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Audit review of Combination 'Go Live' arrangements

Meeting Date: 4th January 2016**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 6

MEETING	Shadow Policy and Resources Committee
DATE OF MEETING	4 th January 2016
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Audit review of Combination 'Go Live' arrangements
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	To note
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This paper provides the Shadow Policy & Resources Committee with the findings following the review of the Combination's 'Go Live' arrangements by the external and internal auditors.
RISK ASSESSMENT	The audit reviews did not identify any significant issues that would prevent the authority 'going live'. However a number of recommendations have been made to mitigate potential risks.
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	None for the purposes of this report
RECOMMENDATIONS	Members are asked to note the contents of the reports.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None.
APPENDICES	Detailed findings from the audit reviews: Appendix 1 – KPMG Appendix 2 – Swindon Internal Audit Services Appendix 3 – South West Audit Partnership
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority (Combination Scheme) Order 2015 was laid before Parliament on 4 March 2015. This paved the way for the current Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority and the Dorset Fire Authority to become a new combined fire authority from 1 April 2016.
- 1.2 Throughout this process, External and Internal Auditors of both Authorities have worked to provide independent assurance that the transition to the new Authority is properly managed.
- 1.3 Previous reviews have appraised transition arrangements for the two Authorities, focussing on the robustness of the combination business case/transition planning.
- 1.4 KPMG (the External Auditors for both Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authorities) also completed a 'Stage 1 review of Transition arrangements'. The outcomes of this review were reported to the Shadow Authority on 23 October 2015.
- 1.5 Senior Officers requested that a further (Stage 2) readiness to go live audit be carried out. External Audit and both Internal Auditors have contributed to the review. The review focussed on the arrangements for the following areas:

Area	Auditor
Strategy and leadership	KPMG
People	KPMG
Finance	Swindon Borough Council
IT and information management	Swindon Borough Council
Programme management	SWAP
Policies and procedures	SWAP

- 1.6 Key lines of enquiry for each of the risk areas above were agreed between the Joint Leadership Team and the External and Internal auditors.

2. Findings

2.1 Summary

The auditors found that strong arrangements continue to be in place regarding the Combination. Members, senior officers and staff are well informed about the Combination process and clearly understand the rationale for moving to one organisation.

Plans in place for IT and information management are clear and tasks required and timescales for completion were well understood by staff. Arrangements regarding financial management and governance arrangements are being progressed.

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Programme management arrangements are sound with clear strategic, tactical and administrative co-ordination and oversight. The programme has clear and well defined objectives underpinned by robust delivery arrangements.

However, the auditors recognise the tight time scales in a number of areas regarding the completion of tasks and the Authority needs to remain focussed regarding the completion of these.

Key staff departing during the transition process is also a risk to successful combination. However, this is mitigated by strong governance arrangements in place within the work-streams.

Given the findings of the audits and the Authorities' good track record to date, the auditors are confident at this stage that the 'go live' will be successful.

- 2.2 Detailed audit findings are set out in the individual audit reports attached as appendices to this report.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 A number of recommendations have been made. All the recommendations made are of a 'medium' or 'low' priority and are not considered to be significant overall.
- 3.2 A summary of the audit recommendation is set out below:

Strategy and leadership

- No recommendations.

People

- The Combination team should provide clear communications to staff about the remaining timescale to Combination and how it plans to ensure consultation responses are taken into consideration in the remaining months.

Finance

- The testing of the accuracy of the migration of standing data to the new Agresso system should be included in the project plan.
- Produce prioritised training plans to ensure that key staff are aware of refreshed financial management processes for 1 April 2016 and are ready to cascade training to other staff.

IT and Information Management

- Monitor the impact of resourcing a single Service Desk Technician to ensure that service levels are met, especially during the period of transition where demand may increase due to the level of change in the ICT environment. Ensure that other staff are adequately trained and there is adequate capacity to undertake this role in the event of spate conditions for ICT incidents/calls or absence/holidays. Ensure that adequate capacity will be in place to deliver required ICT related training.

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Performance Management

- No recommendations

Policies and Procedures

- No recommendations

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