

COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

At a **MEETING** of the **AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE** held at Fire Service Headquarters, on **25 October 2019 at 10.00 am**.

PRESENT: Cllr J Turnbull in the Chair
DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL: Cllrs B Avery, L Marshall and Cllr F Tinsley
(Substitute for Cllr D Bell)
DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL: Cllr G Lee
OFFICERS: T Hope and K Carruthers
INTERNAL AUDIT: S Carter
MAZARS: G Barker and J Greener

Item

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr D Bell and Cllr E Scott.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 31 July 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3 Annual Audit Letter 2018/19

G Barker provided an overview of the Annual Audit Letter which summarised the work undertaken for the year ended 31 March 2019 and highlighted the conclusions for each area of responsibility.

Cllr Lee noted the financial pressures discussed in the report and queried whether an update was available. G Barker confirmed that all findings were from the completion report issued on 31 July 2019.

T Hope provided an update regarding the predicted settlement for 2020/21 noting an expected inflationary increase. Discussion took place regarding funding beyond 2020/21 and it was noted that the position was unknown at this time.

Cllr Lee noted that the report referred to satisfaction in significant respects and queried whether insignificant matters were identified. G Barker clarified that significant respects was an audit term which covered the agreed areas of responsibility. T Hope further clarified that internal audit were responsible for the audit of other areas.

Action: Members **noted** the report.

4 Additional Audit Fee Letter 2018/19

G Barker presented the letter which provided an update regarding audit fees. Final costs of the 2018/19 audit had been assessed and an additional fee variation of £950 plus VAT proposed.

G Barker confirmed that the fee had been approved by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.

Action: Members **noted** the report.

5 Corporate Governance Action Plan Update

T Hope introduced the report which provided an update on the progress being made in relation to the actions arising from the development of the Authority's corporate governance arrangements.

Cllr Lee requested clarification of the training to level 4 certificate in fire safety. K Carruthers noted that the certificate was a formal fire safety qualification which would allow the audit of high risk/ complex buildings.

Further discussion took place regarding anticipated change for business fire safety and the need for fire service involvement in the early stages of planning. It was agreed that T Hope would raise the comments with the CFO to discuss at DCC and DBC senior team meetings.

Action: Members **noted** the contents of the report and the ongoing work in relation to the corporate governance arrangements of the Authority.

6 Corporate Risk Register – Position at 30 September 2019

T Hope introduced the report which provided details of the corporate risk register as at 30 September 2019. One new risk had been added during the period – CR 217 UK exit from the European Union without a deal.

Cllr Lee queried whether a risk had been identified regarding possible climate change costs. T Hope confirmed that it was not on the corporate risk register but would be captured on section risk registers.

Cllr G Lee requested clarification regarding the highest possible risk score. T Hope confirmed that the highest possible score was 25.

Action: Members **considered** the corporate risk register report.

7 Internal Audit Progress Report

S Carter introduced the report which advised members on the work undertaken by Internal Audit between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. It was noted that within the reporting period no limited assurance opinions had been provided.

Action: Members **considered** the outturn position in delivering the internal audit plan for 2019/20 together with that made by managers in responding to the work of internal audit to gain assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment.

Part B

8 Internal Audit Outstanding Actions Appendix 3

S Carter provided an overview of the five recommendations

ACTION: Members **noted** and **approved** the revised target dates.