

BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee has been established to ensure that the following areas of the Fire and Rescue Service are functioning efficiently and effectively, challenging areas of under performance as required and approving any associated policy or activity as necessary:

- Audit Activity
- Regulatory Framework
- Accounts
- Standards

Membership

The Group is to consist of those Members appointed by the Fire and Rescue Authority for the ensuing year or as determined by the Fire and Rescue Authority.

One Member, but not a member of the Executive, will be nominated as Chair of the Committee by the Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) at its annual meeting and another elected Member will be nominated as Vice Chair at the first Committee meeting held after the annual meeting.

Quorum

Business shall not be transacted at any meeting of the Committee unless at least one third of voting members are present and at least one member from two constituent authorities.

Support

The Group will be supported by the individual Principal Officer with responsibility for Corporate Services, the Authority's Treasurer, the Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance and Assistant Treasurer, and members of the Strategic Support Team.

Regularity of Meetings

The Committee is to meet a minimum of four times a year. Other meetings can be called when deemed necessary by any member of the Committee and following agreement with the Committee Chair.

Reporting

The Committee has delegated power to take certain decisions on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Authority as identified, in bold, in the Terms of Reference. The Committee's minutes are submitted to the Fire and Rescue Authority under a

covering report from the Committee's Chair with any decisions and recommendations.

Terms of Reference

Audit Activity

1. To consider reports and opinion from the Authority's Internal Auditors, and a summary of internal audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance they can give over the Authority's corporate governance arrangements.
2. To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
3. To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of the providers of internal audit services.
4. To consider a report from internal audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale.
5. To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.
6. To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
7. To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
8. To commission work from internal and external audit.

Regulatory Framework

1. To maintain an overview of the Authority's constitution in respect of contract procedure rules, financial regulations and, subject to the terms of reference on standards below, codes of conduct and behaviour.
2. To review any issue referred to it by the Chief Fire Officer.
3. To monitor the Authority's policies on Whistleblowing, the Anti-fraud and Corruption Strategy and the Authority's Complaints Process.
4. **To oversee the production of, and approve, the Authority's Annual Governance Statement on Internal Control and to approve the Fire Authority's Statement of Accounts.**
5. **To oversee the production of, and approve the Authority's Annual Statement of Assurance fulfilling the requirements as set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.**
6. To consider the Authority's arrangements for corporate governance and agreeing necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice.
7. To monitor the effective development and operation of corporate risk management including the annual review of the Authority's Strategic Risk Register.

Accounts

1. To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Standards

1. **To discharge the Authority's duty under the Localism Act 2011 of ensuring that its Members (and any co-opted Members) maintain high standards of conduct.**
2. To advise the Authority on the operation of its Code of Conduct and on any changes to the Code (including its register of interests) that may be necessary or desirable.
3. **To monitor the operation of the Authority's arrangements for dealing with standards allegations against Members under the Localism Act 2011 and to make any changes that may be necessary or desirable.**
4. To receive regular reports on any standards allegations against Members.
5. The Monitoring Officer be authorised to take action on the advice of the Committee Chairman where it is necessary to appoint a Panel of Members to advise whether to investigate a complaint, or an Adjudication Committee to adjudicate upon a complaint following a finding of breach of the Code by a Member, or any other action in relation to the preparation for, or the hearing of, a matter by the Adjudication Committee.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference are reviewed by the Committee on an annual basis at the first Committee meeting held after the annual meeting.

Revised Terms of Reference and quorum arrangements agreed by the then CFA on 7 September 2011

Committee named changed from Audit Committee to Audit and Standards Committee with revised Terms of Reference agreed by the then CFA on 28 June 2012

Updated for change of Authority name – December 2012

Revised to separate membership from that of Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group by FRA on 4 June 2013

Amendment to the Terms of Reference to include Item 5 under the Regulatory Framework agreed by the FRA on 11 December 2013

Reporting Statement included – FRA Meeting 21 July 2016

Last review: 14.07.21

Eighth point under Regulatory Framework (to consider the Authority's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls) be removed as its intention is covered elsewhere in the terms of reference – Recommended by Audit and Standards Committee 8 December 2016 and agreed by FRA 9 February 2017.

Audit recommendations on review period of Terms of Reference added and delegated responsibilities highlighted in bold – Audit and Standards Committee on 6 July 2018