Corporate Risk Register

Position Statements – December 2009

RISK 1: Staff Engagement
The Employee Opinion Survey undertaken during the latter part of the year identified that approximately 80% of respondents are proud to work for West Midlands Fire Service and that nearly 90% care about the future of the Service. However, the survey also identified that the way information is communicated throughout the organisation is an area for improvement; actions aimed at addressing those concerns and other issues identified in the survey will be implemented during the forthcoming year in order help to manage this risk. Similarly, the recent adoption of a formal consultation framework, through the introduction of the Joint Consultative Panel and Joint Consultative Committee, will help to ensure that relationships between employees, their representatives and management are improved by promoting an efficient and seamless process for the avoidance/ settlement/resolution of organisational disputes.

RISK 2: ICT provision
The likelihood of this risk being realised is reducing following the full implementation of a bi-directional meshed Wide Area Network (WAN). Completion of additional work to the network in the next financial year, combined with a review of the archive and retention periods for organisational data, may warrant the risk likelihood score being reduced from 3 to 2. Similarly, work on creating 3 distinct data centres within the organisation (located at HQ, Safeside and BTC) to enable shared services, is due for completion in late 2010 - early 2011. Combined with on-going reviews of back up procedures and processes, this investment may justify a re-assessment of the risk impact score from 3 to 2.

Ref. AU/AC/907120924/ML/AMH

RISK 3: Regional Fire Control

A reschedule to the National FiReControl Project has taken place. This has had little impact on this risk as a result of the National Ways of Working review process not delivering the products required to progress some of the work within WMFS. The recognition of the potential impact of Swine Flu upon the project locally, regionally and nationally has been developed and this is reflected in the addition of a new issue relating to the risk. Internal continuity planning has taken place to address this potential event. However, the prospect of Fire Control staff transferring to the Regional Control Centre during the latter part of 2011 (and the impact that this will have on those staff that remain) will increase the likelihood of risk realisation during the period leading up to RCC cutover. Fire Control degradation plans will be developed during the early part of 2010 in order to deal with this issue.

RISK 4: Partnership Arrangements

The Fire Authority has been identified as having a strong and proactive approach to partnership working, actively supporting the 7 Local Area Agreements across the West Midlands area. This has enabled the Authority to support the delivery of improved outcomes for the communities of the West Midlands. To further reduce the likelihood of this risk being realised, additional work is programmed for the forthcoming year in order to improve Governance arrangements; this ranges from a review of the partnership database to additional training across the organisation. Completion of this work may result in a reduction from 3 to 2 in terms of the likelihood of this risk occurring.

RISK 5: Business Continuity

In accordance with the National Risk Register a number of strategic plans have been produced in order to reduce the likelihood of external events such as adverse weather, pandemic etc causing extensive disruption to WMFS activity. The plans are now being tested and an exercise programme initiated in order to validate the content. Successful completion of this activity may justify a reduction of risk likelihood score from 3 to 2. Departmental business continuity plans have been prepared across the organisation and the first stage of validation has commenced. The nature of these plans requires them to be reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis; future achievement of this would reduce the impact upon the organisation in the event of the risk being realised.

Ref. AU/AC/907120924/ML/AMH

RISK 6: Operational Response
The Operational Assessment Peer Review identified that emergency response arrangements within West Midlands Fire Service are flexible and are delivering the organisation's statutory duties and requirements under Integrated Risk Management. The review also identified that emergency response will be enhanced by improving the current de-brief procedure and implementing the Site Risk Identification project in full. Such activity will also reduce the organisation's exposure to risk. Similarly, the projects and work packages identified as part of the Operational Preparedness Programme have been incorporated into the Risk Management Action Plan for this risk. It is anticipated that completion of the projects and work packages will reduce the likelihood of this risk occurring and/or provide substantial assurance in respect of the existing control measures.

