



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 19/52

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	18 December 2019
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Local Government Association Peer Review Progress Update
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	For consideration and to note
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>As Members are aware, in June 2019 the Authority commissioned the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a peer review of governance. Their final report provided positive assurance on the Authority's governance arrangements and suggested six improvement areas for further consideration.</p> <p>A Member working group, led by the Chair of the Authority, reviewed the LGA report and identified recommended actions against each of the suggested improvements. The LGA report was formally presented to the Authority at its meeting on 30 September 2019.</p> <p>This report provides Members with an update on the progress of the recommended actions.</p>
RISK ASSESSMENT	Failure to have appropriate and robust governance arrangements may adversely affect the efficiency, effectiveness and reputation of the Authority.
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report.
BUDGET IMPLICATION	There are no budget implications resulting from any of the actions within this report.
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider and note the progress of the actions.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	Local Government Association Peer Review of the Authority's governance arrangements. (Report to the Authority 30 September 2019) https://www.dwfire.org.uk/fire-rescue-authority/meetings/fire-rescue-authority/
APPENDIX	Appendix A – Local Performance & Scrutiny Feedback Proforma
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	Name: Jill McCrae, Head of Strategic Planning & Corporate Assurance Email: jill.mccrae@dwfire.org.uk Tel no: 01722 691073

1. Background

- 1.1 In September 2017, Members agreed to reduce their membership from 30 to 18, and a revised Combination Order was subsequently laid before Parliament on 4 December 2017. At their meeting on the 6 June 2018 Members approved the revised governance arrangements and requested a review after 12 months of operation.
- 1.2 Noting the Local Government Association's (LGA) success and experience within their peer review programme, the Authority approved the undertaking of an independent peer review on the 6 June 2019. This review was undertaken at no cost to the Authority.
- 1.3 Members approved the key areas for this peer review as:
- i. Review the effectiveness and efficiency of the current governance arrangements and structures associated with the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
 - ii. Review the current assurance framework and supporting procedure that underpins the annual Statement of Assurance required under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, 2018
 - iii. Review the quality of Member and Officer relations and clarity of respective roles
 - iv. Review the scope of opportunity of Member development arrangements
 - v. Make recommendations for strengthening the current governance arrangements.
- 1.4 The LGA peer review took place over two days on 24 and 25 June 2019 with the final report published in July 2019, identifying their findings and recommendations.
- 1.5 The LGA report provided the Authority with positive assurance of its governance arrangements, citing that, '*the overall impressions are that the Authority is a good, well organised Fire and Rescue Authority*'. In addition, it included six suggested improvements, detailed within table 1 of this report.

2. Authority Response

- 2.1 All Members were invited by the Authority Chair, to a working group on the 23 July 2019, to review and discuss the report and develop a considered response against the recommendations. At the September Authority meeting, a report was presented by the Authority Chair, for Members to formally review the LGA

report, the suggested improvements and the working groups recommended actions. The Authority approved the working group's recommended actions, detailed in table 1 of this report.

3. Progress in implementing the recommendations

- 3.1 Since the September meeting, positive progress has been made against each of the approved actions. Table 1 of this report provides Members with an update against each of the recommendations.
- 3.2 To support the delivery of recommendation 4, a feedback proforma has been developed to assist with feedback from the Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees (LPS) to the Authority; to ensure a consistent approach and provide an improved feedback loop. The proforma is included as Appendix A.
- 3.3 Chairs of the LPS Committees completed a proforma after each of the November Committee meetings. The LPS Chairs will use the proforma when providing their feedback on behalf of their LPS Committee during the Authority meeting.

4. Summary and Key Points

- 4.1 Following their peer review in July 2019, the LGA provided a positive assurance of the Authority's governance arrangements and proposed six recommended improvements.
- 4.2 Since this time Members have developed and implemented many of these recommendations as outlined in this report. A further progress report will be provided to Members in June 2020.

