

**Isle of Man Fire and Rescue
Service
Inspection Report 2007**

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Introduction

Background

1. Fire and rescue authorities across the UK are undergoing an extensive programme of modernisation following the National Joint Council (NJC) agreement on pay and conditions in 2003. This programme of change is intended to move Services towards a more targeted and risk-based approach to prevention, protection and emergency response.

2. Her Majesty's Fire Service's Inspectorate (HMFSI) (Scotland) is tasked with examining whether the intended benefits of the various national changes under modernisation are being delivered locally.

3. In July 2006, a request was received from the Department of Home Affairs of the Isle of Man Government. This is the parent Department responsible for the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was formulated and an inspection brief for an inspection of the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service in April 2007 was agreed. The overall focus of the inspection would be the extent to which the Service was achieving the objectives of modernisation and, in particular, whether:

- Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) are effectively supporting the change in emphasis from intervention to prevention, and
- the progress to modernisation is reflected in the culture of the organisation.

4. From 24th to 27th April 2007, an HMFSI inspection team visited the Service. The inspection team conducted an extensive range of interviews, reviewed relevant documents and analysed performance information. The inspection team reviewed five areas of performance:

- Strategic management;
- Fire prevention and risk management;
- Workforce management;
- Management of operational business; and
- Communication

5. The inspection team found that the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service was a generally well managed and dedicated public service. However, the Service and the Authority are challenged in several areas which without the benefit of a strategic plan will become a barrier to further reform and improved service delivery.

**The conclusion therefore is that the Service is judged as
“improving with some reservations”.**

6. Appendix 1 to this report contains what the Inspectorate team believe to be the strengths, challenges and areas for continuous improvement for the Service. The way forward for the Service and the Fire and Rescue Authority from this point is to maintain the strengths and to develop an action plan which will address both the challenges and some minor areas for improvement.

7. This inspection report presents our findings and conclusions against the above five areas for the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Strategic Management

- Local challenges affecting the Service include financial constraint and the restriction of the overall government head count which can inhibit the development of the Service, especially in the “backroom” areas of operational support and administration.
- The CFO and DCFO have had a determined plan to improve the culture of the Service and to direct limited expenditure to the front end of the Service in terms of operational service delivery, fire safety legislation and community fire safety. They are to be commended for their progress in these areas.
- There is no strategic plan for the Service covering the next 10 year period.
- However, it will be vital to ensure that in developing a strategic plan the many strengths that the Service has, e.g. flexibility, high morale etc., is not weakened or lost.
- The Service’s IRMP lacks some basic stages that are necessary in order to understand what resources, and the location of these resources, are required. The basic steps are quite simply to utilise a recognised methodology and toolkit to quantify and identify the risk on the Island. Thereafter, consideration should be given to all options regarding reducing the risk and to implementing the findings of the review.
- There may be an opportunity to consider whether the Government’s Civil Defence Unit (CDU), which also sits within the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), would be suitable for an amalgamation between the Services. This could be considered at an early stage whilst a strategic development plan is considered.
- The strategy for the vehicle replacement programme for the Service is to be commended. It is a clear demonstration of the Department and the Service working together.

Fire Prevention and Risk Management

- The external consultation exercise on the Service’s IRMP was extremely beneficial. The document was accessed on the website over 800 times. This led to the establishment of a community safety partnership with one of the largest local authorities on the Island and membership of the Eastern District Neighbourhood Partnership.
- A highly effective Road Traffic Collision (RTC) reduction campaign has led to a 25% reduction in fatalities on Manx roads and reduced accident figures in the 16–24 age group.

Workforce Management

- Whilst Human Resource Management (HR) currently sits with the Deputy Chief Officer and the Head of Operations, however the broad remit and workload of these positions can due to capacity hinder the development of formal policy and procedures. This has however been identified in the Service's business plan submission for access to an HR professional person.
- Out of necessity, the flexibility of the workforce in the Service is exceptional and perhaps unique when compared to the overall United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Services.
- The flexible working, and integration of the Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel, whilst being commendable, is not at present supported by up-to-date contracts for all employees.
- Due to retirement, the Service will lose a considerable percentage of the workforce over the next few years and it is essential that workforce and succession planning is considered when faced with both this challenge and opportunity.
- Every effort should be made to secure Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in the form of training courses, attendance at seminars and events etc. for both principal officers and senior management of the Service.
- When considering all options for service delivery, which will be an outcome of the evidence-based IRMP, even greater use of RDS staff should be a major consideration.
- The implementation of Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) has required innovation in order for IPDS to fit the local Island model, rather than the Service fitting the UK IPDS model. The Service continues to support the introduction and continuation of personal development within the UK National IPDS strategy as befits the unique situation in the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service.
- There are a number of premises which are no longer fit for purpose in terms of access for disabled persons, dignified facilities for staff etc. This should be addressed as part of the strategic plan.
- While the Service has actively campaigned to diversify its workforce, it currently has only two female firefighters, both within the retained service.
- To date the Service and the Department have done little to encourage ethnic minorities to consider applying for positions as in their view the Island's population mix has few ethnic minority groups.

- The current wholetime/retained duty system is not gender friendly. The Service could offer wholetime only contracts to women (or indeed to men also) and employ more retained personnel to take emergency cover. This should not incur significant expense and the issue of 'head count' need not be affected.
- Further development of diversity and equality should be even more achievable given the present Service culture which is welcoming, respectful and mature.

Operational Management

- A hindrance to the development of new dimension procedures is that there are no plans to replace the 1936 Emergency Powers Act with a Civil Contingencies Act. The Service is currently evaluating the Northern Ireland civil contingency framework as a possible model for implementation.
- The Operational Support Department is predominantly responsible for the formulation of policy and procedures and while progress has been made with a six month secondment of a firefighter on junior officer development. However the limited resources available does impede the Service's ability to timeously develop the systems and procedures that are necessary to support both operational practices and the introduction of new equipment.
- There is both a legal requirement and an operational imperative for all fire fighting staff to undergo regular Breathing Apparatus (BA) training and Realistic Fire Fighting which is currently achieved off Island. It is a matter of urgency that the Department consider the provision of an 'on Island' realistic fire training unit (incorporating BA training) which, if approved, would compliment any outcome of a strategic review.
- The Service and its partners would benefit from a series of properly focused exercises and more joint training to support the development of a fully integrated decontamination capability as part of the Islands resilience arrangements.

Communications

- The introduction of the TETRA radio scheme for the Emergency Services and other Isle of Man Government users has proved an invaluable asset in interoperability with nineteen Government departments currently on the radio system. This has proved especially beneficial during major incidents.
- The good progress that has been made with IT across the Service by working in partnership with other Government departments is commendable and should continue. In particular, there needs to be consideration given to an Asset Register and Tracking for all resources.
- For some time the Service has looked to introduce vehicle mounted data systems on all fire appliances. Regrettably this has not yet been achieved. It cannot be over-stressed how important, in some of the remote rural areas, this vital

application can be to firefighters who are often confronted with difficult decisions to make in the early stages of emergency incidents.

- The Service is in the forefront of innovation in regard to its Emergency Services Joint Control Room. UK Fire and Rescue Services can look to the Isle of Man as an example of how to introduce and operate such a system.

Local context

8. The Isle of Man is a semi autonomous self governing Crown dependency, constitutionally being outside the United Kingdom, but geographically in the centre of the British Isles. The Island covers an area of 224 square miles with the principal communities being around the coast and central valley, the population is steadily increasing and is in the region of 80,000.

