

Extraordinary Meeting of the Audit Committee

9.00 am Tuesday 7 September 2010

Headquarters, 2 Kings Court, Charles Hastings Way,
Worcester WR5 1JR



Present: Mr D Prodger, MBE (Chairman)
Mrs L Duffy, Mrs G Hopkins, Mr C Smith and Mr J Thomas.

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Named Substitutes

None

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Review of Committee Structure

The Clerk thanked all of the Committee Members for making it to the Extraordinary meeting at 9.00 am. She said that the purpose of the Extraordinary meeting was to give the Audit Committee the opportunity to consider proposals for the review of the Authority's Committee Structure and to make recommendations to the Authority Meeting on 28 September.

The Meeting heard that the review of the committee structure was the first tranche of an overall review of the Authority's governance arrangements. A Governance Review Working Group, of which the Committee Chairman was also a member, had met on 4 February, 5 May and the 18 August to progress the review. The Standards Committee (23 April) and the Audit Committee (26 May) had been updated on the progress of the Review and Group Leaders had considered and approved the revised Committee Structures and Terms of Reference on 6 September 2010.

The Clerk told the Meeting that the most substantive concern which had arisen was the separation of policy review from budget policy into the Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee (7 Members) and the Budget Committee (11 Members) respectively. It was proposed to merge these functions into a single 11 Member Committee, Policy and Resources.

The Review also addressed the delegation of functions from the Authority to the Chief Fire Officer and to Committees and proposed to expand this by delegating certain procurement and land management issues to the Policy and Resources Committee. It was further proposed to include certain human resource functions to enable feedback on these into a Member forum. These proposals were reflected in the draft terms of reference for the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Meeting welcomed the proposal to increase the Audit Committee from 5 Members to 7 and considered the revised terms of reference for the Appointments Committee.

The Committee noted that the proposals for review would be considered by the Authority on 28 September and, if approved, the Authority would also appoint Members to the revised Committees at that Meeting.

The Audit Committee welcomed in principle the proposals for revised Committee structures and the expanded terms of reference for the Committees. There was a concern, however, that the merging of the Budget Committee and the BVPP Committee might result in some Members being denied the opportunity to participate at Committee level and consequently the Committee requested the Clerk to consider increasing the number of Members on the proposed Policy and Resources Committee. The Clerk agreed to consider this, having regard to the requirement for political proportionality on the Committee.

RESOLVED *that the Audit Committee recommends*

- I. that the Fire and Rescue Authority approve the revised structure of Committees and amended terms of reference for Committees as presented to the Extraordinary Meeting;***
- II. that the Authority considers appointing more than 11 Members to the proposed Policy and Resources Committee in order to accommodate Members who wish to participate at Committee level; and***
- III. that the Deputy Monitoring Officer be asked to reconsider the number of Members on both the Policy and Resources Committee and the Audit Committee in order to allow the widest possible participation at Committee level by Members of the Authority.***

The meeting finished at 9.40 am.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....