

# Essex Fire Authority

## Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



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MEETING

**Audit, Governance and Review**

AGENDA ITEM

**4**

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MEETING DATE

20 April 2016

REPORT NUMBER

**EFA/056/16**

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SUBJECT

Governance Audit Report

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REPORT BY

Acting Chief Fire Officer, Adam Eckley

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PRESENTED BY

Service Solicitor, Roy Carter

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### **SUMMARY**

An audit of the Essex Fire Authority's Governance framework and committee structure was undertaken as part of the approved internal audit periodic plan for 2015/16.

The purpose of the review was to establish whether the Authority has in place effective systems and forums to provide robust governance control within the organisation.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members of the Audit, Governance and Review Committee are asked:

1. That the Report be received.
2. To Note the Governance Audit Report annexed hereto.
3. To accept the recommendations and action plan stated within the Governance Audit Report.
4. To agree a schedule for implementation by way of delegation.

## **BACKGROUND**

Proper governance is vital for the Authority in managing and controlling its affairs. The importance of high standards of governance cannot be overstated.

The Governance Audit Report (the 'Report') has revealed the following conclusion:

*..."Taking account of the issues identified, the Authority can take reasonable assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this area are suitably designed, consistently applied..."*

Whilst providing a positive commentary to existing governance arrangements, the Report in addition identifies matters of risk that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the control framework is effective.

Overall those identified issues are recommended to be settled by way of the Report's Action Plan.

Members are invited to review the Action Plan at page 5 and 6 of the Report and note that out of 5 identified actions, 4 are low priority risks and 1 is medium priority risk. It is also worthy of note that only actions 1.1, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 fall to the Authority to implement. Moreover, the remaining action 1.2, is now otiose due to the recent conflation of the Service Delivery Board and the Strategic Delivery Board into the Service Leadership Team.

A low priority risk means there is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality.

A medium priority risk means that timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.

Accordingly, Officers are keen to expedite a remedy for the medium priority risk and to have dealt with the low priority risks (excluding 1.2) as soon as is practicable. It is therefore recommended that this Committee accept the recommendations and action plan stated within the Report and agree the schedule for implementation of risks 1.1, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5, again as stated in the Report, and that such necessary work associated with effecting implementation, is delegated to the Acting Chief Fire Officer.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None considered as relevant.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None considered as relevant.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

None considered as relevant.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None considered as relevant.

<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985</b>	
<b>List of appendices attached to this paper: Governance Audit Report</b>	
<b>List of background documents (not attached):</b>	
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