

# COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

## Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services : Performance Report and Action Plan 2010 02 September 2010

### Report of Corporate Director (Community Services)

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To briefly review the Fire and Rescue Services performance report and action plan 2010 and to consider proposed changes in the way services are delivered.

**This report is public**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Committee note the Performance Report and Action Plan 2010.
- (2) That Committee comment on the five key service areas proposed for change as outlined in the body of this report and detailed in the Appendix and authorise the Corporate Director (Community Services) to respond to the consultation on the basis of the Committee's comments".

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Fire and Rescue Performance Report and Action Plan 2010 provides information on how they have performed during 2009/10, gives feedback on the findings of external inspections and includes proposals for change in respect of:
  - review of specialist rescue and support services
  - developing a strategy for Unwanted Fire Signals
  - review of the retained duty system catchment areas for recruitment
- 1.2 On the consultation part of the report (section 5) comments are requested by 07 November 2010. The full report can be found at [www.lancsfireandrescue.org.uk](http://www.lancsfireandrescue.org.uk).
- 1.3 In terms of actual performance, most performance targets have been met or exceeded although some concerns are expressed about workforce accident figures during the severe winter weather and during more hazardous training exercises. In addition, some of the recruitment targets for BME and gender have not been met. Concern is also expressed at the high turnover rate in the Retained Duty System (RDS) staff and ways of improving retention are built into the action plan.

- 1.4 In addition, the performance assessment review by the Audit Commission for 2009/10 resulted in an “excellent” judgement – the only excellent rating out of 46 English Fire Authorities.
- 1.5 The action plan reports on five main improvement areas, but also provides a reference to a further forty plus items which can be accessed via the Fire and Rescue web site.

## 2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 In the provision of specialist rescue and support over and above that which is available on front line fire engines, three specialist areas are proposed for review
- major incident support/heavy rescue
  - boat provision
  - rope rescue team
- 2.2 **Major Incident Support:** report identifies that there are two specialist teams located at Preston and Leyland which operate county-wide. The proposal is to close the Preston team down and to focus on using the Leyland based team to provide the sole major incident support and heavy rescue capability in the future (see appendix for details). There are also two further options around whether this team should operate as now or be enhanced to provide a quicker night time response.
- 2.3 **Boat Provision:** Two boat units are currently provided at Preston and Penwortham. However, with the upgrading of seven strategically located fire engines to ‘water rescue pump status’ the demand for boat usage has reduced and the proposals is to keep both boats at Penwortham but only have one trained team. (See appendix for details)
- 2.4 **Rope Rescue:** A specialist rope rescue team is based at St Anne’s and they deal with more complex incidents of rescue of people or animals above and below ground. However, this arrangement relies on volunteers providing the service which has caused some operational difficulties. Four options for change are considered but option 4 is the preferred solution which moves away from using volunteers to use the full time staff at St Anne’s and the Major Incident Support Team at Leyland for rope rescue. (See appendix for details)
- 2.5 There are also proposals to change the high level of unwanted fire signals received by the service. These are ‘false alarms’ generated from automated systems. Almost one-third of 20,367 emergency incidents were this type of false alarm. Detailed proposals are intended to reduce the number of mobilisations to unwanted fire signal incidents. (See appendix for details)
- 2.6 Retained Duty System (RDS) staff are those staff who provide an on-call response – usually in the more rural areas of the county. They are normally recruited from a geographic area which means they can get to their station within five minutes of an emergency alarm. However, this has created recruitment difficulties so the proposal is to extend this travel time to seven minutes for nine rural stations, including Silverdale and Hornby.

### **3.0 Details of Consultation**

3.1 The performance aspects of the report are for information and the Business Committee is itself a consultee of Section 5.

### **4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)**

4.1 The options/options analysis for the five review areas has been carried out by Fire and Rescue and included in the appendix to this report.

### **5.0 Conclusion**

5.1 Lancashire Fire and Rescue provide an excellent service to the people of Lancashire as assessed by the Audit commission. Proposals are made to make the service more efficient whilst maintaining quality and in some areas making further improvements and members comments are requested on those changes.

#### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

This is an information and consultation report and has no direct impact

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications to this authority as a result of this report.

#### **SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Performance Report and Action Plan 2010

**Contact Officer:** Peter Loker

**Telephone:** 01524 582501

**E-mail:** peterloker@lancaster.gov.uk

**Ref:** reports/councilbus/03