

Police, Fire and Crime Panel – 26th October 2020

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service

Safety Plan 2020 - 2024 Update Report

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report is to update the Police and Crime Panel on the delivery of the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan (SP - Integrated Risk Management Plan - IRMP). The publication of the Safety Plan fulfils the legislative obligations as defined within the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England 2018.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Panel note the update on the delivery of the SP 2020 – 2024 and make comment as appropriate.

3. Background

3.1 The IRMP is a document that each Fire and Rescue Authority in England is required to produce. Whilst there is no specific template that the Authority is required to follow, there is guidance detailed within the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England 2018 on the content of the plan. Each plan must:

- reflect up to date risk analyses including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the authority;
- demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities, through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a way that makes best use of available resources;
- outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;
- set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat; cover

at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the authority is able to deliver the requirements set out in this Framework;

- reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners; and
- be easily accessible and publicly available.

3.2 Following the transfer of governance from the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority to the Staffordshire Commissioner, a new Safety Plan 2020-2024 was developed which was published in August 2020.

3.3 The Safety Plan was designed to underpin the Staffordshire Commissioners Fire and Rescue Plan and four priorities for the Service were determined following consultation in 2020 across Staffordshire.

3.4 The four priorities that the Service is delivering against are: -

3.4a) Prevention and Early Intervention

We aim to develop a detailed community risk profile of Staffordshire so that we can use our resources in the most efficient and effective way.

3.4b) Protecting Staffordshire and its people

We aim to reduce and remove risks in communities by using a combination of prevention, protection and response activities and help make Staffordshire a safer place to live, work and visit.

3.4c) Public Confidence

We aim to report regularly on our progress and communication openly about our plans so that, they are clearly understood, meet our legal duties and provide assurance to the public in a way which is transparent and easy to scrutinise.

In order to demonstrate the Services performance against the key measures as detailed within the Safety Plan 2020-2024.

The key measures as detailed are: -

- Total number of incidents attended
- Number of accidental dwelling fires
- Number of accidental fire deaths and injuries
- Number of Safe and Well Visits completed
- Number of accidental business property fires
- Number of road traffic collisions (RTCs) attended
- Number of people killed or seriously injuries (KSIs) at RTCs
- Number of automatic fire alarms we attend

3.4d) Service Reform

We aim to develop and support a diverse, healthy and highly professional workforce who are motivated and empowered to improve our Service.

4. Progress to Date

4.1 Prevention and Early Intervention

The impact of C19 on the work undertaken by the Service has been and continues to be significant and as such the way in which the Service has delivered its prevention and early intervention activities has been amended in line with the various C19 restrictions applied over the few months.

4.1a) As previously reported the Service developed an on line delivery of Safe and Sound to support families while children were being educated at home. The plan was to follow a similar format to our on station delivery with partners delivering their workshops all themed around supporting communities to make informed and positive lifestyle choices, improving their health, safety and wellbeing.

In May the Service launched Safe and Sound via LearnLive with the support of numerous partners. Consequently the Service has now committed to delivering 40 weekly term time session for the current academic year. Viewer figures for the first two week averaged 1250, however this represents the number of devices watching and therefore if a class is watching the viewer numbers are likely to be much higher. The Service is also going to deliver four seasonal specials with the first being a winter driving special is being planned for coincide with road safety week. The Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership are providing support and resources, with the target audience for this special being elderly drivers.

The Service is currently developing a new interactive workshop focusing on secondary fires for KS2 pupils designed to give a real insight to the impact and consequences of secondary fires. A hazard perception immersive workshop is also being developed designed for new drivers which can be used as a stand-alone Safe and Sound pod event.

The Service will be launching a streaming live approach to Safe and Sound in the New Year and schools will be invited to attend their event, which has been pre-arranged. Partners will deliver their workshop live to schools in the way a physical event would have taken place with schools attending fire stations. Local Authority partners are supporting this streaming approach through funding and the delivery of workshops.

