

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	CSCPC/20/6
MEETING	COMMUNITY SAFETY & CORPORATE PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	11 DECEMBER 2020
SUBJECT OF REPORT	SAFER TOGETHER PROGRAMME UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Service Improvement, ACFO Gavin Ellis
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a high level overview and update on current progress on the Safer Together Programme.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	The Service has reinstated elements of the programme and is currently reviewing the impact of external suppliers and internal resource availability.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	Each workstream has undertaken equality and risk benefits analysis at the business case stage.
APPENDICES	None
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a high level overview and update of current progress on the Safer Together Programme. At the previous meeting of the Committee on 14 October 2020, it was reported that the Safer Together Programme had not escaped the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic, however, supply chains and work re-commenced across the Programme and progress was made. The second wave of the pandemic and lockdown which commenced on 5 November 2020 has impacted again and this is referenced in this report.
- 1.2 The Safer Together Programme consists of the following key workstreams, namely:
- Service Delivery Operating Model (SDOM);
 - Fleet & Equipment (replacement);
 - Data and Digital Transformation; and
 - People Development.
- 1.3 The progress on each of these key workstreams is set out in this report.

2. **SERVICE DELIVERY OPERATING MODEL (SDOM)**

- 2.1. This workstream is made up of a number of strands of work which align to the decisions made by the Authority, following a 12 week public consultation, at its extraordinary meeting on 10 January 2020 (Minute DSFRA/32 refers). The progress made on each of these strands is described below.
- Deferral of day crewing at Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paignton (Minute DSFRA/32(a)(i))***
- 2.2. This decision was dependent on agreement with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) to the introduction of a revised 24/7 crewing model, including roving vehicles.
- 2.3. Formal negotiations on this commenced with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) in January 2020. Good progress was made at that time with the FBU and local representatives about to commence a series of station visits to recommend the Service proposal of changes to the start and finish times of the existing shift system and the introduction of a day duty system that complemented both the day hours of the shift system and the day hours of the Pay for Availability (P4A) system. Unfortunately, the first lockdown imposed restrictions which prevented those visits taking place in time for conclusion by the end of the 19/20 financial year.
- 2.4. The Service has encouraged the FBU to continue engagement with its members when the lockdown restrictions lifted and by remote visits. The FBU has, however, been reluctant to progress any matters relating to terms and conditions of service whilst their members are working under the provisions of the tripartite agreement being used to support communities beyond the recognised duties of the firefighter role map.

- 2.5. In the meantime and to continue to make progress, the Service has recruited 34 Firefighters on new contracts which will provide the flexibility that the Service requires from the new ways of working. These staff were previously on-call firefighters who transitioned to the whole-time duty system on different contracts to those used for existing staff. In addition, an external recruitment process will be undertaken in 2021 with the firefighters so recruited being deployed on the new contracts. The Service also maintains a 'crewing pool' of staff with a range of skills who are able to crew fire engines. The crewing pool provides the Service with the flexibility to fill gaps (sometimes at short notice) as necessary and to provide additional staff for other duties, such as on roving vehicles.
- 2.6. Further internal discussions are taking place to consider centralising leave/training and sickness management arrangements whilst still continuing to provide the required number of firefighters at station level to crew fire engines. In doing so, the Service is able to provide a more efficient way of matching resources to risk and support HMICFRS expectations in this regard.
- 2.7. In terms of roving vehicles, the Service has engaged an external data visualisation company which has worked with Service data analysts using historical data. The Service can now forecast where roving vehicles should be deployed (and when) to generate the best effect. The crewing for these vehicles is most likely to come from staff rostered off from whole-time stations or from the crewing pool outlined above. The vehicles will either be existing fire engines or training/spare fire engines. These will provide additional 'primary crewed' vehicles (i.e. ready for immediate deployment rather than being on-call) when needed and this will again support the risk-based approach HMICFRS has identified is required. Roving vehicles provide significant flexibility and will be a cornerstone of the Service risk-based approach moving forward.

