

## Agenda No 5

### AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

<b>Name of Committee</b>	<b>Communities Overview and Scrutiny</b>
<b>Date of Committee</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> April 2011</b>
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Implementing the Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Plan</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>The Fire and Rescue Service is making good progress on delivering its Improvement Plan. All projects are on track. Benefits delivered to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capacity released from changing our response to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) – turnouts reduced by 67 per cent;</li><li>• Meeting the target of 10,000 home fire safety checks to help local people be safer in their homes and reduce accidental dwelling fires;</li><li>• Increased training for firefighters to improve firefighter safety; and</li><li>• Reduced days lost to sickness absence.</li></ul>
<b>For further information please contact:</b>	Gary Phillips, Deputy Chief 01926 423231 Fire Officer
<b>Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?</b>	No
<b>Background papers</b>	Cabinet Paper 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2010 'Improving Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service'  Communities Overview & Scrutiny Report 3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2010 'Implementing the Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Plan'

### Appendices

#### CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-

Details to be specified

Other Committees

Local Member(s)

Councillor Heather Timms, Councillor Angela Warner

- |                           |                                     |  |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Other Elected Members     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Councillor John Whitehouse, Councillor Richard<br>Chattaway, Councillor Chris Williams, Councillor<br>Sarah Boad |
| Cabinet Member            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Councillor Richard Hobbs   |
| Chief Executive           | <input type="checkbox"/>            |  |
| Legal                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Greta Needham  |
| Finance                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Helen Murphy   |
| Other Strategic Directors | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | David Carter, Monica Fogarty   |
| District Councils         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |  |
| Health Authority          | <input type="checkbox"/>            |  |
| Police                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            |  |
| Other Bodies/Individuals  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Michelle McHugh, Kate Nash   |

***FINAL DECISION***

***SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:***

Details to be specified

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Further consideration by<br>this Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To Council                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To Cabinet                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To an O and S Committee                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To an Area Committee                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Further Consultation                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Communities Overview and Scrutiny

28<sup>th</sup> April 2011

### Implementing the Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Plan

#### **Recommendation**

The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the report and make recommendations as appropriate.

#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Warwickshire County Council is committed to providing the best possible Fire and Rescue Service for its communities, delivering value for money and ensuring firefighter safety. The Improvement Plan is helping increase the pace of change in delivering a fitter, stronger Fire and Rescue Service.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on progress made by the Fire and Rescue Service since the last report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2010.

#### **2.0 Governance Arrangements**

- 2.1 Governance arrangements continue to be applied in line with PRINCE 2 principles. Project teams have produced project initiation documents, project plans and risk registers and report progress monthly to the Programme Manager. Standard templates are used for project reporting in line with the County Council's approach. The programme board, the Fire and Rescue Strategic Leadership Team, receive a monthly progress report from the Programme Manager and presentations from project teams as required. Training has been provided for Programme Board members and Project Managers to ensure their roles and responsibilities are understood.

#### **3.0 Programme Plan**

- 3.1 The programme plan is shown in Appendix A. The following table summarises the programme plan.

Project	When
<b>STEP 1: Duty systems and Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Duty System to improve Firefighter availability</li> <li>• Managerial and Support Function Rationalisation</li> <li>• Decommission Warwick and Brinklow stations</li> <li>• Convert Alcester to a Wholetime station</li> <li>• Decommission Studley</li> </ul>	January 2012 By September 2011 September 2011 By December 2012 By March 2013
<b>STEP 2: New false alarm policy</b>	March 2011 <b>ACHIEVED</b>
<b>STEP 3: Increase Home Fire Safety Checks</b>	10,000 by 31/3/11 <b>ACHIEVED</b>
<b>STEP 4: Additional firefighter training</b>	Annually <b>PHASE 1 ACHIEVED</b>
<b>STEP 5: Improved attendance management</b>	March 2011 <b>ACHIEVED</b>
<b>STEP 6: Enhanced Flood Response</b>	March 2012
<b>STEP 7: Road Traffic Collision Units/Specialist Rescue</b>	March 2012
<b>STEP 8: Deploy Small Fires Unit at Bedworth</b>	March 2012

