



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/09/27
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	28 SEPTEMBER 2009
SUBJECT OF REPORT	SERVICE CORPORATE IDENTITY
LEAD OFFICER	Head of Corporate Support
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>(a) <i>that the new Service corporate identity, as presented at the meeting, be approved; and,</i></p> <p>(b) <i>that the new identity be implemented on an incremental, cost-neutral basis, replacing items within existing budgets as part of normal programmes.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Improving communications is a high priority for the Service and has been a Corporate Plan activity since combination. Additional resources have been invested in communications and a communications strategy is being developed to embed effective communication throughout the organisation. As part of this work, it was identified that there was inconsistency in how the Service was being presented to staff, public and other key stakeholders. Indeed, achieving a strong and consistent single identity has been an identified action since the two previous fire services were combined.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	None – All costs will be met within existing budgets and some cost reductions may be achieved.
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	An initial assessment has revealed that there are no equality issues arising from this report.
APPENDICES	Nil.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Nil.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Communication is at the heart of everything we do in the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service. Developing an effective communications strategy that will improve communication with staff, partner organisations, the public and other key stakeholders is essential to support our ambitious organisational improvement plan to become one of the top performing Fire and Rescue Services in the UK.
- 1.2 Improving communications is a high priority for the Service and has been a Corporate Plan activity since combination. Additional resources have been invested in communications and a communications strategy is being developed to embed effective communication throughout the organisation. As part of this work, it was identified that there was inconsistency in how the Service was being presented to staff, public and other key stakeholders. Indeed, achieving a strong and consistent single identity has been an identified action since the two previous fire services were combined.
- 1.3 A review of in-house skills and capacity determined that this project could not progress within existing resources and to the required timescales. This led to Logo Design and Marketing (Logo), a local design agency, being commissioned earlier this year to assess how the Service was being presented visually in terms of its corporate identity and image and to develop a strong single identity that would support the organisation's improvement agenda and help position the Service nationally. However, it was considered important that materials produced to support the new image should be able to be used alongside existing materials to avoid the need for costly, wholesale change over. Consequently, part of the design brief for the new identity was that it should compliment the existing identity and not be a radical change.
- 1.4 In addition, Logo was tasked with the production of comprehensive guidelines to govern use of the corporate identity to ensure consistent application and maintain high quality, professional standards.
- 1.5 The crest for the Fire Authority, as designed and formally granted by the College of Arms, was not part of the scope of the work and will not change. The College of Arms has confirmed that we are able to change the Service identity and have expressed support for the initial design concept that they were shown, which features an element of the Arms granted to the Authority.

2. WHY DO WE NEED TO CHANGE?

- 2.1 The Service does not have and clear guidelines to govern the use of a corporate identity or style and this has led to materials being produced in a variety of colours, style, formats and fonts. This lack of guidelines has resulted in communication that is inconsistent and does not reinforce the messages the Service wants to deliver to its stakeholders.
- 2.2 For a set of guidelines to be produced a strong and consistent corporate style is required. Although the current Service badge has created a level of recognition and the fire service is well thought of by the public, it was felt that the existing identity did not differentiate the Service sufficiently from other fire and rescue services, other emergency services or local authorities. Indeed, the current relationship between the words and the badge used at present provides just a description of who the Service is, not an identity. Furthermore, it was felt that the existing identity was too traditional and did not reflect a modern and progressive fire and rescue service.

- 2.3 The existing identity for the combined Service is very similar to that of both of the two previous services and that has not helped staff feel like they are part of something new. Indeed, results from the staff survey and communication focus groups highlighted that some staff stated that the organisation “still feels like two services” and that a “them and us” attitude still exists in some areas. Developing a clear and engaging corporate identity that is consistently applied will enable staff to develop a strong association with the combined Service as it will be sufficiently distinctive from that used by the two previous services.
- 2.4 The Service is aiming to be one of the best performing fire and rescue services in the UK. As the public facing arm of the Service, fire fighters portray a professional image to the public that has generated an excellent reputation with both communities and partner agencies. However most of the current communication materials being produced by the Service are not consistently portraying a modern, progressive fire service. The community needs to be able to trust and respect the communications they receive and good consistent design will help deliver this by demonstrating professionalism throughout the organisation.

3. NEW PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The new proposals have looked at the relationship between the badge and the supporting typeface and have aimed to modernise and evolve the existing badge and supporting typeface rather than radical change. Logo will be presenting the new proposals to the Authority at the meeting.
- 3.2 A key aim of the transition to the new identity standards is to be cost neutral and part of the design brief was for an identity that would compliment the existing badge and typeface, rather than producing any radical changes. The new proposals have been designed to help increase productivity of communications by initially reducing the Service’s reliance on external agencies whilst allowing the in-house team, working to set design guidelines, to produce high quality, professional communication materials. Agreed templates and clear design guidelines for corporate literature will enable the Corporate Communications Team to increase output by eliminating the need to design every leaflet from a scratch. The team will produce a library of documents for operational staff to draw from, bringing consistency to the delivery of communication materials.
- 3.3 Implementation of the new identity and guidelines will deliver potential cost savings. The new identity allows for different reproduction options and has been designed in a way that will allow for effective one colour printing, which will help to reduce print costs. The electronic image files have also been designed so that costs of transferring the badge to clothing will be cheaper as the design is much cleaner and less complex than the existing badge.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Through this proposed corporate identity the Corporate Communications Team will be in a strong position to help support the communication improvements identified in the Corporate Plan and it will be a key part of implementing the new communications strategy.

- 4.2 The new identity will help to differentiate the Service from other fire and rescue services, other emergency services or local authorities and support the Service in being recognised as one of the leading fire and rescue services in the country. It will also support the creation of a strong identity amongst staff for being part of one organisation, which is an important part of improving employee engagement and involvement.
- 4.3 Implementation of the new identity will help to reduce some production costs and increase productivity of the in-house team. As the new identity will compliment the existing badge and typeface, it avoids the need for costly, wholesale changes to existing materials. Consequently, all existing stocks (e.g. headed letter paper, leaflets, community safety merchandise and station signs) will only be replaced with new materials as and when required as part of normal programmes and within existing budgets.

MIKE PEARSON
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