9. Whilst there is a diminishing tourist, agriculture and manufacturing base, there is a buoyant and burgeoning international financial sector, Maritime and Aircraft Register and a developing film industry.

10. There are a high number of motor sport events which involve the closure of public roads necessitating special mobilising arrangements, extensive preplanning and assessment of fire cover and risk for 3 months of the year.

11. The Isle of Man has the oldest continuous Parliament dating back to 979, Tynwald, having an upper 11 member upper chamber, the legislative Council and 24 member lower chamber, the House of Keys. Additionally there are 24 local authorities (town, village and parish commissioners) on the Island. The Service operates in an environment of public and political scrutiny, accountability and transparency.

Part 1: Strategic Management

Key Findings

- Local challenges affecting the Service include financial constraint and the restriction of the overall Government head count which can inhibit the development of the Service, especially in the “backroom” areas of operational support and administration.
- The CFO and DCFO have had a determined plan to improve the culture of the Service and to direct limited expenditure to the front end of the Service in terms of operational service delivery, fire safety legislation and community fire safety. They are to be commended for their progress in these areas.
- The Service’s Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is lacking some basic stages that are necessary in order to understand what resources, and the location of these resources, are required. The basic steps are quite simply to utilise a recognised methodology and toolkit to quantify and identify the risk on the Island. Thereafter consideration should be given to the reduction of the risk and options provided for implementation to the Fire and Rescue Authority.
- There is no strategic plan for the Service covering the next 10 year period.
- It will be vital to ensure that in developing a strategic plan the many strengths that the Service has, e.g. flexibility, high morale etc., is not weakened or lost.
- There may be an opportunity to consider whether the Government’s Civil Defence Unit (CDU), which also sits within the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), would be suitable for an amalgamation between the Services. This could be considered at an early stage whilst a strategic development plan is considered.
- The strategy for the vehicle replacement programme for the Service is to be commended. It is a clear demonstration of the Department and the Service working together.

Strategic Management contd

12. The Service has a staffing level of 55 Wholetime personnel and 110 Retained based at one wholetime station, six retained and a headquarters housing the Fire Safety Department, management and administrative function. The Service responds to approximately 2,000 emergency calls per annum of which over half are false alarms caused by defective automatic fire detection system. The Operations Department is based at Douglas fire station, which is also responsible for communication, training, transport and the procurement functions of the Service.

13. In support of the uniformed establishment there are six civilian staff, four of whom are Isle of Man Government civil servants, based at headquarters, an administrative officer in a finance role for salaries and payments to creditors, a Computer Aided Drawing (CAD) operator, principally in support of fire safety plan drawing and two secretaries in support of the administrative function for the Fire Safety Department.

14. Two vehicle technicians, employed on public sector Whitley Council conditions are based in the Transport Department at Douglas fire station. In addition to covering an on call rota for vehicle repairs both these members of staff are also retained firefighters. The establishment of the Service is subject to the Isle of Man Government capping on the public sector head count and any increase requires the approval of the Council of Ministers (COMIN).

15. The Service broadly operates under two functions, operations department and fire safety, which report to the Service management and senior management teams.

Ops Department	Fire Safety Department
DO	DO
ADO	ADO
Training	Statutory Inspections; Agency Inspections on behalf of other Government Departments ie Residential Care Homes, Nursery Schools etc
Transport	CFS
Procurement	Event Safety
Health & Safety	Goodwill Advice
Communications	
Ops Procedures	
Stn Commander	
Watch Officers	
Retained Officers	

Strategic Management contd

16. The wholetime station at Douglas operates on the 2-2-4 duty system with the additional flexibility of all wholetime personnel performing retained commitment on the third and fourth rota days and in between the day and night shift. Nine Retained personnel support the wholetime establishment at Douglas.
17. The Retained Duty System (RDS) commits personnel to providing 120 hours cover per week, the ethos being to provide a 48 hour break from duty. The provision of 48 hours free from duty is fragmented to cover unavailability due to commitments within primary employment. This flexibility has not, to date, caused undue concern due to the current levels of activity on retained stations.
18. Seven junior officers with a variety of specific service support references are conditioned to the nine day fortnight with flexibility on the allocation of rota days, with evening and weekend working being performed as required, these officers also have a retained duty commitment.
19. The flexible duty system operates on a 4 week rota and covers the cadre of staff from Station Officer, ADO and Divisional Officer to maintain the operational command function.
20. The CFO and DCFO cover the Principal Officer availability on a 2 week rota. They also offer mentoring support to officers under development, fire investigation and the political interface on operational incidents.
21. The organisational structure was traditionally hierarchical but has migrated to a horizontal structure devolving management responsibility and decision making and improving communication channels throughout the Service.
22. The CFO launched a rebranding and reorganisation exercise encompassing the CFOA endorsed philosophy of Prevention Protection and Response. The drivers for change, planning and priority setting have been the overarching philosophy of community safety and social well being.
23. The CFO as an autonomous head of division is responsible for the strategic direction and goal setting of his organisation. Cognisance is taken of political and departmental objectives and societal trends when setting such strategy. It is usual for the setting of such strategy to have the support of the political members rather than they be directly involved in the formulation from the outset.
24. As a division of the Isle of Man Government, the Service has also been cognisant of identifying local conditions, trends and operational statistics from their own and other services, societal behaviour and government policy and expectation.
25. The Service monitors developments in the UK Fire and Rescue Services and, through CFOA, the CLG and regional Service partners they are kept informed of initiatives.

Strategic Management contd

26. The Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer have had a determined plan to improve the culture of the Service and to direct allocated budget to the front end of the Service in terms of operational service delivery, fire safety legislation and community fire safety. They are to be commended for their progress in these areas. The equipment and fleet that the Service use is now on a strategic rolling replacement programme and the resources for fire safety legislation coupled with community fire safety are at an appropriate level.

27. However, due to the small number of staff in the Service, and current revenue budget allocations, has meant that an unusually high percentage of strategic managers' time has by necessity been generally concentrated on the day to day issues and this has been at the expense of strategic planning for the Service. There has also been a shortfall due to staff illness and absences of a very small, but critical group of support staff. There are only 6 support staff across the Service, 2 of whom are in the workshops maintenance department and also provide Retained Duty System (RDS) cover which is extremely effective and value for money.

28. Of the remaining 4 support staff, regrettably long-term illness and absence has affected the continuity and stability of the team and this has meant that the Chief Fire Officer and the Senior Management Team are involved in tasks that it would not normally be expected to find such managers engaging in. However, this has been necessary and once again all staff across the organisation have to be commended for assisting and ensuring that the Island and its community continue to receive a first class service.

29. The CFO, reporting to the Fire Authority (Department of Home Affairs) (DHA)) has produced an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2006-2010 and many elements of the IRMP are appropriate to the progress that the Service needs to make during that period of time. However, the IRMP currently does not comprise of the recognised 4 stage development process, which is seen as being fundamental to ensuring outcomes that will drive the IRMP process are robust, measured and validated. These basic steps are quite simply to utilise a recognised methodology and toolkit to quantify and identify the risk on the Island. Once this is completed the Fire Authority should be provided with a suite of options to reduce the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

30. All costings should be applied and an implementation plan should be formulated with an agreed introduction period. This, of course, should be kept under constant review. At present the IRMP for the Service does not have these stages and without an evidential based approach to Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP), the present situation may always be open to question and would not allow the Fire Authority to have a plan for implementation for major elements of infrastructure for the Service, e.g. property, equipment, appliances, staff turnover etc.