Closure of Budleigh Salterton fire station (Minute DSFRA/32(a)(ii))

- 2.8. Operational use of Budleigh Salterton fire station ceased at the beginning of April 2020 and all firefighters who wished to remain with the Service have transferred to Exmouth fire station.
- 2.9. As reported to the last full Authority meeting on 23 October 2020, (Minute DSFRA/49 refers), given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the Chief Fire Officer (following consultation with the Authority Chair as required by Standing Order 27), approved the disposal of the fire station building at Budleigh Salterton on 3 July 2020.
- 2.10. Subsequent to this decision, the station has been sold with contracts exchanged. In the event, the sale of the station realised a capital receipt of £366,666. In accordance with accounting regulations, the capital receipt has now been included in the Authority's capital funding.

Relocation of Topsham fire station (Minute DSFRA/32(a)(iii))

- 2.11. The relocation of Topsham fire station to Service Headquarters fire station (Stn 60) is due to be completed on 8 December 2020. This will involve the redeployment of one fire engine to the SHQ site with an on-call section to crew this vehicle.

- 2.12. In parallel, work has progressed to recruit and establish a new on-call section at Middlemoor fire station. The newly-established crew have been familiarising themselves with the second fire engine from Topsham and training on it and the vehicle is due to be “on the run” on 12 December 2020. The current Topsham Fire Station will then be closed.
- 2.13. At its last meeting, the Authority considered a report on the disposal of Topsham Fire Station and resolved that that potential options for alternative use, within the legal constraints placed on the Fire Authority, be explored and reported back to a future meeting prior to disposal of the station (Minute DSFRA/52 refers). This is currently being explored.

Replacement of the third fire engines at Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil (Minute DSFRA/32(a)(iv))

- 2.14. The replacement of all existing third fire engines with a Light 4x4 Pump(L4P) is due to be completed by the end of January 2021. Despite impacts of the pandemic both internally and externally, the rollout of the L4P’s at Taunton and Torquay stations are on track to take place in December 2020. The L4P’s due for Bridgwater and Yeovil are currently with the supplier awaiting fit out of blue lights and the Service is awaiting confirmation that the vehicles will be received in time to keep timescales on track for replacement by the end of January 2021 (or before Christmas 2020 if possible). The supplier is currently working at reduced capacity, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Removal of the second fire engines from Crediton, Lynton, Martock and Totnes (Minute DSFRA/32(a)(v))

- 2.15. The removal of the second fire engines from Martock and Totnes was completed at the end of March 2020.
- 2.16. The removal of the second fire engines at Lynton and Crediton and replacement with L4P’s was completed in October 2020.

Introduction of variable fire engine availability dependent on risk (Minute DSFRA/32(a)(vi))

- 2.17. Facilitation of this element for the eleven identified stations has been linked to the introduction of Pay for Availability (P4A) in the first instance. Therefore, two risk-dependent availability stations transitioned in October 2020 and another is scheduled for January 2021.
- 2.18. The remaining eight stations will transition at the same time as moving to P4A should they opt to take this system. Stations that do not wish to take the P4A offer will be transitioned to risk dependent availability status later in 2021.
- 2.19. The Service began informal discussion with both the Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA) and the FBU on this matter in the summer of 2019. Following the Authority meeting of January 2020, all parties agreed to a period of formal negotiation with a view to securing a collective agreement on the terms and conditions for the P4A system.

