

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
Audit and Standards Committee  
28 March 2018  
Item No. 11

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**REPORT AUTHOR:** ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER (HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

**SUBJECT:** 2017/18 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY'S EFFECTIVENESS

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Background Papers: Annual Governance Statement 2016  
Audit and Standards Committee Paper 6 December 2017  
(Review of the Fire and Rescue Authority's Effectiveness 2016/17)

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Implications (tick ✓):

|                 |       |   |                        |  |
|-----------------|-------|---|------------------------|--|
| LEGAL           |       |   | FINANCIAL              |  |
| HUMAN RESOURCES |       |   | EQUALITY IMPACT        |  |
| ENVIRONMENTAL   |       |   | POLICY                 |  |
| CORPORATE RISK  | Known | ✓ | OTHER (please specify) |  |
|                 | New   |   | CORE BRIEF             |  |

*Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.*

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**PURPOSE:**

To consider the outcome of the 2017/18 Review of the Fire and Rescue Authority's Effectiveness, including any identified areas for improvement and agreed actions for the coming year, together with a record of Members' attendance at meetings.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Members agree the 2017/18 Review of Effectiveness and associated action plan for approval by the Fire and Rescue Authority on 26 April 2018, and for incorporation into the Annual Governance Statement.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 At their meeting on 9 September 2010 the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) agreed a recommendation of the former Audit Committee that it publishes an Annual Review of the FRA's Effectiveness and Record of Member Attendance from 2010/11.

1.2 On 18 January 2018, Members of the FRA held a facilitated discussion on the review of the FRA's effectiveness in 2017/18. Previously it was based upon a revised questionnaire following a review agreed by the Audit and Standards Committee on 7 September 2016. However, for 2017/18 it was agreed that the questionnaire was no longer required. At the meeting it was agreed to a review of Governance and for station visits to be structured. These points have been captured in the action plan.

## 2. 2017/18 Review of the Fire Authority's Effectiveness

2.1 The FRA's three Policy and Challenge Groups, and the Audit and Standards Committee, each conducted a review of their own effectiveness against their Terms of Reference.

They were asked to consider three overarching questions:

- i. Does the Group consider they have been effective and discharged their responsibility in regard to the Group's terms of reference?
- ii. Considering the Group's terms of reference are there any area that have not been considered and should be addressed?
- iii. Does the Group consider any training and development would assist them with the areas of work of the Group?

The following was found during consideration of the above questions:

### 2.2.1 *Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group – 30 November 2017*

- a. The Group was satisfied with their Terms of Reference and considered that, over the past year, they had reviewed and monitored:
  - Terms of Reference
  - Performance and Programmes
  - Audit and Governance Action Monitoring
  - Corporate Risk Register
  - Annual Service Delivery Performance Indicators and Targets for the next financial year
  - Customer Satisfaction
  - Operational Decision Making Procedures – Exception Report
  - New Internal Audit Reports
  - Evaluation of Effecting Entry Pilot
  - Demonstration of Forced Entry Equipment

- Strategic Road Safety Partnership update
  - Community Risk Management Plan
  - Mobilising System update
  - Police and Ambulance Collaboration
  - Annual Review of Partnerships
  - Review of the Fire Authority's Effectiveness
- b. Other points highlighted were:
- Members agreed that it was well supported by Officers and that the Groups' consideration of issues had been wide-ranging, informative and useful for Members.
  - A comment was made on the frequency of meetings. It was noted that, if the need arose, the Chair would be able to convene an additional meeting of the Group.
  - There were no requests for further training or development

#### *2.2.2 Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group – 29 November 2017*

- a. The Group was satisfied with their Terms of Reference and considered that, over the past year, they had reviewed and monitored:
- Terms of Reference
  - Performance and Programmes
  - Audit and Governance Action Monitoring
  - Corporate Risk Register
  - Annual Corporate Services Performance Indicators and Targets for the next financial year
  - New Internal Audits including Key Financial Controls
  - Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring 2018/19
  - 2019/20 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme (Planning Arrangements)
  - Efficiency Plan
  - Treasury Management Annual Report
  - Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report
  - Asset Management Plans – ICT, Property and Fleet
  - Asset Management Strategy for 2018/19
  - Annual Review of the Operations of ICT Shared Service Agreement
  - Review of the Fire Authority's Effectiveness
- b. Other points highlighted were:
- The Service Efficiency Plan was identified as an area that would benefit from greater Member scrutiny.
  - Members' agreed the Group should continue to focus on commissioning and overseeing reviews into specified areas of work

on a more frequent basis and select items to consider in greater depth.

