

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee

Item

1 July 2010

Project Engage update and changes to the corporate planning process timescales

Report of the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

1.1 This is a progress report on Project Engage, and an update on the changes to the corporate planning process timescales for the forthcoming year.

2 Recommendations

2.1 That the committee endorse the work of the Service in making Project Engage a success.

2.2 That the committee endorse the changes to the corporate planning process timetable.

3 Introduction and background

3.1 Staff engagement and involving staff earlier in the planning process is key to the Service developing. In the past, the Service has predominantly taken a 'top down' approach to planning, with senior managers putting forward the majority of proposals for inclusion in the Service plan. We want to change this to a Service that encourages the active participation of all staff in shaping objectives through a 'bottom up' approach.

3.2 During consultation on the draft objectives for the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan 2010 to 2013, the feedback received from staff suggested that consulting on the final solutions to a challenge isn't always best. Instead, staff would like to know what challenges the Service face, and to help develop solutions from the 'bottom up'.

4 Project Engage and the Manager's Conference

4.1 Project Engage is an initiative focussed on involving all staff in the development of the objectives to address our key strategic challenges for inclusion in the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2011 – 2014, and in future Service plans.

4.2 In December 2009 the Service Management Team identified five key strategic challenges that the Service would face over the coming years.

They are: -

- How can the Service get to rural incidents in a quick and safe way?
- How can the Service better match resources to local risks?
- How can the Service reduce the environmental impact of incidents?
- How can the Service respond to road traffic collisions (RTCs) differently?
- How can the Service reduce it's spending by £1.5m year on year?

4.3 Station managers, group managers and department heads were briefed on the five strategic challenges within Project Engage. Each manager was given an information pack to help them conduct meetings with their teams, to discuss, and suggest solutions to the challenges. These meetings were held over a 33-day period from 8 February to 12 March 2010.

4.4 In total staff submitted 1562 ideas and solutions. Of these: -

- 160 were for matching resources to risk,
- 281 for getting to rural incidents faster,
- 272 were for environmental impact,
- 266 for RTCs differently, and;
- 583 were for saving money.

The Conference Development Group collated these solutions, ready for use at the manager's conference.

4.5 Over 100 managers from across the organisation gathered at Winchester Guildhall on 29 March 2010 for the Manager's Conference. Here the ideas submitted through Project Engage were displayed on boards according to the challenges, and grouped into clusters of similar ideas. The managers divided into five groups and were assigned to one of the boards. Facilitators assisted them in sorting and grouping ideas, which were then labelled as tactical or strategic. 43 strategic clusters were identified, which managers then voted on to see which ideas should be developed further. The top ten ideas were discussed in smaller groups in the afternoon session.

4.6 Currently the directorates are looking at the strategic clusters that emerged from Project Engage, which are informing the development of draft corporate

objectives. They are also looking at the ten top strategic ideas to see if they can be developed into draft objectives, or whether they link to the other objectives being developed.

4.7 As part of the Project Engage process, all the individuals / teams who submitted ideas will receive feedback on what has happened to their ideas. The tactical ideas are being fed into the "I" Group, the Savings team, the Process Improvement Team or individual project teams, for consideration and possible implementation. Ideas and solutions not used this year, will be stored for use in future years.

4.8 A Service 'extra' newsletter was released in May updating staff on Project Engage. It included an update on the managers conference, including feedback received, details on where the ideas will now feed into and the new timetable for developing objectives.

5 Changes to the planning process timescales

5.1 Project Engage and the Managers Conference were scheduled for February and March to fit in with the new corporate planning process timeline for the Service plan. However due to the Shirley Towers incident, the Service decided to push back the planning timeline for this year, to allow sufficient time to properly research and develop the objectives for the future. The Shirley Towers incident required many Service resources at short notice, which meant that the directorates were not able to adequately develop draft objectives, in line with the timescales as originally planned.

The major changes to the timeline are moving: -

- The Fire Authority meeting to approve the draft corporate objectives for consultation from 9 June 2010 to 15 September 2010.
- The 12-week consultation period from June to October, to consulting between 20 September 2010 and 12 December 2010.
- The Authority meeting where the final objectives are approved from 8 December 2010 to 9 February 2011.
- The launch of the Service plan 2011 – 2014 from late January to late March/early April.

In future years the planning process will revert back to the original proposed timeline (see appendix A).

5.2 Due to reasons highlighted in 5.1, there has been a delay in two of the objectives in the Service plan 2010 – 2013. 'Creating a dedicated fire investigation team' will be temporarily delayed and 'Reviewing staff numbers' will commence in June 2010, instead of April 2010 as originally stated.

5.3 Extending the period before the Service consults on the draft objectives, has

allowed more input from the ideas flowing out of Project Engage. The quality and amount of ideas that arose from Project Engage was greater than anticipated. The previous planning timeline would not have allowed for the level of input from Project Engage we are now going through.

6 Contribution to corporate aims and objectives

6.1 Project Engage is about involving staff in the development of objectives for the future. The outcomes of Project Engage are the development of objectives to which the whole of the Service has contributed from the 'bottom up'.

6.2 The objectives that have been developed using ideas from Project Engage will be clearly identified in the Service plan 2011 – 2014. It will also include pages dedicated to the five strategic challenges. The best tactical ideas from each of the challenges will be incorporated into the Service plan.

7 Risk analysis

7.1 Failure to engage with staff is currently scored as green 'low scored' risk on the strategic risk register. Undertaking Project Engage has further mitigated this risk, as staff are now better engaged and participating in the strategic planning process and development of objectives.

7.2 There is a risk however, that if the Service does not follow up on the ideas submitted by staff, and give appropriate feedback, that staff will feel less engaged, and the risk will increase. The Conference Development Group has been tasked to ensure that everyone who submitted an idea receives feedback on where their idea has been fed into.

8 Resource Implications

8.1 There are no resource implications at this time. All costs have been met from within existing budgets.

9 People Impact Assessment

9.1 No negative impacts to report.

10 Environmental Impact

10.1 One of the five strategic challenges in Project Engage was environmental impact. Project Engage had 272 ideas from staff around 'how the Service could reduce it's environmental impact'. The environment remains a priority to the Service, and is a focus for staff.

11 Consultation

- 11.1 Project Engage has allowed the service to consult with staff prior to the development of the corporate objectives. This is in addition to what the Service has done in previous years. Stakeholders, partners and staff will be consulted on the draft corporate objectives which will go to the Fire Authority meeting on 15 September 2010 for approval.

12 Conclusion

- 12.1 To date, Project Engage has successfully engaged staff from across the Service in developing and shaping objectives from the 'bottom up'. These objectives will be presented to the Authority in September for approval prior to consultation. Good internal communications, and feedback to staff on their ideas, is needed to maintain the good work already undertaken.

13 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:

Appendix A – Corporate planning timeline

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