



Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

Fire Peer Challenge

19 – 22 November 2012

Introduction

- Peer challenge is part of the new approach to sector led improvement (as opposed to the previous CPA arrangements) and complements OpA self assessment
- It is not an inspection - invited as 'critical friends'
- We have familiarised ourselves with MFRS
- Been well received and made very welcome
- People have been open and honest
- The evidence has been gathered in confidence
- What you hear is what we've heard, seen and read

The Process

- Background reading provided to the team in advance, including OpA self assessment and supporting documentation
 - Timetable of on-site activity with interviews, observations, focus groups and workshops
 - Met with a broad cross-section of staff, elected members and partners
 - Assimilation of our findings
 - Discussion of our findings
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The Team

- Jon Hall – CFO, Gloucestershire FRS – Lead Peer
 - Cllr Sian Timoney – former Chair – Luton and Bedfordshire FRS
 - John Mills – DCFO – Hertfordshire FRS
 - Steve Makepeace – ACFO – South Yorkshire FRS
 - Nicholas Bailey – Superintendent – Cheshire Police
 - Henry Cressey – Head of IT – Cambridgeshire FRS
 - Anne Brinkhoff – Local Government Association
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Peer Challenge Focus

- Leadership, Governance and Corporate Capacity
- Operational Preparedness and Response
- Prevention and Protection
- Support Services Review

Other Areas

- Community Risk Management
 - Health and Safety
 - Training and Development
 - Call Management and Incident Support
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Leadership, Governance and Corporate Capacity

Strengths

- Clear and definite sense of ‘we are all in it together’
 - Clear demonstration of mission, aims and core values
 - PO Group and FA are highly visible
 - Strong new leadership of the Service has resulted in positive relationships with all staff and representative bodies
 - Workforce have huge respect for and faith in the CFO and his team
 - Principled and clear political leadership
 - Clear, consistent and effective communication (eg strategy days)
 - Positive and effective partnerships that are highly valued
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Leadership, Governance and Corporate Capacity

Areas to explore

- Independent scrutiny – consider bringing in LA to establish trusted scrutiny
 - Operational team looks lean
 - The team have seen numerous examples of good and excellent practice in the operational area of the service and in community safety activity. There are areas including support services that need to be challenged in their support of the mission for the service
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Operational preparedness & response

Strengths

- Operational planning
 - Assessment and Monitoring
 - Use of MDT's and officer laptop PC's
 - Operational response
 - Debriefing
 - Standard operating procedures (eg high rise)
 - Effective joint working (eg Riots in 2011) – could be a national case study
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Operational preparedness & response

Areas to explore

- How MACC is used to support operational activity
 - Try to ensure all Operational Commanders, and in particular the District Managers, are included in operational issues
 - Changing rotas and rosters needs to be inclusive
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Prevention

Strengths

- Use of Gold Mine Fire Service Direct and modelling by Liverpool John Moore University
 - Targeting of high risk homes and categories of people will be enhanced by the Portal system
 - Operational training time and CFS interventions balanced by the work routine
 - District Plan is linked to Corporate plan, Police plan and Local Authority plan designed using an EI assessment
 - GM has central team delivering a wide range of services
 - Multi agency team on the Wirral Police, LA YOS voluntary sector supported by advocates delivers real efficiency of scale
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Prevention

Areas to explore

- Data sets could be made available for district teams on a self serve basis
 - Strategic managers to take the lead on the Road Safety Partnerships.
 - Potential to devolve more community safety staff to districts
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Protection

Strengths

- Centrally based team with a mix of grey and green book staff.
 - SMG is to consider new enforcement policy
 - Inspecting officers start the SSRI and pass this to crews via MACC for operational visits to take place
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Protection

Areas to explore

- Instigate a review on inspections and design a risk based inspection programme
 - Provide officers with clear focus around identifying new premises
 - Develop/Purchase a suitable IT system
 - Mobile working for inspecting officers
 - Train crews to complete low risk assessments
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Support Services Review

