

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Report of a meeting of the East Sussex Fire Authority held at Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters at 10.30 hours on Thursday 20 May 2010.

Present: Councillors Carden, Fawthrop, Freebody, Harmer-Strange, Healy, Heaps, Howson, Kemble (Chairman), Kenward, Livings, Marsh, Ost, Pidgeon, Rufus, Scott, Sparks and Waite.

1. Communications, Consultation and Engagement Update

1.1 The Fire Authority approved the arrangements for consultation and engagement activities relating to the requirements arising from the rural review. An outline of the processes involved in the Authority's consultation was given and it was noted that consultation was to be carried out on two key parts, the first being engagement on methodology and the second being consultation and engagement on the conclusions and recommendations, once approved by the Fire Authority. Consultation and engagement was due to commence on 24 May 2010 and end on 20 August 2010, in line with Government best practice guidelines.

2. Rural Cover Review

2.1 The Fire Authority approved the findings of the review of Fire Cover and Resilience in rural areas, the 'Rural Review', and the subsequent recommendations of the Policy & Resources Panel to the Fire Authority prior to consultation.

2.2 The review, which had taken a year to complete in view of its thoroughness, covered the services provided by ESFRS in Lewes, Wealden and Rother and the proposals set out to balance effectively the match between community risk and the response and prevention resources available to the Fire Authority; this was to achieve the Authority's aim of achieving safer and more sustainable communities.

2.3 The Review Team had considered details such as historical incident activity, predictive analysis and community profiling which provided insight into community needs within each station area. The data also gave insight into whether the resources of the Service could be better allocated to mitigate risk and provide an enhanced level of service delivery.

2.4 The review highlighted a number of areas that were considered to have a significant impact on risk, both potentially and historically which included such issues as:

i) **ESFRS Resources – Station & Station Admin Areas**

- Location of fire stations in relation to risk
- Incident activity within each station admin area
- High risk premises within each station admin area

ii) **ESFRS Resources – Appliances**

- Service Response times
- Average time taken for appliance to turn out to an incident (turnout time)
- Attendance times of first and second appliances including phase time (time period between the arrival of first and second appliances)
- Appliance availability
- Pre-determined attendances

iii) **ESFRS – Staff**

- Shift systems
- Method of alerting staff on retained duty system

2.5 The review utilised various analysis tools used in order to obtain the information and the type of analysis that had been undertaken to better identify, understand and meet customer needs. Analysis carried out identified six groups that were more susceptible to having a dwelling fire and were identified as vulnerable. These were:

- Close knit, inner city and manufacturing town communities;
- Educated, young single people living in areas of transient population;
- People living in social housing with uncertain employment in deprived areas;
- Low income families living in estate based social housing;
- Upwardly mobile families living in homes bought from social landlords;
and
- Older people living in social housing with high care needs

2.6 The review proposed alignment of service delivery to match local demographics and community needs and sought to identify any potential impact upon the people, commercial businesses, critical infrastructure and our local environment. There was evidence to suggest that the current allocation of resources in relation to community risk was effective and efficient. However, there were opportunities to allocate resources in a different way to either enhance the service provided or deliver the service in a more cost effective way.

2.7 Members were advised of a draft people plan for subsequent development with the Way Forward Working Group and a communications strategy to ensure that all staff were kept up to date and also to ensure that those members of staff directly affected by the proposals were informed of the

various options available to them pending the outcomes of both the consultation and deliberations of any future Panel/Fire Authority meeting.

2.8 Members resolved to approve the detailed recommendations of the Policy & Resources Panel and for a period of 12 weeks consultation and engagement, along with the communication of the findings of the review, to take place with all stakeholders. Finally, it was agreed that the findings of the consultation and engagement processes will be presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting on 9 September 2010 for further consideration.

20 May 2010
TED KEMBLE
Chairman

