

**Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority**

**Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee**

**Item: 9**

**22 October 2013**

**Report on the Operational Assessment Fire Peer Challenge of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service**

**Report by the Chief Officer**

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**1 Summary**

- 1.1 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service is committed to being the best fire and rescue service, and part of that commitment involves seeking external scrutiny and assessment of our performance. The Local Government Association (LGA) administers the Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge process on behalf of fire and rescue services.
- 1.2 The Service underwent a Peer Challenge between 29 April and 2 May 2013. Attached in appendix 1 is a copy of the report which captures the outcomes and presents the key findings of the work.
- 1.3 We are currently reviewing the 'areas to explore' reported against our Service Improvement Plan to ensure that these are already included. Where they are not, we are developing further improvement plans.

**2 Recommendations**

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the contents of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Fire Peer Challenge Report.
- 2.2 Makes a request for Member volunteers to contribute to a working group to examine the areas in the Peer Challenge report related to 'Members, governance, and scrutiny'.

**3 Introduction and background**

- 3.1 The Service is committed to regular external scrutiny and assessment where it is considered that doing so will bring benefit and added value. Any external assessment assists us with continuous improvement and our aim of being the best fire and rescue service.
- 3.2 The Operational Assessment/Peer Challenge process administered by the LGA is a well established scrutiny and challenge process which is improvement focused.

3.3 In preparation we completed a self-assessment based on key assessment areas of the LGA Operational Assessment Toolkit.

3.4 For each of the Key Areas of Assessment we self-assessed ourselves as Developing, Established, or Advanced.

3.5 Our self-assessment results were:

1	Community Risk Management	Advanced
2	Prevention	Established
3	Protection	Established
4	Response	Advanced
5	Health and Safety	Established
6	Training and Development	Established
7	Call Management and Incident Support	Established

3.6 The results of our self-assessment were reported to the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee in February 2013.

3.7 From our self-assessment and evidence gathering we identified five priority areas for a Peer Challenge team to focus on during their visit.

These were:

- Members, Governance and scrutiny
- Community Engagement
- Technology, innovation and service effectiveness
- Training and Development
- Community Safety – Prevention

These are not all standard areas of focus from the Toolkit, but ones that we felt needed stronger focus for improvements.

3.8 The next stage of the process was the Peer Challenge which involved a visit from a team of specially trained peer assessors. This team of seven was led by the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and included an elected member from and a client executive from IBM. We took the approach that we could use the strength of knowledge of the Review team to provide a robust challenge to us so that we could gain the most benefit from the process.

3.9 The resulting report is attached in Appendix 1. We are currently reviewing the 'areas to explore' in the report against our Service Improvement Plan to ensure that these are already included. Where they are not, we are developing further improvement plans.

#### **4 Areas of particular interest for this Committee**

4.1 Section 6 of the report considers "Members, governance and scrutiny" and may be of particular interest to Members, particularly those on this Committee. Some of the points raised have influenced the recently agreed changes to committees'

terms of reference, some will be reviewed by the Member Development sub-committee, and others will be examined further in the scrutiny work on the report by Sir Ken Knight 'Facing the future'. We plan to run a further Member working group to focus on the 'areas to explore' detailed on pages 9 and 10 of the Peer Challenge report:

- Enhanced leadership and constructive challenge
- New demands will require members to provide greater strategic direction
- Further enhance engagement with members and staff on strategic matters
- Development of an organisational development strategy which includes a focus on succession planning skills development and talent management
- Members to play a stronger role leading communities through local consequences of resource and risk based strategic change proposals

4.2 The outcome of the response to the peer assessment will be reported to this Committee at a future meeting.

## **5 Supporting our corporate aims and priorities**

5.1 The proposals within this report support our aim of being the best fire and rescue service.

## **6 Risk analysis**

6.1 Without external scrutiny and assessment we may miss opportunities for improvement.

## **7 People impact assessment**

7.1 There is no people impact from the assessment and any actions arising afterwards will be subject to individual consideration.

7.2 The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the equality and human rights legislation.

## **8 Environmental and sustainability impact assessment**

8.1 There are no impacts from the assessment or the report. Actions arising from our improvements will be separately assessed.

## **9 Resource implications**

9.1 Human Resources:

There are no human resource impacts of the process, but actions arising from our improvements will be separately assessed.

9.2 Physical Resources:

There are no physical resource impacts of the process, but actions arising from our improvements will be separately assessed.

### 9.3 Financial Implications

There are no financial impacts of the process, but actions arising from our improvements will be separately assessed.

## 10 Consultation

10.1 Consultation over the process has taken place with the Local Government Association.

## 11 Background papers

11.1 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

Report to Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee, Operational Assessment of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, April 2013

Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service, Fire Peer Challenge Report, May 2013

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