



Event Name: Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority & Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority's Information Sharing Day

Source: Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

Date: 5 February 2009



Officers and Members of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) were pleased to welcome colleagues from Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire & Rescue Authority (BMKFRA) for an information exchange day on 22 January. This visit was initiated by Councillor David Kirk, Chairman of HFRA's Performance and Scrutiny Committee and an IDeA elected Member peer mentor who has been working with Members from BMKFRA.

BMKFRA Members and Officers joined Hampshire's Corporate Management Team meeting where a lively and informative discussion took place in relation to the consultation process and facilitation of Hampshire's Service Plan 2009-2012 and Member Development.

Three separate discussion groups were arranged for the afternoon; Developing our People, Operational Diversity and Finance, Asset Management and Managing Performance.

Discussion Group 1: Developing our People

An initial discussion took place in relation to Member development and reference was made to the role and remit of Hampshire's Member Development Steering Group, induction processes for both authorities and performance development plans for Members. Hampshire Members explained their approach to, and progress towards, the LGA's Equality and Diversity Charter for Fire and Rescue Authority Members. A wider debate then focussed upon Member involvement in Service activities and relationships with local Station and Group Managers.

Discussion Group 2: Operational Diversity

This group considered the following questions:

- *What is the role of the fire service in community cohesion?*

It was felt that community cohesion and equality and diversity were inextricably linked. Fire Services were considered to have a strategic influence with their partners through initiatives

such as community events, working with the education sector, recruitment practices and as part of the decision making process.

- *How can monitoring from Service Delivery enrich the PIA process?*

To enable the Service to use intelligence to best effect, it was agreed that improvements were needed in the collection of data. BMKFRA referred to their use of the Vulnerable Localities Index which is now being rolled out across the SE region.

- *How has Buckinghamshire Fire Service encouraged recruitment from target groups?*

BMKFRA reported some success with women transferring in to the Service. A wider discussion then took place around the business case for creating a diverse workforce.

Discussion Group 3: Finance, Asset Management and Managing Performance

A number of issues were discussed including; the role and remit of HFRA's Asset Management Working Group, Property Management Strategies/Registers and approaches to asset management.

HFRA demonstrated a range of performance management information used to monitor performance throughout the Service. One of the initiatives discussed in detail related to the Beacon Station Indicator set. As a result of this initiative HFRS has seen a reduction in short term sickness, energy usage and turn out times. Members also discussed an evaluation toolkit used to measure the impact of new policies and procedures, providing valuable evidence in terms of value for money and use of resources.

Councillor David Rowlands (BMKFRA) said: *"I am grateful to Hampshire for hosting Members and Officers from BMKFRA and for organising an informative day. I believe events such as these are helpful in allowing us to share our experiences as Fire Authority Members and discuss different approaches to fire service activities. We hope Hampshire will be able to visit Buckinghamshire in the Autumn for a reciprocal visit".*

Councillor David Kirk (Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority) said: *"It is opportunities like this where Members and Officers can share ideas and approaches to key strategic issues which really help to drive improvement in our Authorities".*

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