

MEETING: 28th FEBRUARY 2011

SUBJECT: OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW 2010

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report advises Members of the outcome of the Operational Assessment Peer Review undertaken between October 12th and 15th 2010.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Operational Assessment (Op/A) is a sector led approach to assessing operational effectiveness, designed by the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA). It is a voluntary process consisting of a self assessment against seven key lines of enquiry, followed by an on-site peer review. The process is rigorous and has been accepted by the Audit Commission as evidence of organisational effectiveness. The process of completing Op/A is a useful exercise in self awareness, understanding of achievements and areas for improvement.
- 2.2 The key lines of enquiry (KLOE) for Op/A are:
- Community risk management
 - Prevention
 - Protection
 - Response
 - Health and Safety
 - Training and Development
 - Call management and incident support
- 2.3 In 2010 Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service requested an Operational Assessment as part of its overall commitment to service improvement. As a result, following completion of the self assessment by a team of staff from across the organisation, the service was visited in October 2010 by a peer review team led by CFO Louis Jones, Northern Ireland FRS, supported by a Councillor from Bedfordshire and Luton FRA; Senior Fire Service Officers from Hampshire and Merseyside FRS; the Deputy Chief Executive of Kettering BC; the Chair of the Kettering Community Partnership and a review manager from LGID.

3 KEY FINDINGS

- 3.1 At the conclusion of the audit the peer review team provided informal verbal feedback and have now provided formal written feedback to the service and it is pleasing to note that team formed a very positive opinion of the service in general, as the following two examples demonstrate:

Creating the Safest Community

- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) is a good service performing well. Staff are enthusiastic, they work hard, and enjoy working for the service and are committed to it.
- In the recent past the service has made significant progress in relation to the change of culture to embrace community safety alongside response and the development of operational intelligence

3.2 The detailed findings and the recommendations of the peer review team are contained in their main report under the seven Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) and cross cutting theme headings, a sample of which are shown below.

3.3 **Cross cutting themes**

- This is a good service performing well
- The culture of the service is positive and hard working
- Members have a passionate and committed support for the Fire and Rescue Service
- Staff are enthusiastic and are committed to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS)
- The (CFO) and Senior Management Team (SMT) are respected across the organisation
- Staff recognise there will be challenges in the immediate future
- Staff engagement and communication is open and effective
- Performance Management and evaluation are well embedded and effective and there is evidence of transferability of good practice

3.4 **Notable practice**

In addition to providing an overview of the organisation, the review also highlights areas of notable practice which in their view should be shared with other services. Notable practice was found in Response, Protection and Health and Safety, specifically:

- The Red Kite quality assurance system
- The Tyne Tunnel Fire Suppression System
- Occupational Health provision

3.5 Areas for consideration

Areas for consideration relate to those parts of the Service where the Review Team feel additional work could be undertaken. These include:

- Continue to work with housing providers (public and private) to understand risks, prevent risks and educate tenants
- Consider a formalised approach for providing Business Continuity Management advice to businesses during audits
- Consider developing the Incident Liaison Officer (ILO) concept

3.6 The Service will continue to examine all areas for consideration detailed within the report, and include relevant improvement actions in the Improvement Plan. TWFRS.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 The Op/A process was a worthwhile exercise both in terms of the benefits of working together to complete the self assessment, and the independent scrutiny of operational effectiveness provided by sector peers.

4.2 The outcome of the review is very positive and it is clear from the report that this has been made possible through the positive culture of the organisation and the dedication of all staff and Members.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of this report and;
- b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

Operational Assessment toolkit and KLOEs
TWFRS: Operational Self Assessment
TWFRS: Peer review report