Strategic Management contd

31. The Service and the Authority do not have a Strategic Development Plan. Once an evidence-based Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is developed, it should form a major part of the Strategic Development Plan. However, it will be vital to ensure that in developing the plan the many strengths that the Service has, e.g. flexibility, high morale etc., is not weakened or lost.

The Chief and Deputy Chief Fire Officer are to be commended for having brought the Service to where it is today, where morale is high, and the maturity of staff at all levels is noticeable.

32. A further aspect of strategic management and leadership in the Service is the engagement that has been necessary of the Chief Fire Officer and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer at a level that would not normally be found elsewhere. While appreciating that the culture of the Isle of Man cannot simply be compared to nearby UK Services, it is nevertheless necessary to take stock and allow the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy and other senior managers to undertake further continuous professional development. They are to be commended for having brought the Service to where it is today, where morale is high, and the maturity of staff at all levels is noticeable. Without doubt, there are some managers across the Service who demonstrate great potential to progress in future years, however, at this stage it is necessary that continuous professional development for the positions of Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer are identified and implemented. Equally this should be cascaded to senior managers in the Service for future succession planning.

33. The strategic management of the Service becomes more of a challenge when one considers the employment laws on the Island and the Government strategy of "Head Count" which in practice means that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to increase numbers of staff. This is not necessarily a negative and can sometimes be a driver for greater initiatives across the Service.

The strategy for the vehicle replacement programme for the Service is a clear demonstration of the Department and the Service working together and is to be commended.

34. If a strategic plan was in place for the Service it would identify opportunities for shared common services, or even amalgamated services. In particular, as a first step, there may be an opportunity to consider whether the Government's Emergency Planning Unit (EPU), which also sits within the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), would be suitable for an amalgamation between the Services. This integration would bring many benefits to the communities on the Island and also in terms of the diversity of the management in both of these units, including the sharing of resources. This could be considered at an early stage whilst a strategic development plan is considered.

Strategic Management contd

35. In discussions with the CFO it became evident that the retirement of the current DCFO is expected to take place in June 2007. The Fire and Rescue Authority have an opportunity to consider how they will fill this vacancy with the above in mind. It will be difficult for the Service to move to the next strategic level while the CFO and whoever the new Deputy Chief may be, together with their senior managers, are engaged in activities out of necessity which prevent them from having strategic development time and the opportunities to apply more strategic vision to the Service.

36. The strategy for the vehicle replacement programme for the Service is a clear demonstration of the Department and the Service working together and is to be commended as this has resulted in a rolling programme of vehicle replacement and consequently the fleet is beginning to reach a very good standard and is certainly fit for purpose. However a strategic evaluation may offer the opportunity to review the current capacity and requirements of both the operational and reserve fleet.

37. The opportunity, within a future strategic development plan referred to above, should be taken to apply the same business planning to other essential areas of the Service. In particular, the number of premises which are no longer fit for purpose in terms of access for disabled persons, dignified facilities for staff etc. should form part of the plan. The seven premises in the ownership of the Service are utilitarian in nature, predominantly constructed in the 1960's and now require substantial investment to maintain. Demographic changes within local communities invariably means that fire stations are in historic locations rather than strategically positioned in relation to risk. However, overall there is reason to be confident that the Department, working in conjunction with the Service in a similar manner to that applied to the vehicle replacement programme, will contribute to the overall strategic development plan to provide longer term sustainability.

38. The Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service (IOMFRS) is a Division of the IOM Government Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and therefore maintained wholly by central government rather than being a local authority service. The strength of this structure is that principal management of the Service are able to contribute to the wider issues of community safety and well being with the Island's Department of Home Affairs.

The Fire and Rescue Service on the Isle of Man has a unique position in its structure and governance which provides opportunity for innovation.

39. There is currently no constituted Fire and Rescue Authority. The Department's Chief Executive Officer, Director of Finance and Research, and Director of Administration and Legislation, all of whom are permanent civil servants, meet monthly with the Minister for Home Affairs and the two political members appointed to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). This is known as 'The Department meeting' and heads of Division attend to report on their performance. This group is therefore deemed to act as the 'Fire and Rescue Authority'.

Strategic Management contd

A number of areas identified for change in the modernisation agenda are already being performed on the Island out of necessity to maximise the Service's limited resources, such as overtime working, mixed crewing and wholetime/retained duties.

40. Following the general election in November 2006 and the appointment of a new Minister of Home Affairs and two political members to the Department, delegated responsibility has now been conferred by the Minister upon Mr G H Waft, MLC (Legislative Council) to oversee the Fire and Rescue Service division and to act as Deputy Minister for Home Affairs. It is envisaged that this arrangement may lead to the establishment of a Fire and Rescue Authority on a more formal footing than before.

41. The Fire and Rescue Service on the Isle of Man has a unique position in its structure and governance which provides opportunity for innovation. One challenge is maintaining a parity of service delivery with their UK colleagues. However, the Service is not statutorily bound to encompass the modernisation agenda in its entirety. A number of areas identified for change in the modernisation agenda are already being performed on the Island out of necessity to maximise the Service's limited resources, such as overtime working, mixed crewing and wholetime/retained duties.

42. Local challenges affecting the Service include financial constraint and the restriction of the overall Government 'head count' which can be a challenge to the development of the Service, especially in the areas of operational support and administration.

43. Legislative reform is a priority to replace the existing Fire Services Act 1984 with a Fire and Rescue Service Act encompassing the changes in statutory responsibility reflected in the 2004 UK Act. This is currently on the Department's legislative programme and is proposed to commence in December 2007. Similarly the Service is reviewing its current fire safety legislation and is considering the options having examined the UK Regulatory Reform route and the Scottish model.

44. It is anticipated that in conjunction with the reform of the 1984 Fire Services Act the Fire Services Discipline Regulations 2001 will be repealed and conditions of service altered to align the disciplinary process in line with established procedures throughout the Isle of Man Government.

Strategic Management contd

45. As a division of central government, the Service works to the standards set out in the Isle of Man Government Corporate Governance Strategy. This system provides a reporting structure in the following areas:

- Performance management;
- Structures and processes;
- Risk management and Internal control;
- Standards of conduct; and
- Community focus

46. The Service operates within the framework of the following legislation:

- Fire Services Act 1984
- Fire Precautions Act 1975
- Fire Precautions (Nursing Homes) Order 1983
- Fire Precautions (Flats) Regulations 1996
- Fire Precautions (Hotel and Boarding Houses) Order 1997
- Fire Precautions (Entertainment Premises) Regulations 1997
- Fire Precautions (Licensed Premises) Regulations 1997
- Fire Precautions (Fixed Firefighting Systems) Regulations 1999
- Fire Services (Discipline) Regulations 2001

47. There is a monthly Department meeting where all Division Heads report directly to the Minister, Department Political Members, and permanent Civil Servants. Additionally there is a monthly Division Heads meeting with the Chief Executive (CEO) Director of Finance and Research (DFR) and the Director of Administration and Legislation (DAL).

48. The CFO/DCFO meet monthly with the Chief Executive Officer of Department of Home Affairs (DHA) for an informal update meeting. Similarly the Deputy Chief Fire Officer meets monthly with the Director of Finance and Research (DFR) for financial reporting, planning and monitoring. This level of interface is constructive and provides a Strategic, Tactical and Operational reporting discussion and decision making forum. As a division of the Department, the Service follow the DHA complaints procedure, which provides a common format for complaint handling.

