

Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee 15 January 2013

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Commissioning and Strategic Alliance Update

Recommendation

That the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress made to date with the Strategic Commissioning process in Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) and the Strategic Alliance with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS).

1.0 Strategic Commissioning

- 1.1 As part of the three year programme to review all services, WFRS is undertaking a Strategic Commissioning Review of its services. This is being led by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and other officers from WFRS.
- 1.2 The review coincides with the development of the Service's key strategic plan, the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), and the development of the Business Case for a Strategic Alliance with NFRS.
- 1.3 The Service is using the Strategic Commissioning Review to inform both the production and delivery of its IRMP. In turn, this has helped to underpin discussions with NFRS regarding the Strategic Alliance.
- 1.4 To date, Corporate Board has agreed the following review stages:
 - The Initial Assessment which identified areas for improvement – completed 4th July 2012.
 - The Options Appraisal which starts to identify how improvements could be delivered – completed 24th October 2012.

The Options Appraisal describes:

- Progress towards a Business Case for a Strategic Alliance with NFRS;
- Options for ensuring that Whole-time Firefighters are deployed effectively to support fire cover arrangements;
- Options for delivering our prevention work including the opportunity for a shared service with NFRS; and
- Work undertaken to combine prevention and protection work with operational response. This will enable the better integration of areas that impact on public safety and also ensure that important risk information is shared between frontline/public facing departments.

1.5 Work is now underway to develop a Business Case for Strategic Commissioning. This will enable WFRS to explore options for delivering the high level proposals set out in the IRMP. The Business Case will include work to support the following areas:

- A review of response standards for Warwickshire and associated performance measures;
- A review of the use of Wholetime Firefighters, particularly in supporting RDS Firefighters;
- Development of a shared service prevention model;
- The costs and benefits associated with these models;
- The estimated delivery time for the changes;
- How risks will be managed; and
- How key stakeholders will be engaged in the next phase.

2.0 Strategic Alliance

2.1 On the 8th September 2011 Warwickshire County Council agreed to develop closer working arrangements between WFRS and NFRS. The following areas were proposed for initial consideration for joint working:

- Fire Control;
- Firefighter and Incident Commander training;
- Fire Safety Enforcement;
- Community Safety; and
- Technical Equipment.

2.2 In July 2012 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for collaborative working between the two Services was agreed and signed. Further work has been undertaken and the Chief Executives from the two authorities met on 5th November 2012 to discuss progress. They agreed that work should proceed with an emphasis on areas that could generate the most collaborative advantage, namely:

- **Joint Management Team** – the development of a joint senior management team at Principal Officer and Area Commander level will enable greater sharing of learning and expertise across the two Services and efficiency savings in staffing;
- **Joint Fire Control** – the sharing of Fire Control functions, facilities and staffing between WFRS and NFRS will deliver effective, efficient and resilient mobilising; and
- **Joint Training** – a joint approach on training and development will enable a sharing of expertise and resources across the two Services and efficiency savings in staffing.

2.3 Progress made to date on the Strategic Alliance and the potential for savings were presented in a paper to Corporate Board on 5th December 2012. A Terms of Reference for governance of the Strategic Alliance is also being finalised for approval at the next partnership board meeting.

3.0 Next steps

3.1 The Strategic Commissioning Business Case is being developed for presentation to Corporate Board in March 2013. Detailed proposals for change will then be incorporated into a draft IRMP Action Plan, which will be subject to consultation with all key stakeholders.

3.2 A Business Case for the Strategic Alliance is also being prepared for presentation to Corporate Board in March 2013. This will fully detail the associated benefits and risks.

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