

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/20/20
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	16 DECEMBER 2020
SUBJECT OF REPORT	“SAFER TOGETHER” PROGRAMME – UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY OPERATING MODEL (SDOM) DECISIONS
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the progress as outlined in this report on implementing the Service Delivery Operating Model decisions approved by the Authority on 10 January 2020 be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>In 2019, an extensive public consultation exercise was undertaken on those proposals for the Service Delivery Operating Model (SDOM) workstream of the “Safer Together” programme.</p> <p>The outcome of this consultation was considered at an Extraordinary Meeting on 10 January 2020, with the Authority subsequently approving a number of measures to reallocate resources to support implementation of the new Service Delivery Operating Model.</p> <p>This paper now outlines progress to date in implementing those decisions.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	As indicated in report DSFRA/20/1 to the Authority Extraordinary meeting held on 10 January 2020 and in this report.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	Where required, implementation of the Service Delivery Operating Model decisions have been subject to People Impact Assessments (which incorporate equalities, risk and benefits assessments) for Service staff and Community Risk Assessments for impacts on communities.
APPENDICES	A. Supporting Information
BACKGROUND PAPERS	<p>A. Report DSFRA/20/1 (Safer Together Programme [Service Delivery Operating Model] – Outcomes of the Consultation on Reallocation of Resources) to the Authority Extraordinary meeting held on 10 January 2020 and the Minutes of that meeting.</p> <p>B. Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018-22.</p> <p>C. Fire & Rescue Plan 2018 – 2022.</p> <p>D. HMICFRS Inspection report of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service 2018-19.</p>

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The Authority has been advised previously of the inspection undertaken of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (“the Service”) in 2019 by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The resultant HMICFRS report, received in December 2020, outlined that:

“An efficient fire and rescue service will manage its budget and spend money properly and appropriately. It will align its resources to its risk. It should try to keep costs down without compromising public safety. Future budgets should be based on robust and realistic assumptions. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service’s overall efficiency requires improvement”...

“The service covers both urban and very rural areas. The stations are located based on historic levels of fire cover, despite the changing level of risk. For example, there are stations that attend fewer than two incidents a week. The service has recently launched its Safer Together programme to match resources to risk”.

- 1.2. This paper provides the Authority with a progress report on implementing the decisions made in January 2020 to re-allocate resources within the Service area as part of the Service Delivery Operating Model of the “Safer Together” programme. In summary, significant progress has been made despite having to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic during this period.

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The reallocation of resources required the Authority to approve proposals for public consultation as the outcomes of this work indicated changes to the existing provision of fire engines and fire stations across Devon and Somerset. The Authority resolved to approve these proposals for public consultation at its meeting on 28 June 2019 (Minute DSFRA/17 refers).

- 2.2. The consultation ran for 12 weeks, from 3 July to 22 September 2020. At an extraordinary meeting held on 10 January 2020, the Authority considered the feedback and analysis of the consultation and resolved (Minute DSFRA/32 refers):

(a). that, having taken account of analysis of the outcome of the consultation on the reallocation of resources to support the new Service Delivery Operating Model, the following be approved:

- (i). deferral of the decision to implement day crewing at Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paignton subject to a revised 24/7 crewing model, including roving appliances, being agreed with the Fire Brigades Union before the end of the 2019-20 financial year;
- (ii). closure of Budleigh Salterton fire station, with affected firefighters allowed to respond from Exmouth fire station;

- (iii). relocation of Topsham fire station to Service Headquarters and relocation of one fire appliance to Middlemoor fire station (both existing Topsham fire engines to be relocated to Service Headquarters until an on-call crew can be established at Middlemoor), with a report on the proposed disposal of the Topsham site to be presented to the Authority at a future date;
- (iv). replacement of the third fire engines at Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil with alternative vehicles;
- (v). removal of the second fire engines from Crediton, Lynton, Martock and Totnes; and
- (vi). introduction of variable fire engine availability dependent on risk, as set out in paragraph 9.14 of report DSFRA/20/1.

2.3. The update information set out in this paper was initially contained in report CSCPC/20/6 submitted to the meeting of the Community Safety & Corporate Planning Committee on 11 December 2020.

