

**DEVON AUDIT PARTNERSHIP - PROPOSAL FOR DEVON AND SOMERSET FIRE
AND RESCUE SERVICE TO JOIN THE DEVON AUDIT PARTNERSHIP**

Report of the Head of Devon Audit Partnership

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to confirmation by the Committee before taking effect.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i. That members approve the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (D&SFRS) to join the Devon Audit Partnership during the 2022/23 financial year.
- ii. That members note the actual date of commencement will be dependent upon governance and HR issues that will need to be fully addressed prior to commencement, with a joining date of 1 October 2022 being aimed for.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The internal audit provision for DSFRS is currently delivered by way of in-house staff, supported by DAP.
- 1.2 DAP have supported DSFRS since DAP was formed (2009) although the level of support has fluctuated. We have previously worked with the Service to meet their needs, and this has including seconding DAP staff to the Service for periods of time.
- 1.3 The Service have now formally made an application to joining the Partnership.

2. SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

- 2.5 The internal audit plan for DSFRS currently shows delivery of around 180 days of internal audit per year. DSFRS have been made aware of the partner day rate that DAP would expect to charge, and that, going forward, this day rate is strongly influenced by pay and price inflation - any pay award for staff from April 2022 will have an impact on this rate.
- 2.6 The Head of DAP has explained that each year (around late November / early December) DAP would require initial indications from DSFRS of the internal audit requirements for the coming year; it is recognised that this can go up or down, depending upon activity, risk and how the internal audit function can support the Council. To aid DAP management in planning and resourcing delivery it is expected that annual fluctuations will be limited to around 10% of the total plan.

3 STAFF AND OPERATIONAL CONSIDERTAIONS.

- 3.1 There is the likelihood of a TUPE transfer relating to up to two employees currently working with DSFRS. If this transpires then we will work with DSFRS and DCC HR colleagues to arrange for a suitable TUPE transfer.

4 IMPACT ON DEVON AUDIT PARTNERSHIP

- 4.1 DAP currently provide internal audit services to DSFRS and so have the experience and knowledge to deliver this work. Depending upon TUPE considerations there may be a need to source additional staff to fully support the required service delivery.
- 4.2 As a Partner, DSFRS would be expected to provide an officer to attend and vote at the Partnership Management Board, along with two members who will be invited to attend the Devon Audit Partnership Committee at which DSFRS will become a voting member.
- 4.3 Surpluses / deficits as of 31 March 2022 will be “frozen” to the existing members (Plymouth, Torbay, Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon and Torridge). Any future surpluses / deficits will be shared between the partners, with allocations being based upon the expected percentage of contribution made by each partner as of 1 April 2022 (and each April thereafter).
- 4.4 Having a “blue light” partner on the Board and Committee will further strengthen the depth and breadth of knowledge of the Partnership. The Fire Service covers both Devon and Somerset and we expect that this will further strengthen the appeal of DAP’s service offering outside of Devon, in particular in Somerset.

5 TIMELINES

- 5.1 The timeline for conclusion will be impacted by certain key events including approval by this Committee (Devon Audit Partnership) and individual member ratification where required (dates to be confirmed). We anticipate that, if agreed, DSFRS would join DAP on or around 1st October 2022, with any TUPE affected staff also transferring to DAP on that date.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The D&SFRS will make a contribution to DAP for the delivery of internal audit services. This is expected to be in the region of £55k. There are no expected financial risks from the proposal as the contribution from D&SFRS will cover the service delivery by DAP. (DAP is a non-for-profit organisation).

3. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

If agreed, then we will require the DAP Partnership agreement to be amended. This will require the input from legal teams at D&SFRS and Devon County Council. The updated legal agreement will need to be signed by all Partners of DAP.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS (INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE)

There are no environment and environmental related issues arising from this report.

5. EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

There are no equality issues identified as arising from this report.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

No specific risks to DAP are expected from this proposal. With regards TUPE, DAP Management will engage with DCC HR colleagues to ensure correct procedure is followed. Should any risks be identified from this process then these will be managed by DAP Management.

7. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT

There are no implications on public health, or public health services, arising from this report.

Angie Sinclair, Director of Finance & Public Value

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972:

Contact for Enquiries: Robert Hutchins, Head of Devon Audit Partnership

Tel No: 01392 385483 Room: Dart Suite, Larkbeare House, Topsham Rd, Exeter