

**Police, Fire and Crime Panel – 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

**Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service**

**Safety Plan 2020 - 2024 Update Report**

Report of the Police & Crime 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.

Since the previous report the delivery of online lessons has continued and the programme has seen the roll-out of weekly LearnLive sessions running during the academic terms. During the first term of this current academic year circa 24500 individuals devices accessed the sessions. It is likely that the viewing figures are much higher however as we know that schools classes access the sessions via a single device. The sessions are also available on demand remain part of the library of LearnLive programmes.

In addition there are 4 seasonal specials that have been scheduled with the first taking place in November covering winter driving. This programme continues to be promoted on social media when adverse weather is predicted. The remaining 3 specials will be aimed at KS1, KS2 and Olive Branch training.

Live streaming of Safe and Sound is scheduled to start from a pod based at Stone Community Fire Station after Easter 2021. This will enable schools to attend their Safe and Sound event which will include partners and be based on 20 minute live workshops. Funding and resources to enable this approach has been secured through the Service, Staffordshire County Council, South Staffordshire District Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

An immersive secondary fire workshop has been developed aimed at KS2 pupils. This will give real insight to young people as to the impact and consequences of secondary fire. Once the current restrictions are reduced the workshop will be piloted within the pod environment.

The Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership are working with Immersive Interaction to create a Hazard Perception workshop aimed at new drivers. Funding has been provided by the SSRP and the Service and this workshop will be available to be used as a stand-alone pod delivery, and as part of Safe and Sound events aimed at pre and new drivers.

- 4.1b) Since the previous update the Princes Trust programmes remain affected by a number of C19 restrictions with restrictions on participant numbers and differing forms of delivery from face-to-face and virtual being deployed. Team programmes has been delivered in Cannock and Stafford with a total of 18 participants. The success of the programme continues to be demonstrated will all 8 of the participants in the Stafford programme gaining employment or going into further training as a result of their attendance on the course.

The Cannock team programme concluded in January with the final 3 weeks being delivered online in accordance with the national lockdown requirements.

- 4.1c) As a result of C19 the Service moved to a different approach for the delivery of our Safe and Well programme. The approach is 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.

Based on the changes to the C19 tier systems the Service has deployed its prevention arrangements in line with C19 level/tier in place. In addition where lock outbreaks were experienced the Service took this into account in respect of the delivery of physical safe and well visits.

## **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 almost concluded the retro-fitting of Southern Court and Dibden Court and Penkhull Court are expected to be by the end of March. The final block in this phase of their retro-fit programme, Honeywall Court is expected to be completed by May.

The collaboration with Midland Heart which will see the retrofitting of sprinklers in two of their properties, both located in Lichfield continues to progress. The current lockdown however has slowed the progress of this work.

It is also worth noting that as part of the tall building inspection programme, fire safety audits were carried out at both of these buildings in December. The

satisfactory outcome has no bearing on the sprinkler project as Midland Heart recognise the sprinklers are intended as an extra layer of protection.

- 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 included physical visits and telephone audits alongside the completion of building regulation consultations and licensing consultations.

The Service has adapted its protection delivery model to take into account. In November the Service attended a fire involving a flat on the fourth floor of an eight story building, Ridware House, which caused severe damage to the flat involved and smoke-logging to other flats and common parts of the building. As a result of the damage caused by the fire and issues associated with the fire risk assessment the Service issued a prohibition notice on the managing agent of the property. This resulted in the temporary rehoming of the residents of the entire block with a number being supported through the local authority Lichfield District Council whilst others made their own arrangements.

The prohibition notice remain in place from the 12<sup>th</sup> November until the 2<sup>nd</sup> December at which stage the Service lifted this notice and put in place an enforcement notice. This allowed residents to return with a range of additional fire safety control measures in place to ensure their safety whilst the managing agent addresses the contents of the enforcement notice. This includes the use of a waking watch whose role is to monitor the fire alarms in the 4 towers and should a fire occur ascertain the location of the flat on fire and ensure that the front door and lobby doors are closed.

Three further enforcement notices are in place in three additional blocks of flats in Lichfield that the managing agent has responsibility for.

The Service continue to work with the managing agent whilst ensuring sufficient and appropriate progress is made against the requirements of the enforcement notices.

- 4.2c) Following the incident in Lichfield and the identification of a number of issues with the fire risk assessments the Service has re-inspected 47 of the 48 buildings classified as tall buildings.

This programme of re-inspections will ensure that the responsible person has taken into consideration all the required aspects of the agreed recommendations following the Hackett review and the report from phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower inquiry.

