

Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee



1 July 2019

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Transformation Working Group Progress Report

Purpose of report:

To update the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee on progress made by the Fire Transformation Working Group in reviewing the 'Making Surrey Safer-Community Safety Plan' which proposes a number of changes to the way Surrey Fire and Rescue Service operates.

This report provides an outline on the Working Group's activity to-date. A formal public consultation closed on 26 May 2019 and the Cabinet will consider the feedback from the consultation and any proposed changes to the Fire and Rescue Service in September 2019.

Introduction:

1. At its meeting on 5 December 2018, the Environment Select Committee received a formal report from the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) on the performance of the service which included a brief update on the inspection undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The inspection findings and report can be found at the following link, <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/frs-assessment-2018-19-surrey/>.
2. It was apparent at this meeting that the service required transforming in order to improve performance standards. The Committee were informed of proposals for a service wide transformation programme focusing on prevention, protection and culture. At this meeting Members formally agreed to convene a Working Group to support the SFRS on its journey of transformation.
3. A Working Group was formally established by the Environment Select Committee at its meeting on 22 February 2019 with a specific remit to scrutinise and review the details of the 'Making Surrey Safer-Community Safety Plan' to ensure the plan and proposals are fit for purpose and supports the needs of Surrey residents. Following the conclusion of its scrutiny, the Working Group will make recommendations to the Cabinet. The Terms of Reference for the Fire Transformation Working Group are attached as Annex 1 to this report and provide a detailed outline of the scope and remit of the Working Group.

4. The Membership of the Working Group was agreed as the following:
 - Saj Hussain (Chairman)
 - Jan Mason
 - Tina Mountain
 - Chris Botten
 - Amanda Boote
 - Marisa Heath

5. The Working Group has met numerous times since it was first established hearing evidence from a diverse range of stakeholders in an effort to understand individuals and groups experiences of the Fire Service and views on the proposals contained within the 'Making Surrey Safer-Community Safety Plan'. Taking into account the Working Groups timescales for conducting research and meeting with stakeholders as described in Annex 1, the Working Group has targeted its call for evidence from a wide range of perspectives in an attempt to ensure that the outcomes from its work are both objective and balanced including VCFS organisations, business groups and nature and conservation groups. The majority of those whom have responded to the Working Groups call for evidence either have a keen interest in the Fire Service and/ or are impacted by the proposals contained within the document.

6. The evidence compiled must be collated and considered holistically before the Working Group is able to present its findings. It is therefore proposed that the Working Group's final report is considered by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2019. This interim report provides an outline of work undertaken by the Working Group to date for consideration and comment by Members of the Select Committee.

Work Undertaken by the Task Group to Date

7. Members would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have taken time to share their experiences with the Working Group which will help to shape the findings of this review.

8. The Working Group had an initial meeting on 14 March 2019 to review the 'Making Surrey Safer-Community Safety Plan' and identified and agreed key lines of enquiry to use when meeting stakeholders. As a starting point it was agreed that each stakeholder the Working Group met with would be questioned using the same lines of enquiry with an opportunity to ask supplementary questions.

