

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority	Item:
Human Resources Committee	
28 April 2011	
HFRA Elected Member Development	
Paper on behalf of the Chief Fire Officer	

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1 Summary

- 1.1 HFRS achieved the South East Charter for Member Development on 19th January 2011. This paper summarises the findings of the South East Employers Report and identifies further areas for improvement to embed Member development as a key activity within the Fire and Rescue Authority.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Authority's achievement in obtaining the South East Employers Charter Mark for Elected Members be celebrated.
- 2.2 That the action points contained within the Improvement Plan attached at Appendix A be agreed.
- 2.3 That the Elected Member Steering Group continue to be supported to develop the processes to deliver the Improvement Plan over the next 3 years.

3 Introduction and Background

- 3.1 In September 2008 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) committed to achieving the South East Charter for Member Development. The Member Development Steering Group was established to develop an action plan to achieve the Charter and to improve key areas of Member development on behalf of HFRA .
- 3.2 On 19th January 2011, HFRA underwent the assessment for the Charter award. The assessment was based on a portfolio of evidence collated by the Member Development Steering Group, interviews with key personnel and an Elected Member workshop. Interviews were conducted with the Chief Officer, the Chair of the Fire Authority, Training Officers and the Steering Group Members along with other Authority Members from various parts of the County.
- 3.3 The assessment standard comprised of 5 areas:
1. Commitment to Member Development
 2. Strategic Approach to Member Development
 3. Member Learning and Development Plans in place
 4. Learning and Development is effective in building capacity
 5. Supporting Councillors
- 3.4 On the basis of the assessment, HFRA was awarded the South East Charter for Elected Member Development with effect from the date of assessment.

4. Assessment Report

- 4.1 The report from South East Employers congratulated HFRA on achieving the Charter Mark Standard and provided an overview of its findings.

The key strengths identified by the assessors were:

- The Member Induction process.
- The Member Development Group has increasing commitment with clear links to the HR Committee and good governance.
- Monthly Member updates from the Chief Officer are excellent .
- Awareness sessions for Members following the HFRA Meetings .
- There is commitment from both political and officer leaders, and there is good support from officers.
- Members Development covers processes and procedures to provide skills, knowledge and understanding that may be required.
- Community interface is excellent; especially successful is the contact that Members have with their local fire stations.
- Members more clearly understand the budget and its implications for the service.

- 4.2 The areas for improvement identified by the assessors were as follows:

- Steering Group needs to gain more confidence in promoting the benefits of member development and increase it's profile.
- The Steering Group should be the first point of contact to discuss development needs and they should be the group to take these requests to officers.
- Increase the interface between the Fire and Rescue Service and the constituent local authorities.
- Use the Member Profile with newly elected HFRA Members to help familiarise with them the requirements of the role beforehand.
- Increase the awareness of the profile with the Group Leaders of all three Councils.
- Use of the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to develop a learning and development plan.
- Use the TNA process through face to face discussion.
- Evaluate all development activities for Elected Members and identify the return on investment.
- Encourage more learning with partner organisations including local authorities and other FRS's.
- Develop scrutiny skills to increase accountability.
- Increase Members' understanding of the Corporate Management Team structure.

- 4.3 The award is valid for 3 years and the Authority will undergo a follow up review in 18 months time to identify progress against the areas identified for improvement. A further assessment will be conducted in 3 years to ensure the award is still valid for the Authority.

- 4.4 To support achievement of the areas identified in 4.2, an action plan has been developed by the Member Development Steering Group and this sets out the recommended activities for the Authority to pursue. The details of this action plan are at Appendix A.

5 Contribution to Corporate Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 Achievement of the Charter has demonstrated the commitment of the Fire Authority to ongoing development. The Charter Mark has helped identify areas for improvement which will ensure the Authority Members continue to develop their skills and specialist knowledge. This will support HFRA in providing strong leadership to achieve the aims and

objectives of the service and deliver high quality services to the community.

6 Risk Analysis

- 6.1 The fire and rescue service is in a period of substantial and sustained change as the expectations of the public and Government continue to grow whilst budgets are being reduced. These future financial pressures will require HFRA Members to continue to develop their understanding of the service, supporting the HFRA in making future risk-based decisions to ensure continued delivery of its strategic priorities.

7 Resource/Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no additional resource or financial implications related to the proposals within this report.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has previously been carried out on this proposal and no negative impacts are identified.

9 Consultation

- 9.1 The creation of initiatives within the SEE Charter Action Plan have been consulted on with the Fire and Rescue Authority and the HR Committee as they have been developed. The Member Development Steering Group will ensure consultation with all Members is undertaken to achieve their full understanding and engagement in the future work of the group.

10 Conclusion

- 10.1 Achievement of the Charter has demonstrated the Authority's commitment to ongoing Member Development and will help build capacity within the Authority for the future. As the Authority strives towards being an 'excellent' authority, the service as a whole will need to continue to update and improve employee skills and keep up to date with new developments. Through their commitment to the Charter, members can demonstrably lead by example.
- 10.2 Whilst Members receive development within their own authorities, their position on the Fire and Rescue Authority inevitably requires additional specialist knowledge and skills to support them to undertake their roles effectively. This Charter Mark has assisted in establishing sound practices within the Authority to help secure the continuous development of Elected Members.

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:

South East Charter for Elected Member Development - Guidance

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