

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group  
6 December 2016  
Item No. 9

---

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

**SUBJECT:** REVIEW OF CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP EFFECTIVENESS  
2016/17

---

For further information on this Report contact: Jackie Green  
Information Support Officer  
Tel: 01234 845149

---

Background Papers: None

---

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

---

## **PURPOSE:**

To review the effectiveness of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group during 2016.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That:

1. Members consider the effectiveness of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group (CSPCG); and comment on whether:
    - i. CSPCG have been effective and discharged their responsibility in regard to their terms of reference (CSPCG Terms of Reference are attached as an Appendix);
    - ii. There are any areas of their terms of reference which have not been considered and should be addressed; and
    - iii. There is any Training and Development would assist them with the areas of the work of CSPCG.
  2. The recorded Minutes of the meeting will be fed into the facilitated meeting to be held on 27 January 2017 to review the Fire Authority's Effectiveness in 2016/17.
- 

### 1. Introduction

The Fire Authority publishes an Annual Review of its Effectiveness and Record of Member Attendance. This Review and a resultant Action Plan are included in the Fire Authority's Annual Governance Statement, which forms part of the Statement of Accounts.

### 2. 2016/17 Review of the Fire Authority Effectiveness

- 2.1 On 7 September 2016, the Audit and Standards Committee considered proposals for a review of the Fire Authority's effectiveness in 2016/17 and agreed that the Policy and Challenge Groups and Committees review their effectiveness by considering three overarching questions:

- i. Does the Group/Committee consider they have been effective and discharged their responsibility in regard to the Group's/Committee's terms of reference?
  - ii. Considering the Group's/committee's terms of reference are there any areas that have not been considered and should be addressed?
  - iii. Does the Group/Committee consider any Training and Development would assist them with the areas of work of Group/Committee?
- 2.2 The minutes will be fed into the facilitated meeting to be held on 27 January 2016 following the Budget Workshop to review the Fire Authority's effectiveness in 2016/17.
3. Review of Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group Effectiveness
- 3.1 Corporate Services is one of three Policy and Challenge Groups established by the Fire Authority to focus on the following areas of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue work:
- Strategic Support
  - Finance and Procurement
  - Asset Management
  - Information, Communications and Technology
- 3.2 The Group has no delegated power to take decisions but its minutes are submitted to the FRA under a covering report from the Group's Chair with any recommendations.
- 3.3 Members are requested to review the terms of reference attached to confirm that they are content that the responsibilities for the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group have been discharged effectively or whether there are any areas which have not been met.
- 3.4 In relation to the Terms of Reference and span of responsibility, Members are asked to consider if there are any training or information items they would like added to the work programme for next year, either to the CSPCG or to the wider Member Development days.

### 3.5 **Regularity of Meetings:**

The Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group meets four times a year, meetings for the current year were:

- 7 March 2016
- 9 June 2016
- 14 September 2016
- 6 December 2017

The meeting dates are agreed when the Calendar of Meetings for the following year is presented to the FRA at their December meeting.

Attendance against the meetings will be reported to the Audit and Standards Committee on 16 March 2017.

### 3.6 **Support:**

The Group is supported by the Principal Officers with responsibility for Corporate Services.

Officers with responsibility of the areas of work overseen by the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group attend to present reports and respond to Members.

Officers who attended regularly during 2016 were:

- Chief Fire Officer
- ACO, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
- Head of Finance and Treasurer
- Head of Safety and Strategic Projects
- Head of Operational Support
- Head of Strategic Support

Other personal also attended to present reports and if the leads above were unavailable a Deputy has attended.

### 3.7 **Review of Work Carried Out:**

The Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group reviews their Work Programme each meeting and the following items have been discussed:

- Review of Terms of Reference (first meeting of the year)
- Performance Monitoring and Report on Programmes (each meeting)
- Audit and Governance Action Monitoring Reports (each meeting)
- Corporate Risk Register (each meeting)
- Annual Corporate Services Performance Indicators and Targets for the next financial year
- New Internal Audits including Key Financial Controls, IT Shared Service and Governance
- Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring 2016/17 (most meetings)
- Treasury Management Strategy and Practices
- Treasury Management Annual Report
- Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report
- Asset Management Policy and Plans – ICT, Property and Fleet
- Annual Review of the Operations of ICT Shared Service Agreement
- Community Facilities Charges at Stations
- Utility Usage
- Review of the Fire Authority's Effectiveness

**ZOE EVANS**

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

## **CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP**

The Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group 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 as necessary:

- Strategic Support
- Finance and Procurement
- Asset Management
- Information, Communications and Technology

### **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 elected Member will be nominated as Chair of the Group by the Fire and Rescue Authority at its annual meeting and another elected Member will be nominated as Vice Chair at the first Group meeting held after the annual meeting. The Group may co-opt onto its membership any person, such as representatives or members of groups, who may provide specialist information or skills in assisting the Group to reach its aims and objectives set out below.

### **Quorum**

Business shall not be transacted at any meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group unless at least three Members are present and at least one Member from two constituent authorities.

### **Support**

The Group will be supported by Principal Officers with responsibility for areas within the remit of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group, the Fire and Rescue Authority's Treasurer, Head of Finance and Assistant Treasurer, and members of the Strategic Support Team.

## **Regularity of Meetings**

The Group is to meet a minimum of four times a year and whenever deemed necessary by any member of the Group.

## **Reporting**

The Group has no delegated power to take decisions but its minutes are submitted to the FRA under a covering report from the Group's Chair with any recommendations.

## **Terms of Reference**

1. To consider and report as necessary on performance in respect of the Fire and Rescue Authority's Corporate Services Directorate functions and be involved in the setting and monitoring of Service targets.
2. To consider at each group meeting the current year revenue and capital budgetary control information.
3. To oversee the Fire and Rescue Authority's Efficiency Plan.
4. To monitor the progress of the Corporate Services projects identified in the Community Risk Management Plan.
5. To commission and oversee reviews into specified areas of work within the Corporate Service's Directorate.
6. To monitor the effective identification and management of corporate risks relating to Corporate Services functions.
7. To monitor and review the Fire and Rescue Authority's Asset Management strategy, plans and processes.
8. To consider any external reports relating to the Corporate Services functions.
9. To act as Treasury Management scrutiny.

*Revised Terms of Reference agreed by the then CFA on 7 September 2011*

*Updated for change of Authority name – December 2012*

*Quorum included – 24 June 2014*

*Support to include Principle Officers with responsibility for areas within the remit of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group – 15 July 2015*

*Reporting Statement included and reference to 'approve' removed from points 3 and 7 of terms of reference – FRA Meeting 21 July 2016*