9. The following lines of enquiry were formulated and agreed by the Working Group:

- a. How confident are you that the needs of the most vulnerable residents in Surrey have been addressed within the Community Safety Plan?
 - b. Is the community safety offer being proposed ambitious enough? Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service has appointed a community engagement and positive action officer to improve engagement with people whom it has found harder to reach.
 - c. What are your views on charging for non-emergencies (e.g. freeing trapped animals)? Do you think the service should adopt a formal cost recovery scheme?
 - d. How confident are you that the proposed response model (crewing and vehicle placement) is right for Surrey and will not have any adverse impact on the Fire and Rescue Service's ability to respond to emergencies? What actions will be taken to mitigate any risks?
 - e. Successful Community and Business Safety initiatives require strong partnership working. Do you think that partnership working can be strengthened any further within the Community Safety Plan?
10. Various methods were used to engage with stakeholders. The democratic services social media Twitter account was used to put out calls for evidence from residents interested in being involved in this work. A call for evidence was also sent to the Surrey Community Resilience Forum and VCFS Infrastructure Organisations operating within Surrey County Council. An email was sent from the Chairman of the Working Group to all County Councillors asking for suggestions of any organisations and groups the Working Group could make contact with to support this piece of work.
11. It is important to note that during the time the Working Group was gathering evidence a public consultation on the 'Making Surrey Safer-Community Safety Plan' was also taking place. This opened on 4 March 2019 and closed on 26 May 2019.
12. Specific organisations and groups identified in the Working Groups Terms of Reference were contacted on an individual basis asking if they would like to meet with the Working Group to consider the 'Making Surrey Safer-Community Safety Plan'. A total of 15 organisations and groups were contacted, of these 10 agreed to meet with the Working Group. Relevant documents associated with the plan and the lines of enquiry were sent to stakeholders before meetings took place. Those unable to meet with the Working Group were given the opportunity to submit evidence which would then be shared with the Working Group for review. The Working Group has met with the following stakeholders.

Table 1: Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder Name	Organisation	Date of Meeting
SFRS Leadership Team (Steve Owen-Hughes, Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, Julie Pickford)	SFRS	27 March 2019
Lee Belsten	Surrey Fire Brigades Union (FBU)	10 April 2019
Clare Burgess	Surrey Coalition of Disabled People	29 April 2019
Louise Punter	Surrey Chambers of Commerce	7 May 2019
Hugh Bryant	Esher and Walton Labour Party/ Cobham Area Foodbank	7 May 2019
Amanda Carcary	Red Cross	7 May 2019
Alan Palmer	Walton on Thames Trading Alliance/ UK Fire Association	7 May 2019
Paul Couchman	Save our Services Surrey	14 May 2019
Neil Odin	Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service	11 June 2019
SFRS Staff Members (6 members of staff including front line and back office staff)	SFRS	14 June 2019

Conclusions

13. The Task Group has heard the views of 17 stakeholders between March and June 2019. For a small Working Group with limited resources, Members were satisfied with the number of stakeholders that came forward. Numerous attempts have been made by the Working Group to engage with the various stakeholders impacted by the proposals, not all successful. Where engagement has not been possible, further attempts have been made by the Working Groups Support Officer to engage with these stakeholders.
14. Importantly, Members have been given access to a diverse range of perspectives due to the willingness of the stakeholders listed to share their views with the Working Group. This will ensure that the Working Group's findings are informed, balanced and robust.
15. Key themes and messages arising from meetings with stakeholders include:

- a. The need for public consultation documents associated with the 'Making Surrey Safer-Community Safety Plan' to be easily accessible to a diverse range of people with different physical and sensory needs, for e.g. those who are visually impaired.
- b. More detail is needed regarding the savings to be achieved from the 'Making Surrey Safer-Community Safety Plan' and specifically the remaining £1.5 - 2m saving from a total saving of £3m which has not been acknowledged in the plan.
- c. Concerns around firefighter shortages in the service and the resilience of on-call firefighter arrangements and the impact this will have on any new proposals introduced.
- d. The need for the service to clearly outline the mitigation measures in place to support vulnerable groups impacted by the proposals and identified in the Equality Impact Assessment.

Next Steps

- 16. In July the Working Group will meet with officers from the SFRS and the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Fire and Resilience to receive an update on the results of the 'Making Surrey Safer-Community Safety Plan' public consultation. The Working Group will also provide officers and the Cabinet Member with an update on the key themes arising through the course of the Working Groups review, giving attendees the opportunity to respond to the evidence that has been provided by stakeholders.
- 17. Following this, Members of the Working Group will hold a meeting to review the evidence gathered and, if appropriate, will submit a report with its recommendations to Cabinet on the 'Making Surrey Safer-Community Safety Plan'.

Recommendations:

The Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee is asked to acknowledge the progress of the Fire Transformation Working Group in undertaking its review and comment as appropriate.

Report contact: Huma Younis, Democratic Services Officer

Contact details: 020 8213 2725, huma.younis@surreycc.gov.uk

Annexes:

Annex 1- Fire Transformation Working Group Terms of Reference

This page is intentionally left blank