

COMMUNITY SAFETY & CORPORATE PLANNING COMMITTEE

(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

11 December 2020

Present:

Councillors Redman (Chair), Colthorpe, Corvid, Eastman (Vice-Chair), Radford and Trail BEM.

Also in attendance in accordance with Standing Order 38:

Councillors Randall Johnson and Wheeler.

* **CSCPC/12** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

* **CSCPC/13** **Safer Together Programme Update**

The Committee received, for information, a report of the Director of Service Improvement (CSCPC/20/6) on progress with the Service “Safer Together” Programme. The Programme had four key workstreams, namely:

1. the Service Delivery Operating Model (SDOM);
2. Fleet and Equipment (replacement);
3. Data and Digital Transformation; and
4. People Development.

The Service Delivery Operating Model (SDOM) workstream comprised a number of strands aligned to decisions made by the Authority, following a 12 week public consultation, at its extraordinary meeting on 10 January 2020 (Minute DSFRA/32 refers). The report outlined progress made against each of the following strands:

- deferral of day crewing at Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paignton (dependent on agreement with the Fire Brigades Union on the introduction of a revised 24/7 crewing model). Introduction of a new crewing model had in part been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic but in the meantime the Service had recruited 34 firefighters on new contracts to provide the flexibility required and a further external recruitment process would be undertaken in 2021;
- closure of Budleigh Salterton fire station. This had been completed;
- relocation of Topsham fire station. This was being progressed with options for community use of the station to be disposed of being explored;

- replacement of third appliances at Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil. This was due for completion in January 2021 and had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- removal of second appliances from Crediton, Lynton, Martock and Totnes. Martock and Totnes was completed at the end of March 2020; Crediton and Lynton in October 2020; and
- introduction of variable fire engine availability dependent on risk. This was dependent on the introduction of Pay for Availability (P4A). 11 stations in total had been identified for this, with two risk-dependent stations having transitioned in October 2020, with third planned for January 2021. The remaining 8 stations would transfer at the same time as moving to P4A.

The Fleet and Equipment workstream had seen progress with medium rescue pump replacement (with the first batch of vehicles expected in Spring 2021), receipt of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), anticipated to be in service in January to February 2021, and Phase 1 of the project to upgrade the functionality of the Service fleet management system.

The Management of Risk Information (MORI) project was now being progressed as part of the Data and Digital Transformation workstream, together with transformation of the Service's data architecture to ensure a consistent approach across all operational areas.

The People Development workstream was focussed on access to a performance toolkit to record evidence of staff progression and a review of the existing promotion processes and structure, with a number of development "talent pools" being established for uniformed and non-uniformed staff seeking progression.

In debating this report, the following points were raised:

- that, for future reports, a simplified "RAG" rating to indicate progress against each of the workstreams would be helpful;
- that Authority Members may find it helpful to receive an information briefing on the principles behind and usage of roving appliances;
- that, while developmental opportunities to date had in the main been identified by one-to-one line management meetings informing personal and professional development (PPD), moving forwards it was intended that the introduction of the new performance framework would facilitate the use of more quantitative data and analysis of subsequent effectiveness.

* **CSCPC/14 Grenfell Recommendations Progress Report**

The Committee received, for information, a report of the Director of Service Delivery (CSCPC/20/7) on progress by the Service in implementing recommendations from the Grenfell Phase 1 Inquiry and use of additional grant funding.

Some 26 of the Grenfell recommendations applied to the fire sector including the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (“the Service”). The report indicated that 8 of these were completed. Of the 26 ongoing, 18 were due to be completed by the end of December 2020, with the remainder to be completed by 1 April 2021. There were no high-rise residential properties with aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding in the Service area. Cladding had been removed from the three Devonport Towers in Plymouth and had been fitted with sprinklers and a full evacuation system. As such, they were now designated as “low risk” by the National Fire Protection Board. Within the Service area there were 172 buildings meeting the high-rise definition for operational planning and response. These buildings included residential, student accommodation, hotels and others.

The Service had received grant funding totalling £455,125 to support the outcomes of Grenfell in addition to general improvements in fire safety standards and outcomes as follows:

- Building Risk Review Programme (£60,000);
- Protection Uplift Programme Grant (£256,909); and
- Grenfell Infrastructure Fund (£138,216).

The Building Risk Review Programme had been developed by the National Fire Chiefs’ Council (NFCC) to support the Fire Protection Board in reviewing fire safety arrangements for all “in scope” high rise residential buildings over 18 metres by December 2021. The Service had identified a multi-disciplinary team (protection; prevention; risk; communication and engagement) and developed an action plan to deliver the programme for the 89 buildings identified in the Service area. To date, 21 of these buildings had been inspected, with the remainder to be addressed by September 2021.

In response to a question, the Director of Service Delivery advised that none of the buildings inspected to date had any composite cladding albeit that there could be other, “hidden”, construction issues that were within the building engineering rather than fire service remit at present. Progression of the Building Safety Bill could, however, see the introduction of a new compliance regime.

In response to other issues raised during the debate, the Director of Service Delivery also advised:

- that the Service was a statutory consultee only for building developments. There was, however, the opportunity for Members to promote fire safety issues while discharging their roles (e.g. planning) at constituent authorities. Members commented that, in this respect, the provision of appropriate awareness of fire safety issues to planning committees might be beneficial;
- that a dynamic risk assessment existed for individual buildings to inform the most appropriate way of responding to an incident. While early evacuation would always be a high priority, this would need to be achieved as safely as possible. The Service adhered to NFCC guidance in this area.

The report identified that the Protection Uplift funding was for use in bolstering fire protection capability and delivery in line with the locally-agreed Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and risk-based inspection programmes. The funding could be used for a range of associated issues such as upskilling of operational staff and hardware acquisitions (e.g. tablets and body cameras). The Service was developing an action plan to provide increased numbers of Building Safety Officers alongside increasing qualifications for existing staff. Further details would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Some 319 smoke-hoods and associated equipment had been purchased using Grenfell Infrastructure funding. The smoke-hoods would be used to complement other Service activities to secure, where required, safe evacuations from premises.

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

The Meeting started at 10.15 am and finished at 11.27 am