

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

23RD APRIL 2007

1. **ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER**

Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Authority note the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to inform Members of the outcomes of the three aspects of the latest round of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process including assessments, Operational Assurance, Use of Resources and Direction of Travel.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Members may recall that during the last year the Authority has been subject to three different types of Comprehensive Performance Assessment undertaken by a mixture of the Audit Commission, the Communities and Local Government Government Department and our external auditors, KPMG. The three assessments included the Use of Resources judgement, a Service Assessment including an assessment of our performance against our Best Value Performance Indicators and a Direction of Travel assessment, which again included an element of value for money, but measured our progress since the initial CPA assessment, when the Authority was rated as a **good** performer.
- 3.2 Attached as Appendix 1 to this report is the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter which includes sections dealing with:
- An overall summary.
 - How is the West Midlands FRA performing?
 - Direction of Travel Report.
 - Service Assessment.
 - Financial Management and Value for Money.
 - Conclusion.
 - Availability of the Letter.

- 3.3 During the course of discussions with auditors undertaking these reviews, they were asked to bear in mind the amount of change and modernisation that the Authority has been through during the period prior to and during the CPA process. Obviously much of this change has been quite significant in terms of our personnel and it is pleasing to note that in spite of some of the issues that arose during the modernisation process, the Brigade has retained its “good” performing status against a range of independent audits and assessments.
- 3.4 The Lead Members for Performance Management have been kept apprised of the progress and development and of the outcomes of these audits as they have proceeded. The same Members were directly involved in a number of interviews with the assessors as was the Chair of the Authority.
- 3.5 Officers from the Audit Commission and KPMG will be present on the day to present the report and to answer any questions from Members about the contents of the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The matters raised in this report do not relate to a change in policy or of function.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The course of action recommended in this report does not raise issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CPA Files

F. J. E. SHEEHAN
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

L. BATEMAN
TREASURER