



SHOUT!

The magazine of Hampshire Retained Firefighters Union

Tuesday, 26 April 2005

RFU
Serving the community

The View From Here

With time to think and having a few conversations with other firefighters one thing seems to be becoming more and more apparent - 8/80 is wrong!

8/80 seems to have gone underground for the moment, but the bottom line is this. When an RDS alerter goes off, we respond to the station as quickly, and as safely as possible. When the call is classed as an emergency, we make our way to the incident as quickly and as safely as possible. How can any time be shaved off this? Look at your own station, without cutting corners, is there scope for calls to be attended faster?



HRFU is concerned that if HFRS become fixated on indiscriminately achieving this statistic inappropriate pressure will be subliminally applied to attend a call that bit quicker. We accept that when discussing the 8/80 target HFRS stresses that safety is of paramount importance. However, the 8/80-target can only do one thing and that is wrongly pressurise drivers and personnel. Considering the possible implications of this ill thought out benchmark we hope that HFRS will reassess this target.

Each RDS station is unique. Some cover large rural areas, others are more built up, some run along the sea, others include motorways, differing risks and places of historic importance. Is it conceivable that one target is going to be appropriate to every RDS station?

This self-inflicted statistic has resulted in a pressure on HFRS that is not beneficial or conducive to ensuring a more efficient service. To improve you need a specific metric to measure against. This is easy for items that are being manufactured or harvested where they are tangible and have associated costs. We question the metrics and units used by HFRS in this case.

Don't forget—visit our website for the facts—not the gossip—and leave your own comments. Be a part of the changes in HFRS
www.hrfu.org.uk

On our publication of this article in our website we received this response from the 8/80 Project Manager— Fred Brown

In that the 8/80 stat is a service benchmark all station managers R/T & W/T should where possible try to determine how they may improve the stations response times. This does not mean they should undermine anyone's health and safety or be under undue pressure. However there may be practices/areas that IF done differently would improve 8/80. This does not mean they will necessarily achieve 8/80 but any improvement at each station would have a positive effect on the total service figure which is 5 or 6 % under at any one time.

In that we are all trying to provide the best we can for the 'customer' it is reasonable to explore what may be done better. This will no doubt be discussed at the forthcoming meeting with R/T Station Managers.



The RFU newsletter—designed to educate, inform and entertain.

RFU *part of the solution not the problem*

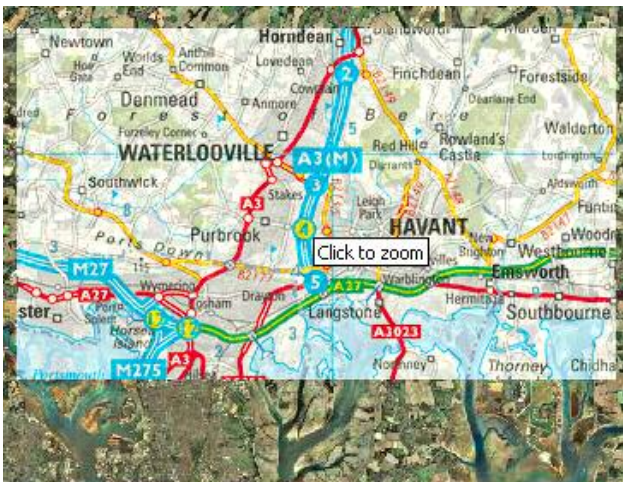


Havant & Waterlooville

From the hrfu website

The rumour about Havant and Waterlooville being closed and merged has been commented on by HFRS and the following was communicated to HRFU by SDO Butcher.

Havant Borough Council want to improve the centre of Waterlooville and have their eye on the current fire station's position. They offered HFRS a new position which was rejected because it was too far west towards Droxford and so moved away from the area most requiring cover.



The bottom line is, as with any business, HFRS are willing to consider moving premises so long as it does not affect its cover and the move is convenient and beneficial. With this in mind another possible location is Dunsbury Hill Farm off the A3M.

Emergency Cover Review

Dunsbury Hill location is being looked into, however, many things have to be considered and proven before any move can go from deliberation to actuality. This will involve an emergency cover review that HFRS are now undertaking. This review essentially considers the advantages and disadvantages of such a move and is expected to take until August 2005.

