



ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Workforce Planning

FINAL

Internal Audit Report: 2.15/16

22 February 2016



CONTENTS

1 Executive summary	2
2 Action plan.....	5
3 Detailed findings.....	9
APPENDIX A: SCOPE	19
APPENDIX B: FURTHER INFORMATION	21
For further information contact	22

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Final report issued	22 February 2016	Client sponsor	Lindsey Stafford-Scott- Director of HR and Organisational Development
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We have no responsibility to update this report for events and circumstances occurring after the date of this report.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service implemented a Workforce Planning Project, as part of the Workforce Transformation Programme, in 2014/15 which aimed to introduce workforce planning processes to effectively manage the workforce. The Service has an objective, which states they will ensure their people are involved, engaged and empowered to deliver excellence. As identified in the Service Risk Register, the Service has identified a risk that they will be unable to innovate and deliver safe and effective services to their communities; if they do not have motivated and engaged people with the right skills and competencies.

The purpose of this review was to assess the planning process for workforce management and agree actions to ensure key processes had been established, this was originally planned as an assurance review, however management requested this to be advisory as workforce planning was in an early stage of development. Therefore this report has not provided a formal assurance opinion, but has identified control improvements to be implemented by the Human Resources and Finance departments.

This advisory review assessed the following areas: workforce strategy and plans; financial planning; skills gap, retirement and vacancy analysis; vacancy authorisation process; succession planning and pools; risk management processes; and governance arrangements.

The audit field work was undertaken in September 2015 which coincided with the findings reported as a result of an external cultural review. Therefore some of the findings from our review overlap with issues uncovered during the cultural review. Furthermore, we obtained additional information in January 2016 prior to the finalisation of this review which we have incorporated into our report.

1.2 Conclusion

Our review identified that a process had been commenced by the Service to identify a workforce planning framework, this is being monitored by the Workforce Planning Group. Compliance testing could not however be fully carried out as the workforce planning implementation was still in its early stages as implementation of Programme 2020 and the actions agreed from the Culture Review have taken precedence. We confirmed the following elements of the workforce planning framework had not yet been implemented:

- Workforce plans for each department;
- Skills gap analyses;
- Vacancy analysis;
- Succession planning for key risk roles; and
- Effective risk management.

We assessed the methodology for workforce analysis, governance structure and risk management arrangements in place, and identified significant gaps) in these areas, detailed in the findings below. Whilst we noted that the significant gaps were in part due to the Authority being in the early stages of implementing changes, improving the controls in each of these areas, will help the Service improve overall workforce management and Service performance; however there is a long way to go before the new arrangements will be fully operational and expected benefits realised.

1.3 Key findings

The key findings from this review are as follows:

- A review of the financial planning, alongside testing of the process for the authorisation of vacancies demonstrated robust controls were in place;
- The Service did not have a documented implementation plan for Workforce Planning activity; with key tasks/ programmes, implementation dates or deliverables in place. Without this plan in place, there is a risk the Workforce Planning activity will not be delivered to the required quality or within the expected timeframes. Through discussions with the Deputy Director of Finance in January 2016 we were informed that the workforce plan had been put on hold due to the outcome of the culture review and the implementation of the initiative entitled 'Programme 2020'; which aimed to align the service workforce to the service requirements of Essex, using a risk-focussed model. The findings of the culture review which were reported in September 2015 has led to the Authority agreeing to implement 35 recommendations. Some of the actions agreed feed into the Workforce Programme, therefore these actions are being focussed upon rather than creating a separate Workforce Programme. The DDoF advised us that it was unlikely that a Workforce Plan would be created until June 2016. (Medium);
- We reviewed the Departmental Strategy for Human Resources, and noted objectives had been set for reductions in both agency (temporary staffing) and overtime expenditure. Discussion with the Deputy Directors of HR and Finance confirmed that performance against workforce objectives within departmental strategies had not yet been reviewed, therefore evidence could not be provided to show the trends from the start of the financial year. Without evidence, we could not conclude if the Service had achieved these objectives. We have agreed an action with the Deputy Director of Finance (Medium);
- Whilst a process had been identified for the monitoring of early retirement, using pension data; key details of the process had not been identified. The operational lead for this process had not been selected and the process had not been rolled out to all staff, such as retained firefighters. (Medium)
- We noted that a robust methodology for implementing skills gap analyses had not been documented. Without the process being identified and documented, there is a risk that the objective of each analysis will not be achieved or inconsistent analyses will take place. We have agreed a management action with the Deputy Director of HR (Medium);
- We noted that the risk management processes for Human Resources and workforce were not sufficient. Mitigating controls, risk scoring and routine updates were not documented on the HR Risk Register we reviewed, raising concern that a formal risk management approach was not undertaken and is not being followed. Where risk management is not undertaken, there is a risk that key HR and workforce risks will not be identified and managed. We have not made any additional management actions, but would refer management to the actions agreed within our Risk Management audit (9.14/15). We would remind management that our risk management audit has been qualified for the previous two financial years;
- A review of the reports and minutes of the Workforce Planning Group, Strategic Delivery Board and Strategic Management Board noted that no performance measures relating to workforce were being reported at the time of the audit. However, in December 2015 a new Corporate HR report was introduced. We noted that although sickness absence, short term sick, attendance management and other case management (such as grievances) were reported there were no agreed performance measures to compare them against. We were advised by the Deputy Director of Finance that appropriate performance measures were being considered so that consistent performance reporting and benchmarking can be carried out. There is a risk that whilst performance is being reported that if there are no comparatives against previous figures and current targets that performance measuring will not be effective.

1.4 Additional information to support our conclusion

Risk	Control design*	Compliance with controls*	Agreed actions		
			Low	Medium	High
If we do not have motivated and engaged people with the right skills and competencies there is a risk that we will be unable to innovate and deliver safe and effective services to our communities.	3 (11)	4 (4)	2	4	0
Total			2	4	0

* Displays the number of controls not adequately designed or complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area.

2 ACTION PLAN

The table below sets out the actions agreed by management to address the findings, as follows:

Ref	Findings summary	Priority	Action for Management	Implementation date	Owner responsible
Risk: If we do not have motivated and engaged people with the right skills and competencies there is a risk that we will be unable to innovate and deliver safe and effective services to our communities.					
1.1	An implementation plan had not been drafted for the workforce tasks/ initiatives due to be undertaken in 2015/16.	Medium	<p>The Deputy Director of HR will document a formal implementation plan for workforce planning, detailing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives to be rolled out across the Service; • Responsible managers; • Start and end dates; • Key deliverables; and • Reporting arrangements. 	July 2016	Lindsay Shankland- Deputy Director of HR
1.2	Trend analysis had not been undertaken on agency or overtime spend to monitor achievement of objectives within the HR Departmental Strategy.	Medium	<p>The Deputy Director of Finance will liaise with the Deputy Director of HR, and identify the reporting arrangements for temporary staffing and overtime.</p> <p>Any adverse trends will be reported to the Workforce Planning Group and Strategic Management Board.</p>	September 2016	<p>Glenn McGuinness- Deputy Director of Finance</p> <p>Lindsay Shankland- Deputy Director of HR</p>

Ref	Findings summary	Priority	Action for Management	Implementation date	Owner responsible
1.3	<p>Whilst a process had been identified for the monitoring of early retirement, using pension data; key details of the process had not been identified.</p> <p>The operational lead for this process had not been selected and the process had not been rolled out to all staff, such as retained firefighters.</p>	Medium	<p>The HR Subject Matter Advisor will liaise with the Head of HR and ensure the following actions are completed for the high level retirement analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Service operational lead for predictions process will be identified; • The prediction process will be completed for retained firefighters; • The frequency of updates will be communicated; • The reporting lines for the statistics will be identified; and • The impact on succession planning will be considered. 	July 2016	Jenny Dines- Head of HR

