Guernsey Fire and Rescue Service Inspection Report 2008

Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit
St Andrews House
Edinburgh

Contents

1.   INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1   Fire and Rescue Services across the UK are undergoing an extensive programme of modernisation following the National Joint Council (NJC) agreement on pay and conditions in 2003.   The programme of change is intended to move Services towards a more targeted and risk-based approach to prevention, protection and emergency response.

1.2   The Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit (SFRAU) (in its previous form as Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland) was tasked with examining whether the intended benefits of the various national changes under modernisation were being delivered locally.

1.3   In this context a request was received from the Bailiff of Guernsey to carry out an inspection of Guernsey Fire and Rescue Service.   A Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference were established and the Service was asked to submit a self-assessment together with supporting evidence.

1.4   On the 29th and 30th October 2008, an SFRAU inspection team visited the Service. The inspection team conducted an extensive range of interviews, reviewed relevant documents and analysed performance information. The inspection team reviewed eight areas of performance:

- Strategic management;

- Risk management;

- Financial management;

- Workforce management;

- Partnership working;

- Communications;

- Operational preparedness and emergency response; and

- Community safety and preventative working.

1.5   Evidence from the Service's self assessment submission was considered along with these findings and the conclusions reached have been included in this report and were presented to the States of Guernsey Government Home Department in December 2008.

2. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Strategic Management

2.1   The Service should consider further audits of performance.

Risk Management

2.2   The Service should examine the potential of developing or utilising existing mapping systems in order to enhance its data collection and risk analysis options to support the provision of accurate empirical evidence.

2.3   The Service should review crewing arrangements with a view to ensuring safe systems of work which can be implemented by crews arriving at the early stages of significant incidents.

2.4   The Service should exercise its business continuity plans, in conjunction with partner agencies as appropriate, as a matter of priority.

2.5   The Service should carry out a review of its Safety Policy and procedures in order to ensure that levels of knowledge and expertise are improved throughout the organisation.

2.6   The Service should review the provision of information on front line appliances including the manner in which it is updated, stored and presented.

Workforce Management

2.7   The Service should continue to review crewing arrangements in order to ensure optimum provision of experience and expertise is available for front line operations.

Partnership Working

2.8   The Service should consider drawing up a partnership register which identifies the benefits to be achieved for the service and the expectations of partners. Such a register could be easily expanded to include contact details and location of resources that would support staff who take on partnership responsibilities.

2.9   The partnership arrangements and the documentation that supports the education programme are commendable. The documentation that has been developed could be used as a template for all partnership working.

Communications

2.10   The Service should explore the scope for a collaborative approach to improve the resilience of the control room.

2.11   The Service should consider the potential to improve mobilising times by the installation of a 'pre-alert' signal into the station turnout system, whereby the pre-alert will automatically sound in the station when a '999' call is made to fire control, giving station crews an alert to the existence of an incoming emergency call.

2.12   The Service should consider the provision of real time recording of fire calls to allow monitoring and maintenance of call handling standards.

Operational Preparedness and Emergency Response

2.13   The Service should proceed with the introduction of the additional posts identified within the 2008 IRMP and these should be used to supplement the crewing levels to five riders on the first pumping appliance in order to ensure safe systems of work for initial crews arriving at incidents.

2.14   The Service should re-evaluate its commitment to New Dimension response in conjunction with its partner agencies.

2.15   The Service should review its provision of site specific risk information to operational personnel attending incidents:

- Accurate and useful information should be readily available to personnel attending incidents.
- There should not be total reliance on site operators to provide the information and notify of changes.
- Consider the use of two levels of information. In addition to full information which may be necessary, incorporate first strike information, in the form of brief information suitable for the first attending incident commander.

Community Safety and Preventative Working

2.16   The difficulties in achieving the proposed changes to the current fire safety legislation identified in IRMP 2004 continues to hamper attempts to have a fully risk based inspection programme. Legislators should be encouraged to give priority to the changes to fire safety law.

2.17   The preliminary work being undertaken to identify a robust method for collecting premises data risk information for the benefit of fire safety and operational staff should be given some priority. The CFOA premises audit format could be adapted to create a simplified methodology thus retaining the ability to benefit from any future UK development work.

