

PEER CHALLENGE FINAL REPORT

SUMMARY

1. The final version of the draft report brought before the Authority on 24 June 2013 is included at Appendix 1. There have been a number of changes to the report resulting from officer comments upon the draft version. Those changes are detailed in Paragraph 10 below.
2. Members will be aware that this report presents the key findings from the Local Government Association's (LGA) Fire Peer Challenge at Humberside Fire and Rescue Service in March 2013.
3. The report highlights strengths and areas to explore in each key area of assessment.
4. Whilst the Peer Challenge Team were of the opinion that "Humberside Fire and Rescue Service provides a high quality service to local citizens and businesses" the Service is always keen to learn and improve and so all of the areas to explore are being considered with a view to improving the Service even further.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.
 - (a) Members are asked to consider this report and take assurance as to the steps being taken to continually improve the Service.
 - (b) Members approve that the Peer Challenge Report be published on the Service website in the "Our Performance" section
 - (c) Members approve that the specific action plans not be published on the website, but that they are recorded and managed in the same way as all other Service action plans and made available upon request.

BACKGROUND

6. The Fire Peer Challenge took place from the 5-8 March 2013 and consisted of a range of on-site activities including interviews, focus groups and visits to four Fire stations. In total the team met and spoke to over 140 members of HFRS staff and partners.
7. The team also undertook background reading provided to them in advance, including Humberside's summary Operational Assurance (OpA) Self-Assessment and key supporting documentation. The purpose of the peer challenge was to complement that self-assessment by providing external challenge to help support improvement and to reflect how the Service is performing across the areas of focus.
8. Fire peer challenges are managed and delivered by the sector for the sector. Peers are at the heart of the peer challenge process. They help Services with their improvement and learning by providing a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge.

9. The peer challenge team included:
 - Nigel Williams, Chief Fire Officer, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (lead peer);
 - Councillor Sian Timoney, Luton Borough Council;
 - Dean Stevens, Director of Prevent and Protect, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service;
 - Simon Allsop, Director of Finance and Treasurer, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service;
 - Barbara Owen, Brigade Manager People and Development, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service;
 - Jonna Stevens, Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association.

10. Officers commented upon the draft version of the report which was brought before the Authority on 24 June 2013 and there have been a number of changes resulting from those comments. These are as follows:-
 - A small number of changes were made to reflect HFRS standards and local terminology;
 - Reference to widening the role of the Governance Audit and Scrutiny Committee to include making formal recommendations to the Authority was removed as that role is already carried out by the Committee;
 - Reference to opportunities for elected Members to engage at CPU level was amended to acknowledge that some elected Members already attend quarterly CPU performance meetings;
 - Reference to CPUs not being able to access the Risk Register was corrected as the issue was around speed of access, rather than access itself. The report now acknowledges that the project to upgrade the Wide Area Network will overcome the problem. Progress against that strategic project is reported to the Authority in the Quarterly Performance Reports.

11. All of the 'areas to explore' which are highlighted in the report are being considered by the relevant Boards, and where appropriate managed through the Board's Risk Register. Any strategic areas are being considered and managed by the Change Board which is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer.

12. Any significant improvements resulting from that work will be reported in the Annual Performance Report 2013/14.

13. The timing and method by which the report is published is a matter for the Authority. The LGA and CFOA encourage all Fire Authorities to publish the report and subsequent action plans via their own website at a time of their choosing.

14. It is recommended that the report is published as soon as possible on the Service website in the "Our Performance" Section.

15. It is not recommended that the actions plans are published separately as the Service manages action planning in a structured manner through the risk registers. Therefore, the action plans are regularly updated 'living documents' on the internal portal, they are available at any time on request and are also included in the Quarterly Performance and Risk Reports to the Authority where appropriate.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPATIBILITY

16. The report provides key information to assist in supporting the delivery of the Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCES/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

17. It is anticipated that any improvements resulting from consideration of the report will be met within existing budgets.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. None arising.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/HR IMPLICATIONS

19. None arising.

CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

20. None arising.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

21. None arising.

COMMUNICATION ACTIONS ARISING

22. The report will be published as determined by the Authority.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

23. None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR ACCESS

24. Board Risk Registers and Actions Plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS RESTATED

25. (a) Members are asked to consider this report and take assurance as to the steps being taken to continually improve the Service.
- (b) Members approve that the Peer Challenge Report be published on the Service website in the "Our Performance" section
- (c) Members approve that the specific action plans not be published, but they are recorded and managed in the same way as all other Service action plans and made available upon request.

C BLACKSELL

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