

**15 September 2010**

**Draft 'Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan 2011 to 2014': proposed corporate objectives and consultation strategy**

**Report by the Chief Officer**

Contact: David Howells, Director of Corporate Services

Telephone 02380 626833

## **1 Summary**

- 1.1 Eight new corporate objectives are proposed for the draft 'Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan 2011 to 2014'. Once these have been considered and approved by the Authority, we will seek views and comments on them from our various stakeholders. The consultation period will run from 20 September 2010 to 10 December 2010.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the proposed corporate objectives (set out in Appendix A) be approved as a basis for consultation with stakeholders; and
- 2.2 That the proposed consultation strategy and programme (set out as Appendices B and C) be approved.

## **3 Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Authority's corporate plan covers a three-year period which is reviewed, consulted upon and updated annually. We call our corporate plan the, 'Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan'. It incorporates our annual report and what we used to call our 'Integrated Risk Management Plan' (IRMP) – which all fire and rescue authorities are required to publish.
- 3.2 The published plan is the tangible result of a well-established corporate planning process and performance management framework. The process ensures that the corporate objectives in the plan (together with all other supporting plans, strategies, policies and procedures) remain relevant in the changing context in which we operate, and responsive to our stakeholders needs. Important elements of the process include regular reviews of:
- current and emerging risks (Strategic Risk Register)
  - operating context – assessing social, technological, economic, environmental, political, legal, ethical factors (STEEPLE analysis)
  - our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis)

- past and current performance (monitoring of key performance indicators)
  - the findings and recommendations from external and internal audits
  - central government expectations (e.g. The National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service)
- 3.3 We give careful consideration to the resource implications of each objective, as well as our capacity to deliver them.
- 3.4 Effective consultation with our key stakeholders is vital to the planning and formation of new objectives, actions and activities. In particular, our staff have been actively engaged prior to the development of the objectives through an initiative we called 'Project Engage'. Group plans are also taken into account to strengthen our 'top-down and bottom-up' approach to corporate planning.
- 3.5 Members will be familiar with the Service's current corporate branding strap line: "We make life safer". It stemmed from a view that Service's overarching purpose could be summarised as, "Every time we touch a life, we make it safer".
- 3.6 Members will also be aware of our commitment to pursue continuous improvement. Our ambition is to be the best fire and rescue service in the country.
- 3.7 We want the plan to be easily understood by the public and our staff. That is why for the '2009 to 2012' and '2010 to 2013' plans, we asked the Plain English Campaign to look at our plan and make suggestions as to how we make it less technical and easier to understand. Both publications were awarded a 'Crystal Mark' as a result. We have again asked the Plain English Campaign to look at the wording of our proposed corporate objectives for 2011 to 2014 prior to consultation (see Appendix A) and we will ask them to look at the final plan before it is published in April 2011.

#### **4 Looking ahead to 2015**

- 4.1 In our current Plan (2010 to 2013) we set out a vision statement. Members will recall that we tried to imagine that it is now 2015 and described how the Service will look. It is worth repeating that statement here:
- Hampshire is safer. There are fewer fire related incidents because our work to prevent and protect against fires is working well. Our response times to life threatening emergencies have improved.
  - We have much better contact with the public. We really understand the wide range of groups in our local communities – and the risks people face. This means we are very good at knowing how and when to use our resources to have the best effect.

- The way we work with partner organisations to reduce risks and improve safety has gone from strength to strength. Our partners continue to want to work with us, because we continue to make things happen.
- The amount available to spend on the public sector is still very tight. We have made considerable savings and improved our cost-effectiveness over the last five years. However, because we expect to have to deliver more with less funding, we have continued to consider this in our plans for the future. Despite these challenges, we continue to benefit from excellent working relationships between the fire authority, managers and staff.
- Across the whole of the service we have fewer staff, but this will never put the public or our staff in danger. We are working more efficiently because we have flexible work arrangements with our staff. Our retained (on-call) firefighters are vital to the way we deliver value-for-money services.
- We have the same number of fire stations, but the types of emergency response vehicles in some of them have changed. There are more specially designed vehicles to deal with small scale incidents.
- We have in place a new control room so we can better manage our emergency resources. We share this with other fire and rescue services in the south east.
- We are more environmentally friendly. We use less energy than we did five years ago, because we are all doing our bit to reduce the effect we have on the environment. We have strong plans for dealing with the risks and emergencies caused by climate change.
- All our staff are fitter and healthier. There are fewer work related injuries. Staff are better trained and skilled to carry out their roles and responsibilities, which are getting more and more varied.
- Because of the changes and improvements we have made, we are seen as the best-performing fire and rescue service in the country. The public are happier with our performance than ever before. We have our staff to thank for this.

4.2 It is suggested that all of the proposed corporate objectives are consistent with this vision and will help to make it a reality.

## **5 Consultation strategy and programme**

5.1 The consultation strategy attempts to provide a programme of activities designed to ensure a good level of engagement with those key stakeholders most likely to be concerned about, or able to contribute most to, the proposed set of corporate objectives. A copy of the consultation strategy and draft programme are attached as Appendices B and C for the Authority's approval.

- 5.2 The consultation period will run from Monday 20 September 2010 until Friday 10 December 2010.

## **6 Risk Analysis**

- 6.1 Failure to produce a corporate plan (including the statutory requirement to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan) would pose a significant risk for the Authority because the Authority would be failing to meet a statutory obligation as set out by the Government.

- 6.2 Consultation with key stakeholders on the preparation of our corporate plan is an essential requirement of good governance. The lack of a robust consultation strategy would run the risk that our corporate priorities, policies and objectives might fail to properly reflect the needs and expectations of local communities and our various key stakeholders.

## **7 Resource Implications**

- 7.1 Work is continuing on identifying the resource implications and the proposed objectives for the three-year financial planning period 2011/12 to 2013/14. As several of the proposals seek to improve cost-effectiveness the overall impact is not expected to lead to any growth in the budget. There may, however, be some short-term investment in resources to manage the various projects. These will be funded from within existing resources.

- 7.2 The costs associated with the programme of consultation activities will also be met from within existing departmental budgets.

## **8 People Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 An initial 'people impact assessment' (PIA) has been undertaken for each of the proposed corporate objectives.
- 8.2 The proposals within this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

## **Background Information (Section 100D of Local Government Act 1972)**

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:

None

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

- Appendix A** A copy of the new consultation document including the proposed corporate objectives with the 'What & Why' and 'How & When' sections.
- Appendix B** A copy of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan (IRMP) 2011 to 2014 Consultation Strategy.
- Appendix C** A copy of the consultation programme for 2010 to 2011.

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