



Minutes

Audit Committee

Date: 28 July 2023

Time: 10:30

Venue: FSHQ

Present: Cllr Renshaw (in the chair), Cllrs Downes, Fazal and Hawkins

In Attendance: Simon Straker, Paul Burnham

Apologies: Cllrs Hall and Tulley

1 Minutes of last meeting held on 21 April 2023

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

2 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3 Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

4 Admission of the public

There were no items requiring exclusion of public and press.

5 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

6 Abridged Performance Management Report

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Corporate Services which informed members of the Authority's performance against Key Performance Indicators where targets are not being achieved during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Members commented that it would be helpful to have the Service Delivery indicators expressed as total figures and not just percentages. They were informed that One View would show both figures and percentages for all indicators.

Members noted the increase relating to fires attended where a working smoke alarm was correctly fitted but did not activate and were informed that this was often because people evacuated the premises prior to the detector being activated.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

7 Risk Management Strategy Group Update

Members were presented with a report from the Director of Corporate Services giving details of the risk management activity and developments reported to Risk Management Strategy Group (RMSG) in July 2023 and highlighting any future risks or risk related areas.

In the period considered, 22 risks have been reviewed and Members were given a summary of the key areas as follows;

- The risk relating to 'Severe weather other than flooding resulting in increased costs, activity, loss/damage, fuel costs, increased calls to spate conditions and restricted mobility of staff and appliances', has an increased score from 9 (3x3) to 12 (4x3) due to wildfire being the main future threat. Wildfires are becoming more severe, however, WYFRS are changing how they respond to them in terms of resources, training and vehicles.
- The risk relating to 'Failure to provide an effective control function which has a significant impact on service delivery and organisational reputation', there was an issue with incoming 999 calls on the 25 June. A number of actions were implemented at the time by WYFRS Control and BT. Ofcom are currently investigating the issue as it was a national event.

Members were provided with a breakdown of the movement of the 44 current risks over the past 12 months also provided with details of the 8 risks classified as very high in section 3.4.

Members sought information regarding the extent of global work being undertaken currently to aid in fighting wildfires and were informed there was a good international community focussed on gathering all possible learning, which was then synthesized into practical actions.

Members also sought clarity regarding government grants and the possibility that grants could be cut, presenting challenging risks to the budget.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

8 Revenue Outturn

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer submitted a report which provided a summary of the Authority's financial outturn for 2022/23 and the Members allowances payments made in 2022/23. The report focused on:

- Revenue Expenditure, which included a brief explanation of the major variances against budget;
 - Operational Staff -£0.163m
 - Support Staff -£0.380m
 - Training +£0.190m
 - Supplies and Services -£0.330m
 - Contingency -£2.486m
- Capital Expenditure Outturn which included details of the capital expenditure of note in 2022/23;
 - Commencement of the redevelopment of the FSHQ site totalling £6.214m
 - Commencement of the rebuild of Keighley Fire Station costing £0.460m
 - The refurbishment of Odsal and Todmorden fire stations costing £0.779m
 - The refresh of ICT station equipment, Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) and the Wide Area Network (WAN) totalling £0.756m
 - Completion of the replacement of operational PPE and the replacement of wildfire vehicles costing £0.166m
- Members' Allowances Outturn, which is a statutory requirement under Regulation 26A of the Local Authorities (Member Allowances) Regulations 1991.
- Draft Statement of Accounts

Members sought clarification of the staffing issues at Deloitte which have caused a delay to the approval of the 2021-22 accounts for a range of authorities, including WYFRA. Members were informed that the delays had not had any legal implications or caused any operational issues, and there was strong confidence that the cash position would not change. It was confirmed that Grant Thornton would be auditing the accounts for 2023-24.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted

9 Internal Audit Quarterly Review

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer submitted a report which provided a summary of the audit activity for the period April to June 2023. Members were informed that in the period five audits have been completed, two receiving substantial assurance and three receiving adequate assurance.

The report included the Audit Plan for 2023/24 delivery.

With regards to a challenge from Members regarding the removal of cash and cheque payments, Members were informed that in the first instance an impact assessment would be undertaken to examine the proportion and sources of these payments.

Members suggested that updated cyber training should be provided to all staff and Members.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted

10 Annual Governance Statement

Members considered a report of the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer which presented the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 for approval and inclusion in the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.

Members were advised that the statement is split into the following five sections:

- Scope of Responsibility and Code of Corporate Governance
- The Purpose of the Governance Framework
- The Governance Framework
- Review of Effectiveness
- Significant Governance Issues

And that new governance issues have been identified for 2023/24;

- Implementation of the recommendations from the Values and Culture Report
- Minimum Services Level Bill for Fire and Rescue Services
- Changes to European Legislation

Members were further informed of the governance issues remaining from 2021/22;

- Central Government Funding uncertainty.
- Implications Matzak Court of Justice Ruling (albeit the risk has reduced following the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of Tomlinson-Blake v Royal Mencap).
- Policing and Crime Act 2017.
- Reforms to Fire and Rescue Services, including the election of the West Yorkshire Mayor.
- Implementation of the performance management system.

Members sought and received confirmation that there was a Culture Action Plan which would be going to the next HR Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Governance Statement be approved

Chair