- Members supported the continuation of training on the Statement of Accounts and treasury management and agreed that it would be useful for members to receive training on understanding the Service's assets, including IT, fleet and property. In this respect, it was suggested that Members may benefit from a property tour or greater access to the assets of the Service. This could be accommodated during some of the scheduled station visits, particularly in stations where specialist equipment and/or teams were located.

### 2.2.3 *Audit and Standards Committee – 6 December 2017*

- a. The Group was satisfied with their Terms of Reference and considered that, over the past year, they had reviewed and monitored:
- Review of Terms of Reference
  - External Audit Plan for 2017/18
  - Annual Audit Fees
  - External Audit Progress Reports
  - Audit Results Report
  - Annual Audit Letter
  - 2016/17 Annual Governance Statement and action plan
  - Draft Summary of Statement of Accounts
  - Statement of Accounts and Letter of Representation
  - New Internal Audit Reports
  - Internal Audit Progress
  - Internal Audit Annual Report 2017/18
  - Internal Audit Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21
  - Audit and Governance Action Monitoring
  - Corporate Risk Register (each meeting)
  - Annual Review of the Fire Authority's Effectiveness
  - Annual Review of Monitored Policies
  - Review of the entire Risk Register
  - Registration of Interests and Gifts/Hospitality
  - Statement of Assurance
  - Revision of Standing Order 21
  - Report on Standards

- b. Other points highlighted were:
- The Committee agreed that it had effectively discharged its duties in regard to its terms of reference and that there were no areas of the terms of reference, as they currently stood, that had not been addressed.
  - Members commented on the audit training received and agreed that this should be provided on an annual basis. Members will be offered training on effective governance from RSM in November 2018.
  - Training on effective governance was provided for all Members of the Authority at the Member Development Day on 1 November 2017. As a result of this training, a report on the review of the entire Corporate Risk Register would be submitted to the March 2018 meeting of the Committee.
  - Members discussed the Committee could do more to explain its work to both internal and external stakeholders. Although this was not set out in the Committee's Terms of Reference, it was an important area as it was recognised that the Committee performed a different role from the Policy and Challenge Groups and was a decision making body. Members requested that a review be undertaken on how the work of the Committee is currently recorded and published and that the outcomes of this be reported to the Committee for further consideration.

#### 2.2.4 *Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group – 11 January 2018*

- a. The Group was satisfied with their Terms of Reference and considered that, over the past year, they had reviewed and monitored:
- Terms of Reference
  - Performance Monitoring and Programmes
  - Audit and Governance Action Monitoring
  - Corporate Risk Register
  - Annual HR Performance Indicators and Targets for the next financial year
  - Corporate Health and Safety Objectives to date and proposed for 2018/19
  - New Internal Audits
  - Absence Year End report including Occupational Health Support
  - Occupational Accidents Year End Report
  - Annual Provision of External Training
  - Equality Duty Report
  - Public Sector Equality Scheme Review
  - Appraisal Report
  - Fitness Guidance
  - Health and Safety Annual Report

- Positive Action Report
- Review of the Fire Authority's Effectiveness

b. Other points highlighted were:

- Members agreed that the Group had been effective in discharging its responsibility in regard to its Terms of Reference and that there were no areas within the Terms of Reference that had not been considered.
- The view was expressed that the Group was well briefed on current issues and that Members were confident in providing challenge when required.
- Members were reminded that a visit to the Fire Services College was being arranged for a future Member Development Day to observe firefighters on the Foundations Training Course.

