

ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



MINUTES OF THE MEETING CHALLENGE AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH 2010 AT 14:00 HOURS

Present:

Councillor Aspinell
Councillor Barker (Chairman)
Councillor Channer
Councillor Johnson
Councillor Knapman
Councillor McEwen
Councillor Miller
Councillor Reeves (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Roberts

Councillor Walters
Councillor Wexham
Councillor White

The following Officers were present in support throughout the meeting.

The Chief Fire Officer, David Johnson
Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Adam Eckley
T/Assistant Divisional Officer, T Webb
Minute Taker, Trisha Adams

No members of the public were present.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kent, Riley and Skeels.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members in respect of items included on the agenda.

32. MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2010.

Resolved:

That the minutes be amended for accuracy and signed by the Chairman.

33. PRESENTATION PAPER- HAITI EARTHQUAKE 2010

The Committee received a presentation from T/ADO Webb about ECFRS' involvement in the recent rescue operation following the earthquake in Haiti.

The Chairman asked why agencies did not maintain a database of equipment held by organisations, T/ADO Webb advised that the agencies held databases but could not command the use of kit, they coordinated rescue operations.

Councillor McEwen asked why Officers had initially mobilised to Brussels to be briefed. T/ADO Webb advised that following coordination meetings in Brussels he had quickly arrived in Haiti via a Belgian military flight.

Councillor Walters asked about Officers personal welfare e.g. inoculations, T/ADO Webb advised that inoculations were always kept up to date, Officers were always in a state of readiness.

Councillor Channer said that the presentation had been very interesting. The Chairman was of the view that it was known which areas of the world did not have resources, she asked what the international resilience community was doing to give them basic starting points. T/ADO Webb said that in his view it was about getting the right people in place to assist.

The Chief Fire Officer commended the fantastic efforts of the rescue teams in Haiti.

34. PERFORMANCE REPORT

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/010/10 set out the performance information for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 January 2010.

The Chairman noted that due to the introduction of the Incident Recording System more fires were being recorded as primary and secondary fires. Councillor Wexham asked how the Service had previously recorded turn out, the Chief Fire Officer gave the example that previously a standing crop fire would be recorded as an incident but not as a primary fire. ACFO Thomson advised the Committee that the new recording system had been in effect for under a year, it was therefore difficult to extrapolate figures, he said that it would be easier to look at trend analysis further down the line. In response to an enquiry from the Committee, it was confirmed that all Services in the family group had moved from the FDR1 form to the electronic reporting system. DCFO Eckley advised Members that the Police made the final judgement as regards whether a fire was deliberate or arson, since arson required verification as to the intention of the perpetrator.

The Chairman asked if there was improvement in the numbers of completed IRS forms. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that six incidents remained outstanding from the previous year, the outstanding number of forms had reduced from 543 to 44, the Service was exceeding the CLG's target of 95% returns. In response to an enquiry from the Committee the Chief Fire Officer advised that the increase to 20k forms was due to the requirement to report all incidents. DCFO Eckley advised that the statistics informed community safety targets for proactive intervention and Service delivery. In response to Councillor Walters' enquiry DCFO Eckley confirmed that the Service reported all call outs. The Chairman suggested that a Task & Finish Group look at primary and secondary fire statistics, it was agreed to wait until the reporting system settled down.

Councillor Aspinell said that there was a lot of good news information in the statistics, he asked what the Service was doing in terms of disseminating the information to the public. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the media tended to be more interested in negative rather than good news stories. Councillor Wexham suggested that the Service publish items in borough newspapers and magazines. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Service had published items in the County Council magazine, he added that the Service was constrained by editorial controls. The Chairman suggested that Council Leaders

were contacted to see if they would be happy to publish performance reports related to their local areas. Councillor Channer agreed that she would be keen to have items published in the Maldon District Council's Members' Bulletin and in the Courier. The Chairman said that district councils could disseminate information to parish councils perhaps at the end of each year tailored to each locality. The Chief Fire Officer said that he would speak to ECFRS' Performance and Communications teams.

Resolved:

That Members noted the contents of the report.

35. WORK PROGRAMME

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/011/10 contained a summary of the progress made to date on the work programme of the committee for 2009/10.

Referring to the review of the Authority's committee structures the Chief Fire Officer advised that recommendations of the Grievance, Discipline and Remuneration of Principal Officers Group would be brought to the Authority.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed the dates scheduled for Member Development Training as 14 and 28 May 2010 and the date set for Members to discuss Budget Priorities and Financial Matters as 21 May 2010.

Resolved:

That Members noted:

1. That the work to review all EFA Committees arrangements was ongoing and that the Chief Fire Officer would present the outcomes of that review for consideration of Essex Fire Authority in due course;
2. The outcome of the 'Essex Fire Authority Member Development Opportunities Questionnaire 2009/10' would inform a number of events that would offer information in the requested format over the forthcoming months.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Essex Fire Authority Chairman's Charity Dinner

The Chairman advised Members of the Fire Authority Chairman's Charity Dinner on 4 June 2010 at Stock Brook Manor for Down Syndrome extra 21, tickets were available at £35 with £10 of the ticket price going straight to the very worthy cause.

Signed
Chairman.....19 May 2010

