



CFOA
Chief Fire Officers
Association



Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service Fire Peer Challenge

Report

1. Introduction, context and purpose

1.1 Introduction

This report outlines the key findings from the Local Government Association's (LGA) Fire Peer Challenge at Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service (DFRS) in January 2017.

DFRS requested that the peer team provide specific focus on:

- Process for developing the IRMP
- Transparency – considered in ‘Organisational capacity’
- Culture – considered with ‘Organisational capacity’, ‘Political and Managerial leadership’
- Value for money – considered with ‘Financial planning and viability’
- Collaboration with others

In addition, the team considered all the Key Assessment Areas (KAAs) in the Operational Assessment (OpA) toolkit, including those within the heading of ‘leadership and organisational capacity’:

- Understanding of local context and priority setting
- Delivering outcomes for local communities
- Financial planning and viability
- Political and managerial leadership
- Governance and decision-making
- Organisational capacity
- Community risk management
- Prevention
- Protection
- Preparedness
- Response
- Health, safety and welfare
- Learning and development

In order to best meet the needs of DFRS, the feedback presentation and this report have been grouped as follows:

1. Focus areas:
 - Collaboration with others – incorporating ‘Delivering outcomes for local communities’ and ‘Community Risk Management’
 - IRMP development – incorporating ‘Understanding local context and priority setting’
2. Leadership and organisational capacity:
 - Financial Planning and Viability – incorporating ‘Value for money’
 - Political and Managerial Leadership, considered with Governance and Decision Making, and incorporating ‘Culture’
 - Organisational Capacity – incorporating ‘Transparency’ and ‘Culture’
3. Key Assessment Areas:
 - Prevention – incorporating ‘Community risk management’, ‘Delivering outcomes’ and ‘Understanding local context’

- Protection
- Preparedness
- Response – incorporating ‘Delivering outcomes’
- Health, Safety and Welfare
- Learning and development

1.2 Context

Derbyshire FRS (DFRS) has been on a major change journey over the last few years. There has been a new Chief Fire Officer (CFO), a new Chair to the Authority, a new transformation programme, and a move to the new joint police / fire headquarters. The last fire peer challenge, in 2014, focused on the plans for a transformation programme which subsequently proved unpopular through consultation and was rejected by the Fire Authority.

DFRS asked the peer team to come on site during the consultation period for its revised Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP; in January 2017) and give feedback on its development, approach and process. The Combined Fire Authority (CFA) will take significant decisions in March 2017. The discussions held on site, and this feedback report, form the feedback from the peer team.

1.3 The fire peer challenge process

Fire Peer Challenge is part of sector led improvement. In the last four years, all 46 Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) nationally have undertaken a peer challenge. Following this, the process has been revised to reflect developments within the sector and ensure it continues to meet the needs of FRSs and other key stakeholders. Services are now able to commission another peer challenge, to take place at a time of their choosing over the next four years.

The DFRS Fire Peer Challenge took place 24th – 27th January 2017 and consisted of a range of on-site activities including meetings, focus groups and fire station visits. The peer team met with a broad cross-section of staff including front-line firefighters, senior officers, support staff, along with partners and elected members. During the challenge, the peer team were very well looked after. Everyone the team met were fully engaged with the process and very open and honest.

The peer team undertook background reading provided to them in advance, including the DFRS Operational Assessment (OpA), the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP; out for consultation at the time of the peer challenge) and associated project plans. The evidence and feedback gathered was assimilated into broad themes as described above, and was delivered to DFRS in summary on the final day of the challenge. There was continual dialogue between the peer team and DFRS throughout our time on site.

1.4 The peer challenge team

Fire peer challenges are managed and delivered by the sector for the sector and peers are at the heart of the process. They help FRSs' and Fire & Rescue Authorities with their improvement and learning by providing a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge.

The peer challenge team for DFRS was:

- Dene Sanders, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Humberside Fire and Rescue Service
- Councillor Sian Timoney, former Chair of Bedfordshire and Luton Fire Authority and Deputy Leader, Luton Borough Council
- Jim Bywater, Head of Prevention and Protection, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Nathaniel Hooton, Group Manager Service Delivery, Cornwall Fire, Rescue and Community Safety Service
- Rex Webb, Equality, Inclusion and Cultural Change Manager, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Becca Singh, Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association

2. Executive Summary and Overarching Messages

The team found a generally well-motivated, enthusiastic workforce who are committed to delivering excellent services to its local communities. Station-based personnel understand their local risks and have a good knowledge of vulnerability and how to protect people and businesses.