2.18   Consideration should be given to the need for administrative support for fire safety inspecting officers. (This recommendation should be considered in association with later recommendations relating to community safety staffing).

2.19   When implementing the change to management structure to improve management of operational issues, consideration should be given to the level of support that is required to avoid any loss of momentum within the area of community safety.

2.20   The proposal to expand the HFSC (Home Fire Safety Check) scheme is a positive step. The Service should consider targeting this response at those most at risk to ensure that limited staff and financial resources have the greatest impact.

2.21   The Service should consider if the various needs of the Fire Safety department in administrative support, support for safety programmes and the need to develop better premises risk information could be met by an additional non-operational member of staff.

2.22   The Service has a well developed approach to reducing mobilisations to automatic fire alarms. However, it should evaluate the updated CFOA policy in relation to this issue to identify any opportunities it may offer.

3. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

3.1   The organisation has a clear strategic Management Plan with links to its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and the Service Performance Plan.

3.2   It was clear from the evidence submitted and from service interviews that there is a strong planning framework throughout Guernsey Fire and Rescue Service.

3.3   The Service has built up a wide range of partners external to the Service and is highly thought of by all the external partners.

3.4   At present there are some outcome measures in place and comparison with other Island services has been initiated.

3.5   The Service has been pro-active in requesting an assessment by the SFRAU Team and has clearly benefitted from carrying out the self-assessment process. Other toolkits are available for examining specific aspects of the Service such as that produced through a collaboration of the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) and Communities and Local Government (CLG) for Operational Assessment of Service Delivery. This can be completed on an individual basis but is also designed for use in a peer review process which the Service may wish to consider in conjunction with a neighbouring Service.

The Service should consider further audits of performance.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1   The Service has a clearly defined policy in relation to the assessment of existing and potential risk within the community and has made good use of available data. The Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) model has not been used as part of the process of developing the Service's IRMP. In addition, no significant mapping systems are available for use, although use is made of information from other departments on the Island. The Service's 2008 IRMP seeks to upgrade the Management Information System to allow enhanced data collection for incident location.

4.2 The IRMP is developed by the Senior Management Team and agreed following input from all departments. A draft IRMP is then produced for presentation to the Island's Home Department and, subject to approval in principle, is then circulated for consultation to a wide range of stakeholder groups. Thereafter a final IRMP is produced. Annual Service plans are produced with departments supporting by means of action points.

The Service should examine the potential of developing or utilising existing mapping systems in order to enhance its data collection and risk analysis options to support the provision of accurate empirical evidence.

4.3 The Service has used options appraisal as a tool in determining the optimum use of resources. A nucleus crewing system has been implemented and bespoke duty system and operating procedures have been implemented for RDS staff. Levels of operational crewing are set out in the IRMP and the Service has, due to budget constraints which operate throughout the States, been required to reduce the establishment by two Nucleus Crewing posts.

4.4 The IRMP is reported on annually within the performance reporting cycle and the Service has benefited from the IRMP as it has provided clear guidance and uniformity to both operations and community safety. Clear goals have been set and the overall professionalism and service delivery has improved, reflected in the number of appreciation letters received and zero complaints. Partners hold the Service in high regard, both in terms of core activity and also in the wider community wellbeing role.

4.5 The Service has identified the skills required to deal with the risks faced by the communities and has introduced a structured development programme designed to ensure the competency of personnel in all aspects of managing this risk. Good use is made of lessons learned from incidents by use of an effective debrief system which is both appreciated and supported by staff.

4.6 The Service has identified training resources needed through an annual training needs analysis with safety critical training events given priority. The Service has made good use of off-station training events to maximise learning opportunities, including the use of live fire situations. The Service also makes good use of partnership arrangements with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service to provide fire behaviour and marine firefighting training on a three yearly basis to staff.

4.7   All staff spoken to indicated high levels of commitment and enthusiasm to their respective roles.   However, recent changes to crewing levels have caused concerns about the ability of crews arriving at a significant incident to deal effectively and safely with the tasks required, particularly in the early stages.

The Service should review crewing arrangements with a view to ensuring safe systems of work which can be implemented by crews arriving at the early stages of significant incidents.

4.8   Corporate Risk is dealt with under the umbrella of States plans with well developed business continuity plans for loss of premises, systems etc.   Plans tie in with States of Guernsey plans but, to date, there is no evidence that these plans have been effectively exercised.

