

AT A MEETING of the of HFRA Standards and Governance Committee held at
Fire & Police HQ, Eastleigh on Friday, 15th September, 2017

Chairman:

* Councillor Luke Stubbs

* Councillor Roz Chadd
Councillor Jonathan Glen
* Councillor Sharon Mintoff

Councillor Roger Price
* Councillor Rhydian Vaughan

*Present

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Glen and Cllr Price.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed

4. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations for the meeting.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements.

6. EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Committee received a covering report from the Treasurer (Item 6 in the Minute Book), along with the External Auditor's Audit Results report.

The Chairman welcomed Adam Swain and Maria Grindley to the meeting from Ernst & Young.

External Audit were pleased to confirm that the Audit had been a smooth process with nothing to cause concern, and it was highlighted that the deadline for signing off the accounts for 2017/18 was the end of July, which would require a meeting of S&G Committee at that time.

It was also noted that given the restricted timescales, the appropriate papers for those meetings were likely to only be available at the actual Committee.

RESOLVED

The Committee:

- a) Received the External Auditor's HFRA Audit results Report for 2016/17; and
- b) Endorsed the proposal to appoint Ernst & Young as external auditors from the 2018/19 audit of accounts for a period of 5 years.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND OPINION 2016/17

The Committee received a report from the Chief Internal Auditor (Item 7 in the Minute Book) which provided an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's framework of risk management, internal control and governance operated for the year ending in March 2017.

The Chief Internal Auditor confirmed that framework of risk management, control and governance continued to be adequate. A summary of actions for limited opinions had been listed, which were mainly based around procurement and would be monitored going forward.

RESOLVED:

The Committee accepted the Chief Internal Auditor's annual report and opinion statement for 2016/17

8. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received a report from the Chief Internal Auditor (Item 8 in the Minute Book), which provided an update regarding internal audit work completed in accordance with the approved audit plan, and an overview of the status of 'live' reports.

It was confirmed that some actions were listed as 'pending', meaning that the due date had not yet been reached. Members queried why safeguarding was included in the plan and officers confirmed that it covered every aspect of the service and was particularly important due to firefighters being in contact with vulnerable people and children.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the progress of internal audit work for the period ending 31 August 2017.

**9. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS -
PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Officer (Item 9 in the Minute Book), which provided an overview of work done to oversee the implementation of internal audit recommendations and respective actions, and also an update on actions not yet completed along with their status. It was confirmed that department managers were responsible for agreeing actions to be taken in response to audit findings to mitigate risk. The action plans clearly identify the proposed action, responsible officer and target completion date.

There were some aspects on Page 85 regarding Provided Vehicle Policy where updates were not possible due to the changes in taxable benefits, but this would return to Committee once it had been resolved.

RESOLVED:

The progress made towards the implementation of the internal audit management actions was noted and continues to be monitored.

10. ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT

The Committee received a report from the Chief Officer (Item 10 in the Minute Book), which asked Members to approve the Statement of Assurance as part of the Fire and Rescue National Framework requirements.

It was confirmed that the format and interpretation of the Statement was different across Authorities, but the Home Office had been happy with HFRS's version and so it had been continued this year following last years submission.

RESOLVED:

The Annual Assurance Statement 2017 was received and approved by the Committee.

**11. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS INCLUDING ANNUAL GOVERNANCE
STATEMENT**

The Committee considered a report from the Treasurer (Item 11 in the Minute Book), which asked Committee to approve the Statement of Accounts for 2016/17 and Letter of Representations.

RESOLVED:

- A) The Statement of Accounts for 2016/17 was approved subject to any minor amendments, of which the Treasurer had delegated authority to approve as necessary.
- B) The Letter of Representations contained in Appendix 2 was considered and approved by the Committee

12. ANNUAL REPORT OF PENSION BOARD

The Committee received a report from the Chief Finance Officer (Item 12 in the Minute Book) which summarises work of the Pension Board for 2016/17 and provided an update on key issues.

It was confirmed that initially the Board were dealing with historical admin issues early in 2016/17, but more recently, the Board and officers supporting them had been much more proactive in their approach to various issues, including increasing communications with Members and employees. A new interactive pensions website had also been developed which provided up to date information and tools which allowed Officers to more simply request information such as personalised pension estimates.

RESOLVED:

- A) The contents of the report were received and acknowledged by the Committee

HFRA S&G Chairman,