On a time span of 3 - 5 years the decision may then go ahead to relocate to new station consequently Waterlooville and Havant will close. If this happens, Horndean may also be caught up in the change however, they are probably too far to be factored into closure "initially".

During this interim period SDO Butcher may consider changes to the duty systems prevailing at Waterlooville. The options are either to leave things as they are or remove the wholtime element from the station.

The ultimate goal appears to be (3 to 5 years from now) building a new station by the A3(M) which will allow Waterlooville and Havant to merge and become a 2 pump wholtime and 1 pump RDS station plus specials.

Council Tax Leaflet and IRMP Booklet

The tri-fold leaflet produced by HFRS that we all received from our county council or unitary authority in the council tax pack really stood out from the rest of the information provided. It has great visual impact and provides very relevant information of exceptional clarity. It was also good to see recruitment information for RDS firefighters included. This tri-fold should be entered for an award; there must be one.

The producers of the 2005/6 IRMP publication should likewise be congratulated on producing something special; interesting relevant photographs, good layout and clear and concise information.



HRFU Comment

The fire service is a potentially dynamic service having to continually review cover and disposition based on conurbation changes, efficiencies and governmental requirements. However, like most people we become concerned when talks of closure of stations occur. Taken to the (ridiculous) extreme, HFRS could have one central Hampshire super station - but of course although this may well help financial targets, cover targets would never be achieved. A realistic alternative to closures of RDS stations is of course expansion into numerous well positioned RDS stations. This would be efficient use of resources, provide effective ongoing local community safety initiatives and be extremely economic. The government acknowledges the inherent efficiencies and effectiveness of the retained duty system. We will be keen to be involved in the consultation process of the emergency cover review.

If a reduction in resources is deemed necessary we will be pushing for early discussions with HFRS to ensure that the best possible packages can be offered to RDS crews to keep their skills within the service.

At this stage nothing is confirmed and we do acknowledge HFRS initiative to publicly state their intentions early on and open discussions with all parties involved. However, what we have outlined above is as it stands at this time. There is nothing to say that any local changes in policy, risk analysis etc will not lead to these plans changing.

Have we got your views right? Come on line and tell us? - www.hrfu.org.uk



Responsibility for equality lies with each and every one of us

As Hampshire Fire and Rescue launches its revised Race Equality Scheme, Deputy Chief Officer **Dave Curry** explains that

As the Deputy Chief Officer responsible for Equality and Diversity, it is my pleasure to introduce you to our revised Race Equality scheme. But whilst this scheme sets our approach to equality and diversity, I must stress that ultimately its success depends upon the actions of each and every one of us. Therefore I would encourage you all to not just read it – but embrace it in your daily lives.

We published our first scheme in 2002 and have recently reviewed its content and action plans to enable us to deliver our equality and diversity objectives.

Our Race Equality scheme and associated action plans sets out how we intend to meet these duties. Some of our key objectives are to:

- Provide leadership to positively and proactively deal with race equality
- Allocate appropriate resources to deliver our equality objectives and action plans
- Ensure that our functions, policies and services do not have an adverse impact on any minority group
- Ensure that all our diverse communities have access to the full range of services and information that we provide
- Ensure that our workforce is representative of the communities we serve
- Provide appropriate training to our employees on the scheme and race and equality issues
- To ensure that contractors who deliver services on our behalf are made aware of their equality obligations and are monitored



Another key inclusion in our scheme is our “Core Values” which I believe will assist us in delivering our equality objectives. Our Core Values have been developed within the Service, guiding us in not just what we do, but how we do it, and we have recently started to integrate them into our work.

Our Core Values are:

- People – we value all our employees
- Improvement – we value improvement at all levels of the service
- Service to the Community – we value service to the community
- Diversity – we value diversity in the service and the community

This scheme is available on our website at <http://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/jobs/fairness.html>.

Our Race Equality scheme focuses on racial equality, however we must also keep in sight of the fact that there are several other strands to our equality agenda, including: Disability, Gender, Sexuality, Religion / Belief, Age.