- 2.20. In early March 2020 the FRSA was able to agree with the Service and signed a local collective agreement. It should be noted that, due to the complexities of trades union membership, the FRSA is not recognised to negotiate at a national level on behalf of on-call firefighters but is recognised locally for collective bargaining purposes by the Service.
- 2.21. Despite parallel progress being made with the FBU locally, the Service was informed in March 2020 that the FBU wished to refer the matter to a national negotiation level to be determined by national representatives of the FBU and the Employers.
- 2.22. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic delayed progressing these national negotiations, with matter eventually being discussed at the beginning of September 2020. Unfortunately, this process failed to broker an agreement between the Service and the FBU.
- 2.23. Following this, local engagement continued and the Service made a revised offer to the FBU. This offer was rejected by the FBU in October 2020.
- 2.24. Having consulted with on-call staff, it appears that 44 fire stations (55%) are keen to move to the Service P4A proposal. A further 24 fire stations (30%) have asked for more information but may be interested in voluntarily moving to the new on-call proposal. Only 11 fire stations (15%) have said that they do not wish to progress the new model but it should be noted that some of these stations are currently on a legacy payment model which is being phased out. As such, this may change in the future if funds remain available for the investment.
- 2.25. As part of planning for the 2021-22 budget, it appears that the full amount allocated for P4A will now not be required as, without a collective agreement, a whole service approach is not possible. Crewing levels and performance on those stations where P4A has not been agreed will continue to be scrutinised.
- 2.26. On 1 October 2020, an initial group of six “early adopter” stations (involving eight fire engines) moved to the new system. It should be noted that the majority of the “early adopter” stations had high availability in 2019-20. As such, this is not likely to result in significant increases in availability.
- 2.27. Other fire stations who have indicated a desire to do so will transition to the P4A system as soon as possible. In addition to this, an imminent trial on selective alerting is planned to commence with an “early adopter” P4A station. This will allow on-call firefighters to be alerted for specific appliances rather than a blanket approach to mobilising resources.

3. FLEET & EQUIPMENT (REPLACEMENT)

Medium Rescue Pump (MRP) replacement

- 3.1. The new chassis are now with E1 (the Service’s supplier) and the crew cab arrangements have been agreed. The locker layout has also been agreed in principle and a stowage exercise is planned with E1 to finalise arrangements in January 2021. It is still anticipated at this point that the Service should be in receipt of the first batch of vehicles in Spring 2021.

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) - increased wildfire capability

- 3.2. The Service is now in receipt of all of the new ATV vehicles, however, due to the impact of the pandemic on the Service's Fleet workshops, there has been reduced capacity to complete the fit out of the vehicles. As a result, the roll out of the L4P vehicles to replace the second and third fire engines was prioritised as described above. This has impacted the roll out of the ATV slightly and the Service now expects these vehicles to go on the run in January to February 2021.

Asset Management

- 3.3. Phase 1 of this project is progressing to enable the upgrade to functionality in the system that manages the Service's fleet. The additional functionality is currently in User Acceptance Testing (UAT) and the team is working with the suppliers to fix any bugs or issues that are found during this period. The formal sign off of the UAT is due at the end of November 2020, if this is successful a planned go live date is currently the beginning of December 2020.

4. DATA AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

- 4.1. The Management of Risk Information (MORI) project development is now progressing again following its pause due to COVID 19 and Business Continuity. The first of the applications that will be complete will be for the MORI protection app which will enable increased capability in case management of the Service's business safety activity. The project will also be beginning sprint zero (initiation) of the next application which collates and manages operational risk information at the end of November 2020.
- 4.2. To support all of this work, digital transformation of the Service's data architecture continues to ensure that, in future, the Service can have confidence in a consistent approach to determining risk across all operational areas of the business.

5. PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT WORKSTREAM

- 5.1 This project continues to move forward and in early 2021, all staff will have access to a performance toolkit to record evidence and reflect upon progress within their current role.
- 5.2 The project is also reviewing existing promotion processes and structure, understanding how and where this can be enhanced or improved. In order to support better investment in our people, a number of development 'talent pools' have been established at all levels of the organisation and they will be accessed by both uniformed and support staff who are looking for progression through promotion.

5.3 Finally, work to explore apprenticeship for leadership and management at all levels is also in progress. All of this work aligns to moving forward the People Strategy.

ACFO GAVIN ELLIS
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