

16 September 2020



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 24th March 2020. This report provides a further full update on the following areas:

- a. Implementation of Phase 1 of the changes included within Our Plan;
- b. The recommendations made by the Fire Transformation Working Group (FTWG) of this Committee on Our Plan;
- c. Our response to the Inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on the remaining concerns in the second revisit letter (Annex 1) and an overview of future Inspections of the Service;
- d. An update on the progress of our response to Brunel University’s recommendations included within the Assurance Report;
- e. Our continuing response to COVID-19 and Recovery Plan;
- f. Further Assurance of Phase 2 implementation.

Introduction:

1. Our Plan addresses the concerns of the HMICFRS Inspection and includes the following areas of change to SFRS, (the Service), some of which have been put in place in Phase 1 Implementation from April 2020:
 - a. More time and resources will be spent on prevention and protection activities to reduce the likelihood of emergencies.
 - b. There is 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 will stay the same but there will be changes to how some of them are crewed.
 - d. The actual number of On-Call firefighters will be increased and the way in which we attract and retain them will improve.

- 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. The development of Our Plan was scrutinised by FTWG. The FTWG made six recommendations to Cabinet that the Service should seek to apply throughout the implementation of Our Plan (Annex 2). This report provides an update on the Service's progress against these recommendations.
3. Phase 1 of the changes to the Service were implemented in April 2020. The second phase of changes were due to be implemented later this year however we have asked Brunel University to assure these changes to ensure they remain the right thing to do taking into account the impacts of COVID-19, the outcomes from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and as a result of new legislation. Brunel University will bring independent and academic rigour to the assurance process. It should be noted that when the FTWG made their recommendations (Annex 2) the decision had not been made that this would be a phased approach. The recommendations have either already been delivered or will be during Phase 2 of the implementation of Our Plan, subject to the assurance process.

Phase 1 Implementation

4. The changes within Phase 1 that have been implemented included the following:
 - a. The new Prevention and Protection Service, now called Community Resilience, has been launched.
 - 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.
5. As an emergency service and as part of the Community Protection Group (CPG), the Service has been front and centre in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chief Fire Officer chairs the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The role of the LRF is to co-ordinate the multi-agency major incident to protect the residents of Surrey from the worst ravages of this terrible pandemic. Staff in the Service volunteered to support temporary mortuary facilities, led and worked in the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Cell, participated in training led by South East Coast Ambulance to dual-crew ambulances, have been trained up to provide additional resource to support the Services Joint Fire Control and continue to be involved within the LRF and local communities. 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.

Community Resilience

6. **Community Resilience:** Business and Community Safety have successfully combined within the wider Community Resilience (CR) Team. This better reflects the expected prevention and protection outcomes. CR Leadership continues to build a single team approach that is required to deliver agility in preventing risk and preparing organisations and communities for when emergencies do occur. CR staff have supported response teams during COVID-19 but have now returned and are central to recruitment, selection and forming new teams. Community Safety has almost completed recruitment and are onboarding staff across July and August with Business Safety in the process of onboarding and advertising internally and externally for auditing, inspector and data analyst roles. All staff continue to be involved in shaping the way the service is to be taken forwards. As well as expanding and forming new ways of working, the Business safety Team continue to work with Boroughs and Districts around high rise buildings in anticipation of changes following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry which remains a key work stream. (Recommendation 3 of the FTWG, Annex 2).
7. **Allocation of Roles:** Due to COVID-19, we needed additional resilience in response which created necessary delays in moving staff into the CR teams. These staff have now repatriated into their new roles and have completed an accelerated three-week Induction. Due to the interruption caused by the pandemic, an accelerated recruitment programme is also taking place to recruit to the vacant posts within CR which include recruitment to Education, Partnership, Youth Engagement, Firewise and posts within Business Safety, as detailed in the section above.
8. **Training:** A training package has been provided to ensure all new staff in CR can successfully carry out their roles. Most outward facing roles within Business Safety will require significant training investment which sits within existing budgets. Dame Judith Hackitt's report 'Building a Safer Future' identifies qualifications linked to building a safer future. It is crucial that we reflect the changes from this report and any other outcomes from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. Therefore, there will be a significant period of training, planning and forming prior to delivering all the anticipated outputs for the Community Resilience team.

Changes to Response (Implementation of 1b and c)

9. **Implementation of changes to Response:** The changes that were implemented within Phase 1 included changes at Camberley, Fordbridge, Guildford, and Woking Fire Stations who 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.

