



Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland

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Dear Chief Fire Officer Hunter

PROGRESS INSPECTION TAYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE – 9/10 AUGUST 2005

As discussed during the above inspection undertaken by myself and Assistant Inspectors Harrison, Webb, Wilson and McCaffrey, I gave a commitment to follow up the inspection with an open letter for yourself, the Convener of the Fire and Rescue Board and your Clerk. This letter and the attached appendices will appear on the Inspectorate website www.scotland.gov.uk/hmifs and is available for you to use and to report to your Fire and Rescue Board.

I am pleased to report the good progress that was noted during the inspection period in November 2004 is continuing and of the 29 recommendations that were made in the Inspection Report, 26 are being progressed and several of these have actually been concluded. The 3 that remain to be addressed will be highlighted later in the attached appendices.

The fact that Tayside Fire and Rescue has continued to address these recommendations and to implement further areas of the Modernisation Agenda, is an outstanding achievement when considered against a backdrop of extensive planning and implementation for arrangements during the recent G8 summit at Gleneagles. Everyone connected with Tayside Fire and Rescue, and also the Fire and Rescue Board, have to be congratulated for making such progress against a demanding schedule during this time.

There is no doubt that the Fire and Rescue Service in Tayside is in the “Continuous Improvement” category. These improvements are being conducted in a competent manner and involve full consultation. It is, once again, a credit to the Management Team in Tayside that within their finite resources they are able to cope with the issue of capacity within the organisation. The ability of the Management Team to prioritise the many challenges that lie ahead permits a confidence that the issue of capacity should not become critical.

It was pleasing to note that during this progress inspection the culture of the organisation continues to be inclusive and very much team-based. This undoubtedly permeates from top tier leadership, through a united Management Team and is “Golden threaded” amongst a very committed workforce.

In conclusion, it is not a coincidence that Tayside Fire and Rescue is a highly performing organisation. As mentioned in the Inspection Report of 2004 the arrangements whereby the Tayside Fire and Rescue Board set and approve policy, receive reports and monitor performance whilst allowing the Chief Fire Officer and his Management Team to deliver the service is, without doubt, continuing. The lines are clearly defined and both groups support each other to the benefit of safer communities. In addition to this it is also very evident that during the current year Tayside Fire and Rescue has been able to operate to the full Grant-Aided Expenditure indicator level plus the transitional funding provided by the Scottish Executive to assist in funding the recent pay awards following the major industrial dispute across the UK Fire and Rescue Service. This financial stability has added to the excellent professional relationship that exists between the Fire and Rescue Board and the senior management of Tayside Fire and Rescue. All these issues, together with the commitment of the staff throughout the Fire and Rescue Service in Tayside, ensures that the community can have every confidence in the Service who are truly attempting to achieve Best Value through continuous improvement.

The Tayside Fire and Rescue Board, the Chief Fire Officer and Management Team are invited to consider the attached appendices and ensure that any outstanding areas of the original 29 recommendations are reviewed and considered for further inclusion within the Action Plans for 2005-2006 and beyond.

Yours sincerely



JEFF ORD
HM Chief Inspector of Fire Services

RECOMMENDATIONS – CURRENT POSITION

Section 1 - The Strategic Management of the Service

1. *Whilst not losing or diluting the improving IT arrangements that will support staff communication, the issue of face to face communications is of sufficient importance as to require additional consideration by the Firemaster and his team. The further empowerment of managers in all sections of the Brigade will assist this vital change management area*

Since the inspection the Management Team have considered models across all industries and organisations in terms of improved communications for staff and further empowerment of managers. The Management Team are introducing a scheme based on “Leading an Empowered Organisation” which has been successful and gained improvements in many other organisations. In addition to this there are regular visits to fire stations and departments by senior managers and heads of departments. Efforts are being made to improve all forms of information sharing with internal and external stakeholders. These elements combined will lead to sustained performance in terms of staff communications and empowered managers throughout the organisation.