And we have detailed plans in place which complement our Race Equality scheme and enable us to deliver across the entire equality spectrum. We are committed to making this scheme a success, and sharing best practice, therefore if you require any more details about our equality and diversity work, please do not hesitate to contact a member of our Equality team at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters or email: or

Deputy Chief Office Dave Curry
Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

For more information contact:

Andy Kettle on HQ Ext 5416. E-mail: andy.kettle@hantsfire.gov.uk
Shanti Waas on HQ Ext 5343. E-mail: shanti.waas@hantsfire.gov.uk

Web: <http://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/jobs/fairness.html>.



News Bites

MOD and Airport Firefighting Personnel—a big, big step for HFRS

Following consultation with HFRS we received news about developments in the policy for transfer of non-local authority fire service personnel into HFRS. HFRS Human Resources policy decision means that people in associated fire fighting roles such as MOD or airport personnel will now be assessed on their individual merits and qualifications and then if successful, be given bespoke training based on their requirements.

This move will currently affect few RDS firefighters, however, it is a major change in HFRS recruitment policy and we applaud their initiative. This policy moves closer to enabling RDS firefighters to apply for full time roles with their retained training being acceptable qualifications.

Bounty Payments

Some things in life are very unfair. One of these things is the lack of recognition of long service for wholetime firefighters who have carried out RDS duties for ten years or more. Particularly, a number of current RDS firefighters served as RDS firefighters for seven or eight years prior taking on wholetime contracts and subsequently continued their RDS service. On completion of their ten years continuous RDS service they are denied their bounty and recognition of service to their community by the Conditions of Service. HFRS insists on abiding by the Conditions of Service, which after all are only minimum conditions, and the chair of the Fire Authority, Michael Cartwright, supports them. We believe that outside the Conditions of Service there is a moral obligation to recognise the service of these personnel. There is a considerable resentment that could so easily be resolved at a small financial cost.

BNP

At the meeting of the Practitioners Forum on the 15th December 2004 the FBU presented a paper entitled "Fire and Rescue Service and Service Organisations and the BNP". As the minutes for the meeting show all those present, including the RFU National General Secretary Derek Chadbon, shared the condemnation of BNP policies. However there were doubts as to the legal powers of Fire Authorities to take action against employees simply by reason of BNP membership. The Forum concluded that membership of the BNP or similar groups was incompatible with a modern Fire and Rescue Service, which had a duty to promote racial equality and which aspired to be multi-cultural. It was resolved that the Chair, Alan Doig, take up this issue with the Local Government Authority and the Chair of the Diversity Happens Programme board. The RFU fully concurs with the views expressed at the meeting and the actions proposed.

The Fire and Rescue Service Retained Duty System Report—a review of the recruitment and retention challenges

This review was set up by the Minister to meet our concerns and was launched by him at a RFU conference.

The RFU were the only union to make a full contribution to the review. We are continuing to pursue the recommendations through the current implementation phase.

The review contains fifty-one recommendations; many of these can be implemented locally by HFRS. The Fire and Rescue Service Circular 7-2005 accompanied the publication of the report and called on each fire and rescue authority to "*complete a self audit against the recommendations and take action to address any issues raised*"

One of the main themes of the Review Report is that RDS personnel must be more involved in the planning and policies of fire and rescue services. It is clear that HFRS should be directly involving RDS personnel in the audit process.

ROMSEY FIRE STATION CO - RESPONDERS DOUBLE BOOST

A curry night organised by Romsey's town mayor Dorothy Baverstock at Naz's Cuisine in The Hundred raised £635; enough to buy a satellite navigation system for the Romsey Co - Responder vehicle. However, when SubO John Hurle went to Garmin Europe on the Abbey Park Industrial Estate to buy the navigation system the firm decided to donate the equipment free of charge. Hilary Reynolds, Garmin's UK Sales and Marketing Office Co-ordinator said, "The Co-Responders are helping local people out so we thought it would be a good cause to support."

Hilary went on to say that once an address is typed into the top of the range Street Pilot system it literally calls out directions to the driver taking them to the door. Co-Responder Kelvin Tongs said that the Streetpilot would be a great help when responding to emergencies, "It is going to save us time and assist us to go straight to the property."

The donation means that Romsey Co-Responders now have over £600 for other equipment to help the people of Romsey and the surrounding areas.

Tell us what you think

Visit our website, find out more and leave your own comments.

www.hrfu.org.uk