The Service should exercise its business continuity plans, in conjunction with partner agencies as appropriate, as a matter of priority.

4.9   Responsibility for health, safety and welfare is designated to the Deputy Chief Officer on the Senior Management Team.   Policies are in place and there is evidence of a reasonable culture and understanding of health and safety throughout the Service.   However, more work needs to be done to formalise procedures and increase individual ownership and awareness of health and safety issues.   It is important that personnel develop an improved awareness of health and safety issues, recognising the importance of reporting near misses and other events and that safety is an issue for all staff, not solely those whom have a specific reference.

The Service should carry out a review of its Safety Policy and procedures in order to ensure that levels of knowledge and expertise are improved throughout the organisation.

4.10 Safety critical information is provided within all frontline appliances and is generally kept up to date. However, the volume of information and the number of different formats in which it is stored are such as to limit its overall effectiveness.

The Service should review the provision of information on front line appliances including the manner in which it is updated, stored and presented.

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5. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

5.1 Financial management was not a main part of the inspection, none of the inspection team are financial auditors. However, it was noted throughout the inspection that future funding of the Service is a major concern at all levels, all personnel are acutely aware of the need for financial probity.

5.2 There is clear financial impact monitoring in place and no projects are undertaken without future revenue and capital costs being explored.

5.3 As with all Fire Services the majority of revenue costs are driven by staff salaries which leave very little scope for further flexibility.

5.4 The Service has good asset management and replacement programmes included within the IRMP which enable it to link financial planning to service delivery, taking full account of risks to the community, the organisation and its workforce.

5.5 Over the recent years the Service has implemented a programme of external fund raising for domestic smoke alarms. This has been a highly successful and a creditable initiative for the Service.

6. WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

6.1 The Service has clear policies for workforce planning and development covering selection, learning and development, and competence. The national Integrated Personnel Development System has not been adopted in its entirety. The Service has developed a system based on the National Occupational Standards and modified to take cognisance of the particular circumstances faced on the Island. Electronic records have been introduced and individual training and development files exist although further development is required if these records are to accurately reflect individual competence.

6.2   Following return from basic training, new entrants are provided with a service induction before being assessed as suitably competent to attend emergency incidents. Thereafter a structured development programme involving regular assessment is the means for developing candidates within their own roles and beyond.

6.3   The Service has introduced policies which determine levels of competence to be attained prior to an individual being permitted to act up to the role above their substantive role and take charge of an emergency appliance at an incident. Proportionately increasing levels of assessment are required prior to acting to crew, watch and station manager roles respectively. The Service has elected to utilise the Institution of Fire Engineers examination system as a means of assessing the technical knowledge of candidates presenting themselves for promotion, as part of the assessment and development process.

6.4   Resources are allocated to the training department and prioritised in line with annual action plans. The Service has developed effective partnerships with the Guernsey Training Agency and the Guernsey Ambulance and Rescue Service and makes good use of these partnerships to deliver effective training to Service personnel.

6.5   The Service has introduced a number of varied and flexible working patterns supporting family friendly working. It is anticipated that additional staff on the nucleus crewing system will be introduced in the near future to remove some budget pressures whilst improving daytime cover. Good use is made of overtime and also the RDS system to supplement crewing levels. Nucleus crewing arrangements allow new entrants to work across a variety of watches in order to develop experience. It is important that this arrangement continues to support their individual development while ensuring that overall skill levels are maintained throughout operational watches, together with optimum crewing levels.

The Service should continue to review crewing arrangements in order to ensure optimum provision of experience and expertise is available for front line operations.

7. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

7.1   The Service has built up numerous partnership arrangements. Partners include not only the historic ties with the other emergency services, but also Health and Safety enforcement, Building Control, Youth Services and Education. No clear policies have been developed to identify a partnership strategy and the growth of partnerships has tended to be organic and in some cases reactive to requests from agencies.

7.2   The restrictions caused by the limited staff resources mean that knowledge is concentrated into a very small number of highly motivated individuals. This is a source of concern for succession planning and business continuity.

7.3   The evaluation of the effectiveness of partnership working is not fully developed by the Service. Performance measures that relate to the work done to develop and maintain partnerships could benefit the Service in its drive to make best use of its resources.

