

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND PROTECTION  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2002 at 10.30 a.m.**

**FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE INITIATIVES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

*Report Of The Chief Fire Officer*

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**1. Purpose of Report**

This report is in response to the request of the March 2002 Select Committee to scrutinise initiatives with young people in Hertfordshire and other Fire Authorities, in particular innovative work undertaken by Leicestershire and Wiltshire.

**2. Summary**

2.1 A workshop at this years Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Conference was devoted to youth initiatives and highlighted work undertaken within Fire Authorities in Leicestershire and Wiltshire.

2.2 At this time three cadet units are operating within the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. Following consideration of a report in 2001, the Service Management Board commissioned work that would result in a full review of youth policy within the Service.

2.3 This work was programmed to take place over the next six months and a report is to be presented to the Service Management Board in autumn 2002. A report to the Committee will follow in January 2003.

**3. Conclusion**

The Scrutiny Committee should discuss whether it is appropriate to form a short life Topic Group to work closely with officers in the research phase of developing Fire and Rescue Service initiatives with young people.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 During this year's Local government Association (LGA) Fire Conference, a session was devoted to initiatives with young people. Delegates attention was directed to work undertaken by the fire Authorities in Leicestershire and Wiltshire. The then Chairman of CIP Keith Emsall attended this LGA workshop and at the March 2002 CIP meeting proposed this topic for scrutiny by the Committee. Members agreed to scrutinise this item and requested a report detailing current initiatives within Hertfordshire.
- 1.2 The Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has operated a cadet scheme for some years. Cadet units are based at Royston, Watford and Potters Bar. Whilst these units are over subscribed and well supported by parents, they work on a relatively informal basis and rely upon substantial commitment from a small core of volunteers. They are mostly funded through local events and sponsorship arrangements.
- 1.3 During 2001, a report on the future of cadet units was produced for the Service Management Board. It was evident that the units needed an overhaul with some specific roles, such as Community Fire Safety, attached to them. In addition it was clear that the whole venture relied on the goodwill and commitment of a small core of volunteers both from within the Service and from elsewhere. These people "pay their own way" and give up time to help the cadets. Future funding arrangements and possible compensation for individuals was discussed.
- 1.4 Issues were also raised about associations with recognised groups such as Scouts and Guides, targeted recruitment campaigns, and work experience. At this time the Service have, for example, supported a number of initiatives with the Princes Trust, mostly in the Stevenage area. Community safety is a high priority and joint initiatives such as "Crucial Crew" enjoy good support from a variety of services. Contributors include the police, train operators, utility providers and the building trades as well as the Fire Service. Specialist members of staff from each organisation come together in one location and explain the hazards of their various trades or occupations to visiting parties of local school children. Schools report that the events are well received by students but unfortunately are not available across the whole county unless long coach journeys are arranged.
- 1.5 The Board decided to continue with the current arrangements for cadets during 2002 but tasked the Deputy Chief Officer (DCO) to lead a major review of youth policies within the Fire and Rescue Service.
- 1.6 It was agreed that David McClement would work closely with the DCO to develop a report and that the findings should be presented to the Service Management Board in autumn 2002. This detailed report would therefore be available for presentation to CIP committee at their meeting in January 2003.

## **2. Financial Implications**

The financial implications arising from this report have been included within the Fire and Rescue Service 2002/03-revenue budget.

### *Background Papers used by the author when compiling this report*

"Fire Cadets Scheme" – A report to Fire and Rescue Service Management Board - August 2001