

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

AUDIT COMMITTEE

9TH JUNE 2008

1. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Committee note the existing arrangements in place for the management of risk within the Authority.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted in order to inform the Committee of the existing arrangements in place to manage risk within the Fire Authority.

The Risk Management strategy provides a framework which enables risks to be identified and acted upon in an informed manner throughout the Authority.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Risk Management is the process of identifying threats and opportunities, evaluating their potential consequences and then determining the most effective and efficient methods of controlling them and/or responding to them.
- 3.2 Through a robust analysis of risk, the Fire Authority is better able to deliver its Corporate Strategy and Annual Service Plan objectives.
- 3.3 Furthermore, if the Authority is to continue to meet the Government's expectations of performance and improvement in the forthcoming years, it will be important for the organisation to ensure that its risk management strategy is reviewed and updated to reflect best practice.

- 3.4 The existing risk management strategy (attached as Appendix 1) was published in November 2007. The strategy details the framework used to manage risk within the West Midlands Fire Service. It also details the processes in place to manage risk at strategic and departmental level, as well as identifying the links to other areas of activity, such as partnership working and project management.
- 3.5 In order to include the work currently being undertaken to update the Corporate Risk Register and the associated assurance arrangements, a revised strategy will be issued in late 2008.
- 3.6 In accordance with the recommendations made in the Internal Audit report of Risk Management (dated April 2008), the revised strategy will be presented to the Committee for approval.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out. The initial Equality Impact Assessment did not raise issues which required a full Equality Impact Assessment to be completed.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Whilst the purpose of the Authority's Risk Management Strategy is to assist in the achievement of the Authority's corporate objectives and statutory responsibilities, evidence of a Risk Management Strategy is also required by audit and inspection bodies who review the Authority.
- 5.2 There are numerous standards applicable to the management of risk within the local authority sector. Included amongst these is guidance from the Audit Commission, CIPFA/Solace and a set of joint standards published by the Institute of Risk Management (IRM), (The National Forum for Public Sector Risk Management) ALARM and (Association of Risk Managers) AIRMIC.
- 5.3 Evidence that robust management of the Authority's risks is undertaken demonstrates compliance with these standards.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Policy Planning Forum 18th December 2006

Authority Meeting 12th February 2007, Minute 5/07 refers

Executive Committee 9th July 2007

Executive Committee 10th September 2007

Audit Committee 31st March 2008

F. J. E. SHEEHAN
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER