

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/09/1
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY (BUDGET MEETING)
DATE OF MEETING	16 FEBRUARY 2009
SUBJECT OF REPORT	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY CORPORATE PLAN 2009/10 TO 2011/12
LEAD OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>(a) <i>that the final Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12, as enclosed with the agenda for this meeting and revised to reflect, where appropriate, the results of stakeholder consultation, be approved.</i></p> <p>(b) <i>that the results of the Corporate Plan consultation and meetings with Community Groups be further used to contribute to the development of corporate equality scheme 'Making the Connections';</i></p> <p>(c) <i>that the final Corporate Plan be used as a basis for further activities to increase awareness of the contribution that the Service can make to its partners in order to improve safety for the public.</i></p> <p>(d) <i>that, subject to (a) to (c) above, the report (including the results of the consultation on the draft Corporate Plan) be noted.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>This report seeks approval to the final Authority Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12 and summarises the results of the stakeholder consultation on the Draft Plan. Stakeholders were asked specifically to comment on two areas: Service Ambition and Service Priorities.</p> <p>A hard-copy of the amended Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12 revised to reflect, where appropriate, the results of the consultation has already been provided to Members of the Authority. The Corporate Plan sets out how it is proposed to realise the ambitions of the Authority over the next three years by reference to organisational goals, priorities, targets and activities.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting are reports addressing the proposed revenue budget 2009/10 and Capital Programme 2009/10 to 2011/12. These have been prepared with regard to the contents of the Corporate Plan.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	No potentially negative impact sufficient enough to warrant a full impact assessment has been identified in the content of this report.
APPENDICES	<p>A Advert promoting consultation period</p> <p>B Primary Stakeholders who responded to the consultation</p> <p>C Comments received during consultation</p>
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Report DSFRA/07/23 (Draft Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12) to the meeting of the Authority held on 23 October 2008.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) is required by Government guidelines to produce an annual Integrated Risk Management Action Plan (IRMP) by 31 March of each year. Since Combination the requirements of an IRMP has been integrated into the production of the Corporate Plan and this format continues for the plan 2009/10 to 2011/12.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 23 October 2008 the Authority approved the Draft Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12 in principle for consultation purposes (Minute DSFRA/49 refers). Whilst there are many different consultation techniques the Authority agreed that the plan be consulted upon by writing and seeking views from key stakeholders as well as promoting the plan to raise awareness amongst the general public. The period of consultation commenced on 27 October 2008 and closed on 12 January 2009.

2. METHODOLOGY AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 2.1 To assist in making the consultation more accessible a leaflet was produced that summarised the detail behind each of the two specific areas on which opinion was sought.
- 2.2 The questions in the consultation leaflet were a combination of 'closed' and 'open ended' questions, this means there was a mixture of pre-determined answers and space for respondents to write as little or as much as they wanted in response to a question. A combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to analyse the responses.
- 2.3 Many opportunities were made available to ensure that the consultation was as accessible as possible to different members of the community. Views and opinions on the proposals could be registered using the following methods:
- Online survey service
 - Email
 - Telephone
 - Fax
 - Post
- 2.4 The online survey service could be accessed from dedicated pages on both the intranet and website. The online service provided users with the opportunity to complete an online survey and view the consultation leaflet and the draft corporate plan. A link was also created on the bottom of all emails sent from DSFRS staff. This link would enable the recipients to connect directly to the online consultation service.
- 2.5 Alongside the above consultation a series of initial meetings were held with Community Groups representing the six equality strands. The purpose of the meetings was to:
- Develop contacts with Community Groups for future consultation and engagement work.
 - Raise awareness of services provided by DSFRS.
 - Understand how DSFRS can better improve services for the community.
 - Obtain feedback on the Service's Ambition and Priorities.

- Obtain feedback on the Equalities Strategy 'Making the Connections' and the 2009/10 – 2011/12 Corporate Plan.

