

## SCRUTINY & AUDIT PANEL

**Minutes of the meeting of the SCRUTINY & AUDIT PANEL held at County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1UE at 10.00 am on Thursday, 31 October 2019.**

Present: Councillors Barnes (Chairman), Taylor, Hamilton, Lambert, Osborne and Galley (In place of Smith)

Also present: D Whittaker (Chief Fire Officer), M O'Brien (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), M Andrews (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), L Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), L Ridley (Assistant Director Planning & Improvement), S Milner (Planning & Intelligence Manager), W Tricker (Finance Manager), L Stevenson (Risk & Insurance Officer), K Pearce (Information Technology Governance Manager), H Thompson (Ernst & Young LLP), Z Hiley (Democratic Services Officer – Minutes), E Simpkin (Democratic Services Officer)

### **12       Declarations of Interest**

It was noted that, in relation to matters on the agenda, no participating Member had any interest disclosable in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct for Members.

### **13       Apologies for Absence/Substitutions**

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Amanda Evans. Councillor Galley declared that he was substituting for Councillor Andy Smith.

### **14       Notification of items which the Chairman considers urgent and proposes to take at the end of the agenda/Chairman's business items**

There were none.

### **15       Non-Confidential Minutes of the last Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting held on 25 July 2019**

**RESOLVED** – That the non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel held on 25 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (*Copy in Minute Book*)

### **16       Callover**

Members reserved the following items for debate:

17     2019/20 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter – Corporate Risk Register Review

19     Annual Audit Letter 2018/19

## **Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel**

**RESOLVED** – That all other reports be resolved in accordance with the recommendations as detailed below.

### **17 2019/20 2nd Quarter - Corporate Risk Register Review**

The Panel considered the report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer which provided Members with the latest quarterly review (Quarter 2, 2019/20) of Corporate Risk. The report identified the business risks and how they had or were being mitigated, under Appendix 2. (*Copy in Minute Book*)

There was a discussion around reviewing and re-formulating Risk 8 – *Failure to mobilise effectively (Sussex Control Centre)* to reflect the current position; with Member's suggesting potentially updating and splitting it into two distinct areas such as systems risks and staffing risks. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the risk originally encompassed a number of potential causes which could now be reviewed for clarity purposes, and this would be done by the next scheduled Panel meeting on 30 January 2020. The Chief Fire Officer added that the Senior Leadership Team had debated the risk at length and wished to keep the risk score level at 12-substantial (red) due primarily to the implications for staffing changes, and not systems-risk related reasons.

**RESOLVED** – That the Panel:

- a) Noted the Quarter 2 2019/20 Corporate Risk Register, including the changes made since the previous quarter;
- b) Authorised Officers to determine any alterations in respect of Risk 8 – *Failure to mobilise effectively (Sussex Control Centre)* to reflect current risk values; and
- c) Had not identified any issues where it required further information or assurance.

### **18 2019/20 1st & 2nd Quarter Performance Results**

The Panel received the report of the Assistant Director Planning & Improvement which presented the first and second quarter performance indicator results for 21 performance indicators for 2019/20, compared with the results for the same period in 2018/19. The report also included year end results for 2018/19 and the projected year end result for 2019/20.

**RESOLVED** – That the Panel:

- i. Considered the performance results and progress towards achieving the Service's purpose and commitments as contained in Appendix 1 (agenda pages 33 to 37); and

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- ii. Considered the performance results and remedial actions that had been taken to address areas of under performance in the Fire Authority's priority areas.

### **19 Annual Audit Letter 2018/19**

The Panel considered the report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer (ADR/T) which set out the recently published Annual Audit Letter that summarised the work of the Authority's external auditor, Ernst & Young (EY), relating to 2018/19. (*Copy in Minute Book*)

Helen Thompson (EY) drew the Panel's attention to the Executive Summary within the Annual Audit Letter which set out the results and conclusions on the significant areas of the audit process. Of note, as Members were already aware, was that EY had issued its audit certificate on 2 August 2019 and not by the 31 July deadline. Ms Thompson confirmed that the delay had been the result of staffing changes at EY and, due to a recent recruitment drive, she hoped they would not be in the same position next year.

The Panel thanked Ms Thompson for her work and attendance at the meeting.

**RESOLVED** – That the Panel considered and approved, on behalf of the Fire Authority, the recently published Annual Audit Letter 2018/19.

### **20 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** – That:

- i) Item 21 be exempt under paragraphs 3 and 7 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and accordingly not open for public inspection on the grounds that the report contains:
  - Information relating to the business affairs of the Fire Authority; and
  - Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

### **21 Information Security Project - Update**

The meeting concluded at 10.35 am

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Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2020