Dumfries & Galloway **FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

Fire Service Headquarters, Brooms Road, Dumfries DG1 2DZ
Tel: (01387) 252222

HMFSI(S) REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS 2005: PROGRESS ON REPORT

1.   Reason for Report

To advise members of progress made and further actions to be taken to address the recommendations of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire Services (Scotland), set out in his report of June 2005.

2.   Background

In January 2005 Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspection Team (Scotland) undertook a full inspection of Dumfries and Galloway Fire Service. The finalised report was presented to the Fire Authority in June 2005 setting out 34 recommendations. This paper provides a management response and progress position in respect of each of the recommendations as at 31 August 2005.

3.   Recommendations
3.1   Section 1 – Strategic Management
Recommendation 1 - Rank to Role

Wherever possible, temporary promotions, particularly within the Management Team, should be reassessed with a view to making substantive appointments as they arise. Opportunities should be taken to complement the uniformed section of the Service with specialist support staff. This will enhance the diversity and experience of the Service and will allow uniformed staff to further concentrate on service delivery. (Para. 1.5)

3.2   <u>Management Response</u>

Since the inspection the service has developed a 3 phase programme to address this recommendation in the context of Rank to Role and modernisation.

Phase I was approved by the Fire Authority in March 2005 and included the Brigade, Area and Group Manager roles.

Phase II was approved by the Authority in June 2005 and this phase included all other uniformed roles.

Phase III does not require formal approval in that it sets out the action plan and timescale for implementing all rank to role and specialist support role changes to be concluded in January 2006. Phase III will be formally communicated to all staff in August 2005.

3

On August 24 2005 Employers Circular 16/05 confirmed that the substantive move from Rank to Role had been agreed. On August 24 2005 four Group Manager 'A' appointments were confirmed in the role of Community Risk Officers based in each of the four Districts. The process has now begun to appoint four Community Risk Officers to further support the Districts.

3.3   Section 2 - IRMP
Recommendation 2 – FSEC

The IRMP team should consider presenting an intervention options paper to the Firemaster in relation to house fires and road traffic accidents. Without detriment to the ongoing need for a dynamic database, urgent consideration should be given to the skills set required to create alternative proposals for service delivery which utilise not only the database but also FSEC and professional judgement supported by underpinning evidence. Such consideration will lead to a reduction in the wasteful use of resources, e.g. operational response to automatic fire alarms, etc. (Para. 2.4)

3.4   Management Response

The FSEC Team has produced a development plan for 2005/06 with 4 strategic aims.
*   To fully develop a risk model for Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Service.
*   To develop the Services resource allocation programme using the risk model and response plans to develop operational risk reduction strategies.
*   Analyse the results to develop a specific risk database for each station in the region.
*   Support the development of Community Fire Safety activity, contributing to the Community Safety plan.

3.5   Recommendation 3 – Control Room

The Best Value review of the control room may not be the best use of limited resources and should be reconsidered by the Fire Authority. (Para. 2.6)

3.6   Management Response

The Fire Authority agreed to suspend its Best Value review of Fire Control in March 2005 and await the ministerial announcement.

3.7   Section 3 - IPDS
Recommendation 4 – Realistic Fire Training and Guidelines

It is recommended that the Service ensures that all staff receive realistic fire training at the earliest opportunity. The Service may wish to examine the level of Guide Line scenarios included in multi-pump exercises. (Para. 3.3)

3.8   Management Response

- A consultation document entitled 'Realistic Fire Training Unit Attendance For Breathing Apparatus Wearing - Refresher Frequencies' has been issued.
- Guideline exercise to be carried out during next cycle of Realistic Fire Training Unit training.
- Multi-pump guideline exercise arranged for 12 October 2005.

3.9   Section 4 – Community Fire Safety and Local Government Act (Scotland) Recommendation 5 – Community Fire Safety Workload

The Service will need to ensure that the increasing workload in Community Fire Safety is adequately resourced to support the many initiatives contained within the Community Fire Safety action plan. (Para. 4.1)

3.10   Management Response

The introduction of our four area teams will enable us to support the Community Fire Safety Action Plan Initiatives. An example of this is already in place where we now have managed, in some cases through partnership working with the police and other agencies, to set up a project working with young people in an effort to offer diversion from anti social behaviour and to influence future behaviour. Such schemes exist in all of the four areas.

It is the intention to continue co-ordinating Community Fire Safety activities such as the Primary Schools Education Programme and Operation Safety from Headquarters, with the resources within the local area teams delivering the message.

