

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>CSCPC/17/4</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY &amp; CORPORATE PLANNING COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>21 APRIL 2017</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>HERITAGE BUILDINGS IN DEVON AND SOMERSET</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER – SERVICE DELIVERY</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>Numerous strategies have been planned and promoted to raise awareness of fire safety prevention for heritage buildings and these include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion free phone number for owners of heritage buildings to contact us.</li> <li>• Review of all heritage buildings in Service area</li> <li>• Invitation to education events aimed at heritage building owners/managers</li> <li>• Additional training for Business Safety staff</li> <li>• Development of Service guidance note for heritage buildings</li> <li>• Development of guidance leaflet for owners of heritage buildings</li> <li>• Development of partnership and collaborative working arrangements with heritage agencies</li> </ul> <p>To support all of the above initiatives, a Business Safety officer working in North Central team has been asked to lead the heritage programme for Devon &amp; Somerset Fire &amp; Rescue Service.</p>
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Business as usual – part of the Community Safety Protection Department delivery strategy to support business.
<b>EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)</b>	Business as usual – part of the Community Safety Protection Department delivery strategy to support business.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<p>Appendix 1- Press release from November 2016 ‘Keeping heritage buildings safe’</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Draft guidance note to be published – ‘Emergency salvage plan’,</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Draft guidance note to be published - ‘Heritage and Buildings of Special Interest’</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Draft fire safety risk assessment for heritage buildings</p>
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	N/a.

## 1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service believes that it is better to prevent an emergency from happening in the first place rather than deal with it when it does. This is a key part of our Corporate Plan “Creating Safer Communities: Our Plan 2017-2022” which sets out three main priorities:

- Public safety;
- Staff safety; and
- Efficiency and Effectiveness.

1.2 To support this belief, the Service works with local communities and partners to educate them in how to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies and do all it can to help prevent crime and disorder through, for example, work on reducing incidents of arson. If a fire does start, we want to make sure people have the best chance of escape and that the disruption to business and the community is kept to a minimum. We will work with businesses to influence and regulate the built environment to protect people, property and the natural environment from harm.

1.3 Following the devastating fire involving the heritage buildings in Exeter Cathedral Yard in October 2016, the Business Safety Manager for Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (the Service) has investigated ways in which it can offer suitable advice and support to owners and occupiers of heritage buildings (which will include Grade I, II\* and II listed buildings) and the action that is being taken is set out within this report for information.

## 2. **PLANNED STRATEGIES**

2.1 There are numerous strategies which have been planned and promoted, and these include, but are not limited to the following areas of work:

### Promotion of the Home Safety Visit:

- There is a free phone number (0800 05 02 0800) for owners of heritage buildings to contact us;
- A press release was issued in November 2016 giving advice and contact details (a copy is attached to this report at Appendix 1);
- Call handling staff in the Community Safety team and in Fire Control were briefed to expect calls related to heritage buildings;
- A follow up process has been put into place.

### Review of all heritage buildings in the Service area:

- The new data set the Service has acquired (known as ‘FRED’) has been used along with information from English Heritage to obtain the addresses and contact details of a vast number of these premises;
- This will allow the Service to have an inspection strategy which will include an appropriate focus on heritage buildings;

- Letter drop or email contact will be made to all identified heritage buildings and their owners and managers, to remind them of some practical fire prevention management strategies.

#### Invitation to education events aimed at heritage building owners/managers

- These events are already being planned;
- The Service is also linking up with the South West branch of the Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE) to promote their centenary event in 2018 which will be on heritage buildings;
- Additional training for Business Safety staff;
- Staff already receive regular continuous professional development (CPD) training. Future events are planned to ensure they are equipped to give suitable and sensible advice and guidance on heritage buildings

#### Development of Service guidance note for heritage buildings

- This is ready to be published.

#### Development of guidance leaflet for owners of heritage buildings

- This is ready to be published.

#### Development of partnership and collaborative working arrangements with heritage agencies

- As well as working with the IFE, the Service has linked up with Historic England and the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) to have a co-ordinated and joined up approach to heritage buildings.

### 3. **STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE**

- 3.1 To support all of the above initiatives, a Business Safety officer working in the Service's North Central team has been asked to lead the heritage programme.
- 3.2 The officer in question joined the Service several years ago after spending many years working for 'Historic Royal Palaces', with responsibility for supervising, restoration and maintenance of some of the most iconic royal palaces in the country. Her knowledge and understanding of heritage buildings is exceptional and the Service is pleased to have her guiding our approach.
- 3.3 The officer is a qualified Business Safety officer and together with her knowledge of heritage buildings, she has been preparing detailed guidance for our staff and the public. This is ready to be published very soon. The officer is tasked with supporting and co-ordinating the Service's local initiatives, giving advice to local Group Support Teams which are planning events to give guidance to heritage owners. Plymouth Group Support team is planning an event in the summer of 2017. The officer sits on the CFOA regional Heritage group and attends the National CFOA Heritage forum; reporting on heritage matters directly to the Business Safety Manager and is supported by a Station Manager in the Business Safety Team.

#### 4. **THE EXETER CATHEDRAL YARD FIRE**

- 4.1 In the aftermath of the Exeter Cathedral Yard fire, many businesses were likely to be affected by the restrictions required to make the area safe.
- 4.2 This meant that during a very important period leading up to Christmas, the local economy could have lost tens of thousands of pounds in revenue. One business estimated potential losses in the millions. These businesses were not damaged directly by the fire at all.
- 4.3 Whilst the incident was ongoing, the local Business Safety team visited the area and spoke to the businesses most affected. Work was undertaken with the local council, demolition teams and Health and Safety Executive officers to develop an agreed plan to get these businesses open. This involved some flexible thinking and approaches, but by the Wednesday following the fire nearly every business, not directly impacted by heat and flame, were operating again.
- 4.4 In February 2017, the CFOA Heritage lead (Area Manager Mark Abrams from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service) visited the scene of the fire, to see at first-hand the devastation and extent of the fire. Mark was impressed by the work carried out by the Business Safety team members, and later commented to the National CFOA Business Safety Group leads meeting in Tamworth, on the professionalism of the team and also how the Business Safety 'after fire recovery model' was something to be followed by others.

#### 5. **CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The Business Safety team has already carried out some good work to promote suitable fire safety management strategies in heritage buildings. It continues to review what else can be done to ensure fires in such buildings are prevented or their impact minimised, hence the creation of a 'heritage lead officer' who is a subject matter expert.
- 5.2 It should be noted that this approach to a fire is complementary to the business safety activity which the Service is already carrying out, with a further emphasis on heritage building stock.
- 5.3 Business Safety officers work in many ways to achieve a satisfactory standard of fire precautions in all building types. Despite this, large devastating fires do still occur. While local and national attention is focused on heritage buildings, the Service is endeavouring to encourage building owners and managers to engage with us.
- 5.4 Where fire has occurred, emphasis has been placed on getting businesses back operating as soon as possible, demonstrating again the willingness of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service to promote economic growth and prosperity, a cornerstone to health and wellbeing in the community which we serve.

**ALEX HANSON**

**Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery**