



Minutes

Name of meeting	FIRE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL
Date and time	WEDNESDAY, 7 JULY 2010 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs Julie Jones-Evans (Chairman), Heather Humby, Arthur Taylor, Jerry White, David Williams
Cabinet Members	Cllr Barry Abraham
Officers Present	Marian Jones, Stuart Love, Rob Polkinghorne, Simon Wiggins

1. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [5 May 2010](#) be confirmed.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr David Williams declared a personal interest in Minute 5, as he was a member of the Fire and Rescue Service Modernisation Panel.

3. **Forward Plan**

It was noted that there were two items on the Forward Plan which came within the remit of the Panel. The Fire and Rescue Service Model for Change which was due to be considered by the Cabinet on 13 July 2010 had previously been presented to the Panel. The Chairman asked members to note that the Annual Fire and Rescue Service Report would be covered later in the meeting. The Panel therefore agreed to defer discussion until that agenda item arose.

4. **Performance Management**

Members reviewed the performance management report submitted to Cabinet on 1 June 2010, which related to those areas which came within the panel's terms of reference. Members noted the percentage of environmental health planned inspections that had been carried out was highlighted as an area of concern. The Panel sought assurances that the seconded officer to the Food Standards Agency had returned to their post. The Strategic Director of Economy and Transport stated

that the secondment had followed production of exemplar work by the officer regarding food hygiene standards and offered opportunities to assist a national agency. It was confirmed the officer had since returned to the authority.

The panel was informed that the information regarding the outcomes of the introduction of whole-time crewing at Ryde Fire Station was in the process of being assimilated. The Director confirmed that this information would be made available to the Members.

In regard to the security of funding for the proposed Ryde extension and the new fire stations at Newport and Ventnor, the Director stated that currently capital funding remained available. The Director was unable to provide a long term guarantee but assured the members that the authority was pressing ahead with the phase one projects under the modernisation project.

On a wider issue members were told that the capital programme remained under constant review following the budget pressures that had been placed on all local authorities by central government.

RESOLVED :

- (i) THAT the report be noted.
- (ii) THAT assessment of the achievement of the outcomes expected from the migration to whole-time crewing at Ryde be reported to a future meeting.

5. Draft Annual Fire and Rescue Service Statement

The Strategic Director of Economy and Transport gave members a brief introduction to the report. He advised that the report was one of a suite of annual reports covering various service areas of the authority that would be considered by councillors. The Director stated that comments would be welcomed from the Scrutiny Panel before final submission to Full Council on 21 July 2010.

Members suggested that it would be an easier report to provide comment on if sub headings were provided, particularly within the report of the Chief Fire Officer. In addition it was agreed that the report would be aided by means of further clarity on the number and type of incidents which had been attended. It was stated that the report would reflect that the service included protection and prevention, moving away from the perception that it was solely a "blue light" service. Furthermore it would report that the majority of incidents were Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) and therefore not fire related.

The Panel further stated that it would be an advantage for members to receive daily incident reports to assist with the monitoring of performance as well as identify any ongoing trends.

The Director was asked to consider the inclusion of some more notable incidents on the Island for reference which members believed would make the report more engaging for the public and enable them to consider the progress that had been made by the service. The success of the Learning Intervention Fire Education (LIFE) scheme was acknowledged and members enquired to its permanency. The Director confirmed there were no current plans to cut back on the investment in the

programme, although he asked members to consider the current budget pressures on the authority.

Members enquired about the benefits of gathering hazard intelligence and the robustness of this information. The Panel was advised that information had been gathered to maintain a “real time” means for fire-fighters to be able to risk assess an incident and information was provided on route via mobile data terminals, which had been installed in every Island appliance. The terminals were able to provide data including storage of gases, chemicals and firearms, building construction or whether occupants may be vulnerable or disabled. Ultimately the information improved the safety for fire-fighters as it reflected the services response to tackling the incident.

The Panel suggested that the report should contain more details with regard to the recent successful prosecution for non compliance with Fire Regulations. Members believed this would send out a message, clarifying that those who were not compliant would be prosecuted.

Members raised a number of issues with regard to the performance of the service against targets; in summary they raised areas including:

- Noting that the number of accidental dwelling fires had exceeded the target for 2008/09. Members were told that greater numbers of whole time fire-fighters under phase one of the modernisation would allow for focussed targeting of high risk areas which displayed a trend. It was further stated that home checks would allow for a study of people’s lifestyles and provide further education about fire prevention.
- The number of fires that had been attended where no smoke alarm was present had missed its 2009/10 target by 20%. Members asked what actions had been taken to combat this significant overshoot of the target. In response, the Cabinet Member for Fire and Community Safety stated that it had been the long term wish of the authority to achieve a change in national legislation, which would insist on new build properties being fitted with sprinkler systems. It was noted that this could not be enforced locally through planning conditions as any conditions that were placed on applications had to be reasonable and enforceable. Members asked the Director to clarify as to whether building regulations for new build applications required the statutory provision of smoke alarms.
- Members were of the view that the significant number of Code Black incidents on the Island, where Hampshire had been requested to standby due to a shortage of available appliances, was an area of concern. The Panel were of the view that the report should contain further clarity for the reasons and costs incurred, whilst providing information on how this would be tackled in the future. The Panel was informed that protocols were in place between adjacent fire authorities and that they worked under an understanding of partnership and there had been occasions when the Island assisted Hampshire. In reply to exceeding the 2009/10 target, it was stated this had occurred through a lack of provision of appliances due to fluctuations in retained cover. Moving to increased whole time provision would naturally lessen the number of these occurrences.

RESOLVED:

- (i) THAT Panel Members would receive copies of the daily incident reports.
- (ii) THAT the Director be recommended to incorporate the Panel's suggestions for amendments and additions into the report.
- (iii) THAT clarification be supplied to the Panel in regard to building regulations for new build properties and provision of smoke alarms as a statutory requirement.

CHAIRMAN