The Service is working collaboratively with different partners, most notably the police, with whom it now shares a headquarters building. It is working strategically with councils, safeguarding boards and voluntary sector organisations to identify local risks and put steps in place to address them as far as possible.

The revision of the IRMP has involved and engaged staff throughout the process. Members have been involved in the process to ensure that they are fully cognisant of the practicalities and impacts of the strategic decisions that they take. Additional specific engagement has taken place in areas that are most affected by specific changes. Although the outcomes of any review and subsequent decisions may not be what everyone wants, the process to date has been inclusive and engaging. The Year 1 action plan will help DFRS determine how best to increase its value for money.

There is a strong emphasis on prevention activity, through strategic networking and influencing, partnership working, information sharing and delivery activity on stations. This includes the work of the Fire Safety team who focus on achieving safe premises, working with partners and customers where possible to minimise the need for prosecutions.

We found that staff are broadly satisfied with recent changes, particularly to the culture of the organisation. Early adopters can make it appear that the whole Service is fully on board; but the team found evidence in parts of and at different levels of the organisation, that suggests some more work is needed to fully explain the benefits of the changes, including those already implemented and those planned.

Staff can feel unsettled if rumours are able to take hold. Consider strengthening internal communications around the change process. For example, staff would have welcomed more information on the preferred options of the choices it is presenting to the Fire Authority in March 2017.

You are aware that some ICT systems are causing problems. It should be acknowledged that some problems are outside of the control of the Service. It is important not to underestimate how much frustrations about this affects the Service, in terms of efficiency, productivity, and general morale. There may be considerable opportunities to explore through collaboration with the police, but further investment may be needed in order to find a solution that works for everyone.

The TriService Control Project (collaboration with Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services) has taken several years to come to

completion. Problems that senior managers are well aware of are not understood lower down the organisation. Frustration with deployment systems add to the frustration with ICT systems more generally. The concept needs to be communicated to all staff and Members and the desired outcomes delivered. We recognise that this cannot be done in isolation, and encourage the three FRSs to work speedily to bring this project to fruition.

3. Focus Areas

3.1 Collaboration with others

The Tri Service Control project has been a collaboration with Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire FRSs to build resilience through shared Control facilities at all three Services. This has been implemented in line with the nationally funded project to establish Control and mobilising consortia to deliver functional efficiencies. However, the delivery has been hampered by delays and negotiations, particularly with the technology provider. All three Services are aware of the impact this is having on their own service provision. In DFRS, this is clearly understood at a senior level, but these messages are not getting through lower down the organisation. As a result, there are frustrations with deployment systems at the frontline. The concept needs to be fully embedded with clear measurable outcomes. It is now affecting morale with increased frustration about some ICT systems and processes involved, along with the delays that have beset the project. The team suggests closing solutions on these matters are agreed with service partners and the provider as soon as possible.

The move to the new joint Police/Fire headquarters (HQ) was well-prepared and delivered. It was largely a positive experience, although not without teething problems. Staff felt fully engaged and supported throughout the process, including examples of where reasonable adjustments were made to ease the transition. Locating most departments in the new HQ has improved the atmosphere as people now know each other better. We heard that there is a more creative and productive working environment which has improved joint working between FRS departments. People feel part of the same organisation rather than completely distinct departments and teams and barriers have been removed both physically and notionally.

DFRS is clearly on a journey of collaboration with the police. The new joint HQ is on a former police site, and at times it has felt to staff that they have moved in as ‘tenants’ rather than the joint collaborative venture that it actually is. The Limited Liability Partnership model for delivery of the project is considered to be notable practice. The current lack of ICT integration and increased security measures for the building has been difficult to get used to. Consider how you could enhance the sense of shared ownership of the space, maximising what could be achieved. Although there are different cultures and processes in police and fire, continue to seek areas of crossover, building on the excellent proposals around the Joint Training Centre. The centre will have distinct and separate police and fire training areas (for example a police firing range), plans are in place to share as much of the

space as possible, for joint and separate exercises (for example road traffic accidents) as well as classroom based training.