3. UPDATE ON PROGRESS

Deferral of day crewing at Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paignton (Minute DSFRA/32(a)(i))

- 3.1. As indicated, this was dependent on agreement with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) to the introduction of a revised 24/7 crewing model, including roving vehicle.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.

- 3.4. 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.
- 3.5. 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.
- 3.6. 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))

- 3.7. 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.
- 3.8. As reported to the last meeting (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.
- 3.9. 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))

- 3.10. The relocation of Topsham fire station to Service Headquarters fire station (Station 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.

- 3.11. 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.
- 3.12. 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))***
- 3.13. 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))***
- 3.14. The removal of the second fire engines from Martock and Totnes was completed at the end of March 2020.
- 3.15. 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))***
- 3.16. 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.
- 3.17. 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.
- 3.18. 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.

- 3.19. 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.
- 3.20. 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.
- 3.21. 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.
- 3.22. 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.
- 3.23. 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.
- 3.24. 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.
- 3.25. 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.
- 3.26. 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.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1. To comply with the National Framework (a statutory requirement of the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004), the Authority is required to approve an Integrated Risk Management Plan. This IRMP is the key strategic basis for ensuring that the Authority fulfils its statutory duty to provide an effective and efficient fire and rescue service for the communities it serves.

- 4.2. The “Safer Together” Programme is the strategic mechanism for dealing with many of the risks identified in this Authority’s IRMP. Progress against the proposals approved in the Safer Together Programme are positive with the majority of activities completed and all others on track for completion during 2021. This will mitigate further those risks previously identified in the IRMP 2018-2022 and pave the way for a revised IRMP, with a new timescale, to be developed for approval by the Authority.

LEE HOWELL
Chief Fire Officer

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Section 21 of the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 (“the Act”) requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework. The Framework:
- (a). must set out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions;
 - (b). may contain guidance to fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of any of their functions; and
 - (c). may contain any other matter relating to fire and rescue authorities or their functions that the Secretary of State considers appropriate.
- 1.2. Section 22 of the Act provides the Secretary of State with power to intervene in any fire and rescue authority which it is considered is failing, or is likely to fail, to act in accordance with the Framework.
- 1.3. To comply with the Framework, each fire and rescue authority is required to produce:
- (a). An Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP);
 - (b). An annual statement of assurance; and
 - (c). Financial plans
- 1.4. Approval of an Integrated Risk Management Plan is one of the key decisions for a fire and rescue authority. The IRMP is the strategic risk analysis of the foreseeable fire and rescue risks faced by the community served by the fire and rescue authority. In
- 1.5. In approving an IRMP, a fire and rescue authority is in effect acknowledging that the resources of a fire and rescue service will need to be considered in their entirety to ensure that the identified risks are mitigated against.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Between 2004 and 2017 the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (“the Service”) produced, for approval by the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority (“the Authority”) a corporate plan every year which incorporated the IRMP requirements alongside identified continuous improvements that the Service wished to make in reaction to self and peer assessments.

- 2.2. In January 2017 the [then] Director for Service Improvement established an officer working group to produce a standalone IRMP to support a long- term implementation of change and improvement that would influence the organisation for the future. This working group, chaired by an Area Manager, had the remit of:
 - (a). Researching actual risk faced by communities across Devon and Somerset;
 - (b). Quantifying data into a risk rating for measurement, enabling improvement and understanding how Service activities affected risk;
 - (c). Re-evaluating Service Protection, Prevention, and Response arrangements against actual risk; and
 - (d). Producing options for consideration.
- 2.3. The Community Safety & Corporate Planning Committee (“the Committee”) was advised of this at its meeting on 13 February 2017 (Minute *CSCPC/14 and report CSCPC/17/1 to the meeting refer).
- 2.4. There is a requirement for public consultation on the IRMP (once developed) prior to its approval by the Authority. At its meeting on 29 September 2017, the Committee considered a draft IRMP and resolved to recommend its approval (subject to any amendments to be made by the Chief Fire Officer following consultation with the Committee Chair) to the Authority for the purposes of public consultation (Minute *CSCPC/7 refers).
- 2.5. The Authority subsequently approved the plan for public consultation purposes at its meeting on 20 October 2017 (Minute DSFRA/40 refers). The subsequent public consultation ran for an eight week period, commencing on 1 November 2017 and closing on 31 December 2017.
- 2.6. The Committee initially considered feedback from the consultation at its meeting on 1 February 2018 (Minute CSCPC/9 refers) . The Authority then considered the outcome of the consultation, together with the views of the Committee, prior to approving an amended, final, IRMP 2018 – 2022 at its meeting on 16 February 2018 (Minutes DSFRA/63(b) and DSFRA/65 refer). This action discharged the Framework obligation of the Authority to approve an IRMP.
- 2.7. When recommending the IRMP 2018 – 2022 to the Authority for approval, the Committee also recommended that the Authority approve a revised planning framework which also provided for the development of a Fire & Rescue Plan (FRP) to complement the IRMP by identifying internal, organisational risks faced by the Service and how these should be addressed (Minute CSCPC/10 refers). This approach was also approved by the Authority at its meeting on 16 February 2018 (Minute DSFRA/63(b)(ii) refers).
- 2.8. The outcome of these decisions was to initiate the Service’s three - four year Change and Improvement Programme (subsequently named the “Safer Together” Programme) to give effect to the proposals contained in both the IRMP and the FRP.

3. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) 2018 – 2022

3.1. The IRMP sets out what fire related risks are faced by the communities of Devon and Somerset along with the current and proposed prevention, protection and response activities that the Service will undertake to mitigate and deal with those risks.

3.2. Following the assessment of fire related risk through the IRMP process, a gap analysis was carried out to consider any strategic issues that the Service may face in the coming years. This identified that the following six elements within the identified risks required further consideration in planning the strategic direction of the Service:

- An increasingly ageing population
- Common Health and Wellbeing risks
- Availability of On Call appliances
- The historical distribution of Service Delivery Resources
- An increasing demand for Emergency Medical response
- An increase in the number of serious fires affecting commercial premises

3.3. To mitigate against these risks, the Authority approved the strategic direction articulated in the IRMP as:

“To deliver the Fire and Rescue Service for the communities of Devon and Somerset over the next 5 years the Service will need to consider:

- The way our fire stations and appliances are crewed;
- Relocating some of our fire stations, appliances and staff to areas where risk is greatest;
- Investing in our Emergency Medical Response capacity;
- Ensuring that we collaborate with other Emergency Services; and
- Delivering more prevention and protection activity”.

4. FIRE & RESCUE PLAN (FRP)

4.1. In parallel with the IRMP, the FRP considered the risks facing the organisation and identified six priority areas for improvement:

Service Delivery – how to deliver the best possible prevention, protection and response services to keep communities safe.

People – ensuring the very best people are recruited, retained, supported and developed.

Value for Money and use of resources – ensuring the provision of value for money, making the most of Service assets, investing in improvement and planning for a sustainable future.

Governance – putting the right information, processes and people in place to help make the right decisions on all occasions.

Collaboration – seeking opportunities to work better with others to provide an improved service to shared communities.

Digital Transformation – making use of technology to provide the information needed, in the right way and developing smarter ways of working and thinking.

5. SAFER TOGETHER PROGRAMME

- 5.1. By cross referencing the risks and considerations identified in both the IRMP and the FRP, the Service was able to present a mandate for change and improvement for approval to the Authority via the Committee on 30 July 2018 (Minute DSFRA/16b refers).
- 5.2. This mandate was subsequently named the “Safer Together” Programme to allow for common referencing for staff and public consultation.
- 5.3. Following the establishment of clear programme and project governance mechanisms the “Safer Together” Programme has four key work streams:
1. Service Delivery Operating Model (SDOM);
 2. Fleet & Equipment (replacement);
 3. Data and Digital Transformation.
 4. People Development Workstream
- 5.4. The key focus for delivering mitigating actions against the IRMP is through the Service Delivery Operating Model work stream. Due to the volume and complexity of work involved in this area the work stream was split into two phases:
- Phase 1** – New duty systems and contracts for operational staff
- Phase 2** – Reallocation of resources
- 5.5. The introduction of new duty systems and contracts for operational staff has required consultation and negotiation with staff and the representative bodies with the focus on two proposals:
- (i). Pay for Availability – a new way of paying On Call firefighters to increase fire engine availability and provide a better work /life balance for staff; and
 - (ii). Revised arrangements of the existing Wholetime shift duty system and the introduction of a new complimentary day duty system – to release capacity from the workforce, increasing productivity and offering alternative career choices for staff.