Our Wholetime and Retained staff have already given a commitment to providing a Home Fire Safety Check to those identified.

The support and commitment shown by all concerned is clearly demonstrated by the increase in recorded activity in Community Fire Safety. In particular a total of 106 hours in support of our Fire Cadets at New Galloway, have been provided from that Station's retained personnel, between October 2004 to June 2005.

In addition to our uniformed staff, we have a part time Administrative Assistant at Headquarters who is responsible for our recording of Community Fire Safety activities and also assisting with the general administration of all initiatives.

3.11   Recommendation 6 – Home Safety Visits (Funding)

3

The Service has established some excellent community safety partnerships, which presently cover a wide and diverse range of activities. However, it should consider all options available should the programme of 'over sixties' home safety visits become financially unsustainable.

3.12   Management Response

Following termination of Better Neighbour Services Funding, this will be replaced by the Community Regeneration Fund which, following Scottish Executive direction can only be used in deprived areas.

There are a few areas recognised in Dumfries and Galloway and as a consequence an application for funding has been submitted. The application was for £5,000 in 2005/2006, £10,000 in each of 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 to support our Home Fire Safety Project. It has recently been confirmed that this funding will be allocated.

3.13   Recommendation 7 – Community Fire Safety Targeting

The current priority targeting within this initiative, whilst highly commended, does appear to require the Service to meet a specific numerical target. It may be better to widen the impact of this partnership and the benefits it provides across other sections of the community. (Para. 4.3)

3.14   Management Response

We aim to continue with our established partnerships and have entered into others when identified.

One such scheme has been with Dumfries and Galloway Health Board in their S.T.A.R.S project which assesses and reduces the risk to people returning to their own home after hospitalisation.

Our partners in Better Neighbourhood Services Fund have many avenues to vulnerable elderly people, through groups which we would wish to continue an association with when funding is terminated.

Our Management Team have discussed re-directing efficiency savings from incident reduction to provide funding for continued Home Safety initiatives involving all vulnerable groups.

3.15   Recommendation 8 – Toolkit/Data availability

The Service makes good use of data on operational activity and the various initiatives are monitored to assist in the development of targeted Community Fire Safety. However, the Service may wish to consider providing this information 'live' to stations so that they can immediately identify local issues and implement, where appropriate, a remedial plan. In addition, the Service should consider how best to utilise all staffing options in the delivery of Community Fire Safety work and develop the wider use of the Community Fire Safety Toolkit by station personnel to enhance and support local initiatives. (Para. 4.9)

3.16   Management Response

As part of our targeting programme for Home Fire Safety Checks, Community Fire Safety staff have already requested data via the Fire Service Emergency Cover team to assist operational personnel. This has been used by Wholetime staff at present and it is expected that it will be extended to Retained Stations.

Our existing IT Infrastructure is at present not able to deliver live data direct to all stations, this has been recognised and forms part of a submission for funding via a 'Top Slice Bid'. As stated earlier, both Wholetime and Retained Staff have been used to support our wider Community Fire Safety initiatives. These include use of our Chip Pan demonstration unit, 'Prison Me No Way' and other 'working with youth' projects.

Our plan to utilise the Community Fire Safety toolkits will be enhanced when our four area teams are formed, enabling the person with the Community Fire Safety reference to support individual stations and focus on thematic and specific targets relating to the area profile.

3.17   Section 5 – Fire Safety
Recommendation 9 – Business Continuity

In light of the considerable expertise and experience held by the existing Fire Safety staff, some of whom could be in a position to retire in the near future, the Service may need to further consider in its future planning, to reduce the possible impact of losing a number of existing experienced staff over a short period. In light of the withdrawal of operational staff in Dumfries from the inspection programme, the Service should consider how best to maintain expertise and skills for these staff who would normally be utilised as part of succession planning. (Para. 5.5)

3.18   Management Response

3

At present only one member of Staff within Safety Command has indicated that he may retire within this year, however we are sufficiently covered within the existing rank structure with two non fire safety personnel having been trained on Modules A and B and a further two on Module A of fire safety courses.

Commanders Safety and Learning and Development, have discussed this matter fully and additional courses have been provisionally requested for year 2006/2007 to maintain continuity.

The 2006/07 IRMP will seek to identify an improvement plan to include business continuity and succession planning measures to discharge the new Fire Safety duties (Part 3) of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 when it is enacted in 2006.