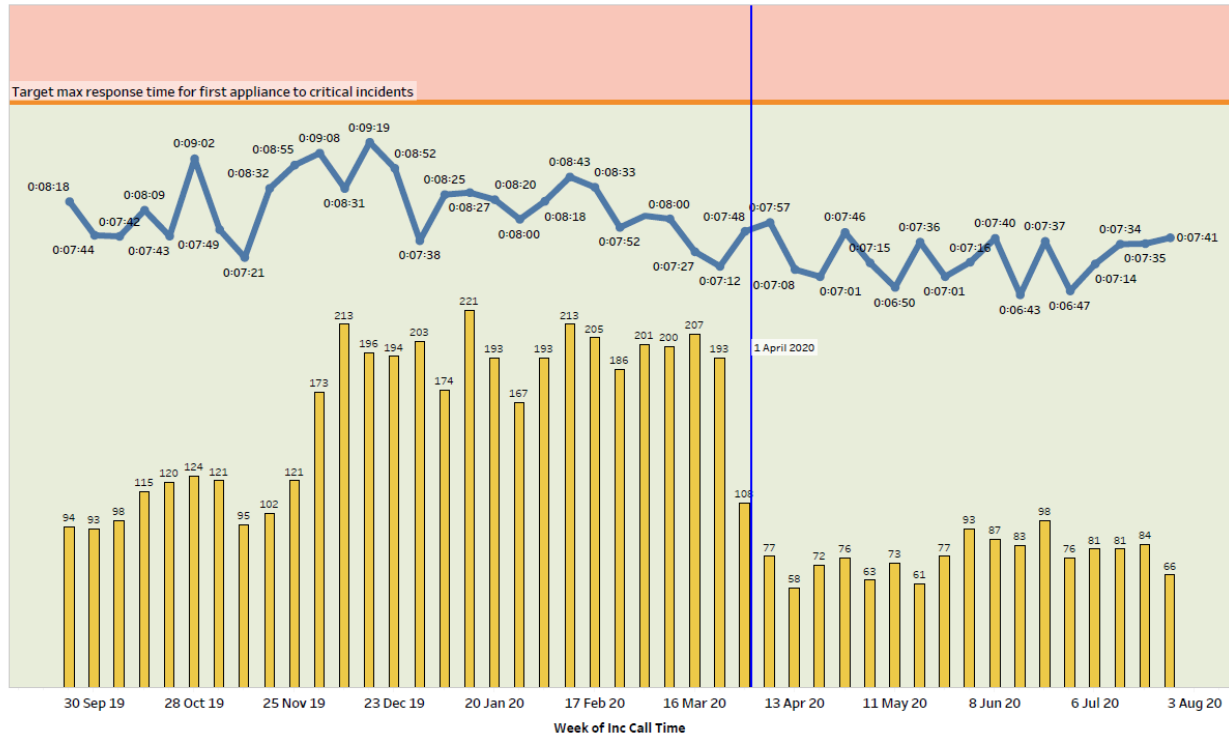
10. **Engagement with staff:** To ensure the Service complied with Government Guidance, face to face engagement was put on hold with personnel at Fire Stations in the initial weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, this was compensated by using other mechanisms, Teams in particular has been very successful and established a new way to collect valuable feedback. As soon as Government Guidance allowed the Service Leadership Team (SLT) commenced face-to-face engagement with all staff and are actively collecting feedback on the implementation. This will be fed back to Brunel as part of their review and will also form the basis of an action plan by SLT for the implementation of any future service changes. The learning from this will form part of the next service update to the Select Committee. This reflects Recommendation 3 of the FTWG, Annex 2.

11. **Phase 2 Assurance:** The implementation of the Phase 2 changes which include Banstead, Egham and Painshill is due to be carried out later this year. However, as stated earlier in this report, the Service has asked Brunel University to assure the second phase of implementation. Brunel University will be carrying out this work over the summer period and will be providing the outcomes by mid-September. The outcomes from this assurance will inform whether the implementation of Phase 2 continues in its current form.

12. **Wholetime Recruitment:** We attracted 538 applicants for the role of firefighter. Twelve of those who are appointed started their training on the 26th May and another training session will start on the 14 September 2020 for a further twelve new recruits. We are about to launch an ongoing recruitment campaign for firefighters to join the Wholetime and On-Call. We are monitoring staff numbers very closely through our Workforce Working Group for the whole Service. This considers the Services retirement/leaver profile and the outcome of the changes to the pension scheme. We have noticed a rise in those who have wanted to take retirement earlier than anticipated as a result of the changes to the pension arrangements and we are factoring this into our workforce planning requirements.

13. **Current Response Standard:** The impact of COVID-19 reduced travel times to incidents as there was less traffic and increased appliance availability. Our call volumes remained fairly constant and were evenly spread throughout the day, rather than spiking during the peak times in the morning and evening. Whilst we expect our response times to increase as lockdown is eased, we expect them to continue to be within the Response time standards for the Service. (FTWG Recommendation 2, Annex 2)
 - a. **Critical Incidents:** The graph shows an average response time of first appliance to critical incidents both before and after the implementation of the Making Surrey Safer Plan to present. Critical incidents are the minority of incidents, however when the data is only refined to this type of incident there is a reduction in volumes after the start of lockdown and this has continued to the present time.

