

14. Performance Assessment 2008/9

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on the results of the 2008/9 Organisational Assessment results for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority.
2. The FRA performs well and scores 3 out of 4 for its Organisational Assessment.

Recommendation

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer recommends that the content of this report is noted.

Background

3. Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) was introduced in April 2009 and represented a fundamental change in the way councils and their partners were assessed. Where the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process, which was used from 2005 through to 2008, focused on the performance of individual public service providers in an area, the CAA focuses on the delivery of community outcomes for the area as a whole. It assesses the outcomes delivered by councils working alone or in partnership, and involves a forward-looking assessment of the prospects for the future achievement of shared priorities by the council and its partners.
4. The following diagram sets out the main elements of the CAA framework for the Fire and Rescue Service.



Organisational Assessment

5. The Organisational Assessment focuses on two key aspects – **Managing Performance** and **Use of Resources**. Specific considerations for H&WFRS included:
- how well the FRS was delivering the priorities and objectives set out in the National Framework, balancing effectively its prevention, protection and response functions;
 - how well equality and diversity is fully integrated into all aspects of the Service; and
 - an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of the contribution to broader partnership outcomes in the LAA.

Managing Performance

6. The Managing Performance theme reflected on specific performance and service delivery priorities within the FRS. It is reported against two key lines of enquiry:
- how well is the organisation delivering its priority services, outcomes and improvements that are important to local people?
 - does the organisation have the leadership, capacity and capability it needs to deliver future improvements?

Use of Resources

7. The use of resources theme assessed how well the FRS delivers value for money in terms of managing finances, governing the business, and managing resources. The key lines of enquiry had three overarching questions:
- Managing finances:
How effectively does the organisation manage its finances to deliver value for money?
 - Governing the business:
How well does the organisation govern itself and commission services that provide value for money and deliver better outcomes for local people?
 - Managing resources:
How well does the organisation manage its natural resources, physical assets, and people to meet current and future needs and deliver value for money?
8. The Audit Commission commenced work on H&WFRS Organisational Assessment in Spring 2009. This comprised of a rigorous evaluation of previously submitted self assessment documents, an extensive review of key evidence to support the self assessment documents and two on-site visits which involved 1-2-1 interviews with Authority Members and a cross section of staff.

9. The final report confirms that fires, fire deaths and injuries have been reducing at a rapid rate and last year the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) recorded the lowest number of fires ever. It also acknowledges how well the Service responds to incidents and the difference it is making to the lives of vulnerable people who are at risk. The report concluded that:
- People in Herefordshire and Worcestershire are at low risk from the dangers of fire and last year the FRA attended the lowest number of fires ever recorded in the two counties.
 - Accidental house fires, fire deaths and injuries have been reducing rapidly for a few years – at one of the fastest rates nationally.
 - The Authority is providing an effective and improving Fire and Rescue Service to communities and provides value for money.
 - Arson is not a widespread problem in most parts of the county and the work of the FRA has lessened the occurrence by half in the last three years.
 - The FRA is among the best services in the country for promoting equality and diversity.
 - The FRA is aware of where it can get better. For example, by further reducing attendances to unwanted fire alarms and malicious fire calls.
10. A summary and a full copy of the report are attached for your information.

Supporting Information

Appendices

1. Hereford and Worcester FRA Organisational Assessment 2009- Summary
2. Hereford and Worcester FRA Organisational Assessment 2009- Full Draft

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