3. Member Attendance at Meetings 2017/18

3.1 A record of Members attendance for year 2017/18 is appended to this report for information at Appendix A.

5. Action Plan for 2017/18

|   |   | <b>Owner(s)</b>   | <b>Timescale</b>   |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | At their first meeting each FRA group/Committee to review their Terms of Reference and look forward to the year ahead to agree an annual work programme. In addition to the current practice of requesting additional reports this to include consideration of a major topic with a longer timescale for implementation as done by the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group. | Chief Fire Officer (CFO)<br>Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO)<br>Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) | First Policy and Challenge Group of financial year – June 2017 - <b>Completed</b>              |
| 2 | Continue pre-meetings with relevant Chairs of Groups and Committees.  | CFO, DCFO and ACO   | Ongoing – <b>Completed 2017/18</b>   |
| 3 | Request that post AGM, training needs of Members are re-visited to feed into the two programmed events.   | Head of Projects, Safety and Business Support   | Post Annual Meeting – 25 May 2017 - <b>Completed</b>   |
| 4 | Continue to review Induction material, re-circulate updated content to Members by email or make accessible on line as a reminder and easy access. Provide 1 to 1's for Members that change as a one off.  | Head of Projects, Safety and Business Support   | Ongoing – <b>Completed 2017/18</b>   |
| 5 | Continue to include training/awareness on operational matters.  | Head of Operations and Head of Training and Development                                       | Ongoing <b>Completed 2017/18</b>   |
| 6 | Continue Station Visits.  | Head of Projects, Safety and Business Support   | Ongoing <b>Completed 2017/18</b>   |
| 7 | Continue with the distribution of daily incident logs.  | Head of Operations  | Ongoing <b>Completed 2017/18</b>   |
| 8 | Members should continue to discuss plans to meet the projected budget gap and further strengthen the Authority's financial plans into the future.   | Chief Fire Officer  | On-going and Budget Workshops on 21 November 2017 and 18 January 2018 <b>Completed 2017/18</b> |

|    |  | <b>Owner(s)</b>   | <b>Timescale</b>  |
|----|--|---|---|
| 9  | Continue Budget workshops - 21 November 2017 and 18 January 2018.  | Head of Finance and Treasurer                                     | Booked<br><b>Completed 2017/18</b>  |
| 10 | Continue Treasury Management training and development.   | Head of Finance and Treasurer                                     | July 2017 (Bi-annual)<br><b>Completed 2017/18</b>   |
| 11 | Provide training and development on the Statement of Accounts and governance particularly in relation to the role of an Audit Committee.   | Head of Finance and Treasurer                                     | Member Development Days – 4 July or 1 November 2017<br><b>Completed 2017/18</b>               |
| 12 | Relevant benchmarking data if known is made available when performance targets are being set.  | Owner of each target setting paper to Policy and Challenge Groups | Target setting by Policy and Challenge meetings during March 2018<br><b>Completed 2017/18</b> |
| 13 | Review presentation of performance reports to provide previous quarter's information indicating direction of travel when reviewing current period.                                   | Service Assurance Manager   | Members' Development Day 31.10.18   |
| 14 | Advance the use of electronic media and continue to explore the possibility of extending paperless meetings for other FRA Meetings (CSPCG is now established as a paperless meeting) | Head of Projects, Safety and Business Support                     | 31 March 2018   |
| 15 | To support paperless meetings, and provide one to one training as required.  | Head of Projects, Safety and Business Support                     | Ongoing   |
| 16 | Review Committee Structures of other Fire and Rescue Authorities   | Head of Projects, Safety and Business Support                     | 31 March 2018 – Review by RSM 2018/19 Q1  |



5. Action Plan for 2018/19

5.1 In light of the review undertaken by Members on 18 January 2018 Members may wish to consider including the following in an Action Plan for 2018/19:

|   |   | <b>Owner(s)</b>   | <b>Timescale</b>   |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | At their first meeting each FRA group/Committee to review their Terms of Reference and look forward to the year ahead to agree an annual work programme. In addition to the current practice of requesting additional reports this to include consideration of a major topic with a longer timescale for implementation as done by the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group. | Chief Fire Officer (CFO)<br>Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO)<br>Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) | First Policy and Challenge Group of financial year – June 2018 |
| 2 | Continue pre-meetings with relevant Chairs of Groups and Committees.  | CFO, DCFO and ACO   | Ongoing  |
| 3 | Request that post AGM, training needs of Members are re-visited to feed into the two programmed events.   | Head of Organisational Assurance  | Post Annual Meeting – 31 May 2018                              |
| 4 | Continue to review Induction material, re-circulate updated content to Members by email or make accessible on line as a reminder and easy access. Provide 1 to 1's for Members that change as a one off.  | Head of Organisational Assurance  | Ongoing  |
| 5 | Continue to include training/awareness on operational matters.  | Head of Operations and Head of Operational Support  | Ongoing  |
| 6 | Continue Station Visits.  | Head of Organisational Assurance  | Ongoing  |