Ref	Findings summary	Priority	Action for Management	Implementation date	Owner responsible
1.4	<p>A skills gap analysis had not been undertaken at Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>Further investigation identified a methodology for this process was yet to be established.</p> <p>Furthermore, we noted through discussions with the Deputy Director of Finance (HR) that a Skills Gap Analysis would be carried out as part of the Programme 2020 analysis and Workforce Planning exercise.</p>	Medium	<p>A skills gap analysis methodology will be drafted by the Operational Training Manager and Learning and Development Manager; and formally approved through the Workforce Planning Group. This will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will be responsible for implementing the skills gap analysis; • What are the key objectives of the analysis; • Does the service have current job specifications for all roles; • What template/ steps will be used in the analysis process; • How frequent will the analysis be implemented; • How will staff be approached/ involved in the process; • How will analysis data be collated; • How will training and recruitment be impacted/ prioritised following skills gap analysis; and • How will results be reported. 	October 2016	<p>Moir Bruin- Operational Training Manager</p> <p>Claire Budgen- Learning and Development Manager</p>

Ref	Findings summary	Priority	Action for Management	Implementation date	Owner responsible
1.5	The Terms of Reference for the Workforce Planning Group did not detail the responsibility for workforce risk management, or review of the HR Risk Register.	Low	<p>Following a review of the Risk Management process, the Deputy Director of HR will update the Terms of Reference of the Workforce Planning Group.</p> <p>A requirement to review and monitor relevant workforce risks will be included.</p>	March 2016	Lindsay Shankland- Deputy Director of HR
1.7	Robust key performance measures around vacancy and other workforce measures had not been identified for monitoring the efficiency of workforce management.	Low	Suitable key performance indicators will be created and included in the performance reports, for reporting purposes to the Strategic Delivery Board and the Strategic Management Board.	October 2016	<p>Lindsay Shankland- Deputy Director of HR</p> <p>Glenn McGuinness- Deputy Director of Finance</p> <p>Tracey King- Performance Manager</p>

3 DETAILED FINDINGS

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all audit testing undertaken.

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Management action
Risk: If we do not have motivated and engaged people with the right skills and competencies there is a risk that we will be unable to innovate and deliver safe and effective services to our communities.						
1.1	<p>Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has a high level Service Strategy in place which identifies the strategic objectives for the service.</p> <p>The strategy identifies two clear service objectives related to workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will use our resources flexibly, efficiently and effectively, reducing the cost of the Service to match the funding available. • We will ensure our people are involved, engaged and empowered to deliver excellence. <p>Programme 2020 is an initiative of the service,</p>	No	N/a	<p>We were provided with the Service Strategy, and noted this provided the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose; • Achievements to date; • Vision and steps to achieving this; and • Service Objectives. <p>We noted two of the objectives directly related to workforce.</p> <p>Through discussions with the Deputy Director of Human Resources (HR) that a workforce plan had not yet to be drafted, however it was due to commence in July 2016.</p> <p>We requested an implementation plan, showing when key processes were going to be rolled out. However, the Deputy Director of HR informed us that this had not yet been documented.</p> <p>Without a documented implementation plan, there is a risk to the Service that the elements of the Workforce Programme will not be established to the required quality or within the expected timeframe.</p> <p>Through discussions with the Deputy Director</p>	Medium	<p>The Deputy Director of HR will document a formal implementation plan for workforce planning, detailing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives to be rolled out across the Service; • Responsible managers; • Start and end dates; • Key deliverables; and • Reporting arrangements.

