



FRIDAY, 19 MARCH 2021

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Implementation of Making Surrey Safer – Our Plan 2020-2023

Purpose of report:

The Select Committee was provided with a report on progress of the implementation of the [Making Surrey Safer – Our Plan 2020 – 2023](#) (“Our Plan”) for the meeting held on the 16th September 2020. This report provides a further full update on the following areas:

- a. Implementation of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the changes included within Our Plan
- b. The outcomes of the COVID-19 Inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) (Letter from Inspectorate provided can be found on the HMICFRS website [here](#))
- c. Our continuing response to COVID-19 and Recovery Plan including extending Our Plan to 2024.
- d. SFRS Priorities

Introduction:

1. Our Plan addresses the concerns of the HMICFRS Inspection and includes the following areas of change to SFRS, (the Service):
 - a. More time and resources will be spent on prevention and protection activities to reduce the likelihood of emergencies and harm.
 - b. Increased availability of crews at Haslemere and Walton during weekend days, improving immediate response and resilience for specific risks including water and wildfire.
 - c. The number of fire stations in Surrey have stayed the same but changes have been introduced to how some of them are crewed.
 - d. An increase to the actual number of On-Call firefighters and improvements to the way in which we attract and retain them.

- e. Charging for some non-statutory incidents we attend, such as false reports of fire (hoax calls and Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA)) and animal rescues so that costs can be recovered.
2. Phase 1 of the changes to the Service were implemented in April 2020 and Phase 2 were implemented in January 2021. The changes were assured by Brunel University London prior to implementation bringing independent and academic rigour. The Assurance Reports can be found on the website [here](#). Assurance has also been received by the NFCC Advisory Panel who have advised that since the Panel was established the Service has made significant progress on a wide range of matters. The Panel has now disestablished advising that SFRS is now well placed to continue with its journey of change and improvement and therefore an appropriate time for the panel to be disestablished.
 3. Our Making Surrey Safer Plan 2020-23 is being extended to 2020-24. This extension is to ensure that this improvement journey and the outcomes pledged within the plan can be completed. These include improvements to prevention and protection activities as well as working on improving the culture within the Service. The reason for this necessary time extension is due to COVID-19 and so that we can take into consideration any changing governance of Fire and Rescue Services that may be proposed by the Home Office in the review of Police and Crime Commissioners coming up this year.
 4. The SFRS Member Reference Group have recently provided further scrutiny of the implementation of Our Plan, their role has been to:
 - a. To Monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of Phase 2 of the FRAs Making Surrey Safer Plan, providing assurance to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee
 - b. Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the changes made to the Service as part of Phase 1 of the FRAs Making Surrey Safer Plan, to assure the Select Committee that these improvements have become embedded as 'business as usual'; and
 - c. To seek assurances that sufficient progress is being made ahead of an inspection by HMICFRS in 2021 by offering critical friend challenge to the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Leadership Team of SFRS.

The findings from the Member Reference Group findings will be provided to this meeting of the Select Committee.

5. Since the last report to this Select Committee, the Service has continued in its support of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic to support the community. The Chief Fire Officer chairs the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and through this work SFRS have supported the provision of temporary mortuary requirements and staff to facilitate body removals as part of the Death Management cell and have supported the work required to distribute essential Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and welfare provisions to the most vulnerable across Surrey. The Service has seconded staff to support South East Coast Ambulance

(SECAmb) to dual-crew front line ambulances. Most recently the Service has been involved in supporting the wider community testing initiatives, including the wider health surveillance within Woking and Egham and supporting the current focus of providing volunteers to administer the lifesaving vaccine. A Recovery Project is in place to ensure that we understand the impacts from COVID-19 but also to ensure that we learn from what has worked well within this period and 'build back better'. The specific impact of COVID-19 on progress is included within the detailed sections below.

6. HMICFRS have carried out an inspection of all Fire and Rescue Services response to COVID-19 during the first three months of the pandemic. The Service is pleased with the outcome from the Inspection and has developed an action plan to take forward the two recommendations that were made. This report provides an overview of the report and our progress with the recommendations.

Implementation of changes

7. The changes within Our Plan that have been implemented include the following:

Phase 1

Delivered in April 2020:

- a. Invested in Community Resilience (Prevention and Protection) to grow the team and recruitment into new posts started.
- b. Haslemere and Walton Fire Stations have improved immediate availability as they have been changed from 5 working days to 7 working days.
- c. Changes to Response which included changes implemented at Camberley, Fordbridge, Guildford and Woking Fire Stations who have one immediately available fire engine available at night, rather than two.
- d. New web pages for the Service have been published.
- e. The Charging Schedule has been published

Phase 2

Delivered in January 2021:

- f. Changes to Painshill, Banstead and Egham Fire Stations who now have one immediately available fire engine during the day. At night fire engine cover is now provided from neighbouring Fire Stations.

Prevention and Protection Progress over Phase 1 and 2

8. There are 41 new roles within the Services Prevention and Protection Teams and the majority of these have now been recruited. These roles include Education, Partnership, Youth Engagement, 'Firewise' and posts within Business Safety. A training package has been provided to ensure all new staff

can successfully carry out their roles. The most outward facing roles within Business Safety require 18 months of significant training investment, which is still ongoing whilst still delivering activities within their current competencies

9. All new roles have been recruited to during the COVID-19 pandemic. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have delayed the timeline for delivery of the outcomes.

Activity update:

- a. **Domestic Safe and Well Visits:** The materials for Domestic Safe and Well Visits have been reviewed and updated. Farnham and Godstone have piloted these materials when carrying out visits and feedback has been provided to the team within Community Resilience. New training, equipment and processes have been agreed and will be rolled out over February and March.
- b. **Business Safe and Well Visits:** The materials and training package for Business Safe and Well visits have been developed. Initial training was rolled out to Fire Station-based crews in 2020 and then reviewed as a result of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions and closures. Plans are in place for a full roll out in April 2021.
- c. **Education:** The Education Teams have been designing the offer to schools for Early Years, Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS 2. The draft lesson plans have been shared with teachers for review and feedback. Work is also underway to develop young person appropriate animations to deliver key safety messages.
- d. **Cadets Scheme:** Research has been carried out to identify good practice from the experiences of Police, Military and other Fire and Rescue Services who currently run Cadets Schemes. A survey has been carried out with Cadets within the Police Service to help inform the development of the scheme. Policies and procedures have all been developed, lesson plans and curriculum for Year 1 is complete with Year 2 currently in development. A communications plan is also being developed to encourage participation and it is hoped to fully launch the scheme in the summer (subject to Government Guidance in relation to COVID-19).
- e. **Youth Engagement Programme:** All of the materials for the Youth Engagement Programme are currently being updated.

Changes to Response

10. **Implementation of changes to Response:** The changes that were implemented within Phase 1 included changes at Camberley, Fordbridge, Guildford, and Woking Fire Stations who now have one immediately available fire engine available at night, rather than two. Haslemere and Walton Fire Stations have improved immediate availability as they have now changed from 5 working days to 7 working days. Due to the impacts from COVID-19, the outcomes from the Grenfell Tower report and new legislation, Brunel University London were asked to assure the changes within Phase 2 for a second time to

ensure the changes continued to be the right thing to do. This assurance was provided and as a result the changes within Painshill, Banstead and Egham Fire Stations were put in place on the 5th January 2021. These Fire Stations now have one available fire engine during the day.

11. **Service establishment:** Further to the implementation of Phase 2 of the changes the overall establishment within the Service in January 2021 can be shown in the Table 1 below. There are a further two On-Call training sessions planned for 2021.

Table 1		
Staffing Group	%	Nos.
Whole time	100%	456
On-Call	83.3%	115
Control	100%	34
Support	100%	80.8

Collaboration

12. **Joint Fire Control:** We have established a shared fire control with West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service which has delivered both operational effectiveness as well as efficiencies through collaborative procurement contracts. The co-developed, operational reporting system has brought together complimentary skills from both services and transformed the way both services display and utilise data to deliver service improvements. Further work is underway within Joint Fire Control to establish further collaboration with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service which will be in place in September of this year.

