

Governance Committee

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Health and Safety Annual Report 2010/2011

Report by the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

- 1.1 This annual report provides the Committee with an overview of the progress that has been made to further improve our arrangements for operating in a healthy and safe way – in all that we do.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Health and Safety Annual Report for 2010/2011 be received and approved.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 We want to provide effective health, safety and welfare arrangements for all staff. This means having in place effective management processes and procedures. These will help us to embed best practice that is relevant and proportionate to the risks we face. We aim to strengthen an already positive environment in which our managers and staff work constructively together to continuously improve working conditions.
- 3.2 Our vision for delivering and improving health and safety is included as Appendix A.

4 Existing health and safety arrangements

4.1 Policy and procedure

- 4.1.1 Our vision provides the strategic direction for reviewing and developing policies, procedures, guidance, and specific health and safety-related activities

- 4.1.2 Although Appendix A shows this as a linear process, we continually monitor and respond to changing internal and external factors that might have an impact on what we need to do. This can include: changes in legislation; processes; equipment; the outcomes of fire and rescue service directives; and, outcomes from safety event investigations.
- 4.1.3 The findings of audits, the outcomes and recommendation of Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspections are taken into account when reviewing and developing our management processes. This approach fits well with the Health and Safety Executive's guidance for health and safety management (HSG65). This well-established system (currently under review) expects that all policies are monitored and reviewed to help maintain up-to-date, effective and efficient arrangements.

4.2 Organisation

- 4.2.1 Responsibility for health and safety management rests with the Service Delivery directorate. A small dedicated team provides advice and support to all managers and staff. It both initiates and coordinates relevant activities to ensure the promotion of a strong 'health and safety culture' throughout the Service. Data from health and safety incidents and events are closely monitored and performance reports are regularly presented to the Service Management Team.
- 4.2.2 The team has four full-time equivalent posts. The team manager is a Chartered Health and Safety Practitioner. Over the past 12 months one post has been held vacant (during the recruitment freeze). But, this has now been filled as part of the Staff Review implementation. This appointment will strengthen the resilience of the team.
- 4.2.3 Our Health and Safety Committee provides a forum for monitoring emerging health and safety issues. It comprises representatives from management, staff and trades unions (which enables it to act as the health and safety consultation group for representative bodies). The Committee reports to the Health and Safety Strategy and Performance Group [which comprises the Service's Area Managers and is chaired by the Health and Safety Manager]. This Group provides a direct link into all our functions; the Service Management Team and; other relevant forums such as the Workforce Wellbeing Committee and regional and national health and safety groups.
- 4.2.4 All workplaces have an appointed Health and Safety Representative who, along with the workplace managers, support a comprehensive programme of regular health and safety inspections. These are used to identify and eliminate any potential hazards. Over the last year the Health and Safety team have been supporting this process through a series of station audits completed in conjunction with local managers.
- 4.2.5 The reporting of 'safety events' continues to improve and this helps us to monitor any potential areas for action. The data from them are used to spot trends, and enables us to measure our performance against regional and

national statistics. Work is also continuing on improving the quality of safety event investigations and the training of managers to approach investigations in a 'commonsense' way. The overriding aims are to improve staff welfare and safety; encouraging management responsibility; and, protect the Service against litigation and reputational damage.

4.2.6 We benefit from having a member champion for health and safety: Councillor Robin McIntosh, Chairman of this Committee. This is recognised by the HSE as an example of good practice.

4.2.7 A diagram of our organisational arrangements is included at Appendix B.

4.3 Planning

4.3.1 The Health and Safety Medium Term Plan is reviewed annually to keep it up date. The current Plan covers eight key areas for development. These are set out in Appendix C. Outcomes and recommendations arising from significant activities - such as the HSE inspection in 2009; safety audits and changes in legislation - are taken into account when reviewing the Plan. We are now into the second year of the current plan and we are 'on target' in all areas.

4.3.2 The detailed day-to-day planning is undertaken by the Health and Safety Team. This includes responding to: findings from the workplace inspections; risk assessment reviews; outcomes identified by safety event statistics; findings from health and safety site support visits; directives from the HSE and any national/regional health and safety initiatives.