At the time of the review, there was some uncertainty over what HQ Phase 2 might entail. Although it is right not to pre-empt Member decisions, some indication of SLT preferred options would ease staff understanding and patience. Good communications are crucial at times of change. Phase 1 left some confusion over plans for future collaboration with the police, and there are considerable levels of anxiety, particularly for support staff. DFRS managers need to recognise that people are at different stages with regard to embracing the changes and some may take time to see the benefits of the new situation.

DFRS, in agreement with its fire service partners in the East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) trial, has shared the evaluation of the trial with the National Joint Council (NJC) led Emergency First Responder (EFR). Collaboration with EMAS has been received positively with both organisations and the majority of staff involved. In DFRS, only RDS officers have been involved to date, but there are plans to expand this to wholetime firefighters. This has resulted in some uncertainties for RDS on how their role will continue. Ensuring RDS understand how the EFR is working across all Services involved in the pilot may help to reassure concerned staff. Good communications, for example sharing the imminent outcomes from the NJC national trial may assist further in resolving concerns among some staff. The relationship with EMAS has been highlighted as Notable Practice.

DFRS works well with its neighbouring FRSs, most notably Nottinghamshire, but also Leicestershire and South Yorkshire. However, there is little collaboration with the FRSs on its western border. Further resilience may be found by working more closely with these other Services. It is worth ensuring that when considering changes to crewing models or pump locations, this is done alongside changes being considered by neighbouring Services along the shared borders.

3.2 IRMP and its development

The IRMP has been revised and was currently out for consultation at the time of the peer challenge. Within the Action Plan, there are proposals for extensive reviews and research in Year 1 in order to inform decisions about service provision and location in subsequent years.

The process to date has been very inclusive and positive. Staff at middle manager level (Station Manager/equivalent and above) worked together on risks and priorities, along with potential solutions to problems that staff had identified through various methods. The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT – Area Managers and above) then carefully considered and commented on the resultant ideas and proposals, with a degree of prioritisation. This continued with a Member away day, where they also considered options and proposals and discussed the implications. SLT have sought to engage staff and Members more extensively in those areas where specific changes have

already been identified. This involved those directly affected by changes to crewing models in those areas. This has been an extensive piece of staff engagement unlike any previous change programme or corporate planning at DRFS. As well as being published on the DRFS website, the consultation document was sent to key stakeholders and partners who have been encouraged to respond. We found that everyone we spoke to, knew the details of the IRMP and how it was developed. The Service should be commended for this work.

The Year 1 action plan is very clear and ambitious. We wondered if DRFS has the capacity to deliver it, or whether further prioritisation was necessary. The team was assured that some projects will continue beyond the first year to ensure thorough and robust reviews and processes are followed. However, some staff raised concerns about capacity to continue the 'day job' whilst taking on additional demands from the Year 1 Action Plan.

The IRMP proposes a review of and clarification of response standards. The team welcome and support this. Some robust dialogue may be needed with Members and the public during that review, particularly when considering the realities of the topography and demography of Derbyshire and the location of key risk sites. DRFS' IRMP needs to show clearly how its risks are matched to the resources allocated both in 'weight' and location. This relationship then links to the wider conversation about realistic response standards that are meaningful and justified.

4. Leadership and organisational capacity

4.1 Financial planning and viability

DRFS has sound financial management planning processes enabling the Service to manage change effectively. This is proactive as opposed to reactive and gives members and senior management the time and space to manage change effectively. There is a strong understanding at strategic and political level of the impact of savings on the wider organisation with contingencies in place as well as awareness of opportunities and innovation where appropriate.

The Service experienced funding reductions in its Revenue Support Grant of £4.8m (24.4%) over the period of the Comprehensive Spending Review from 2010. It experienced further funding reductions of £1.6m in 2015/2016, £1.25m in 2016/2017, and £1.52m in 2017/2018. The Service has already secured on-going savings in the region of £8.7m as part of a concerted and timely approach to address the impact of funding reductions, and would otherwise be facing a deficit of around £10.3m in year 2019/2020. It has invested a further £0.3m in the Retained Duty System budget including support for safe and well visits, £0.1m in its Prevention team and £0.1m in its ICT capacity. It also maintains £0.25m in a Reserve to support schemes that protect the most vulnerable. To offset the investment, £0.4m of on-going savings have been identified to balance the budget for 2017/18, including just under £0.1m from the immediate move to the new Headquarters. However,

challenges remain to bridge an estimated £1.6m deficit by 2019/20 with continued uncertainty over Council tax and Business rate growth which forms a significant source of funding for the Service.

