

Draft objectives for the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan 2011 to 2014

Introduction

We are planning to introduce the following objectives in this year's Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan. We have developed these objectives to make sure that we continue to improve the services we provide, and to help deliver our priorities and our vision for 2015.

Objectives one and two

We understand that we are not using our retained (on-call) fire stations effectively. However, these stations are an important part of the community, which is why we want to create new ways to use these fire stations.

Objective three

We are continuing to look for new ways to respond to small fires.

Objective four

We are continuing to look for new ways to respond to automatic fire alarms.

Objective five

We are continuing to look for new ways to respond to road-traffic accidents.

Objective six

We are continuing to review the need:

- for full-size fire engines; and
- to match our resources to the level of risk.

Objective seven

We want to reduce the effect we have on the environment, so we will develop our buildings to be more environmentally friendly.

Objective eight

We will continue to try to understand our communities better, to make sure our services meet their needs.

These objectives will make sure that we continue to improve and offer excellent services, as well as help to achieve our ambition of being the best fire and rescue service in the country.

Objective one – We will create a business centre at one of our retained (on-call) fire stations

What and why?

We will create a business centre at one of our retained (on-call) fire stations. This will allow our staff to make the most of the station and work in a more effective and efficient way. We will also encourage our partners (such as other emergency services, Hampshire County Council and other public organisations) and members of the local community to use the business centre, so we can improve the service we provide.

Creating a business centre with suitable office accommodation and working facilities will allow us to use the station during the day. The facilities will allow part-time or self-employed on-call staff to provide cover while carrying out work associated with their main job in the business centre. This will be convenient for them and it will also help us to respond to incidents more quickly. The business centre will also give us the chance to improve the way we work with our partners, as they will also be able to use these facilities. By improving the way we work with our partners, we will be able to improve our relationship with the community.

How and when?

From our research into the local risks and circumstances of our retained (on-call) fire stations (including information from our research during our 2009/2010 review of the services we provide for Bishops Waltham, Wickham, Botley and Droxford), we have found that Alton or Petersfield would be the most suitable stations to have the business centre at. We plan to choose one of these stations after considering feedback from the consultation process. We will then create a 'model specification' for building the business centre, which will include ideas of the work involved and a flexible design, so that if successful, we could adapt it to suit the different needs of other buildings in the future.

We will start working on the chosen station for the business centre in April 2011. After six months of using the business centre, we will evaluate how effective the work has been. If this objective is successful, we will consider, depending on the funding available, introducing business centres at other stations in the county.

Objective two – We will have community facilities at our stations

What and why?

We will identify community facilities which people consider to be 'essential'. These are likely to include community libraries, post offices, village stores and so on. We will work with Hampshire County Council to introduce a community facility at one of our retained (on-call) stations.

Our retained stations are often in communities that are losing community facilities. Usually, the people who use these facilities are the people that we are trying to work with to reduce the risks that they face. By having community facilities at our stations, we can work directly with the community and earn money to improve our own services.

How and when?

We will work with Hampshire County Council's 'Culture Communities and Rural Affairs' directorate to find a suitable community facility to work with. We will use this information to find a suitable station to test the community facility at in April 2011.

Objective three – We will respond to small fires more effectively in rural areas

What and why?

In rural areas, we will respond to small fires using a crew of two firefighters in a Land Rover. Most small fires do not need the same number of firefighters or the same amount of equipment as needed for a major fire. By better matching our resources to the type of

incident, we will make sure that our full-size fire engines are immediately available to tackle life-threatening incidents.

How and when?

We plan to test this idea in Waterlooville, Ringwood and Fleet using our retained (on-call) firefighters. We will run the trial from May 2011 to October 2011. We will use the information from the trial to decide whether it would be possible and effective to introduce this idea at other stations.

Objective four – We will respond differently to automatic fire alarms which are in non-domestic properties

What and why?

We will develop more efficient ways of responding to automatic fire alarms (AFAs) in non-domestic properties throughout the county. In city areas, an appropriate member of staff will respond in a small vehicle to certain AFAs at specific times of the day, according to the risk and need. In rural areas, a local manager from a retained (on-call) station will respond in a small vehicle to certain AFAs (we will send extra vehicles and equipment if needed).

This idea has come from the staff involved in our 'four station review' of stations in Botley, Bishop's Waltham, Droxford and Wickham.

