



**Hampshire
& Isle of Wight**
FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

HIWFRA Full Authority

Purpose: Noted

Date: **14 JUNE 2022**

Title: **FIRE CADETS PROGRESS REPORT**

Report of Chief Fire Officer

SUMMARY

1. Fire Cadets is a nationally recognised youth organisation, fully supported by the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC). Fire Cadets is for young people aged 13-17.
2. The vision for Fire Cadets is "to be a nationally recognised, inclusive and progressive uniformed youth organisation, delivered through Fire & Rescue Services, which inspires and empowers young people to be the best they can be". This is achieved by providing fun and challenging opportunities for young people to reach their full potential contributing to safer, stronger and healthier communities.
3. The programme focuses on the development of operational firefighting drills, knowledge of the Service and its safety messages and the completion of social action projects and a BTEC qualification. Fire Cadets complete a one-year programme.
4. The purpose of this report is to update the Authority on the progress made in relation to the expansion of Fire Cadet units across the Service since the Authority's decision to fund the project in 2018. It also seeks to highlight opportunities and challenges for the future.
5. This report is for noting purposes only and no decisions are required from the Authority at this time.

BACKGROUND

6. Fire Cadets is a core Children & Young People (CYP) programme supported by the NFCC. 38 Fire Services across the UK deliver Fire Cadets. Nationally there are 250 units and 4,500 Cadets. The NFCC Fire Cadets Board continues to encourage Services to expand their provision.
7. In December 2018, the Authority approved the decision to expand the number of Fire Cadet units in Hampshire from one to seven over a three-year period. The plan was to open two new units per year between 2019 – 2021.
8. The Authority agreed to fund this at a total cost of £131,000 to facilitate the set-up costs of six new units and the ongoing costs for seven units for four years. The plan thereafter was that external funding be sought to fund Cadet units.

PROGRESS TO DATE

9. Four new units have opened to date and two others will open in September 2022/January 2023:

Unit Location:	Date opened/due to open:
Eastleigh (SHQ)	June 2019
Gosport	June 2019
Southsea	April 2021
Rushmoor	April 2021
Isle of Wight (Ryde – TBC)	Due to open September 2022
Basingstoke	Due to open January 2023

10. COVID19 had a significant impact on the opening of six units by 2021. Covid lockdowns meant Cadets had to be delivered online utilising Microsoft Teams for several months and the opening of new units in 2020 and 2021 were delayed.

11. Whenever Covid restrictions allowed, the Service returned to face-to-face engagement in line with a robust Covid risk assessment and Government, Service and National Youth Agency guidance. HIWFRS was one of the first Services nationally to return to face-to-face Cadet delivery.
12. In July 2021, the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire became the Patron to HIWFRS Fire Cadet units, attending a Covid secure event at Rushmoor Fire Station. Deputy Lord Lieutenants attended the first pass out parades of Gosport and Eastleigh units in December 2021. The Lord-Lieutenant/ Deputy Lord-Lieutenants have been very complimentary of the Fire Cadets and their achievements.
13. Fire Cadets have assisted at Service events such as Station Open Days, Service exercises, Trainee Graduation ceremonies and Celebrate Success. They also attend remembrance parades. In November 2021, three HIWFRS Cadets represented the Service at the Cenotaph parade in London. This was the first time Fire Cadets nationally were represented.
14. Cadets have completed social action projects in their local communities. Most recently this has been the significant support to collecting, sorting and packaging of donations for Ukraine, with Southampton Polish Club. Other social actions include a makeover of a local school garden, Christmas tea parties with the elderly, community litter picks and donating care packages to the elderly and vulnerable families during Covid.
15. Fire Cadets complete the BTEC Level 2 Award Fire Service in the Community and a First Aid qualification.
16. Currently we are working towards an Investing in Volunteers accreditation to further support, engage and retain volunteers in the Service.

