



**Hampshire
& Isle of Wight**
FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee

Purpose: Noted

Date: **9 April 2024**

Title: **INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGEMENT ACTIONS PROGRESS REPORT**

Report of Chief Fire Officer

SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Standards and Governance Committee Members with the latest update on the medium and high internal audit management actions that have not been completed within the agreed target date and are now overdue. The Standards and Governance Committee has a key scrutiny role in monitoring the implementation of internal audit management actions.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the progress made towards the implementation of the internal audit management actions and the delivery of the audit plan be noted by the HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee

BACKGROUND

3. Internal audit is provided by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) and is one of various assurance mechanisms that the Service utilises as part of our wider assurance programme. Our assurance programme includes internal and external assurance mechanisms with external mechanisms including from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and ISO certification testing.

4. In terms of internal audit, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (HIWFRS) Organisational Assurance team maintains mechanisms to monitor management actions that are as a result of finalised internal audits. The team record whether management actions are in progress and on target, have been delayed and extended or have been completed. Heads of Service are responsible for the delivery of management actions that fall within their areas of responsibility.
5. Once a final audit report has been issued, the agreed management actions are recorded along with:
 - a) the priority of the recommendation;
 - b) the target date for implementation; and
 - c) the person responsible for the action.
6. The Organisational Assurance team will ask for confirmation and evidence that an action has been completed, or if it has not been completed when it is expected to be. Any management actions that continue to remain outstanding are referred to the relevant Director. Outstanding audit recommendations are monitored regularly by the Director of Policy, Planning and Assurance and the Head of Governance and Assurance.

MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY

7. Only medium and high overdue management actions are reported to the Committee. There are currently no overdue actions.
8. Since the last committee meeting, the overdue Competency, Resourcing and Succession planning – Prevention and Protection action has been closed. Work has been completed and will now be developed as business as usual. The ICT Systems and Governance audit management actions have been completed and this Audit is now closed.
9. Internal Audit have completed the Benefits Management audit which has received limited assurance. As a result there are four medium actions which will be completed over the next few months which will address the risks identified.
10. Overall, there 13 open audit actions which are being monitored by the Organisational Learning and Assurance team (compared to 20 open actions in the last quarter).

SUPPORTING OUR SAFETY PLAN AND PRIORITIES

11. By ensuring the implementation of internal audit recommendations, we ensure the improvement of processes and governance arrangements which will contribute to making life safer. This also assists the Authority in achieving our High Performance and Learning and Improving Safety Plan priorities, and our vision to work smarter, be more efficient, and to make life safer for everyone in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

COLLABORATION

12. The Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) provide internal audit on behalf of all partners within Shared Services and many other public service organisations.
13. Our internal audit procedure outlines how HIWFRS and the Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) collaborate. The relationship continues to be effective, as evidenced by the progress made with audit actions and our approach to risk-based audit planning.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

14. When agreeing management actions in response to an audit report, the cost of addressing the risk should be considered against the risk materialising. Implementing audit recommendations helps to ensure that the Authority uses its resources efficiently, that key controls are in place and working, and opportunities to achieve value for money are taken.
15. The management of internal audit actions is carried out within current resources.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

16. Impact assessments have not been required for this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

17. There are no legal implications arising from this report, however the provision of Internal Audit is a requirement of The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

RISK ANALYSIS

18. Failure to implement internal audit recommendations and management actions leaves the Authority vulnerable to the consequences of the identified risks and weaknesses in controls. Internal management of audit recommendations and actions is an important process which forms part of the management of risk. The updates on progress ensure that Members are fully aware of any problems associated with addressing the issues raised and the priority given to driving down or eliminating specific risks.

EVALUATION

19. The evaluation of the progress the Service makes in completing internal audit management actions forms an important part of the Service's organisational assurance activity, provides a valuable measure of corporate health and identifies learning across the Service. The Service's Organisational Assurance team regularly monitors progress in completing management actions and have regular discussions with our internal auditors, the Southern Internal Audit Partnership.

CONCLUSION

20. Progress continues to be made in both completing the management actions from previous audits and progressing the current audit plan. Management actions will be undertaken in respect of the specific audits themselves and more widely in respect of internal control issues and how they are managed across the Service. As outlined in the MoU, management actions are owned by an Executive Sponsor and Heads of Service, who work with their teams to ensure progress is made.

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