

At a meeting of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at Hampshire
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Eastleigh on 27 June, 2012

PRESENT:

Councillors: K. Chapman (Chairman); I. Beagley; M. Cooper; A. Evans; J. Frankum; T. Knight; E. Neal; D. Simpson.

92 APOLOGIES

Councillor Knight sent apologies ahead of the meeting for being slightly late.

93 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should, normally at the time of the debate, declare their interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code.

There were no declarations of interest made by members under this item.

94 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held 24 February 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

95 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements to make to the Committee.

96 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made under this item.

97 APPROACH TO SERVICE PLANNING FOR 2013/14 AND BEYOND

The Committee received a presentation regarding Service Planning and the changes as a result of a new National Framework and Localism Act. It was highlighted that plans for the future included engaging more closely with local communities and that the Service Plan would be a dynamic document which was continually updated.

98 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 7 in the Minute Book), which provided a comprehensive update as to how the Authority had performed in 2011/12.

The following points were highlighted:

- Fires Attended – It was noted that links had been found between the weather, hours of sunlight and the number fires attended, particularly regarding secondary deliberate fires. It was anticipated that chimney fire statistics would be broken down into the types and causes of fires in the longer term.
- Accidental Dwelling Fires – The trend followed the national average. It was noted that a change in the national recording system in 2009 may have had an impact on the numbers of these fires when looking over a six year period. 35% - 39% of fires required no fire fighting action to be taken, although fire safety advice is provided.
- Casualties from Primary Fires – the number the Authority recorded was above the target set. It was noted that a large number of casualties were as a result of cooking accidents. The Authority was working at improving its data sharing with other bodies in order to identify reasons for the increase.

It was noted by the Committee that the average response times to critical incidents were within the target.

RESOLVED:

a) The Committee supported the performance reports and endorsed the strategies proposed to meet targets.

99 EVALUATION OF HFRA DEDICATED SPECIALIST FIRE INVESTIGATION TEAM

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 8 in the Minute Book) regarding a specialist HFRA Fire Investigation team.

The Arson Task Force was established in 2006 and had proved to be a very successful initiative, taking the average conviction rate for Hampshire to 52%. The Authority had established a very good working relationship with the Police, with around 260 cases being investigated each year and over 600 people arrested to date. All incidents were investigated, but those thought to be Level 2 or Level 3 were taken on by the Hampshire Arson Task Force.

Members agreed that publicity was important to promote the success of the Task Force.

Action: That a short paragraph be included in the Activity Report that covered the successes of the team.

RESOLVED:

- a) The Committee acknowledged, supported and also congratulated the progress made to date of the dedicated Specialist Fire Investigation team and the Hampshire Arson Task Force
- b) A paragraph be included in the Fire Incident Report summarising the successes of the teams.

100 REVIEW OF RELOCATION OF WINCHESTER FIRE STATION

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 9 in the Minute Book), which offered an update and details regarding the relocation of Winchester Fire Station.

The move had been supported by Winchester and HFRA Members and learning points had been identified that would be applied to the new station in Basingstoke. Two buildings at the new site in Winchester had been retained and refurbished and the site enabled fire protection officers and management staff to work together at the same location. The site also provided water rescue training facilities. Early measures were taken to offer some retained staff relocation packages so they could move with the new station and still provide cover.

Members were informed that they were welcome to visit any stations across the County if they wished., and it was agreed that old Basingstoke station would be of benefit to Members in comparison to the newer stations.

RESOLVED:

- a) The improvements in service delivery, infrastructure, future capacity and increased resilience by the move of Winchester Fire Station from North Walls to Winnall were endorsed
- b) The learning points identified to inform the construction of a new station in Basingstoke were supported.

101 RESPONDING TO SMALL FIRES IN RURAL AREAS MORE EFFECTIVELY BY USING LANDROVERS

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 10 in the Minute Book), regarding the use of Landrovers for small fires in rural areas.

The officer explained how Landrovers were more cost effective and also enabled a main engine to be freed for use on larger fires. A pilot of the project had been successful and achieve £3000 of savings.

A separate rota for the Landrovers had not been suitable for teams and shift patterns and selective paging was being developed further in order to streamline the operation and despatch of the vehicles and drivers.

Action: It was agreed that a further report be brought back to the Committee in 12 months' time, detailing progress with the scheme.

RESOLVED:

The Committee endorsed the following:

- a) A phased approach to using Landrovers to respond to clearly defined small fires in the open as follows:
 - i. Phase 1: Landrovers in existing locations to be mobilised as the first appliance to small fires in the open. To commence on 1 August 2012
 - ii. Phase 2: In line with current work reviewing the disposition of vehicles across the county, consideration would be given to the location of the Landrover fleet.
 - iii. Phase 3: Landrovers to respond beyond their own station grounds to small fires in the open in neighbouring areas using Automatic Vehicle Location system when the facility is available.

- b) Subject to the outcomes of the selective paging project, selective paging be used to reduce the number of personnel required to attend to enable mobilisation of the Landrover.