The themes in relation to common issues being discovered during these inspections include front doors and self-closures. There is also a number of tall buildings which have conflicting strategies posed by the fire alarm system

installed and the evacuation strategy from the building. A communal alarm is not the desired approach for a 'stay put' policy due to the confusion it causes residents. This situation has been found to be replicated across the County and our Protection Teams will be working with the housing providers and responsible persons to ensure the alarm system is suitable for the evacuation strategy.

### 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 1712 incidents during Q3 20/21 compared to 2041 in Q3 19/20. This is a decrease of 329 across the quarter which represents a 16 % decrease against the time period of 19/20.

Over the quarter the largest reduction has been in primary fires, special service calls and false alarms. Over the last five quarters the trend in respect of all incidents being attended is showing a slightly downward position.

- The Service attended 132 accidental dwelling fires in Q3 20/21 compared to 141 during Q3 19/20. Of these incidents 70 were classified as low severity and 62 as high severity, in comparison to 90 low and 51 high in Q3 19/20. The top causes of these fires remain the same as the previous quarter; cooking related and faulty equipment. Over the last 5 quarters the trend remains in a downward direction.
- During Q3 20/21 there were 5 injuries and 2 fatalities which occurred in accidental dwelling fires in comparison to 2 injuries and 2 fatalities during Q3 19/20. In one of these cases all but two of the individuals concerned fell within one or more of the SAME categories.
- During Q3 20/21 1307 safe and well visits were completed in comparison to 7001 in Q3 19/20. Due to the C19 pandemic revised prevention arrangements were established resulting in safe and well visits been stopped with the exception of where an immediate risk to life was identified.

Since the commencement of the first lockdown in March 2020 the Service approach has included telephone audits, the issuing of equipment and advice for people to install themselves and where necessary a physical visit through our prevention team.

The Service risk stratifies the county and then at household level determines the actual stratification level the household falls into, gold, silver

or bronze. This approach ensures the most vulnerable are targeted and receive a bespoke visit from a crew, technician or volunteer.

- The Service attended 30 accidental business fires in Q3 20/21 in comparison to 40 in Q3 19/20. The top cause of this type of incident is faulty equipment and over the last 5 quarters the trend for this type of incident is in a downward position.
- The Service attended 166 RTC's during Q3 20/21 in comparison to 179 during Q3 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 22 occasions, whilst on 107 occasion's crews made either the vehicle or the area safe.
- The Service attended 338 automatic fire alarm signals classed as unwanted fire signals during Q3 20/21 in comparison to 409 attended during Q3 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 quarter a further 497 calls were not attended as they were screened out by the process of call challenge. Over the last 5 quarters the trend for this type of incident is in a downward direction and the top 3 types of premise being attended are residential in nature.

#### **4.4 Service Reform**

- 4.4a) The Service has been part of the working group which has established a Core Code of Ethics in conjunction with the National Employers through the Local Government Association. The development of this core code has been in response to the following recommendation made in the HMICFRS State of Fire Report 2019: -

*By December 2020, the National Fire Chiefs Council, with the Local Government Association, should produce a code of ethics for fire and rescue services. The code should be adopted by every service in England and considered as part of each employee's progression and annual performance appraisal.*

The Core Code is due to be presented through the NFCC and LGA governance arrangements during February and March with publication due following this process. Recently the NFCC and the LGA have agreed for the APCC to be co-owners of the document.

The published Core Code will subsequently be reviewed alongside the Service's cultural message, the cultural framework, the staff code of conduct,

contracts of employment and other Service policy and procedures such as the appraisal policy. This will ensure that the contents of the core code are reflected throughout our existing policies and procedures.

4.4b) During the period of September to November 2020 HMICFRS conducted inspections into FRS individuals responses to C19 examining the following areas: -

- what is working well and what is being learnt;
- how the fire sector is responding to the COVID-19 crisis;
- how fire services are dealing with the problems they face; and
- what changes are likely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Service has now received its narrative letter from HMICFRS (attached for information) which states that the Service adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively, continuing to provide its statutory functions. The HMICFRS were particularly impressed with the service's preparations for the pandemic, especially that it had anticipated many of the pandemic's impacts and had put measures in place to mitigate them.

The letter further states that the Service gave additional support to the community during the first phase of the pandemic. It used its operational workforce to respond to emergencies, support vulnerable people in the community and help partner agencies. Non-operational staff also contributed to the work agreed under the tripartite agreement which meant the people of Staffordshire were well supported through the pandemic.

The Service was complemented on its approach to staff welfare during the pandemic and the communication of information which included issues relating to well-being. Finally HMICFRS recommend that the Service determine how it will adopt for the longer-term, the new and innovative ways of working introduced during the pandemic, to secure lasting improvements.

## **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.

**Matthew Ellis**  
**Staffordshire Commissioner**

**Contact Officer:** Rebecca Bryant

**Telephone:** 01785 898542

**Email:** [r.bryant@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:r.bryant@staffordshirefire.gov.uk)