|    |   | <b>Owner(s)</b>                  | <b>Timescale</b>  |
|----|---|----------------------------------|---|
| 7  | Written briefings forwarded to FRA members and crews prior to Station Visits.   | Head of Organisational Assurance | April 2018 - Ongoing  |
| 8  | Members to receive training on understanding the Service's assets, including IT, fleet and property. This can be incorporated in scheduled Station Visits, particularly in stations where specialist equipment and/or teams were located. | Head of Organisational Assurance | Ongoing   |
| 9  | A review be undertaken on how the work of the Audit and Standards Committee is currently recorded and published and that the outcomes be reported to the Committee for further consideration.   | Head of Organisational Assurance | June 2018   |
| 10 | Members to visit to the Fire Services College to observe firefighters on the Foundations Training Course.   | Head of Organisational Assurance | Member Development Day – 20 June 2018                                 |
| 11 | Continue with the distribution of daily incident logs.  | Head of Operations               | Ongoing   |
| 12 | Members should continue to discuss plans to meet the projected budget gap and further strengthen the Authority's financial plans into the future.   | Chief Fire Officer               | On-going and Budget Workshops on 15 November 2018 and 17 January 2019 |
| 13 | Continue Budget workshops - 15 November 2018 and 17 January 2019.   | Head of Finance and Treasurer    | Booked  |
| 14 | Continue Treasury Management and Statement of Accounts training and development.  | Head of Finance and Treasurer    | Oct/Nov 2018  |

|    |  | <b>Owner(s)</b>   | <b>Timescale</b>  |
|----|--|---|---|
| 15 | Members will be offered training on effective governance from RSM in November 2018.  | Head of Organisational Assurance                                  | November 2018   |
| 16 | Relevant benchmarking data if known is made available when performance targets are being set.  | Owner of each target setting paper to Policy and Challenge Groups | Target setting by Policy and Challenge meetings during March 2019 |
| 17 | Advance the use of electronic media and continue to explore the possibility of extending paperless meetings for other FRA Meetings (CSPCG is now established as a paperless meeting) | Head of Organisational Assurance                                  | Ongoing   |
| 18 | To support paperless meetings, and provide one to one training as required.  | Head of Organisational Assurance                                  | Ongoing   |
| 19 | RSM to conduct a Governance audit to review the Committee Structure of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority in relation to other Fire and Rescue Authorities                       | Head of Organisational Assurance                                  | 31 August 2019  |

**ZOE EVANS**  
**ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER (HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

APPENDIX A

RECORD OF MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS 2017/18

| COUNCILLOR                              | Atkins | Chapman | Chatterley | Downing | Duckett | Franks | Headley | Khan | McVicar | Mingay | Saleem | Waheed | TOTAL BY MEETING |
|---|--------|---------|------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|------|---------|--------|--------|--------|------------------|
| <b>FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>        |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| May (Annual Meeting)                    | ✓      | ✓       | ✓          | ✓       | ✓       | ✓      | ✓       | ✓    | ✓       | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 12/12            |
| July                                    | ✓      | ✓       | ✓          | ✓       | ✓       | ✓      | ✓       | N    | N       | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 10/12            |
| October                                 | ✓      | ✓       | N          | ✓       | ✓       | ✓      | ✓       | ✓    | ✓       | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 11/12            |
| December                                | ✓      | ✓       | ✓          | ✓       | ✓       | ✓      | ✓       | ✓    | ✓       | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 12/12            |
| February                                | ✓      | ✓       | ✓          | N       | ✓       | ✓      | ✓       | ✓    | ✓       | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 11/12            |
| April                                   |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| <b>BUDGET WORKSHOPS</b>                 |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| November                                | ✓      | ✓       | N-C        | N       | ✓       | N      | ✓       | UN   | ✓       | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 8/12             |
| January                                 | ✓      | ✓       | ✓          | ✓       | ✓       | ✓      | ✓       | UN   | ✓       | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 11/12            |
| <b>AUDIT AND STANDARDS CTT</b>          |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| June                                    |        | ✓       | ✓          |         | ✓       | N      | ✓       |      |         |        | ✓      | UN     | 5/7              |
| September                               |        | ✓       | ✓          |         |         | N      | ✓       |      |         |        | ✓      | N      | 4/7              |
| December                                |        | ✓       | ✓          |         |         | UN     | ✓       |      |         |        | ✓      | ✓      | 6/7              |
| March                                   |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| <b>CORPORATE SERVICES P&amp;C GROUP</b> |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| June                                    |        | ✓       |            |         | N       |        | ✓       |      | N       |        |        | ✓      | 3/5              |
| September                               |        | ✓       |            |         | ✓       |        | ✓       |      | ✓       |        |        | ✓      | 5/5              |
| November                                |        | ✓       |            |         | ✓       |        | ✓       |      | ✓       |        |        | ✓      | 5/5              |
| March                                   |        | N       |            |         | UN      |        | ✓       |      | ✓       |        |        | N-C    | 2/5              |