4.4 Audit / feedback from audits

4.4.1 We endeavour to have some form of audit at least every two years. This can involve peer reviews through regional collaboration with other fire and rescue services, internal audit, or by our insurance brokers. Audit reports will be presented to the Authority (or the appropriate committee) for scrutiny. These reports will always include an action plan in response to any findings. Our most recent audits include:

- HSE Inspection – May 2009

We continue to work with the Health and Safety Executive following their inspection and have made significant progress against our jointly agreed action plan. A summary of the HSE recommendations and progress against them is included at Appendix D.

- Oxygen Insurance brokers risk profile – January 2010

Our brokers provided the Service with a draft risk profile report in May 2011. We achieved a score of 904 out of a maximum possible of 1122. Areas for improvement were identified as: control of contractors, and

manual handling. Both areas are being developed within the current Health and Safety Plan.

Hampshire County Council's Internal Audit Service will next carry out an audit in 2012

4.4.2 We apply annually to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) for recognition in their annual achievement awards. From our submission this year, we were nominated for a Gold Award. If granted, this would be our sixth consecutive Gold Award, We will continue to seek further success and recognition from RoSPA.

4.5 Internal performance review and measurement

4.5.1 Our own Health and Safety Team undertake some internal auditing of health and safety arrangements at fire stations. This involves a cycle of robust site safety visits. The results are fed back to local managers so that any actions can be used to inform station-based plans.

4.5.2 We measure our performance and benchmark results against those for other services in the region. An overview of our performance can be seen at Appendix E.

4.5.3 All policies and supporting documents are now reviewed on a three yearly basis to ensure continued legal compliance. New legislation, regulatory change, government directives or changes in process are incorporated into our policies at the earliest opportunity.

4.5.4 The need to maintain a robust approach to the management of health and safety is recognised in the Authority's Strategic Risk Register. This is reviewed quarterly by the Service Management Team who also receive a quarterly report on key health and safety issues and activities.

4.5.5 We have introduced key health and safety indicators at fire station level specifically to encourage improved performance.

5 Current and planned development

5.1 Notable practice

5.1.1 We continue to be the regional lead on health and safety. We chair the regional health and safety practitioners' group. This also involves us participating in the national committees. This work provides us with opportunities to both share and identify notable practice.

5.1.2 A revised 'road risk' management committee has been formed. We will use this forum to: improve monitoring and reduction of vehicle-related safety events; compliance with road related legislation; improving monitoring of

driver compliance (driver licence checks); and, the review of relevant service orders and guidance to vehicle users. The work will help to improve safety for both the public and staff; and, it will save us time and money by reducing vehicle collisions.

5.2 Future developments

- 5.2.1 **Safety event investigation.** A complete review has been undertaken of the processes used for safety event investigation and the level of expertise required by the investigating officer. A revised process is now being put in place supported by a new service order dedicated to safety event investigation and bespoke training for investigators. This will improve how we manage the aftermath of safety events and respond to any findings.
- 5.2.2 **Integrating activity with Occupational Health Team.** Monthly meetings will be scheduled between the Occupational Health and Health and Safety teams to facilitate joint working where there is a common interest in making improvements.
- 5.2.3 **Health and Safety training.** Training across all departments of the Service is under review. The rollout of a new Institution of Occupational Safety and Health training course commenced in October 2011. Dorset Fire and Rescue Service is working with us on the development of a bespoke fire service health and safety training package. The aim is to make this part of firefighters' development.

6 Contribution to corporate aims and objectives

- 6.1 Improved health and safety arrangements will support our aim of being the best fire and rescue service in the country.

7 Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no additional human resources, information and communications technology, physical resources nor financial implications arising from this report.

8 Risk Analysis

- 8.1 It is morally and legally incumbent on us to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all of our staff. To do otherwise would put the Authority at serious risk. The maintenance of an exemplary health and safety culture - supported by robust processes and practices will mitigate that risk.

8.2 Responsibility for health and safety rests with both with the Service and the Authority. So, it is important that Members have a good appreciation and understanding of our arrangements; and, are they are satisfied with the information provided by the officers.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

9.1 This report and it's recommendation does not give rise to any equality issues; and is 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:

- HSE Final Inspection Report 2009
- HFRS Health and Safety Statistics

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