Strengths

- Clear terms of reference for Directors to carry out assessments, leading to clear proposals in anticipation of grant reductions
 - Criteria for decision making based on agreed risk based approach
 - Staff feel well informed by the senior management team
 - Staff feel able to feed back their ideas if required
 - Recognition that frontline services are the priority
 - Drive to minimise compulsory redundancy by keeping open voluntary severance package, funded through reserves
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Support Service Review

Areas to explore

- Greater understanding of the systemic impact of proposals
 - The same logic and rigor in reducing demand on front line services has not been applied to support services
 - Support services need to understand that the processes currently used are potentially wasteful (eg MACC; demonstrable reduction in 999 calls compared to no change in relation to other non-operational areas of business)
 - This could be achieved through:
 - Analysis of non-operational demand on the organisation
 - Review business processes end to end
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Community risk management

Strengths

- Better sharing of risk data with other agencies
 - Fire Support Network carry out low risk HFSC as well as house clearances loft decluttering
 - Common North-West Regional IRMP and response standard
 - Protection department inform staff of premises that require SSRI
 - Use of the mobile data terminals is increasing and assisting crews with preplanning on route to and at incidents – FF safety
 - Caldecott Guardians referring over 65's to MFRS
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Community risk management

Areas to explore

- Further develop the mobile data terminals to support community safety activity
 - Develop IT systems to allow end users to self serve
 - Fire Support Network would like to be used more – perception is they may be seen as competition.
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Health and Safety

Strengths

- Leadership commitment to the improvement of the Health and Safety demonstrated in the mission
 - Strong leadership demonstrated by the DCFO as Chair of Health and Safety Committee
 - Introduction of grey book officer as lead for health and safety
 - Demonstrable increase and emphasis in operational training reducing the risk especially for front line staff
 - Auditable processes on the OSHENS system to track health and safety actions.
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Health and Safety

Areas to explore

- The submission of near miss forms appears to be lower than expected
 - In a period of job insecurity where sickness is a factor, staff are choosing to not call in sick but are taking leave.
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Training and Development

Strengths

- Training Development Academy is a place that staff now enjoy attending
 - Increased operational development and training is making staff feel valued
 - Management Development training is structured and well managed by the Workforce and Organisational Management Team.
 - Well supported FA members – individualised member training plan
 - Good support for staff at risk of redundancy (eg mentors, redeployment policies)
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Training and Development

Areas to consider

- 'permit to work' requires direction from SMG
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Call Management and Incident Support

Strengths

- Very experienced staff
 - Robust call challenge process in place
 - Good performance and performance management
 - Text back service for malicious calls
 - Staff feel more valued and included and are looking forward to the new facilities
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Call Management and Incident Support

Areas to explore

- Better work with the Highways Agency (eg strategic road network cameras)
 - Improve understanding between MACC and operational staff
 - Large screen technology
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Organisational culture questionnaire

(average scores)

I understand where the service is trying to go to	8.4
Different parts of the service work well together	7.5
The service works well with a variety of partners	8.7
I get to hear what is going on inside the service	8.0
I trust MFRS leaders to make decisions that will improve the service	8.3
MFRS trust me to make decisions that will improve the service	7.8
Decision making authority is delegated	7.3
I feel listened to and my views are valued	7.9
The service seeks my views to get my 'buy in' to new ways of working	7.5
The service is flexible and adaptable	8.1
The service enables its people to get involved in major pieces of work	8.1
I would recommend MFRS as a place to work	8.8

Sample size: 87 1 = very poor; 10 = excellent

Organisational culture questionnaire

MFRS is excellent at:

Response; innovation; serving the community; communicating

MFRS could get better at:

Communication; listening; matching activity to resource;

MFRS should continue doing:

Prevention; community engagement; partnership working;
development

Next steps

- Draft report provided within 4 weeks
 - You will want to take the time to reflect on the report and consider how to take things forward
 - Agree final report on your timescale
 - Encouraged to publish your report and associated action plan on your website
 - Evaluation – how was it for you?
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Thank you

Questions

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