

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****DATE: 24 SEPTEMBER 2019****REPORT OF: MS DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR  
COMMUNITY SAFETY, FIRE AND RESILIENCE****LEAD OFFICER: STEVE OWEN-HUGHES, CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PROTECTION AND  
EMERGENCIES****SUBJECT: MAKING SURREY SAFER – OUR PLAN 2020-2023****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The vision of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is to make Surrey a safer place to live, work, travel and do business. To achieve this in an ever changing environment, we need to reimagine our service and innovate. This means thinking differently about how we deliver our prevention, protection and response activities and finding better ways of working with partners, residents and businesses. The detail of how we intend to do this is set out in Making Surrey Safer – Our Plan 2020-2023 (“Our Plan”). This is included within this report at Annex 1.

There are significant drivers for this change:

- a. The Government’s Fire and Rescue reform agenda sets out how the work of Fire and Rescue Service’s needs to change. There has been a considerable reduction in the number of fires across the country (fire incidents have reduced by 45% nationally and 30% in Surrey over the past decade- Annex 4 contains the data), there is much greater emphasis on prevention and protection activities, and there is a move to a more people centred approach to identifying risk and providing services.
- b. There is a new Community Vision for Surrey in 2030. This puts resident’s safety at its core and emphasises the need for prevention activities to improve outcomes.
- c. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection has said that our response to incidents is inefficient (Annex 2). We also do not undertake enough prevention and protection activity to reduce the likelihood of emergencies. This means we need to do more of this in the future. We also need to ensure we are providing an efficient, effective, accountable and transparent service that is reflective of the communities we serve.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires that all Fire and Rescue Authorities produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan, which considers all the fire and rescue related risks that could affect our communities. This is contained in Our Plan and associated appendices. We want to develop a wide

reaching approach to managing risk, not just in the home and workplace but in every place where we can influence behaviour and encourage a safer attitude and environment, whilst still ensuring we respond to emergencies well.

Our Plan was consulted on from 04 March – 26 May 2019 and the feedback was broadly supportive of our proposals. A report on the consultation responses, including the survey data and qualitative comments can be found at Annex 3 to this report.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that Cabinet, as the Fire and Rescue Authority, approves the “Making Surrey Safer – Our Plan 2020-2023”, for publication and implementation.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

Our Plan puts people at the heart of what we do by focussing on our most vulnerable people and our most risky places. This will reduce the likelihood of emergencies. Our Plan also ensures that when emergencies do happen we respond more efficiently.

Our Plan will meet the national direction from government for the future and local risks, whilst responding to the recommendations for improvement made by HMICFRS. The feedback from the consultation broadly agreed with Our Plan. However, concerns about night time response cover have been expressed and we have responded to these in Section 18 of this report.

### **DETAILS:**

#### **Making Surrey Safer – Our Plan 2020-2023**

1. Fire and Rescue services undertake three main functions:
  - a. **Community Safety** – focuses effort on education and prevention, including raising awareness amongst the most vulnerable in our communities. The aim is to minimise serious injuries and loss of life across Surrey.
  - b. **Business Safety** – focuses effort on prevention of damage to property, heritage, the environment and preventing serious injuries and loss of life across Surrey.
  - c. **Response** - When a call to help 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.
2. Whilst we have always placed a strong emphasis on response activities we have not focused enough on prevention and protection activities (delivered through our Business and Community Safety Teams) to meet the risk profile of Surrey. The proposals set out in Our Plan shifts effort to these activities whilst continuing to provide a strong, effective response which will be more efficient. This approach is also consistent with the Community Vision 2030.

## Underlying Principles

3. Our Plan adopts the National Fire Chiefs Council's Person Centred Approach to managing risks to vulnerable people. We will be sector leaders in doing so. This is at the core of Our Plan and builds on and strengthens the work we already do together with our partners to look after vulnerable people, so that they have the tools they need to live safely in their communities. We have also developed a Place Centred Approach.
4. The Person Centred Approach considers the factors that affect an individual's risk profile, based on their lifestyle, location and circumstances. The Place Centred Approach will focus on economic, geographic, social and political factors that impact on the risk present in the location. For example, our road network, rivers, places of assembly and agricultural or rural areas.
5. These two core approaches will ensure that our management of risk will be holistic, robust and deliver better outcomes for Surrey's residents. We are at the forefront of the development of a Place Centred Approach nationally.

## Proposals

6. Our proposals address the findings from the HMICFRS inspection. A re-visit by the inspectors took place early in September 2019. During the course of the re-visit we made Our Plan available to them. We have also sought the advice of the National Fire Chiefs Advisory Panel which is made up of representatives from other Fire Authorities in developing Our Plan. Our Plan makes the following proposals:
  - a. To spend more time on prevention and protection activities to reduce the likelihood of emergencies. This means educating people and businesses about the risks of fire and other emergencies, and how to prevent them. This will realign our resources to meet the risk in Surrey and this will ensure that we deliver public value.
  - b. To increase availability of crews at Haslemere and Walton during weekend days, which will improve our resilience for specific risks including water and wildfire.
  - c. To maintain the number of fire stations in Surrey and change how some of them are crewed. Changes are proposed in the Banstead, Camberley, Egham, Fordbridge, Guildford, Painshill and Woking areas. Camberley, Fordbridge, Guildford and Woking will have one immediately available fire engine available at night, rather than two. There will be no station based night time response cover provided from Egham, Banstead and Painshill. Night time cover at these locations would come from neighbouring fire stations. The response time for the first appliance, would continue, on average, to be less than 10 minutes. Annex 4 sets out the proposed changes to crewing.
  - d. To further increase the number of On-Call firefighters in Surrey. We will do this by improving the attractiveness of the role and by increasing the area we can recruit from. This will further improve our availability to respond.
  - e. To charge for some incidents we attend such as false reports of fire (hoax calls and automatic false alarms) and animal rescues so that we

can recover our costs. Wherever possible, we will work with partners, business and animal owners (in particular farmers), to avoid the need to respond to these types of incidents in the first place – handing the incident over to the responsible person(s). This will avoid the need for a charge to be made.

## **CONSULTATION:**

### **Public Consultation**

7. Public consultation took place for 12 weeks from 04 March – 26 May 2019 in accordance with the Surrey County Council Consultation framework. During this period we engaged extensively with the public and with partners using a variety of methods. This included meetings with various community groups, District and Borough briefings, online and targeted social media advertising and in print. The consultation documents were also made available in accessible formats. Based on feedback further additional formats were also provided.
8. The consultation received feedback from over 1,800 individuals and groups, through the consultation survey, letters and face-to-face engagement events. This represents 0.14% of the Surrey population, which is estimated to be 1,185,300 (*The Office for National Statistics (ONS)*).

### **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

9. Feedback from the consultation has been broadly supportive, in most areas of our proposals, with the exception of the proposed changes to night time response cover. A summary of the key findings are as follows:
  - a) The majority of people agree with adopting a risk-based approach
  - b) Most people agree with the proposal to spend more time on prevention and protection activities (Business and Community Safety)
  - c) The majority of people disagree with the proposal to change how some fire stations are crewed
  - d) Most people agree with recovering costs from some incidents and to re-invest in SFRS. However, charging for animal rescues was less favoured
  - e) Most people agree with expanding the recruitment area for On-Call firefighters to aid recruitment

For further detail please refer to the Consultation Report at Annex 3.

#### **Our response to these key findings:**

10. Respondents agreed with adopting a risk-based approach and doing more business and community safety activity, but some were concerned that this was at the expense of emergency response cover. Some respondents also reported the changes to be perceived as cost cutting and wanted more information. Our Plan is based on the resources that we need to provide business safety, community safety and emergency response cover to meet the risk set out in the Community Risk Profile (“CRP”) (Annex 5). To meet this risk, we need to change how we resource response activities so we can invest more in business and

community safety. This will align our resources to meet the risks in Surrey and this will ensure that we will deliver public value.

11. Respondents raised perceived concerns about reductions in staff and fire engines. Some respondents were concerned they may be less safe due to waiting longer for fire engines to arrive at night. Our Plan contains a robust workforce plan that means we do not rely on overtime to maintain our operational response and is based on:
  - a. Five years of evidence about incidents in Surrey. This includes reviewing our calls which drop significantly at night-time. The data has been used to model the impact on emergency response cover and has been independently verified. The changes will result in a more even distribution of cover across Surrey based on the identified risk.
  - b. Our CRP which contains the most recent data about current and forecasted risks within Surrey. This information helps us to understand where the risks associated with places in the county are, where the most vulnerable people are and when and where the risks are greater.
  - c. A minimum of 20 fire engines to be available during the day. Our new configuration will provide 25 fire engines, 22 of which will be crewed by firefighters that will be available to respond immediately. The remaining 3 will be crewed by On-Call firefighters.
  - d. A minimum of 16 fire engines to be available at night. Our new configuration will provide 23 fire engines, 13 of which will be crewed by wholetime firefighters and will be available to respond immediately. The remaining 10 will be crewed by On-Call firefighters.
  - e. Tried-and-tested plans that make sure we can always deal with emergencies effectively. We continually monitor all our vehicles around the county, using new technology, so that people and equipment are in the right place at the right time.
  - f. The introduction of new technology and new procedures that will improve response times.
  - g. An increase in the availability of crews at Haslemere and Walton during weekend days, which will improve our resilience for specific risks including water and wildfire.
  - h. Making further improvements to On-Call firefighter attraction, recruitment and ways of working.
  - i. Active recruitment of firefighters and no redundancies. The focus on prevention and protection will mean we will provide our firefighters with additional training to ensure they have the necessary skills to implement Our Plan.

We will regularly review our CRP and distribution of resources as population numbers and distribution changes over time, to ensure we are providing adequate resources that continue to meet the risk and changing needs of communities. Our Plan will result in a significant increase in activities including safety visits for every Surrey school and much more partnership working with all

boroughs and districts. By increasing our safe and well visits we will be able to target all people with mobility issues, other disabilities or other vulnerabilities. We will do much more to help prevent fires and work with residents and businesses to understand what to do when a fire does occur.

12. There was widespread support from respondents for charging for some services, concerns were raised though, in relation to charging for animal rescues, with respondents fearing their animals may be at risk. Our Plan makes a provision for rescuing animals and we will continue to train our firefighters to rescue animals safely and provide the equipment they need to do so. We do not receive any additional funding to allow us to do this. The National Framework for Fire and Rescue in England makes it clear that any additional activity that services undertake should not be at the expense of effective delivery of their statutory core fire functions. Charging for these types of calls will allow us to recoup some of the cost of doing so, however our focus will be on working closely with our communities (such as farmers) to ensure the right person is attending a call for assistance.

### **Staff Engagement**

13. We have engaged with our staff throughout this process and will continue to do so. Our staff have been given the opportunity for a face-to-face discussion led by members of the Service Leadership Team (SLT). These discussions explained the proposals, the rationale and the potential implications.
14. Staff will continue to be engaged on an ongoing basis to ensure they are given the opportunity to shape the design of the service.

### **Employee Relations**

15. There was early engagement with trade union representatives and further opportunity for discussion was offered during the consultation period. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has responded formally to the consultation and that response is available on its website. The FBU's submission focused on changes to the response model which it opposes whilst welcoming the approach to business and community safety. There will be ongoing consultation and negotiation, as appropriate with the trade union. In addition, the FBU has engaged with Elected Members through the Fire Transformation Working Group.

### **Fire Transformation Working Group**

16. A Working Group of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee was established to act as a critical friend in order to help improve performance and support the Service's transformation. The Working Group has questioned and challenged officers about the changes being considered and assisted in ensuring Our Plan is as comprehensive as possible. The Working Group has consulted with a number of key witnesses, including trade unions and community groups and plan to submit a report for Cabinet to consider alongside the draft Our Plan, on the 24 September, 2019.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

17. There are associated risks with the implementation of these proposals:

a. Industrial Relations:

Given Our plan will require staff changes and the opposition to elements of it by the FBU, there will be an impact on industrial relations. We will mitigate that impact through on-going dialogue with the trade unions, consulting and negotiating as appropriate.

b. Learning and Development:

The refocus on prevention and protection activities will require upskilling of the workforce in order to deliver it effectively. As a result, there will be a transition period whilst this is embedded which may impact on delivery in the short-term. We will mitigate this with a robust transition plan and a programme of training and development activities.

c. Transition of Staff Roles:

The realignment of resources between Response and Business and Community Safety team roles, will require the identification of a number of staff to move from their existing roles. This will impact current shift working patterns. We will mitigate this with a clear selection process for the new roles, allowing preferences and an opportunity to understand impacts from staff personally. Wherever possible, the number of staff moves will be minimised.

d. Public Perception of Response Changes:

The consultation feedback has demonstrated that our communities and partners believe that crews usually respond to incidents from fire stations nearest to them, and undertake limited other activity when not responding to incidents. We will deliver a proactive communication and engagement plan which clearly describes how our Service operates and what services we offer.

e. Ongoing Capital Investment for Materials:

The increased prevention activities require associated materials to mitigate risks identified in people's homes during Safe and Well Visits, this will require annual capital investment. We will manage this by robust financial planning and capital business case creation through the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, whilst also looking for opportunities for the sponsorship of these materials.

## **FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

18. The proposed changes will have a number of impacts against the operating costs of the service, and will also require initial and ongoing capital investment.

Prevention and protection activities

19. The new Business and Community Safety model requires a significant increase in establishment, which will cost an additional £1.9m per year. This will be funded from changes in the response establishment.



### Changes to Response cover

20. The current planned increased recruitment in on call staffing numbers are estimated to cost an additional £0.3m per year.
21. The changes in how some stations are crewed will release £3.3m, which will fully fund the changes set out in Our Plan.

### Capital requirements

22. The increased Business and Community Safety activity will require a total capital investment over the next three years of just over £1m. This will cover the initial team set up, and ongoing costs of equipment required for the Safe and Well visits. Following which there will then be an expected annual requirement of around £0.5m.
23. In addition to this there will be an increased vehicle requirement for the larger Business and Community Safety team. There is currently a vehicle renewal programme in the Service that will see the replacement of thirty vehicles over the next two years. It is considered that the vehicle requirements of the new employees could be covered by this renewal programme if the life of current vehicles are optimised. This will enable the analysis of vehicle usage and establish the actual requirements. There is the potential for new working practices to be instigated that will enable greater vehicle sharing to make better use of the current vehicle fleet. Should the analysis of vehicle use, combined with efficient management systems, show that additional vehicles are required this may necessitate further capital investment.
24. Our Plan confirms that going forward we will require the same number of fire appliances as are currently in operation. As part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the current appliance replacement programme and associated capital budget will be reviewed and updated accordingly to reflect this.

### **SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY**

25. The HMICFRS inspection identified a number of issues in the Service. It said that the Service response to incidents is inefficient, and it does not undertake enough prevention and protection activity to reduce the likelihood of emergencies.
26. As set out in the report, the planned changes in response cover will create efficiencies that will enable the Service to fund increased prevention activities, and address the HMICFRS recommendations. It is anticipated that these changes can be implemented within the service's revenue budget envelope.
27. Capital investment will be required to deliver business and community safety activities, and the existing vehicle replacement programme will need to be reviewed. These changes will be incorporated into the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer**

28. The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework is the means by which the Government sets out its priorities and objectives for fire and rescue services in England. Pursuant to the Framework all Fire and Rescue Authorities must produce a publicly available integrated Risk Management Plan covering at least a three year time span which reflects up to date risk information and how services can be best used to mitigate that risk. "Making Surrey Safer" constitutes SFRS



Risk Management Plan and in its capacity as the Fire and Rescue Authority, Cabinet is asked to approve it.

29. The Plan sets out a number of proposals to change the way that SFRS delivers its prevention, protection and response activities so that there will be an increased emphasis on prevention. Although the proposals do not represent a reduction in the number of fire stations, appliances or fire fighters, they do, in part, constitute a reduction in night time response cover with a corresponding increase in some response times. The proposals also include plans to impose new charges for some discretionary services.
30. The Risk Management Plan has been the subject of a public consultation exercise. Although there was broad support for an increase in prevention work, the proposed changes in night time cover do not have overall public support and there was more limited support for some of the charging proposals. A consultation exercise is a mechanism to capture public opinion and Members are not obliged to reach a particular decision based on the number of responses that do not support a particular recommendation. In taking the decision Members must individually weigh up all relevant matters and conscientiously take them into account. In this context, relevant matters will include the consultation responses, the impact of the options on service provision, any risks associated with the options, any legal implications and the impact on the Council's financial position. Members must also have regard to the public sector equality duty and in so doing they must consider the Equalities Impact Assessment which has been provided to them. The weight to be given to all these considerations is for Members to decide.

#### **Equalities and Diversity**

31. Valuing and promoting equality and diversity are central to the work of the Service. The ability to protect the public through fire safety advice, fire prevention, fire protection and emergency response depends on understanding the differing needs of our diverse communities and responding appropriately to those needs.
32. In considering Our Plan members must have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, foster good relations between such groups, and eliminate any unlawful discrimination. These matters are dealt with in the attached Equalities Impact Assessment "EIA" (Annex 6) which should be read alongside this report. The assessment is based on the proposals for change. If any changes in service delivery are necessary to implement Our Plan, a further, specific equalities impact assessment will be carried out.
33. The following potential positive impacts to different groups in the community were identified:

It is proposed to increase Safe and Well Visits (SAWVs) from 4,500 to 20,000 by 2021. This has the potential to benefit all members of society. The SAWV is a far more holistic and sophisticated product than the Home Fire Safety Visit that Fire Services have been offering for many years. The SAWV looks at all elements of an individual or family's lifestyle and circumstances and offers meaningful advice and interventions to help ensure that people not only stay safe in their homes but get wider support in their community to enable them to thrive.

This is accomplished by broad collaboration with other agencies, including social services, police, housing providers and community groups. By giving people the tools they need to live safe lifestyles we can build safe, resilient communities. This has the potential to have a far greater long-term impact than the traditional response-led approach that has been the mainstay of Fire and Rescue Services in the past. In the EIA, the groups that have been identified as likely to receive the greatest benefit from this approach were the elderly, people with disabilities, and males in certain age groups who are at greater risk from drowning incidents.

The proposed system of Lifelong Learning will expand the potential for positive impacts to all age groups. The resultant community outreach work will benefit people from different religions and ethnicities who may not have been reached by our community safety work in the past.

34. The following potential negative impacts were identified:

The reduction in fire and rescue cover at night may have a negative impact. The EIA has identified certain groups that may be more negatively impacted by these changes than others. These include the elderly, particularly people who live alone who may be at greater risk from fire. This also applies to people with certain disabilities, especially those who have reduced mobility and families with children. Young drivers, who are statistically more likely to be involved in road traffic collisions, especially in the areas of Runnymede and Guildford may also be impacted.

The above are mitigated through a number of measures that include:

- a. developing embedded community engagement programmes that focus community safety work on groups and individuals identified as most at risk, such as elderly people who live alone.
- b. the proposed response model which will efficiently deploy resources to the areas and times of greatest need, based on rigorous independently reviewed modelling.
- c. expanding driver safety initiatives (including the award-winning "Safe Drive Stay Alive").
- d. focussing business safety inspections at tertiary learning establishments.

35. Changes to crewing patterns from 'days and nights' to 'days only' will have an impact on staff. There may be positive and/or negative impacts to individuals depending on their personal circumstances. No specific issue has been identified at this stage however there is potential for a greater impact to staff with caring responsibilities who are based at stations where day crewing will be implemented. This will be analysed and then addressed in a separate EIA once the patterns of crewing are known. The findings from the internal engagement programme and focus groups will be used to inform this EIA as well as outputs from the staff consultation process should the proposals be agreed.

### **Other Implications:**

36. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

#### Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults

37. Surrey experiences relatively low numbers of fatalities and injuries from fires. Our challenge is to continue to reduce these small numbers and this means the accurate targeting of those who are most vulnerable. We must also maintain our contribution to the reduction of casualties associated with road traffic collisions and will continue to focus on young drivers. We recognise that we also have an important part to play in improving the life chances for young people, so we deliver a number of other effective prevention activities.

#### Public Health

38. Increase integration and meaningful collaboration with other emergency services to assist them to respond to an increasing demand for services, where we can improve community safety and public health, and add value. We continue to educate the public through community safety campaigns and Safe and Well Visits. Our Safe and Well Visit is designed to cover fire safety, road safety, environment safety and by using the One Stop Surrey referral process, cover a range of health and social issues that support independent living. We also supply a range of equipment, such as smoke alarms, hard of hearing alarms, fire retardant bedding and advise on TeleCare alarms and sprinklers. We are continuing to work with the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board members, such as Adult Social Care, the NHS, public health and Age UK Surrey, to develop the content of our Safe and Well Visits to reduce risk to the elderly.

#### Climate change

39. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a legal duty on all emergency services to carry out risk assessments in their area. Significant risks are recorded on the Surrey Community Risk Register. We have to assess the risk of major emergency incidents such as flooding, derailments, major spillages, fires, chemical incidents, civil unrest, terrorist attacks and flu pandemics.

#### Carbon emissions

40. Through the greater utilisation of the existing fleet, the service will minimise the impact on the environment and carbon footprint.

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

41. Subject to approval the plan will be published and implemented.

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**Consulted:**

The service gathered the views of residents, staff, partners and stakeholders. Partners and stakeholders included Surrey MPs, borough and county councillors, district and borough council leaders & chief executives, parish councils, business groups, community groups, voluntary sector and vulnerable groups. Full details are provided in Annex 3.

**Sources/background papers:**

- Annex 1 – Draft Making Surrey Safer - Our Plan 2020-2023
- Annex 2 – HMICFRS Inspection Report
- Annex 3 – Full Consultation Report
- Annex 4 – Changes to Crewing Model and Fire Incidents Graphs
- Annex 5 – Community Risk Profile
- Annex 6 – Equality Impact Assessment

[Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)

[Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)

[Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)

Communities and Environment Select Committee

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