Most AFAs are false alarms and they take up the time of our firefighters and equipment unnecessarily. By developing other ways of responding, we will be able to make better use of our firefighters. This will also help us to:

- improve our response times in rural areas;
- make better use of our resources;
- match our resources to the risk;
- respond more effectively and safely to calls;
- give full-time crews more time for training and community safety activities; and
- have our resources available for emergencies.

How and when?

We will run a trial Portsmouth and Southampton using our current staff and resources.

In rural areas we will trial a scheme at two suitable stations – Botley, Alton, Romsey and Hartley Witney are possible locations. We will decide where to have the trial based on the number of incidents in the area and how suitable the station would be.

We will have the first trial in a rural area, and then we will find a suitable area and appropriate resources and run a second test scheme in a town or city. We may do this using resources from the Business Education Unit at Service Headquarters.

We will start the trial in a town or city by April 2011, and in rural areas by October 2011. We will evaluate how effective they have been after 12 months

Objective five – We will respond to road-traffic accidents in rural areas more effectively**What and why?**

In rural areas, as well as the normal resources we usually send to an incident, which we call the pre-determined attendance (PDA), we will have a trained manager from the local retained (on-call) fire station who will respond in a suitable small vehicle directly to road-traffic accidents. This will allow us to reach accidents earlier. This trained manager will gather information, carry out a risk assessment and decide what resources we need to deal with the accident. In areas where we work with the ambulance service and provide co-responders, we will also send a co-responder as well as the PDA.

This idea has come from the staff involved in our 'four station review' of stations in Botley, Bishop's Waltham, Droxford and Wickham.

How and when?

We will carry out a trial in at least one of the most suitable locations, based our risk information. The trial is likely to be at Botley, Alton, Hartley Wintney or Romsey.

We will introduce this scheme by October 2011, and evaluate it after 12 months. If the scheme is successful, we will introduce this way of working in other suitable rural areas across the county.

Objective six – We will change the way we respond from Rushmoor Fire Station**What and why?**

We will replace Rushmoor Fire Station's second full-time fire engine with a small-fires vehicle. By introducing the small-fires vehicle and having a community safety liaison officer focusing on reducing fires started deliberately in the Rushmoor area, we will reduce and respond to arson in a different way. Also, by reducing the number of staff we have at Rushmoor, we will make ongoing savings.

How and when?

We previously introduced a small-fires vehicle in Southampton, and we are learning from this. We will replace the second full-time fire engine with a small-fires vehicle in Rushmoor in October 2011.

Objective seven – We will use energy more efficiently at our buildings**What and why?**

We know we can do more to reduce the negative effect we are having on the environment. This includes reducing the amount of energy and water we use in all of our buildings. The problem is that some of the things we want to do involve spending money up front so that we can identify the problems and then make savings in the long term.

How and when?

We need to invest to save. But, over the next few years, we know that our budget will be under severe pressure. It will be difficult to justify spending money on building improvements. So, from April 2011, we will try to find new funding and use this money as well as some of our current income to pay for energy-saving schemes. We will use the money we save to carry out further work which will help us reduce the effect we are having on the environment.

Objective eight – Improving ‘Operational Diversity’ to help reduce the different risks people face in the community

What and why?

The main aim of our equality agenda, which we call ‘Operational Diversity’, is to keep local people safe and improve their quality of life. In particular, we want to reduce the risks people face because of their personal circumstances or lifestyle. By having better ways of collecting information and understanding these risks, we will be able make sure our services better meet people’s needs. When we attend incidents, some people can be affected more than others due to their circumstances. We aim to reduce these kinds of effects on individuals and groups.

We will be looking for ways to better communicate with people in Hampshire. We want to improve the way we work with other organisations who work in the community, and we will improve the way we collect and use information to help make sure our services better meet people’s needs.

How and when?

Our main aim is to better understand the different risks people face and the effect that the incidents we respond to can have on people. This will not be the same for everyone. We will improve the way we collect information about the incidents we respond to and we will have closer contact with people in the community and our partners. We will then be able to use this information to better understand and identify what risks people face, and how these risks could affect people in different ways. We will then make our future plans based on our improved understanding, which will help us to keep the community safe.

To help improve the way we use our information, we will use some new software. The new software will help us analyse the information we collect and which others give us. We will start collecting our information from April 2011, and we will use it to help us make our plans for April 2012.