ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY
Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

MEETING		AGENDA ITEM	
	Audit, Governance & Review Committee	**5**	

MEETING DATE		REPORT NUMBER	
	21 January 2015	**EFA/006/15**	

SUBJECT	
	Audit Recommendation – Report on Progress Against Action Plans

REPORT BY	
	The Finance Director & Treasurer, Mike Clayton

PRESENTED BY	
	The Finance Director & Treasurer, Mike Clayton

SUMMARY

This paper reports on the progress against the action plans developed by the Service in response to audit reports. Items reported as completed in the previous quarter's report have been deleted from the table.

RECOMMENDATION

Members of the Audit Sub Committee are asked to review the progress.

BACKGROUND

This report brings forward the progress made by the Service in response to Audit recommendations. It includes those made by the Audit Commission in their annual audit letter, and in internal audit reports. The recommendations in the review of Risk Management are the subject of a separate action plan and a progress report will be made to the next meeting of the Committee.

RISK MANAGEMENT, LEGAL, FINANCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL & EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management, legal, financial, environmental or equality implications from this report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985	
List of appendices attached to this paper: Table of Recommendations	
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Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
Business Continuity	All Business Continuity Plans should be submitted to the Risk and Business Continuity Team in a timely manner to enable a regular review.	This is a perennial problem, somewhat worse this year. Department Managers will be debriefed on this Audit to inform them of the findings and recommendation. The SDB and the SMB will be asked to endorse the recommendation	Risk & Business Continuity Manager Delayed from April 2014 to December 2014	Completed
Business Continuity	Each department should assure itself that its key suppliers or partners that support a critical activity have effective business continuity management arrangements in place and update their Business Continuity Plans accordingly.	Department Managers will be debriefed on this Audit to inform them of the findings and recommendation. The SDB and the SMB will be asked to endorse the recommendation.	Risk & Business Continuity Manager Delayed from April 2014 to December 2014	Completed
Safer Communities	As part of the Safer Communities Strategy review, the draft should be submitted to the Activ8 Community Volunteers for consultation.	The Activ8 forum was set up as a basis for consultation. This has been replaced by a wider ranging volunteer programme. We will therefore liaise with our volunteers when we review and update the strategy in the Autumn of 2014. This update will be published and made available to the public by 28th February 2015.	SDO Safer Communities Feb 2015	On Track

Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
ICT General Controls	Management should ensure that IT policies are periodically reviewed, in particular the Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy, and all IT policy documents should identify the date for review and contain a review history.	This can be reviewed as part of ensuring the CoCo for Airwave etc. as part of the Control relocation project	Head of ICT December 2014	Completed
ICT General Controls	All network users should formally agree that they are aware and will comply with the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.	Agreed in principle to automate. Implementation deferred until resources available after completion of the Control Project.	Head of ICT December 2015	Delayed
Follow Up Review	Fleet Management - Local Station Managers should be required to verify that daily checks have been conducted and recorded within vehicle log books.	This is being raised at meetings between the fleet department and local managers and will be detailed is the Service level agreement under review with Operations	Engineering Manager December 2014	On Track

Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
Follow Up Review	Property - The Services should review the process to record and monitor if repairs are completed within the required timescales. This could then be utilised to determine whether job sheets have been provided and use this as a basis to approve payments for repairs conducted by contractors.	Significant investment has been agreed by the Authority for an integrated Property Software Solution that will cover the RAG assessment of works. There is also an interim measure in place on orders. 10% checks of work are now formalised the sample will be increased only to the extent that it is cost effective to do so. A new system will enable job sheet timeframes to be captured and monitored.	Property Services Manager December 2014	On Track
Follow Up Review	Reporting should be undertaken using the system Dream to monitor ordering patterns that may be indicative of disaggregated ordering practice. It is recommended these be run twice a year, unless major issues are uncovered.	Agreed	Purchasing & Supplies Manager December 2014	On Track
HR Transactional Processes	We would recommend that a workshop is run to identify the HR Transactional processes and to identify opportunities for process simplification and automation.	We will be undertaking a complete review of processes to ensure they remain fit for purpose, under the SAP Next Steps Project.	Head of HR March 2016	On Track

Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
HR Transactional Processes	In relation to the aspect of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) there is a need for an overhaul of the current system.	The review of processes will include reviewing the FAQs as a dependency and will include all relevant links Where appropriate, the team will signpost staff to the FAQs – an additional sentence will be added to the intranet site to guide staff to do this and the team will ask them if they have accessed the FAQs if they call and send a link to the FAQs if they have e-mailed. A process will be introduced to review requests received that cannot be answered via an existing FAQ to introduce new FAQs where appropriate.	Head of HR & OD July 2015	On Track
HR Transactional Processes	The training delivered to the HR Team should be formalised to ensure the HR team are fully aware of how to fully utilise the SAP System. The Training should be enhanced to include further technical SAP training. This could be delivered by; ☐ Outsourcing specialist SAP training; or ☐ Identifying whether a SAP specialist could be employed by the Authority.	SMB have recently approved a business case re next steps for SAP which will address some of the current issues including reporting, a review of training required and a full training programme for all relevant staff. It is expected that this training will be provided in-house from the current Project Manager who is working on the SAP development programme. The Project Manager is also exploring options for SAP reporting and upskilling.	Head of HR & OD July 2015	On Track

Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
HR Transactional Processes	The Authority should develop and adopt a more functional and less manually intensive process for the receipt and management of queries. There will be a need to ensure that a structured and automated workflow/ call system is established to manage the process and include as a minimum; ☐ A Senior Responsible Officer; ☐ RAG rating; ☐ Timescales per query. The reporting functionality should also be reviewed to determine whether automated reports can be run, to ensure accuracy and use of information to inform decision making.	SAP specialist/helpdesk operative would be involved in workflow/call system, call logs, response rates – if this does sit within IT – will need joint working RAG rating/triage for calls/emails will be introduced as part of process review and improvement – this will include SLAs/timescales for responding.	Head of HR & OD Head of ICT June 2015	On Track
HR Transactional Processes	Care should be taken to ensure that all second checking of documents is undertaken before issue. In addition we would recommend that the Aide Memoire is updated to reflect the dip sampling undertaken.	We have a new HR Support Team Manager (Angela Mayers) who will be ensuring that a robust first check is sufficient.	Head of HR & OD October 2014	Completed

Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
HR Transactional Processes	The Authority should undertake a 'Phase Two' of the HR Transaction Project to ensure the original PID is delivered. A separate Project Initiation Document (PID) should be drafted for the Phase Two piece of work and the Benefits identified within the original PID should be substantiated. The measures must also be quantified to ensure the Authority can identify whether all benefits have been realised.	The next steps project for SAP will address these issues. This is expected to be a 12 – 18 month project, so benefits realisation will be subject to the project milestones which are yet to be scoped and agreed.	Head of HR & OD March 2016	On Track