Strategic Management cont

The Department reports annually to the Chief Secretary's office so that all complaints across government are collated centrally.

The Inspectorate met with a number of trade union officials and they agreed that industrial relations across the Service were generally good.

49. The opportunity was taken during the inspection period to meet with the predominant trade union, the Transport and General Workers' Union. The Inspectorate met with a number of trade union officials and they agreed that industrial relations across the Service were generally good. However, they were frustrated that recently they felt that meetings scheduled with the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) for various reasons had had to be deferred or delayed. This was reported later during the inspection process to the Department who were already aware of this. It is due to work pressures. The Department hope to get the scheduled meetings back on track in the near future.

50. The 2007 Isle of Man budget, released on Tuesday 20 March 2007 by the Treasury Minister, has reinforced the stance on public sector spending and employee head count. It is a challenge within this environment to implement effective procedural policies without support mechanisms being available. The resulting detrimental effect being that senior managers in strategic roles have little or no administration or managerial support staff to assist them.

51. There is no 'Freedom of Information Act' in the Isle of Man. However, the Service follows the Chief Minister's policy on release of government information.

52. The Service's Budget amounts to £4.7M annually which, after salary costs, leaves a revenue expenditure of approx £642K.

53. By statute, Government has to budget for a surplus and may not undertake any borrowing to fund day to day revenue funded activities. The budget and business planning process starts circa May of each year and results in the budget in Tynwald (usually in February of each year). Resource allocation (revenue, capital and personnel) is ultimately decided by the Council of Ministers, taking into account Government priorities and issues raised by Departments. Surpluses arising each year are either passed to reserves or used as "funds" for specific purposes (e.g. Pensions, Housing, General Development, Marketing etc).

54. The present financial systems are being replaced with one corporate system for the whole of Government – Microsoft Axapta. The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) has been used as a pilot for the introduction of Axapta. Due to difficulties encountered arising from the migration to a new software programme the Service are currently experiencing problems in management reporting and interrogation of financial codes, which they are working through with the assistance of the Director of Finance and his central service staff.

Strategic Management contd

55. The Head of Operations and Head of Fire Safety report directly on their Department's performance against targets at the monthly Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting. The performance management is therefore by peer review, and overall supervision by the principal management. Correlation between operational activity and fire safety is made and it is possible to identify strategic changes aligned to changing risk and identified community trends.

Part 2: Fire prevention and risk management

Key Findings

- The external consultation exercise on the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) was extremely beneficial. The document was accessed on the website over 800 times. This led to the establishment of a Community Safety Partnership with one of the largest local authorities on the Island and Membership of the Eastern District Neighbourhood Partnership.
- A highly effective multi agency Road Traffic Collision (RTC) reduction campaign has led to a 25% reduction in fatalities on Manx roads and reduced accident figures in the 16–24 age group.
- The foundation for the Service's IRMP is built upon the experience and knowledge of the Chief Fire Officer and his team. This is not necessarily a weakness, but it is most unusual.

Fire Prevention and Risk Management contd

56. A draft IRMP was circulated for internal consultation with all personnel being invited to contribute and take ownership. This plan was then issued for external consultation throughout all Government departments, all elected members of parliament and local authorities, key stakeholders in the public and private sector, such as service chiefs of other emergency services, charities, and support groups.

57. During the external consultation process the document was accessed on the website over 800 times. The consultation process was extremely beneficial in that it directly led to the establishment of a community safety partnership with one of the largest local authorities on the island and membership of the eastern district neighbourhood partnership. It is intended to present a hard copy individually to every member of the Service.

58. An Integrated Risk management Plan (IRMP) has been produced together with a Business Plan outlining strategic objectives to 2010. The IRMP is supported by an Annual Action Plan which is delivered, monitored and reported upon as part of the Senior Management Team function.

59. Although not statutorily bound to do so, the Chief Fire Officer has taken the opportunity to review service delivery and carry out a revised assessment of risk as a four year strategic plan. However, at present there is no risk identification in place.

The Service has excellent relationships with the Office of Fair Trading, Health and Safety and the Office of Environmental Health where joint initiatives, inspections and campaigns are delivered to target groups.

60. The foundation for the Service's IRMP is built upon the experience and knowledge of the Chief Fire Officer and his team. This is not necessarily a weakness, but it is most unusual. Across the UK, IRMPs' are built upon an evidence-based foundation using a methodology of risk assessment of:

- life risk from fire;
- road traffic collisions; and
- other emergencies.
- Service resilience.

61. This methodology helps to inform the Chief Fire Officer's professional judgement. This in turn will lead to evidence-based options for service delivery, i.e. prevention, intervention and personnel. The evidence-based IRMP will then inform a major element of the Strategic Development Plan referred to earlier in this report which, at present, does not exist. In order to undertake the review of risk on the Island, it may be necessary to slow down or defer some other areas of work over a 12 month period in order to create an IRMP team. This may also require a small capital sum for a recognised software package.

Fire Prevention and Risk Management contd

62. The Service has excellent relationships with the Office of Fair Trading, Health and Safety and the Office of Environmental Health where joint initiatives, inspections and campaigns are delivered to target groups.

63. The Service has an RTC reduction campaign involving the Police, Ambulance and the Department of transport, (both road safety and vehicle examiners). The Service has also partnered with the Institute of Advanced Motorists in their 'Driven by Safety' campaign.

64. The CFO is developing a partnership with Police Community Volunteers in areas such as home fire safety checks and customer satisfaction questionnaires. The strength of these partnerships is effective not only in community education and incident reduction but also develops relationships with like minded safety professionals.

65. The Service works in partnership with the education department which has 65 education department premises which includes 36 Primary and 6 Secondary schools. An electrical engineer is employed by the department to constantly monitor and review all activities involving fire alarm and fire related activities at educational premises. There is a meeting with the Service on a 3 monthly programme to review and agree actions plans to reduce incidents involving unwanted AFA's based on the activity data provided by the Service. It is recognised that there has been an increase in activity in some premises. However, the department is working with the Service to identify problem areas and provide an appropriate solution to these unwanted alarm activities.

66. The Department consult closely with the Service on a wide variety of issues such as sprinkler installation in department premises and other general fire prevention and protection activities.

67. The Emergency Planning Department on the Island are also responsible for the management of Civil Defence volunteers, whose role is to assist the primary blue light services and other agencies at incidents or events, such as the TT, the Hill search team, they provide communications support with additional Tetra Radios as well as a host of additional functions including emergency catering, they also act as a link with other government departments to draw together equipment and specialist resources to support multi-agency incidents. The relationship with the Service is very good and the Service has provided Civil Defence personnel with training on a number of activities, including working at or near water.

68. An events safety group has been established to provide a co-ordinated and strategic direction on the necessary safety systems and practices for those wishing to run various events on the island. Some issues were raised regarding the future role of this group and its current remit may require to be reviewed.

Fire Prevention and Risk Management contd

69. Business continuity plans for the IOM are led by the Emergency Planning Department and it was identified during the inspection that this was an area which requires some work by a number of organisations including the fire and rescue service.

70. The competing priorities faced by the Service make it difficult to commit the necessary resources to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment of the underpinning and crosscutting activities that are required to develop and maintain robust multi agency emergency plans.