3.19 Recommendation 10 – Inspection Regime Review

The Service has consistently been able to complete its existing inspection programme. However, due to staff shortages and secondments, this has not been possible over the last year. There is no evidence to suggest that this has had an impact on safety critical premises. The Service may wish to further examine its inspection programme risk categories. (Para. 5.3)

3.20 Management Response

Discussion has taken place at the Chief Fire Officers Association Fire Safety Legislative Committee within Scotland and collaboration with other members is likely to occur. It is understood that the Lothian and Borders system of addressing the future inspection regime meets with Her Majesty's Inspectorate approval and therefore to maintain consistency we intend to follow a similar route. The inspection programme risk categories will be addressed at this time too.

3.21 Recommendation 11 – Staffing Options

It is recommended that the Service should consider in its review of working arrangements the full range of staffing options available to them to deliver some elements of legislative work including, where appropriate, operational personnel. (Para. 5.7)

3.22 Management Response

As a consequence of the forthcoming introduction of the new Fire Safety Legislation, we have considered the re introduction of using Wholetime personnel to deliver some elements. Whilst we are reviewing our inspection regime we will consider and implement a programme according to the Organisational needs. (See 3.18 above).

In reviewing the full range of staffing options, the opportunity to utilise non uniformed staff has been considered. All of our Fire Safety posts have an operational commitment with the exception of the two Headquarters based Watch Managers.

However, with the new powers to investigate fire and the greater need to establish the actual cause, these Officers require to be trained in Fire Investigation. This allows them to form part of our Fire Investigation teams in support of our Flexible Duty Officers.

3.23   Section 6 – Heads of Agreement
Recommendation 12 – Efficiencies

Whilst the opportunities for efficiencies arising from the Heads of Agreement and other reforms in the Service are limited, they should be kept under constant consideration, consultation and review. (Para. 6.3)

3.24   Management Response

We have already secured agreement or actions on overtime, mixed crewing, watch strengths and first responder. Further reviews to follow as part of Integrated Risk Management Planning year 2 and beyond.

3.25   Recommendation 13 – Wholetime Retained

Where appropriate the Service should look to implementing its whole time/retained policy to support crewing shortages. (Para. 6.3)

3.26   Management Response

Achieved.

3.27   Section 7 – Diversity and Equality
Recommendation 14 – Equality Advisor Posts

The Service should explore the possibility of the creation of an equality advisor's post. (Para. 7.1)

3.28   Management Response

The Service is exploring a joint approach with the Council, Police, NHS or offering the post on a part-time basis to a suitable candidate.

3.29   Recommendation 15 – Race Relations Act etc.

Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Service must look at the ownership of the duties of the Race Relations Act. It must be audited and reported on annually and Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) undertaken for all new and existing relevant policies and procedures. These EIAs must also be published where any adverse results emerge. There must also be evidence that consultation has taken place with the black and minority ethnic (BME) communities on the relevant parts of the action plan associated with the Race Equality Scheme (RES), and the results of such consultation are published. The Senior Management Team must take corporate responsibility for the duties under the Act and the reporting and publication of progress. Reporting on the progress of the RES should be a standing agenda item in Management Team meetings. Each Head of Division/Department should be reporting on the specific duties/action plans for their area. The RES is owned legally by the Fire Authority. Therefore it is they who are at risk if the Service is not fully compliant.

3.30   Management Response

The Service Equality and Diversity Forum have received training in Equality Impact Assessments (EIA). Senior Managers to receive training by IODA, a specialist Human Resource Training Organisation, in November 2005.

A template is being developed to identify and prioritise all policies and procedures to enable Equality and Diversity Forum to carry out EIA's screening process, which will identify those policies and procedures that have an adverse impact and require consultation either as a Part EIA or Full EIA. The results of the EIA and outcome of consultations will be published as part of the annual report relating to the Race Equality Scheme.

Members of the Equality and Diversity forum will support their Department Head's by carrying out the EIA. The Brigade Manager Service Support leads the Equality and Diversity forum and is responsible for ensuring delivery of the Diversity Strategy and Race Equality Scheme.

Equality and Diversity will be a standing item on Brigade Management Team agenda commencing September 2005. This will include an update on the activities of the Equality and Diversity forum and an update by Department Head's of the Diversity Strategy Action Plan and Race Equality Scheme Action Plan.