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Management action
	<p>and the vision is, as follows: Leading the way to a Safer Essex; in 2020 the organisation will be service led, community focussed, values driven and financially sustainable.</p> <p>A workforce planning strategy was yet to be developed; however the Service did not have a clear workforce planning timetable or implementation planning timetable demonstrating how the processes would be rolled out.</p>			<p>of Finance in January 2016 we were informed that the workforce plan had been put on hold due to the outcome of the culture review and the implementation of the initiative entitled 'Programme 2020'; which aimed to align the service workforce to the service requirements of Essex, using a risk-focussed model. The findings of the culture review which was reported in November has led to the Authority agreeing to implement 35 recommendations. Some of the actions agreed feed into the Workforce Programme, therefore these actions are being focussed upon rather than creating a separate Workforce Programme. The DDoF advised us that it was unlikely that a Workforce Plan would be created until July 2016.</p> <p>Whilst we have noted the reasons behind why the Authority do not currently have a Workforce Programme in place we have agreed a management action to ensure that one is created once the actions from the culture review and 'Programme 2020' have been implemented.</p>		
1.2	<p>At the time of the audit, the Service was operating under the Department Strategies approved in 2014.</p> <p>The Departmental Strategies were</p>	Yes	No	<p>We selected three divisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources; • Finance; and • East Area Command. <p>We reviewed the Department Strategies and</p>	Medium	<p>The Deputy Director of Finance will liaise with the Deputy Director of HR, and identify the reporting arrangements for temporary staffing and overtime.</p> <p>Any adverse trends will be reported to the Workforce Planning Group and Strategic</p>

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Management action
	<p>produced in 2014 as part of the annual business planning process for 2015.</p> <p>Each had been reviewed through the Strategic Management Board.</p>			<p>confirmed the standard template was utilised in each instance. This provided information on current achievements, visions, department objectives and an action plan.</p> <p>We confirmed workforce was clearly identified in each department strategy. We identified actions and success measures for each of the three department strategies selected.</p> <p>Human Resources</p> <p>Objective one was the completion of the SAP (Systems, Applications and Products) Development programme. We confirmed an update was provided as of September 2015, demonstrating the progress made with the SAP Programme.</p> <p>Objective two was the development of the Workforce Planning Group. As discussed in paragraph nine of this report below.</p> <p>Objectives three and four related to a reduction in agency and overtime spending. At the time of the review, evidence could not be provided to demonstrate a reduction. Where a review is not completed, there is a risk of overspend in both agency and overtime costs.</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>One of the objectives of Finance was to develop further management information on firefighter headcount, to support changes in crewing and headcount reductions.</p> <p>We confirmed through review of reporting provided by the Deputy Director of Finance that headcount data was reported to both the</p>		Management Board.

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Management action
				<p>Strategic Delivery and Strategic Management Boards. This is documented in paragraph's ten and eleven below.</p> <p>East Area Command</p> <p>We confirmed this department identified the ongoing requirement to manage workforce and succession planning. However, this could not be tested at the time of the audit, as succession planning and identification of pools had been put on hold centrally, due to the Service's cultural review.</p>		
1.3	<p>Research on natural wastage was implemented by the HR Subject Matter Advisor, and a prediction spreadsheet was used to collate pension stats and earliest leave dates for whole-time firefighters.</p> <p>This allowed a chart to be produced which showed a prediction of whole time workforce, should staff retire. This also included a second line for turnover.</p> <p>An analysis of retirement is implemented by HR, to support the succession planning and pool processes.</p>	Yes	No	<p>Through discussion with the HR Subject Matter Advisor and review of the subsequent report, we noted a high level analysis had been established for retirement of whole time fire fighters.</p> <p>We noted that head count for whole time firefighters had been forecasted, with prediction attrition through retirement and turnover. A third row was documented for actual headcount.</p> <p>We noted this process had been completed for whole time firefighters up to July 2015 with no subsequent updates, but was yet to be rolled out for retained firefighters.</p> <p>Without a clear process in place, there is a risk that forecasting will not achieve its objective. We identified the remaining actions to complete this process.</p> <p>We confirmed a separate analysis had been implemented, on an individual basis; to identify eligibility for early retirement. This covered ranks SDO to Station Officer.</p>	Medium	<p>The HR Subject Matter Advisor will liaise with the Head of HR and ensure the following actions are completed for the high level retirement analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Service operational lead for predictions process will be identified; • The prediction process will be completed for retainer firefighters; • The frequency of updates will be communicated; • The reporting lines for the statistics will be identified; and • The impact on succession planning will be considered.

