

## **Report of the Head of Corporate Services**

### **10. Operational Assessment Action Plan 2013/14**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To provide the Audit and Standards Committee with a progress report on the action plan to address the areas for improvement arising from the Operational Assessment conducted in 2012.

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#### **Recommendation**

***It is recommended that the Audit and Standards Committee notes progress on the Operational Assessment Action Plan 2013/14.***

#### **Introduction and Background**

2. As Members will have read elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting, the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, published in July 2012 requires that robust mechanisms should be in place to provide independent assurance to communities and to the Government around financial, governance and operational matters and to show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in the National Framework.
3. In 2012, the Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge, a major peer review of our operational service delivery, was undertaken in collaboration with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). The Operational Assessment is an important part of the process of assurance as it provides an independent peer assessment of this Authority for the benefit of Members and for our communities.
4. The Operational Assessment is designed to provide assurance that the Service's operations are efficient, effective and robust. It forms a structured and consistent basis to drive continuous improvement within the nation's Fire and Rescue Services and provides Fire and Rescue Authorities and Chief Fire Officers with information that allows them to challenge their operational service delivery.

#### **Overview of the Operational Assessment Process**

5. The peer review team that undertook the assessment was facilitated/co-ordinated by the LGA and visited both SFRS and HWFRS to undertake two independent four-day reviews. The review team included senior FRS officers, an elected FRA Member, a West Mercia Police Officer and a professional chief executive from the private sector. The reviews included focus groups involving staff, partners and Authority Members including the Audit Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

6. The results of the Operational Assessment were reported to the Authority on 13 February 2013 where it was agreed that a detailed Action Plan to address the report's findings would be presented to the Audit Committee for approval and subsequent monitoring of implementation. The Audit Committee approved the Action Plan at its meeting on 17 April 2013, which is now presented to the Audit & Standards Committee to enable Members to monitor the progress of implementation of the approved actions.

### **Actions for Improvement**

7. The review found that the Service continues to make progress with considerable improvements in many areas and a good overall performance. The review also identified the following areas that needed to be addressed:
  - a) the need to ensure close and continued management of the risks associated with financial planning in the light of current and future budget reductions;
  - b) the need to ensure that the management of major projects and cross cutting programmes is mainstreamed into 'business as usual'; and
  - c) the need to fully embed Member involvement and public consultation in strategic planning and decision making.
8. A detailed description of progress being made to date is provided at Appendix 1, which includes actions to address the areas identified in paragraph 7 above. However, a summary of key areas is outlined below:
  - a) Management of the risks associated with financial planning has been on-going and staff have been made aware of the implications through emails, bulletin articles and briefings.
  - b) Co-ordination of project activity has been incorporated into the 2013/14 work programme for the Corporate Services Department. An initial scoping study is due to commence in September 2013.
  - c) A Member's workshop was held on the 16 July 2013 to engage/involve Members of the current financial position, savings made to date and options that will need to be considered in order to meet the financial challenges faced by the FRA. This will be supported by further workshops later in the year.
  - d) The importance of social media has been recognised for communicating with a wide variety of the public and stakeholders. Twitter and Facebook will be a key focus in this year's Community Risk Management Plan consultation exercise.
9. There were also several areas within both Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire that were identified as having potential opportunities for further collaborative working. These opportunities were investigated during 2012-13 and following approval of the Action Plan by the previous Audit Committee the implementation of the recommendations are being progressed.

## Conclusion/Summary

10. The Operational Assessment Review undertaken by a peer review team in 2012 aimed to provide assurance to the Authority and the public that the Service's operations are efficient, effective and robust. The review found that the Service continues to make progress with considerable improvements in many areas and a good overall performance, however there were some areas identified for improvements.
11. This report and the Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 illustrate the sound progress which has been made to date with regard to the implementation of the recommendations put forward by the peer review team that undertook the Operational Assessment Review in 2012. The Committee is recommended to carry out its role in the monitoring of the implementation of improvements by considering the report and attached Action Plan.

## Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The Operational Assessment recommended that there is a need to ensure close and continued management of the risks associated with financial planning in the light of current and future budget reductions
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	<p>The Operational Assessment shows how the Authority has had due regard to the expectations set out in the Integrated Risk Management Plan and the requirements included in the National Framework</p> <p>The attached Action Plan shows how each recommended action supports the key principles set out in 'Our Strategy'</p>
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	The Action Plan incorporates improvement actions for Firefighter Safety and Community Safety.
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Senior Management Board consultation.
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	No this was not a requirement of the Operational Assessment. However, any changes to Service policy will require an Equalities Impact Assessment

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1: Operational Assessment 2012 – HWFRS Detailed Action Plan 2013/14 – Progress Report

Background Papers

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Fire Peer Challenge Report 2012

Fire Authority Agenda, Reports and Minutes – 13 February 2013

Audit Committee Agenda, Reports and Minutes – 17 April 2013

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## Appendix 1: OpA 2012 – HWFRS Detailed Action Plan-2013/14 Progress Report

Summary of Thematic Areas for Action to improve Service Delivery (arising from Operational Assessment 2012)		This action supports the following HWFRA "Our Strategy" Key Principles:	Links to: SMB Work Programme, IRMP, FC Project	Collaborative action between HWFRS & SFRS (Yes or No)	Priority (High, Medium or Low)	Lead Officer(s)	Comments (Summary of expected collaborative outcomes/benefits :)	Progress:
1.	<b>Theme:</b> Incident Command/Management <b>Description:</b> a collaborative review of Incident Command/Management arrangements leading to enhanced command resilience, competence, inter/intra-operability, debriefing, monitoring and peer audit.	Firefighter Safety	IRMP	Yes	High	Jon Pryce	Through collaboration, the outcome will result in seamless cross-border working, improved inter-agency command arrangements and increased officer capacity and resilience through mutual shared command/ specialist officer functions.	<p>HWFRS are adopting the South East Operational Collaborative partnership now taken by over 20 FRSs nationally. This will provide common and standard operating procedures for operational incidents and a common platform to review policies.</p> <p>Joint working with officer command groups progresses well and relationships are being built. Officers are now building links with counterparts in Shropshire and joint working is becoming normalised. The use of shared resources such as incident command units has been seen in December 2012 at a large fire, as well as joint Fire Investigations work when appropriate.</p> <p>Probably the strongest area of joint working is reflected in the Incident Liaison Officer (ILO) &amp; protective security working within West Mercia and also includes Warwickshire.</p> <p>Joint training and relationship building with the operational stations in north Herefordshire and south Shropshire has progressed well.</p>
2.	<b>Theme:</b> Integrated Risk Management Planning <b>Description:</b> the development of a collaborative approach to IRMP necessary to address requirements of the FRS National Framework including the review/development of community focused Response, Protection and Prevention targets and standards.	Community Safety	IRMP	Yes	High	Jean Cole	Sharing knowledge, expertise and resource, the outcome will result in a common agreed approach to IRMP, seamless cross-border working, improved inter-agency command arrangements and increased officer capacity and resilience through mutual shared command/ specialist officer functions.	<p>The CRMP has been developed and will be considered by the FRA at its meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2013. It sets out what we do to reduce risks to our community, to our firefighters and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our services.</p> <p>It is fully compliant with the guidance issued as part of the Fire &amp; Rescue National Framework. This document will be issued for full consultation after the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2013.</p>
3.	<b>Theme:</b> Training & Development <b>Description:</b> a coordinated collaborative approach to training and formal accreditation/peer review (where appropriate) to enhance service delivery in Incident Command, Cross-Border/Inter-Agency working, Technical Fire Safety and Health & Safety.	Firefighter Safety	IRMP	Yes	High	Mark Preece	The delivery of a collaborative training policy and joint training (where appropriate), leading to uniformity of approach and service delivery efficiencies. The outcome will also include formal accreditation/peer review (where appropriate) to provide community assurance.	Regular bi-monthly meetings are taking place with SFRS to explore areas of training collaboration. Both HWFRS and SFRS purchased the XVR Incident Command System (ICS) simulation software and we are assessing level 1 candidates to a similar standard. Peer assessment for ICS is currently being programmed as is the option for sharing assessors for ICS. Officer groups are also meeting regularly to train together and help foster relationships, and local joint training is taking place at station level.

