

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 2 FEBRUARY 2005

RESTRUCTURE OF STRATHCLYDE FIRE BRIGADE

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of a restructuring of commands and management within Strathclyde Fire Brigade.

2. REVIEW OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT

- 2.1 At the meeting of Strathclyde Fire Board on 14th October 2004 a restructure of senior management within Strathclyde Fire Brigade was considered and agreed. This essentially changed the designation of the Firemaster to Chief Officer (Fire and Rescue Service) and deleted the post of Depute Firemaster.

- 2.2 The new structure consists of six Directors, four of whom are uniformed. The two non-uniformed are the Director of Finance, Legal and Administration and the Director of Personnel, Development and Diversity.

The four uniformed Directors have strategic responsibility for Operations, Operations Support, Community Safety and Strategic Planning.

- 2.3 This restructure formed part of the Brigade's Integrated Risk Management Plan.

3. REVIEW OF COMMAND STRUCTURE

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Fire Board on 9th December 2004, the next stage of the review was agreed. This basically involved the re-alignment of internal boundaries within the Brigade, together with the management and administrative boundaries necessary to support the new structure.

- 3.2 Following its inception in 1975, Strathclyde Fire Brigade was organised around six similarly sized divisions, each with its own divisional headquarters and broadly covering the areas of the constituent Brigades that had been amalgamated to form Strathclyde. In 1994, the six divisions were re-organised into four commands with headquarters located at Glasgow, Ardrossan, Clydebank and Motherwell.

- 3.3 Local Government re-organisation in 1996 left a number of local authorities straddling two command areas and fire cover for up to six local authorities of parts thereof administered by one command. This was further exacerbated by the duties imposed on fire authorities by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, particularly those surrounding community planning.
- 3.4 It was this principal motivator that led Brigade management to consider re-aligning internal boundaries with a view to developing better relationships with partners and improving service delivery. Consideration was given to a wide range of potential solutions to the problem of aligning geo-political boundaries with much evidence gathered and assimilated. In short it is noted that no two partner organisations operate on exactly the same geographical boundaries, while all those consulted stated that, provided there was no reduction in service delivery, any move towards closer geographical alignment would represent a real improvement.
- 3.5 Identification of individuals in partner agencies is important for local authorities in progressing community planning. Consequently, for the Brigade to participate fully and influence policy strategically it is important that Area Managers are in a position to fully develop relationships with their respective local authorities in order to positively contribute to the community planning process. Further, the requirements of Civil Contingencies legislation must be met with close liaison with all partners being essential. In addition, it is considered advantageous in terms of Civil Resilience for Brigade boundaries to be as co-terminous as practicable with our colleagues in Strathclyde Police.
- 3.6 A number of different criteria were used to decide the preferred structure, including operational response, community planning areas, existing Brigade management structures and proliferation of wholetime, retained and volunteer personnel throughout the Brigade area. The governing principles chosen were those of the provision of optimum service delivery to communities and best value.
- 3.7 Ultimately, it was agreed that the preferred option provides for ten areas each under the direction of an Area Manager as follows:-
- Argyll & Bute;
 - East and West Dunbartonshire;
 - North West Glasgow;
 - North East Glasgow;
 - South Glasgow;
 - North Lanarkshire;
 - South Lanarkshire;
 - Inverclyde and Renfrewshire;
 - North and South Ayrshire;
 - East Renfrewshire and East Ayrshire.

- 3.8 The restructuring of Strathclyde Fire Brigade will result in a number of smaller administrative areas than the current command system. Rather than four large commands, it is proposed that there should be ten smaller areas, each under the direction of an Area Manager. This person will hold the rank of Senior Divisional Officer.
- 3.9 It is proposed that each Area Manager will be responsible for all aspects of service delivery and performance within their area. They will be the point of contact for partners, particularly local authority Chief Executives and will be benchmarked against local performance standards. They will be responsible for ensuring suitable and sufficient resources are committed to reducing incidents of fire, deaths and injuries for their area and their service plan will include local community safety targets.
- 3.10 It is not intended that each area would have a dedicated headquarters but that financial and administrative support should be provided from a number of central locations (consistent with current command headquarters). This will allow the new area structure to be implemented with a minimum of disruption to both administrative staff and support facilities. It is intended that a review of the administrative organisation should be carried out in order to determine the most advantageous support arrangements for the new areas. However, it will be important that close contact is maintained between the Area Manager and local authority served and it is therefore proposed that arrangements are made to obtain suitable accommodation within council areas and, where possible, local authority premises.
- 3.11 The Area Manager will detail those measures that will be required to meet performance levels for his or her area. These, together with those from all other Area Managers will be collated, assessed and developed into an annual service delivery plan by the Director of Operations who will liaise with the Chief Officer and other Directors to determine internal service level agreements.
- 3.12 A review of station management was also carried out which in summary will result in the appointment of a Station Manager rather than the current four watches. It is felt that this will be beneficial in a number of areas including better links with the community.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Firemaster has confirmed that any costs will be met from the existing budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None arising from this report.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service are Community Planning Partners and the restructure of the service is partially driven by the Community Planning agenda. The revised structure will assist in the implementation of the Community Plan Action Plans

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The new structure within the Brigade, which was also renamed as Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service, will be implemented on 3 October 2005 following extensive consultation and preparatory work. The Brigade feel that the new management structure is robust and will allow it to move ahead with the modernising agenda.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JS

6th January 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Reports to Strathclyde Fire Board on 14th October and 9th December 2004.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01563 576023 and ask to speak to William Stafford, Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services.

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