Section 2 - Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP)

2. *The IRMP team should consider presenting an intervention options paper to the Firemaster in relation to house fires and road traffic accidents.*

Road traffic collisions data has been used to map the best locations for positioning the Service’s rescue appliances and a paper has been presented to the management team on this subject.

A second presentation is to be given in the near future regarding house fires. Good progress has been made in this area since the last inspection.

3. *Following the formal IRMP consultation period a first year draft action plan should be produced prior to the introduction of IRMP (April 2005).*

The Action Plan has been completed and issued to all stakeholders.

4. *The IRMP document should contain a reference to the agreement appertaining to appropriate/necessary working on nightshifts and public holidays.*

A Working Group involving management and the representative trade unions has been set up to review the current working arrangements. The findings of this group will be implemented on 1 January 2006.

Section 3 - Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS)

5. *An implementation programme and impact study for rolling out IPDS across the Service should be undertaken and reported to the Fire Board.*

An implementation programme has been established and is well advanced. However, an impact study has not yet commenced. This is awaiting the launch of the Fire-fighter development programme. There is clear evidence of commitment to carry out the study and to report this to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

6. *The Brigade may wish to reconsider its approach to training reserve in light of the forthcoming removal of the recommended standards of Fire Cover.*

The Service approach to the issue of training reserve has been re-examined. There is clear evidence that a flexible approach in line with the Modernisation Agenda is now being developed.

7. *The Brigade may wish to examine the level of Guide Line scenarios included in multi pump exercises.*

The Service will implement this recommendation over the next few months. However, it is disappointing to note that this had not been commenced in the interim period from the time of the last inspection.

SECTION 4 - Community Fire Safety (The Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003)

8. *The Brigade should consider carrying out a strategic review on the impact, success and level of commitment in community fire safety work to identify priorities and evaluate the Brigade's capacity to deliver.*

Currently there is a 'paper based' system in place within the Service in regard to C.F.S. initiatives. This system has resulted in a good reduction in the number of wilful fire raising incidents. However, there appears to be a degree of reluctance from operational personnel to become more involved because of the amount of paperwork required to provide an audit trail of such work.

As a result, the Service are currently investigating the purchase of a data base system for the collation and review of all elements of C.F.S. workload.

In addition, the Service are also about to advertise a position for a Data Analyst.

9. *The benefits of the work of FSEC should be fully utilised to support community fire safety initiatives. It is particularly important where areas of good practice have been identified such as the Electric Blanket initiative in Perth, which has highlighted a higher than average failure rate on these items. Examination of incident data may support the implementation of this initiative across the Brigade area.*

There has been little progress made in regard to this recommendation.

The Service are awaiting the outcome of the investigation into the data base referred to under recommendation 8 above.

However, there is a great deal of FSEC information currently available which, if more readily accessible by operational personnel, would encourage and support C.F.S. initiatives.

10. *As the balance of work increases in the area of community safety, the Brigade may wish to review the many initiatives being developed by operational staff so as to maximise the benefits to all of the communities across the Brigade.*

Since the last inspection the Service has created 3 C.F.S. leading firefighter posts and 5 District Liaison Officers (DLO) posts

The DLO's will evaluate station driven initiatives. As a result these initiatives should be more targeted to the service plan requirements. Very good progress has been achieved in this area.

11. *With the continued development of new duties in this area, it would seem appropriate to further consider alternative staffing options to undertake certain elements of community fire safety work.*

This recommendation forms an action point within the Service Plan for 2005/06. A paper will be prepared for the consideration of the Service Management Team.

SECTION 5 - Fire Safety Issues

12. *Whilst the Brigade is presently reviewing the current and future workload in relation to all elements of fire legislation, the implications of the shift in staff from the legislative work to community safety should be monitored to ensure that the resulting workload is appropriately balanced with the new staffing arrangements.*

A reassessment of risk categorisation and inspection timescales is currently underway. Coupled with this is an increase in the working hours available for Fire Safety officers under a new flexible duty regime.

However, there is evidence to suggest that workloads continue to increase and that the Service Management Team may, in the near future, have to consider an increase in staff numbers.

13. *It is suggested that the Brigade should further consider the full range of staffing options available to them to deliver some elements of legislative work.*

This recommendation has not been progressed.

However, due to the introduction of the Fire (Scotland) Act and the resultant increase in statutory responsibility, the Service Management Team will have to review this area.

14. *The Brigade should monitor the legislative workload to ensure that it does not exceed staff capacity, particularly whilst the review process is being undertaken.*

The DLO's (see recommendation 10 above) have provided additional capacity for legislative fire safety work. There has also been an increase in the working hours available for Fire Safety Officers under a new flexible duty regime.

In addition further use will be made of the Service's Terian data base system. Currently this system is only used to generate information on routine inspections of premises. Greater use of the systems capacity will result in it being used as a monitoring tool for all aspects of Fire safety work.

Section 7 - Diversity and Equality Issues

15. *The Equal Opportunities Orders would benefit from being edited into a more user friendly form, perhaps a booklet, which covers the basics.*

The issue of a single issue Equality Policy is being taken forward with CFOA Scotland Diversity Business Stream Group. The group plan to develop a Scottish "Standard" Equality Policy for all personnel.

16. *More effort should be made to contact, and work in partnership with, the LGBT organisations in the Tayside area.*

Work is progressing in this area with stronger links being formed with Dundee Equality Partnership. Some key personnel have undergone training in LGBT issues with the Equality Network. Staff have also attended a Community Planning event relating to the LGBT community. Progress is good but further work should be undertaken to assist in attracting persons from the LGBT groups to the service through positive action initiatives.

17. *Monitoring of the use of Contact Officers should be undertaken and a pro forma for reporting of cases developed. Ownership of the information held should be by the Equality Officer only and all records kept confidentially in a lockable drawer/cabinet. This evidence should be analysed regularly for any emerging patterns and training requirements.*

The Service is currently undertaking a review of the Contact Officer network. Further training is planned for the current officers and a recruitment drive is also planned to enhance this service for staff. Further work is still to be undertaken to complete this project.

18. *Tayside Fire Brigade must look at the ownership of the duties of the RRA. Its current Race Equality Scheme (RES) must be audited and reported on and Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) undertaken for all new and existing relevant policies and procedures. These EIA's must also be published where any adverse results emerge. These requirements need to be part of the duties of each Head of Department, or delegated appropriately. They should not be the responsibility of the Human Resource or Equalities staff. The Senior Management Team need to take corporate responsibility for the duties under the Act and the reporting of progress. Reporting on the progress of the RES should be an ongoing agenda item in Management Team meetings.*

The system of reporting on progress in relation to the Race Equality Scheme is still not in place. There appears to be no justifiable reason for this. However, after talks with key staff work will be done to rectify this situation.

Work is progressing very well in the area of equality and diversity within Tayside Fire & Rescue Service. Through strong leadership and commitment, the Service is continuing to improve their practices and procedures in this business stream. Collaboration and good partnership work with key organisations throughout Tayside is adding value to the development of good practice. However, there is still work to be done in relation to compliance with the duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act in putting proper procedures in place for accountability and ownership across the Service. The Inspectorate are satisfied following this inspection that the work required to rectify this situation will be taken forward speedily.

Section 8 - Health and Safety

19. *The Brigade may wish to review both the Brigade Order and the application form relating to secondary employment.*

Where appropriate, any application should require the secondary employer's endorsement so that they also fully understand and accept the primary employment conditions set out in the contract by the Fire Authority to prevent a conflict of employment interests.

This recommendation has not yet been completed. However, it forms part of the wider review of personnel policies and procedures as set out in the Service Plan for 2005/2006 (action point 3.6) and is scheduled for completion in October 2005.

Section 9 - Information/Communications

20. *The Brigade may wish to consider further engaging specifically with Retained staff on community safety and release for duty issues.*

The Brigade have engaged with firefighters on the retained duty system regarding their concerns about additional community safety duties and whether or not their primary employers could release them to undertake this form of work. I am pleased to report that there is a large degree of success in utilising retained members of staff to deliver community fire safety and the concerns that staff had do appear to have been allayed through good communications. Evidence was presented of retained units who have championed community fire safety initiatives. Particularly good examples of this are retained crews at Aberfeldy, Pitlochry and Dunkeld who have been active in various community fire safety activities. However, there are many more examples of a similar nature within the retained element of Tayside Fire and Rescue.

