

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

item 7

Human Resources Committee

9 November 2010

Staff Review Update

Report by the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

- 1.1 As part of the corporate objective 'Reviewing staff numbers' in the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) Plan 2010 to 2013 we said we would review all staff in the service. The aim of the Staff Review is to review our current staffing to ensure we are working in the most efficient and streamlined way. This clearly links to the need for the Service to make substantial financial saving across the whole organisation.
- 1.2 The Staff Review Project is using a process that actively seeks the engagement of all employees who are affected by the review, and will commence in October 2010 (The process is mapped in Appendix A).

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Human Resources (HR) Committee endorses the steps being taken to review staff numbers as part of the Service Plan objectives.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 HFRS has identified the need to plan to reduce its costs given the current national economic position. The impact on the public sector has been widely communicated by politicians, civil servants and other trusted partners. On that basis HFRS is currently anticipating the need to plan for a reduction of 25%, in our overall budget over the next four years (starting in April 2011). Two staff efficiency projects were previously initiated (the Efficient and Flexible Crewing (EFC) Project and Retained Duty System (RDS) Strategy Project). The Staff Review will include all employees who are not part of one of these.
- 3.2 As a pre-emptive move to enable the fuller Staff Review to take place, a review of Directors was undertaken in 2009. A result was that the Specialist Response and Strategic Projects directorate was disestablished and the teams that made up this Directorate were transferred to the Service Delivery and Human Resources Directorates in January 2010. This resulted in a

number of posts being removed from the establishment including a director level post. . Accordingly, the number of Directors was reduced from four to three Plans to move the Fleet Management Centre into Corporate Services are due to become effective in November 2010. Further work flowing from the Directorate Review will continue to drive efficiencies as these are worked through.

- 3.3 We prepared the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service plan for 2010 to 2013 in anticipation of a time when public sector budgets would be under increased pressures. In the consultation meetings on the proposed objectives our staff, partners and the public agreed that we should seek to deliver efficiency savings by reviewing staff numbers in all areas of the Service to ensure that we have the right number of staff with the appropriate skills to deliver our services in the future.

4 **Review Process**

- 4.1 A Project Board has been set up to oversee the review the staff in our organisation as set out in the Service plan. Since the appointment of a project manager in July, time has been spent planning the review to ensure the engagement of all staff during the process. The method to be used has been trialed and lessons learned fed into the final process. The need to take a fair and consistent approach across all areas affected has been a key expectation.
- 4.2 The Staff Review process started in October 2010, with briefings to the Service Management Team (SMT) and team managers on the programme and process. It is anticipated that the majority of teams will complete their reviews by December 2010. The core aim of the project is to ensure that all our existing functions deliver their services in the most efficient and cost effective way possible. The Project sits within the Financial Challenge Programme Board which is chaired by the Chief Officer.
- 4.3 During October and November a series of team meetings will take place, involving all teams and employees affected by the review. The team level meetings are designed to allow all employees to have an opportunity to put forward their ideas for efficiencies. Guidance notes and briefing packs will be available to all staff and managers. The core of the work will be delivered in the three main work streams which are aligned to the existing three directorates (Service Delivery, Corporate Services and HR & Training). The three Directors are ultimately responsible for managing and delivering the requirements of the review. This does not preclude 'cross boundary' working, indeed this is a key expectation of the review.
- 4.4 Once all team meetings have been completed, team managers and directors will consolidate the team discussions to produce a directorate action plan which will be subject to internal peer review. The Project Board will consider these proposals in March 2011 before submitting a holistic plan to SMT.

5 **Review Methodology**

5.1 The review is to be carried out using the following principles:

- It will be kept simple.
- We will focus on what we do, and how we do it.
- All team managers will undertake the reviews in such a way that staff feel they have been 'worked with' as opposed to 'done to'.
- The review will look for interdepartmental efficiencies by ignoring existing organisational boundaries.
- We will put 'clearing house' arrangements in place to manage staff movements locally in the first instance (e.g. move staff within current department / directorate whenever possible).
- We will minimise adverse effects on staff by holding vacancies for displaced staff.
- There will be full consultation and involvement with staff and Representative Bodies.
- A standard set of guidance will be issued to managers to help in carrying out their reviews.
- Standard pro formas will be issued to managers for responses
- We will use similar briefing techniques for managers to those used for Project Engage to initiate the work.

6 **Communications**

6.1 Maintaining good communications with staff throughout the review period is crucial to the success of the project. A communications strategy has been developed, and lays out the methods of communication during the review. Employees will be kept informed of the progress of the review using a range of media including: Routine Notice, Top Line Briefing, Senior Manager Visits, Extras, 'Exchange' magazine, Frequently Asked Questions on the intranet, staff forums, intranet, email, word of mouth etc.

7 **Contribution to corporate aims and objectives**

7.1 Reviewing our staff numbers is an objective in the Fire and Rescue Service plan 2010 to 2013

8 **Resource implications**

8.1 Human resources

Project board membership at 22 September 2010 is as follows

Project Executive: Geoff Howsego
Project Lead: Wendy Lambert

Project Manager: Iain Hardcastle
Project Facilitator: Carole Hobbs
Senior User: Dave Curry
Members: Laura Cadd, Keely Stafford, Kathy Bowden-Ellis, Andy Bowers, Maureen Matthews, Paul Drake, Bob Wythe, Charlotte Woodward, Carole Hobbs
Fire Authority Member Cllr Adrian Evans
Representative bodies

8.2 Financial implications

The cost of the project manager is being met from the area manager vacancy on Service Management Team.

Legal Advice costs have been met from within the Service's budget for legal support.

9 People Impact Assessment

This has been started, and will be completed as part of the project methodology.

10 Conclusion

It is very clear that the current state of the economy and the steps the current Government are and will be taking to deal with the situation will have a significant effect on HFRS as a part of the public sector. The Service has considered what pre-emptive actions we can reasonable take in advance of firm announcements. This has inevitably included reviewing how we use staff to deliver our current level of service. The Staff Review Project will consider all staff groups out side of those working on watches on stations. This will be done in a fair and consistent way and our method of doing so will try to ensure staff are engaged in the process.

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:

HFRS plan 2010-2013 <http://www.hfrs.net/index/corporateservices/plan.htm>

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