

# **Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service**

## **Service Redesign**

Pre-consultation June 23 - July 24 2015

Summary of Results

## Introduction

This summary document sets out the main findings from the recent pre-consultation exercise conducted by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) on behalf of Suffolk County Council as the Fire Authority and decision-making body.

The pre-consultation took place over a four-week period between the 23 June and 24 July 2015. The Service recorded almost 600 views of the pre-consultation document on the County Council's webpage, along with emails and social media comments which were also considered as part of the overall feedback. In addition there were 2 stakeholder workshops for invited delegates representing a range of interested parties. These took place on the 10 and the 20 July and notes made at the events were also captured for analysis purposes.

## Pre-consultation Approach

The pre-consultation marks the start of a much longer period of communication and public engagement for SFRS, and was developed alongside advice from The Consultation Institute and its guidance around how to best apply and remain in accordance with The Gunning Principles of consultation. These principles specify that a public consultation should be carried out at a formative stage when there is still time to change an Authority's decision, or in the case of pre-consultation, inform any options put forward for consideration by the County Council Cabinet.

It was important to ensure that the public and other stakeholders were made aware of the pre-consultation. SFRS achieved this through a proactive communications plan that included early engagement with local media, letters to key stakeholders advertising and providing access to the consultation and publication on social media and the SFRS and SCC website. The approach allowed for different ways the public and other stakeholders could respond during the consultation, including email, phone, letter or SFRS's preferred social media channels of Facebook and Twitter. There was also an opportunity for invited stakeholders to attend workshop events, which were facilitated by the Consultation Institute and supported by SFRS officers to provide factual clarification and assist informed discussion.

SFRS manager briefings and staff updates have been provided either face-to-face or through internal SFRS briefing tools.

## Pre-consultation Methodology

Stakeholders and the general public were not required to respond via a formal questionnaire and instead provided free-form text. In collating social media responses the information was drawn from the original posts by those responding directly to the consultation.

The feedback summary has been separated into emails, social media and workshops. Common themes have been identified throughout, providing a comprehensive picture of public and stakeholder feedback received during the pre-consultation.

## Headline Responses

The three most common themes raised across the pre-consultation communication channels were:

1. The Service should seek out opportunities for blue light integration and further partnership working
2. Speed of response to 999 emergencies is important and should be considered carefully with regard to the impact of potential changes to the service
3. The Service should consider the extent to which it can raise income or charge for services

Further feedback was received and further areas that were raised included:

- Making sure the Service maintains a balance between resources available, demand for services and the county's risk profile
- Placing emphasis on ensuring that the Service continues to focus on improving the availability of on-call firefighters to respond to emergencies
- Recognition of the positive results achieved by firefighters and staff from delivering proactive Prevention and Protection work
- Further enhance the Service's prevention work in order to reduce the numbers of emergencies that occur
- Continue to review how the Service structures teams and uses the skills within them to achieve the best outcomes for Suffolk communities.

## Next Steps

Having listened to the views presented by staff, stakeholders and the general public, the Service is developing options that will form the basis of a formal Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation later this year, subject to the decision of the County Council Cabinet on 10 November 2015.

In the meantime senior officers are working alongside political colleagues and talking with other key stakeholders in order to share the implications of, and aid understanding about, the potential proposals.

Public consultation, following the Cabinet meeting in November, will run for 14 weeks during which time the Service will arrange public meetings, stakeholder events, and further staff briefings in order to ensure that there is ample opportunity for all parties to have their say.

## Stay In Touch

We are committed to continue listening to the views of Suffolk communities and would like to hear from you via any of the following methods;

Email: [FireServiceRedesign@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:FireServiceRedesign@suffolk.gov.uk)

Phone: 01473 260457

Write: Service Redesign Team, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX

