



<b>Classification</b>	<b>Official</b>		
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Performance and Resources Board</b>	<b>Agenda no.</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> June 2023</b>		
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<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Deputy CFO Moira Bruin</b>		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Protection Strategy Update: RBIP – Update (June 2023)</b>		
<b>Type of Report</b>	<b>Update</b>		
<b>PFCC Action Point No.</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>For Publication</b>	<b>Yes</b>

## **RECOMMENDATION**

This paper has been written to give members of the Performance and Resources Board an update on the progress against the new Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP).

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The new Risk Based Inspection Programme started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2023. Since this date there has been several challenges to overcome, primarily associated with the data relating to the premises that fall within the new RBIP. Those challenges are referenced within this report, along with the solutions that have been implemented to ensure progress against the timeframes laid out in the RBIP remain on track.

## **BACKGROUND**

Our Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) lays out our commitment as a service to managing the commercial risk across Essex.

Premises are categorised into four categories based on several factors, all of which are in the RBIP document. The four categories are Very High Risk (VH), High Risk (H), Medium Risk (M), and Low Risk (L).

Within our previous RBIP, there was a commitment to visit all our VH Risk premises every 12 months, and all our H Risk premises every 24 months. This approach was made based on there previously being 1,114 VH Risk classified properties and 2,639 H Risk classified premises. This would require the Inspecting Officers within Protection to carry out 2,433.5 audits per year to meet the commitment within the previous RBIP.

The service carried out a refresh of the data and as of January 2023, we had 1,870 VH Risk premises, and 7,906 H Risk premises. To meet the commitment within the previous RBIP, would require the Inspecting Officers to carry out 5,823 audits per year, which is over 3,000 more audits annually.

This was neither practical or possible and had led to the cause for concern being raised by the HMICFRS, as the targets within the RBIP were unachievable.

Based on this new data, and following a review of other services RBIPs, and the direction we believed the NFCC would take, the RBIP was rewritten with targets that were achievable and realistic.

The new targets, set out in the 2023/24 RBIP are:

- All VH risk premises will have been audited by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.
- All H risk premises will have been audited by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2027.
- Fire Safety Checks (FSO40's) will be completed on all M risk premises on a 6-year cycle, with audits carried out at premises identified with non-compliances.
- Our Business Engagement Team will carry out educational work that will target all risk groups, including L risk premises.

### **Staffing & Competency Levels**

The Protection Department went through a re-structure between July and December 2022 so that the department was structured more to deal with the workstreams and risk.

The Service delivery points within ECFRS are the delivery points where the RBIP data is coordinated and where our Fire Safety Officers are primarily based. We do have qualified officers based at Service Headquarters that are required to carry out 1x audit per month to maintain competence, but the targets within the RBIP were designed specifically to ensure they were achievable without relying on the audits completed by these officers. This allows these additional audits to add resilience to performance, and not be relied upon, as any requirement to increase their audits activity would detract from the work they are already doing as part of their normal duties: -

- Business Engagement
- Fire Safety England Regs,
- Protection Quality Assurance
- Engineering, Enforcement etc

The structure and budget within the Delivery arm of Protection allows for 6 office Managers, 22.6 Fire Safety Officers.

The figures within the RBIP, based on the data in January, showed that we would require 17.5 qualified Fire Safety Officers, doing 9 audits per month, to achieve the figures agreed by SLT.

Competency levels of those officers also dictates at what point they can carry out audits at specific premises:

- Very High Risk – Level 4 Diploma qualified and competency requirements of a Level 4 signed off.
- High Risk – Level 3 Certificate qualified, and competency requirements of a Level 3 signed off.

Current staffing levels within the SDP's, and predicted timeframes that competency will be achieved:

#### January 2023

- Delivery Fire Safety Officers – 14.8
- Delivery Level 4 Diploma qualified – 9.8
- Delivery Level 3 Certificate qualified – 5
- Delivery Fire Safety Officers in development - 0
- Number of additional Level 4 Diploma holders in Protection (covering all ranks up to SM) – 14 - (2x SM's, 6x Office Managers, 1x Primary Authority Scheme Manager, 1x Business Engagement, 1x BSR, 1x CFRMIS, 1x Fire Investigation, 1x detached)
- Number of additional Level 3 Certificate holders in Protection (covering all ranks up to SM) – 2 - (both SM's)

#### June 2023

- Delivery Fire Safety Officers – 16.8 (with 7x recruited, and starting on 1<sup>st</sup> August, taking us over establishment by 1, funded by Uplift Fund)
- Delivery Level 4 Diploma qualified – 14.8
- Delivery Level 3 Certificate qualified – 0
- Delivery Fire Safety Officers in development – 2 (started in March, both due to complete Level 3 by August)
- Number of additional Level 4 Diploma holders in Protection (covering all ranks up to SM) – (2x SM's, 6x Office Managers, 1x Primary Authority Scheme Manager, 1x Business Engagement, 1x BSR, 1x CFRMIS, 1x Fire Investigation, 1x detached)
- Number of additional Level 3 Certificate holders in Protection (covering all ranks up to SM) – 2 (both SM's)
- 7x New Fire Safety Officers recruited at start of June, with a start date of Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 2023. Will start their Level 3 Certificate straight away, with an expected completion date of February 2024.

