

Environment Select Committee



5 December 2018

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Performance and Transformation Update

Purpose of report:

To provide the committee with details of the transformation programme being undertaken within SFRS to ensure that the service is aligned with good practice for a modern fire and rescue service.

Introduction:

This report is intended to inform the committee about the proposals to transform SFRS to meet the changes required of it nationally and the new vision of the council. Transformation will:

- Create an operating model that focusses on community risk reduction and collaboration.
- Shift our focus to community safety and resilience, by increasing our Prevention & Protection activities.
- Change the elements of our culture that do not support the future of the service.
- Respond to the recommendations of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection.
- Integrate the service into the Highways, Transport and Environment directorate and ensure it is aligned with the wider SCC vision.

Context of change:

1. There are a number of factors that are driving the need for change in the service. These are set out below:

Savings Plans

2. In 2016 SFRS proposed a number of changes to its response model, including the introduction of Initial Response Vehicles to replace some fire appliances and the closure of fire stations. In recent months it has become clear that these savings are not deliverable, and are not necessarily focussed on the right activities.

Effectiveness of Prevention and Protection Activity

3. Fire and Rescue services undertake three main functions:
 - Community Safety- focusing effort on education and prevention, including raising awareness amongst the most vulnerable in our community. The aim is to minimise serious injuries and loss of life across Surrey.
 - Business Safety - SFRS has dedicated teams and procedures in place to consult, regulate and educate businesses against national legislation. The aim is to prevent damage to property, heritage, the environment and prevent serious injuries and loss of life across Surrey.
 - Response - When a 999 emergency call is received, fire and rescue crews are sent out to attend and resolve the incident. The range of incidents attended is vast and is changing.
4. Whilst SFRS has always had a strong focus on its response activity it has not focused enough on the other two elements. It therefore needs to shift effort to prevention and protection activities whilst continuing to provide a strong and effective response. This approach is consistent with the council 2030 vision.

Collaboration

5. In October 2018 the Police and Crime Commissioner confirmed that he did not intend to pursue a change in governance of the fire service. This has been helpful in clarifying that SFRS will remain part of the County Council for the foreseeable future.
6. For some time, SFRS has been seeking to develop collaborative working with East and West Sussex Fire Services. This work has not progressed as far as had been hoped, and SFRS will need to determine how it can best move forward with this.
7. Collaboration between the other emergency services has also not progressed significantly, however there is now a much greater ambition amongst our partners to take this forward.

HMICFRS Inspection:

8. HMICFRS have recently started an inspection regime for fire and rescue services, with the aim of driving reform across the sector. The first tranche of these was undertaken over the summer, and SFRS was included in this.
9. The inspection looked at the following areas:

- Effectiveness - the operational service provided to the public (including prevention, protection, resilience, and response)
 - Efficiency - the efficiency of the service (how well it provides value for money, allocates resources to match risk, and collaborates with the police and ambulance services)
 - People - the organisational effectiveness of the service (how well it promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and ensures they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for the workforce and develops leadership and service capability)
10. The initial feedback we have received from the inspection reinforced the need for the service to continue to operate an effective response service, but has confirmed the need to focus greater effort on prevention and protection activity.
11. The inspection report will not be published until after 6 December. The report will be sent to the committee once published.

Transformation Programme:

12. To respond to the issues set out above, SFRS has developed a transformation programme that will aim to create a modern fire and rescue service with:
- An operating model focusing on community risk reduction
 - A shift to community safety and resilience by an increase of prevention & protection activities (SFRS have already integrated the Emergency Management Team to start this shift)
 - Ensuring SFRS have the right culture to deliver this new way of working
 - Focusing on transformation not savings
 - Implementing the recommendations of the HMICFRS report
13. Cabinet indicated their agreement to the proposed approach at an informal meeting in October 2018, and the transformation project was accepted on to the Councils transformation programme at the Change Management Board on 6 November 2018.
14. A copy of the final transformation business case for SFRS is included in Appendix A.

Consultation on Changes

15. Proposals for how SFRS will undertake its activities in the future will be set out in a new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

This will be the subject of a public consultation exercise in March 2019, with the new plan in place from October 2019.

Effectiveness of scrutiny:

16. The Fire Authority has a critical role in ensuring the effectiveness of SFRS. The scrutiny function is a critical element of this.
17. SFRS would welcome a discussion with the committee about how they could support the service as they go through their transformation programme.

Conclusions:

18. SFRS is embarking on a significant programme of change to create a modern fire and rescue service well placed to meet the needs of its residents and communities.
19. SFRS would like to work closely with the committee as it develops and implements this programme to ensure that effective scrutiny is in place.

Recommendations:

20. That the committee consider ways of supporting and scrutinising the SFRS programme of transformation.

Next steps:

21. The HMICRFS report to be circulated to committee on publication.
 22. Consultation on the new IRMP to begin in March 2019 with publication in October 2019.
-

Report contact:

Steve Owen- Hughes, Director of Community Protection and Emergencies
(Acting CFO)

Contact details:

Tel: 01737 733613
Email: steve.owenhughes@surreycc.gov.uk

Sources/background papers:

Appendix A - Full Business case for transformation