



- Other Chief Officers  .....
- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  Michelle McHugh

**FINAL DECISION YES**

- SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:** Details to be specified
- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
  - To Council  .....
  - To Cabinet  .....
  - To an O and S Committee  .....
  - To an Area Committee  .....
  - Further Consultation  .....



## Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26<sup>th</sup> February 2008

### Fire and Rescue Authority Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

#### Report of the Strategic Director for Community Protection and County Fire Officer

##### **Recommendation**

Members discuss the report and comment as appropriate on the performance of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority (WFRA) and related improvement planning activity.

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 In accordance with the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) Performance Management Framework 2007/08, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority (WFRA) was subject to an external assessment during 2007. The Direction of Travel (DoT) and Use of Resources (UoR) assessment was led by the Audit Commission. WFRA was assessed as 'Good' in April 2005 by the Audit Commission following a corporate Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). WFRA was assessed as 'improving adequately' following the Operational Assessment of Service Delivery (OASD) undertaken by the CLG in September 2006.

## **2 DoT and UoR Assessment**

2.1 WFRA produced a progress update as compared with the self assessment submission prepared in October 2006 against the KLOEs. This was followed by a two day site visit by a team from the Audit Commission who reviewed progress against the 2006 CPA action plan and undertook work on the UoR. The DoT rating for WFRA is 2, and at the time of the site visit all actions from the 2005 CPA Corporate Action Plan were signed off as completed. The overall improvement was positive with WFRA being commended for the involvement in wider community safety initiatives. However, there were two factors that contributed to the DoT score of 2. Firstly, mixed performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as at 2006/07, and progress against achieving improved value for money (VFM) outcomes. This judgement for WFRA is encapsulated in the DoT narrative published on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008 on the Audit Commission's website:

- 2.2 *'Warwickshire's performance continues to improve adequately in priority areas and is making an effective contribution to communities. It is maintaining a clear commitment to community safety and is targeting a wider range of initiatives at the young and vulnerable. This is the result of active engagement, good communications and an increasing understanding of communities. Overall satisfaction with the service is below average at 55% and performance on key service delivery indicators remains mixed. Performance is improving for malicious false alarm calls, primary fires, deliberate primary fires, and fire casualties, but is below average for others and some are deteriorating. The FRA is delivering VFM and efficiency gains. There are systems to review and improve VFM but benchmarking is not yet systematic. Further improvements in value for money are limited by the current service delivery structure. The FRA has undertaken a comprehensive independent review and has identified options with the potential to deliver significant change, including improved performance. However the management of any such change will be particularly challenging and require sensitive handling in view of the recent tragic events'.*
- 2.3 The UoR was assessed with reference to the corporate arrangements in place with the County Council and is evidenced by the scores for each of the elements in Table 1 overleaf.

**Table 1. UoR - Auditor Assessments**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Score</b>
Financial Reporting	3
Financial Management	4
Financial Standing	3
Internal Control	4
Value for Money	2
Overall 2006 UoR Judgement	3

- 2.4 WFRA is judged in the UoR assessment to be performing well – consistently above minimum requirements, with an improved score for Internal Control from 3 to 4. There are only four Fire and Rescue Authorities nationally (FRAs) that achieved a score of 4 for UoR.

### **3 Conclusion**

- 3.1 The progress overall has been sustained and positive since the 2005 corporate CPA. Good progress is being made in completing the Operational Assessment of Service Delivery (OASD) action plan. Of the 29 areas for improvement identified in the OASD action plan, 22 have been completed and the remainder due for completion by September 2008. As members will recall, regular progress reports have been made to this committee outside of the formal meetings. This is underpinned by measures implemented to improve results against KPIs, with improvements in malicious false alarm calls, primary fires, deliberate primary fires and casualties in accidental dwelling fires. These achievements demonstrate the continued dedication and professionalism of all staff.

- 3.2 In terms of improvement planning activity for the WFRA, there are a number of areas identified within the 2008/09 IRMP Action Plan. Firstly, further benchmarking activity in respect of KPIs and VFM, in order to better understand our position relative to other similar FRAs. This will also enable the WFRA to refine future modernisation proposals. Secondly, continue the successful partnership working through involvement in the new Local Area Agreement (LAA). Finally, following the tragic fire at Atherstone on Stour on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2007, the structure of the Service will need to be re-aligned in order to address this strategically significant issue and to ensure that operational responsiveness and effectiveness is maintained in Warwickshire. The latter will include researching new partnerships to deliver the highly successful community fire safety initiatives.

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4<sup>th</sup> February 2008