2.6 Recommendations are given for further involvement and engagement with these groups within the results section.

3. **PROMOTION OF THE CONSULTATION PERIOD**

3.1 The consultation period was promoted to raise awareness and attract comments from key stakeholders. The consultation was actively promoted by placing adverts in local papers, details of the adverts placed are given in Table 1. (A copy of the advert can be found in Appendix A). The adverts were followed up by a press release on 5 December and an article was placed in the winter edition of Devon Talk.

Table 2: Details of adverts placed in local papers

PAPER	AREA OF DISTRIBUTION	DATE
Western Daily Press	Somerset	22 November 2008
Western Morning News	Devon	28 November 2008
Herald Express	Torbay	28 November 2008
Evening Herald	Plymouth	28 November 2008
Express and Echo	Exeter	28 November 2008

3.2 Staff were made aware of the consultation through a series of communications. In addition to the dedicated page on the intranet two articles were placed in the Service Update, posters were sent to all stations and departments and leaflets were distributed during the Middle Mangers and Watch Commanders meetings held in November and December 2008.

3.3 Key stakeholders, see Table 2, were invited by letter or email to comment on the Draft Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12.

Table 2: Key stakeholders invited to comment on the Draft Corporate Plan.

STAKEHOLDERS INVITED TO COMMENT ON DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2009/10 TO 2011/12	
Chief Executives of Devon and Somerset Local Authorities	Leaders of Devon and Somerset Local Authorities
Government Agencies	Town Councils
Local Strategic Partnerships	Health Organisations
Key organisations representing the hospitality sector	Organisations representing business including Chambers of Commerce
Insurance companies linked to the service	Key organisations representing the rural sector
Registered Social Landlords	Road Safety organisations
Members of Parliament	Emergency Services
Minister for Fire and Resilience	Representative Bodies

3.4 In addition to contacting key stakeholders letters and emails were sent to a database of consultation volunteers held within DSFRS. The database consists of members of the public and local businesses who have previously indicated they would like to participate in future consultations.

3.5 In total a combination of 705 letters and emails were sent to key stakeholders and contacts held in the database.

4. **RESULTS**

4.1 The consultation focused on inviting views and opinions on two specific areas: the Service Ambition and Service Priorities. A summary of the total representations received during the consultation period by method of response is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of total consultation responses received during the consultation period

METHOD OF RESPONSE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Online surveys completed	18
Consultation leaflet surveys complete	62
Emails received	3
Letters received	5
Response given over the phone	2
Meeting	1
Total number of responses	91

4.2 The 91 responses came from a range of different stakeholders within the community. A summary of types of respondents is provided in Table 4. A list of named stakeholders is provided in Appendix B.

Table 4: Summary of the types of respondents who replied to the consultation

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	%
Public	28	30%
Other	26	28%
Business	19	22%
Staff	14	15%
Community Group	2	3%
MP	1	1%
Cllr	1	1%
Total number of responses	91	100%

*Other included a range of key stakeholders listed in table 1

- 4.3 The online survey service attracted many readers with 755 viewings recorded.
- 4.4 The results were analysed using a both quantitative and qualitative methods. A summary of the results for each of the two areas is provided below.

Service Ambition

- 4.5 Respondents were given a copy of the Service Ambition then asked a series of three questions. Question One asked how strongly respondents agreed or disagreed that the DSFRS Ambition would allow the service to meet the needs of the community. Of the 80 respondents who completed a survey 89% agreed that that the Ambition would allow the service to meet the needs of the community and only 9% disagreed.

Table 5: Q1 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the DSFRS Ambition will allow the service to meet the needs of the community?

RESPONSE	COUNT	%
Agree	71	89%
Neither	2	2%
Disagree	7	9%

- 4.6 Question Two asked how strongly respondents agreed or disagreed that the DSFRS Ambition presents a safer future for Devon and Somerset. The majority of respondents, 83% agreed that the Ambition presented a safer future for Devon and Somerset and 6% disagreed.

Table 6: Q2 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the DSFRS Ambition presents a safer future for Devon and Somerset?

RESPONSE	COUNT	%
Agree	66	83%
Neither	8	11%
Disagree	5	6%

- 4.7 Question Three asked how strongly respondents agreed or disagreed that the DSFRS Ambition will help to move the organisation forward. Again there was a positive response with 81% of respondents agreeing that the Ambition would help to move the organisation forward.

