

## Fire Authority Corporate Plan 2008/09

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Steve Worrall, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260204.

#### 1 Purpose of Report

This report informs Members of the recently published Fire Authority Corporate Plan 2008/09. The Plan replaces the existing Best Value Performance Plan 2007/08. The Corporate Plan will be supplemented by an Annual Report 2007/08, which will be brought before Members in June 2008 for consideration and approval.

#### 2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is requested to note the recently published Fire Authority Corporate Plan 2008/09.

#### 3 Background

Historically all fire and rescue authorities have been duty bound through the statutory requirements of the Local Government Act 1999 to prepare and publish an annual Best Value Performance Plan. The Plan's contents and structure have largely been determined through national guidance. Last year the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 removed the requirement of 'Best Value' authorities (of which the Fire Authority is one) to produce an annual Best Value Performance Plan.

There is, however, a transitional provision within the Act in respect of reporting performance against the 2007/08 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs). The recently released Fire and Rescue Service Circular 9/2008 (see Appendix A) clarifies the transitional arrangements.

At its meeting on 2 October 2007 the Authority's Strategy and Resources Committee agreed changes to the Authority's strategic planning process, leading to refinements of the Authority's annual Performance Plan. The net

result will be two new overarching integrated strategic documents: a forward-looking 'Corporate Plan' and a backward-facing performance report - an 'Annual Report.' Both documents satisfy the changing statutory obligations that impact upon this Authority.

These arrangements, together with the proposed contents of the Corporate Plan, were noted and agreed by the Fire Authority on 13 February 2008<sup>1</sup> and finalised by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 6 March 2008.<sup>2</sup>

## **4 Corporate Plan**

The new Corporate Plan (attached at Appendix B) has been developed to set out, and, perhaps more importantly, align, the following:

The Fire Authority's:

- Purpose
- Core Values
- Aims
- Objectives
- Improvement Priorities
- Core Business

A constant challenge to the Fire Authority and Service has been the publication of a Performance Plan in a format that is easily readable and readily accessible to those charged with its day-to-day delivery – the Service's staff.

As a departure from the previous formats used for performance plans the Corporate Plan has been produced as laminated wall-mounted poster in 'A0' size (a full size version will be made available for viewing at the Fire Authority meeting). A web-based online version will also be available for external stakeholders.

## **5 Annual Report**

Supplementary to the Corporate Plan will be the backward facing Annual Report that will provide an account of the Authority's performance, both financial and operational, for the previous reporting period. The Annual Report 2007/08 will be presented to the June meeting of the Authority for approval prior to publication. The requirements of Fire and Rescue Service Circular 9/2008 will be met through publication of the Annual Report.

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<sup>1</sup> Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, 13 February 2008, Report 15 – Fire Authority Performance Plan 2008/09

<sup>2</sup> Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, Strategy and Resources Committee, 6 March 2008, Report 6 – Fire Authority Performance Plan 2008/09

## **6 Financial Implications**

The development and publication of the Corporate Plan has been contained within existing designated Service budgets. The unit cost for each poster is £38.

There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.

## **7 Legal Comment**

The Authority's statutory responsibilities are set out within this report and there is no further legal comment to add.

## **8 Equality Impact Assessment**

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached to this report.

## **9 Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

Communities and Local Government Fire and Rescue Service Circular 9/2008: Best Value Performance Plans for 2007/08

### **Appendix B**

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Corporate Plan 2008/09

## **10 Background Papers**

### **Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority:**

13 February 2008, Report 15 – Fire Authority Performance Plan 2008/09

Strategy and Resources Committee, 6th March 2008, Report 6 – Fire Authority Performance Plan 2008/09

Strategy and Resources Committee, 24 May 2007, Report 5 – Service and Budget Planning

Strategy and Resources Committee, 20 September 2007, Report 7 – Integrated Strategic Planning Process

Audit and Performance Management Committee, 27th September 2007, Report 12 – Integrated Strategic Planning Process

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial		Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	*
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*



# Initial Equality Impact Assessment Form

**EQIA Number:**

Directorate	Performance Improvement	Department/ Section	HQ
Name of officer	Steve Worrall	Job title	ACFO
Name of Policy/Service to be assessed	SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09	Date of assessment	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2008
New or existing policy	New		

1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/service	The SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09 sets out the Fire Authority's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose</li> <li>• Core Values</li> <li>• Aims</li> <li>• Objectives</li> <li>• Improvement Priorities</li> <li>• Core Business</li> </ul>
2. Are there any associated objectives of the policy/service?	The SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09 sets out the Fire Authority's objectives for the Service.
3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy/service and in what way?	Ultimately the community will benefit subject to the achievement of the aims and objectives, addressed by staff, as set out within the SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09. The SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09 acts as a working document which officers will deliver change and Members will monitor progress.
4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy/service?	The SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09 sets out the purpose of the Fire Authority for the forthcoming year.
5. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy/service?	Whilst the community are in-direct stakeholders, those that the SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09 impacts upon on a daily basis are internal Service staff, to whom the Plan is directed.
6. Who implements the policy/service and who is responsible for this?	Chair of the Fire Authority implements the SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09, the Chief Fire Officer is accountable for its delivery.
7. Are there any concerns that this policy/service could have a differential impact on the following groups and what existing evidence do you have for this? Yes or No, please detail in boxes below.	

