

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 27 September 2018, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Councillors

S Clarke
F De Molfetta (for S Holgate)
A Kay
M Khan
J Shedwick (Vice-Chair)
D Smith
M Tomlinson (Chairman)

Officers

K Mattinson, Director of Corporate Services (LFRS)
D Russel, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS)
J Keighley, Member Services Assistant (LFRS)

In attendance

R Tembo, External Audit, Grant Thornton
J Taylor, Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council

15/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from County Councillor S Holgate.

16/18 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None received.

17/18 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 24 July 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18/18 EXTERNAL AUDIT - ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2017/18

The External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter represented an overall assessment of the Authority's performance, drawing on the Auditor's findings and conclusions from their work, which had previously been reported to the Audit Committee.

Members considered the Annual Audit Letter which summarised Grant Thornton's 2017/18 audit of the Authority as presented by Richard Tembo.

The Auditors had issued an unqualified opinion on the Authority's 2017/18 financial statements on 24 July 2018. The External Auditors were satisfied that in all significant respects the Authority put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2018. It was noted that the External Auditor's fee for 2017/18 was in line with the planned fee for the year.

In a response to a question raised by CC S Clarke, the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the valuation figure did include the Service's appliances, however the majority of the valuation was in respect of the Authority's buildings.

RESOLVED:- That the Audit Committee noted and endorsed the content of the Annual Audit letter 2017/18.

19/18 INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

In 2016 the Committee approved the internal Audit Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme. In line with requirements this had now been reviewed.

Members considered the report by Judith Taylor (Head of Internal Audit Lancashire County Council) which set out the current position in respect of the internal audit plan for 2018/19.

RESOLVED: - That the Committee noted and endorsed the revised Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.

20/18 INTERNAL AUDIT MONITORING REPORT

The Internal Auditors produced a summary of progress against the annual plan for each Audit Committee meeting, setting out progress to date and any significant findings. The report for the period from 1 April 2018 to 14 September 2018 was presented by Judith Taylor. It was noted that work carried out during this period was in accordance with the agreed audit plan and no significant issues had been identified.

The report identified that 10.5 days had been spent this financial year on the 2018/19 plan. In addition, the auditors had spent a further 10 days during the first quarter of the financial year in completing and finalising reviews outstanding from 2017/18 audit plan. The findings from these reviews were reported in the 2017/18 Annual Report which Mrs Taylor had presented to Members alongside this report.

Progress to date in relation of the plan was provided and discussed by Members.

In relation to the proposals regarding the use to the business contingency provision,

the Treasurer advised Members if no further work was required by the internal auditors from the publication of the HMICFRS inspection report he would review the contingency arrangements with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Audit Committee outside this meeting and report back to Members at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: - That the Committee noted and endorsed the report.

21/18 RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The report highlighted action taken in respect of corporate risk since the last Audit Committee meeting. The latest review of the corporate risk register had not identified any new risks which warranted inclusion on the corporate risk register.

An updated corporate risk register was considered by Members with changes summarised in the report.

In response to a question raised by CC De Molfetta in relation to risk 22, failure to maximise collaborative opportunities presented by Policing and Crime Act 2017, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the meetings between LFRS officers and Police colleagues to discuss the progression of the 32 items were continuing to take place. He reassured Members that any finalisations of the work carried out between LFRS and Lancashire Constabulary would be reported back to the Fire Authority.

In addition, the Service had also reviewed its Risk Management Strategy. Members considered the recommended changes which were set out in the report.

RESOLVED: - That the Audit Committee noted the actions taken, endorsed the revised corporate risk register and agreed the revised risk management strategy.

22/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday 29 January 2018 at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Further meeting dates were noted for 2 April 2019 and 23 July 2019 and agreed for 24 September 2019.

LFRS HQ
Fulwood

M NOLAN
Clerk to CFA