Average response time of first appliance to critical incidents - by week starting: 23/09/2019 to 27/07/2020



On Call (Implementation of 1d)

14. New and additional On-Call Support Officers are in place to improve On-Call availability, recruitment, and contractual arrangements. This was initiated as a pilot and has proved successful and is therefore continuing.
15. Detailed research and analysis has been carried out by SLT to identify how we can improve the offer for On-Call. A detailed report is attached at Annex 3 showing both the Strategic proposals and detailed progress in relation to the On-Call Project. It has been recognised nationally that the recruitment of On-Call is a challenge for all Fire and Rescue Authorities. Our project aims at dealing with this at the root cause and transforming our approach to On-Call.
16. Our current On-Call establishment is 103 personnel, against a full establishment of 138. We have 9 individuals on an eight week residential course in August.. We have further courses planned and, together with delivery of the proposals outlined in the On-Call report, we aim to be at full establishment by the end of the delivery of the MSSP.
17. We are confident that the MSSP will be consistently achieved from October 2020. This achievement is dependent upon the implementation of Phase 2 and current forecasted recruitment/training plans relating to all roles within the Response team.

Chargeable Services (Implementation of 1e)

18. The charging schedule has been updated to include Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) and can be found on the website [here](#). The draft was made available to the Select Committee by the 1st April, as requested. This addresses Recommendation 4 of the FTWG (Annex 2).

Further Context:

Trade Dispute

19. The Service has an ongoing Trade Dispute with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). Action Short of a Strike (ASOS) was stopped at the end of March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the strike period has now expired requiring a re-ballot by the FBU if it were to continue. Regular meetings continue to be held with representatives from the FBU and every effort is being made to resolve the issues raised.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

20. HMICFRS have confirmed that the full Inspection due this year in June has now been officially postponed to 2021. The Inspectorate have, however, advised that they will be carrying out a themed inspection of all Services this year to understand the Response/Recovery from COVID-19 and any learning that will be taken forward in September this year. The Inspectorate has confirmed that the themed inspections will not be scored however the learning will be included in the HMICFRS Annual Report which is published early next year. The Inspectorate has also confirmed that it will be carrying out activity to review the areas of concern raised in the full inspection in 2018 and will also be carrying out full inspections of all Fire Services over 2021 and 2022.

Communications and Engagement

21. A Communications and Engagement Strategy has been developed and is currently in the process of sign off.
 - a. We will soon launch a targeting recruitment campaign aiming at increasing the diversity of our workforce.
 - b. We have improved our social media approach to both incidents and prevention activities to ensure residents are as up to date as possible.
 - c. Members of SLT have restarted visiting fire stations on a weekly basis and this has been invaluable for both managers and staff.
 - d. We have a refreshed internal communications strategy which includes regular transformational and CFO updates to staff. Members are also kept

regularly updated through Member Briefings.

Annual Statement of Assurance

22. There is a requirement for Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide an annual Statement of Assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. This statement is designed to reassure the public that the appropriate arrangements are in place to deliver services safely and effectively. The draft Statement of Assurance will be put forward for Cabinet Member decision in October and is attached for Members Scrutiny at Annex 4 as set out in FTWG Recommendation 5, Annex 2.

Conclusions:

23. The Transformation Programme and Phase 1 of implementation has been delivered. Dependent on the outcome of the assurance from Brunel University Phase 2 will be delivered later this year. The Service has identified the impacts from COVID-19 on the Transformation Programme and is confident that we will deliver the outcomes from the MSSP in full by 2023.
24. 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

25. 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 is delivering a proactive communications and engagement plan which clearly describes how our Service operates.

Equalities and Diversity

26. 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.

Other Implications:

27. 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	No significant implications arising from this report.
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	No significant implications arising from this report.

Recommendations:

1. The Committee reviews the information contained in this update and offers feedback.

Next steps:

2. The outcomes from Brunel University assurance will inform the implementation of Phase 2 of the changes.
3. Further updates will be provided to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee as required.

Report contact:

Steve Owen-Hughes, Head of Community Protection and Emergencies (Chief Fire Officer)

Contact details:

Tel: 01737 733613

Email: steve.owenhughes@surreycc.gov.uk

Sources/background papers:

Making Surrey Safer – Our Plan 2020 - 2023

Annex 1 Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Inspection Improvement Actions

Annex 2 Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee Recommendations

Annex 3 On-Call Report

Annex 4 Draft Statement of Assurance

This page is intentionally left blank