Engagement

13. **Engagement with managers:** The Chief Fire Officer holds a monthly meeting with all Middle Managers to ensure that they receive updates on national and local policies; but most importantly get feedback from managers on new policies, projects etc. This meeting is held virtually using MS Teams which has been very successful in giving all the opportunity to get involved and participate. Managers are then asked to share the discussions with their teams and are provided with an overview of the discussions, in presentation format, to support consistent messaging. Managers are also encouraged to lead feedback sessions and deliver presentations on key matters that concern the workforce.
14. **Engagement with all staff:** As soon as Government Guidance allowed, the Service Leadership Team (SLT) commenced face-to-face engagement with all staff initially collecting feedback on the implementation of Phase 1. Feedback was collected from over 44 staffing groups. The feedback from the implementation of Phase 1 was shared with Brunel University London forming part of the assurance of the implementation of Phase 2. The actions that are being taken forward are attached at Annex 1. As a result of the initial feedback

there is currently a review of the new shift patterns that has been put in place. Engagement is key to the successful outcome of the review and therefore there are a number of focus groups in delivery to capture views and ideas. This review will be carried out over the coming weeks. In the meantime, both virtual and face-to-face engagement continues on a weekly basis to ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to provide feedback and influence future change and continuous improvement of services.

Recruitment

15. **Firefighters:** 97 candidates currently awaiting their physical and fitness assessments of which 12 are female. 3 firefighters have been migrated from On-Call to Wholetime. 7 remain in the group and are still to be placed on station. On-Call attraction figures have increased.
16. **Trainees:** The Service have 12 trainees (10 male and 2 female) on the current training course which started this month. The trainees are due to pass out on 25 April 2021.
17. **Workforce Planning:** The Service are monitoring staff numbers very closely through the Workforce Working Group, for roles across the whole Service. Based on analysis of these numbers they are running recruitment processes for;
 - Joint Fire Control teams
 - Business Support teamsand promotional processes for the following ranks:
 - Crew Commander
 - Watch Commander; and
 - Group Commanderover the next few months.
18. **On-Call:** Following the On-Call review attraction has increased significantly. Current On-Call establishment is 115 personnel, against a full establishment of 138. The Service have 9 individuals currently undertaking a course as well as further courses planned. Together with delivery of the proposals outlined in the On-Call report the Service aim to be at full establishment by the end of the delivery of Our Plan.
19. **Approach to On-Call as a result of the review:** The new On-Call Support Officers have been working closely with the Transformation Team to transform the approach to On-Call and deliver the proposals within the On-Call Report which outlines how the Service intend to change the way that they recruit, retain and utilise On-Call Firefighters. The following outlines the progress that has been made to date:

- Aligned the recruitment process to the Whole-Time recruitment process to ensure parity and now have in place a migration process to allow On-Call to migrate into Whole-Time positions.
- The Service has agreed new flexible contracts called 'pay for availability' and the Service is currently in negotiation with the Unions in relation to existing staff. Staff have been consulted throughout this process and their views integrated into a pilot which is due to take place in March.
- A flexible mobilisation pilot is in progress to maximise flexibility of On-Call units matching and mobilising stations for stand-by and relief purposes.
- On-Call have contacted approximately 20 local primary schools within a mile of On-Call units requesting that they support and promote being an On-Call Firefighter to parents via parent mail, some responses have already been received.
- The Service is engaging with Local employers near our 24/7 On-Call units to encourage partnership working to help increase our On-Call.

