

**9 February 2011**

**Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2011 to 2014:  
proposed corporate objectives**

**Report by the Chief Officer**

Contact: David Howells, Director of Corporate Services

Telephone 02380 626833

## **1 Summary**

1.1 The Authority agreed to consult staff and stakeholders on seven proposed corporate objectives. As a result of the valuable feedback we have received it is recommended that one of the proposed objectives should be removed and the wording of the remaining objectives clarified and/or improved.

1.2 The six corporate objectives now recommended for including in the Plan are:

- We will have community facilities at our stations
- We will respond to small fires more effectively in rural areas
- We will respond differently to automatic fire alarms which are in non-domestic properties
- We will respond to road-traffic accidents in rural areas more effectively
- We will use energy more efficiently at our buildings
- We will Improve 'operational diversity' to help reduce the different risks people face in the community

The revised wording for these objectives is set out in Appendix B

The objective no longer proposed is:

- 'We will create a business centre at one of our retained (on-call) fire stations' (see paragraph 3.6)

## **2 Recommendations**

2.1 That the feedback from staff and stakeholders on the seven draft corporate objectives for 2011 to 2014, as summarised in Appendix A to this report, be noted.

2.2 That the revised set of six proposed corporate objectives, as set out in Appendix B to this report, be approved for inclusion in the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2011 to 2014.

### 3 Consultation feedback

3.1 In September 2010 the Authority approved, for consultation with our staff and stakeholders, seven proposed corporate objectives. The twelve-week consultation period ran from 20 September 2010 to 10 December 2010; 17 consultation events were held. These were:

Event	Venue	Date	Attendees
Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) managers	HFRS Headquarters	20/09/10	31
HFRS staff	Rushmoor fire station	22/09/10	27
Public focus group	Ringwood fire station	28/09/10	12
Equality and Diversity Consultative and Scrutiny Group (EDCS)	HFRS Headquarters	04/10/10	19
HFRS staff	HFRS Headquarters	05/10/10	50
HFRS staff	Ringwood fire station	06/10/10	17
HFRS staff	Bishop's Waltham fire station	11/10/10	11
Representative bodies	HFRS Headquarters	12/10/10	4
Public focus group	Shedfield Village Hall, Shedfield	19/10/10	11
HFRS staff	Alton fire station	20/10/10	10
HFRS staff	Wickham fire station	26/10/10	15
Public focus group	Rushmoor fire station	28/10/10	12
Representative bodies	HFRS Headquarters	03/11/10	3
HFRS staff	Petersfield fire station	15/11/10	13
HFRS staff	St. Marys fire station	17/11/10	25
HFRS staff	Fareham fire station	07/12/10	6
Representative bodies	HFRS Headquarters	13/12/10	2

3.2 In addition to these formal consultation events, we also invited feedback from our various stakeholders using an on-line feedback form on our website. Posters and copies of the proposed objectives were displayed in all libraries and public information points, fire stations and a number of supermarkets. Letters inviting comments were sent to all stakeholders on our stakeholder register, neighbouring fire and rescue authorities, constituent local authorities, Hampshire's Members of Parliament and our partner organisations. This resulted in 31 written responses.

3.3 Feedback from staff has been constructive and generally positive. The majority of comments related to just three of the proposed objectives. The main concerns can be summarised as follows:

- ‘We will respond to small fires more effectively in rural areas.’ There were concerns that by sending a Land Rover (rather than a fully-crewed conventional fire engine) would result in fewer ‘shouts’ (calls to incidents) for retained firefighters.
- ‘We will respond differently to automatic fire alarms in non-domestic properties.’ There were concerns that, if the call turn out to be a major incident, a reduced initial response runs the risk of delaying a more appropriate response (in terms of the ‘weight of attack’). It might also result in some reputational damage for the Service.
- ‘We will respond to road-traffic accidents in rural areas more effectively.’ There were concerns about ‘lone working’; and the added pressure and responsibilities on individuals when arriving first at an incident.

3.4 All the comments, views and opinions received from our staff and the various stakeholders have been collated. A summary of the key points and issues raised is set out as Appendix A. This has resulted in various aspects of the objectives being clarified and better defined, as set out as Appendix B.

