

## **Report of the Community Safety Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008**

**Councillors: B Boddington (Substitute member), R Butcher, S Giles,  
L W McGuire, L Oliver (Chairman), R Pegram (Substitute member)  
and H Williams.**

**Apologies: Councillors D Harty and G Murphy**

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**This report contains items considered by the Committee which are submitted to  
the Fire Authority for information.**

### **1. FUNCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT DIRECTORATE**

The Committee has agreed the strategies and priorities for 2008/09 for the following groups within the Operational Support Directorate:

- Community Risk Reduction Group (CRRG)
- Operations Support Group (OSG)
- Training Support Group (TSG)

The Strategies build on the previous Community Safety Strategy and provide each group with a clear statement of policies and priorities for 2008/09 in order to facilitate closer working between the Operational Support Directorate and services delivered by Districts. The strategies follow a common format under headings of: Policy, Organising, Planning, Measuring, and Audit and Review. All plans are to interface with the Corporate Project Management and planning and the Fire Authority Plan and Service Improvement Plan.

Each of the Strategies propose the establishment of Strategy groups comprising the key personnel in each group and District to consider and make recommendations on effective working with, and support for, service delivery. The Committee has agreed that attendance of a Member of the Fire Authority as a “champion “ for each area would enable the community interest to be expressed as well as demonstrating the support, commitment and involvement of the Fire Authority in the delivery of the Strategies. The Committee emphasised that members would need to avoid becoming involved in operational detail and that this could be included in a protocol governing roles, responsibilities and reporting arrangements.

## **Community Risk Reduction Group (CRRG) Strategy**

Priorities for 2008/09 are:

### 1. Community Safety Priorities

- Partnerships (Including elderly and vulnerable persons strategy)
- Children and Young People (Fire Setter, Road Traffic Collisions and schools' packages)
- Arson
- Domestic Engagement
- Performance (statistical analysis)
- Communities and Local Government (National directives)

### 2. Fire Safety Enforcement Priorities

- Complaints of alleged fire risks
- Post fire audits
- Statutory consultations
- Follow-up audits
- Programme audits
- Requests for advice

3. The Head of CRRG to work with District Managers to support the introduction of the Partnership Strategy to utilise efficiencies available through closer community links.

The Committee noted that the Service was currently involved with many of partnerships. It was envisaged that through greater partnership working with the County, City and District Councils and through the Local Area Agreement the Service would develop its awareness and understanding of relevant partnerships and enable key partnerships to be identified.

Members were advised that partnership working was a key aspect on the forthcoming Comprehensive Area Assessment which are to replace the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The Chief Fire Officer has met with local authority chief executives to discuss the Service's role in partnerships and, in particular, its contribution to the social cohesion agenda.

Members have suggested that attendance to present relevant items at the District based "In your patch" meetings organised by the County Council may assist the service in communicating key issues. Attendance by Fire Authority members at District based Crime and Disorder Partnerships was also suggested as a means by which the Service would be able to contribute to broader partnership working.

The Committee was advised of national concerns about the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS), its ability to record staff competences, and the level of bureaucracy involved in the process. The Chief Fire Officer advised on the pressure on time available for training and that the priority would be given to actual training over the completion of paperwork. The Committee agreed that a report be made on progress and issues relating to the IPDS.

The Committee was also advised of the arrangements for the monthly reporting and monitoring of performance by District Management Teams with a quarterly review of performance by the Senior Management Team (SMT). The Chief Fire Officer extended an invitation to Fire Authority members to attend the SMT meetings for the quarterly review of performance.

### **Operations Support Group (OSG)**

Priorities for 2008/09 are:

1. Health & Safety, Organisational Safety & Safe Systems of Work and in particular:

- Command & Control
- Breathing Apparatus
- Operational Procedures – Part 2 Buildings
- Operational Procedures – Working at height
- Operational Procedures – Rescue from height
- Operational Procedures – High Rise

2. Major Incident Planning - National and local issues related to resilience, use of resources and building operational capacity.

3. Premises and Risk Management - Information Database and the provision of information from the Risk Management process in particular.

4. Operational Assurance - Harrow Court task and finish Group. Other local and National issues related to operational matters. The OSG would also respond to revised guidance on Operational Assessment of Service delivery when issued in 2008.

5. The Head of OSG to utilise links within the Region to realise efficiencies available by working more closely with other Fire & Rescue Services. The CFOA Operations group in particular were to provide the conduit to further this approach.

6. Area Managers to work more closely to harmonise the operations related work programmes of support and delivery. Quarterly meetings were to be driven by the Operations Strategy and the Tactical Groups' reports.

The Committee has discussed the need to maintain an audit trail of the Service's response to revised national guidance, indicating what changes were made, timescales for implementation and the identification of the lead officer responsible for the change. The Chief Fire Officer advised that it would be appropriate for the Committee to seek re-assurance that the necessary changes had been implemented and that reports would be made on significant issues.

### **Training Support Group (TSG) Strategy**

Priorities for 2008/09 are:

1. Health & Safety, Organisational Safety & Safe Systems of Work and in particular:

- Incident Command
- Breathing Apparatus (Results from Breathing Apparatus audit)
- Fire Behaviour Training
- New Dimensions Training
- Working at Height
- Rescue from Height
- High Rise
- Driver Training

2. Introduction of the next generation IPDS recording system.

3. Equality and Fairness training identified through the integrated equality schemes.

4. The Head of Training to utilise links within the Region to realise efficiencies available by working more closely with other Fire & Rescue Services and external providers. Opportunities to out-source training to be explored to meet the agenda that was unlikely to be met by current internal resources.

5. The Learning & Development Manager to utilise the partnership with SFL to meet identified Leadership and Management development needs.

6. The Area Managers to work more closely to harmonise the training programmes of Support and Delivery. The quarterly meetings were to be driven by the outcomes of the Training Strategy and Tactical Training Groups.

The Committee has discussed the need to provide the appropriate balance between community safety activity, operational response and training to ensure staff competences. The long term sustainability of the Retained Duty System (RDS) was queried in the light of the time required to ensure professional competences set against the availability and willingness of RDS staff to allocate time for training. The adequacy of the 2 hours set aside each week for training was queried. The use of other staff or volunteers to undertake community safety activity was suggested as a means of increasing the time available for training. The Committee noted that many RDS staff worked longer than their contracted hours and this commitment and community spirit was commended by members.

The Committee has noted the participation of the Service in collaborative work with other Services, both within and outside the Eastern Region on the delivery of training (e.g. on aerial appliances). There were sometimes difficulties in securing common agreement of all authorities to proposals for training and supported collaboration outside the Region where this was appropriate.

Members have noted that individual skills gaps were identified by the appraisal process and were now reported centrally so that Service-wide training priorities could be identified and delivered. The Committee has asked for a report on the skills gap analysis to be made to a future meeting.

**CHAIRMAN**

Source Documents	Location	Contact
Agenda, reports and minutes of the Community Safety Committee – 9/01/08	Hinchingsbrooke Cottage Brampton Road Huntingdon	Michael Brown 01480 444572 <a href="mailto:michael.brown@cambsfire.gov.uk">michael.brown@cambsfire.gov.uk</a>