

### EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

#### Report of a meeting of the East Sussex Fire Authority held at Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters at 10.30 hours on Thursday 10 December 2009.

**Present:** Councillors Carden, Gadd, Harmer-Strange, Healy, Heaps, Howson, Kemble (Chairman), Livings, Marsh, Ost, Pidgeon, Rufus, Scott, Sparks and Waite.

1. **REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD ISSUES** *(South East Fire & Rescue Control Centre Limited (SEFRCC))*
  - 1.1 The Fire Authority considered a report on the business transacted at meetings of the SEFRCC Ltd held on 9 October and 13 November 2009.
  - 1.2 A brief presentation had been given by Shona Dunn, Director of Fire and Resilience from Communities & Local Government (CLG) regarding the progress of the Regional Control Project. This included questions on the funding for out of scope activities and implications for the project as a result of any future change in Government. It was agreed that Shona Dunn would provide information on project costs and agreed that, if a Fire and Rescue Service had a problem with maintaining its mobilising arrangements, the CLG would work with that Fire & Rescue Service to look at a variety of options to ensure that it had effective arrangements in place in place up to cutover.
2. **DRAFT 2010/11 SERVICE PLANNING STRATEGY APPROACHES**
  - 2.1 Members considered a report that presented a projection of the draft 2010/11 Fire Authority Service Planning and Resource Management issues for their initial consideration and for it to be finalised over the period from December 2009 – February 2010. Members were informed that the future financial context for Local Government beyond 2010/11 was likely to be severe and that the Authority should prepare itself for financial constraints for the foreseeable future.
  - 2.2 The Deputy Treasurer informed Members that good progress had been made towards planning a balanced budget for 2010/11 including identification of necessary savings, whilst work for 2011/14 was still at an early stage and would present a greater challenge due to the level of savings required. Whilst a final decision on planned council tax increases for 2010/11 is not required until the Authority's February meeting, Members acknowledged that although current planning was based on a 3.5% rise, options near 3% may need to be considered in order to reflect affordability to council taxpayers and avoid the risk of capping.
  - 2.3 Members noted that the Authority's aspirations were lower with regard to Service Investment Bids and only two temporary schemes had been put forward and resolved a number of detailed actions as set out in the report.
3. **PROGRESS REVIEW OF FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON SCHOOLS 2008/09**

- 3.1 The Fire Authority considered a report that assessed the quality of the Service's fire safety education provisions to infant and junior schools.

- 3.2 A summary of the results obtained from the two Local Education Authorities, East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council during the period September 2008 to July 2009 was presented to Members. 114 schools were visited in total, 90 schools in East Sussex of which 68 responses (76%) were received and 24 schools in the City of which 16 responses (66%) were received. (an extract of the outcomes from the City Council area along with the overall conclusions is attached as an appendix to this report.)
- 3.3 The Chairman asked for thanks to the Schools Education Team to be passed on.
4. **COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (CAA) ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT 2009 EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY**
- 4.1 The Audit Commission had published the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service's 2009 Organisational Assessment. Members considered the outcomes of this assessment and the possible way forward in meeting the Audit Commission's Improvement Agenda. Officers would be meeting with the Audit Commission team in order to gain feedback on areas of improvement in relation to the future achievement of a score of 3.

**COUNCILLOR TED KEMBLE**  
**CHAIRMAN OF EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY**  
10 December 2009

**EXTRACT OF CONSULTATION RESULTS FOR BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY  
SCHOOLS ONLY + OVERALL CONCLUSIONS FOR BOTH CITY AND COUNTY  
AREAS.**

**SCHOOLS IN THE CITY OF BRIGHTON & HOVE** (16 Schools responded to the survey)

1. **The first question asks schools to confirm which year groups were involved in the visit, as not all age groups are represented at every school.** A further part of the question finds out how well the information was communicated to each of the Key Stages. The range of potential responses is from “Very Good” to “Very Poor”.
  - Key Stage One – Reception:** (1 response received)
    - 1 (100%) rated communication as Fairly Good.
  - Key Stage One – Years 1 and 2:** (6 responses received)
    - 6 (100%) rated communication as Very Good.
  - Key Stage Two - Years 3, 4, 5 and 6:** (9 responses received)
    - 9 (100%) reported it being Very Good.
  
2. **The second question asked schools if they agreed or disagreed with five statements related to the visit.**
  - 2.1 **Do you agree or disagree that the arrangements for the visit were easy to make?** (16 schools responded) 14 schools (88%) - strongly agreed
  - 2.2 **Do you agree or disagree that the lesson was appropriate for the age of the class?** (16 schools responded) 12 schools (75%) - strongly agreed
  - 2.3 **Do you agree or disagree that any visual aids and support material were appropriate to the age of the class?** (16 schools responded) 14 schools (88%) - strongly agreed
  - 2.4 **Do you agree or disagree that any visual aids and support material were appropriate to the lesson?** (16 schools responded) 14 schools (88%) - strongly agreed
  - 2.5 **Do you agree or disagree that any visual aids and support material were helpful?** (16 schools responded) 13 schools (81%) - strongly agreed
  
3. **The third question asked schools if they agreed or disagreed with four statements related to the presenter/s.**
  - 3.1 **Do you agree or disagree that the presenter/s engaged with the group?** (16 schools responded) 15 schools (94%) - strongly agreed
  - 3.2 **Do you agree or disagree that the presenter/s was/were approachable?** (16 schools responded) All strongly agreed
  - 3.3 **Do you agree or disagree that the presenter/s was/were professional?** (16 schools responded) All strongly agreed
  - 3.4 **Do you agree or disagree that the presenter/s was/were well informed?** (16 schools responded) All strongly agreed

4. **The fourth question asked schools if they **agreed or disagreed** with four statements related to the content of the Safety Visit.**
  - 4.1 **Do you agree or disagree that the pupils were interested?** (16 schools responded) **13 schools (81%) strongly agreed, 3 schools (19%) tending to agree**
  - 4.2 **Do you agree or disagree that the pupils understood what they were being taught?** (16 schools responded) **13 schools (81%) strongly agreed, 3 schools (19%) tending to agree**
  - 4.3 **Do you agree or disagree that afterwards, the pupils could remember what they had been taught?** (16 schools responded) **12 schools (75%) strongly agreed; 4 schools (25%) tended to agree**
  - 4.4 **Do you agree or disagree that the messages were communicated well to all pupils in the class?** (16 schools responded) **13 schools (81%) strongly agreed; 3 schools (19%) tended to agree**
5. The next question asked **schools** how **satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the Fire Safety Visit**. (16 schools responded) **All were very satisfied**
6. **Schools** were asked if the **original appointment** for the school fire safety visit **was kept by the Fire & Rescue Service personnel** (16 schools responded) **16 schools (100%) said that they original date was kept.**
7. **Schools** were asked if they **would be carrying out any follow-up activities** (16 schools responded) **14 (85%) schools said they would and gave details of the activities they were going to undertake. 2 schools (15%) said they would not.**
8. **CONCLUSIONS COVERING BOTH CITY AND COUNTY AREAS**
  - 8.1 The survey achieved a **high response rate** from the questionnaires. Of the 114 schools visited 76% of respondents in East Sussex schools and 66% in Brighton and Hove schools returned their completed forms
  - 8.2 The team maintains a **positive professional relationship with schools** throughout their contact and this is reflected in the high level of response. Education Advisors support the survey aims by explaining the importance of the feedback to the Service.
  - 8.3 The results clearly indicate that the communication skill of our advisors is highly valued by respondents in terms of both levels of satisfaction and with how information was communicated to pupils.
  - 8.4 **Educational Advisors:** Overall for both East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove, 95% agreed that the advisors engaged successfully with the children during the lesson, 98% said they were approachable and 99% agreed they were professional.
  - 8.5 **Lesson Content:** 71% of respondents in East Sussex strongly agreed the lesson was appropriate for the age of the class, with 75% strongly agreeing that the visual aids and support material used was appropriate. The figures for the City were similar with 75% of respondents strongly agreeing that the content was age appropriate and 88% of them strongly agreeing that the visual aids and support material were age appropriate.

- 8.6 **Pupil Interest and Understanding:** The figures were for East Sussex in respect of the level of pupil interest was high (78% strongly agreed), pupils understanding (79% strongly agreed) and retention of information (75%). In the City, the figures were the level of pupil interest (81% strongly agreed), pupil understanding (81% strongly agreed) and retention of information (75%).
- 8.7 80% of respondents in East Sussex rated the overall visits as very satisfied with 98% stating that they would carry out follow up activities. The figures for the City were very satisfied with the visit 100% and 85% to carry out follow up activities.
- 8.8 **New Education Programme Pilot:** During Terms 1-3 of the school year 2008/09 the team have undertaken a revision and update of the lesson plans. Staff from the Children's Services and Education Team (CSET) delivered a total of 35 pilot sessions (20 primary and 15 secondary) based on recently developed lesson plans targeting Years 2, Year 5 and Year 8. All sessions lasted approximately 40 minutes.
- 8.9 **Team Knowledge and Training:** The team are also benefiting from continuous training and development given by an Independent PSHE (Personal Social Health Education) Consultant from the Health Schools Programme workforce.

This is important and vital to keep knowledge current and to continually develop lesson plans to comply alongside national standards -national curriculum key stages 1 to 4 and in specific to 'citizenship' and 'personal wellbeing', and national agendas and initiatives PSHE, SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) and Every Child Matters (Be *Healthy*, Stay *Safe*, Enjoy and *Achieve*, Make a *Positive Contribution* and Achieve *Economic Well Being*).

It is vitally important that the Fire & Rescue Service maintains its strong professional relationship with schools and ensure that pupils have an opportunity to learn, understand and explore ways of maintaining their safety and make informed choices.

- 8.10 The survey is qualitative and not quantitative and responses are based on subjective opinions of teaching staff. However, this should not detract from the high levels of satisfaction reported by teachers about the delivery of our safety programmes in schools. This is a reflection of the professionalism and communication skills of our education advisors, who continue to maintain the excellent reputation of ESFRS in delivering these important safety messages to pupils across the County and the City.
- 8.11 Finally, the survey is seeking to answer some community outcome performance results by asking the teachers whether or not the children could remember what they had been taught. This is starting to evidence that a successful community outcome has been achieved. Complementary work is taking place with the University of Brighton to assess what evidence there is what was remembered has been taken back into the home and achieved a real change in home safety over a sustained period of time.