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Management action
	<p>The succession planning process has been put on hold following the culture review.</p> <p>The process for identifying key risk roles within the Service will commence following the completion of workforce plans.</p>			<p>However, as the Service was in the process of consulting with trade unions, this had not yet been utilised.</p> <p>We were provided with a retirement analysis spreadsheet, which demonstrated HR has actively been reviewing the age and length of service of staff. In line with this, the succession process has been developed to ensure a pool is established for key risk roles.</p> <p>At the time of the audit, further succession planning or critical role identification had not been put into practice.</p>		
1.4	<p>At the time of the audit, skills gap analyses had not been undertaken.</p> <p>As part of the annual planning process, managers are responsible for identifying gaps in skills and knowledge within their teams and the risks that this may have on service delivery.</p> <p>Upon identification, skills and knowledge development required is highlighted in the submitted workforce plans for submission to the Learning and Development Manager for inclusion in the Learning and</p>	No	N/a	<p>We confirmed through discussion with the Deputy Director of HR, that skills gap analyses had not yet been undertaken.</p> <p>We requested any methodology or planning documents in place for the skills gap analysis. We were informed that this was yet to be drafted.</p> <p>Where a robust methodology is not identified for assessing the skills of the workforce, there is a risk that the competencies required for roles will not be reviewed appropriately resulting in operational risks.</p> <p>Additionally, where skills gaps are not identified, this will adversely affect the training programme in place.</p> <p>Furthermore, we noted through discussions with the Deputy Director of Finance that a Skills Gap Analysis would be carried out as part of the Programme 2020 analysis and Workforce Planning exercise.</p>	Medium	<p>A skills gap analysis methodology will be drafted by the Operational Training Manager and Learning and Development Manager, and formally approved through the Workforce Planning Group.</p> <p>This will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will be responsible for implementing the skills gap analysis; • What are the key objectives of the analysis; • Does the service have current job specifications for all roles; • What template/ steps will be used in the analysis process; • How frequent will the analysis be implemented; • How will staff be approached/ involved in the process; • How will analysis data be collated;

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Management action
	Development Annual Plan.					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will training and recruitment be impacted/ prioritised following skills gap analysis; and How will results be reported.
1.5	<p>At the time of the audit, the service had not established a robust process for risk management.</p> <p>Discussion with the Corporate Risk and Business Continuity Manager indicated that following the risk management audit in July 2015, a comprehensive review of risk management was in the process.</p> <p>The service has a HR Risk Register which identifies nine risks.</p> <p>Each have been given a rating, and assigned a risk owner. Each risk has a brief description, trigger and impact.</p> <p>Risk SSHR0007 details a failure for the Service to undertake effective workforce planning. This has been assigned</p>	No	N/a	<p>We reviewed the HR Risk Register and Service Risk Registers, and noted these had captured workforce risks.</p> <p>However, controls had not been documented and residual risk scoring had not been utilised. The registers did not have a field to allow managers to provide updates on risks.</p> <p>Discussion with the Corporate Risk and Business Continuity Manager noted that meetings had been arranged with leads in HR for September 2015 to address concerns with the risk registers.</p> <p>A risk register was not provided for East or West Area Command. Discussions with the Corporate Risk and Business Continuity Manager indicated these were not in place.</p> <p>Where workforce risks are not adequately documented and managed, there is both operational, through loss of service, and financial risks, through overspending, to the Service.</p> <p>We agreed key management actions to improve the risk management process within our Risk Management audit report, finalised in July 2015. Management will recall that the risk management reviews of 2013/14 and 2014/15 concluded a qualified opinion in both years, with significant weaknesses in the ongoing</p>	N/a	Please refer to our Risk Management audit (9.14/15)

