



Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Decision Report

Report reference number: 006/2020 Government security classification: Not protectively marked
Title of report: Protection Strategy
Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide
Report by: AM J. Palmer Date of report: 01/04/2020 Enquiries to: AM J. Palmer

1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to set out the reasons the strategy is required and to enable the PFCC to approve the Protection Strategy for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS).

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the PFCC approves the attached strategy as the Protection Strategy for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

3. Benefits of the proposal

The benefits of this proposal are:

- The strategy gives the organisation a direction of travel for the protection function
- It enables the service to meet its statutory responsibilities
- It enables the service to track performance against pre-determined measures and give assurance to the PFCC that the service is effectively discharging its statutory responsibility and mitigating risk to the community effectively.
- It highlights the mechanism by which risk will be identified and the frequency of review and updating.
- It satisfies a concern raised by HMICFRS that the service did not have an effective protection strategy.

The risks of not approving this proposal are:

- The organisation is left vulnerable to a poor inspection rating next year
- The organisation is unable to clearly define how it will meet its statutory requirements

4. Background and proposal

Following the HMICFRS inspection in 2019 it was highlighted that the service did not have a protection strategy or an effective risk-based inspection programme. This meant that as an organisation we were not able to effectively demonstrate how we would discharge our statutory responsibility or identify the regulated premises at highest risk.

A key activity in the Protection Improvement Plan was for a strategy to be produced and a risk-based inspection programme to be developed.

The strategy clearly outlines how ECFRS will discharge its statutory function. It highlights the level of inspections that will be carried out and the relevant competencies of staff to carry out that work. This is in line with the National Framework that has been developed by the Protection Board within the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Alongside this strategy is the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP). This document sets out to provide a risk score for all regulated premises within Essex, Southend and Thurrock. From this score the service will then be able to highlight those premises at greatest risk and target resources accordingly.

Both the RBIP and the Strategy have a review frequency within them which enables the service to keep pace with developments both nationally and locally.

It is proposed that this strategy is approved as the basis around which all protection activities will be delivered and monitored.

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

There were no alternative options considered as part of this paper.

6. Strategic priorities

This strategy is relevant to the following strategic priorities as outlined in the Fire and Rescue Plan.

- Prevention, Protection and Response
- Collaborate with our partners
- Make best use of our resources
- Develop and broaden the roles and range of activities undertaken by the service
- Be transparent, open and accessible.

7. Operational implications

The representative bodies have been engaged in the production of this strategy. There are no operational implications to this strategy. It details how operational staff will develop their role to carry out activities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) but this work will be carried out alongside their response function and will not detract from the service's ability to respond to incidents.

8. Financial implications

The strategy outlines the current structure of the function. This is within current agreed budgetary limits. It acknowledges that, in the light of a changing national picture, the function would need to change in order to be able to deliver. The level and scope of this change is currently unknown and as such the additional resources are also unknown. There is no additional cost to operational staff carrying out fire safety checks in line with the strategy and the competency framework.

9. Legal implications

No specific legal advice was received in the production of this report. However, the service has a statutory responsibility to deliver a protection function which includes responsibilities under the RRO and building regulations. This paper and the accompanying strategy enable the service to discharge that legal responsibility effectively.

10. Staffing implications

There are currently no staffing implications associated with this paper. As outlined earlier, the future picture is unknown in the post-Grenfell world, and this strategy is alive to that and acknowledges that the function may well have to change. This strategy gives the flexibility and ability to do that.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

None associated with this paper. Any work carried out in line with the strategy that is subject to EIAs will be carried out with an appropriate equality impact assessment.

12. Risks

The key risk in this paper would arise if the strategy does not get approved. This would leave the organisation at risk of the implications outlined in section 3 of this paper.

The other risk within the paper is that the representative bodies do not approve of operational staff carrying out the work. This has been mitigated in the following ways:

- Regular meetings with the RBs at which they have agreed the approach
- An amendment of the work crews are currently carrying out. This has meant that the judgemental requirement of the assessment has been removed. It has moved the proposed activities in line with the National Framework and in line with the training the crews have received.

13. Governance Boards

This proposal has been discussed and approved at SLT prior to being presented to the Commissioner at the Strategic Board in March 2020.

14. Background papers

Protection Strategy



BW1349_ECFRS_Pro
tection Strategy_02.

Decision Process

Step 1A - Chief Fire Officer Comments

(The Chief Fire Officer is asked in their capacity as the Head of Paid Service to comment on the proposal.)

Approved



Signed:

Date: ...27/5/2020

Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies

(The Chief Fire Officer is to set out the consultation that has been undertaken with the representative bodies)

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Step 2 - Statutory Officer Review

The report will be reviewed by the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority's ("the Commissioner's") Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the Commissioner or their Deputy.

Monitoring Officer

Sign:



Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 22 May 2020

Chief Finance Officer

Sign:



Print: Neil Cross

Date: 2/6/2020

Step 3 - Publication

Is the report for publication? **YES/NO**

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'none' if applicable)

.....N/A.....
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If the report is not for publication, the Monitoring Officer will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

Step 4 - Redaction

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

- 1 Of Decision Sheet **YES/NO**
- 2 Of Appendix **YES/NO**

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

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.....N/A.....

Date redaction carried out:

If redaction is required, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer are to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign:

Print:

Date:

Step 5 - Decision by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign:



PFCC

Print: Roger Hirst

Date signed: 1 December 2020

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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Sign: (PFCC / DPFCC)

Print:

Date signed: