

Division(s): N/A

## **Performance Scrutiny Committee 12 March 2020**

### **Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Draft Action Plan 2020-21**

**Report by the Chief Fire Officer**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to accept the projects and adopt in the final version of the CRMP Action Plan 2020-21.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. Each year the fire authority creates an action plan which proposes a number of new or provides an update on existing projects to support the CRMP 5-year strategy. The 2020-21 Annual action plan provides an update of the 6 projects being conducted by the fire service in order to meet identified demands or risks.
3. As the projects within the 2020-21 CRMP are a continuation of those approved the previous year, no further public consultation was required, but was subjected to full internal and external consultation for a period of 12 weeks during 2018 for the initial proposals within the 2019-20 CRMP. Scrutiny is therefore invited to comment on the proposed action plan.
4. The following projects will be included within the fire authority's CRMP for the fiscal year 2020-21:
  - Project 1 - Risk profiling local communities.
  - Project 2 - Prevention Review.
  - Project 3 - On-Call retention review.
  - Project 4 - Proactive Role in improving standards in rented housing
  - Project 5 - Establishing Community Safety Advocates or Wardens.
  - Project 6 - To increase the diversity of the Operational Workforce to reflect the community that we serve.
5. Our medium-term financial plan and supporting business strategies underpin the proposals within our CRMP action plan

#### **Introduction**

6. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework to which Fire Authorities must have regard when discharging their functions. The 2018 Framework requires each Fire and Rescue Authority to produce a publicly available Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). Within Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) we have called this our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to make it

more meaningful to the public. In April 2017 OFRS published the CRMP 5 year strategy of Oxfordshire, this will cover the period from 2017 to 2022.

7. Each year the fire authority creates an action plan which either proposes new projects and/or an update on ongoing projects to support the CRMP 5-year strategy This report provides an update on the 6 ongoing projects for 2020-21.
8. The agreed projects within the 2019-20 action plan, were subject to a full internal and external consultation for a period of 12 weeks. Scrutiny was invited to comment on the proposed action plan for 2019-20 and are now invited to comment on the work completed so far and the planned activity for 2020-21.
9. Our medium-term financial plan and supporting business strategy underpin the proposals within this year's action plan.
10. The Secretary of State published the latest Fire and Rescue National Framework in 2018. The purpose of the Framework was to provide strategic direction from central government whilst ensuring that authorities continue to make local decisions. The Framework sets out the Government's objectives for the Fire and Rescue Service and what fire and rescue authorities should do to achieve these objectives.
11. Each Fire and Rescue Authority should ensure that the IRMP:
  - Is regularly reviewed and revised and reflects up-to-date risk information and evaluation of service delivery outcomes;
  - Has regard to the risk analyses completed by Local and Regional Resilience Forums including those reported in external Community Risk Registers (CRRs) and internal risk registers, to ensure that civil and terrorist contingencies are captured in their IRMP;
  - Reflects effective consultation during its development and at all review stages with representatives of all sections of the community and stakeholders;
  - Demonstrates how prevention, protection and response activities will be best used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities in a cost-effective way;
  - Provides details of how Fire and Rescue Authorities deliver their objectives and meet the needs of communities through working with partners;
  - Has undergone an effective equality impact assessment process.
12. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service published its strategic CRMP in April 2017 providing the strategic direction for the next five years. This document is subjected to annual review and updated and amended as required. The current strategic CRMP requires no amendment for the fiscal year 2020-21.

## **Consultation**

13. The 2020-21 CRMP has not introduced new projects and so formal consultation has not been required. However, the projects within this CRMP action plan were

subject to full consultation when they were recommended for the 2019-20 CRMP.

14. For the consultation of the 2019-2020 action plan, we sought the assistance of the County Council's Engagement and Communications teams.
15. For the 2019 to 2020 consultation, we set ourselves the following aims and objectives:
  - To increase community involvement and feedback from residents to the annual action plan consultation;
  - To gain feedback from the public on understanding their views on what the priorities should be for the Fire and Rescue Service over the next 12 months;
  - To increase levels of public engagement with the Fire and Rescue Service in general;
  - Provide mechanisms to sustain increased levels of participation.
16. The methods we used, focused on OCC's six key principles of consultation:
  - Keep an open mind and run consultations in an open and honest way;
  - Be clear about what we are consulting on and what we will do with the findings;
  - Give all relevant parties the chance to have their say;
  - Provide sufficient time and information to enable people to engage;
  - Take views expressed in consultations into account when we make decisions;
  - Provide effective and timely consultation feedback.
17. The areas of the focus for the consultation were as follows:

**Live consultation on CRMP:**

- Online portal questionnaire
- Focus Groups
- Locality briefings
- Hard copy questionnaires

**Engagement activities:**

During the consultation we engaged with all neighbouring fire and rescue services, as well as Thames Valley Police and South-Central Ambulance Service.

- Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service;
- Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service;
- Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service;
- Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service;
- Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service;

- Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service.
18. The service held engagement events with 70 Fire and Rescue personnel from all areas of the service.
  19. The service attended Locality meeting engaging with the local councillors in Witney, Faringdon and Wantage, Abingdon and Woodstock and the City of Oxford.
  20. A formal management meeting took place with the representative bodies (FBU) to reply specifically to points raised.
  21. The engagement and communication team supported the consultation in the following areas.
    - Oxfordshire County Council residents' contacts;
    - Engagement team contacts;
    - Voluntary organisations;
    - Intranet and internet publication and news feeds;
    - Hard copy distribution to libraries.
  22. Through this approach we interacted with various stakeholder groups, which amounted to consultation with over 200 people.
  23. As a result of the engagement work we received informal feedback at the events and formal responses from 58 individual's responses. A full consultation response report was published in April 2019.
  24. The following section provides an update on the projects included in the action plan for the fiscal year 2020-21.
  25. Project 1: **Risk profiling local communities**
    - **Precis:** We plan to use a 'risk profiling model' to locally identify the impact of changes in the environment, to understand what resources are needed to ensure we can effectively and efficiently carry out our core activities, respond, protect and prevent.
    - **Update:** This project has now been completed and we have risk profiled the county of Oxfordshire. We now have a greater understanding of the future needs for the county and how best to use the resources at our disposal to best serve the people of Oxfordshire. We are sharing our approach with our partners to give them an understanding of how we have approached our risk modelling. This information will now go to assist us with developing our future Community Risk Management Plans.
  26. Project 2: **Prevention review**
    - **Precis:** Prevention is made up of many different activities aimed at reducing incidence and impact of fires and other emergencies. These activities include educating the public across many age groups as well as conducting Safe and Well visits in people's homes. This project plans

to review these Prevention activities to identify where improvements could be made.

- **Update:** We are currently developing an evaluation framework to support the effective and efficient delivery of our prevention activities. To date, we have concluded an initial review of our education activities and agreed a set of principles that will underpin the delivery of our education programme. These include ensuring that all programmes are evaluated to measure impact and are targeted at those most at risk.
- In addition, under the auspices of the Junior Citizens Trust we commissioned an evaluation of our Junior Citizens programme and delivered a multi-agency workshop to agree new governance arrangements, terms of reference and an action plan for taking forward the recommendations. These changes will support a more consistent, risk-based, outcomes-focused approach, supported by regular monitoring and evaluation. This work is happening alongside StayWise which is a national online resource that is being developed by the emergency services to enable schools to access quality assured learning materials to educate children on a broad range of community safety concerns. In particular, OFRS will have a key role in quality assuring lesson plans for the StayWise website which will inform the new lesson plans for Junior Citizens.
- Work is also underway to develop an evaluation framework for our Safe and Well visits. A working evaluation model has been developed and will be trialled in the new year. This will be supported by a regional prevention pathway workshop in January 2020 (jointly organised by OFRS, NFCC and Home Office) to align with implementation of the national evaluation approach. This work follows the development of the new Safe and Well on-line app which has now been rolled-out across the service.

#### 27. Project 3: **On-Call retention review**

- **Precis:** We plan to review the retention of On-Call firefighters in the service. This review will seek to understand the reasons our staff stay with us, and what we can do to keep our staff for longer
- **Update:** Firstly, we needed to ascertain if the perceived increase in turnover of On-Call staff was correct, so we have set up a working group to gain evidence and analyse the stats from the last 10 years of leavers. The data indicates that there is fluctuations year on year, but it has remained somewhat stable, maybe actually improving. This has been further analysed to understand at what point in the career of an On-Call firefighter they are most likely to leave. The data proves that it is in the first 2 years.
- We also have a working group tasked with producing and conducting a staff survey. This survey is to try to analyse the culture of the On-Call and what the drivers are for staying as an On-Call firefighter. If we understand why people stay, we can learn why people leave. This survey will be via survey monkey and will roll out in the new year.
- The third working group is talking with our like for like partners whether they are Fire & Rescue or indeed the Coastguard. Many organisations have reviewed leaver data and this working group will try to learn the lessons others have already found.