## Appendix 1: OpA 2012 – HWFRS Detailed Action Plan-2

4.	<b>Theme:</b> Data Management <b>Description:</b> the effective, efficient and secure use of data to aid resilience and reliability both at incidents and corporately. The actions required will also address policy, user training and data integration (software/ hardware and data sharing between agencies).	Firefighter Safety	SMB Work Programme	Yes	Medium	Keith Chance	The outcome will enable the seamless, secure and timely transmission of data on agreed standardised resilient software/hardware. This will aid inter/intra-operability and in particular operational intelligence between fire and rescue services and partner agencies.	Phase 2 of the Fire Control project transmitting data to appliances
	<b>Description:</b> Improvements in the quality of data from CFRMIS, IRS and the Command and Control System, and the ability to 'join up' that to provide a holistic approach to all aspects of the Service.	Community Safety	SMB Work Programme	No	Medium	Mark Preece	Accurate and timely information that is available and accessible from all areas of the organisation and can be used to target the Service's resources at those most in need in the community.	A new linked database has been created covering all areas including post fire audit and Technical Fire Safety (TFS).
5.	<b>Theme:</b> Policy Alignment <b>Description:</b> a coordinated collaborative approach to generic service issues such as Health and Safety, Equality & Diversity (process and assessments), Risk Assessments, Personal Development Records and Service Policy Instructions (Protection).	Delivery of Quality Services	SMB Work Programme	Yes	Low	Keith Chance, Jackie Conway & Mark Preece	As an outcome of partnership working and critical friend challenge, both Services will adopt recognised best practice and common operating procedures in a variety of policy areas where economies of scale and service improvements are identified.	Both HWFRS and SFRS have been Working Well and discussions on the feasibility of further collaboration have taken place. Regular meetings have been held with SFRS. This has already led to an assessment of staff. This is being followed by possible moves to an inter-service arrangement, in principle, agreed.
6.	<b>Theme:</b> Fire Control <b>Description:</b> Utilising the agreed 'Memorandum of Understanding' arrangements, secure an efficient, effective, robust and resilient command and control infrastructure for the West Mercia area.	Delivery of Quality Services	FC Project	Yes	Low	Keith Chance	Working in partnership through the agreed 'MoU' project, both Services will share a single, resilient command and control infrastructure operated from two locations. The outcome will enable seamless despatch and management of resources anywhere within the 'West Mercia' area.	Phase 2 of the Fire Control project transmitting data to appliances

## Appendix 1: OpA 2012 – HWFRS Detailed Action Plan-20

Summary of Thematic Areas for Action to improve Service Delivery (arising from Operational Assessment 2012)		This action supports the following HWFRA "Our Strategy" Foundations:	Links to: SMB Work Programme, IRMP, FC Project	Collaborative action between HWFRS & SFRS (Yes or No)	Priority (High, Medium or Low)	Lead Officer(s)	Comments (Summary of expected collaborative outcomes/benefits :)	
7.	<b>Theme:</b> Financial Planning Risks <b>Description:</b> management of the risks associated with financial planning in the light of current and future budget reductions.	Resourcing for the Future	SMB Work Programme	Yes	Medium	Martin Reohorn	Through further communication with staff, the outcome will be a greater awareness of the true scale of the financial savings required in future years and realisation of the impact on service delivery and organisational changes.	Management of the risks associated with current and future budget reductions through emails, bulletin articles
8.	<b>Theme:</b> Project Management <b>Description:</b> ensure the management of major projects and cross cutting programmes is mainstreamed into 'business as usual'.	Fleet & Equipment, Building & Infrastructure	SMB Work Programme	Yes	Medium	Jean Cole	Sufficient and appropriate coordination of project activity will maximise corporate capacity and ensure interdependencies across departments are captured and duplications avoided.	This has been incorporated into the Department. An initial scoping
9.	<b>Theme:</b> Member Involvement/ Development <b>Description:</b> ensure that Members of the Authority are more fully involved in areas such as public consultation, strategic planning and decision making.	Fire & Rescue Authority	SMB Work Programme	Yes	Medium	Jean Cole	Will help to ensure that the Authority is optimising the link between finance, risk and politics to increase the likelihood of success when making strategic decisions in the future.	A Member's workshop was held to discuss the financial position, savings measures to meet the financial challenges later in the year. The new Constitution enables issues and to 'call-in' decisions. A Member Learning & Development Programme. A Member Development Programme workshops on CRMP, Management. A Member Development Workshop to identify learning needs. The Group re
10.	<b>Theme:</b> Public Consultation <b>Description:</b> attract a higher level of engagement and comment from the public and other external stakeholders	Services	IRMP	Yes	Medium	Jean Cole	This will ensure that the new CRMP can be completed in a manner that is robust enough to inform the Service's medium to long term community risk	The Service has recognised the need for a variety of the public and stakeholder CRMP consultation exercise.