

Division(s):

**PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 25 SEPTEMBER 2014**

**OXFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE PERFORMANCE  
UPDATE – ANNUAL REPORT (INCLUDING RESPONSE  
STANDARDS), OPERATIONAL PEER CHALLENGE AND 365ALIVE  
TARGET REVIEW**

**Report by the Chief Fire Officer – Fire & Rescue Service**

**Introduction**

1. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) is a learning organisation committed to continuous improvement. This paper summarises its operational and organisational performance over the last financial year, as detailed in its Annual Report (including response standards) (Annex 1) and its Operational Peer Challenge Report (and associated Action Plan) (Annex 2). It also highlights the Service's commitment to further stretch its targets to save life, reduce costs from emergency incidents and promote public safety during the last two years of its 10-year 365alive vision (finishing in 2016).
2. The Annual Report is a publicly available document that ensures OFRS is both transparent and able to be held to account regarding its key areas of performance - in line with both the Council's expectations and those of the government. A copy of the annual report can be found on our website.
3. The Operational Peer Challenge Report was instigated by OFRS to challenge specific areas of its performance. The subsequent assessment was undertaken using a nationally recognised assessment and review process that has been agreed and adopted by all UK Fire & Rescue Services and is co-ordinated by the Local Government Association, in conjunction with councillors and senior fire and rescue service managers. The final report of the peer challenge team is also publicly available via the website.
4. In Oxfordshire, the review focussed primarily on how well the Service manages public and firefighter safety in the face of emergency incidents. However, it also covered areas such as the broader achievement of outcomes for citizens (e.g. Safeguarding), as well as the effectiveness of the organisation's leadership, governance and capacity to meet both its current and future needs.

**Annual Report – Key Points**

5. In 2013-2014, OFRS continued to perform strongly against its own performance measures, its previous year's performance and the performance of similar fire and rescue services.
6. Specifically, the report highlights that the Service has already exceeded the 10-year targets set back in 2006 with its 365alive vision (i.e. 365 more people alive, £100 million saved and 840,000 people safer). Not only has this resulted in significant financial savings to the public of Oxfordshire over the

last eight years, it has kept more people safe in their own homes, at work and on the county's roads. All the activities undertaken to deliver our 365alive vision are part of the Service's journey to be the most integrated fire and rescue service in the UK.

7. Other notable successes include the reduction in people killed on Oxfordshire's roads, which totalled only 19 last year. This is the lowest recorded figure in the last decade. Sadly, two people died as a result of accidental fires in their homes. Although this is a smaller figure than might be expected for a county with the population size of Oxfordshire, it is still a tragedy for the families of those involved and goes against our intention that no one should die as the result of a fire in Oxfordshire.
8. In terms of wider community protection and wellbeing activities, through its participation in the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adult and Child Boards, OFRS instigated 62 safeguarding alerts to adult and children's social service teams.
9. In addition, firefighters have now been trained in enhanced emergency medical skills so that they can provide critical care in the early stages of any emergency. Since its introduction, fire crews have used these skills at 256 incidents.
10. In terms of performance measures, OFRS sets itself 25 customer focused, strategic performance indicators, and, this year, achieved its targets for 16 of them. A further six were very close to being achieved. The three areas where the Service fell below its targets were in relation to fire deaths, 100% availability of on-call fire engines and the turnover of on-call staff (all detailed in the report).
11. Last year, OFRS responded to 5,505 incidents, including calls into other counties. The average response time was nine minutes three seconds. The Service aims to arrive at 80 per cent of emergencies in 11 minutes or fewer and 95 per cent of emergencies in 14 minutes or less. In 2013-14, the first fire engine arrived at 76.9 per cent of emergencies in 11 minutes or less and 92.14 per cent of emergencies in 14 minutes or less, from the time the station was first alerted.
12. As for the work at emergency incidents, 98 per cent of people who the Service responded to in an emergency in their homes were satisfied with what the fire crews did and 99 per cent were satisfied that they kept the effects of the incident to a minimum.
13. In respect to other key areas of performance, all Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) projects were delivered in time, with the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) programme also progressing well and due to start operating in December 2014.
14. In addition, an external audit of OFRS health and safety management systems showed an overall high performance rating of 87%. This represents an improvement on last year's assessment.