Section 10 - Personnel Attendance Levels.

21. *The Brigade may wish to review both the Brigade Order and the application form relating to secondary employment.*

The Brigade has employed a new HR assistant who has been tasked with reviewing the Services attendance management policy. The title of the policy will be changed after this review has completed.

22. *The Brigade may wish to consider cross linking the Riddor reporting procedure to section 2.2.3 of the attendance policy to assist with this issue.*

This recommendation has been fully implemented and is seen to be improving the management of RIDDOR reporting.

SECTION 11 - Freedom of Information Act

23. *The Brigade should continue to support the introduction of this new legislation by ensuring that staffing is commensurate to the workload identified and to progress document control and information management as appropriate.*

This matter has been considered by the management team and current evidence relating to work associated with managing Freedom of Information requests indicates that existing staffing arrangements are adequate. New software is presently being introduced to enhance document control and information management and training is currently underway to support this process.

SECTION 12 - Information Technology and Data/Information Capture

24. *Further work should be carried out on the interface between FSEC and the BOSS software system and this needs to be progressed as soon as possible.*

The Fortek Company have supplied an interface between the Boss (Fires III) system and the FSEC system which has been in place for approximately 5 months.

This allows Boss information to go straight to, and update, the FSEC system.

There is now 5 years of incident information available to the Service.

25. *There is also a need to produce limited amounts of data from the FSEC model, which is already being gathered, to stations and departments. This would allow staff to analyse the data and the running of planning scenarios which in turn would build up confidence in the use of the FSEC model at both strategic and practitioner level.*

Lectures have been undertaken to station personnel on FSEC capabilities. However, the interface between the FSEC team and the CFS department requires to be strengthened. The workload generated by the input to the FSEC data base is large and has meant that time demands on the FSEC team have left little availability for the furtherance of this recommendation.

SECTION 13 - Duties under the Civil Contingencies Bill

26. *The Brigade should review existing business and contingency plans to identify the potential impact of a national emergency direction being made which could impact on existing service delivery and joint emergency planning assumptions.*

CBRN capability and resilience assessments have been carried out and a risk register is currently being progressed through the local emergency co-ordinating group for Category 1 & 2 responders which will ultimately be used to complete a multi agency emergencies manual.

Business Continuity Plans (BCP) are being established for all critical functions within the Service and draft BCP's for Fire Control and Headquarters are now established.

27. *It is recommended that the Brigade enhance its training and exercise programme to further test arrangements and involve the deployment of mass decontamination facilities in neighbouring Brigades to test mutual aid and validate planning assumptions.*

A training programme is being developed and implemented to support the introduction of the Mass Decontamination Unit into Tayside Fire & Rescue. This is initially being rolled out to the designated primary responder stations with awareness training being provided for all other stations.

Joint exercising with other emergency service providers is scheduled for early October 2005 with a full 'multi agency live play' exercise already scheduled for the end of October 2005. This will also consider mutual aid arrangements with other Fire & Rescue Services.

28. *In light of the type of scenarios now envisaged, the Brigade needs to widen its horizon in planning terms. This planning should also involve those emergency services and other agencies that would be expected to provide mutual aid or other specialist support to such an event*

As part of the Service's review of strategic inter-service/agency planning arrangements, a comprehensive incident support pack has been developed. This was also utilised to support operations during the period of the G8 summit within the Tayside area. This work is closely related to the current emergency co-ordinating group work in developing an emergencies manual to clarify roles and responsibilities of all category 1 and 2 responders under the civil contingencies act during the planning, responding and recovery phases of major incidents.

SECTION 14 - Funding

29. *The Absorption of transitional funding provided by the Scottish Executive will have to be factored in to future budgetary plans.*

The Fire and Rescue Authority has approved plans to absorb the transitional funding provided by the Scottish Executive.