8. Age	Y	N	<p>The SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09 includes several objectives, improvement priorities and aspects of core business that are aimed at lessening any differential impact upon groups in the community or members of staff in respect of concerns/issues related to – Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation and/or Dependant/caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Specifically, the following objectives, improvement priorities and aspects of core business address the aforesaid groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectives: 13, 18, 19, &amp; 20</li> <li>• Improvement Priorities: 18.1, 18.2 &amp; 20.1</li> <li>• Core Business: 13.2 &amp; 20.2</li> </ul>
9. Disability	Y	N	
10. Gender	Y	N	
11. Race	Y	N	
12. Religion or belief	Y	N	
13. Sexual orientation	Y	N	
14. Dependant/caring responsibilities	Y	N	
15. Could the differential impact identified in 7-14 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy/service?	Y	N	No – However, if the SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09 were not delivered then potentially there could be an adverse impact upon those groups identified in 7-14.
16. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or another reason?	Y	N	No - if the SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09 was not approved then potentially there could be an adverse impact upon those groups identified in 7-14.
17. Have you consulted those who are likely to be affected by the policy/service?	Y	N	<p>The Fire Authority, the Strategy and Resources Committee, the Service's Policy Group has been fully involved in the development and publication of the SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09.</p> <p>A draft of the Plan was presented to the Equality and Diversity Steering Group and a focus group of staff for discussion and approval prior to finalisation.</p> <p>Where appropriate, changes were made to the SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09. As an example, this included adjustments to the images used to portray a more accurate reflection of their intended message in respect of the community groups at which the images were targeted at.</p>

18. Should the policy proceed to a full impact assessment?	Y	<b>N</b>	<p>No - Brigade Order 5, Part 2, has been reviewed and the necessity to undertake a full impact assessment is not considered necessary as a <i>“High adverse/negative impact for any equality group”</i> would only occur if the SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09 were not to be approved.</p> <p>If the SWFA Corporate Plan 2008/09 is not approved, then a full impact assessment will be required.</p>
19. Date by which full impact assessment to be completed	Not applicable		
20. Reason for non completion	As detailed in section 18 above.		

I am satisfied that this policy has been successfully impact assessed.

I understand the Impact Assessment of this policy is a statutory obligation and that, as owners of this policy, we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this process.

Signed: (Assessing person)	S G Worrall	Date:	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2008
Signed: (Line Manager)	A Taylor	Date:	
Please note that this impact assessment will be scrutinised by the E&D Officer			

<b>Circular number</b>	<b>9/2008</b>	<b>Date issued</b>	<b>18 March 2008</b>
This circular is	<b>For information</b>	No response required	
This circular is	<b>Relevant to the National Framework</b>		
Status	<b>This circular provides details of the arrangements for 2007/08 Best Value Performance Plans</b>		

# Best Value Performance Plans for 2007/08

## Issued by:

**Gillian Verrall**

**Fire and Resilience Programmes, Finance and Performance Division**

## Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority  
 The Chief Executive of the County Council  
 The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority  
 The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority  
 The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority  
 The Chief Fire Officer**

## Please forward to:

**Performance Managers**

## Summary

The required content of Best Value Performance Plans for their final year will be limited to reporting of 2007/08 outturn performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators and certification of compliance with the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters.

## For further information, contact:

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### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) are already aware that Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) will cease to exist after 2007/08, with the introduction of the new performance framework contained in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

### 2.0 Reporting BVPI outturn for 2007/08

2.1 The 2007 Act removes the requirement for best value authorities to compile and publish an annual best value performance plan (BVPP). The Department intends to commence this provision from 1 April 2008. However, the BVPP is the mechanism by which best value authorities (including FRAs) publish, amongst other things, details of their outturn performance against BVPIs for the preceding year.

2.2 To remedy this shortfall, the Department intends, when commencing the relevant provisions of the 2007 Act, to make savings provisions which will retain the requirement for best value authorities to compile a BVPP for a further year, i.e. by June 2008. The content of this BVPP will be restricted to the reporting of outturn performance data on the 2007/08 BVPIs and a statement certifying compliance with the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters (see section 3 below).

### 3.0 Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts

3.1 Best value authorities are required to certify in their BVPPs that individual contracts entered into comply with best value requirements, including workforce requirements in the Code of Practice and the accompanying statutory guidance. As part of the final BVPP outturn report on BVPIs, fire and rescue authorities will also be required to certify that individual contracts entered into in 2007/08 comply with best value requirements, including workforce requirements in the Code of Practice. The Department will be consulting, in due course, on how future certification arrangements for the Code of Practice might operate.

### 4.0 Content of Best Value Performance Plans

4.1 It will be for the discretion of FRAs as to how to publish or otherwise make available the information set out above. FRAs should, however, ensure that it is available to relevant stakeholders, for instance employee representatives in the case of the compliance certification. FRAs should also continue to make available to their auditor the BVPI data. The Audit Commission will use this BVPI data to inform the Direction of Travel assessment for 2008. During July and August the Commission will collect and verify this data. The Commission will write separately to FRAs explaining how this process will work. Whilst the Department will not be retaining the specific requirement for the 2007/08 BVPP to be audited, auditors will continue to consider data quality arrangements as part of their Code of Audit Practice responsibilities.

- 4.2** This is a short term one-off measure to enable the completion of the current 2007/08 BVPI process and the certification of 2007/08 contracts as well as the smooth transition from the old best value regime to that of the new local performance framework.

**Gillian Verrall**

**Finance and Performance Division**