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Management action
	to the Deputy Director of HR. Residual scoring, controls and assurances alongside commentary were not documented within the register.			documentation to demonstrate that key risks were in fact being managed and mitigated effectively. We have not made any additional actions in this report and have a planned risk management review in Q4 2015/16, but reinforce that the management actions agreed in the 2014/15 risk management audit need to be applied consistently across the service, including Human Resources.		
1.6	<p>The Workforce Planning Group is charged to provide governance over the establishment to ensure financial efficiency and enable the service to make changes to the establishment to meet organisational and operational requirements.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring staffing levels and budgeted posts are agreed and set through an effective budget setting process agreed with Finance. Identifying, 	Yes	No	<p>The Workforce Planning Group Terms of Reference was reviewed, and it was found to document the key roles and aims of the Group, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of strategic guidance over the establishment control process. Receive, review and approve/reject business cases for recruitment. To ensure budgets are in place to financially cover approved business cases. However, this does not include responsibilities in relation to workforce risk management or review of the Risk Register. <p>We also confirmed from a review of minutes for the current financial year that the group was fulfilling its role and responsibilities.</p>	Low	<p>Following a review of the Risk Management process, the Deputy Director of HR will update the Terms of Reference of the Workforce Planning Group.</p> <p>A requirement to review and monitor relevant workforce risks will be included.</p>

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Management action
	<p>challenging and approving workforce amendments via contract changes or vacancies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting future workforce planning and service development. Identifying skills gaps. Supporting and addressing workforce related issues. <p>The Workforce Planning Group has a Terms of Reference which outlines the logistics of the group and key responsibilities.</p>					
1.7	<p>The Strategic Delivery Board is responsible for financial oversight, and monitoring workforce spend on a monthly basis.</p> <p>The Board is made up of management and</p>	Yes	No	<p>The Strategic Delivery Board draft Terms of Reference was reviewed, and it was found to document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key responsibilities of individual members and the Board as a whole; Membership; and Chair responsibilities. 	Low	<p>Suitable key performance indicators will be created and included in the performance reports, for reporting purposes to the Strategic Delivery Board and the Strategic Management Board.</p>

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Management action
	<p>budget holders.</p> <p>Their objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing overall governance for strategic service delivery; • Driving progress against key performance indicators. • Ensuring expenditure is managed within approved budgets. • Identifying corporate risks and opportunities taking appropriate measures. <p>The Strategic Delivery Board has a Draft Terms of Reference which, at the time of the audit, was due to be approved by the Strategic Management Board.</p> <p>Meetings of the Strategic Delivery Board are held monthly, with retention of meeting minutes, agendas, and</p>			<p>A standardised monthly agenda is in place; for which there are specific reports provided and presented by members of the Board.</p> <p>Such reports include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reports documenting performance against agreed key performance indicators. Workforce key performance indicators are established which refer to ensuring the workforce are involved, engaged, and empowered to deliver excellence. • Programme 2020 reports which include a focus on the retention, development, and support of the workforce. • Financial reports; which provide financial analysis and commentary on employment costs, staffing numbers, and ancillary items. <p>It was noted that the Performance Reports circulated do not report on vacancies to assess workforce requirements at a strategic level.</p> <p>However, in December 2015 a new Corporate HR report was introduced. We noted that although sickness absence, short term sick, attendance management and other case management (such as grievances) were reported there were no agreed performance measures to compare them against.. We were advised by the Deputy Director of Finance that appropriate performance measures were being considered so that consistent performance reporting and benchmarking can be carried out. There is a risk that whilst</p>		

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	supporting reports recorded on the server.			performance is being reported that if there are no comparatives against previous figures and current targets that performance measuring will not be effective.		

