

WEST YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 10.30 A.M. IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, BIRKENSHAW

AGENDA

1. Minutes of meeting held on 17 June 2009 (pp 1 – 7)
2. Urgent items
3. Admission of the Public :
The Committee is asked to consider whether, by resolution, to exclude the public from the meeting during the items of business marked with an 'E' reference, because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information.
4. Declarations of interest

To consider any Declaration of Interest in relation to any item of business on the agenda.

Items for decision

5. Audit Committee – review of Terms of Reference (pp 10 - 17)
6. Improvement Plan (pp 18 - 27)
7. Audit Commission Annual Governance report (pp 28 - 34)

Items for noting

8. Minutes of a meeting of the Regional Management Board held on 24 July 2009 (pp 35 - 41)
9. Quality of Service consultation results (pp 42 - 56)
10. Chartermark assessment / Customer Service Excellence (pp 57 - 78)
11. Audit Plan 2009 / 10 (pp 79 - 83)
12. Audit update (pp 84 - 86)

13. Comprehensive Area Assessment – update (pp 87 - 89)
14. Home Fire Safety Checks – annual survey (pp 90 - 96)
15. School Fire Safety Visits – annual survey (pp 97 – 102)
16. Performance Management Activity report (pp 103 - 111)

WEST YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD AT FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, BIRKENSHAW, ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2009

Present: Councillor V Binney (in the chair), A Castle, M Coulson (as substitute for Councillor T Hardwick), J Dodds (as substitute for Councillor Khan), D Gray and B Smith

Apologies : Councillors T Hardwick and M Khan
Mr M Wilkinson - Standards Committee chair

In attendance : Councillor P Booth
Graham Kettles - Audit Commission
Paul Lundy - Audit Commission
Simon Straker - Internal Audit

1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2009 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

2 URGENT ITEMS

None.

3 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC – SECTION 100A, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There were no items which required the exclusion of the public and press.

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest in any matter under discussion at the meeting.

5 AUDIT COMMITTEE – REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which invited consideration of the approved Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED

- (i) That a questionnaire be circulated to all Members seeking their opinion on the operation of the Authority's Audit Committee;
- (ii) That the approved Terms of Reference be amended as follows;

Deletion of reference to the Authority's Statement of Internal Control – replaced with reference to the Annual Governance statement.

and

- (iii) That the outcome of (i) above be submitted to a future meeting of the Audit Committee.

6 IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2009

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided Members with the revised Improvement Plan 2009 which incorporated the areas for improvement following the Audit Commission's Performance Framework 2008 reports.

Particular reference was made by Members to the comments about non-realisation of potential efficiencies by the Regional Management Board. Members were advised, however, of a joint training bid to be submitted to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Improvement Plan 2009 be noted; and
- (ii) That Regional Management Board achievements to date be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.

7 AUDIT COMMISSION ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Finance Officer which presented the Annual Governance report prepared by the Audit Commission following the audit of the Fire Authority 2008 / 2009 Statement of Accounts.

It was reported that the following issues had been highlighted and acknowledged by the Chief Finance Officer;

- weakness in internal control
- judgement and audit risk
- accounting practice and financial reporting

Mention was further made about the very commendable use of resources 2008 / 2009 score (level 3) following the national moderation exercise.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That the draft representation letter be signed by the Chair of the Audit Committee; and
- (iii) That a letter of be sent to all employees thanking them for their continued hard work as reflected in the excellent Use of Resources score.

8 MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON 24 JULY 2009

Members commented on the apparently slow process of the development of regional working and were reminded of the regional technical services bid to be made on behalf of the region to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency partnership (Min no. 12 of the Regional Management Board Minutes refers).

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Regional Management Board at a meeting held on 24 July 2009 be noted.

9 QUALITY OF SERVICE CONSULTATION RESULTS

Members considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which informed Members of the feedback from the Quality of Service survey 2008 / 9.

It was reported that 99% of domestic and 100% of non-domestic respondents expressed satisfaction with the service.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That thanks be included in the letter to all employees for the excellent quality of service results (Min No. 7 refers).

10 CHARTERMARK UPDATE

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which updated Members on the Customer Service Excellence Assessment 2009.

It was reported that the Authority had been encouraged to apply for assessment under this new standard (due to replace the Chartermark standard by 2011). The standard incorporated the core concepts of customer focus and the delivery of excellent customer service.

Members were advised that the Authority had gained full compliance against 55 Customer Service Excellence elements including the award of 4 "Compliance Plus". Areas of "partial compliance" would be incorporated into the Improvement Plan process.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the attainment of the Customer Service Excellence Standards be noted as detailed in the report now submitted; and
- (ii) That thanks be included in the letter to all employees for the standards reached in the Customer Service Excellence assessment (Min No. 7 refers).

11 AUDIT PLAN 2009 / 10

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Finance Officer which presented detail of the scope of the internal Audit Plan for 2009 / 10.

A draft of the Plan was considered at the June meeting of this Committee when it was agreed that more detail be provided for Members. The Plan incorporated the following elements of work to be undertaken in the forthcoming year;

- Key financial systems
- Corporate governance
- Special reviews (mobile communications, water office and car leasing)
- Business risks

The Chief Finance Officer took the opportunity to explain the steps that had, and would be taken, to address the issues raised in the Plan.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

12 AUDIT QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Chief Finance officer submitted the quarterly Internal Audit report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

13 COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT – UPDATE

Consideration was given to a joint report of the Directors of Corporate Resources and Operations which updated Members on the progress of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) process which covered the following three elements;

- Use of resources
- Area assessment
- Operational assessment (due in February 2011 – peer review)

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

14 HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKS – ANNUAL SURVEY

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which informed Members of the feedback from the Home Fire safety Check follow-up survey 2008 / 9.

It was noted that 99.7% of customers had been satisfied with their Home Fire Safety Check.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That thanks be included in the letter to all employees for the excellent survey results (Min No. 7 refers).

15 SCHOOL FIRE SAFETY VISITS – ANNUAL SURVEY

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which advised of the feedback from the School Fire Safety Visit survey 2008 / 9. It was reported that a 95.6% satisfaction rate had been recorded which represented an improvement on the last survey undertaken two years previously.

In response to a question from Members, it was reported that the School Fire Safety presentations did include reference to arson, anti-social behaviour, malicious calls and road traffic collisions.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That thanks be included in the letter to all employees for the very encouraging survey results (Min No. 7 refers).

16 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report informing Members of the Authority's performance against key performance indicators.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

Chair