AT A MEETING of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE held at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Eastleigh on 24 March, 2011

PRESENT:

Councillors: R. McIntosh (Chairman), A.S Carew; L. Fairhurst (Vice-Chairman); D. Harrison; T. Knight; R. Smith; Mrs. M. Tucker.

Also in attendance was Graham West, District Auditor.

56 **APOLOGIES** **ACTION**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Fuller and P. Marsh-Jenks

57 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should normally, at the time of debate, declare their interest and having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code.

There were no declarations of interest.

58 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 November, 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matter Arising:
Strategic Risk Register (Minute 54)

Pursuant to Minute 54 , it was noted that the training session for Members on the Strategic Risk Register would take place following the Governance Committee meeting on 25 November 2011.

59 **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations to the meeting.

60 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman informed the Committee that Members were welcome to put forward relevant items for the

Governance agendas.

61 **AUDIT PLAN 2010/11**

The Committee considered the Audit Plan as well as the changes that were expected (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

Graham West, the District Auditor introduced the report and explained the changes that would happen with the abolition of the CAA and Use of Resources. It was explained that the scoring system would no longer be used and analysis would fall down to professional judgement.

It was confirmed that work on accounts would start in July, with the results being presented in September and these dates would be finalised over the next few months.

Members shared their concerns over the costs of the Audit, considering the abolition of the CAA and government cuts, but were informed that this was a scaled charge applied to everyone. It was agreed that a breakdown of days invested on the Audit (in man-hours) would be helpful, along with the skill level required and associated costs.

Graham West – Audit Commission

RESOLVED:

i) That the Governance Committee receive the Audit Commissions' latest external audit risk assessment and accept the plan for the completion of the 2010/11 Audit

ii) That the Governance Committee receive and note the report on the Audit Commissions' new approach to the 'Value for Money' conclusion.

62 **INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY 2011-14 AND STRATEGIC AUDIT PLAN**

The Committee considered the report of the Treasurer (Item 7 in the Minute Book) that provided an update on the current five year agreed strategy, which would operate at a more strategic level. It was highlighted that low priority areas had been removed, although would be monitored, with more focus being put on medium/high level areas. The reports will be presented and reviewed quarterly and the plan will remain flexible to account for any changes.

It was confirmed that quarterly meetings took place with other Fire Services to compare best practice on a number of issues including risks and audit coverage. The flexibility of the plan helps to ensure that changes in risks or management concerns can be reflected in the audit work.

RESOLVED:

i) That the Governance Committee approves the Internal Audit Strategy 2011-2014

ii) That the Governance Committee endorses the Internal Audit Plan for 2011/12 to 2013/14

iii) That the Governance Committee approves the changes to the Service Level Agreement

63 **REVISED ACCOUNT AND AUDIT REGULATIONS 2011**

The Committee considered the report of the Treasurer (Item 8 in the Minute Book) on Accounts and Audit Regulation changes.

It was confirmed that the accounts only need to be approved by the County Treasurer by the 30 June 2011 and could be approved by Committee in September 2011. This would require no change to the Governance Committee terms of reference.

RESOLVED:

i) That the proposed changes to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, coming into force on the 31 March 2011, be noted.

ii) That, once the Accounts and Audit regulations 2011 come into force, the annual accounts be approved by the Governance Committee by the 30 September following the financial year end and after they have been certified by the Treasurer and audited by the external auditor.

Chief Officer (Performance Review Team)