Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority
Audit and Standards Committee
25 July 2018

Report of the Head of Operational Support

Strategic Risk Register Review

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Audit & Standards Committee with the annual update on the Strategic Risk Register.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

Background

2. Following the Worcestershire Internal Audit risk management audit undertaken in 2015/16, the Strategic and Departmental Risk Registers and supporting management systems have now been improved and embedded into HWFRS as part of the audit recommendations.

3. Department Heads are now responsible for the completion of a quarterly risk register review, with support from the Emergency Planning and Resilience Officer (EPRO).

4. The Strategic Risk Register (SRR) is reviewed at a Senior Management Board (SMB) meeting each quarter and owned by SMB.

5. The Risk Management Strategy is in the form of a Service Policy Instruction (SPI) which is in place for recording strategic high level risks within the Authority. These are usually identified through an escalation process within the departmental risk registers. The Risk Management Strategy SPI was last reviewed in January 2017 and is next due for review in January 2020.

6. The overall objective of the strategy is to ensure that the Authority identifies strategic risks and applies the most appropriate and cost effective control mechanisms to manage those risks, wherever possible. It also provides a robust audit trail for how the Service has considered and mitigated those risks should an issue be subject to scrutiny.

7. Identified risks should normally either be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level, with systems in place to monitor and report against this. The SRR is the overarching document that looks at the highest impact risks. All risks at each level are evaluated by the responsible manager for that area. The residual risk after control measures have been implemented (if possible) and then included in the revised risk assessment.

8. The highest and/or most prevalent risks can then be elevated to the SRR as appropriate, through the discussion held regularly at SMB as a standard quarterly agenda item.

9. The quarterly reviews meet the requirements of the Audit and Standards Committee's terms of the requirement to monitor and review the Authority's risk management arrangements.

Strategic Risk Register

10. The purpose of strategic risk management is to effectively identify risks to the success of the organisation and put effective control measures in place to mitigate their effect. An example of strategic risk management of risk could be the planning and monitoring of the impact of industrial disputes at both local and national levels across several Representative bodies. To mitigate these risks to the Service there are numerous control measures in place, such as a robust and well exercised business continuity plan alongside monitoring with West Mercia Local Resilience Forum (WMLRF) partners and regular meetings with all the appropriate Representative Bodies.

11. Several bespoke business continuity plans are linked to the risk registers and provide a significant control measure against those risks (such as; severe weather, pandemic influenza, fuel shortages, etc) These business continuity plans are either currently under review or have been recently reviewed.

12. The overall responsibility for ensuring risks are managed effectively lies with the Authority as professionally advised by Officers. The live SRR outlines to Members the risk scoring for both likelihood and impact of each identified risk. It also reflects the updated National Risk Register which is intended to capture the range of emergencies that may have an impact on all, or significant parts, of the UK as well as internal risks. The National Risk Register drives the Community Risk Register held by WMLRF and is recognised in the Service's live SRR. From a Service perspective, the SRR also acknowledges departmental, project and partnership risks. SMB are also developing emerging local risks from the Local and Community Risk Registers within the Local Resilience Forum which may become strategic risk register issues in the future.

13. WMLRF is a multi-agency group comprising bodies within West Mercia such as local authorities, national and local health agencies, the three emergency services and the Environment Agency. The purpose of the LRF is to ensure effective delivery of the duties of the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004. This requires partner agencies to co-ordinate resources so they can respond effectively when incidents do occur.

Conclusion/Summary

14.   New processes and framework have been embedded in the management of the SRR and in the departmental level risk registers. There is continual monitoring and reviewing taking place at quarterly SMB performance meetings and Middle Management Board meetings to ensure risks are being used to drive business.

15.   The Authority's Strategic Risk Register will be formally reported to Members annually, with significant changes being reported to the Audit and Standards Committee in a risk update.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	N/A
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	N/A
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	N/A
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	N/A
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A

Supporting Information:
Appendix 1 – Strategic Risk Register (summary) 2017/18

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