APPENDIX A: SCOPE

Scope of the review

To evaluate the adequacy of risk management and control within the system and the extent to which controls have been applied, with a view to providing an opinion. The scope was planned to provide assurance on the controls and mitigations in place relating to the following Risks:

Objective of the area under review	Risks relevant to the scope of the review	Risk Source
We will ensure our people are involved, engaged and empowered to deliver excellence.	If we do not have motivated and engaged people with the right skills and competencies there is a risk that we will be unable to innovate and deliver safe and effective services to our communities.	Risk Register

When planning the audit, the following areas for consideration and limitations were agreed:

Areas for consideration:

The following areas will be considered as part of the review:

- Workforce planning, short and long term, to ensure that future requirements of the Strategic Plan can be met:
- Policies exist which detail the approach to workforce planning, and have been appropriately approved.
- Workforce plans have been developed, reported to the relevant decision-making groups, and approved at an appropriate level, which address the organisation's objectives and key priorities.
- Assumptions used in the development of workforce plans are reviewed for reasonableness and updated on a sufficiently regular basis.
- Whether reconciliations performed between workforce plans, financial plans and existing establishment and whether existing plans are consistent with agreed upon budgets for the organisation.
- Whether the organisation has a dedicated forum which is tasked with regularly reviewing the organisation's workforce, to plan the workforce and monitor its utilisation and achievement of established targets including use of overtime, and whether this is at an appropriately defined level.
- Future recruitment and training requirements including timescales have been mapped and used to inform the workforce planning cycle.
- Whether the organisation is considering the level of retained fire-fighters, and how they can be utilised to assist in the delivery of workforce targets.
- Whether the organisation has undertaken a skill gap analysis. • The use of secondments and review of existing skills to fill posts by the organisation.
- The analysis of trends relating to leave/retirement ages, and whether the organisation has utilised this information to aid workforce plans.

Limitations to the scope of the audit assignment:

The following limitations applied to the scope of our work:

- Testing was undertaken on a sample basis only;
- Testing was limited to the evidence available at the time of the audit;

- We did not provide an opinion as to whether the correct level of staff has been established to deliver organisational objectives;
- We did not provide an opinion as to whether the most efficient levels of staffing had been established or were being worked towards;
- We did not review shift patterns or duty planning;
- We did not provide assurance that staffing were adequate to mitigate risks; and
- Our work did not provide absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

APPENDIX B: FURTHER INFORMATION

Persons interviewed during the audit assignment:

- Lindsay Shankland- Deputy Director of Human Resources;
- Glenn McGuinness- Deputy Director of Finance;
- Mark Dyer- Workforce Programme Manager;
- Stephanie Crawford- HR and OD Systems Programme Support Officer;
- Clare Reading- HR Subject Matter Advisor;
- Kirsty Bates- HR Assistant;
- Rebecca Twins- Personal Assistant to ACFO, Safer/ Resilient Communities and Finance Director & Treasurer; and
- Sarah Firth- Personal Assistant to Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

Documentation reviewed during the audit assignment:

- Service Strategy, 2015/16;
- Programme 2020 Business Case, 2015;
- Human Resources Departmental Strategy, 2015/16;
- Finance Departmental Strategy, 2015/16;
- East Area Command Departmental Strategy, 2015/16;
- SAP Development Programme Summary, April 2015;
- SAP Development Programme Update, September 2015;
- Redundancy prevention initiatives (Flexible retirement), 2015/16;
- Financial Plan, 2015/16;
- Meeting minutes of the Essex Fire Authority, February 2015;
- Financial Update, August 2015;
- Meeting minutes of the Policy and Strategy Committee, June 2015;
- On-call/ Retained Engagement Plan, September 2015/2016;
- Workforce Planning Policy, 2015/16;
- Succession Planning Policy, 2015/16;
- Succession Plan Critical Role Risk Process, 2015/16;
- Succession Pool Policy, 2015/16;
- Vacancy business cases, 2014-16;
- Exit questionnaire spreadsheet, September 2015;
- High Level Retirement and Early Retirement Analysis, July 2015;
- Individual Retirement Analysis, 2015/16;
- Human Resources Risk Register, September 2015;
- Service Risk Register, September 2015;
- Workforce Planning Group Terms of Reference, Reports and Meeting Minutes, 2015/16;
- Strategic Delivery Board Terms of Reference, Reports and Meeting Minutes, 2015/16; and
- Strategic Management Board Agendas, Reports and Meeting Minutes, 2015/16

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