

**ESSEX POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

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| Meeting | **Strategic Board** | Agenda Item | 6 |
| Meeting Date | 18th September 2018 | Report Number |  |
| Report Author: | Anthony Maude – OPFCC – Head of Performance and Scrutiny (Fire) | | |
| Presented By | Anthony Maude | | |
| Subject | **Audit Report – Transitional Governance** | | |
| Type of Report: | Discussion | | |

# Recommendations

1. The Strategic Board is asked to consider and agree the recommendations raised by Internal Audit in their attached draft report on transitional governance arrangements. The recommended measures are:
   1. Accept the Internal Audit findings and the OPFCC work with the Service to:
   2. Review the terms of reference for all boards to ensure their position is clear in relation to overall governance;
   3. Capture the relationship between the forums in a diagram
   4. increase transparency and co-ordination through having a PFCC representative sit on the Change Board
   5. ensure that the OPFCC has early sight of SLT papers;
   6. establish a central repository for governance papers to enable oversight by the PFCC;
   7. Revise the constitution to ensure that delegated authorities are clearly defined; and
   8. Remain vigilant that the boards do not veer outside their agreed terms of reference.

# BACKGROUND

1. A review of ‘Governance – Transition’ was undertaken by RSM as part of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Fire and Rescue Authority internal audit plan for 2017/18. While acknowledging that arrangements were at an early stage in their latest draft report they have concluded:

*‘We found that, while changes had been made to align governance arrangements and there had been progress towards this, there could be improved clarity of responsibility and accountability between the various boards and committees, including whether delegated authorities and escalation routes are clearly defined.’*

1. A series of management actions were set out to achieve this increased clarity. In essence these were:
2. To establish clear lines of authority and accountability between the two main advisory boards and operational forums within the service.
3. To capture the relationship between the forums in an organisation governance structure diagram.
4. Establish a central repository for governance papers to enable oversight by the PFCC
5. To revise the Terms of Reference of the Strategic Board and the Performance and Resources Board to include clear and accurate statements on each board’s purpose and relationship to the other forums and the PFCC as part of the clarification of the governance structure.
6. Ensure that the groups meet and discharge their roles and responsibilities in line with their remit.
7. Revise the Terms of Reference of the SLT and the Change Board to make the distinction between their roles clearer, and update the Terms fo Reference of the Emergency Services Collaboration Strategic Governance Board to include key information on quorum, reporting and escalation.
8. Ensure that delegated authorities are clearly defined in either the constitution or a separate scheme of delegation.

**CONSIDERATION**

1. While the report is a very early reflection of the governance transition process, it has highlighted areas where there needs to be greater linkage between existing service led boards, and the PFCC governance boards. Capturing the relationships in diagrammatic form will be helpful not only to the PFCC and the service, but also to the general public. This would be further strengthened by the recommended central repository of papers. It is important that the terms of reference of the service boards are reviewed to ensure that their position is clear in relation to overall governance.
2. To ensure coherence between the boards there would be benefit in a representative of the PFCC sitting on the Change Board. Prior sight of Senior Leadership Team papers, will also enable the PFCC to highlight any particular issues of concern or relevance at an early stage. A similar review should be undertaken of the Emergency Services Collaboration Governance Board to include key information on quorum, reporting and escalation requirements.
3. The report notes that some strategic issues had been referred to the Performance and Resources Board. These seem to have been initial teething problems, and there has since been a conscious effort to refer issues to the correct boards. It is important that this continues. There has also been a conscious effort to improve the layout and content of minutes, forward plans and action logs.
4. The Constitution is currently being reviewed, and as part of that the terms of reference of the two governance boards is being looked at to ascertain relevance. Some Police Service terminology was for example, inappropriately translated over into the Fire and Rescue Strategic Board. The review of the constitution also offers the opportunity to clarify the decision making functions of the SLT and the Commissioner.

# NEXT STEPS

1. A review by the PFCC with the Service of the terms of reference of the service and governance boards is now necessary, which can then be fed into the revised constitution. The mechanisms for creating an accessible central repository of board papers will also be identified.
2. Proposals will be brought to the December Board, or earlier if an extraordinary meeting of the Strategic Board is called to consider other issues.

# Benefits and Risk Implications

1. There is a risk of the governance structure operating at a sub-optimal level unless the Internal Audit proposed changes are made.

# Financial Implications

1. None

# Equality and Diversity Implications

1. None.

# Workforce Engagement

1. None

# Legal Implications

1. None

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**HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

1. None.