

Appendix B

Consultation Strategy for the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2013 to 2016

Why do we consult?

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service undertakes consultation on behalf of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority on a range of issues. The Service ensures through this consultation strategy, that all consultation carried out is relevant, inclusive, effective and meaningful, and that the outcomes of consultation are used to inform decision making.

Fire authorities have a duty to consult the public and stakeholders on the provision of their services. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012 states that authorities need to ***‘identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their communities may face. To keep their communities safe, authorities need to deliver effective and proportionate prevention and protection activities to plan for and respond to incidents within their areas and in other areas as reflected in their integrated risk management plan’***

This Consultation Strategy will establish the views and opinions of stakeholders on all areas in which the Service operates to determine levels of service provided, areas of risk and financial efficiency.

The purpose of the consultation outlined in this document is to ensure the Service engages in a “conversation with communities and to inform them through the provision of up-to-date, accessible data on risk. Through this transparent approach, communities can better influence local planning and how their authority meets risk”.

Drawing on the widest possible range of data and views available will enable the Service to make informed decisions, requisite in providing the best possible response, and fulfilling the needs of the community which it serves both locally and nationally.

Who do we consult?

The Service will consult with any stakeholder that has a legitimate interest in the strategic proposals. The Service also seeks the views of any persons, organisations or stakeholders that will be affected by any of the strategic proposals.

The Service will ensure that it consults with the following persons, organisations or stakeholders;

- Employees and their representatives
- General public
- Partners
- Businesses and commerce
- Other fire and rescue authorities
- Relevant government departments
- Other emergency services
- Local authorities and other public agencies
- Local councillors and members of parliament

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Areas for Consultation

The Service will undertake consultation on the Strategic Proposals detailed in Appendix A, which have been constructed to enable the Service to address identified risks to communities. Feedback will help shape these proposals for final publication in the 2013-2016 Service Plan.

At the same time the Service will be starting to regularly engage with communities around broader topics to help increase the knowledge of what services we offer. This should allow our communities to be better informed to make future comments on our plans.

Consultation methodologies

The Service will employ both quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to fully understand the opinions and requirements of the communities it serves.

- Quantitative Research

Quantitative research involves sample or census surveys to provide numerical measurement of the distribution of opinion in the target populations – using self-completion questionnaires, telephone interviews and/or personal interviews.

- Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is used to explore and understand people's assumptions, opinions, standards, expectations and attitudes using in-depth conversations in focus groups or comparable forums.

This year the qualitative research will be implemented through the following means:

Face-to-face events

Conversational forums where participants can discuss their views in depth with us. All feedback during these events will be recorded and fed back to participants. It is this rich source of information and ideas that will help shape the proposals for the Service Plan.

The strategic proposals for the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan 2013-2016 have been produced after analysing current/historical data available and will be consulted upon with other agencies and interested parties. This will allow the Service and other agencies to gauge what is required and what can be achieved to promote further interoperability, inline with the National Framework criteria.

Other

As well as face to face, the Service will use pre-existing channels to identify and engage relevant stakeholders on certain strategic proposals. We have a number of forums and

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partners who have close links with businesses, vulnerable groups or similar which we can use for targeted engagement and consultation.

Details of the target groups and proposed methods of consultation can be found in Appendix C.

Timescale for Consultation

Recent 'Consultation Principles' issues by the Cabinet Office (2012) state that timeframes for any consultation should be '**proportionate and realistic to allow stakeholders sufficient time to provide a considered response**'. This timeframe can vary between 2 and 12 weeks, which is a change from the previous code of practice which stated a minimum of 12 weeks. For the purpose of our consultation the Service has decided on a 12 week period.

Risk Assessment

Consultation with the community and other interested parties forms a large part of the Service's planning process and failure to carry out consultation would result in the Service failing to fulfil its duty as set out in the National Framework. Additionally, failure to consult may lead to a Service which does not reflect the needs of the community, and it is therefore likely that the perception of the Service users would fall. For this reason, it is essential that the Service adopts a flexible and consistent consultation strategy in order to satisfy its obligations.

The Service is acutely aware that effective engagement of our staff is critical for ensuring sustainable improvement.

The Service also recognises the need to consult with other stakeholders and strategic partners. Failure to do so could result in decisions taken that compromise the Service's best interests. Other potential consequences are the loss of funding, degradation of reputation and our inability to meet our corporate aims. The Service wants to capitalise on current partnerships and build meaningful relationships with other organisations and agencies to further improve our service to our community.

We will ensure that:

1. The attached scale and methodology of consultation (as outlined in Appendix C), is adopted as the framework for the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan consultation in the year 2012 to 2013.
2. All consultation results will be considered fully before proposals for Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan 2013 to 2016 are implemented. The outcomes of the consultation will be reported to the Fire Authority in February 2013.
3. The consultation process (including results and findings) will be open and transparent and be made available to all interested parties via our website.