Response:

20. Since implementing our Plan we can see that we have:

- a. Reached or exceeded minimum response availability:
 - Weekdays – 21 (minimum 20)
 - Weekend days – 22 (minimum 20)
 - Nights – 23 (minimum 16)
- b. Our average response time of first appliance to critical incidents is well within target at 7 minutes 14 seconds

Chargeable Services

21. Of all calls the Service receives 35-40% are Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs). The Service has a dual approach to AFAs which represent a risk to the public as it requires fire engines to respond on blue lights across the county unnecessarily and reduces fire cover unnecessarily as well. We have taken a dual approach of:

- a. The charging schedule has been updated to include Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) and can be found on the website [here](#).
- b. The Service are now working on proposals to negate the impact of AFAs at the point of call, thus preventing the need to recover costs from businesses.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) - COVID-19 Inspection and 2nd Visit update

22. **COVID-19 Inspection:** HMICFRS inspected the Service in September 2020. The inspection was not graded but looked at the way the Service responded and reacted to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in the first three months. The inspection outcome was very positive, recognising the good work of the Service during the first stages of the pandemic. The report also enables the Service to continuously improve the way they respond to and recover from this pandemic. The Recovery plan is being reviewed to take forward recommendations from the report. The COVID-19 HMICFRS report can be found on the website [here](#)
23. **Full Inspection:** HMICFRS are due to carry out a full inspection of the Service commencing 29th March 2021 which is likely to last 6-8 weeks. SFRS is in the first tranche. HMICFRS will continue to inspect in accordance with their existing programme and framework using similar methodology. To reduce risk to the sector they will minimise their on-site footprint and use virtual inspection methods where appropriate. Within parameters they will be flexible to accommodate service context (i.e., taking account of HMICFRS risk assessments, Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) perspective, the local COVID-19 level.) Graded judgment will be provided only when HMICFRS have the evidence to do so. It is unlikely that they will reach judgments for all questions without some degree of on-site activity. In the event that the inspection is limited by COVID-19 and evidence gaps prevent them forming a graded judgment they will permit a limited extension to the inspection window or arrange a pre-moderation re-visit to the Service to plug the specific evidence gap. In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible to gather sufficient evidence to reach a graded judgment HMICFRS will consider whether they could reach a narrative judgment. Causes of concern from the last visit have a robust action plan in place and will be reviewed as part of the inspection. The Self-Assessment was completed and submitted by 15th February, 2021 and the outcome from Tranche 1 will be published at the end of the year.

Continued response to COVID-19 and Recovery Plan

24. **Recovery:** In June 2020 recovery work commenced in preparedness for restoring services. Service Restoration Plans were completed to capture the timelines, milestones and dependencies for 'switching on' the council's services in each directorate. These served as a baseline, with Weekly Service Status reports highlighting any key changes in timelines, and any imminent actions/information. The project was designed to manage the increased risk to the community and our staff arising from disruption to services. The Recovery Cell objectives are:
- Establish the impacts of COVID-19 on delivery of Our Plan and our staff, for all areas of the business – identify alternative approaches to delivery and plan with a timeframe to implement
 - Implement a return to Business as Usual (BAU) (the 'new' normal)

- BAU to feed into business planning process
- Review the Service's vision in line with the corporate vision

SFRS Priorities

25. Using our robust Risk and Opportunity Matrix aligned to our Value for Money Framework our priorities for the next year include:
- a. Investment in our people by:
 - Reviewing and improving our culture
 - Enhancing and embedding diversity and inclusion in everything we do
 - Reviewing our Wellbeing offer to staff
 - Designing and delivering an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high potential staff
 - Improving and increasing the recruitment of On-Call
 - b. Improving effectiveness by continuing to invest in our Protection and Prevention teams:
 - Creating better relationships with partners and working more closely to deliver services together
 - Continuing to develop our understanding of community risks and how we offer services, via our 4Ps Framework, based upon People, Places, Premises and Products
 - Responding to the Grenfell Tower incident/inquiry outcomes
 - c. Ensuring optimal efficiency within Our Plan's Asset Strategy
 - Data and digital transformation
 - Investing in our capital, infrastructure and fleet, to ensure that new services and products are fit for purpose, end user driven and accessible to all

Further Context:

Trade Dispute

26. The Service has an ongoing Trade Dispute with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). Regular meetings continue to be held with representatives from the FBU and every effort is being made to resolve the issues raised. Action Short of Strike commenced in December 2019 and ended in March 2020. The items in dispute with the FBU have either reached an impasse, been resolved or are subject to legal action. Work to get recognition for other unions and offer choice of union membership to staff is underway although subject to limits of membership levels (10% staff group representation)

Communications and Engagement

27. **Communications Strategy:** A new communications strategy was implemented in August 2020. This is currently being updated and additions are being made to reflect the new legislation regarding accessibility requirements. The additions to the strategy include the following:
- a. Weekly communications member briefings: these are to keep members as up to date as possible.
 - b. Recruitment campaign: 406 applicants in one month – ¼ of which from underrepresented groups. 82 - 100% positive sentiment within comments. 5 out of 7 On-Call stations identified as 'needing focus' achieved or exceeded the required applicant numbers. 788 link clicks to the new recruitment website
 - c. Internal rapid rebuttal: Tripartite agreement, HMICFRS COVID-19 Inspection, Monthly spotlight on other teams within SFRS.
 - d. Monthly staff newsletter: from 35% open rate to 44% in just four editions. Fifth edition released 29th January
 - e. Accessibility and EDI audit – to ensure we are accessible and as representative of our communities and teams as possible. This includes all social media accounts and our internal newsletter.

Conclusions:

28. The implementation of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the transformation has been delivered. The Service has identified the impacts from COVID-19 on the transformation programme and is confident that it can deliver the outcomes in Our Plan in full by 2024. Therefore the plan will be extended for a further year.
29. The Service received a positive outcome from the HMICFRS COVID-19 inspection and is currently preparing for the full Inspection which is to start at the end of March. The outcome from the full inspection is expected at the end of 2021.
30. The Service has put in place business continuity arrangements and contingency plans in respect of the Trade Dispute, whilst continuing to seek to resolve through engagement with the FBU.

Risk Management and Implications

31. There are associated risks with the implementation of these proposals:
- a. Industrial Relations: There is opposition to the changes by the FBU and there is currently a Trade Dispute ongoing. The Service is in dialogue with the FBU with the aim to resolve the issues raised.

- b. Public perception of Response Changes: there has been a campaign, mainly led by the FBU, against the changes being implemented. The Service are delivering a proactive communications and engagement plan which clearly describes how our Service operates.

Equalities and Diversity

- 32. Valuing and promoting equality and diversity are central to the work of the Service. An Equality Impact Assessment informed the development and implementation of Our Plan. A Staff Equality Impact Assessment was carried out to identify whether there were any adverse impacts to members of staff as a result of the changes. The outcomes of this assessment informed the development of new ways of working and implementation of the changes.

- 33. Towards the end of last year the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) consulted on and implemented an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for all Fire and Rescue Services nationally to adopt. As a result Surrey Fire and Rescue Service will now be adopting the NFCC EIA template to ensure the format and approach taken for their EIAs are consistent with those of other Fire and Rescue Services nationally. This will allow for reporting in the same way and more accurate comparison of data across Services.

Other Implications:

- 34. 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.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	There are positive implications arising from the implementation of the Making Surrey Safer Plan as engagement is taking place with Corporate Parenting to ensure Looked After Children are provided with a Safe and Well visit when moving into their first property.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	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	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 <u>One Stop Surrey</u> 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	The <u>Civil Contingencies Act 2004</u> places a legal duty on all emergency services to carry out risk assessments in their area. Significant risks are recorded on the <u>Surrey Community Risk Register</u> . 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	The SFRS Asset Strategy has a commitment to reduce emissions through the use of alternative fuelled vehicles.

Recommendations:

35. The Select Committee use the findings within this report to aid further scrutiny.
36. The Select Committee to work with the service to scope further scrutiny work to take place following the publication of the HMICFRS full inspection report later in the year.

Next steps:

37. Further updates will be provided to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee as required.

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Sources/background papers:

Making Surrey Safer – Our Plan 2020 – 2023

Annex 1 – Qualitative Feedback

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