

# **Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority**

## **Human Resources Committee**

**Item**

**9 November 2010**

### **South East Charter for Member Development**

#### **Report of the Chief Officer**

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## **1 Summary**

- 1.1 The elected members who make up Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) perform an important role in guiding the continual improvement of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS). As the service faces the forthcoming financial challenges, HFRA Members will need to maintain and continually update their knowledge and understanding of a range of developing issues to ensure delivery of the highest levels of service to the community.
- 1.2 The HFRA has signed the South East Employers Charter for Member Development (HFRA 26<sup>th</sup> September 2007). Following the commitment to the Charter, significant progress has been made and it is considered that HFRA is now ready to undergo the assessment to achieve the award of the Charter.
- 1.3 This paper provides an update to elected members on the progress towards achieving the Charter, highlights the progress within the Authority to embed Member Development as a key activity and recommends that we proceed with our Charter assessment in January 2011.

## **2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 Progress on the South East Charter for Member Development Action Plan is noted.
- 2.2 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority undergoes assessment for the South East Charter for Member Development in January 2011.

## **3 Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 Nationally, Fire and Rescue Services faces increasing expectations from both Government and the public. The increasing financial pressures on the whole of the public sector will require elected members to make key decisions on the future allocation of resources to maintain the high quality services we seek to provide whilst managing within more restricted budgets.
- 3.2 Whilst Members receive development within their own authorities, their position on the HFRA inevitably requires some additional specialist knowledge to support them

to undertake their roles effectively. HFRA has adopted a number of initiatives over the years to support members in developing greater awareness of the issues within the service. The agreement to sign up to the SE Charter for Member Development was a further indication of the ongoing commitment to development that exists within the Authority and a formal means by which to recognise and accredit those activities.

#### **4 Contribution to Corporate Aims and Objectives**

- 4.1 Achievement of the Charter will establish the Authorities' commitment to ongoing development and will support achievement of the corporate aims and objectives. It will help ensure that the Authority Members continue to develop their specialist knowledge and will help ensure HFRS continues its improvement and delivers high quality services to the community.

#### **5 South East Employers – Charter for Elected Member Development**

- 5.1 The SEE, in conjunction with the Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA), have developed a Charter for Elected Member Development. The Charter provides a systematic and co-ordinated framework for Member Development and builds on the Member Awareness Framework previously agreed by the Authority.
- 5.2 Benefits of working towards Charter status include establishing a Member led process to place ownership of development with the Members, establishing clearly defined development opportunities for Members, strengthened arrangements for Member development, improved use of capacity and recognition of commitment to Member development in future service assessments.
- 5.3 Achievement of the Charter is through completion of an agreed action plan (Appendix A). The activities within the plan will demonstrate HFRA's commitment to ongoing member development and to establish the necessary structures to support new and existing members in their roles.

#### **6 Progress against the Action Plan**

- 6.1 The HFRA Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) was established to support achievement of the Charter and to develop structures to embed development within the Authority. The Steering Group are supporting the progress towards the Charter through completion of the agreed action plan, co-ordination of new initiatives to support future Member Development and management of the identification of future training needs.
- 6.2 The action plan was introduced to help identify the areas of development required to achieve Charter status. The following are the key areas of work completed:
- HFRA Member Learning and Development Strategy
  - HFRA Member Handbook
  - Revised Member Induction process
  - Development of Elected Member pages on the intranet
  - Introduction of the Community Leadership Skills Questionnaire and Training Needs Analysis
  - Allocation of virtual development budget for each Elected Member

- 6.3 The self assessment action plan is attached at Appendix A and contains the details of the indicators and the progress achieved to date.

## **7 SE Charter for Member Development Assessment**

- 7.1 Successful achievement of the Charter is dependant on completion of the self assessment action plan and undertaking a successful assessment by the South East Employers.
- 7.2 The recommended date for the assessment is 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011. This will involve a number of individual interviews, meeting with the Member Development Steering Group and a focus group with identified members. Further details of the assessment schedule will be provided to Members in December once final arrangements are confirmed for the assessment.

## **8 Risk Analysis**

- 8.1 The fire and rescue sector is facing a period of substantial and sustained change as the expectations of the public and Government continue to grow. Future financial pressures will require HFRA Members to maintain their understanding of the service, supporting the HFRA in making future risk-based decisions to ensure delivery of its strategic priorities.
- 8.2 Achievement of the Charter will help provide a focus for the continuing importance of individual development that helps HFRA Members to steer the service. In doing so it can reduce the risk to the Authority, the Service and the communities we serve.

## **9 Resource/Financial Implications**

- 9.1 There are no additional resource or financial implications related to the proposals within this report.

## **10 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has previously been carried out on this proposal and no negative impacts are identified.

## **11 Consultation**

- 11.1 The development of initiatives within the SEE Charter Action Plan have been carried out by the Member Development Steering Group and reported back to the Authority through the Human Resources Committee.

## **12 Conclusion**

- 12.1 The role of HFRA elected members is probably as crucial now as it has ever been, and as the impact of future financial pressures start to impact on the Service, it will possibly be even greater. The charter itself is perhaps less important than the rigour and discipline it requires to embed sound development process for elected members. Ultimately it is the support that members receive through the process

which will enhance the quality of leadership and decision making within the authority. Successful achievement of the SE Charter for Elected Member Development will demonstrate the commitment of HFRA to the ongoing development of elected members against a national benchmark. It will also help establish a systematic and co-ordinated framework for Member development within the Authority for the future.

### **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:

South East Charter for Elected Member Development - Guidance

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