



**HAMPSHIRE  
FIRE AND  
RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

Purpose: Approval

Date: **3 JUNE 2020**

Title: **SPONSORSHIP AND CHARITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY  
POSITION**

Report of Chief Fire Officer

### SUMMARY

1. This report seeks approval to establish a clear policy position on Sponsorship and Charity engagement.
2. This report summarises the current position, risks, benefits and options available to Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) in relation to the governance of sponsorship and charity engagement.
3. HFRS actively engage in charity and sponsorship activities which bring benefit to our communities, staff or the organisation as a whole. However, there is currently no clear policy position or procedures in relation to these activities.
4. As a public organisation, it is essential that our conduct is held to the highest personal and professional standards. Acceptance of money or support in-kind necessitates appropriate levels of scrutiny. To comply with the Authority's financial regulations, control mechanisms are essential to avoid any suggestion of malpractice or financial mismanagement.

### BACKGROUND

5. Sponsorship is defined as money or support in-kind to be paid to an organisation in return for an opportunity for the sponsor. For Hampshire Fire Rescue Authority sponsorship is a means of generating funding from alternative sources that would enable the Service to continue to deliver activities that fall out of scope of the Fire and Rescue Services Act (e.g. prevention initiatives, supporting cadets, open days and events).
6. Charity engagement is defined as an organisation or any of its employees publicly endorsing or supporting any external charity or the activities associated with an external charity.

7. Working in partnership, which includes the acceptance of sponsorship and collaboration with charities, is aligned with the Fire and Rescue National Framework which states that the Service must:
  - a) Achieve value for money
  - b) Manage their budgets and spend money properly and appropriately
  - c) Ensure the efficient and effective use of their resources, pursuing all feasible opportunities to keep costs down while discharging their core duties effectively
8. Seeking additional finance support through appropriate sponsors ensures that the Authority is pursuing all feasible opportunities to reduce costs. Although benefits are clear this approach does come with organisational risks which are outlined in this report.
9. HFRS requires a policy position on sponsorship and charity engagement in order to:
  - a) Safeguard the reputation of HFRA as the governing body of the Service
  - b) Ensure the Service adopts a consistent and professional approach towards the sourcing and governance of sponsorship and charity engagement
  - c) Ensure sponsors or charities do not compromise or bring into question the integrity and reputation of the Service's operations
  - d) Ensure the sponsorship and charity engagement agreements are robust and provide best value for money for the Service as well as offering attractive benefits for the sponsors
  - e) Ensure all sponsorship and charity engagement is transparent with provision for public scrutiny
  - f) Ensure no individual member of the Service seeks any personal benefit from a sponsorship or charity engagement arrangement, either in cash or in kind and to safeguard members of staff
  - g) Ensure there is a clear exit strategy if required, to cease a particular sponsorship or charity.
10. HFRS' current position is that sponsorship and charity engagement take place across the Service on an ad hoc basis. The Code of Conduct states:

*Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a local government activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.*
11. There are currently no procedures or guidance available to staff to support them to conduct this activity within safe parameters. Staff are currently free to approach sponsorship and charity engagement as they personally see fit,

which is a high-risk approach both for the Service and individuals. This leaves HFRS open to both potential reputational and financial risks.

## BENEFITS OF SPONSORSHIP AND CHARITY ENGAGEMENT TO THE SERVICE

12. Association with the Service is likely to be an attractive proposition for potential sponsors and charities. HFRS is respected, trusted and has the ability to communicate effectively with those that live, work and visit the county.
13. Benefits to the Service include:
  - a) The ability to support and further expand our non-legislative prevention activities (eg. prevention initiatives, supporting cadets, open days and events).
  - b) Increased media profile through coverage on the sponsor or charities website and related press activities.
  - c) Greater awareness of the Service as a viable option for sponsorship.
  - d) Access to new resources that will enable the Service to reach its target groups more effectively.
  - e) Provides a more cost-effective way to deliver our current projects and provides scope for new activities.
  - f) The Service are well placed to enable corporate sponsors to meet their corporate social responsibility aims and objectives.
  - g) Association with selected key charities supports HFRS activity, values and behaviours and enhance staff engagement.

## PROPOSAL

14. It is recommended that HFRS should establish a sponsorship and charity engagement policy position, based on the principle that HFRS should only enter into sponsorship or charity arrangements with:
  - a) A sponsor or charity who has similar values, aims and ethos as the Service.
  - b) A sponsor or charity who has an inclusion and equality policy, or if not, accepts the terms and references of the Service's inclusion and equality policy.
  - c) A sponsor or charity whose values, practices or products are not in conflict with any Service policies.
  - d) A sponsor or charity who will not impose or imply conditions that would limit, or appear to limit, the Service's ability to carry out its functions fully and impartially.
  - e) A sponsor or charity whose sponsorship arrangements will only be entered into where there are clear benefits to the Service and/or the community.

## GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

15. It is recommended that HFRS adopts the acceptable policy position set out by the Authority and that the Service then implements a sponsorship and charity engagement procedure, which will ensure any sponsorship or charity activities are appropriately governed. The procedure will be based on best practice guidance and will align with public sector agreed governing principles.

## SUPPORTING OUR SERVICE PLAN AND PRIORITIES

16. This recommendation reduces the Service risk and support the following priorities:

- a) **Our People** – *We look after each other by creating great places to work and promoting the health, wellbeing and safety of our people:*

This proposal supports the safety of our staff by providing appropriate advice and guidance to avoid any accusations of bribery or corruption.

- b) **Public Value** – *we plan over the longer-term to ensure our decisions and actions deliver efficient and effective public services:*

This proposal supports public value by pursuing all feasible opportunities to reduce costs to the Service are explored. To find funding opportunities to support the delivery of projects/events in line with our priorities.

- c) **High Performance** – *our teams are trusted, skilled and feel equipped to deliver a leading fire and rescue service today and into the future:*

This proposal will enable our specialist teams to provide appropriate and robust advice and guidance to the wider Service.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

17. There are no direct costs resulting from the proposals outlined within this paper. Increased focus on sponsorship should provide an improved pipeline for sponsorship revenue opportunities for the Service.
18. Sponsorship and charity engagement will form part of normal business under the accountability of the Partnerships and External Relationships team.
19. The level of management and oversight for financial sponsorship will be aligned to the HFRA Contract Standing Order thresholds.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

20. There are no positive or negative impacts to the environment or sustainability which may result due to this proposal.

### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

21. The Fire and Rescue Services Act Section 5A (1) states that:

*“A relevant fire and rescue authority may do:*

- a) ***anything it considers appropriate*** for the purposes of the ***carrying-out of any of its functions*** (its “functional purposes”);
- b) ***anything it considers appropriate*** for purposes ***incidental to its functional purposes***;
- c) ***anything it considers appropriate*** for purposes ***indirectly incidental to its functional purposes through any number of removes***;
- d) *anything it considers to be connected with:*
  - (i) ***any of its functions***; or
  - (ii) ***anything it may do under paragraph (a), (b) and (c)***”.

22. On this basis, supporting non-legislative activity is within the Fire and Rescue Services Act functions and raising money via sponsorship to finance such activities will be incidental to the function where sponsorship is evidenced on a cost recovery basis. Sponsorship or other activity that is done on a more commercial basis, going beyond cost recovery would be commercial activity, which could only be done through a trading company

23. Engagement with a charity in order to enhance delivery of shared non-legislative objectives is within the Fire and Rescue Services Act functions.

24. Any arrangement must ensure compliance with the Bribery Act 2010. A key way to assist this is for any individuals involved in agreeing sponsorship agreements or charity engagement to not be directly involved with the procurement of goods or services.

25. Potential legal implications of not having a robust sponsorship and charity engagement policy in place include:

- a) Conflict of interests
- b) Fraud, corruption, bribery accusations
- c) Compromises procurement processes
- d) Public or legal disputes

## PEOPLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

26. The proposals in this report are compatible with the provisions of equality and human rights legislation.
27. An impact assessment has been carried out and the proposal has identified no direct adverse impacts. Positive impacts are identified to our stakeholders through an enhanced approach to engaging with HFRS providing clarity and transparency.
28. Positive impacts are identified for HFRS staff due to additional safeguards to ensure they are working within safe parameters with accessible and appropriate guidance. This will provide staff the capacity to achieve personal objectives and raise quality of delivery within this area. HFRS will benefit from higher level of security and assurance.

## OPTIONS

29. **Option 1** – No action. The Service will continue to operate with a high level of risk due to ungoverned sponsorship and charity activity.
30. **Option 2** – A sponsorship and charity engagement policy to be established, aligned to the principles outlined within this paper. This procedure will ensure the Service adopts a consistent and professional approach towards the sourcing of sponsorship income and the engagement with charities.
31. It is recommended that Option 2 is approved since this approach provides robust governance for the Authority, Service and safeguards all staff involved in engaging external partners.

## RISK ANALYSIS

32. A risk assessment for each potential sponsorship arrangement will be undertaken to determine the risks which the Service may face when engaging in a sponsorship arrangement and whether these risks are acceptable and can be managed.
33. Any identified risks associated with sponsorship and charity engagement activities will be managed as part of the Service risk management process.

## EVALUATION

34. Evaluation of sponsorship and charity activity will be recorded and monitored as part of the Partnerships Register. This activity will form part of Partnerships and External Relationships team routine evaluation activity.

## CONCLUSION

35. This report summarises the current position, risks and benefits of sponsorship and charity engagement.
36. This report outlines the legislative and reputational risks associated at the lack of governance in this area of the organisation.
37. This report recommends the principles and the governance approach that would best protect HFRA and HFRS.

**RECOMMENDATION**

38. That the Policy Statement at Appendix A be approved by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A – Policy Statement**

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