Looking into the future the Service will be adopting a blended approach to the delivery of Safe and Sound which will include physical delivery at a fire station or other premise along with a streaming option. LearnLive will continue to be

used for special programmes which will provide us the opportunity to expand our existing audiences and test new audiences.

- 4.1b) As a result of the C19 national lockdown, in March, all Prince's Trust face-to-face programmes were cancelled however the team continued to run group chats, workshops and extensive 1-1's online to support the students with their transition. All students completed the programme with a full certificate which was nationally agreed by The Prince's Trust.

From April to June, a socially distanced programme was developed (maximum ten students) with the view to return to delivery when schools were due to return in September. In addition to this, a fully digital version of the programme was also developed by the staff to pre-empt any local lockdowns with the foresight of not being able to deliver the face-to-face programmes.

During August, a digital Get Started with Film programme was delivered online with eleven young people across Staffordshire participating. They were also supported through online 1-1's into education and other training providers.

In September, Stafford the team programme in Stafford started as a physical course, with ten students and are currently in their fundraising week as of writing this. The Fairbridge programme (now called Explore) returned at Cannock Community Fire Station with ten students. Finally in October, the team programme in Cannock started.

- 4.1c) During the lockdown period access to community facilities had been restricted in line with Government guidance. More recently a small number of trusted partners had been provided with access to some community facilities around the county.

In addition to the limited and restricted access the Service has also provided two sites for C19 antibody testing to take place in support of the local health providers and local authority's health and social care teams. Work was conducted with the Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust which resulted in daily antibody testing provision being available at Sandyford and Rising Brook Community Fire Stations. As part of the agreement that was reached for the testing offer to be made available to all staff within Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service free of charge as part of the national provision to a set number of organisations (FRS's were not included in the nationally pre-determined list, this was negotiated locally).

The Service has also explored the option of the use of car parking facilities to support mobile testing units for C19 testing. To date these facilities have not yet been used however in the event of this taking place full risk assessments and processes will be in place to ensure the safety of those working on the site and those attending for a test.

4.2 Protecting Staffordshire and its people

- 4.2a) The Community Sprinkler project continues to see progress being made in respect of buildings of 5 or more floors being retro-fit with sprinkler systems. Stoke on Trent City Council have now commenced work on the next phase of their sprinkler programme. The focus has moved from Hanley to Stoke and the buildings forming part of this work are Southern Court, Dibden Court, Penkhull Court and Honeywall Court. To provide more flexibility, work is going ahead concurrently across the buildings and upon completion, these will represent another 135 flats. The current timeline has completion of all 4 buildings scheduled for May next year.

Further to this progress, Midland Heart have agreed to enter into a collaborative project with the Service in respect of Charnwood House and Andrews House in Lichfield. The Service will be providing technical and customer support along with some funding which will see 71 flats retro-fit with sprinklers. As part of the agreement to support these installation Midland Heart have also agreed to install sprinklers into a new development which is currently under construction in Lichfield.

- 4.2b) The Service has needed to adapt its approach to delivering fire safety inspections which have ensured those premises where serious or imminent danger to life from fire exist receive the same level of enforcement should it be required. Protection teams have followed national guidance from the NFCC and tailored them to local needs to ensure the best possible outcomes for our communities. This has involved carrying out over 350 remote telephone fire safety audits focussing on premises providing care to vulnerable residents, or those hospitality venues providing accommodation to rough sleepers through the pandemic. 27 full fire safety audits have been carried out on those premises deemed most at risk. Of those, 8 have received either a Prohibition Notice or Enforcement Notice and 2 premises are currently having prosecution files compiled due to serious breaches of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

There have also been some unique challenges in regards to the building of a number of temporary structures across the county. These included temporary mortuaries to deal with mass fatalities, a number of COVID-19 testing facilities, and alterations to hospitals to enclose bed spaces to prevent the spread of the disease and temporary secure accommodation at local prisons.

Due to the dynamic nature of the pandemic, the NFCC and Local Authority Building Control relaxed compliance with Approved Document B and the suite of Health Technical Memoranda, and a pragmatic, proportionate and common-sense approach was taken to support the local requirement in unprecedented circumstances. However, the need for reasonable fire safety measures was to be considered with the intention of the documents above

being followed and local judgement made by Fire Protection Officers as to their compliance.