71. The IOM Ambulance Service is involved in a number of initiatives with the Service. These include;

- The joint Command and Control Centre which is a tripartite arrangement including the Police. This has now been in operation for 3 years. Regular meetings take place between all services to review arrangements and discuss issues and consequently to agree on any actions deemed necessary.
- A memorandum of understanding (MOU) on first responder provision by the Service.
- Provision of first aid training to Service personnel.
- An MOU on patient transfer and removal.
- All 3 Services are currently working closely with other partners on the Road Safety road shows.
- A quality DVD product has also been jointly developed and is issued to all visitors to the island showing emergency procedures.

An effective RTC reduction campaign has led to a 25% reduction in fatalities on Manx roads and reduced accident figures in the 16 – 24 age group.

72. It was indicated during the inspection, that plans were in place for the Ambulance service to share the current Douglas Fire Station site. However, due to a number of external factors, this has not progressed. On the wider sharing of sites, the joint services have a number of local ad-hoc initiatives in place, such as ambulances being able to make use of fire station facilities. However, there is no strategic plan or direction to take this forward and establish joint facilities on the island.

73. The Service works closely with central government and local authority partners to enhance community safety and education, most notably education, police and transport where an effective RTC reduction campaign has led to a 25% reduction in fatalities on Manx roads and reduced accident figures in the 16 –24 age group.

Fire Prevention and Risk Management contd

74. A process of developing a risk-based approach commenced operationally with the migration from the Service's own Service control room to the Emergency Services Joint Control Room (ESJCR) when the former generic standards of fire cover were replaced by an operational assessment of particular risks with over 500 specific attendances appropriate to risk being written in to the mobilising system.

75. Strategic high risk premises were identified and the Service worked closely with the public and private sector to protect the island's infrastructure and built environment with enhancing passive and active fire safety measure within such premises as the Prison, Hospital, Airport, Education Premises and the Island's Petroleum and Gas Depots.

Part 3: Workforce Management

Key findings

- While Human Resource Management rests with the DCO and Head of Operations, the broad remit of these positions do hinder the progression of formal policy and procedures which have been identified in the Service's business plan submission for an HR professional person.
- Out of necessity, the flexibility of the workforce in the Service is exceptional and perhaps unique when compared to the overall United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Services.
- The flexible working, and integration of the Retained Duty System personnel, while being commended, is not at present supported by up-to-date contracts for all employees.
- Due to retirement, the Service will lose a considerable percentage of the workforce over the next few years and it is essential that workforce and succession planning is considered when faced with both this challenge/opportunity.
- Every effort should be made to secure continuous professional development (CPD) in the form of training courses, attendance at seminars and events etc. for both principal officers and senior management of the Service.
- When considering all options for service delivery, which will be an outcome of the evidence-based IRMP, even greater use of RDS staff should be a major consideration.
- The implementation of IPDS has required innovation in order for IPDS to fit the local island model, rather than the Service fitting the UK IPDS model. The Service continues to support the introduction and continuation of a personal development within the UK National IPDS strategy as befits the unique situation in the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service.
- The Service should carryout a full training needs analysis to support the introduction of the additional capabilities into the Service against the existing additional activities presently being delivered by operational staff at Douglas.
- There are a number of premises which are no longer fit for purpose in terms of access for disabled persons, dignified facilities for staff etc. This needs to be addressed as part of the strategic plan.
- While the Service has actively campaigned to diversify its workforce it currently has only two female firefighters, both within the retained service.

Key Findings - Workforce Management contd

- To date the Service and the Department have done little to encourage ethnic minorities to consider applying for positions as in their view the Island's population mix has few ethnic minority groups.
- The current wholetime/retained duty system is not gender friendly. The Service could offer wholetime only contracts to women (or indeed to men also) and employ more retained personnel to take emergency cover. This should not incur significant expense and the issue of 'head count' need not be affected.
- Further development of diversity and equality should be even more achievable given the present Service culture which is welcoming, respectful and mature.

Workforce Management contd

76. The lack of an evidence-based IRMP and a Strategic Plan does have the potential to perpetuate “custom and practice” in the way that the Service is delivered. The strength of this practice is that experience and knowledge of the Service comes to the fore. However, the weakness is that innovation and a diverse range of ideas for delivering the service is not always considered or encouraged.

77. The wholetime service is operated through a small number of highly dedicated staff who appear to be averaging 84 hours per week availability to the Service (This, in some cases, is a minimum). Whilst this may appear commendable and certainly provides a good service to the community, it does little for work life balance. Therefore, once an evidence-based IRMP is complete and informs the Strategic Development Plan, consideration should be given to a range of service delivery options.

78. Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel are integrated into the Service and are highly valued by the Chief Fire Officer, his team and the Fire and Rescue Service Authority. However, there is evidence that some RDS staff wish to contribute even more to the Service. These personnel are capable of providing more community fire safety work. They also wish to become involved with hill search and rescue teams etc. It is recognised that the Service has to operate to within its allocated reserve budget. However, when considering all options for service delivery, which will be an outcome of the evidence-based IRMP, the greater use of RDS staff should be a major consideration.

79. Working with the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), the Service are currently revising contracts of employment and conditions of service for personnel together with the redevelopment of personal records identified within the Treasury internal audit report.

The flexibility of the workforce in the Service is exceptional and perhaps unique when compared to the overall UK Fire and Rescue Services.

80. Whilst Human Resource Management rests with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Head of Operations, the broad remit of these positions do hinder the progression of formal policy and procedures which have been identified in the Service’s business plan submission for access to an HR professional person.

81. Out of necessity, the flexibility of the workforce in the Service is exceptional and perhaps unique when compared to the overall UK Fire and Rescue Services. Once again, out of necessity, work patterns across the Service are varied, variable and extremely flexible. This occurred long before the recent reform agenda for the UK Fire and Rescue Service where integration of wholetime, retained duty staff, more flexible working patterns etc. are being encouraged at present. The Service has used this approach for a number of years and in many areas is a model to the UK Fire and Rescue Service. However, challenges for the future are whether this flexible working can be sustained and whether the great demands placed upon staff can be maintained. A balance has to be struck between commitment to work and work life balance. The Chief Fire Officer and his team are aware of this and

Workforce Management contd

constantly keep it under consideration. Once again this is an area that the Strategic Development Plan previously referred to should address.

82. The flexible working, and integration of the Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel, while being commended, is not at present supported by up-to-date contracts for all employees (see paragraph 76). The Service is aware of this but, due to a lack of expertise in this area, has not been able to address the issue. Discussions took place on how this may be progressed once the Strategic Development Plan is in place for the Service. It would be wasteful to undertake this work ahead of the production of the Strategic Development Plan. However, it should be considered as a priority thereafter.

With the appointment of a new Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer in April 2004 there has been a new approach to openness, transparency, accessibility and accountability in the Service's interaction with the workforce at all levels throughout the organisation. Morale tends to be high.

83. Workforce planning has largely been determined from the needs to provide cover across the Island from the small workforce of whole time staff and Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel. Once again, this is driven by the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which has not relied upon an evidence based system of assessing and reducing risk. Once such an IRMP and Strategic Development Plan is available to the Service, based on evidence and risk reduction, it will better inform the senior management of the Service in terms of workforce planning. In particular, due to retirement, the Service will lose a considerable percentage of the workforce over the next few years and it is essential that workforce and succession planning is considered when faced with both this challenge/opportunity.

