

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 22 October 2013

PRESENT:

Councillors: K. Chapman (Chairman); M. Cooper; J. Frankum; F. Pearce (Vice  
Chairman); M. Staplehurst; J. Wall

**10 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Simpson,  
Councillor Adam Carew, and Councillor John West.

**11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful of their duty to disclose at the meeting any  
disclosable pecuniary interest they had in any matter on the agenda for the  
meeting, where that interest was not already entered in the Authority's  
register of interests, and their ability to disclose any other pecuniary or non-  
pecuniary interests in any such matter that they might have wished to  
disclose.

No interests were declared under this item.

**12 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Minutes of the previous Committee held on 2 July 2013 were confirmed  
as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

In relation to the action under Minute 3 (page 1) for establishment of a joint  
Risk and Planning Working Group comprising Members from across HFRA  
committees, the Director updated Members that this was being progressed  
together with a risk cover review and an update would be provided at the  
next Committee.

**13 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

**14 DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations received for this meeting.

## **15 SHIRLEY TOWERS INCIDENT – ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT STEERING GROUP UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Officer in relation to the Organisational Improvement Steering Group findings following the Shirley Tower's incident (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

The Area Manager summarised the main findings of the Steering Group following the incident at Shirley Towers in 2010. It was noted that the aim of the Group was to identify lessons to be learnt, and take all necessary actions to improve performance at operational incidents.

It was noted that there were 136 separate issues (and subcategorised 196 items) covering the whole incident. Most had since been addressed and there were only 12 outstanding, as highlighted in Appendix A. Completion of some of these was noted as subject to delay due to a pending re-write on the national Breathing Apparatus Technical Bulletin, from the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Members enquired about the remaining issues which were discussed and it was confirmed that these were being progressed. Members felt positive steps had been made in particular through improvements to Breathing Apparatus cylinder covers, and it was noted that these were also being endorsed for possible use by other services.

The Chairman and Members agreed that the Shirley Towers Organisational Improvement Steering Group was substantially complete and much progress had been achieved.

RESOLVED:

- a) The Committee endorsed the progress made in dealing with the identified issues, and the improvements already in place in HFRS
- b) The Committee endorsed the plan to complete the role of the OISG and to develop the process used into an integrated improvement process for HFRS operational activity, managed by the Response Policy Group.

## **16 EVALUATION OF THE RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM AT ST MARY'S FIRE STATION**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Officer in relation to the future of the Retained Duty System at St Mary's Fire Station (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

The Area Manager summarised the Retained Duty System (RDS) at St Mary's Fire Station and its original aims. Ongoing challenges in maintaining

a consistent service in the area were highlighted including a very transient local population and the related limited availability of locally based officers.

Members discussed the difficulties highlighted and noted that the RDS would be considered within the Service's Risk Cover Review for Hampshire.

RESOLVED:

- a) The Committee noted the content of the evaluation report and recommended that the RDS section at St Mary's be highlighted for inclusion in the Risk Cover Review and;
- b) The Committee recognised that efficiency savings of nearly £100k could be made by removing the RDS section from St Mary's with a decrease in overall performance within HFRS of only 0.2% on the 8/80 response standard.

## **17 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Officer providing an update on performance results during Quarter One and annual results for 2012/13 (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The Performance Review Manager highlighted key results for Members. The total number of fires during quarter one showed an increase against the same period in 2012/13. Members were reminded of the unprecedented low number last year due to the wet weather. The number of fires remained well within target for the year. The total number of fires had reduced by 38% since 2008/09, primarily due to a decrease in secondary fires.

The number of false alarms during 2012/13 had decreased since the previous year. Members enquired about manual checking of alarms following incidents and it was clarified that many cases were due to fitting errors (including location) rather than system failures.

An update was provided on the co-responder scheme. Members acknowledged the wider inclusion now of a new unit at Portchester Fire Station. A breakdown of call types and stations was provided (following request at the previous Committee). The Chairman felt that it would be beneficial for Members to know more about the scheme and it was agreed a presentation be provided at the next Committee.

Members noted a slight reduction in accidental dwelling fires over the last few years and that this was one of the Service's priorities. The Chairman proposed that on behalf of the Authority, he contact parish councils to highlight fire safety in the home and in particular, chimney fire safety, and this was agreed.

The number of deliberate primary fires for quarter one had reduced compared with the same period the previous year, and deliberate secondary fires had reduced each year since 2008/09.

A 68% reduction in false alarms caused by automatic fire detectors in non-domestic properties since 2005 was noted as a large improvement.

Fires in non domestic properties had decreased in 2012/13 and a breakdown was provided (as requested at the previous meeting of the Committee) on types of fire incidents within educational establishments. The majority of incidents shown within Hampshire were clarified as being limited to the item first ignited. Members felt however, that this issue should be highlighted in updates sent to the Members' local authorities.

As requested at the previous Committee meeting, a breakdown of critical response and non critical response times per station was provided. It was noted that response standards were to be included in the forthcoming Risk Cover Review.

Members endorsed the Service's results for quarter one and the good performance results achieved for 2012/13.

RESOLVED:

- a) That a presentation be provided at the next meeting of the Committee in relation to the co-responder service.
- b) That the Chairman writes to local parish councils in relation to fire safety in the home, with reference to chimney fires and safety protocol, for communication to communities.
- c) The Committee endorsed the performance report and the strategies to meet the targets.

## **18 REPORT ON THE OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT FIRE PEER CHALLENGE OF HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

The Committee considered the report from the Chief Officer in relation to the Operational Assessment Fire Peer Challenge (Item 9 in the Minute Book).

The Area Manager updated Members on the main findings from the Assessment. For the 'Members, governance and scrutiny' theme, it was proposed that Members volunteer to be part of a working group to look at areas identified within the Peer Challenge. Councillor Pearce and Councillor Staplehurst volunteered to join the group and this was agreed.

Members enquired about reference to ‘conflicting views’ within the report, between the Central Community Safety Team and local groups on how to deliver community safety priorities. It was explained that a natural tension between central and local group views could arise at times, owing to services needing to consider priorities and risks specific to the local communities they served.

RESOLVED:

- a) It was agreed that Councillor Pearce and Councillor Staplehurst represent the Committee on the working group related to ‘Members, governance and scrutiny’ to examine the areas in the Peer Challenge report
- b) The Committee noted the contents of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Fire Peer Challenge Report

## **19 REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP ON THE ‘FACING THE FUTURE’ REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer in relation to the progress of the Committee’s Working Group and their assessment of the ‘Facing the Future’ report (Item 10 in the Minute Book).

Councillor Pearce provided an update to Members on the working group’s considerations. The review included the following themes: efficiency, resources, and collaboration. The Group felt that some themes were particularly key for Members to consider. These were scrutiny, governance, and different operating models, including mutuals, mergers and sharing governance structures.

The group advised that Members should debate these issues further and proposed a debate be held in the new year. It was suggested that consideration should be given to inviting the Police and Crime Commissioner and a representative from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Committee hold a debate in relation to issues surrounding the ‘Facing the Future’ report and as outlined by the working group.
- b) The Committee endorsed the progress of the working group on the ‘Facing the Future’ report.

## **20 FUTURE ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY (NO REPORT)**

The Committee received an update from the Director in relation to establishing suitable scrutiny topics moving forward.

It was agreed that all of the Authority's committees should consider future topics for scrutiny, as a standard running agenda item.

- a) That it be a RECOMMENDATION to the Authority that all Committees add 'future topics for scrutiny' as a standard item on their agendas.