

## **9. Future Service Planning**

### **Purpose of report**

1. To update Members on changes to the Service's Business Planning Processes and Strategic direction.
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### **Recommendation**

***The Chief Fire Officer recommends that:***

- i) the Authority approves the replacement of the current Vision Statement and associated strategy with the Core Purpose for 2012/13 as set out in paragraph 6 of this report; and***
- ii) the Authority endorses the new simplified approach to business planning and delivery of Service strategy.***

### **Background**

2. Over a number of years the Service has developed a comprehensive and detailed process for managing business planning and projects, supported by a series of organisational and corporate objectives to underpin this. It has been identified that these processes and strategies now appear overly complex, burdensome and do not deliver a clear and easily understood message across the organisation.
3. Since the formation of the Service Management Board (SMB), in January 2011, there has been a desire to rationalise this and deliver a clear and easily understood strategy. It has also been recognised that this also requires a simple and pragmatic business planning process to support this. There is also a requirement for a greater emphasis on providing assurance that resources are being utilised in the most appropriate and efficient manner. Within a climate of reducing resources, a new strategy and simplified planning process will not only provide clear and unambiguous direction to managers when utilising those limited resources, but will also realise elements of managerial capacity.

### **Proposals**

4. Whilst the proposed new Service strategy and business planning process for 2012/13 will look completely different in many ways, the key elements for the delivery of an efficient and structured Fire and Rescue Service, will remain unchanged. A reduction in complexity and bureaucracy will support an increased emphasis on leadership and direct ownership by managers and commanders, at all levels in the organisation. The aim of this is to ensure that the strategy proposed by SMB, and approved by the Authority, is translated into tangible direct action by those responsible for delivering it. This will remove any

ambiguity in strategic direction and give clarity to all staff regarding where the Service is being led and what is required to achieve this.

5. The Authority's current published strategic direction, corporate objectives and vision statement will be replaced with a single strategic message encompassing these areas that will be known as "Our Strategy" (See Appendix 1). This has been developed by SMB, who will be responsible for delivering and championing it throughout the Service.

6. The Authority's current Vision Statement:

*"Serving the community: To make Herefordshire and Worcestershire safer from fire and other hazards and to improve community well-being",*

And will be replaced for 2012/13 by the "Core Purpose":

*"We will provide our communities with sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue and preventative services".*

The Core Purpose will be delivered through three key principles:

- Ensuring firefighter safety
- Ensuring community safety
- Ensuring the delivery of quality services

7. This is underpinned by six key areas (See Appendix 1) behind which the organisation can align resources and objectives, in order to provide the efficient and focussed delivery of the core purpose.
8. The Service will be adopting a leaner and simplified business planning process for 2012/13. The existing process is heavily reliant on managers submitting complex levels of detail regarding their business objectives and resource plans. This will be replaced by a "lighter touch" approach whereby only headline objectives will need to be provided. The monitoring of their progress throughout the year will be owned by line managers at a local level, rather than dictated centrally. This approach is supported by all key departments being represented at SMB, however there will still be support and assurance provided centrally.
9. The focus on resource management will still require significant consideration by managers, including a detailed budget submission and a longer term broad resource plan for a further three years. The systems and reporting mechanisms that underpin this will be greatly simplified, not only reducing the administrative burden at the planning stage, but also ensuring this is kept to minimum throughout the year.
10. Managers will have a greater level of ownership of the process and accountability for its delivery resides with the line management up to SMB, to highlight exception reporting and resource management issues.

## Conclusion/Summary

11. The Service through SMB is committed to the principles outlined in this report and to ensure the optimum use of our available resources, now and in the future. SMB believes the existing processes outlined are overly complex, difficult to understand and not readily understood throughout the Service.
12. Having developed this new approach SMB hope it will not only address the issues outlined above, but will also support the consistent approach of a leaner more focussed delivery of services with minimal levels of unnecessary bureaucracy, administration and complexity. SMB have also developed a supporting programme utilising a variety of forms of delivery to embed the new strategy throughout the organisation, over the next twelve to twenty four months.

## Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	No	

## Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	No	

## Additional Considerations

13. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
<b>Resources</b> (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	Yes	Paragraph 9
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	Yes	Paragraph 6
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	No	
<b>Consultation with Representative Bodies</b>	No	

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1 - Our Strategy

### **Contact Officer**

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