84. The Service intends to formalise its HR strategy using the CFOA best practice model for the Fire and Rescue Service and Isle of Man Government generic and specific procedures.

85. With the appointment of a new Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer in April 2004 there has been a new approach to openness, transparency, accessibility and accountability in the Service's interaction with the workforce at all levels throughout the organisation. Morale tends to be high.

86. The Service, in conjunction with the Department of Home Affairs, runs an Occupational Health and Welfare Scheme which includes both physical and mental health and wellbeing. All staff within DHA have recently completed an independent online stress survey and the results are currently being fed into the management system.

87. All personnel have access to counselling by confidential self referral and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer meets bi monthly with the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) welfare officer to discuss both organisational outcomes and any specific personal issues that arise.

Workforce Management contd

88. Absence levels within the uniformed establishment averaged 3.6 days in 2006. Absence within the support staff has recorded an unprecedented high due to serious illness and a long term chronic condition. This situation is being managed under civil service regulations.

89. There are a total of 25 Emergency Services Joint Control Room (ESJCR) staff. Currently two operators have had long sickness absences for specific reasons. The average loss due to sickness/absence within the ESJCR is 8.64 days inclusive of all operators.

An inherent feature of the Service is that all personnel are multi-functional and multi-skilled which develops their potential within the organisation.

90. The UK NJC Grey Book Conditions of Service have been applied to the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service since 1983. Personnel are now predominantly represented by the TGWU, and are progressing the migration from NJC to a local conditions of service. The first phase of this commenced in 2003 with Local Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) agreements on pay and annual leave being negotiated and implemented. The Service is in a transitional period to replace remaining areas of UK NJC Grey Book that are still in force by a complete Isle of Man Scheme of Conditions of Service.

91. The alterations to the Firefighters Pension Scheme in the UK was considered by the Isle of Man Government personnel office, and HM Attorney General's Chambers. Due to the legislative route with which the Firefighters pension scheme was introduced into the Isle of Man, the Attorney General has advised that the current scheme should remain.

92. An inherent feature of the Service is that all personnel are multi-functional and multi-skilled which develops their potential within the organisation. Many specialist functions are skill based rather than rank based, for example a Firefighter has worked alongside a Police Chief Inspector on the joint control room project for eighteen months. In other areas for example junior officers are also responsible for key references such as procurement and stores etc, and whilst this is a further example of utilising operational staff in specialist roles, it does however raise issues, whether the level of expectation and consequent responsibility placed on such staff is appropriate and commensurate with Best Value.

93. The Service rotates personnel on short term secondments as developmental opportunities. Many operational Firefighters, Leading Firefighters and Sub-Officers have instructional references beyond what would normally be found in similar UK FRS.

94. The implementation of Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) requires innovation in order for IPDS to fit the local Island model, rather than the Service fitting the UK IPDS model. The Service continues to support the introduction and continuation of a personal development within the UK National IPDS strategy as befits the unique situation in the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service.

Workforce Management contd

95. The Service has taken a conscious decision not to follow the UK lead on changing from a rank based structure to a role based system. However, this will be kept under review.

96. Training for core skills is controlled by each station rather than a centrally directed programme so that Station Officers can identify training needs for individuals and teams at that level. The Station inspection programme encompasses training to help with identifying the Service's training needs analysis.

97. Presently the Service is looking to rollout a number of additional operational capabilities, such as Mass decontamination and Urban Search and Rescue. This will clearly add to the workload of staff particularly at Douglas, and it should therefore be a priority for the Service to undertake a full training needs analysis of all activities carried out by operational staff and to identify and importantly prioritise core activities and the consequent skills and competencies required.

98. A Junior Officer Development Programme is provided for potential Junior Officers at a local level prior to promotion, with the supervision of drills, operational command with simulated fireground incidents and table top exercise together with administration and legislation. This Junior Officer Development is extended to those regularly riding as acting OIC's of an appliance when performing retained duties.

99. All officers, regardless of duty system, undergo the same selection procedure for promotion. The Personal Qualities and Attributes contained within the national guidance are used to design and develop questions for interviews.

100. Tabletop exercises are designed and developed to ensure that personnel seeking promotion are assessed against the risk critical operational areas up to the rank of Station Officer. Personnel up to Sub-Officer once promoted are given development to the rank above to allow them to act up in that role, and to eventually be promoted already in possession of the necessary skills and knowledge.

101. Training records that are IPDS compliant are being rolled out, together with Learn-Pro, a system of e-learning being available to staff with development needs, together with the PDR-Pro recording system.

102. Accessibility to all locally run courses is open to all personnel regardless of duty system dependant on relevance. The Service is securing a VECTOR Command leasing arrangement with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) and a similar arrangement is being evaluated for incident command training using the MINERVA Incident Command training system.

103. The Service's Training strategy encompasses the ethos of IPDS. A number of firefighters have already completed crew command courses as a development opportunity but also to reflect the retained element of their role where they may be called upon to act as OIC of an appliance.

Workforce Management contd

104. The Service is undertaking IPDS compliant training with the Fire Service College and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service training centre.

105. Every effort should be made to secure Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in the form of training courses, attendance at seminars and events etc. for both principal officers and senior management of the Service.

106. The Service has not implemented Assessment and Development Centres due to a lack of financial and personnel resources. However, the Service informally recognise and assess potential in its personnel on a continuous basis aligning developmental opportunities with such potential as they arise.

The Service has had mixed crewing since 1983. Retained personnel can also make up crewing on a wholetime crew in certain circumstances.

107. The Service continues to submit a business case annually for an additional Station Officer in training to progress the implementation of IPDS onto a more formal footing.

Firefighters with instructional references will run training courses outside of their operational shifts.

108. With a limited establishment of wholetime and retained personnel, the Service maximises flexible working arrangements to maintain operational response, training events, and essential maintenance and support functions. Wholetime personnel carry out retained duties. The Service has had mixed crewing since 1983. Retained personnel can also make up crewing on a wholetime crew in certain circumstances. Regular overtime is worked and fire safety staff can be seconded onto operational duties at certain times.

109. Firefighters with instructional references will run training courses outside of their operational shifts. To maintain this flexibility and operational availability the Service has retained the 2-2-4 duty system as this maximises availability of personnel in between the day and night shifts.

110. Although there is only limited equality, disability or diversity legislation currently adopted by the Manx Government, the Service encompasses the ethos of equality and fairness and dignity in the workplace in line with other departments of government. New equality legislation is about to be introduced. However, the lack of access to a professional HR person with Fire and Rescue Service experience will have an impact in regard to any policy documents that have to be created flowing from this change in legislation.

111. A legislative feature of the Isle of Man is the Control of Employment Act 1975 which requires persons who are not classified as Manx workers to have a valid work permit before being able to take up employment. While the Service has actively campaigned to diversify its workforce it currently has only two female firefighters, both within the retained service.

Workforce Management contd

112. The Service is undoubtedly male gender orientated. It was noted during the inspection that all personnel continually used inappropriate gender specific terminology. Although this may seem a trivial matter, when attempting to address the imbalance of gender within the Service, the use of such language will not encourage women to apply.

113. To date the Service and the Department have done little to encourage ethnic minorities to consider applying for positions as in their view the Island's population mix has few ethnic minority groups.

114. The current wholetime/retained duty system is not gender friendly. The Service may wish to consider offering wholetime only contracts to women (or indeed to men also) to encourage and attract a more diverse workforce. This would require employment of more retained personnel at Douglas to take emergency cover. This should not incur significant expense and the issue of 'head count' need not be affected.

