

<p><b>Minutes of the Audit Committee</b></p>
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**9<sup>th</sup> June 2008 at 1.00 pm**  
**at the Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham**

**Present:** Councillor Gazey (Chair);  
Councillors Spence and Turner.

12/08 **Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, be approved as a correct record.

13/08 **Annual Audit and Inspection Letter**

The Committee noted the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, which outlined the outcomes of the three aspects of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process covering the 2006/2007 business year, including Service, Use of Resources and Direction of Travel assessments.

Members noted that the Authority had been rated as 'Improving Well' during 2006/2007 and good progress had been recognised on a number of priority areas as well as some key areas for improvement.

14/08 **Audit and Inspection Plan 2008/2009**

The Committee noted the proposed audit and inspection work being carried out by the Audit Commission in the 2008/2009 financial year.

The Audit Commission would be undertaking a range of audit and inspection work including Direction of Travel; Use of Resources, Value for Money; Data Quality, Financial Statements, Accounts and Service Assessments. The fee to the Authority for the work for 2008/2009 was £86,373. This represented an increase on previous years to the inclusion of the Use of Resources assessment and Data Quality Work.

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The Plan took into account the requirements of moving from Comprehensive Performance Assessment to Comprehensive Area Assessment.

### **15/08 Risk Management Strategy**

The Committee noted the Authority's Risk Management Strategy, which detailed the framework used to manage risk within the Fire Service. It also detailed the processes in place to manage risk at a strategic and departmental level as well as identifying the links to other areas of activity, such as partnership working and project management.

In order to include the work currently being undertaken to update the Corporate Risk Register and the associated insurance arrangements, a revised strategy would be submitted for approval in late 2008.

### **16/08 Monitoring Policies on Raising Concerns at Work – Whistle Blowing Standing Order 02/20**

The Committee noted the revised Brigade Standing Order 02/20 in relation to whistle blowing, which had been reviewed and re-issued in March 2008. The Standing Order was issued to all staff and was referred to in both employee and contractor inductions.

The Committee also noted that there had been no incidents of whistle blowing in the West Midlands Fire Service in the two years up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008.

### **17/08 Annual Internal Audit Report 2007/2008**

The Committee was informed of the work undertaken by the internal audit service in 2007/2008 and its opinion in relation to the effectiveness of the Authority's governance, risk management and internal control, processes. The report also provided a summary of the key control issues that arose during the financial year.

**Resolved** that the Annual Audit Report 2007/2008 be approved.

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### 18/08 **Governance Statement**

The Committee received the Authority's draft Governance Statement for 2007/2008.

The Statement was based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of policies, aims and objectives and to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised, the impact should they be realised and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Statement was designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it could therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The Statement would be submitted to the Authority for final approval and signed off by the Chairman, the Clerk, the Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer.

**Resolved** that the draft Governance Statement 2007/2008 be commended to the Authority for approval.

### 19/08 **Work Programme 2008/09**

The Committee approved its updated work programme for 2008/09.

### 20/08 **Date and time of next meeting**

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2008, time to be arranged.

(The meeting ended at 2.06 pm)

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