Table 7: Q3 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the DSFRS Ambition will help to move the organisation forward?

RESPONSE	COUNT	%
Agree	64	81%
Neither	8	10%
Disagree	7	9%

4.8 Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the Ambition, where appropriate these comments have been analysed in themes. Some of the responses suggested changes whilst others were general comments. The comments received suggested a need for greater engagement and consultation, raised concerns around the allocation of budget and resources and emphasised a need for further partnership working.

Service Priorities

4.9 Respondents were given a copy of the Service Priorities then asked a series of three questions. Question Six asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed that the four priorities (1a-1d) will help DSFRS to achieve Goal 1 'To proactively reduce risk, to save life, protect property and the environment from fire and other emergencies.' Nearly all respondents 90% agreed that the priorities would help to achieve the Goal.

Table 8: Q6 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the four priorities (1a-1d) will help us to achieve Goal 1?

RESPONSE	COUNT	%
Agree	69	90%
Neither	3	4%
Disagree	5	6%

4.10 Question Seven asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed that the four priorities (2a-2d) will help DSFRS to achieve Goal 2 'To be an employer of choice'. The majority of respondents 79% agreed that the priorities would help achieve Goal 2.

Table 9: Q7 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the four priorities (2a-2d) will help us to achieve Goal 2

RESPONSE	COUNT	%
Agree	62	79%
Neither	8	11%
Disagree	8	10%

4.11 Question Eight asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed that the three priorities (3a-3d) will help DSFRS to achieve Goal 3 'To provide an effective, efficient and economic service'. Again there was a positive response with 82% agreeing the priorities would help achieve Goal 3.

Table 10: Q8 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the three priorities (3a-3d) will help us to achieve Goal 3?

RESPONSE	COUNT	%
Agree	64	82%
Neither	8	10%
Disagree	6	8%

- 4.12 Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the Priorities, where appropriate these comments have been analysed in themes. Service delivery was the theme that received the most suggestion for a priority. Other common comments were on the format of the plan, issues surrounding staff, request for more detail behind the plan, improvement of communication and further consideration of environment under Goal 1.

Additional comments

- 4.13 Respondents were asked if there were any additional comments they had on the content of the plan, where appropriate these comments have been analysed in themes. Most of the comments received acknowledged the importance of partnership working. The main comments were about working in partnership at a strategic level and to reduce road traffic collisions. Other comments referred to service delivery especially in relation to prevention and response (flooding/water rescue and youth strategies), the switch over to Regional Control Centre and a need for more detail behind the plan.

Meetings with Community Groups

- 4.14 During November and December meetings were held with seven community groups representing the six equality strands (age, disability, faith, gender, race and sexuality.) Meetings were held with the groups listed in table 11.

Table 11: Community Groups met with

GROUP	EQUALITY STRAND
Forum for Equality and Diversity in Somerset (FEDS)	All 6 equality strands
Fawcett Devon	Gender
Intercom Trust	Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)
Devon Racial Equality Council	Race
Plymouth and District Racial Equality Council	Race
Living Options Devon	Disability
Senior Council for Devon	Age (50+)

- 4.15 The meetings were held at a strategic level with senior members of each organisation. During the meetings attendees were asked for feedback on the Corporate Plan. The common themes which emerged during these meetings are presented below.

Priorities are set at a high level.

It was suggested that everyone will agree with the Goals and Priorities. The general feedback suggested that it is the actions that are carried out to meet the priorities and how these consider the different groups within society that are important.

Not to automatically assume priorities will be different.

It was felt that different groups in the community would not want DSFRS to assume that their priorities would be different to that of the wider community just because of the group they sit in.

The language for the priorities should be simple, specific and measurable.

It was suggested that the language used for the priorities needed to be simple in its description. It was also felt that often the priorities contain abstract or vague language resulting in an immeasurable statement.

Accessibility of the plan.

It was recognised that a Corporate Plan needs to fulfil a specific brief in the way they are presented and the information they contain. However, it was suggested there was still scope to make the plan more accessible.

Partnership working and referrals.

Two key messages resulted from the meetings about partnerships. The need to ensure a higher level of interaction was recognised by all partners. It was recognised more effective mechanisms need to be in place to achieve this. Secondly that DSFRS must send staff to partnership meetings who have the executive authority to fully engage in discussion at a strategic level.

Governance and decision making.

There was concern that there are very few independently elected members and that the make up of the Authority seemed to under represent specific groups within society. There was also concern that Authority Members are taking decisions when they are not close to operational needs.

- 4.16 As previously mentioned the meetings were held as an initial step to develop contacts for future consultation and engagement. To conclude the meetings it was asked how the groups would like to engage with DSFRS in the future; the two following suggestions were given.
- a) To set up Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with Community Groups. This would allow DSFRS access to the users of the Community Groups and assistance to carry out consultation and engagement within the group.
 - b) To set up an 'Equality Advisory Group'. This would consist of a community led group representative of the six equality strands who could be used to independently advise DSFRS on how to reflect the needs of all communities.

Representative Bodies

- 4.17 The Fire Brigades' Union (FBU), Fire Officers' Association (FOA), Retained Firefighters Union (RFU) and UNISON were invited to submit representations on the Draft Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12. The invitation also offered a meeting to discuss the plan. Responses were received from the FOA and UNISON and the RFU accepted the invitation to attend a meeting.
- 4.18 UNISON were of the opinion that the staff survey is not dealt with adequately enough in the Corporate Plan. They felt that there needs to be some assurances from DSFRS that the areas highlighted within the staff survey will be addressed.

- 4.19 The FOA agreed that if the ambition was met it would allow the service to meet the needs of the community, present a safer future and help to move the organisation forward. They disagreed that the priorities under Goal 1 and 2 would help the Goals to be achieved. They disagreed that Goal 2 would be achieved as a greater commitment to staff development, involvement, consultation and communication is needed. They agreed that the priorities under Goal 3 would help it to be achieved. FOA suggested five additional priorities; greater focus on service delivery, greater service accountability for all managers, better leadership, improved planning process and greater involvement.
- 4.20 The RFU felt that under Priority 2a 'to improve the Service's approach to equality and diversity' it is important that the Service's approach to equality and diversity permits Retained Duty System Staff (RDS) to progress from their present role into wholetime positions. Under Priority 3c 'to optimise the use of resources' the RFU expressed concern that resource optimisation may result in a reduction of stations and therefore be detrimental to the members they represent. It was considered that in a move to optimise resources more use could be made of Retained staff to provide effective cover at wholetime stations. They considered that there was opportunity to use crewing more effectively by reviewing the provision of appliances / vehicles.

5. SUMMARY

- 5.1 The period of consultation on the Draft Corporate Plan was widely promoted throughout Devon and Somerset using variety of methods over an 11 week period. A total of 91 responses were received and analysed.
- 5.2 The results on the Service Ambition were positive with the majority of respondents agreeing the Service Ambition will allow the Service to meet the needs of the community, present a safer future and help to move the organisation forward.
- 5.3 The results on the Service Priorities were also positive with the majority of respondents agreeing that the Priorities will allow the three Goals of DSFRS to be met.
- 5.4 Meetings were held with community groups representing the six equality strands. During these meetings useful feedback was received and the groups were keen to develop proposals for future engagement.

6. CHANGES TO CORPORATE PLAN 2009/10 to 2011/12

- 6.1 Changes have been made to the Corporate Plan to reflect comments received during the consultation process, the progress of the service planning process and decisions made by the Authority since the draft version was open for consultation. A summary of the changes are listed below:
- a) The Ambition has been amended to incorporate the outcome of a safer community.
 - b) The Introduction has been updated to reflect the current economic situation and progress towards the Regional Control Centre.
 - c) The Risks in Our Community section has been updated to reflect the greater BME population in Plymouth and the Service's work towards reducing environmental impact.
 - d) New images are used in the emergency response standard tables on pages 12 and 13.
 - e) A summary of the Quality of Service Survey results has been added to page 19.