115. There are a number of premises which are no longer fit for purpose in terms of access for disabled persons, dignified facilities for staff etc. This should be addressed as part of the strategic plan.

116. Further development of diversity and equality should be even more achievable given the present Service culture which is welcoming, respectful and mature.

Part 4: Operational Management

Key findings

- A challenge to the development of new dimension procedures is that there are no plans to replace the 1936 Emergency Powers Act with a Civil Contingencies Act. The Service is currently evaluating the Northern Ireland civil contingency framework as a possible model for implementation.
- The Operational Support Department is predominantly responsible for the formulation of policy and procedures and while progress has been made with a six month secondment of a firefighter on junior officer development. However the limited resources available due to the size of the organisation does impede the Service's ability to timeously develop the systems and procedures that are necessary to support both operational practices and the introduction of new equipment.
- There is both a legal requirement and an operational imperative for all fire fighting staff to undergo regular Breathing Apparatus (BA) training and Realistic Fire Fighting which is currently achieved off Island. It is a matter of urgency that the Department consider the provision of an 'on Island' realistic fire training unit (incorporating BA training) which, if approved, would compliment any outcome of a strategic review.
- The Service and its partners would benefit from a series of properly focused exercises and more joint training to support the development of a fully integrated decontamination capability as part of the Islands wider resilience arrangements.

Operational Management contd

117. In addition to the Service's core functions, along with other additional work, it operates specialist teams for:

Hill Search and Rescue

Line Rescue

Water safety

118. The Service also has a very strong Road Traffic Collision (RTC) capability including dedicated rescue vehicles on retained stations.

119. The Service has undertaken a preliminary review of potential risks within this context and this process is being used to inform and develop an appropriate level of capability and resilience that best meets the needs of the Island. Consequently IOM FRS has not bought into the CLG New Dimension programme. Never the less they are currently developing a credible mass decontamination and enhanced Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability that will support activities at an event on the Island pending the implementation of mutual aid arrangements. The development of a new dimension response capability in mass decontamination and enhanced USAR within an Island context, by building up the Service's existing equipment and financial resources is both an exciting innovative opportunity and a challenge.

120. The Service has as yet not identified an operational need to justify the resources necessary for the purchase, maintenance and training required for a High Volume pumping capability, they have however secured a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service for the deployment of such equipment to the Isle of Man. The water authority has a high volume pumping capability and the Service is developing a partnership with them in this respect.

A CBRN committee has been established and all key players are represented.

121. A hindrance to the development of new dimension procedures is that there are no plans to replace the existing 1936 Emergency Powers Act, which presently does not adequately support or empower the ownership of appropriate planning and resilience arrangements that a modern Civil Contingencies Act encapsulates. The Service is however currently evaluating the Northern Ireland Civil Contingency framework as a possible model that could be used to meet the needs of the Island.

122. A CBRN committee has been established and all key players are represented. Some concerns were raised that the budget for this is held by the Emergency Planning Department and not devolved to the relevant services who may have competing priorities.

123. The Service and its partners would benefit from a series of properly focused exercises and more joint training to support the development of a fully integrated decontamination capability as part of the Islands resilience arrangements.

Operational Management contd

A revised response policy has been implemented to AFA calls.

124. A joint service group is in place which is responsible for the review of existing Major Incident Plans and the development of new contingency plans.

125. A revised response policy has been implemented to AFA calls. With the exception of high risk premises, a one pump attendance is now made. Unwanted calls are managed by advice being given by attending crews and a follow-up visit being made by a fire safety officer where necessary.

126. The highest number of AFA calls originate in Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) and Department of Education (DE) premises. Accordingly, a monthly meeting is held with senior facilities managers from these Government departments to actively reduce the type and frequency of occurrence.

127. Hoax and malicious calls do not present an undue problem to the emergency services as a whole and no formal strategy is in place.

128. A five year strategy is in place for Health and Safety training and the Service continually strive to integrate the ethos of health and safety into the culture of the organisation.

129. Safety training is outsourced to a consultancy and bespoke Service specific training is provided. A Health and Safety specialist with sector competence in Fire and Rescue Service activities was employed to develop and deliver two bespoke courses that would be specific to the needs of the Service.

130. An accredited IOSH course has been developed. Initially named "Managing Safely for the Fire Service" when it was submitted for accreditation it has been renamed 'IOSH Strategic Health and Safety within the Fire and Rescue Service', in order to better reflect the impressive content of the course.

131. Procedures are available on the Service's website for ease of access and safety critical information received via the DCLG/CFOA.

132. The Operational Support Department is predominantly responsible for the formulation of policy and procedures and while progress has been made with a six month secondment of a firefighter on junior officer development, the limited availability of resources due to the size of the organisation does impede progress.

133. With limited 'on Island' resources, the Service has developed mutual aid and collaborative measures to enhance operational effectiveness, resilience, and training. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) and informal arrangements with all of the Service's Northwest neighbours and Northern Ireland.

Operational Management contd

134. Agreement has been reached with Strathclyde Fire and Rescue (SFR) for Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) training, and discussions are ongoing to develop scientific support arrangements. The North West New Dimensions planner has visited the Island and assisted with Northern Ireland and Scotland in the development of support, training and response strategies. A formal agreement is being drafted with the UK Government Decontamination Service who provide access to expertise in the field of recovery and restoration of normality.

135. Although outside the Firebuy network, the Service's Procurement Officer and Service Engineer both collaborate through the CFOA network, most notably with Scotland and the North West region.

136. The Islands Vehicle and Driving Test Centre (VTC) works in support of the Service. They provide a 24hr service through the ESJCR wherever vehicles are involved in an incident. They provide support to the Service if they have questions about the vehicles involved. The Service, in turn, lends support to the VTC. Whenever possible, when vehicles are to be disposed of, the Service has first option on the vehicle/motorcycle to see if it is suitable for training purposes. On average the VTC supply around 10 vehicles per year for practice purposes. The recent 'Roadshow' initiative, set up by the Service, was supported by the VTC. The Service has used the VTC test centre to carry out a demonstration to recover casualties from a mock accident set up.

137. There is both a legal requirement and an operational imperative for all fire fighting staff to undergo regular Breathing Apparatus (BA) training and Realistic Fire Fighting. At present this is achieved through sending staff to Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Training Centre. However, this incurs both expense and time loss in terms of staff being 'off Island'. An outline business case has been submitted to the Department for a realistic fire training provision to be built on the Island either in partnership or Service dedicated. In either scenario the business case is compelling and yet may still be understated. Notwithstanding the high calibre of training received in Lancashire, there is an urgency to consider such a provision. Based on current annual training costs, such a provision would pay for itself in less than five years and would provide much greater availability of staff as they would not be leaving the Island to receive this vital area of training. It is a matter of urgency that the Department consider the provision of a realistic fire training unit (incorporating BA training) which, if approved, would compliment any outcome of a strategic review.

Part 5: Communications

Key findings

- The introduction of the TETRA radio scheme for the Emergency Services and other Isle of Man Government users has proved an invaluable asset in interoperability with nineteen Government departments currently on the radio system. This has proved especially beneficial during major incidents.
- The good progress that has been made with IT across the Service by working in partnership with other Government departments is commendable and should continue. In particular there needs to be consideration given to an Asset Register and Tracking for all resources.
- For some time the Service has looked to introduce vehicle mounted data systems on all fire appliances. Regrettably this has not yet been achieved. It cannot be over-stressed how important, in some of the remote rural areas, this vital application can be to firefighters who are often confronted with difficult decisions to make in the early stages of emergency incidents.
- The Service is in the forefront of innovation in regard to its Emergency Services Joint Control Room. UK Fire and Rescue Services can look to the Isle of Man as an example of how to introduce and operate such a system.

