

**10 February 2010**

**Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2010 – 2013:  
proposed corporate objectives**

**Report by the Chief Officer**

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## **1 Summary**

- 1.1 The Authority previously agreed to consult staff and stakeholders on seven proposed corporate objectives. As a result of the valuable feedback we have received it is recommended that one of the proposed objectives should be removed and the wording of the remaining objectives clarified and/or improved.
- 1.2 The six corporate objectives now recommended for including in the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2010 – 2013 are:
1. New risk based response standards
  2. Making best use of our firefighters
  3. Tackling small fires in a better way
  4. Increasing our contact with the public
  5. Creating a dedicated fire investigation service
  6. Reviewing our staff numbers

The revised wording for these is set out in Appendix B

The objective that is no longer being proposed is:

- Getting to incidents in rural areas faster (see paragraph 3.6)

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the feedback from staff and stakeholders on the original seven corporate objectives for 2010 to 2013, as summarised in Appendix A to this report, be noted.
- 2.2 That the revised set of six proposed corporate objectives, as set out in Appendix B to this report, be approved for inclusion in the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2010 – 2013.

### 3 Consultation feedback

3.1 In September 2009 the Authority approved seven proposed corporate objectives as the basis for consultation with our staff and stakeholders. The Service undertook a twelve-week consultation period from 21 September 2009 to 11 December 2009 and 15 consultation events were held. These were:

Event	Venue	Date	Attendees
Service Delivery managers	HFRS Headquarters	07/09/09	36
HFRS members	HFRS Headquarters	16/09/09	14
HFRS managers	HFRS Headquarters	16/09/09	40
Public focus group - Alton	Alton fire station	22/09/09	10
Public focus group - Lyndhurst	Lyndhurst fire station	24/09/09	10
Public focus group - Havant	Havant fire station	29/09/09	10
HFRS staff	Lyndhurst fire station	27/10/09	22
HFRS staff	Cosham fire station	29/10/09	17
Representative bodies	HFRS Headquarters	29/10/09	5
HFRS staff	Redbridge fire station	03/11/09	16
HFRS staff	Basingstoke fire station	04/11/09	22
HFRS staff	HFRS Headquarters	12/11/09	61
HFRS staff	Alton fire station	12/11/09	23
HFRS staff	Rushmoor fire station	25/11/09	43
HFRS managers	HFRS Headquarters	04/12/09	35

3.2 In addition to these formal consultation events, we also invited feedback from our various stakeholders using an on-line feedback form on our website. Posters and copies of the proposed objectives were displayed in all libraries and public information points (as well as at all our fire stations). Letters inviting comments were sent to all stakeholders on our stakeholder register, neighbouring fire and rescue authorities, constituent local authorities, Hampshire's Members of Parliament and our partner organisations. This resulted in 36 written responses.

- 3.3 Feedback from staff has been constructive and generally positive, with 103 responses received. Most of these related to two of the proposed objectives;
- Making best use of our firefighters: with concerns focused on the removal of four fire appliances at fixed times into the strategic reserve.
  - Reviewing our staff numbers: with concerns about possible job losses or redundancies.
- 3.4 All the comments, views and opinions received from our staff and the various stakeholders have been collated. A summary of the key points and issues raised is set out as Appendix A. This has resulted in various aspects of the objectives being clarified and better defined, as set out as Appendix B.
- 3.5 The feedback we have received has prompted alterations to the wording of five of the six proposed objectives. The changes made to each objective are summarised below.
- New risk based response standards: The words 'life-threatening' have been added to the 'critical incidents' response standard to distinguish these from other incidents. The new categories and response times proposed are:
    - Life-threatening and other critical incidents – 8 minutes
    - Non-critical incidents – 15 minutes
    - Other incidents – 60 minutes
  - Making best use of our firefighters: We have removed the concept of the 'strategic reserve' and replaced this with a 'second line' availability process. The original proposal placed four wholetime pumps into the strategic reserve from specific stations at set times, however, after consultation with staff – we will now limit the amount of pumps that go on second line availability to three, and ensure that the process is driven by demand and not limited to certain times of the day.
  - Tackling small fires in a better way: In Southampton from April 2010 and in Basingstoke from April 2011, we will crew the small fires vehicles 24 hours-a-day, instead of the previously proposed 1000 hours to 2200 hours. The small fires vehicle will be jointly crewed with the aerial ladder platform as suggested by staff at these stations, instead of using the 'strategic reserve'. In Portsmouth the small fires vehicle will be crewed using second line availability, and at times when small fires most frequently occur.
  - Increasing our contact with the public: We will not purchase any further mobile community contact points (MCCP) until after a full evaluation of the first MCCP in Portsmouth. We will look into using existing vehicles to help us deliver our services to the community, as suggested by staff.
  - Creating a dedicated fire investigation service: No changes
  - Reviewing our staff numbers: We have changed the wording of the objective to reflect that all HFRS staff will be reviewed. There was some confusion around

non watch based staff which prompted this change. The text around a salary scheme for retained firefighters has changed – this is still an option, however no final decision has yet been made.

- 3.6 The proposed objective on 'Getting to incidents in rural areas faster' provoked considerable discussion. Staff and the representative bodies expressed both logistical and safety concerns. In response to these, it is felt that the objective should be removed from the Plan this year. The need to get to rural incidents faster is still a concern, so further research and development will be carried out with the intention bringing this back for consideration in the future. Our managers will be asked to develop their initial ideas at a managers conference to be held in March 2010.
- 3.7 Other key points that emerged from consultation include:
- Staff said that they would appreciate being better engaged prior to the corporate objectives being developed. So, we will change the planning cycle for the Plan to enable this to happen. This will also improve the integration of group, station, and departmental plans.
  - Members of the public said that when dealing with emergency calls we should tell the caller where our resources are coming from, and give an indication of how long it would take to get to the incident. We felt that this was a good suggestion and we will take steps to introduce it.
- 3.8 It was disappointing that we received very little feedback from the business community.
- 3.9 We have maintained a 'learning log' during the preparation of the Plan. This helps us to identify practical improvements for the future management of the consultation process.

#### **4 Preparation of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2010 - 2013**

- 4.1 Work is well underway in preparing the Plan which will be published at the beginning of April. It is hoped that an early draft will be circulated at the meeting. It will include a short commentary on the progress of each of the objectives from the current edition of the Plan (2009 – 2012).
- 4.2 Last year we asked the Plain English Campaign to look at our Plan and make suggestions as to how to make it easier to understand and more accessible. We achieved 'Crystal Mark' accreditation. We are going through the same accreditation process this year.

#### **5 Risk Analysis**

- 5.1 Consultation 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. We believe that we again carried out a comprehensive programme of consultation activity that has genuinely informed the development and preparation of our Plan for 2010 - 2013.

## **6 Resource Implications**

- 6.1 The costs associated with the consultation process and the subsequent production of the Service Plan will be met from within existing budgets.

## **7 People Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 A People Impact Assessment (PIA) has been completed for the Plan. There are no significant issues arising from it to draw to the attention of Members.
- 7.2 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:

Draft Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2010 - 2013: proposed corporate objectives and consultation strategy (see item 10)

<http://www.hants.gov.uk/decisions/decisions-index/index-docs-7102.html>

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

Appendix A – Summary of feedback from consultation

Appendix B – Draft corporate objectives