'Value mapping' has been done but should be explored further to maximise efficiencies in DFRS. The mapping exercise ensures greater inter-departmental collaboration, as the Service identifies the work with greatest impact and value, both on the organisation and the communities it serves. The exercise could be used in conjunction with risks identified in the IRMP (and other documents) to communicate better with staff around efficiency savings and demonstrate how DFRS is value for money.

DFRS shared with the team clear visual and pictorial messages around what budgets you have complete, partial and no control over. It would help to share these with staff to improve wider understanding about the potential impacts (benefits as well as risks) of proposed changes. Communications support would help to direct the most appropriate way to share and involve staff in those exercises.

The efficiencies planned for HQ Phase 2, are not well understood outside SLT which is causing some uncertainty amongst staff, especially in support functions. Clearer communications and a steer from senior management of the direction of the Service would be helpful.

The potential of income generation should not be under-estimated for the Littleover site and the new Joint Training Centre. Opportunities to generate income, whilst acknowledging it is not guaranteed or consistent, should be explored and exploited. Take up networking opportunities to explore what other Services have done to generate income.

4.2 Political and managerial leadership and Governance and decision-making

There is a strong sense of a cultural change and attitude within the Service where openness, challenge and shared responsibility are prevalent and encouraged. The sense of transparency has been clearly demonstrated by the high levels of staff and Member engagement on the development of the IRMP and other exercises (such as the Cultural Survey). In addition, DFRS has been preparing for the impact of the recently enacted Policing and Crime Act 2017 in an open and transparent manner, particularly because of its potential for changes to governance arrangements. We found that DFRS is working well with elected members, the PCC and rep bodies to ensure that key stakeholders are fully cognisant of what the possible future options are and are sharing information and plans.

There are knowledgeable and engaged elected Members on the Fire Authority who are keen to consider innovative options for the future direction of the Service. They recognise and understand the changed role of the Service and for fire fighters, as well as the significantly reduced budget. There is a 'buddy' system established between Members and members of

SLT in order to build working relationships and further enhance understanding of the scale and breadth of the Service's work. This is reported by both Members and officers to be working well.

There has been considerable investment in managerial development to help change the culture of the Service, for example using the iPerform App and supporting them to move to a coaching style of management. HR is working hard to recognise that managers and potential managers different learning styles in order to embed leadership styles that are open, accept challenge, and empowering.

The positivity around the change in leadership has not yet been felt universally; middle and frontline levels of the organisation may need further engagement and reassurance. Changes in culture and leadership style can take some time to become established, but DFRS is well on the way.

Communications play a large part in determining how change is perceived and felt. Staff want to have a greater understanding what SLT prefer, whilst not anticipating the decisions of the Authority. It is easy for rumours to start, and these can make staff feel unsettled. Consider how internal communications in particular could be strengthened to help keep everyone on board to deliver future plans. Some people will hear more information than others, and will hear things in different ways. We suggest that you look at communications provision after this review, and consider some support (for example, from LGA Communications).

There is an embedded ethos of 'Stop / start / continue' when reviewing work. However, it is viewed differently at different levels of the Services. There are examples where SLT feel 'stop' occurs, at the right time, but this is not felt more widely, for instance at SMG. Sometimes what appears to be a small change at the top which is soon over, has longer lasting impacts and effects, with associated work to complete, lower down the organisation. For example, even a change of job title or management responsibility takes time to implement through the automated HR systems and this should be recognised and acknowledged by more senior managers.

The speed and consistency of decision-making is causing frustration in some areas. Where reasons can be easily explained they should be communicated clearly. For example, although the Fire Authority will take decisions in March about future collaboration and the IRMP, staff would welcome clear indications about preferred options.

4.3 Organisational capacity

DFRS is an inclusive organisation with a positive culture encouraging challenge, engagement and feedback through visible managerial and political leadership. Staff recognise that there are more changes to come, and there is a degree of nervousness about this. It is easy to forget although the organisation is broadly supportive, there are those that are still processing what recent changes mean for them.

There is considerable evidence of ‘buy in’ across the organisation to the Service’s values and behaviours. These have been developed through staff engagement and by supporting managers on their development journey. Feedback is given to suggestions for changes and improvements, although this is not always heard or recognised. The newly formed Women’s support group was well-attended and opened by the CFO, demonstrating commitment to promoting a more equal and diverse workforce.

There are good positive relationships with the FBU, however, consideration should be given to staff who are not members of FBU, for example RDS officers or support staff, and whether recognition of other unions may be possible, perhaps in partnership with other organisations, building on other forms of staff engagement (for example the IRMP process). Other Services have seen positive outcomes from wider Representative Body recognition by forming Joint Consultative fora where all staff representatives sit together and engage as one with the Service.

Frontline fire fighters and other staff, in particular RDS, are still not all feeling the positive changes that are in evidence further up the service. There is an impression that the redesign of the whole organisation is not well understood below SLT. Greater communication and involvement of staff at all levels may address this.

Many staff expressed frustration with ICT systems, on stations and at HQ. The frustrations and problems affect morale and efficiency and should not be underestimated. The move to joint police / fire HQ has not yet realised the anticipated ICT savings and efficiencies and this should be addressed. This may also need to be considered alongside the TriService Control project, where delays with systems have also caused frustrations and problems. Additional investment may be required to find solutions that work for everyone, along with clear internal communications with timelines, and potentially interim arrangements. It should be noted that the Headquarters project is a 10 year business plan and savings will be identified through a programme off planned change. Police secure networks and national initiatives such as ESN will no doubt impact on any efficiencies realised through IT.

Some staff report that they are not routinely involved in kit selection, and do not feel that they are involved in changes to training approaches. These are instances where staff engagement could add value to plans and decisions.

There are different views of current workloads and capacity from different levels of the Service. Attention should be paid to acknowledging the significant proportion of work that makes up the ‘day job’ given the ambitious project programme emerging from the IRMP.

5. Key Assessment Areas

5.1 Prevention

There is evidence that DFRS understands the needs of its communities. This was demonstrated through the way the service stratifies its data to target the most at risk within their community. There is a clear assessment and referrals process into the Service by partners, ensuring that prevention work is appropriately targeted. It is important that the impact of this demand on the service is monitored but the approach appears to be sound.

Staff demonstrated good understanding of local community risks at all levels of the Service including prevent practitioners, operational crews and managers. Station staff understand and recognise the concept of vulnerability and are keen to deliver the best outcomes for local residents. More strategically, there are effective relationships with Safeguarding Boards and other local groups and partners. This leads to better intelligence and targeted prevention work which in turn is delivering real improvements and outcomes for residents.

The dashboard process measures specifically linked to prevention activity seem to be effective. Prevention staff were able to demonstrate and explain specific areas of 'output' for example number of visits, conversion rates from the visit to an actual Safe & Well being carried out, the quantity and type of referral. DFRS was able to give examples of successful outcomes as a result of prevention activity, but these were framed through case studies and were not the basis of the performance management system. It would be beneficial to consider developing outcome measures (for example, how lives have changed as a result of the intervention), to enhance what has been put in place so far. A structured framework within the dashboard which could collect outcome data from partners could be used to feedback to the staff which would in turn embed this work within the Service and also demonstrate the benefits to other partners (for example, health colleagues).

There was evidence provided from partners and community volunteers which demonstrated positive outcomes relating to health and community inclusion. The team consider DFRS community safety officers delivering chair-based exercises to be notable practice.

Consider structured accredited training for prevention staff to complement this strong prevention approach. There are externally accredited qualifications that Prevention teams in other Services are exploring. Although accredited training for staff is a national issue, in our opinion it would be beneficial for DFRS to investigate this field of work to support the positive approach to prevention work being carried out.

5.1 Protection

There appears to be a well-structured approach to carrying out the duties of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. There is logic behind the risk

based inspection program and current structure seemed to meet the needs of this.

There is a balanced approach to preventative work, enforcement and prosecution. Staff discussed the preferred method of education and prevention rather than a default position of solely a regulator who enforces and prosecutes, however not shying away from their duties of enforcement and prosecution if required.

There was evidence of positive relationships with key partners to achieve safer premises. Various partners welcomed the approach of DFRS described above and described an organisation which is an active partner, although some concern around the frequent rotation of staff, however this is not specifically aimed at protection alone.

The match-funding scheme for suppression systems is a good initiative and the partnership with Councils in Derbyshire has resulted in a commitment to install sprinklers into new builds. The willingness and commitment with a joined up approach was explained again in the partner workshop. The specific approach to fit domestic suppression systems with housing partners, where £20,000 is allocated for each area, has resulted in underspend in some places. Although a good initiative to work with partners to keep the community and Fire fighters safe, the logic behind the £20,000 may need reviewing. It may be more beneficial to move from a financial model where the money is split between partners to a more risk based approach which would capture the premises which could have an impact on Fire fighter and community safety. This approach could result in a priority list being created which may result in the budget being joined up, which could give produce better outcomes. It could also focus on partners who are more willing to support the project.