Communications contd.

138. All stations and premises are linked through the Isle of Man Government Intranet by a high speed fibre optic cable. The Service can communicate and store policies and procedures on a shared drive for easy access and are developing IT suites for e- learning and recording of training (PDR Pro) on all stations.

139. Overall, information technology has been somewhat late in arriving within the Service. However, in partnership with the Government's Information Systems Division and the Finance Director of the Home Affairs Department, the Chief Fire Officer and his team have made great advances. Currently there is an intranet system across the Service with several terminals on all sites. This will improve the information flows across the Service and will allow for a new training recording system to be implemented (PDR-Pro).

The good progress that has been made with IT across the Service by working in partnership with other Government departments is commendable and should continue.

140. A number of new software systems have been introduced by the Government through the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and this has had an impact upon the Service. In particular, a problem arose in relation to software systems for the transport section and it is a credit to the DHA and the Director of Finance and his team that this has quickly been resolved without an ongoing detrimental effect to the efficiency and performance of the workshops section. Similarly, a problem arose across the whole of the Government's IT system for a short period of time in relation to the accounting system. Once again a determination by members of the Information Systems Division along with the team of the Director of Finance has ensured that this challenge has been overcome in a very effective manner and there is reason to be confident about this system for the future.

141. The good progress that has been made with IT across the Service by working in partnership with other Government departments is commendable and should continue. In particular there needs to be consideration given to an Asset Register and Tracking for all resources. There are good examples in other Services where this has occurred and discussions with the Chief Fire Officer and the Information Technology Officer has allowed the opportunity for considering these examples.

142. For some time the Service has looked to introduce vehicle mounted data systems on all fire appliances. Regrettably this has not yet been achieved. However, the hardware has been purchased and is in place. It is a matter of the software programme that is required and the ongoing maintenance. It cannot be over-stressed how important, in some of the remote rural areas, this vital application can be to firefighters who are often confronted with difficult decisions to make in the early stages of emergency incidents. The more information that the Service possess and that can be made available to firefighters at the front end of an emergency incident will help to ensure that the incident can be brought under control and concluded in a safer manner for all concerned. The Inspectorate looks forward to the software being introduced along with the maintenance for this equipment in this vital area.

Communications contd

The Service is in the forefront of innovation in regard to its Emergency Services Joint Control Room. UK Fire and Rescue Services can look to the Isle of Man as an example of how to introduce and operate such a system.

143. The Service migrated from running its own control room staffed by operational Firefighters to the Emergency Services Joint Control Room (ESJCR) in April 2004 where fully integrated operators handle all emergency calls irrespective of the service required. The Service gave up 4 wholetime firefighter posts as part of the project. However, the Service is still negotiating to restore the retained element of the posts lost.

The introduction of the TETRA radio scheme for the Emergency Services and other Isle of Man Government users has proved an invaluable asset in interoperability with nineteen Government departments currently on the radio system.

144. It was identified during the inspection that there appeared to be some anomalies in the methodology utilised within the ESJCR to assist staff selecting individual Pre-determined attendances (PDA). From the evidence provided, there appears to be too many variables and specific descriptors included in the suite of options available to ESJCR staff determining the appropriate resources to be deployed and the Service would benefit from a review of this information to make it more user friendly and to reduce any potential impact on resource deployments.

145. The ESJCR is administered by the communications division of the Department of Home Affairs.(DHA) The building encompasses a Gold Command Suite and engineering workshops in addition to the control room and administrative offices.

146. The introduction of the TETRA radio scheme for the Emergency Services and other Isle of Man Government users has proved an invaluable asset in interoperability with nineteen Government departments currently on the radio system. This has proved especially beneficial during major incidents in opening up communication channels where other government services such as transport, highways forestry and civil defence act in a vital support role to the emergency services.

147. An evaluation of the London Assembly report on the London bombings by the director of communications at ESJCR indicated that the joint control and radio infrastructure on the Island already met with the majority of the recommendations in terms of communication.

148. The Service has opportunities for informal meetings on a daily basis with staff. More formal management arrangements are also in place. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer meets weekly with the Head of Operations and Head of Fire Safety, monthly with union representatives and Fire Service National Benevolent Fund representatives, and bi- monthly with the Department of Home Affairs welfare officer.

Communications contd

149. The Brigade Management Team, (all Station Officers and above) meet bi-monthly, with the Senior Management Team meeting monthly. The Head of Operations meets with all retained station officers twice yearly and wholetime station officers visit each retained station weekly. Principal officers attend at least annually but preferably every six months.

150. With differing duty systems and six retained stations, the Service realises that communication is vital and continually seek to enhance communication so that all personnel feel included and valued.

151. The Service continues to develop its website with Fire Service Guidance notes and fire certification application forms, legislation, fire safety advice and other organisational information being freely available.

152. The Service is seeking to enhance a higher return of customer survey questionnaires and are considering the use of police community support volunteers in Community Fire Safety (CFS) activity. Customer feedback is also sought on training, operational response and fire safety delivery.

153. The Service has a monthly newspaper feature and hold seminars on legislation. Communication with partner agencies is networked through the Joint Emergency Services Working Group, Event Safety Advisory Group, Isle of Man Government CBRN Working Group, Road Safety Planning Group and other like forums.

Appendix 1

Summary of strengths, challenges and areas for improvement in the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service

Strategic Management

Strengths	Challenges and areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving culture of the Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> constraint of the overall government head count no strategic plan for the Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vehicle replacement programme for the Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IRMP is lacking of some basic stages

Fire Prevention and Risk Management

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> external consultation exercise on the Services IRMP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IRMP not evidence based. No strategic plan for the Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A highly effective RTC reduction campaign 	

Workforce Management

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> flexibility of the workforce in the Service is exceptional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of access to an HR professional person. No up-to-date contracts for all employees. Lack of workforce and succession planning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of IPDS requires further innovation in order for IPDS to fit the local Island model. Service need to carryout a full training needs analysis for operational staff at Douglas
<p>The Service culture is welcoming, respectful and mature.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a number of premises which are no longer fit for purpose in terms of access for disabled persons, dignified facilities for staff etc. This should be addressed as part of the strategic plan. While the Service has actively campaigned

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
	<p>to diversify its workforce it currently has only two female firefighters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the present time the Service has done little to encourage ethnic minorities to consider applying for positions. • The current wholetime/ retained duty system is not gender friendly.

Management of operational business

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
<p>At every level the workforce gives of their best to serve the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No plans to replace the 1936 Emergency Powers Act with a Civil Contingencies Act. • lack of resources in the operational support department • Lack of an 'on Island' Breathing apparatus and hot fire training facility. • Table top exercises and joint training require to be rolled out involving the Service as part of a wider decontamination capability.

Communications

Strengths	Challenges & areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESJCR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating the effectiveness of communication techniques • Introduction of new communications strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the TETRA radio scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with ethnic minority and hard to reach groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be consideration given to an Asset Register and Asset and Management Tracking
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software for vehicle mounted data systems is urgently required. • Review of information held in mobilising database used to support ESJCR staff select appropriate PDA's