7.4   The work that is being developed by the community safety manager to record information that will benefit future staff tasked with working in partnerships has the potential to be expanded to involve all partnership working that is carried out across the whole organisation.

7.5   To ensure that this work is comprehensive it should be owned at principal management level.

The Service should consider drawing up a partnership register which identifies the benefits to be achieved for the Service and the expectations of partners. Such a register could be easily expanded to include contact details and location of resources that would support staff who take on partnership responsibilities.

7.6   Although most of the partnerships are not formalised, feedback indicates that they are well developed and partner organisations are content with the relationships. Positive examples of the high level of respect for the Service and its staff were available from all the partner organisations contacted. This is a credit to the organisation and reflects well on the culture that exists within Guernsey FRS.

7.7   Partnership activity with youth services sees Service staff actively involved at various stages in pupil development throughout their education. This work has been developed to fit well with the other competing demands on teaching staff.

The partnership arrangements and the documentation that supports the education programme are commendable. The documentation that has been developed could be used as a template for all partnership working.

8.   COMMUNICATIONS

Control Room

8.1   The Service operates a dedicated control room. There are six control room personnel with supervision provided by a control manager. A four watch system operates with one control officer per watch and one flexi officer to cover absences. There is a fallback arrangement in case there is a need to evacuate the control room. This staffing arrangement leaves the Service with minimal resilience and it is vulnerable in the event of extended control staff absence.

The Service should explore the scope for a collaborative approach to improve the resilience of the control room.

8.2   Incident addresses at station turnout are given by voice only over a tannoy system. While this may offer scope for error by mishearing, there was no evidence that personnel have had difficulty with this arrangement. One consequence of this system is that the operator cannot alert and pass details of the call to the station until the fire call is terminated.

8.3   Fire call information is recorded on paper and details are input into the Management Information System (MIS). Since there is no 'real time' recording of fire call handling times, these times cannot be accurately monitored.

8.4   The replacement of the Command and Control system is an action point in the Service's 2008 IRMP.

The Service should consider the potential to improve mobilising times by the installation of a 'pre-alert' signal into the station turnout system, whereby the pre-alert will automatically sound in the station when a '999' call is made to fire control, giving station crews an alert to the existence of an incoming emergency call.

> **The Service should consider the provision of real time recording of fire calls to allow monitoring and maintenance of call handling standards.**

8.5   The control suite is effectively designed with the workstation arrangement having high staff approval.   The "digimap" facility in control is overlaid with hydrant locations and some risk information. In combination with the Automatic Vehicle Location System display, the "digimap" is an extremely useful function.

9.   OPERATIONAL PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

9.1   There are four levels of operational response, in general these work very effectively:

- Station personnel operating on a shift duty system:
- Shift duty personnel operating a call back system;
- Retained duty system (RDS) personnel; and
- Full FRS mobilisation.

9.2   Two appliances are crewed by shift duty personnel. A feature of the shift duty system is a call back requirement by which personnel are called by alerter to crew a further appliance. There is flexibility in the operation of the call back system, allowing personnel to opt out of providing alerter cover where there are sufficient personnel available on the system.   There is no expected time scale specified for responding to an alert while on the call back system.

9.3   The shift duty establishment is 44, allocated across four watches with the minimum crewing level on the first two pumping appliance being four riders. Overtime is used to ensure crewing levels do not fall below the minimum.

9.4   There is a proposal within the 2008 IRMP, to reintroduce nucleus firefighter posts.

> **The Service should proceed with the introduction of the additional posts identified within the 2008 IRMP and these should be used to supplement the crewing levels to five riders on the first pumping appliance in order to ensure safe systems of work for initial crews arriving at incidents.**

9.5   RDS personnel are used as a back-up to shift duty and call back personnel. They may be called in for a protracted incident but in practice have a very low rate of callout.

9.6   The RDS establishment is 22 personnel, (three crew commanders and 19 firefighters). A two watch system operates for RDS personnel operating 24 hrs on, 24 hrs off. RDS personnel are available for two hours training a week but are only expected to be proficient in the use of the equipment on their appliance and the water carriers. RDS personnel and shift duty personnel train together and mixed crewing operates during the training period when two RDS personnel are given the opportunity to ride the whole time pumps. This provides an excellent development opportunity for staff and helps maintain the excellent relationship between RDS and shift duty personnel.

