

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

30TH MARCH 2009

1. DATA QUALITY PILOT REVIEW

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Committee note the contents of the Data Quality Pilot Review Audit Commission report.
- 1.2 THAT the Committee receive a report back from officers setting out an action plan to address the areas for improvement highlighted in the report.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to inform the Committee of the outcomes of the participation of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority in a Data Quality Pilot Review to assist the Audit Commission.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Audit Commission has developed a new approach to assessing the quality of data produced by public bodies. This approach forms part of an updated Use of Resources assessment which will be undertaken across all fire, police, local government and health bodies as part of our 2008/09 audit work.
- 3.2 The Authority agreed to assist the Audit Commission in piloting a number of elements of the data quality section of the updated Use of resources assessment between November 2008 and February 2009. The arrangements were also piloted as a number of other Fire and Rescue Authorities across the country. This piloting process will provide the Authority with an interim assessment of its arrangements for securing data quality, and will also provide the Audit Commission with valuable feedback on its proposed audit methodology.

- 3.3 Meeting took place between officers, the Lead Auditor, Neal Harris, and also with the Lead Member for Performance, Councillor Stuart Davis. The methodology included assessing documentation already held by the Audit Commission (including the Authority's recently completed self-assessment documentation) and requesting and viewing additional documentation as appropriate. Throughout the review the Audit Commission received feedback from the Authority on their draft Key Lines of Enquiry questions and audit tools which helped the Audit Commission to inform the final version of their methodology. This final version of the methodology will become KLOE 2.2 in the new Use of Resources assessment which will be used nationally as part of their 2008/09 audit work.
- 3.4 A copy of the report into Data Quality in the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority is attached as Appendix 1 to the report and Neal Harris will attend on the day of the meeting to present his findings. The report shows the findings of the pilot and issues to be followed up in the Use of Resources Audit 2008/09. Because of his previous involvement, Councillor Stuart Davis, as Lead Member for Performance has also been invited to attend the Committee.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the contents of the report do not represent any change of strategy.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Accounts and Audit Regulations Act states that a relevant body must "maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with the proper internal audit practices". Data Quality is one of the new areas prescribed for review by the Audit Commission for review.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

As this was a pilot exercise, the costs of the review were met by the Audit Commission and there was no fee charged to the Authority.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Data Quality Pilot report
Brigade Standing Orders 1/29, 1/33

V RANDENIYA
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER