

**ESSEX POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**  
**FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
 Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Service Leadership Team</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	6 e
	<b>Performance &amp; Resources Board</b>		12
<b>Meeting Date</b>	21 April 2020	<b>Report Number</b>	<b>20-91</b>
	30 April 2020		
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<b>Presented By:</b>	Colette Black, ACEO People Values and Culture		
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Operational Training Update – April 2020</b>		
<b>Type of Report:</b>	Information		

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 The Performance and Resources Board is asked to note:

- The March 2020 highlight report (**Appendix 1**) detailing progress against each of the 6 Operational Training Project – Assurance and Delivery workstreams,
- The actions taken as at 16 April 2020, in response to the risks posed by the current pandemic, Covid-19,
- The actions that we are taking to identify how we can best return to delivery of the plan.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 5 June 2019, the Strategic Board approved the investment of £1,400,000 for the Service to deliver the Operational training plan 2019 - 2022.
- 2.2 A further £1,962,120 capital spend 18 month programme to refurbish the entire suite of Breathing Apparatus (BA) chambers, deliver a safe working at height (SWAH) rig at Witham and evaluate the deep water pits – used for open water pumping - was approved by SLT in September 2019.
- 2.3 The Orsett hot fire training facility capacity is being doubled; fully funded by the capital budget of property services department at a cost of £113,000.

- 2.4 A review of training facilities to ensure that they are fit for purpose continues and specifically includes live fire training, Witham Service Training Centre (STC), Road Traffic Collision (RTC) and Heavy Rescue Pump (HRP) training.
- 2.5 Training facilities that are fit for purpose is a key enabler in achieving the three pillars of our Operational Training Strategy; competence, assurance and verification. The strategic direction of Operational Training is to enable and ensure that the majority of training is maintained via local station based training with core acquisition and specialist training being delivered centrally. The review of training facilities will ensure that we are in a position to deliver this strategy.
- 2.6 Governance arrangements for the Operational Training Project – Assurance and Delivery have included monthly highlight reports that are submitted to the Learning & Development Steering Group at which the PFCC's office is represented.
- 2.7 As at March 2020 the project was being delivered on time and on budget. The March highlight report is attached (Appendix 1). To date, particular delivery highlights include the following:
- Core Skills Assurance phase 1 programme is complete
  - 15% of our Core Skills Assurance phase 2 programme has been rolled out,
  - The 1<sup>st</sup> cohort of 18 recruits that had their initial 8 weeks of the 15 week training programme at Fire Service College (FSC) all successfully passed out on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2020. The second cohort have begun training
  - A new Service Intranet A-Z library bringing all operational training products and information into one accessible space is now live
  - 602 operational personnel have received mandatory casualty care training since January 2019
  - Budget approval and planning works commenced for a SWAH rig at STC, doubling the capacity of the Orsett hot fire training facility and the complete refurbishment of all the Breathing Apparatus (BA) chambers

### **3. OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**

- 3.1 The Learning & Development invoked their Business Continuity Plan as a result of a decision by SLT to cease the delivery of all operational training for 6 weeks from 23 March 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.2 A department 6 week impact assessment was completed on 27 March 2020 indicating that the maximum tolerable period of disruption for all training activity would be 3 months.
- 3.3 The Fire Service College (FSC) closed its doors on 27<sup>th</sup> March until further notice. This was 2 weeks before the end of the course that was in progress; cohort 2. A further cohort of 18 Wholetime recruits were to begin their initial training at FSC 27<sup>th</sup> April. This cohort will now be trained by the Service Training Centre in two cohorts. The FSC will not be open.
- 3.4 The Operational training plan 2019-2022 and the required resources to support it will need to be reviewed, rescheduled and delivery reprioritised once delivery of training is able to recommence. A department workshop is planned week commencing 20 April to initiate this review.

- 3.5 The project milestones and resources identified as required to enable delivery by the original deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 are likely to change.
- 3.6 To mitigate the impact of non-delivery of operational training, the following qualification validity changes have been temporarily agreed for the following core competencies;
- A 6 month extension to the BA qualification has been approved
  - A 6 month extension to the Incident Command qualification has been approved
  - A 6 month extension to the emergency blue light driving has been approved
- 3.7 A risk assessment is being undertaken to inform whether we can continue to deliver the following planned training to our external partners as follows –
- Suffolk Fire & Rescue – Level 3 IC training  
Essex Police – Firearms training
- 3.8 As part of the business continuity command and control meetings, the recovery phase and return to normal activities are being considered and details captured on a weekly basis.
- 3.9 A department business impact assessment is in development for the Service wide recovery workstream being led by our Director of Corporate Services, Karl Edwards. This will further be informed by the review activity identified in 3.4 above.

#### **4. BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Operational Training Strategy is directly linked to strategic risk SRR150010 - *'There is a risk that the Service fails to, or is unable to, implement appropriately the learning from local/National incidents, audit reports, case studies, changes/interpretation to law/regulations in an effective and timely way.'*
- 4.2 And also strategic risk SRR150020 *'The Service does not provide training to ensure that staff have the skills required to provide an effective operational response to the Essex public and ensure the safety of operational staff in line with the health & Safety at work act, The Service does not provide training to ensure that all employees have the skills to carry out their roles.'*
- 4.3 This risk is cross referenced to SRR150014 – *'There is a risk that through action or non-actions by the Service, there is a fatality of a member of staff or the public'*
- 4.4. The risks associated with the Operational training project have been reviewed in light of the current situation and the 3 strategic risks that the project directly underpins are now rated as RED (High).

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Budgeted project spend for 2019-20 was £922,560. Total spend (including order commitments) was £665,996. The variance of £256,564 was predominantly a result of being able to move to a less expensive Casualty Care Training provider. Full detail below.

Nominal	Budget 2019-20	Actual to Feb20	Order Commitments to March20	Staff Forecast to March20	Total Spend 2019-20	Variance
Staff Nominals	345,560	282,733	-	36,322	319,055	26,505
2903 - Consultancy	20,000	18,561	1,614	-	20,175	-175
0707 - Casualty Care Training	325,400	144,485	20,315	-	164,800	160,600
0707 - FS College	205,200	68,400	77,616	-	146,016	59,184
0707 - FS College Travel	26,400	11,000	4,950	-	15,950	10,450
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£922,560</b>	<b>£525,178</b>	<b>£104,495</b>	<b>£36,322</b>	<b>£665,996</b>	<b>£256,564</b>

- 5.2 The drawdown on reserves was less than anticipated partly as a result of the savings detailed above but also lower than normal 'business as usual' spend - predominantly in the area of leadership development. Further analysis of 2019/20 'business as usual' training spend will be presented to the P&R Board in May 2020.
- 5.3 The impact of the FSC closing will be reflected in our forecasting and a decision to send a third cohort will be made once we are in a receipt of an updated status from the supplier.
- 5.4 Once the delivery of operational training can recommence, a further review of the financial implications as a result of the pandemic will be undertaken.
- 5.5 The review of the operational training delivery plan and requirement for new activity such as management of apprentices and apprenticeship providers may have an impact on the resources required within the operational training department.

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct equality implications with this paper. Any new policies, procedures or courses, will attract a requirement for an equality impact assessment in the normal manner.

## WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

The communication and engagement plans of the Operational Training Project will be updated to reflect the content of this paper. The above will also be discussed with our representative body colleagues.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Fire Professional Framework (FPF) details nine core operational areas of competence, which are defined in Fire Service National Operational Standards (NOS). The competency areas are:

- Driving
- Command and Control
- Breathing Apparatus
- Hazardous Materials
- Working at Height
- Water Rescue
- Fire Service Pumps
- Extrication and Rescue
- Casualty Care

By ensuring and evidencing that our personnel are competent in each of these areas, we can deliver on our legal responsibilities as part of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 and Civil Contingency Act 2004.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

It is an employer's duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees and other people who might be affected by their business. We must do whatever is reasonably practicable to achieve this; this includes training.