3.31   Recommendation 16 –Equal Opportunities Policy

The Equal Opportunities Policy should be reviewed and an individual copy given to all current and future staff. The revised policy should include the Harassment Policy as there is no need for this to be a separate document.

3.32   Management Response

The Equal Opportunities Policies are currently being reviewed and the first draft will be completed by end of September 2005.

3.33   Recommendation 17 – Equality Training

The undertaking of training in equality issues must be addressed and resourced as soon as possible. The Senior Management team have not been trained adequately on Diversity and Equality issues and this must be undertaken immediately. It is imperative that Senior Managers are trained in order that the agenda on diversity and equality can be taken forward efficiently and professionally. The delivery of training to all other staff must also be considered, particularly noting the new legal requirement arising from the Race Relations Act to train staff on cultural and race awareness.

3.34   Management Response

The Senior Management Team will receive Diversity Training on 17 November 2005 provided by IODA. The Learning & Development Manager is currently putting a training plan together for all other staff.

3.35   Recommendation 18 – Contact Officers Group

A more representative Contact Officers Group should be established and all members should be adequately trained in conflict resolution and the Service's procedures in dealing with complaints. The Service should ensure that a list of these contact officers is communicated to all staff along with the procedures to make a complaint.

3.36   Management Response

Members of the Equality and Diversity forum will become Equality Contact Officers. There is representation from each function across the Service.

An information bulletin will be issued to all staff, which will inform staff of the terms of reference for the Equality and Diversity forum and their role in relation to dealing with Equality issues and the procedures for making a complaint.

**3.37   Section 8 – Health and Safety
Recommendation 19 – Attendance Data**

It is recommended the Service examines ways to better integrate the use of data produced by the Health and Safety Advisor in relation to managing attendance.   (Para. 8.4)

3.38   Management Response

3

Currently introducing a new Health and Safety module of FireWatch to fully integrate with existing Human Resource information system.

The Health and Safety module within Firewatch is now used to record Health and Safety data. As a result this provides a foundation for developing integration with personnel data. H&S reports are being developed that will provide the Risk Management Support Officer with access to this information, however formal discussion regarding specific requirements still need to be undertaken with Risk Management Support Officer and Personnel.

3.39 Recommendation 20 – Working Time Directive

3.40 Management Response

Still to be considered.

3.41 Section 9 – Information/Communications
Recommendation 21 – Face to Face Communications

The Service may benefit from enhancing 'face-to-face' communications with staff, particularly during a time of major change across the Service as current perceptions can have a detrimental affect on morale. Such 'face-to-face' communication will help to reduce concerns. Increasing staff awareness of the benefits that New Dimensions equipment is bringing to the Service and the community should form part of the information/communications flow. (Para. 9.2)

3.42 Management Response

A considerable effort has been put into delivering the Service Communications Strategy. The strategy includes E-communications, service bulletins and briefing papers, consultation fora, seminars, training events and regular face to face briefings with staff.

3.43 Recommendation 22 – Retained Staff Involvement in Community Fire Safety

The Service may wish to consider further engaging with retained staff specifically on community safety and release for duty issues. (Para. 9.3) Section 10 – Personnel Attendance Levels.

3.44 Management Response

Being considered as part of Phase III Modernisation (August 2005).

3.45 Section 10 – Personnel Attendance Levels
Recommendation 23 – Human Resource Structure

It is recommended that the Service reviews the functionality of its Human Resource/Personnel Development management structure. (Para. 10.1)

3.46 Management Response

This clearly links to recommendation 14 and the corporate review of Human Resource. It will form part of Phase III modernisation (August 2005).

3.47 Recommendation 24 – Human Resource/Personnel Manager

It is recommended that the Service prepares and submits a business case to the Council to re-designate its current development manager post to that of Human Resources/Personnel manager. (Para. 10.2)

3.48 Management Response

Achieved.

3.49 Recommendation 25 – Trigger Levels

It is recommended that trigger levels be introduced to the attendance management policy. Whilst reviewing the policy, it is recommended that a benchmarking exercise be carried out with similar Services to explore best practice in the use of trigger levels. (Para. 10.2)

3.50 Management Response

The Brigade Manager Service Support will address this with reference to revitalising Health and Safety targets.

3.51 Section 11 – Freedom of Information Act
Recommendation 26 – FOI Order

Whilst it is recognised that the Service's arrangements are inextricably linked to that of the Council, it nevertheless needs to move forward and issue the current draft Service order to ensure that all staff have access to the necessary guidance on dealing with any requests under FOI. (Para.11.2)

3.52 Management Response

Achieved.

