

COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE
(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

8 September 2023

Present:

Councillors Hendy (Chair), Brazil, Coles (vice Power) and Kerley

Apologies:

Councillors Chesterton and Radford

* **CSC/23/1** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* **CSC/23/2** **Strategic Priority 1 and 2 Performance Measures: Quarter 1 2023-24**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Delivery (CSC/23/8) on performance by the Service in Quarter 1 of the 2023-24 financial year against those Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) associated with the following two Strategic Priorities:

Strategic Priority 1: “Our targeted prevention and protection activities will reduce the risks in our communities, improving health, safety and wellbeing and supporting the local economy”; and

Strategic Priority 2: “Our operational resources will provide an effective emergency response to meet the local and national risks identified in our Community Risk Management Plan”.

The performance status of the Service KPIs was based on the following criteria:

Succeeding	The KPI was achieving its target
Near Target	The KPI is less than 10% away from achieving its target
Needs Improvement	The KPI is at least 10% away from achieving its target

Performance in Quarter 1 of 2023-24 was as summarised below:

	Succeeding	Near target	Needs improvement
Priority 1	13	5	1
Priority 2	7	6	1

The KPIs with a status of “needs improvement” were:

- KPI 1.2.2.2 – Number of non-domestic fire fatalities; and

- KPI 2.1.4.2 – Percentage of operational risk information in date - level 4 tactical plans.

The report identified the main factors behind the ability to deliver the expected level of performance together with actions intended to secure improvement in both areas. Exception reports were also included within the appendix to report CSC/23/8.

In debating the report, the following points were raised:

- KPI 1.2.2.2. - fire fatality non-domestic – this involved a fire in outbuildings so it was classed as non-domestic but it was an unusual situation;
- KPI 2.1.4.2. – it was noted that this was a legacy situation arising from the Covid. Pandemic but that good progress was being made to bring this back on target;
- The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery – would be submitting details of revised KPIs that had been discussed recently by the Executive Board to the Committee for consideration.

The Committee enquired as to whether there was a full list of KPIs available. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery - stated there were additional KPIs not listed in this report. As indicated above, a full list of the revised KPIs would be submitted to the Committee at the next meeting.

Reference was made to the targets for Emergency Response (ERS) times and whether issues such as rurality had been factored in. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery - responded that there used to be national standards for response times which changed in 2005 when such matters were devolved locally for consideration in accordance with risk factors. The University of Exeter had undertaken research on behalf of Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service some years back which indicated that a 10-minute response for urban areas and 15 minutes for rural areas was appropriate. This was being reviewed, however, and the Committee would be apprised of the revised measures being considered. The Committee welcomed the work being undertaken on a review of the ERS. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery - stated that he hoped to elicit more root level data to inform the response as a result of the work being undertaken that would then be utilised to improve performance. The Committee asked if there could be a comparison with similar rural fire and rescue services when considering response standards. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery - advised that this work had been undertaken and would be shared with the Committee in due course.

RESOLVED

- (a). That the work on Emergency Response Standards be considered at a future meeting of the Committee;
- (b). That a report on the revised Key Performance Indicators be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (c). Subject to (a). and (b). above, the report be noted.

* **CSC/23/3** **Planning and the Role of the Fire & Rescue Service**

The Committee received for information a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Service Delivery (CSC/23/9) on the work that was being undertaken within the Service on Planning and the Role of the Fire & Rescue Service.

The Area Manager – Prevention and Protection - advised the Committee that the Service was not a statutory consultee for planning applications but did provide advice as and when requested. The Service's main concerns on planning applications were access and water supplies on new development. There were mitigations that could be considered though as, in areas where access may be difficult, measures such as the use of domestic sprinklers could be installed in new properties.

The Chair drew attention to the point that developers may agree to install fire safety measures on initial planning applications but may change their agreement at a later stage which could cause fire safety issues. The Area Manager – Protection and Prevention – advised the Committee that the Service was consulted on Building Regulations with 15 days to respond and officers suitably qualified as fire engineers were able to respond and advise on matters pertaining to fire safety. Approximately 1300 consultations were received each year by the Service on Building Regulations applications. Once a property was signed off for Building Regulations and completed, responsibility for fire safety passed to the Service. Any subsequent issues could be pursued under the Fire Safety (Regulatory Reform Order) 2005.

The Committee referred to the large-scale domestic developments being built as extensions to large urban areas in Devon and Somerset together with major commercial developments and he asked how the Service was going to cope with this. The Area Manager – Protection and Prevention – replied that engagement was being undertaken by Assistant Chief Fire Officer Nicky Bottomley to look at new developments and where they were located so opportunities were not missed for new fire stations and associated funding where needed. The Committee welcomed feedback to constituent authorities from the Service on the planning process in place. The Area Manager – Protection and Prevention – responded that local engagement was found to be of assistance in many cases.

* **CSC/23/4** **Partnerships**

The Committee received for information a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Service Delivery (CSC/23/10) setting out how the Service's Protection and Prevention teams worked with partner agencies to target individuals in high risk groups with fire safety checks.

It was noted that the groups at highest risk of having a fire included households with factors such as age, limited mobility, living alone, disability, now working smoke alarm and alcohol/drugs (amongst others).

The Committee sought clarification on how the Service was able to increase the number of referrals so that more basic fire safety checks could be undertaken. The Area Manager – Prevention and Protection - stated that the Service was not short of referrals from partners and had to prioritise the most vulnerable people for fire safety visits. Those classed as being of medium risk could undertake an online fire safety assessment. It was added that the Service also accessed those communities who may not necessarily engage with the Service such as those whose first language was not English.

The Committee sought an assurance that partners were assisting the Service as much as possible given the capacity issues identified. The Area Manager – Protection and Prevention – responded that the Service did as much as possible to educate and train other partners to assist in the fire safety process without a need for a referral to reduce the workload as much as possible.

In response to a question, it was noted that the Service undertook 18,000 home fire safety visits a year currently based on capacity to deliver. More work was required, however, to understand demand in areas such as an increasing, ageing population which may lead to an increase in the number of high risk individuals.

* **CSC/23/5**

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Areas for Improvement Action Plan Update

The Committee received for information a report of the Chief Fire Officer (CSC/23/11) on progress against action plans to address Areas for Improvement within the remit of this Committee and stemming from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) 2022 inspection report of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (the Service).

Action plans had been developed to address the following two Areas for Improvement which were specifically related to the remit of this Committee:

- HMI-1.2-202203 - The Service should evaluate its prevention activity so it understands what works; and
- HMI-1.2-202204 - Safeguarding training should be provided to all staff.

It was noted that the action under HMI-1.2-202203 - The Service should evaluate its prevention activity so it understands what works – was no longer required. This was due to the point that the Service should evaluate its prevention activity so that it understood what worked but there was no requirement to align to ISO accreditation.

The Committee enquired as to the position overall on the 14 areas for improvement. The Committee was advised that there was good progress being made. The next inspection was now scheduled for April 2024 with HMICFRS requesting documentation to support any evidence in March 2024.

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

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