



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	CSCP/08/4
MEETING	COMMUNITY SAFETY & CORPORATE PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	6 NOVEMBER 2008
SUBJECT OF REPORT	OPERATIONS AND RESILIENCE SUMMARY UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operations)
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The following update provides a brief summary of progress against the Corporate and department Plans. The majority of work seeks to improve service delivery arrangements through a more flexible approach being taken to not only the workforce, but the procurement and future disposition of appliances and equipment reflecting local community risk.</p> <p>The department is currently preparing a five year 'Vision' regarding service delivery which will be presented to Members in due course.</p>
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	Programmed and agreed.
APPENDICES	N/A
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	N/A

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Operations and Resilience Department is working on a number of projects linked to the corporate objectives and department plan. This paper provides a brief update on the specific projects linked to these and other projects that the department is currently working on. Each activity will improve operational service delivery, provide a more efficient, effective and safe response and also, looking to the future, provide a more flexible and responsive operational workforce, able to deal with local, regional and national challenges.

2. COMMUNITY SAFETY AND TRAINING ACTIVITY

- 2.1 This project is considering the current wholetime and day crewed shift arrangements, looking at the flexibility required to meet the challenges faced by a modern fire and rescue service, including our ability to match resources to demand and provide a more flexible, family friendly working environment. The National Framework Document clearly indicates that any improvements must be made by utilising existing resources. By reviewing current shift arrangements, resources may be released and re-invested to support community safety activity, training and provide a more evenly balance between risk and resources across the Service.
- 2.2 The initial scoping work for this project has been completed and further work is now underway to look at the best options for DSFRS. This work will incorporate a dialogue with Representative Bodies and a further detailed report will be presented to the Committee in due course.

3. REVIEW OF WORKING PRACTICES AT STATION LEVEL

- 3.1 Work has been undertaken on examining current wholetime and day crewed fire stations working practices with a view to maximising available time in support of operational preparedness, training and local community activity. The review is now complete and a revised 'work routines' policy is currently undergoing consultation in accordance with the normal procedures. This policy will provide an improved framework for the prioritisation and pre-planning of work and a new system for recording and monitoring station based activity thereby improving community station plan targets.

4. REVIEW OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE RESOURCES

- 4.1 This project is considering the current distribution of stations, personnel, appliances and equipment following the implementation of the new emergency response standards. The aim is to ensure that resources reflect the risks associated for local communities in the most flexible manner possible. Understanding the local community risk profiles is key and integral to a rolling programme of review of service delivery arrangements across DSFRS.
- 4.2 The project will also scope out a range of options that reconsiders the 'one size fits all' approach with the standard B type water tender. Whilst there is a need to ensure we meet our emergency response standards there are opportunities to utilise different types of vehicles relevant to local risk and with the potential to improve our capital expenditure in this area. A further detailed report will be submitted to the Committee early in 2009.

5. REVIEW AND HARMONISE THE PROVISION OF OPERATIONAL RISK INFORMATION

5.1 This project will harmonise and update arrangements for gathering, storing, disseminating, reviewing and testing operational risk information. The National Framework Document makes a specific requirement on Services to ensure that operational personnel are provide with current risk information. As well as harmonising existing arrangements, the project has looked extensively at national good practice to ensure that crews have the most effective system for provide accurate risk information. This work will also ensure our new system will be fully compatible with the requirements of the 'Firelink' and Regional Control Centre (RCC) projects. Progress has been positive and it is anticipated that the new system will be operational by the beginning of April 2009.

6. CO-RESPONDER UPDATE

6.1 Following extensive consultation and cooperation with South West Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST), a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been produced. This document confirms the commitments of both services to collaborate in the provision of life saving medical care in the community, providing an agreed framework of operation for the joint initiative.

6.2 The new MOU includes a performance based financial agreement resulting in DSFRS receiving funding for meeting trust attendance time targets for medical emergencies. A funding floor of £66,000 per year has been agreed, with the potential to achieve an agreed ceiling of £90,000. In addition to this operational funding the SWAST also continues to provide an officer who is seconded to the Service Training Centre, delivering first aid training on a full time basis.

6.4 A decision was made in 2007 to reduce the co-responder budget by £150,000. This target has been reached through changes to mobilising arrangements and will continue to improve once roll out of the remainder of the light vehicles has been completed and will contribute significantly to further reductions in co-responder costs. At present the service has introduced 7 of these new vehicles across Devon, with the remaining vehicles to be acquired and allocated by early 2009.