9.7   A day duty watch manager is in charge of the RDS personnel. He attends during the weekly training night and looks after administration and cover, this is an arrangement that has proved very effective.

9.8   Full mobilisation involves recall of all available Fire and Rescue Service personnel and is used only occasionally in exceptional circumstances.

9.9   The Service has no boat rescue or line rescue capability, this is carried out by Guernsey Ambulance and Rescue Service. However, the Service has a wide range of equipment as would be expected in an island environment where self sufficiency is the norm. Because of the amount of equipment and finite staff resources, keeping up personnel competencies is a major challenge, recognised by the Service.

New Dimension

9.10   Following the 2001 terrorist attacks, the UK Government introduced an initiative named 'New Dimension' to task Fire and Rescue Services to carry out Mass Decontamination and Urban Search and Rescue functions. This was subsequently expanded to include enhanced provisions for Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM).

9.11   The Service has a collaborative approach to mass decontamination with Jersey FRS with additional back up provided by Hampshire FRS. In order to support this it has a DIM capability in the form of Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) Identification (ID). Whilst the Service has trained Hazmat personnel they are not trained to the enhanced DIM standards and it would be a considerable risk to make major decisions based on results from the substance ID equipment. The level of training to ensure competence to use this kit properly is high and ongoing.

9.12   The Service has exercised mass decontamination but there are issues with the fact that the area of land necessary to set up equipment is not readily available and there are not staff levels to do so quickly and effectively.

9.13   Mass Decontamination (MD4) small units are used for decontamination of FRS staff. This works well and is quick to set up. Additional units of this type or slightly larger may be a better option than the use of larger units.

> **The Service should re-evaluate its commitment to New Dimension response in conjunction with its partner agencies.**

9.14   The Service is considering the purchase of a high volume pump (HVP). The reasons given are to combat coastal flooding and provide a backup function for the St. Sampsons firemain. The provision of a HVP might be overkill, unless it is a replacement for other appliances and it may be prudent to seek UK assistance should the need arise.

9.15   The Service is carrying out high level discussions with officers from the Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre in the UK to seek the possibility of entering into a Memorandum of Understanding for UK support on all New Dimension functions.

Site specific risk information

9.16 Site specific risk information is contained in 'Fire Plan' information. Copies are not carried on appliances, the onus being placed on site operators to keep the plan available and to keep the information up to date. There is some acknowledgement within the Service that these fire plans and inspection regime are in need of revision.

The Service should review its provision of site specific risk information to operational personnel attending incidents:

▪ **Accurate and useful information should be readily available to personnel attending incidents.**
▪ **There should not be total reliance on site operators to provide the information and notify of changes.**
▪ **Consider the use of two levels of information. In addition to full information which may be necessary, incorporate first strike information, in the form of brief information suitable for the first attending incident commander.**

9.17 There are two levels of supervisory officer cover, station manager and senior officer. An incident performance monitoring system is in place along with a debrief procedure.

10. COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PREVENTATIVE WORKING

General

10.1 The Fire Safety department is staffed by a highly skilled and well motivated workforce whose professionalism is clear. The department has been at the forefront of the organisation's drive towards the declared aims of making Guernsey a safer place to work, live and visit. It has consistently taken new ideas and tried to identify the best ways to implement them, and feedback from operational personnel would indicate that the new direction laid out in 2004, is well understood and generally accepted as the way forward.

10.2 There is general support from watch-based staff that work carried out on community safety activity and fire safety legislative activity is valuable, although there are some tensions over the available time for competing needs of fire safety and training.

10.3   Throughout the inspection process department staff displayed competence and a clear willingness to engage in debate to provide the necessary evidence required to help the inspection process.   Their understanding of the risks that they are trying to reduce is based on a good local knowledge and a clear understanding of the main research findings from the UK and how to interpret the findings in a local context.

10.4   The structure of the department suggests that there are two independent areas of workload. Fire Safety - legislative regulations and non-regulations; and Community Safety - based around the interaction with other important preventative activity such as education, home safety, road traffic collision and other partnership activity.

10.5   This structure works well because the constant interaction between the two strands of work helps to overcome any barriers that could grow. This is helped by the proximity of the physical work areas, but is fully supported by the staff who understand that their work should not be carried out in isolation, but should help to support the objectives of the organisation as a whole.