There is now an open approach to whether protection staff are operational or non-operational. Non-operational FSOs have started to be introduced which may have an effect on the future workforce. It may be worth considering succession planning in your approach to Fire Safety Officers, to build capacity and experience internally, allowing staff to progress through this area of work.

5.2 Preparedness

A system of regular station visits by SLT (including Principal Officers) provide operational assurance. Business continuity planning is tested through these visits, appears to be working and supports Station managers. These visits are improving and adding value.

There is positive feedback from the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) including joint working around exercising, planning and documentation creation and sharing. Ensure that these exercises include relevant communications and support functions.

5.3 Response

A performance culture is gaining momentum across the organisation and outcomes are being used to effect change. The dashboard performance system is widely used and understood. All staff are aware of the system and were able to demonstrate how it is being used to improve performance. However, most of the measures appear to be output measures; consider how to monitor outcomes to demonstrate how DFRS is delivering good outcomes for the local communities. Ensure that the dashboards are used to manage performance and not just monitor it. Currently, performance is quite close to targets. Consideration should be given to how changing duty systems might affect performance and how that will be addressed.

As has been said, participation by RDS crews in the Emergency First Responder (EFR) pilot with EMAS has been received positively. Staff recognise the benefits to residents that this scheme can bring. The team believe that the relationship with EMAS as notable practice. Ensure that the learning from this collaborative approach is felt across the Service.

However, despite investment in the RDS including access to EFR, Community Safety work, weekend training programmes and enhanced supervision, they are still feeling under-used, under-resourced and under-appreciated. This issue is not unique to Derbyshire but needs recognition and consideration. There are high levels of RDS commitment to the Service, for example, Dronfield have a long-standing record of 100% availability. DFRS needs to be aware of how changes could affect both morale and availability. For example, changes to the EFR pilot, including the expansion to include wholetime officers and changes to the mobilising and crewing system, are affecting morale amongst RDS officers.

Concerns were raised about the new systems for mobilising. These are connected to and affected by the TriService Control project, and particularly, but not exclusively, affect RDS officers. Officers were often not aware that the problems were for reasons beyond DFRS' sole control.

5.4 Health, safety and welfare

DFRS has been externally recognised for its work in this area. The Well4Work programme was shortlisted for the Personnel Today Health and Wellbeing awards in 2016, and the work on the Cultural Survey was shortlisted for the Employee Engagement Awards. This demonstrates the commitment that DFRS has to supporting its staff in their varying roles and at different times in their working lives.

Measures have been taken to embed learning and understanding from local, regional and national events to improve fire fighter safety. These include embedding the National Operating Guidance.

There is an inconsistency in responses to DB1s, and this is undermining confidence in the system. The process needs to improve and include a more effective feedback loop.

5.5 Learning and development

There is a positive blended approach to training, incorporating station based exercises, online development, multi-agency exercises as well as activities at the training centre. The use of the iPerform app demonstrates DFRS' willingness to try different approaches to meet the learning needs of different people. The use of IFE training enables demonstration of underpinning knowledge. There is a clear recognition of the importance of theoretical knowledge, and a flexible approach to achieving qualifications through this route.

The Joint Training Centre offers exciting opportunities for future training. These options are already being identified and explored, and could provide an innovative way forward for training both police and fire sectors.

DFRS has recognised that there has been a heavy focus on assessment and not enough on training, resulting in fire fighters not enjoying training, and being reluctant to attend because of perceptions around capability. The Maintenance of Skills Training system needs to be refreshed as it is currently not fit for purpose. We heard that there are creative ideas being explored to address these concerns. For example, on-station Incident Command training including entire watches in an active, role playing, or observational role. We also heard that there are inconsistencies in instruction from different trainers, and firefighters are therefore not always clear what is accurate, up to date and best practice.

The training centre is responding to criticism about its focus on assessment rather than training and inconsistencies between trainer approaches. Few people we spoke to were aware that their concerns have been listened to and are being addressed. Consider how this could be made clearer to staff, particularly operational fire fighters.

The frequency and duration of training should be reflected against local, regional and national risk. Consider how well training and development is aligned to the IRMP.

