

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee

Item

1 July 2010

Road Risk Management Strategy

Report of the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the various issues relating to vehicle and driving policies, the progress of the Road Risk Management Strategy Group (RRMSG), actions taken to date and those proposed.
- 1.2 Vehicle, driver and driving regulations are a very complex and continually developing area. Within HFRS, concerns about our policies and practices were raised during 2008/9 from a number of sources including internally from Fleet Management, Driver Training, Performance Review, and Response; and externally from Hampshire Police. On assessing the situation it was found that four separate Service Orders existed, that some areas of concern were not addressed at all and that there was no single 'owner' of the subject. Research also showed that several other fire and rescue services had made considerable progress in this subject and that their work could be seen as notable practice. As a result SMT approved a paper on 6th October 2008 outlining the approach to addressing the situation. Additionally an entry on this subject was added to the Strategic Risk Register. SMT subsequently received a follow up report on 4th May 2009 detailing significant progress and describing plans to address all of the issues and put HFRS on a sound footing with regard to all aspects of the management of Occupational Road Risk.
- 1.3 The RRMSG, made up of staff from all the relevant departments as well as from the representative bodies, was established to develop a policy document, designed as a one stop document, covering all aspects of vehicle, driver and driving regulations.
- 1.4 The bulk of this work has now been released as a Service Order with more sections being made available as they are completed and consulted upon. Work is currently taking place in analysing the effects of the CLG guidance on the EU Drivers Hours and Tachograph Rules for Goods Vehicles (Regulation 561/2006).

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the contents of this report, including the improvements made, be noted.
- 2.2 That the Committee note the phased introduction of the HFRS Driver and Vehicle Service Order with overall ownership being with the Health and Safety department, the overall aim being to improve health and safety, introduce accountability and reduce strategic risk.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 The previous situation with regard to driver and vehicle policies had four separate Service Orders, owned by different directorates. The Service Orders had not changed significantly or been updated for some considerable time. Various sources within HFRS including Driver Training, Fleet Management, Health and Safety and Performance Review had raised issues with regard to current practices, legislative change and the perception of 'best practice'.
- 3.2 Additionally the introduction of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act and a recent court case with a driver being imprisoned after causing a crash whilst using a hands free mobile phone, have focussed attention in this area.
- 3.3 Policy documentation from several other fire and rescue services has been sourced and compared and contrasted with HFRS. We have also sought further advice from Hampshire Police and others as to our current performance in this area.
- 3.4 As a result a number of existing topics were identified as requiring action in order to protect the Service and to ensure legislative and regulatory compliance.
- 3.5 The RRMSG was formed in order to progress the items and a risk assessment for the most urgent items undertaken. A Strategic Risk Register entry on this topic has now been in place for 18 months. This entry was initially scored as a high 'red' risk but due to the work undertaken by the Road Risk Management Group (RRMG) the score has now been reduced to a medium 'amber'. It is anticipated that it will move to a 'low' green risk once all of the component parts of the strategy and supporting arrangements are in place.
- 3.6 The Health and Safety department line management have reviewed our health and safety arrangements since the transfer of responsibility. They have made a number of changes and improvements to health and safety within the Service, with further changes still to come. The Road Risk Management issue was seen as an area where further significant improvement can be made, and this view was reinforced during the 2009 South East Region Health and Safety peer review.

- 3.7 The RRMSG also identified a large number of areas which were not previously considered and these have been factored into the project. This has meant that the Service Order would now contain different sections covering various topics and these would not all be ready at the same time. It was considered preferable to have a phased introduction with sections being consulted upon and implemented once they are ready, rather than waiting for the entire document to be completed. This approach has been successful with the majority of the document now in place and ongoing work in specific areas.
- 3.8 The initial (and ongoing) aim of the RRMSG has been to reduce risk to the Authority by reducing the number of blue light users and blue light movements to the lowest figure necessary to ensure operational effectiveness. As a result this also links in with the drive to remove appliance self-mobilising options and the overall reduction in approved and accredited blue light users.

4 Analysis of HFRS's current position

- 4.1 As a result of the work undertaken HFRS is now in a strong position with regard to most aspects of occupational road risk management. Ongoing work will be required to maintain our position.
- 4.2 HFRS has policies in place covering all current aspects of this issue and these policies are considered to be industry best practice.
- 4.3 Overall responsibility for the Service Order will transfer to the Health and Safety Department once all of the development work is completed.
- 4.4 Actions taken so far include;
- Production of a one stop Policy Document which is cross departmental
 - Reduction in the number of staff given the authority for an emergency (blue light) response
 - Verification and updating of the details of those staff who are emergency responders
 - Document check of all HFRS personnel and their vehicles (where appropriate)
 - Removal of all non-essential mobile phone hands free kits and the introduction of a suitable policy for issue
 - A check of training currency for all non-EFAD blue light drivers
 - Additions to the training web pages detailing driving licence requirements.
 - Improved driver training and record keeping
 - Improved police blue light vehicle notification
- 4.5 Current issues to be addressed are the impacts of drivers hours regulations and the possibility of introducing provided vehicles for selected drivers, such as FDS officers.

5 Contribution to Corporate Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 Ensuring legislative, regulatory and guidance compliance is essential to protecting HFRS and its reputation. By reacting to new issues we continue to learn, review and change our policies and procedures to ensure continuous improvements and safeguards for the health and safety of our staff and the public.

6 Risk Analysis

- 6.2 Failure to address these issues and to continue to monitor them, and to regularly review and refresh our policies could potentially result in increased safety events and possible litigation or serious damage to our reputation.

7 Resource Implications

- 7.1 The provision of driver and vehicle information fields on SAP will have an associated cost. Current investigations are underway to ascertain if the Fleet Management module can include the information required. The alternative is to include the RRMSG information within the HR module. In either case there is likely to be some additional programming required with an estimated cost of up to £10,000.
- 7.2 The administration of the additional safety checks and document checks will be an additional burden. To date this has been managed within existing resources but a long term solution will need to be found.
- 7.3 The potential for provided cars for blue light users would have an initial cost even if phased in over a four year period. However the current costs of mileage for FDS officers alone is £300,000 and so it is possible that provided vehicles may actually be cost neutral. Additionally in providing vehicles some of the other costs referred to above may be negated, and would assist in the potential for provided vehicles to generate a cost saving in the longer term.

8 People Impact Assessment

- 8.1 Ensuring legislative compliance and the Health and Safety of all staff is relevant to all staff and all members of the public. This paper does not have any detrimental effect on any staff groups.

9 Consultation

- 9.1 Representative bodies are invited members of the RRMSG . Full formal consultation has taken place over each section of the Service Order and this will

continue for the remaining sections.

10 Conclusion

- 10.1 HFRS has made considerable improvements in its management of occupational road risk. It is now in a strong position with regard to current issues and has developed a mechanism to be able to react to new issues as they emerge.
- 10.2 The creation of a 'one stop' document has brought benefits of simplification and clarity to the service. The Service Order has also achieved our aim of reducing risk to HFRS.

Background Information (Section 100D of Local Government Act 1972)

The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report:

SMT Report 6th October 2008
SMT Report 4th May 2009
Vehicle Value for Money Audit report by HCC 2009

Note: The list excludes: (1) published works; and (2) documents that disclose exempt or confidential information defined in the Act.