Fire Safety

10.6   Staff are involved in addressing fire safety in both the legislative (controlled Regs.) and non-legislative (Non-Regs.) premises. Their workloads are driven by the Fire Services (Guernsey) Law 1989 as amended, and as such are required to focus on some premises which do not always carry the greatest risk to life.

10.7   The prescriptive nature of this work detracts from their willingness to focus on the highest risk premises. This frustrating situation was highlighted in IRMP 2004, but still exists. While it is recognised by the inspection team that the legislative process is outwith the control of the Service's management, this situation requires to be rectified as quickly as possible.

> **The difficulties in achieving the proposed changes to the current fire safety legislation identified in IRMP 2004 continues to hamper attempts to have a fully risk based inspection programme. Legislators should be encouraged to give priority to the changes to fire safety law.**

10.8   Despite this difficulty, fire safety staff are using what influence they have to get access to the highest risk premises and make recommendations that will lead to improved safety. Managers are actively developing a simple database that will allow them to focus inspection activity into the higher risk premises.

10.9   The risk assessment methodology for this work is based around local knowledge and management experience, and would benefit by being a more systematic process. Use of the UK CFOA methodology has been evaluated, but partly discounted for its complexity and the perceived onerous burden it would place on staff. The risk in not adopting some or all of this UK methodology is that any future development and improvement made in the UK will not be compatible with systems developed within Guernsey.

10.10   The present methodology does not automatically allow information gathered for fire safety purposes to inform operational activity and vice versa, and while there is no doubt that the nature of the Service allows such information exchange, it does not necessarily happen on every occasion.

10.11   The opportunity to develop a fully integrated risk assessment methodology is recognised in fire safety, operations and mobilising and implementation would lead to a significant improvement in recording premises information. Additionally this would provide the potential to have a single point of data entry that is accessible to all parts of the organisation.

The preliminary work being undertaken to identify a robust method for collecting premises data risk information for the benefit of fire safety and operational staff should be given some priority. The CFOA premises audit format could be adapted to create a simplified methodology thus retaining the ability to benefit from any future UK development work.

10.12   It was clear that the limited time available to staff in fire safety was divided between inspection programmes and administrative duties. The primary focus for inspecting officers should always be on addressing the identified risks within the premises they monitor. This concept is identified within IRMP 2004 and confirmed in the 2008 plan.

10.13 The skills of the departmental staff are such that as and when legislative change is approved, they will be able to address the wider property base to the benefit of the people of Guernsey. However, there is a risk that their available time to inspect premises and make recommendations could be negatively impacted upon by their need to address administrative issues.

Consideration should be given to the need for administrative support for fire safety inspecting officers. (This recommendation should be considered in association with later recommendations relating to community safety staffing).

Community Safety

10.14 The changes that have taken place within this area following IRMP 2004 have been dramatic. The development of wide ranging community based programmes and joint working with partners is well advanced, and the team have built up good contacts with other service providers For this new direction to be managed by such a small team is indicative of their motivation and professionalism, and the clarity of direction set by the Service's Senior Management Team.

10.15 The recent involvement in developing the road safety package aimed at young drivers and based on an actual incident is sure to be hard hitting. Given the localised nature of the reconstruction, young drivers cannot fail to recognise that they are vulnerable to the same issues, and to give greater consideration to safety in their decision making.

10.16 There are many other initiatives for which the Service provides staff and these will require to be carefully managed to avoid resources being too thinly spread.

10.17 IRMP 2008 identifies a desire to create a new post of Operations Manager funded by the removal of the post of Community Fire Safety Manager.

When implementing the change to management structure to improve management of operational issues, consideration should be given to the level of support that is required to avoid any loss of momentum within the area of community safety.

10.18   The Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) programme is an excellent example of the Service's ability to involve operational staff in work that benefits the community. The focus of this work has, to date, been on the over 60 age group. This is an accepted high risk group and any work completed with this group should have tangible benefits in the short to medium term. The commitment of the operational staff to this work is good practice, and feedback indicates their support for the initiative. Some concern was expressed that the homes that they were visiting were not those most at risk, and that this may undermine the aims.