15. Finally, the budget for OFRS for 2013-14 was £24,941,368 – with the most recent national (CIFPA) breakdown of costs (from 2012-13) showing the cost of providing the fire and rescue service in the county being approximately 11p per day for each person – or £41.80 per person per year.

### **Operational Peer Challenge – Key Points**

16. In May 2014, OFRS undertook a successful Operational Peer Challenge. The feedback from the peer review team was very positive; praising the Service's leadership at all levels during challenging times, as well as the political support received from elected members. The report highlights 33 areas to explore, from which an action plan has been produced.
17. In terms of outcomes for local citizens, the Service's commitment to wider safeguarding issues, in line with council priorities, was seen by the review team as notable practice to be shared across the wider UK fire sector.
18. Other areas of notable practice were;
- strong and well-embedded performance management ethos and systems across the Service.
  - the development of enhanced emergency medical skills, in partnership with South Central Ambulance Service.
19. The review team also recognised the development of strong working relationships with partners in both the private and public sector and the of positive outcomes for citizens that OFRS achieved through their work to secure sprinkler installation commitments for the major Westgate Shopping development, Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre and Oxford City Council's High Rise Flats. .
20. In respect to areas of further development, there were a number of key aspects of the Service's work that the review team assessed as requiring specific focus going forward.
- Reinvigoration of the '365alive' vision within the Service, as it had reached its 10-year targets two years ahead of schedule.
  - Building on the successes and lessons learnt from the Winter floods of 2013/2014 across the county, to work with the emergency planning team to become key players in the future engagement, assistance and promotion of community resilience initiatives, particularly in relation to adverse weather planning and preparation –
  - Finally, the review team noted that on-call recruitment, selection, development and retention remained an on-going and mutable challenge (as it is across all FRS's with significant on-call establishments) – and although the Service had put in place a number of innovations in respect to flexible, focussed and pragmatic support and training for the on-call staff

(matched by the Authority's continuing commitment in terms of financial investment) – the Service would need to continue to invest and innovate in order to maintain their high operational standards and good levels of availability of fire engines across the rural parts of Oxfordshire.

### **365alive - Target Review**

21. Following the observations and feedback of the Peer Review Team, the Service has drawn up an action plan with the aim for further service improvement and better citizen outcomes.
22. One of the key areas highlighted was the stretching of the 365alive targets over their last two years up to 2016.
23. As a consequence, the Service has reviewed its past eight years' performance against the established targets and set challenging new goals based on its best performing years. In reality, this equates to a 25% increase in targets for lives saved (45 per year as opposed to 36), money saved (£12.5m per year as opposed to £10m) and face-to-face safety messages delivered (104,000 per year, as opposed to 84,000). There is also an additional target set for the delivery of safety messages through social media and traditional media campaigns. These revised targets will be explained to the Scrutiny Committee via a presentation from the Chief Fire Officer.
24. From both a review team and Service perspective, this resetting of the targets for their last 24 months was seen as vital for keeping the strong momentum and innovation going in the prevention and protection arenas, as well as helping to strengthen the Service's wider participation in delivering the county council's broader health & wellbeing objectives.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **25. The Performance Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**

- (a) Approve the publication of the OFRS 2013 / 2014 Annual Report
- (b) Note the findings of the Operational Peer Challenge and support OFRS Strategic Management Team's aim to further add value to OCC in line with the peer review recommendations and associated action plan.
- (c) Formally adopt the new 365alive stretch targets for the last two years of the vision, which will be reported through the existing quarterly business management and monitoring reports.

DAVID ETHERIDGE  
Chief Fire Officer

Background papers:

- National Framework document for the Fire and Rescue Service
- Oxfordshire Fire Authority Integrated Risk Management Plan 2013-18

Contact Officer: Nathan Travis 01865 855206

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