Table 1. Progress of agreed actions

No.	LGA Suggested Improvement	Authority agreed action	Progress Update	Status
1	Revisit the critical success factors for the Governance Review which was conducted in 2017 and resulted in the reduction in the number of Authority Members from 30 to 18. These factors should then form the basis of a self-evaluation exercise, providing the Authority with an opportunity to recognise and celebrate success, identify opportunities for future learning and move forward from a position of strength.	<p>The peer review was the exercise to ensure that the critical success factors were achieved. Assurance has been achieved through the LGA peer review process.</p> <p>Democratic Services Team to:</p> <p>Strengthen and clarify the Authority terms of reference to include updates within section 4.6 of this report (Report to the Authority 30 September 2019, LGA Peer Review of the Authority's governance arrangements.)</p>	The Authority's terms of reference will be updated and brought to the February Authority meeting along with the revised policies.	Progressing
2	Collectively define what scrutiny means to the Authority and consider how this can be most effectively delivered, without over complicating or adding to the existing committee structures.	<p>Democratic Services Team to:</p> <p>Update the Members handbook to include:</p> <p><i>Scrutiny is the responsibility of all Authority Members. The overall objective of scrutiny is to aid improvement. Member seminars and working groups are the principal mechanisms for Members of this Authority to oversee and scrutinise; through monitoring, examination and questioning of decisions, actions and performance.</i></p>	An update has been made to the Members' Handbook at the following link https://www.dwfire.org.uk/fire-rescue-authority/members-handbook/about-the-authority/	Complete

3	Widen the Member Working group, currently established to review performance reporting practices and processes, to review the name of the Local Performance and Scrutiny committees to align more appropriately to its role and function.	<p>Retain the current branding for the Local Performance & Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>Democratic Services Team to:</p> <p>Set up a Member Working group for Local Performance & Scrutiny Chairs to meet, reporting to the Authority; with oversight (if required) by the Authority Chair or Vice Chair.</p>	<p>A meeting of the new Member Working group will be set up to meet in February 2020 after the full Authority meeting. Terms of reference for this Working Group will be discussed during this meeting and proposed to the Authority in June 2020.</p>	Progressing
4	Ensure that there is an effective feedback loop in place which sets out how local performance issues, that are raised via the LPS Committee, are escalated to other bodies such as the Authority, Finance & Governance Committee (F&G), (now Finance & Audit), or directly with Senior Officers, and then fed back to the local committees and the Members raising the matter.	<p>Strengthen the six-monthly Local Performance & Scrutiny Chair updates at the Authority meetings by the use of a standardised proforma report.</p> <p>Where items are identified by the Authority for action the Authority will determine the route for its progression.</p> <p>Democratic Services Team to:</p> <p>Create a draft proforma report to be circulated to Local Performance & Scrutiny Chairs for recommendation and approval of the Authority Chair. Proformas to be used from December 2019.</p>	<p>A draft proforma has been approved by the Authority Chair and is Appendix A to this paper. Full minutes continue to be taken at these meetings which can be accessed via the Service website.</p>	Complete

5	Identify other Authorities where Member development is strong and look to review and understand notable practice in this area and further support Members in taking ownership of their personal and collective development.	<p>Democratic Services Team to:</p> <p>Complete a Members' skills audit to understand Member Development requirements for 2020 onwards.</p> <p>Offer Member development sessions after Authority meetings, like the arrangements currently in place for Finance & Governance Members. A programme of sessions to be in place from April 2020.</p> <p>Review the use of technology for Member Development. For example, recording sessions so that Members can access the training they are unable to attend.</p>	<p>The Members' skills audit will commence in January 2020.</p> <p>A programme of development sessions will take place from April 2020.</p> <p>The September Finance & Governance information session was recorded, however further work to improve the sound quality is required. Alternative options will be progressed for 2020-21 sessions.</p>	<p>Progressing</p> <p>Progressing</p> <p>Progressing</p>
6	Review the structure, style and governance process for the Statement of Assurance.	<p>Democratic Services to:</p> <p>Update the Authority's terms of reference to include approval of the Statement of Assurance and Annual Governance Statement from September 2020.</p> <p>Rename the Finance & Governance Committee to Finance & Audit (from December 2019) aligned to reflect their references.</p> <p>Head of Strategic Planning & Corporate Assurance to update the style of the Statement of Assurance in consideration of the potential public audience.</p>	<p>The Authority's terms of reference will be updated and brought to the February Authority meeting along with the revised policies.</p> <p>The Committee has been renamed.</p> <p>The 2018/19 Statement of Assurance is now published. A plain English review was complete prior to publication to ensure it is appropriate for the audience.</p>	<p>Progressing</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>

Appendix A

Local Performance & Scrutiny Committee Feedback Proforma

Overall Local Performance & Scrutiny Committee Summary	
Committee	
Date of meeting	
Highlights of positive local work	
Local challenges	
Collaborative and partnership working to note	
Matters for Authority consideration	