Joint inspections were carried out alongside colleagues from the County Council across the county at all new structures and a satisfactory level of fire safety precautions was evident across all facilities. Operational crews were also made aware of their presence, and the unique challenges that they may pose.

4.2c) As part of the Government approach to dealing with the outcomes of phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower inquiry report funding was made available to the Service aligned to the delivery of fire inspections in high rise residential buildings and high risk residential buildings. This funding amounted to circa £200k which is ring-fenced for use to deliver the following: -

- The building risk review programme which will deliver a review of all high-rise buildings above 18m across England by the end of December 2021;
- An uplift of fire protection arrangements locally (through upskilling of firefighters in addition to the 3 new fire safety inspecting officers);
- Equipment purchase (smoke-hoods) and delivery against the local Grenfell recommendations action plan

The Service will be using some of this grant to deliver accredited fire safety training for Operational Managers. This increased knowledge of crews in the built environment would in turn ensure more informed decision making on the incident ground therefore improving firefighter safety as well as allowing for a greater capacity of fire safety work to be undertaken across the organisation widening the scope of the Risk Based Inspection Programme and ensuring compliance with the NFCC Competency Framework for fire safety regulators.

4.3d) As a result of the C19 national lockdown the Service moved to a different approach for the delivery of our Safe and Well programme. The approach was in line with the strategic intentions set by the NFCC for the delivery of prevention activities. The revised approach used the following; telephone advice only, telephone advice and smoke alarms dropped off at the door for the occupier to fit and for residents with an immediate threat to life telephone advice and a full safe and week physical visit. This approach was implemented during April to June with full visits recommencing in July.

Physical visits were undertaken by Community Safety Officers and technicians during July, August and September however as a result of the national alert level being returned to level 4 the Service as of September 23rd returned to the methodology described above. The Community Advice Team continue to accept referrals, but book the relevant intervention depending on the individual's vulnerabilities.

All households who received telephone advice only will be offered a full visit during 2021. Information relating to the performance of the Service in respect

of these visits is detailed within section 4.3a of this report.

During the term of this SP the Service will be following the recently agreed national approach to the delivery of fire safety in the home. This will result in the Service adopting the standard home fire safety visit as defined by the National Fire Chiefs Council which will be enhanced locally where the need is identified to include a safe and well visit.

4.3 Public Confidence

4.3a In order to ensure improving outcomes for the communities of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire key performance measures are reported on a quarterly basis and compared to the same quarter from the previous financial year.

- The Service attended 2360 incidents during Q1 20/21 compared to 2307 in Q1 19/20. This is an increase of 53 across the quarter which represents a 2.2% increase against the time period of 19/20. Over the quarter there have been an increase in the number secondary fires incidents to false alarms good intent however there has been a decrease in special service calls and RTC's. There is no doubt that the C19 lockdown has resulted in the increase as described above due to people burning rubbish and garden waste at home.

During Q2 20/21 the Service attended 2154 incidents compared to 2294 in Q2 19/20. This is a decrease of 140 across the quarter which represents a 6% decrease against the time period of 19/20. Over the last 5 quarters the trend is static.

- The Service attended 134 accidental dwelling fires in Q1 20/21 compared to 140 during Q1 19/20. Of these incidents 79 were classified as low severity and 55 as high severity, in comparison to 95 low and 45 high in Q1 19/20.

During Q2 20/21 the Service attended 117 accidental dwelling fires compared to 154 during Q2 19/20. Of these incidents 73 were classified as low severity and 44 as high severity, in comparison to 101 low and 53 high in Q2 19/20.

The top causes of these fires remain the same as previous quarters; cooking related and faulty equipment.

- During Q1 20/21 there were 2 injuries and 0 fatalities which occurred in accidental dwelling fires in comparison to 6 injuries and 0 fatalities during Q1 19/20.

