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**MEETING**

Audit, Governance & Review  
Committee

**AGENDA ITEM**

**4**

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**MEETING DATE**

15 July 2015

**REPORT NUMBER**

**EFA/056/15**

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**SUBJECT**

Audit Recommendation – Report on Progress Against Action Plans

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**REPORT BY**

The Finance Director & Treasurer, Mike Clayton

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**PRESENTED BY**

The Finance Director & Treasurer, Mike Clayton

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**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
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	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
HR Transactional Processes	In relation to the aspect of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) there is a need for an overhaul of the current system.	<p>The review of processes will include reviewing the FAQs as a dependency and will include all relevant links</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A process will be introduced to review requests received that cannot be answered via an existing FAQ to introduce new FAQs where appropriate.</p>	Head of HR & OD Call management system to be implemented by September 2015	Delayed

Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
HR Transactional Processes	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Outsourcing specialist SAP training; or</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identifying whether a SAP specialist could be employed by the Authority.</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Head of HR &amp; OD July 2015</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
HR Transactional Processes	<p>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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A Senior Responsible Officer;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> RAG rating;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Timescales per query.</li> </ul> <p>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.</p>	<p>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</p> <p>RAG rating/triage for calls/emails will be introduced as part of process review and improvement – this will include SLAs/timescales for responding.</p>	<p>Head of HR &amp; OD Head of ICT Call management system to be implemented by September 2015</p>	Delayed

Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
HR Transactional Processes	<p>The Authority should undertake a 'Phase Two' of the HR Transaction Project to ensure the original PID is delivered.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Head of HR &amp; OD March 2016</p>	On Track
Communications	<p>The Head of Communication should devise three separate strategies and implementation plans, demonstrating outcomes and performance measures for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Public Relations;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employee Engagement; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community Safety.</li> </ul> <p>These documents should be approved at the Strategic Management Board, and then disseminated to staff via the Service intranet.</p>	<p>A restructure to give the Head of Corporate Communications strategic lead on these activities and professionalise the department with resources to deliver these three key strands of activity have been agreed and recruitment process is under way with funding from April 2014/15. Work to develop these strategies to support strategic ambitions of the Service is already under way.</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Communications Staff sickness has delayed this until September 2015</p>	Delayed
Communications	The Communications governance structure needs to	This proposal was put forward by the Head of Corporate	Head of Corporate Communications	Delayed

Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
	<p>be established for each of the three work streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Public Relations;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employee Engagement; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community Safety.</li> </ul> <p>This structured needs to demonstrate the relationship between each individual and group.</p>	<p>Communications to introduce wider governance from within the SMB team with the benefit of ensuring more cohesive communications activities with consistent messages delivered to all stakeholders and all three strategies working together. Expanding reporting lines will also assist SMB in presenting a collective narrative. CFO to maintain line management for Corporate PR, Director HR &amp; OD for Employee Engagement and Director Safer and Resilient Communities for Community Safety marketing</p>	<p>Staff sickness has delayed this until September 2015</p>	
Communications	<p>The Fire Service should ensure there is an appropriate process for managing the Communications Plans for each project implemented. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> An approval process, during project initiation, from the Head of Corporate Communications for each Project; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring of the Communications Plan of the project.</li> </ul>	<p>This process is in place for major programme boards but a number of projects undertake communications activities beyond the oversight of the professional Corporate Communications team. This approach will ensure corporate scrutiny and provide more corporate context and alignment, maximising opportunities to share corporate lines. Will require buy in, particularly from operational side of the organisation. First step to consider communication implications in meeting papers and as part of all project planning. Additional resources will allow introduction of greater governance around</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Communications December 2015</p>	<p>On Track</p>

Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
		communications activity		
Communications	<p>The Fire Service need to ensure that it has appropriate policies, procedures and/or protocols in place governing the key channels of external communications, such as the media, press releases, 'images as incidents' and acceptable uses for all social media platforms. These should be approved, dated and assigned an annual review date to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Following this, the documents should be made available to all staff via the Service intranet</p>	<p>These policies, procedures and protocols exist in practice but need to be formalised. Additional resources will allow introduction of greater governance around communications activity. In January, the Service procured a social media management system and is currently training official service users to operate via a single, formal channel. This allows oversight of activity and encourages sharing of current messages and campaigns through a single portal. A programme of training supports new users and will allow expansion of official social media participants without some of the significant associated risk.</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Communications Staff sickness has delayed this until September 2015</p>	Delayed
Communications	<p>The Head of Corporate Communications should implement a training needs analysis, identifying which service personnel require communications training, and a training log, to effectively monitor training completion. Additionally, the Service could incorporate a training incentive scheme with the new social media software purchased by</p>	<p>Corporate Communications offers in house Media, Social Media and internal communications skills training, primarily to uniformed staff to give them the skills they need to present the Service in a professional way, limiting risks to ECFRS image. Currently delivered on request, there is some urgency now to train more station managers to be able to deliver information to the media, particularly at incidents.</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Communications Staff sickness has delayed this until September 2015</p>	Delayed

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	the Head of Corporate Communications.	This recommendation supports the delivery of a more formal programme of training and development that is recorded and recognised. Rather than incentive, it is proposed to implement a proficiency standard before individuals can represent the Service to the media.		
Communications	The Fire Service should ensure a guidance document or procedure is developed for processing Freedom of Information requests, to ensure the process is implemented consistently.	This will be reviewed when management of the Fol process moves in to Corporate Communications. This work will be completed once additional resources are in place.	Head of Corporate Communications September 2015	On Track
Key Financial Controls	The Service should ensure that all weekly journal reports are approved and included in the journal register to be approved by the Director of Finance and evidenced as such.	Isolated incident, thus none	Deputy Director of Finance April 2015	Completed
Key Financial Controls	HR should ensure that all starter, leaver and amendment documents are scanned and placed as an attachment to the employee records on the PRF Human Resources system in a timely manner.	A new service level agreement (SLA) will incorporate this	HR Support Team Manager September 2015	On Track



Source	Recommendation from Audit report	Original (or amended) Service Action Plan	Responsibility and Timescales	Progress
Key Financial Controls	The Service should ensure that all debt (barring the public sector and debts under £50) are referred to the debt collection within the 90 day cut off period.	Where cost effective and appropriate this will be implemented	Deputy Director of Finance April 2015	Completed
Budgetary Setting and Control	The Service should ensure that the Business Excellence Planning Toolkit is updated to reflect current budget setting practice and is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective in guiding the process.	The Business Excellence Planning toolkit will be updated for the 2016-2017 budget setting process.	Deputy Director of Finance July 2015	Completed
Budgetary Setting and Control	The Service should implement a monitoring sheet to ensure all stages of the budget process are recorded and reviewed. This will add a greater element of control to the process	The existing timetable will be reviewed and more detail of the initial budget build scheduled where appropriate.	Deputy Director of Finance July 2015	Completed