7. TECHNICAL RESCUE

7.1 Additional funding was secured within the 2008/09 budget to introduce a specialist Technical Rescue capability across four stations. This is now moving forward at pace and the following progress has been made to date:

- Implementation plan complete
- Consultation with Representative Bodies on-going
- Decision made on location of all stations (Special Ops, Camelshead, Bridgewater and Barnstaple)
- Courses arranged
- Equipment ordered
- Specialist rescue vehicle specification complete

Water Rescue

- Consultation on implementation plan now complete and final draft distributed
- Instructor training complete
- Course package complete
- Planned date of commencement January 2009
- Draft Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) written
- Draft training policy written
- Draft in-water training policy written
- Water training venue risk assessments complete

8. NATIONAL RESILIENCE PROGRAMME

- 8.1 The Fire and Rescue National Resilience (New Dimensions) programme, developed through the Cabinet Office for Fire and Rescue is nearing completion. This programme which commenced in 2001 will be completed this month (Acquisition and rollout) with the final delivery of the Enhanced Command Support Unit (ECSU) shortly to be delivered to DSFRS.
- 8.2 As a Service we now host the largest special appliance and staff assets outside of London; which also includes the newly established Urban Search and Rescue Teams (USAR), appliances, and equipment that has been delivered into the service over the last five years. These assets now include three Incident Response Units, two High Volume Pumps, two Hose Vehicles, six Transport Vehicles, two Mass Decontamination Units, and six Specialist Modules.
- 8.3 Although this capability is primarily designed to deal with terrorist incidents, it is increasingly becoming used to support a multi-agency capability when large-scale incidents or natural disasters occur e.g. the flooding in Gloucestershire and South Yorkshire, where substantial support was provided by specialist officers, high volume pumps, equipment and teams.
- 8.4 The delivery of the ECSU will enhance substantially our command support function, locally and at national incidents across the UK. In preparation for this new role the Service has recently trained 26 first response officers and USAR Technicians to undertake the role National Resilience Support Officers for out of county DSFRS deployments which includes performing the roles such as: welfare support, cross border liaison and as a contact point between DSFRS and the Special Operations Team Leader. The Service has also recently completed the building of a new Specialist Station and Training Rig for the USAR teams, servicing the needs of the South West. These assets are being embedded within DSFRS mobilising arrangements.

9 CIVIL CONTINGENCIES

- 9.1 The arrangements for supporting, two Local Resilience Forums (LRFs), Devon & Cornwall along with Avon & Somerset, has been reported to the Committee on previous occasions. The purpose of each LRF is to delivery of a number of core duties within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 that need to be developed through a multi-agency approach. The LRF also provides a forum for sharing good/poor practice, lessons learnt, understanding the various frameworks and relationships between the Government Office SW, Regional Resilience Team, each LRF and supporting agencies.

- 9.2 The Service continues to provide a regular and strong commitment to both Forums which includes two Chief Officers Groups, two Business Management Groups and several sub groups; this includes chairing a number of groups and providing administrative support and meeting venues. The sub groups undertake emergency planning, training and exercising against the National Capability Work streams such as Pandemic Flu, Flooding, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN(E)), Community Risk Registers and dealing with Mass Casualties. The Service has recently issued two LRF wide CBRN(E) Plans for consultation and has incorporated lessons learnt from recent terrorism events.
- 9.3 The Service is planning to hold two LRF wide CBRN Seminars to be held at Service HQ in February 2009. These will provide the opportunity to share information with other responders, obtain a greater understanding of roles and responsibilities of statutory partners, and demonstrate the resources DSFRS has to offer in terms of community protection.
- 9.4 The department has also recently recruited a new Emergency Planning Officer who commences in December 2008; which will enhance our arrangements, assist in meeting legal obligations and provide support for both Forums.

10 STATION PREPAREDNESS.

- 10.1 Given the history of recent tragic firefighter fatalities and subsequent HSE Improvement Notices issued to some fire authorities, there is a need to ensure a robust and frequent assessment of Service Delivery arrangements. This is particularly relevant in terms of operational preparedness and emergency response, which compliment the full annual station audits, providing checks against risk critical areas concerning staff, skills, appliances and equipment.
- 10.2 These visits are being conducted through the Group Command structure who will audit stations on a three monthly basis. Specifically, the visits will examine the following areas:-
- The identification and sharing of “best practice” locally within each Area Command
 - Provide a basis for Group Commanders and their support teams to maintain or improve station standards;
 - Ensure compliance with safety critical instructions and associated procedures
 - Ensure that the activities of the station are based around risk analysis and risk reduction, operational preparedness, emergency response, and local partnerships
 - Provide evidence of continuous improvement when examined under formal Service audits; and
 - Provide support to improve standards relating to Health & Safety, appliance & equipment maintenance, and Equality and Diversity

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