## RECORD OF MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS 2017/18

| COUNCILLOR                            | Atkins | Chapman | Chatterley | Downing | Duckett | Franks | Headley | Khan | McVicar | Mingay | Saleem | Waheed | TOTAL BY MEETING |
|---------------------------------------|--------|---------|------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|------|---------|--------|--------|--------|------------------|
| <b>SERVICE DELIVERY P&amp;C GROUP</b> |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| June                                  | ✓      |         | ✓          | ✓       | ✓       | N      |         | ✓    | ✓       | ✓      |        |        | 7/8              |
| September                             | ✓      |         | ✓          | N       | ✓       | ✓      |         | N    | N       | ✓      |        |        | 5/8              |
| November                              | ✓      |         | N-C        | N       | N-C     | ✓      |         | ✓    | N-C     | ✓      |        |        | 4/8              |
| March                                 |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| <b>HUMAN RESOURCES P&amp;C GROUP</b>  |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| June                                  | ✓      |         |            | ✓       |         |        |         | N    |         | ✓      | N      | ✓      | 4/6              |
| September                             | ✓      |         |            | N       |         |        |         | ✓    |         | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 5/6              |
| January                               | N      |         |            | ✓       |         |        |         | UN   |         | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 4/6              |
| March                                 |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| <b>Corporate Equality Group</b>       |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| May                                   |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        | ✓      |                  |
| October                               |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        | ✓      |                  |
| January                               |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        | ✓      |                  |
| <b>DEVELOPMENT DAYS</b>               |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |
| July                                  | ✓      | ✓       | N          | ✓       | ✓       | N      | ✓       | N    | N       | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 8/12             |
| November                              | ✓      | ✓       | ✓          | ✓       | UN      | ✓      | ✓       | UN   | ✓       | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 10/12            |
| <b>Total Attendance</b>               |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        |                  |

Key:

N-C – Notified Constituent Auth Mtg / Commitments

UN – Un notified

N - Notified

## RECORD OF MEMBER ATTENDANCE FOR STATION VISITS 2017/18

| COUNCILLOR   | Atkins | Chapman | Chatterley | Downing | Duckett | Franks | Headley | Khan | McVicar | Mingay | Saleem | Waheed | TOTAL BY MEETING |
|--|--------|---------|------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|------|---------|--------|--------|--------|------------------|
| Dunstable<br>19 July 2017<br>(following FRA Meeting) | ✓      | ✓       | ✓          | ✓       | ✓       | ✓      | ✓       | N    | N       | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 10/12            |
| Harrold<br>19 July 2017<br>(evening)                 | ✓      | ✓       | ✓          | ✓       | ✓       | N      | ✓       | N    | N       | ✓      | ✓      | ✓      | 8/12             |
| Biggleswade<br>7 September 2017<br>(evening)         | ✓      | ✓       | ✓          | ✓       | ✓       | N      | ✓       | ✓    | N       | ✓      | ✓      | N      | 7/12             |
| Woburn<br>April 2018<br>(TBC)                        |        |         |            |         |         |        |         |      |         |        |        |        | /12              |

Note: Confirmation of attendance at Harrold and Biggleswade Station visits was not received by Democratic Services; therefore it has been assumed Members attended unless apologies were received prior to the visit.