10.19   In order to maintain the support of the operational staff, it may be useful to outline the efforts already underway to work with the States Housing Officers and with care services providers to address this issue.

10.20   The financial support for the initiative has been somewhat piecemeal, but it is pleasing to note that work is in hand to ensure finance is available for the next 12 month period. Given the expected increase in uptake of the HFSC, the Service should consider its funding strategy in a longer timeframe.

> **The proposal to expand the HFSC (Home Fire Safety Check) scheme is a positive step. The Service should consider targeting this response at those most at risk to ensure that limited staff and financial resources have the greatest impact.**

10.21   The schools fire safety education programme is an excellent example of working within a partnership to achieve a practical solution to young persons. The production material to assist teachers and FRS staff is extremely professional and is a credit to the Service.   The willingness of the team to develop this high quality product in a way that complements the needs of teaching staff shows adaptability. It also shows that FRS staff have been prepared to put a great deal of effort into overcoming partnership and relationship issues.

10.22   The size of Guernsey FRS means that a great deal of work can often tend to be focussed around a single individual and this can create a long term sustainability issue. Fire Safety is aware of this issue and has developed some good procedures for any future seconded staff. However, the proposed changes to management roles as outlined previously, could reduce the ability of staff to deliver the services proposed.

10.23   Given the administrative issues identified earlier, the need to gather better quality of premises data and the need for regular input to the schools programme, it may be prudent for the Service to consider if an additional post is required. Such a position would not require to be operational, and could offer flexible working arrangements which would make it attractive to a more diverse group.

10.24   The Service's 2008 IRMP seeks to create a new non-operational post of Community Safety Officer.

The Service should consider if the various needs of the Fire Safety department in administrative support, support for safety programmes and the need to develop better premises risk information could be met by an additional non-operational member of staff.

10.25   The approach to reducing the number of unwanted mobilisations to fire alarm systems was identified in IRMP 2004 and this work has been managed within the Fire Safety department. The work undertaken to date has led to a measurable reduction in activity, despite a likely increase in the number of fire alarm systems in Guernsey.

10.26   The updated CFOA policy on this issue outlines a number of additional strategies for consideration. Although many of the issues reported in the CFOA policy have already been considered by the Service, the options available may help to achieve continuous improvement.

The Service has a well developed approach to reducing mobilisations to automatic fire alarms. However, it should evaluate the updated CFOA policy in relation to this issue to identify any opportunities it may offer.

Appendix

Summary of strengths, challenges and areas for improvement in Guernsey Fire and Rescue Service

Strategic Management

Strengths	Challenges and areas for improvement
• Clear Strategic Management Plan and IRMP in place	• Continued development of outcome measures
• Strong planning framework in place	• Consideration of further Audits of Performance

Risk Management

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
• Positive attitude to Health and Safety	• Development of data mapping systems
	• Review of crewing arrangements
	• Exercise of business continuity plans
	• Review of information on front line appliances
	• Ensure Safety Policy is dynamic

Financial Management

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
• Clear financial impact monitoring in place	• Current economic climate putting additional burdens on Service resources
• Financial plans linked to IRMP	

Workforce Management

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
• Positive and flexible workforce	Review of crewing to ensure optimal experience and safe working practices
• Good links to IRMP and Strategy Document	Dynamic reviews of training skills gap on annual basis
• Good training links on and off Island	

Partnership Working

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
• Very positive feedback from all partner organisations	• Development of partner register
• Service leads on many initiatives	• Ensure Service does not become overstretched
• Excellent partnership supporting Education Programme	

Communications

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
• Comprehensive Communications Policy in place	• Exploration of wider knowledge of Service beyond "after the fire"
• Good stakeholder involvement	
• Good communications with staff and their representative bodies	

Operational Preparedness and Emergency Response

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
• Good knowledge and understanding of local risks	• Collaboration to improve control resilience
	• Real time recording of fire calls
	• Consideration of increase in watch strength
	• Re-evaluation of New Dimension commitment with partner agencies

Community Safety and Preventative Working

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
• Highly skilled, motivated and professional workforce	• Fire safety workloads not risk-based due to current legislation
• Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) programme is excellent	• Robust method of premises risk data collection required
• Expansion of HFSC programme is positive step	• Consideration of admin support for fire safety officers
	• Increase of operational cover should not be at the expense of Community Safety