SUPPORTING OUR SAFETY PLAN AND PRIORITIES

17. Fire Cadets aligns to the Safety Plan in relation to the priorities of our people, our communities and public value.
18. Our Communities - Fire Cadets enables us to empower and personally develop young people from our local communities and potentially see the Service as an employer of choice for the future. By utilising volunteers from the community, we are attracting diverse adults with varied skillsets and backgrounds into the Service. The community benefits from the social action projects Fire Cadets complete and Cadets develop citizenship skills.
19. Our people - volunteer instructors are a diverse range of people attracted to the organisation by being a Volunteer Fire Cadet Instructor. Currently a

third of our Cadet Instructors are female and two thirds male. We are currently undertaking an Investing in Volunteers accreditation process to improve the experiences and retention of our volunteers.

20. Public Value - Fire Cadets is delivered cost effectively through a volunteer model. By attracting sponsorship and external funding, the plan is to increase the sustainability of Fire Cadets, reducing its financial impact to the Service.

COLLABORATION

21. We collaborate with other Cadet networks through the Lord-Lieutenant's patronage. In May 2022, Fire Cadets, alongside other Cadet groups, will attend Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee Service at Winchester Cathedral, being organised by the Lord-Lieutenant.
22. In partnership with Eastleigh Borough Council's Emergency planning team, a Hampshire Young Persons Emergency Response (HYPER) network has been created. Approved by the Local Resilience Forum Delivery Group, this allows for Fire and Police Cadets and Scouts, supervised by their instructors, to be utilised in the response and recovery phase of an emergency (e.g. flooding).
23. We work collaboratively with Hampshire Constabulary to provide mutual visits between Fire and Police Cadets. The Children & Young People Manager has been asked to be a member on the Hampshire Constabulary Police Cadet Executive Board. This will further enhance collaboration.
24. Children & Young People (CYP) staff work collaboratively with other Fire Services nationally and through the NFCC Fire Cadet Board in relation to governance and sharing of best practice. HIWFRS Fire Cadets are represented at national Fire Cadet events.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

People

25. Fire Cadets is managed by the Children & Young People (CYP) Team. Two full time permanent posts support the delivery of the programme. The Fire Cadet Lead provides ongoing support to units and volunteers and specifically works alongside new units for the first year to ensure they are set up effectively. The Fire Cadet Manager provides direct management to the volunteer instructors and is responsible for the governance and quality assurance of programme delivery. The Service's Volunteer Manager supports these staff with the recruitment of instructors.

26. If the Service or the Authority wishes to expand the number of units beyond seven, there will be a need to source another Fire Cadet Lead post to provide sufficient employed staff to support the units and volunteers. This would be additional staff cost of £34,095 (including oncosts). There is currently no capacity within the CYP budget to pay for this additional role and so funding for a new post would need to be identified. There would be an opportunity to expand units to 10, by 2026 if this further post could be sourced. The CYP Manager has expressed an interest to the NFCC Fire Cadet Board to set up two further units in 2023 with an application being made to seek national funding for new units from Youth United.
27. Across the county, there are currently 45 Volunteer Fire Cadet Instructors. A small minority are operational Firefighter volunteers, and the rest are community-based volunteers, trained in drill yard supervision training with the support of Academy.

Finances

28. As outlined above, the Authority approved a total spend of £131,000 to expand our Fire Cadet provision in 2018. To date £45,344 has been spent on the project due to careful spending. Spending has also been significantly impacted by Covid. Covid delayed units opening and meant that for a significant duration, units were delivered online, reducing costs. Whilst young people are due to attend the programme for one year, due to Covid our first cohorts on the first new units were retained for 2.5 years, further reducing costs.
29. The funding has been utilised to provide full uniform, personal protective equipment and helmets for all the Fire Cadets and Instructors. Specialist cadet firefighting equipment, such as light-weight hoses, BA sets and ladders have been purchased for each unit. Funding has also been used to source BTEC qualifications, first aid courses and Fire Cadet Pass out parades.
30. 3SFire financially supported the work of Fire Cadets through a grant of £4,879 in July 2021 to purchase two ladders, Fire Cadet sliders and some helmets and uniforms for volunteer instructors. 3SFire funding will be applied for in the future.
31. The remaining balance of £85,656 will be used to set up the last two units and to meet ongoing costs for all units. Most units have not been running for the 3 years the ongoing funding was intended to sustain them for.

