

COMMUNITY SAFETY & CORPORATE PLANNING COMMITTEE

(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

16 July 2020

Present:

Councillors Redman (Chair), Colthorpe, Corvid, Doggett, Radford, Trail BEM and Saywell (vice Eastman).

Apologies:

Councillor Eastman.

In attendance (in accordance with Standing Order 38(1))

Councillors Randall Johnson and Wheeler

* **CSCPC/5** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2019 be signed as a correct record.

* **CSCPC/6** **Impacts of Covid-19 on the Safer Together Programme**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Service Improvement (CSCPC/20/1) that set out details of the work undertaken on the Service's business continuity response during the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated impact on the Safer Together Programme.

At this point, the Chair thanked all those staff involved in service delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic for going above and beyond the call of duty.

The Director of Service Improvement referred to the areas of work that the Service had undertaken during this business continuity event. The key areas of work undertaken included:

- Operational crews were relocated from Budleigh Salterton station to Exmouth and the building was now going through preparations for disposal. Crews had settled in well at Exmouth, improving availability and resilience;
- Work was continuing to prepare the relocation of crews from Topsham to Middlemoor and Station 60, with estates work and recruitment progressing to ensure both locations would have crews available as soon as possible;
- Contracts for upgrading the Service Tranman system to facilitate the asset management programme had been progressed;
- The final roll out of lightweight PPE had been achieved and the project had been approved for closure; and
- A framework for leadership development, aligned to the National Fire Chiefs' Council best guidance, had also been progressed.

It was noted that one of the key areas of work delayed due to the pandemic was the fleet replacement project. This project included new wildfire vehicle and supporting the removal and replacement of second and third fire engines on selected stations. This project was delayed due to suppliers being furloughed, thus delaying delivery of required vehicle parts. In turn, this delayed the delivery of the new wildfire vehicles. This was compounded by driver training being reduced due to the Service business continuity response impacting all non-critical activities.

The Committee enquired if the Service would be making any changes to the Safer Together Programme as a result of learning points from Covid-19 and business continuity arrangements. It was noted that the Service had acknowledged the need for learning points to be incorporated into future practices and that, in accordance with its risk based approach, the Service would need to consider any future changes in conjunction with a review of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). It was requested that the Committee be updated on the position on this matter at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the impact of Covid-19 on the Safer Together programme, including supply chain issues.

* **CSCPC/7** **Grenfell Recommendations Progress Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Service Delivery (CSCPC/20/2) that outlined the Service's progress with implementation of the recommendations from the Grenfell phase 1 inquiry and the additional Building Risk Review Grant funding.

It was noted that, following the publication of the Grenfell Tower Enquiry Phase 1 report, the Service had reviewed the recommendations made. Overall there were 44 recommendations in two main groups:

- National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)/Legislative changes; and
- Recommendations/ improvements for all Services and other agencies.

The Grenfell recommendations were focussed specifically on high rise residential buildings. There were no high rise residential buildings (over 18 metres) with cladding in Devon & Somerset but 172 buildings that fall within the high rise definition. The Service had already completed a high-level gap analysis against its current position. Of the 44 recommendations made, the 17 NFCC/Legislative changes had been implemented and 13 of the 27 sector wide recommendations were completed with the other 14 in progress. These recommendations had also been compiled into a formal assurance tracker to be scrutinised by Risk and Response Governance Board (RRGB). This Board will review progress monthly and had a nominated lead officer (Group Manager for Risk) assigned to oversee the implementation across multiple service areas.

The Director of Service Delivery advised that the Hackett Review had recommended that a complete systematic review of fire safety needed to be undertaken, not just a review of the buildings. With this in mind, the Service was in the process of re-organised its prevention and protection teams into one, multi-disciplinary team that would address the following elements (amongst others):

- Building design and fire safety/engineered solutions;
- Compliance with fire safety legislation;
- Occupancy and behavioural factors to take into account social, economic and cultural differences;
- Engagement with residents groups;
- Engagement with and education of management committees and responsible Persons; and
- Risk information and equipment provided for fire-fighting such as lifts, access routes, Hydrants, signage and communications.

A grant of £316k had been allocated to Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service that must be ring-fenced for discharging fire protection duties as well as assuring that all high-rise residential buildings over 18m were reviewed by the end of December 2021 with a framework for identification and inspection in place. A proportion of this grant would be utilised to establish the multi-disciplinary team to oversee this work.

The Committee asked if the tracking information and progress made could be published so that it was more visible to the public. The Director of Service Delivery undertook to look into this matter.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Committee reviews at future meetings the assurance process for the Grenfell recommendations and the Home Office returns for the Building Risk Review Grant funding; and
- (b) that, subject to (a) above, the report be noted.

* **CSCPC/8 Briefing on Service Support for Other Organisations during the Covid-19 Emergency**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Delivery (CSCPC/20/3) that set out the Service's response to requests from other agencies during the Covid-19 emergency.

It was noted that the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC), National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) agreed a Tripartite Agreement to outline the additional activities that fire and rescue services could undertake during the Covid-19 emergency. The Service supported external organisation in two of these Activities, namely:

- (a) Ambulance driving; and
- (b) Face fit testing for face masks.

The Service, through the Chief Fire Officer, led the development of ambulance driving response in the South West. Officers from the Service worked collaboratively with the South West Ambulance Services Trust (SWAST) to develop a Concept of Operations (ConOp) that was used by all five South West FRSs. The Service also led the development of the training package for the FRS volunteer drivers alongside SWAST. 44 Service volunteers were the first firefighters in the UK to drive ambulances on a 'blue light'. The volunteers were a mixture of on-call and whole-time firefighters (primarily co-responders and Academy Instructors). Initially they were accompanied by Emergency Care Assistant (ECAs) attending lower acuity calls, but since 29 June 2020 had been working alongside paramedics and responding to all category of emergencies. SWAST had asked the arrangements to drive ambulances continue until 31 July 2020, with an option to extend until after the August Bank Holiday. The Service was able to support this request as a result of the resilience built into its volunteer team. The Committee enquired as to the support available for the staff involved following a difficult or tragic incident. The Director of Service Delivery confirmed that a debrief took place after each incident and diffusing put into place to support individuals as necessary. The Committee further enquired as to how the learning points from this joint working would be captured. It was noted that there would be a full learning debrief undertaken in conjunction with SWAST at the end of this exercise.

At this point, the Committee placed on record its thanks to all of the staff that had undertaken this voluntary activity with SWAST in this difficult period.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.19 pm