3.5 The feedback we have received has prompted alterations to the wording of all six of the proposed objectives. The changes made to each objective are summarised below with key changes to wording underlined:

- ‘We will have community facilities at our stations.’ We have changed the wording to read that we will work with Hampshire County Council and others, in seeking to introduce a community facility in at least one of our retained stations. We had previously mentioned only Hampshire County Council, and just one of our fire stations.
- ‘We will respond to small fires more effectively in rural areas.’ The public found the description of ‘small fires’ confusing, so we have amended the wording to ‘small fires in the open’. We have also changed the wording about the vehicle involved to read: ‘... a small fires vehicle at Waterlooville fire station ...’, rather than ‘a Land Rover’.
- ‘We will respond differently to automatic fire alarms which are in non-domestic properties.’ Our staff requested we change the reference to ‘a local manager’, because this was potentially confusing. We have amended this to ‘incident commander’. We can now say – after considering risk information – that the trial should take place at Botley and Romsey.
- ‘We will respond to road-traffic accidents in rural areas more effectively.’ Like the previous objective, our risk information shows that the trial should take place at Botley and Romsey. The scheme will be extended, if successful, to only those stations where we operate co-responder schemes.

- ‘We will use energy more efficiently at our buildings.’ We have included a comment that we will use some of our current income to invest to save – not just new funding.
- ‘Improving ‘Operational Diversity’ to help reduce the different risks people face in the community.’ We have removed the text referring to ‘new software’. We have also changed the wording to say ‘... we will try to better understand the risks that people face because of their lifestyle and circumstances ...’.

- 3.6 The proposed objective: ‘We will create a business centre at one of our retained (on-call) fire stations’ has been removed – mainly because it caused confusion about our intentions. However we will still consider accommodating suitable and appropriate small businesses on our retained fire stations if it results in genuine improvements in the availability of retained firefighters.
- 3.7 We received several comments at public consultation meetings to the effect that they were pleased to see that the Authority is striving to improve the service provided to the local community despite the current financial climate.
- 3.8 It was disappointing that we received very little feedback from the business community, despite our specifically targeting them. We will work on ways to improve this in future years.
- 3.9 We have maintained a ‘learning log’ during the preparation of the Plan. This helps us to identify practical improvements for the future management of the consultation process.

#### **4 Preparation of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan 2011 to 2014**

- 4.1 Work is well underway in preparing the Plan which will be published at the beginning of April. It will include the Service’s 2015 vision statement, which first appeared in last year’s Plan. The Plan will also include a short commentary on the progress of each of the corporate objectives from the current edition of the Plan (2010 to 2013).
- 4.2 For the past two years we asked the Plain English Campaign to look at our Plan and make suggestions as to how to make it easier to understand and more accessible. We achieved ‘Crystal Mark’ accreditation and we will be aiming to get it again this year.

#### **5 Risk Analysis**

- 5.1 Consultation on the preparation of our corporate plan is an essential requirement of good governance. The lack of a robust consultation strategy would run the risk that our corporate priorities, policies and objectives might fail to properly reflect the needs and expectations of local communities and our various key stakeholders. We again carried out a comprehensive programme of consultation activity that has genuinely informed the development and preparation of our Plan for 2011 to 2014.

## **6 Resource Implications**

- 6.1 The proposed corporate objectives are consistent with, and will help to deliver, the aims of our medium-term financial strategy.

## **7 People Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 A People Impact Assessment (PIA) has been completed for the Plan. There are no significant issues arising from it to draw to the attention of Members.
- 7.2 The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

## **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:

Draft Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan 2011 to 2014: proposed corporate objectives and consultation strategy (see item 12)

[http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&pref=Y&item\\_ID=2021&tab=2](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&pref=Y&item_ID=2021&tab=2)

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

Appendix A – Summary of feedback from consultation

Appendix B – Proposed corporate objectives

Secretarial\WPWord\Corporate\HFRA\HFRA Committee\HFRA\2011 HFRA  
2011 02 09 HFRA Service Plan update

DH/IH 27-01-11