- f) A paragraph has been added to page 21 on the impact of the current economic situation on the Service's plans.
- g) Targets have been added to the tables on pages 24 to 27. The targets were agreed at the Community Safety and Corporate Planning Committee and the Human Resource Management and Development Committee.
- h) The performance target table in the Performance Framework section has been removed to improve the document's accessibility.
- i) The activity in Priority 1c of the Draft Corporate Plan, *to develop emergency response standards for other emergencies*, has been removed as this activity has been completed more quickly than anticipated. A new Corporate Activity has been added to Priority 1c, *"Consider revised emergency response standards for other emergencies and consult publicly prior to implementation"*.
- j) A new activity has been added to Priority 1c as a result of the consultation responses on the prominence of environmental issues. The new activity is:
"Develop a service wide environmental policy for service delivery arrangements:
 - a) *review and identify service delivery arrangements that meet the needs of operating in, and protecting a changing environment.*
 - b) *recognise and contribute to environmental issues impacting on service delivery with partner agencies"*
- k) A new activity has been added to Priority 2a in response to the meetings with the Community Groups on future community engagement. The new activity is: *"Create an equality and diversity steering group to act as a reference point"*.
A new activity has been added to Priority 3a. The new activity is: *"To implement the International Finance Reporting Standards"*. This is a government requirement and will have an impact across the service with particular focus on the Finance, Human Resource Management and Development and Physical Asset Departments as well as the financial management of the operational Groups.
- l) A new activity has been added to Priority 3b in response to the consultation response to make fire stations more accessible to the public. The new activity is: *"To review and consider the impact of making fire stations accessible to members of the public"*.
- m) The Consultation section has been removed.
- n) A new section has been added to provide information on becoming a retained firefighter.

LEE HOWELL
Chief Fire Officer

Advert placed in local newspapers to promote the consultation period.



Having your say...

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority is now consulting on its Draft Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12.

The plan presents our intentions for the next three years and we would like you to have your say. There are two specific areas in the plan on which we would like your views and opinions:

- Service Ambition
- Service Priorities

Visit our website www.dsfire.gov.uk for more information about the plan and for your opportunity to comment. Alternatively you can contact us on:

Telephone: 01392 872354

Fax: 01392 872300

Email: ConsultationOfficer@dsfire.gov.uk

By Post: DSFRS, Fire Service Headquarters, The Knowle, Clyst St George, Exeter, Devon, EX3 0NW.

The closing date for comment is 12 January 2009.



ACTING TO PROTECT AND SAVE



Named stakeholders who responded to the consultation.

Abbyfield, Dawlish
Anchor Trust, Kingsbridge
Arcada Housing Group, Whorle
Arthur Roberts House, Exeter
Audit Commission
Avon and Somerset Police (Two returns from different Departments)
Babcock Marine, Plymouth
Burnham on Sea and Highbridge Town Council
CARE, South Molton
Communities and Local Government, Fire Minister
Cooperative Group, Axminster
Dartmoor National Park Authority
Devon and Cornwall Police – Territorial Policing Department
Devon County Council
Devon Strategic Partnership
Fernham Day Centre, Paignton
Fire Officers Association
Fire Protection Association
Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service
Government Office for the South West
Hawchurch Parish Council, Axminster
Ivy Bridge Town Council
King Sturge, Plymouth
Linden House Nursing Home, Wellington
Northcote House, Exeter
Peveler, Wellington
Pheonix Childcare Ltd, Barnstaple
Plymouth Charity Trust Almshouse Accommodation
Princess Yachts, Plymouth
Retained Firefighters Union
Sodexo, Exeter
Somersfield, Plymstock
Somerset County Council
Somerset Primary Care Trust, Yeovil (2 returns from different Departments)
South Somerset District Council
South West Ambulance Service
Taunton Deane Borough Council
Torbay Care Trust, Torquay
Torbay Council
Torrige District Council
Two Trees Care Home, Plymouth
UNISON
Woolworths, Plymouth
Wyke Farm Wincanton Ltd, Wincanton