During Q2 20/21 there were 4 injuries and 0 fatalities which occurred in accidental dwelling fires in comparison to 0 injuries and 3 fatalities during

Q2 19/20. In all of these cases the individuals concerned fell within one or more of the SAME categories.

- During Q1 20/21 the Service completed 85 full safe and well visits supplemented by 997 interventions which included telephone advice with smoke alarms being delivered to the property where appropriate. During Q2 20/21 the Service completed a total of 925 full safe and well visits supplemented with a further 973 interventions as previously described.

The Service subsequently made 100 referrals to partners for support for residents as a result of the outcomes of the Safe and Well visit.

- The Service attended 21 accidental business fires in Q1 20/21 in comparison to 31 in Q1 19/20. During Q2 20/21 the Service attended 41 accidental business fires in comparison to 34 in Q2 19/20.

The top cause of this type of incident is faulty equipment which accounted for 16 of these incidents. Over the last 5 quarters the trend for this type of incident is static.

- The Service attended 94 RTC's during Q1 20/21 in comparison to 189 during Q1 19/20. The Service attended 169 RTC's during Q2 20/21 in comparison to 178 during Q2 19/20.

The Service does not attend all RTC's that occur across the county therefore this figure does not represent the totality of RTC's experienced across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. Of these incidents crews assisted with the removal of persons from vehicles on 33 occasions, whilst on 168 occasion's crews made either the vehicle or the area safe.

- The Service attended 322 automatic fire alarm signals classed as unwanted fire signals during Q1 20/21 in comparison to 381 attended during Q1 19/20.

During Q2 20/21 the Service attended 380 incidents classed as unwanted fire signals in comparison to 409 during Q2 19/20. The Service introduced a revised automatic fire alarm policy which defines the methodology the Service adopts when in receipt of these types of calls. Fire Control utilise a call challenge process for automatic fire alarms and during this period a further 1071 calls were not attended as they were screened out by the process of call challenge.

4.4 Service Reform

- 4.4a) The Service was due to start a whole-time firefighter recruit course in September with the expectation that the recruitment and selection process would have been completed during the summer of 2020. Due to the C19

restrictions the recruitment and selection process had to be postponed and it re-commenced in August and was completed in October. The process was completed in accordance with C19 secure arrangements and 378 individuals were invited to undertake job-related tests. Following this phase of the recruitment process 183 individuals were invited to attend the assessment centre which involved a group discussion, presentation and interview. The final phase saw 94 individuals invited to undertake the fitness tests and medicals.

A total of 36 individuals have been invited to join one of two recruit courses scheduled to take place between January 2021 and September 2021. A further 16 individuals have been offered a conditional place on a course scheduled for January 2022.

At this point in time the need for this course will be determined by the outcome of the implementation of the remedy for the Sargeant/McCloud pension legal outcomes.

- 4.4b) The Service has recently published its Digital Strategy which is underpinned by the implementation of two core IT software platforms, Microsoft 365 and Infographics/FireWatch. These systems will rationalise the current Service provision and move to interoperable, scalable and complementary products which will reduce duplication, automate connections, streamline workflows and reduce the effort and resources needed across all departments.

The Service has 5 key principles which act as the foundation for the Digital Strategy moving forwards:

- Enable anytime, anyplace working
- Provide the right information to the right people at the right time
- Allow collaborative and connected working
- Provide resilience and security
- Rationalise all the systems and applications

- 4.4c) The Service has recently introduced a high potential development programme designed to support the highest performing individuals with their development and prepare them for more senior roles. Following participation in a promotion assessment centre individuals will be invited to join the programme which will last between 18 and 24 months and tailored to meet the candidate's needs in order to prepare them for two roles higher than their current role.

The programme will run from January each year and the Service expects to have 9 people on each cohort, with 3 firefighters, 3 supervisory manager and 3 middle managers.

The programme will use the NFCC leadership framework and four leadership levels to assess a candidates needs and develop their individual development pathway.

Conclusion

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel will continue to receive updates in line with their proposed work plan for the coming year and as requested.

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