

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee

Item 8

19 April 2016

LGA Peer Challenge Review 2015

Report by the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

- 1.1 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority voluntarily participated in a Peer Challenge Review in November 2015 and the final report was published in March 2016. This report contains an overview of the report and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service's response to it, including how it will ensure that the findings are acknowledged and implemented.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That receipt of the LGA Peer Review report is acknowledged by the Committee on behalf of the Fire Authority.
- 2.2 That the Service's approach to addressing the areas identified for improvement by the Peer Review team is endorsed.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 In November 2015 the Service underwent a Fire Peer Challenge as part of the offering available from the Local Government Association for sector improvement. The purpose of the 2015 HFRS Peer Challenge was to review and gain outside expert opinion on progress against the Service's strategic vision and goals.
- 3.2 The Peer Team comprised a number of recognised experts in their individual fields some of whom were from the Fire Sector and others from industry. They were given a specific brief on areas to focus on. Over the period 23 – 27 November the team met with a wide variety of stakeholders, including members, staff and representatives from partner organisations. They collected information relating to the in scope areas through focus groups, panel interviews and station visits.
- 3.3 The final report – produced by the Peer Team and attached to this document – was subject to internal quality control within the LGA as well as discussions with HFRS to ensure that the content was factually correct at the time of writing.

4 Report Findings

- 4.1 The report identifies many examples of excellent practice throughout the Service and offered specific examples in each case of how that practice could be further

improved as well as clearly identifying a number of areas that may benefit from further consideration which are all contained within the full report. As the purpose of a Peer Challenge Review is to offer critical appraisal in a safe setting without recourse to a set of prescriptive standards, there is no obligation on the Service to take forward every recommendation identified by the reviewing team.

4.2 The Peer Team identified eight areas as 'Quick Wins' that if the Service addressed this may act as critical enablers for success. These are as follows:

- Commit to a visible action plan to address issues raised by this peer review
- Clarify and unify the aims and cultural vision of the organisation
- Produce a strategy on a page
- Streamline to governance framework and decision making process
- Identify the vital few performance measures
- Reduce the communications/engagement gap between SHQ and stations and aid in closing the loop
- Address the huge number of people in temporary positions
- Adopt an integrated approach to Inclusion and Diversity

5 Service approach to the report

5.1 HFRS will commit to improving its performance in the areas identified by the Peer Team and will report to the Fire Authority on progress in each of the agreed areas. The Knowledge Management Department will retain strategic oversight of progress in each of the areas.

5.2 The Service has communicated the report through internal channels with an accompanying document and video to explain more fully the context of the report and certain findings. As the Service is committed to wider improvement in the Fire Sector and sharing knowledge, the report has been shared externally with the Chief Fire Officers' Advisory Unit (CFRAU) and published on the Hampshire Fire and Rescue website.

5.3 A detailed Peer Review Action Plan (including the 'Quick Win' list) that focuses on individual improvement areas will be developed by Knowledge Management and approved by the Service Management Team. Individual members within SMT will take accountability for the delivery against agreed areas. Once the action plan is agreed, we plan to invite Members to oversee the delivery of the key outcomes within their scrutiny role.

6 Supporting our corporate aims and objectives

6.1 In addressing the areas for further improvement and consideration, Hampshire Fire and Rescue service will continue to fulfil its mission of making Hampshire safer. The priorities within the Service Plan align with continual improvement and carrying out this important improvement work will ensure that we progress towards the end states of each priority.

7 People Impact Assessment

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

8 Resource implications

- 8.1 There are no specific Resource implications as the actions associated with each area for improvement or further consideration will be including within routine business planning activities.

9 Background papers

- 9.1 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:

LGA HFRS Peer Review Report 2015
Peer Review Report explanatory document (internal only)

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