The coaching and mentoring principle is a positive concept, however it needs more exploration and clarity. Not all staff feel that it applies to their area of work, or are clear what it means in practice.

Ensure clear programme pathways and development for all employees, including non-operational staff. This is partly about assessments and qualifications, for example for Prevention staff, but also about development opportunities to move into managerial position.

6. Notable Practice and Signposting

6.1 Notable Practice

- Relationship with EMAS on EFR, agreement of Memorandum of Understanding with EMAS and five other FRSs and its independent external evaluation.
- ‘Member buddy’ system with SLT ensuring views on plans and proposals can be clarified and understood between officers and Members in advance of decisions.
- Using the iPerform app and other demonstrations of recognising different learning styles and providing a ‘self-service’ platform for management development
- Police/Fire HQ and Training Centre Delivery – establishing the Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) (incorporating representatives from both police and fire) which owns the building. This was initially unfamiliar to police colleagues but has proved hugely successful and a platform for further collaborative opportunities.
- Value mapping approach to be revisited, to maximising efficiencies Service wide has the potential for greater integration of departments and the encouragement of cross organisational planning in the future
- Shortlisted for national awards i.e. health and well-being and staff engagement
- Sprinkler partnership approach and match funding with Councils on new build properties to improve property safety and fire fighter safety.
- Chair-based exercises initiative – notable practice that DFRS has trained community safety officers to deliver these sessions in recognition of the link between limited mobility and fire safety risk.

6.2 Signposting:

- Accredited training for prevention staff – Staffordshire FRS,
- Work with Police – Cornwall TriService, Devon & Somerset FRS, Humberside FRS, Lincolnshire FRS
- IRMP relationship with Response Standards – Humberside FRS,
- Income Generation opportunities – Humberside FRS, Joint Consultative Committee – Humberside,
- Training and development for senior managers – Gloucestershire FRS piloting of putting non-operational senior managers through 18 months of operational training in order to improve their knowledge and enhance their skills as a manager.

7. Conclusion and contact information

Through the peer challenge process we have sought to highlight the many positive aspects of Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service but we have also outlined some key challenges. It has been our aim to provide some detail and some examples of them through this report in order to help the service consider them and understand them. The senior managerial and political leadership will therefore undoubtedly want to reflect further on the findings before determining how they wish to take things forward.

Thanks are due to everyone involved for their participation. The team are particularly grateful for the support provided both in the preparation for the challenge and during the on-site phase and for the way people we met engaged with the process.

DFRS are invited to undertake a follow-up to the challenge with members of the same team (some or all) in due course (usually about 12 months') at a time most valuable to you. I will maintain contact in order to facilitate this. Mark Edgell is the Principal Adviser for the Local Government Association in your region. Hopefully these contacts provide you with a convenient route of access to the organisation, its resources and packages of support.

All of us connected with the peer challenge would like to wish DFRS every success in the future.

Becca Singh
Peer Challenge Manager
Local Government Association
E-mail: Becca.singh@local.gov.uk
Phone: 07919 562 851

www.local.gov.uk

8. Annex – Contents of the feedback presentation delivered to DFRS on Friday 27th January 2017

Specific focus areas

- Process for developing the IRMP
 - Transparency
 - Culture
 - Value for money
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Headline messages

- Positive and significant cultural change journey
 - Consider Communications capacity and resources necessary to ensure success in delivering future plans.
 - Don't underestimate the importance of ICT systems, especially given the new opportunities offered for collaboration (police and others). More investment may be needed.
 - Be cognisant that staff are at different places on the change curve
 - The Tri Service Fire Control concept needs fully embedding with clear measurable outcomes communicated to all members and desired outcomes delivered
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Collaboration with others

- Good preparation and delivery of the HQ move. Staff felt fully engaged and supported throughout the process
 - Co-location has led to greater interaction between staff and different departments
 - Uncertainty with staff around Phase 2.
 - Realisation that not everyone is on the same place on the 'Change Curve'
 - Collaboration with EMAS has been received positively with both organisations and the majority of staff
 - Concept of Tri Service Fire Control is really good for resilience. Delivery has not been so successful to date
 - Evidence of joint working and opportunities with neighbouring FRSs.
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IRMP development