28. **Project 4: To have an active role in improving standards in rented housing**

- **Precis:** This project will seek to protect tenants and prospective tenants from both physical harm and monetary loss when renting a residential property.
- **Update:** Challenges in recruiting a suitable candidate has seen this project significantly delayed and it will be now carried over into 2020/21. However, recruitment has now completed, and work has begun on making important connections with stakeholders such as Public Health and the Housing Authorities across Oxfordshire. Proactive visits to trader premises will also be starting imminently. This will help to further understand the level of legislative compliance, particularly by lettings agencies.
- During the delay in recruitment, we have been working closely with Oxford City Council on ensuring that legislation regarding energy performance certificates (EPCs) and minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES), on rented properties, is used to maximum benefit. As a result, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet has agreed the proposal to delegate enforcement powers for EPCs and commercial MEES to the city and district councils. Under these agreements, the County Council retains the ability to use these enforcement powers. These are important tools in helping to ensure that properties are both energy efficient, but also are warm homes that tenants can afford to heat.

29. **Project 5: Establishing Community Safety Advocates or Wardens**

- **Precis:** We aim to attract people who would like to be a part of us and what we do, but not necessarily by fighting fires. Community Safety Advocates or Wardens will be pivotal in the delivery of safe and well activities in their localities.
- **Update:** The project team has made an extremely promising start and is progressing well with its aim to deliver this initiative.
- Following initial fact-finding and stakeholder engagement, Henley has been identified as the base location for a volunteer-hub to serve the town and its surrounding communities.
- A volunteer co-ordinator has been employed to establish and oversee the delivery of a pilot initiative which will see the first volunteers recruited, trained and deployed in the first half of 2020.
- As well as the generation and delivery of Safe and Well visits for the most vulnerable local residents, the volunteers will be afforded the opportunity to get involved in a host of other community safety campaigns from road safety and speed awareness to community education and school visits.
- Once the pilot initiative is up-and-running, we will look to conduct an ongoing process of evaluation in order to develop a business case to expand the pilot and consider making the use of volunteers 'business-as-usual'.

30. **Project 6: To increase the diversity of the Workforce to reflect our community**

- **Precis:** Over 2018-19 we have been looking at ways to encourage people from underrepresented groups to take up work within the service. It is proposed for this work to continue through 2019-20
- **Update:** During 2017-19 the service has been looking at ways to encourage applicants from underrepresented groups into operational roles within the service. This work will continue during 2020-21.
- We all acknowledge that the modern fire service can be perceived as non-representative. We recognise that to better help the people we serve, we need to reflect the community we serve. We also recognise that a more diverse workforce has great benefits to the way in which the service works, as being more inclusive will help our education and prevention work.
- We have used data to understand where our diverse communities are and ensure that we build strong community relationships, further breaking down barriers. Opportunities are advertised in more accessible places and through the use of social media. We have successfully held 'taster' days, where interested individuals can experience what it takes to be a firefighter and ask questions of those already in service. Our recruitment media and leaflets are inclusive and show the diversity we wish to reflect. Increasing the diversity in our workforce will not only make us more representative but will allow us to attract and retain the best and brightest individuals from all communities.
- Since 2017 we have increased the percentage of women and Black and Minority Ethnic firefighters who carry out our operational roles.

## Financial and Staff Implications

31. Each project will fully recognise the prevailing economic constraints, delivering efficiencies or allowing existing/additional services to be delivered more effectively. If any budgetary pressures result from the implementation of these projects, they will be managed within existing budgets or highlighted to Cabinet through the annual Service Resource and Planning process.

Rob MacDougall, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety Services

Background papers:

National Framework document for Fire and Rescue Service.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england>

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority 2017-2022 Community Risk Management Plan

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/community-risk-management-plan>

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