## 4.0 Progress to date

- 4.1 Step 1:** We are changing **duty systems** to improve our ability to respond. This will be supported by the procurement of an IT system to help manage crewing levels for wholetime and retained duty staff. The restructure of managerial and support functions is underway. Plans to decommission Warwick, Brinklow and Studley, and convert Alcester to a wholetime station by March 2013 are all on track. We are consulting staff and Unions on all these changes.
- 4.2 Step 2:** Since its introduction last September the new **AFA policy** has resulted in over 1000 fewer vehicle movements. This is a reduction of **67%** compared with the same period in the previous 12 months and a predicted saving of £100,000 a year. The new policy is releasing capacity for more firefighter training and delivering home fire safety checks. It has also reduced unnecessary journeys which reduces our impact on the environment.
- 4.3 Step 3:** We have met the target of delivering **10,000 home fire safety checks**, an increase of **33%** on last year. Most of them (88%) were delivered by firefighters. We are now reviewing our approach to ensure our efforts are targeted to the most vulnerable people in our communities.
- 4.4 Step 4:** All firefighters up to Area Manager level have received 'hot fire' **training** to ensure they have a realistic awareness of the heat and smoke that is experienced in fires. A second round of training is now underway at the Fire Service College which will include experience of fire in high rise buildings.
- 4.5 Step 5:** Fewer days are being lost to **sickness** as we have improved how we manage sickness absence and are helping people return to work. In 2010/11 over a six month period 170 fewer days were lost to sickness, a reduction in absence costs of £26,010. We also have a new Fitness Service Order and are purchasing more fitness equipment for stations.

- 4.6 Step 6:** We have procured rescue poles to enhance our **water rescue** response. We also plan to strengthen water rescue training and provide additional equipment to improve our response to flooding incidents.
- 4.7 Step 7:** We are improving our response to **road traffic collisions** (RTCs) by procuring a refurbished unit (to be based at Coleshill), more equipment on appliances and firefighter training. We are reviewing our response to animal rescue including improving procedures and providing better equipment.
- 4.8 Step 8:** Plans are progressing for a new **small fires unit** at Bedworth. Vehicle specifications have been prepared and trials of new water fogging equipment have taken place.

## **5.0 Project Risks**

- 5.1 Project risks are recorded and managed by all projects in line with the new County Council approach. Project risks are held in a central register and reviewed regularly by project managers and escalated to SLT as required. Higher level risks include the following:
- Insufficient resources on projects and lack of continuity through loss of key people to deliver other key work e.g. work required following the outcome of the Atherstone-on-Stour tragedy, and the need to provide our own Fire Control service following the demise of the Regional Control Centre project;
  - Insufficient procurement capacity to support project implementation;
  - The workforce and Unions are not supportive of the changes and the possibility of industrial action by the Fire Brigades Union; and
  - Failure to procure and implement the required IT to support the projects e.g. new duty systems and Home Fire Safety Check system.

## **6.0 Programme Communication**

- 6.1 A communication framework has been developed and is being managed by the Programme Manager to meet the needs of each project. Regular updates are provided to all staff through the monthly team brief and presentations. Consultation is progressing with staff on stations due for decommissioning and those involved with crewing changes. The Unions are involved on all projects. External communication is being managed with the support of Lisa Mowe.

## **7.0 Improvement Plan Support**

- 7.1 We are undertaking a pilot on 'system thinking' to provide additional support for the Improvement Plan. Systems thinking is a methodology that radically challenges the way we currently think about the design of work. This work will enable us to take an outside in view of our service to understand what causes us to work the way we do and identify opportunities to deliver improvements to the communities we serve, our staff who do the work and the taxpayers who fund us.

## **8.0 Recommendation**

8.1 The Communities Overview and Scrutiny committee consider the report and make recommendations as appropriate.

**Report Author:** Gary Phillips

**Head(s) of Service:** n/a

**Strategic Director(s):** Graeme Smith

**Portfolio Holder(s):** Councillor Richard Hobbs

