



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on Wednesday 8 July 2009 at Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillors M Simon (Chair), K Musgrave, A Needham, C Oliver, N Wright, and Independent Member Mr W Ravenscroft.

APOLOGIES: Councillors S Nelson and D Bateman

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

B DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

RESOLVED: That

[1] membership of the Committee, as agreed by the Fire Authority on 3 April 2009 and confirmed below be noted:

Councillor M Simon – Chair
Councillor D Bateman
Councillor A Needham
Councillor S Nelson
Councillor C Oliver
Councillor N Wright
Independent Member – Mr W Ravenscroft

[2] the minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 25 March 2009 be approved.

2 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09 AND PLAN FOR 2009-10

The Treasurer introduced the Internal Auditor from Bentley Jennison who presented Members with the Internal Audit Annual Report 2008-09 and Plan for 2009-10. The report gave an introduction and the Internal Audit Assurance for 2008/09.

The Auditor made reference to Annex A, the Internal Audit Assurance map and Annex B, Internal Audit Opinions and Recommendations. Members were informed that there were no fundamental recommendations made.

Members enquired about the Risk Maturity Matrix and whether it included operational risk, it was confirmed that the Risk Maturity Matrix did include operational risk. Further to this Members discussed the increasing issue of wheelie bin fires and various campaigns that were seeking awareness and prevention. Members were advised by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Risk Reduction that the North West Prevention Board were in the early stages of an investigation and the issue was being deal with regionally.

RESOLVED: That

Members received the content of the 2008-09 Internal Audit Annual Report and approved the 2009-10 Annual Plan.

3 EQUALITY STANDARD FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT – LEVEL 4

The Head of Corporate Communications presented Members with a paper detailing the equality standard for local government – level four. The report identified that the service was 'performing strongly' at level 3 of the equality standard for Local Government. Members noted that achievement of level 4 was through a process of self assessment, an attached report identified the accurate assessment of recent progress and evidence that recognised the organisation met the Level 4 criteria.

Whilst achievement of Level 4 is via self assessment, an informal peer review session would take place at the end of July with a representative from a Fire Authority which had recently reached Level 4; this would provide some third party assessment of progress.

Members raised concerns for securing employment for people with learning disabilities and their access to employment, they were advised by the Area Manager, Corporate Communications, that the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service were working nationally and regionally to ensure that people with learning disabilities were given opportunities within the organisation and undertook periodic reviews to ensure positions were accessible to all where possible.

The report identified the importance of member awareness in terms of Equality and Diversity and the continued training to raise such awareness.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the draft self assessment form be accepted as evidence that the service meets the criteria for Level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government;
- [2] the Equality Monitoring Report be 2008-09 be received; and
- [3] a further report be produced on the implications of the Fire Authority attaining the new 'Excellent' category under the revised Equality Framework for Local Government.

4 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no issues to be considered under urgent business.