3.53 Recommendation 27 – Staff Training

To support these arrangements, staff training should be progressed as soon as practicable, preferably utilising the Council's e-learning package. The results of the initial information audit should be used to extend this process across all Service departments. (Para.11.5)

3.54   Management Response

Training of front line staff being pursued as a priority.

3.55   Section 12 – Information Technology
Recommendation 28 – FSEC/Active Response

Further work should be carried out on the interface between FSEC and the Active Response System software system and this needs to be progressed as soon as possible. There is also a need to provide limited amounts of data from the FSEC model, which is already being gathered, to stations and departments. This would allow staff to analyse the data and the running of planning scenarios which in turn would build up confidence in the use of the FSEC model at both strategic and practitioner level. (Para. 12.3)

3.56   Management Response

A further two years data has been prepared by the team and they are awaiting validation, amendments and other input by the Fire Service Emergency Cover Hub Team and Fire Control. Some data is now being supplied to Operations Command to support operational response options, and to Community Fire Safety for risk profiling. The Fire Service Emergency Cover and active response systems cannot be interfaced but can be used in tandem at this time.

3.57   Section 13 – Civil Contingencies Act
Recommendation 29 – Work Plan

The work plan for managing the new duties imposed by the Civil Contingencies Act are clearly identified in the framework of the report to the Councils Corporate Management Team, and this work plan should be utilised to develop the Service specific duties as a category 1 responder. (Para. 13.1)

3.58   Management Response

The Local Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) has agreed a business plan style approach including new strategic structure. The Council is currently reviewing its Emergency Planning arrangements and the new structure (SCG) now places the Chief Executive of the Council, Chief Constable, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive of the Health Authority as the lead group.

3.59   Recommendation 30 – Business Continuity

The Service may also wish to consider the wider expectations of all partners in developing business continuity plans, to ensure that there is not an over reliance on finite Service resources. (Para. 13.2)

3.60 Management Response

Work is progressing at local (SCG) and UK (via CFOA) levels in respect of Business Continuity. The first plan, Pandemic Flu, has been produced by CFOA(S) for adoption at UK level and local level. Further work is in progress.

3.61 Recommendation 31 – Wider Role

It is recommended that the Service considers developing a wider role in exercising these arrangements. This should include, where appropriate, the deployment of mass decontamination facilities and support arrangement from existing Services with Major Incident Units to further validate mutual aid and local planning assumptions. (Para. 13.7)

3.62 Management Response

Planning is ongoing for inter-agency training days which will include the use of incident response units.

3.63 Recommendation 32 – USAR

The Service has innovatively utilised its resources to provide an interim USAR solution which maximises the capability provided by the new dimension programme to deliver an enhanced service to the benefit of the community. (Para. 13.9)

3.64 Management Response

The initial risk profiling has been undertaken. This will be integrated into the FSEC process when resources permit.

3.65 Recommendation 33 – Planning Assumptions

The Service should look to build on existing planning arrangements and consider how best to review its planning assumptions. Planning should also consider, in more detail, the type and scale of events that previously would have been unimaginable. (Para. 13.10)

3.67 Management Response

Relevant Brigade Orders are being reviewed and updated to include 9/11 considerations where appropriate.

3.68 Section 14 – Funding
Recommendation 34 – Transitional Funding

Reviews of the infrastructure areas of the Service should be undertaken in an attempt to identify efficiencies and/or savings. The Fire Authority should plan for the absorption of the recently provided transitional funding which may be assisted by these reviews. (Para. 14.1)

3.69 <u>Management Response</u>

This is being addressed within Phases 1-3 of the Modernisation agenda, IRMP and Operational Plans and Rank to Role programme. Service improvement and efficiency savings include:

- Establishment of new District Teams.
- Reduction of wholetime crewing (19 to 18).
- Establishment and development of non-uniformed roles.
  New posts and revised posts.
- Special Appliance Reviews (September 2005).
- Automatic Fire Alarm policy development.
- Pre Determined Attendance review.
- Anti Social Behaviour Programme
- Wildfire Strategy.

---

4. Recommendations

To advise members of progress made and further actions to be taken to address the recommendations of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire Services (Scotland), set out in his report of June 2005.

Gerry Campbell
Brigade Manager, Service Delivery
Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Service
Brooms Road
Dumfries

31 August 2005