- IRMP Yr 1 action plan is clear; however, is there the capacity to deliver?
 - Staff engagement on IRMP is extensive and inclusive
 - IRMP consultation has included community partners and other stakeholders
 - Some areas of the IRMP need further communication to all staff due to the perceived impact. This would minimise uncertainty across staff groups
 - Consider if there is enough clarity with regard to the link between the risk profile and service response standards
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Financial planning and viability

- DFRS has sound financial management system enabling the Service to manage change effectively
 - Strong understanding of the impact of savings on the organisation, with contingencies in place
 - 'Value mapping' should be explored to focus on areas that maximise efficiencies in DFRS
 - SLT's clear understanding of efficiencies is not consistently understood more widely
 - The potential of income generation should not be underestimated for Littleover and Training Centre.
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Political and managerial leadership and Governance and decision-making

- Strong sense of cultural change and attitude to the Service where openness, challenge and shared responsibility are prevalent
 - Given the potential for Governance change, elected members, PCC and rep bodies are well engaged and mutually supportive of the direction the Service is currently taking
 - Performance culture is gaining momentum across the organisation and outcomes are being used to effect change
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Political and managerial leadership and Governance and decision-making

- The positivity around the change in leadership has not been felt universally yet, with the middle and frontline levels of the organisation needing further comms and reassurance in this regard.
 - Stop / start / continue ethos is viewed differently at different levels of the Services. I.e. SLT feel 'stop' occurs when necessary, this view is not shared at SMG
 - Speed and consistency of decision-making is causing frustration in some areas. Where reasons can be easily explained they should be communicated
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Organisational capacity

- Evidence of organisational buy-in to the Service's values and behaviours
 - DFRS is an inclusive organisation with a positive culture encouraging challenge, engagement and feedback
 - Visible managerial and political leadership
 - Frontline staff (RDS especially) are not yet feeling positive changes
 - Consider the balance between ambitious IRMP project programme and the day job
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Prevention

- Evidence that DFRS understands its communities. Data is stratified to target prevention activities
 - Strong organisational approach to prevention, now expanding into health through safe and well visits
 - The workforce and partners 'get it'. Effective relationship with Safeguarding boards and other local groups and partners
 - Chair based exercises are notable practice
 - Dashboard process measures are effective

 - Consider developing outcome measures
 - Consider structured accredited training for prevention staff to complement the strong approach
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Protection

- Balanced approach to prevention and enforcement
 - Match-funding scheme with suppression systems is a good initiative
 - Partnership with Derbyshire Councils to install sprinklers into new builds. A positive relationship

 - £20,000 each approach to housing may need reviewing as some money is not spent. Consider project based on risk
 - Non-ops FSO now started to be introduced consider future succession planning if increased.
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Preparedness

- Business continuity planning testing through Ops Assurance station visits appears to be working and supports Station managers
 - Positive feedback from Local Resilience Forum (LRF) including joint working around exercising, planning and documentation creation
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Response

- The dashboard performance system is widely used and understood
 - EFR pilot has been received positively from crews and staff
 - Ensure effective communication around training, equipment and procurement from station based staff
 - We encourage the proposed review of response standards and this being clarified in the IRMP
 - RDS feel undervalued in comparison with WDS colleagues
 - Some concerns raised around new systems for mobilising
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Health, Safety and Welfare

- Fire Fighter safety – measures have been taken to embed learning and understanding from local, regional and national events
 - Good positive relationships with the FBU
 - External recognition for Well 4 Work - Personnel Today 2016 Health and Wellbeing awards shortlist
 - DB1 process needs to improve and include a more effective feedback loop
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Learning and development

- Positive blended approach to training, however content must be up to date, accurate, consistent and relevant
 - Coaching and mentoring principle is a positive concept, however it needs more exploration and clarity
 - Recognition that training has become focused on assessment rather than development; this is being addressed
 - Use of IFE enables demonstration of underpinning knowledge
 - Positive opportunity with Joint Training Centre
 - Ensure clear programme pathways and developing for all employees
 - Continuity and consistency of training and assessment needs to be developed further.
 - Frequency and duration of training to be reflected against local, regional and national risk. Redkite needs to be refreshed
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Notable Practice

- Relationship with EMAS on EFR
 - Member buddy system with SLT
 - iPerform programme
 - Fire HQ and Training Centre – LLP delivery vehicle
 - Value mapping approach to maximising efficiencies across Service
 - Shortlisted for national awards i.e. health and well being and staff engagement
 - Sprinkler partnership with Council on new build properties
 - Chair-based exercises initiative
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