RISK 7: Asset Management
The likelihood of this risk occurring is reducing following the introduction of the Property Asset Management Plan in February 2009. This plan is a practical working tool which will ensure that the Authority's property portfolio will remain 'fit for purpose' and complement the operational and functional needs of a rapidly changing organisation. An updated Plan is due to be presented to the Fire Authority in February 2010. Similarly, the Asset Management Plan for fire appliances and support vehicles has now been implemented in full, ensuring the effective use of these resources by linking their anticipated life span to the financial planning cycle.

RISK 8: Financial Management
Following the latest review of this risk the Director, Finance and Procurement, has recommended an escalation of the risk score from 6 to 12. This is due to the uncertain nature of the economic climate, the potential for an emergency budget following the General Election in 2010 and the anticipated reductions in public sector expenditure from 2011/12. Actions to control this escalation in risk have already been considered; the Use of Resources assessment identified the stability offered by the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) but recommended that scenario/sensitivity analysis planning should be developed as a part of this Plan. The Chief Fire Officer has also outlined proposals to achieve full year savings of £1m from 'back office' reductions during the 2010/11 financial year

RISK 9: Staff Recruitment/Development
The implementation of a revised IPDR process during the early part of 2010 will help to ensure that all employees have the opportunity to develop in a way that is appropriate and effective in meeting organisational needs. Improving the quality of IPDR's and the associated monitoring arrangements will also support the organisational Learning and Development strategy, thereby reducing the organisation's exposure to this risk.

Ref. AU/AC/907120924/ML/AMH

RISK 10: Fire Safety
The overall level of risk to the Authority continues to be assessed as 'Very Low', with well established existing control measures in place. This assessment was supported by the findings of the Operational Assessment Peer Review completed in March/April 2009. Nevertheless a Fire Safety Strategy is currently being developed; this will provide a cohesive framework to ensure a more consistent approach to interpretation and application of legislation across the three delivery areas (Birmingham, Black Country, Solihull and Coventry). In addition, a review of the Risk Based Inspection Programme is also underway, the purpose of which is to link this database to others within the organisation e.g. Site Risk Surveys, Command and Control. The outcome of this work will further refine the risk focussed element of the inspection regime.

Comment: Is it necessary to add where the risk might come from here? i.e. … from legislative fire safety issues …

Comment:

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RISK 11: Command and Control
The likelihood of this risk being realised was reduced following the transfer to the new fire control facility within the Safeside complex at HQ, as well as the introduction of a new command and control system plus the new Firelink Radio network. Business Continuity plans have been developed to reduce the impact of staff shortages arising from pandemic e.g. swine flu. These plans have been tested to ensure resilience. However, the prospect of Fire Control staff transferring to the Regional Fire Control during the latter part of 2011 (and the impact that this may have on those staff that remain) could result in an increasing likelihood of risk realisation during the period leading up to RCC cut over. Fire Control degradation plans will be developed during the early part of 2010 in order to address this issue.

RISK 12: Firelink
The likelihood of this risk being realised has reduced following the installation of the SAN I (C-Soft Solution) Firelink - Airwave radio equipment into Fire Control. Initially this was linked to the existing legacy VHF radio systems, whilst progressing through the fire appliance installations schedule during the second and third quarter 2009.
A further reduction was realised following the completion of the appliance installation schedule and subsequently the removal of any legacy radio equipment from the C-Soft system. As a consequence of the above activity and a number of other events being resolved, the Director (Technical and Operational Support) has recommended that the overall risk score be reduced from 9 (medium) to 3 (low).

Ref. AU/AC/907120924/ML/AMH

RISK 13: Health and Safety
As identified within the Operational Assessment Peer Review report the Authority has 'established arrangements for dealing with its responsibilities under health, safety and welfare'. The fact that 'the management of Health and Safety is embedded in the organisation' was also recognised by ROSPA with a gold award in 2009 for Occupational Health and Safety. In accordance with Successful Health and Safety Management (HSG65) considerable work has been undertaken within the organisation in terms of reviewing and auditing existing control measures. For example, the service and representative bodies have agreed a protocol for joint accident investigation of serious injuries. Such activity provides organisational assurance and ensures that the likelihood of risk realisation remains under control.

Ref. AU/AC/907120924/ML/AMH