32. The existing project funding provided by the Authority to fund units until March 2023, will be sufficient to fund units until March 2024, due to the reduced spending and time delays in opening new units due to COVID19.

FUTURE FUNDING

33. The CYP Manager and Partnership Officer are seeking to attract external sponsorship and funding for units. It is not yet known how successful applications for external sponsorship and funding this will be, as the market for this will be competitive.
34. It is believed that the strongest financial position for Fire Cadets would be for it is be sourced through a variety of funding streams post April 2024. This may be further Fire Authority funding, if this was approved, alongside 3SFire grants and external sponsorship and funding. It is proposed that a further paper be provided to the Authority in April 2023, once external funding options have been explored and the success of these is known, to make recommendations for the funding of the units post April 2024.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

35. Impact assessments for data protection, equality and health and safety have been completed for Fire Cadets and Children and Young people activities.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

36. There are no significant legal implications identified.
37. CYP policies, procedures and guidance notes and risk assessments are in place. Specific Fire Cadet governance has been written to ensure safety, standardisation and compliance.

BENEFITS

38. Fire Cadets benefits young people by equipping them with work, life, social skills, qualifications, and volunteering experience to achieve their full potential, and assists with college and employment applications.
39. Fire Cadets are educated in Service safety messages, empowering them to be advocates for the Service by sharing these messages with their peers, families and at community events.
40. Community volunteers benefit by developing leadership skills and confidence. Many report they feel a sense of pride in being part of the Service and the young peoples' development journey.

41. The benefits to HIWFRS include a positive impact on workplace diversity, enabling both young people and instructors to see the Service as an employer of choice for the future. Two Fire Cadet Leads and two community-based instructors were successful in joining wholetime in 2020/21 and 6 instructors applied for the current recruitment process.
42. Allowing operational and civilian staff to volunteer on units, provides the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and support community safety work. This is helpful to trainee firefighters in development and those seeking promotion.
43. The Service benefits from being able to deliver a high quality CYP programme cost effectively through volunteers. From social action projects, pass out parades and the Lord-Lieutenant's patronage there are positive promotion opportunities for the Service. Fire Cadets also support Service events.

RISK ANALYSIS

44. All risks for CYP activities, including Fire Cadets, are recorded, regularly reviewed and managed through JCAD, the Service's risk management system.
45. Fire Cadet activities are fully risk assessed.
46. All those involved in delivery of the Cadet programme are subject to Safer recruitment processes and enhanced DBS checks.
47. HIWFRS' safeguarding policy and procedures will be utilised to protect, support and report any safeguarding matters.
48. Fire Cadets is a nationally recognised programme governed by the NFCC Fire Cadet Board. This board provides governance and minimum standards in relation to the programme's delivery, which assists HIWFRS.

EVALUATION

49. Fire Cadets is evaluated through evaluation forms completed by young people and volunteers. Case studies of young people and volunteers are also utilised to show the powerful effect the programme has on the personal development of both parties.
50. Work is to be completed moving forward to ensure performance outcomes are measured more robustly to ensure the benefit of Fire Cadets can be demonstrated – e.g. demographic data, social action hours, retention and achievement rates.

CONCLUSION

51. Although COVID19 had significant impact on the opening of units to the original timescale, all six units will be open by January 2023 and the project fully delivered.
52. Existing funding underspend will be utilised to fund units until March 2024. External funding sources and sponsorship, as well as funding through 3SFire, will be explored to ensure a strong financial position for Fire Cadet funding moving forward, whereby units are funded through a variety of funding streams, rather than being reliant on one stream.
53. A paper will be submitted to the Fire Authority in relation to funding post April 2024, in April 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

54. That the progress the Fire Cadets project has achieved to date be noted by the HIWFRA Full Authority

Contact: Stew Adamson, Director of Operations

Stew.adamson@hants.gov.uk 07918 887596