

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Governance Committee

24th March 2010

Action Plan for the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Health and Safety Executive Inspection (2009)

Report of the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting in September 2009, the Fire Authority received a report on the outcomes of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspection, and noted the intention to produce an agreed HFRS and HSE action plan to address the issues highlighted.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to present the action plan to the Committee.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the action plan for the implementation of recommendations arising from the Health and Safety Executive inspection. (Appendix 1)
- 2.2 That the Committee agrees to receive regular updates on the progress towards implementing the recommendations made.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 Early in 2009 the Health and Safety Executive announced that it would be carrying out a programme of inspections of Fire and Rescue Services across the UK and would be visiting eight services as a representative sample. These would be chosen based on size, demographics, governance arrangements and previous knowledge of the HSE. The background to the inspections were the number of recent firefighter fatalities in various incidents around the UK, and particularly the Improvement Notices served on Warwickshire and Hertfordshire FRSs. Hampshire volunteered to take part and was selected as the first service to be inspected. The inspection took place during May 2009 with a team of four HSE Inspectors on site for three days.

- 3.2 The inspection resulted in a report on the effectiveness of the health and safety arrangements in HFRS, and a general national report is planned once all eight inspections had been completed. Although the main purpose of the inspections was to gauge the fire and rescue sector as a whole, it was clear that enforcement action would take place whenever the inspecting teams discovered any areas where they felt that this was merited.
- 3.3 The HSE team returned to the Service to present their draft report on 8th June, after which a final report was agreed and reported to the Fire Authority in September 2009.
- 3.4 Since that time an action plan has been agreed with the HSE and presented to Service Management Team. The action plan is appended for information.
- 3.5 The Health and Safety Strategy and Performance Group will be overseeing the implementation of the plan and the evidence gathering, and progress reported to Service Management Team.
- 3.6 It is also proposed that the Governance Committee receives regular updates on the progress against the actions and timescales detailed in the plan.

4 Contribution to corporate aims and objectives

- 4.1 Effective health and safety arrangements are vital to our aim of being the best fire and rescue service in the Country. Additionally legislative and regulatory requirements mean that this is an area where we must continually develop and evolve in order to ensure compliance. The opportunity to volunteer and 'test' our arrangements during an inspection was a useful way of having external scrutiny of our arrangements.

5 Risk Analysis

- 5.1 Health and safety requirements are the basis of an entry on the Strategic Risk Register. The action plan has been referred to within that entry. Failure to implement recommendations will result in the HSE revisiting and asking why we have not responded to the areas they have highlighted.

6 Resource implications

- 6.1 In the short term the action plan and any improvements will not have any additional resource implications. The majority of the recommendations are about systems and should not have significant additional resource implications. In many cases we are already working on improvements and so this report does not add any further costings. There is however one recommendation which might have implications, Recommendation 3 – 'the use of specialist appliances by RDS personnel' will need to be reviewed and this could have resourcing implications which cannot be assessed until this work is carried out. If the review highlights additional resource requirements it will be the subject of the report to the Service Management Team meeting and if necessary the Authority.

7 Human resources

7.1 No additional human resource implications.

8 Physical resources

8.1 No additional physical resource implications

9 Information and Communications Technology resources

9.1 No additional ICT resource implications

10 Financial implications

10.1 No additional financial implications.

11 People Impact Assessment

11.1 Our health and safety arrangements are already subject to a People Impact Assessment and this report does not have any additional impact.

11.2 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.

12 Consultation

12.1 Representative bodies were fully involved with the HSE inspection process and had the opportunity of a separate meeting with the inspection team. The final report was made available to all representative bodies.

13 Conclusion

13.1 The Service took the opportunity to be involved with the HSE inspections in order to test our health and safety arrangements against robust external scrutiny. Overall this has been a positive inspection with a good outcome, and has helped to further our already good relations with the Health and Safety Executive. The action plan and its reporting to this Committee will contribute to the overall governance of our health and safety arrangements.

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:

The Management of Health and Safety at Hampshire Fire and rescue Service – Report of the inspection by the Health and Safety Executive (May 2009)

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

Appendix 1 – Health and Safety Executive Inspection May 2009 Outcomes - Action Plan with glossary of terms