While we train Fire Safety Officers to be competent to audit at the right level, there was an acceptance that Office Managers would support Protection hitting targets by picking up additional audits. We acknowledged that this would have an impact on aspects of their other work, but as long as our statutory obligations were achieved, then it was accepted that workloads would be managed locally.

All other qualified personnel across Protection are required to do 1x audit per month to maintain competence, which would also support targets.

#### **The Data**

The reason for the shift in data was due to the transition to using addressed based premium coding (ABP). This meant that we used data provided by the local custodians (that sit within the Local Authority) to ensure a single data set is being used and is kept up to date, as the Local Authority will amend classification as they received planning application/ changes of use, etc.

To give an appreciation of this shift in data, the historical RBIP data suggested that there were 33,738 premises that fell into either the Very High, High, Medium, or Low Risk

classification. A review of the data in January 2023 suggested that this figure was now 88,236.

This extreme shift in data meant that the targets within the previous RBIP were no longer achievable, and as a service we were no longer resourced to deliver those previous targets.

The targets within the new RBIP were designed around the data we were provided at the time:

- Very High Risk Premises – 1,872
- High Risk Premises – 7,884
- Medium Risk Premises – 22,470
- Low Risk Premises – 56,010

As our Fire Safety Officers started to carry out audits, in line with the targets and expectation set, it became clear that the data needed to be cleansed to meet our needs.

There were several premises identified that had multiple jobs for a single premises. This was mainly associated with premises such as sheltered accommodation, where the Local Authority would require a job for each flat within that sheltered accommodation due to their needs to audit each residence under their relevant Acts. As a fire service, The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order only applies to the communal area, so we were in a position where we only needed one job.

As a Protection Department, we worked with our internal CFRMIS Team to develop a process that allowed us to capture and share the information when we located premises that we believed didn't require an audit and refer into the local custodian so they could be removed from our lists. This process involved the custodian creating a "parent" premises, and then listing all the residences as "child" premises. As a fire service we would then just have an audit job for the single "parent" premises, whereas the local authority would carry out their checks against multiple "child" premises too.

This cleansing was time consuming for the Fire Safety Officers, so to ensure the Service remained on target with our RBIP commitment, Protection set an expectation within our Delivery Team that our activity against the RBIP targets would need to be a combination of "audits + cleansed premises", to ensure that the overall list of premises was reducing at the rate required to meet our RBIP commitment.

The next success Protection delivered with the CFRMIS manager was identifying the list of premises that required removal from our RBIP through continual data cleansing of APB codes with the custodians within Local authorities. Therefore, the Service RBIP targets will change every 6 weeks when the Local Authority update their data.

Where Local Authorities don't provide the update due to workloads the Protection team have developed an internal process, that allows our own CFRMIS Team to create the "parent" premises. This internal process has been agreed and will be in place by Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

To confirm, this process for cleansing the data is:

- 1) Fire Safety Officers identify premises that they believe don't require an audit.
- 2) Fire Safety Officers add these premises to a shared spreadsheet.

- 3) This spreadsheet is reviewed by a trained CFRMIS person to quality assure that the input is correct.
- 4) Once quality assured the CFRMIS team will set up a “parent” premises and move all “child” premises across.
- 5) CFRMIS Team date the spreadsheet on when this action was taken, for our Service internal audit purposes.
- 6) CFRMIS updates automatically every Sunday, which will then automatically update our RBIP figures and the monthly targets within our RBIP PowerBi dashboard.

On 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023, our impact against the RBIP commitment was:

VH's:

- Initial target within RBIP to get to all premises over the 3-years – 36 per month.
- Target of premises needed to be visited by May – 180
- Actual impact against RBIP figures – 144 Audits + 124 premises cleansed and awaiting removal = total activity against VH RBIP commitment - 288.

H's:

- Initial target within the RBIP to get to all premises over the 5-years – 121 per month.
- Target of premises needed to be visited by May – 605
- Actual impact against RBIP figures – 405 Audits + 572 premises cleansed and awaiting removal = total activity against H RBIP commitment – 977.

As mentioned above, the process to cleanse the data is time consuming, but we remain on track to complete our lists of VH & H risk premises within the timeframes in the RBIP. As the data is cleansed then audits can increase, but the refreshed targets will allow us to monitor capacity against performance. We are expecting to see an increase in enforcement over the coming months due to non-compliances with the new Fire Safety (England) Regs so as a department we need to ensure we remain on target with audit numbers but start planning for this expected increase in enforcement.

### **Fire Safety Checks (FSO40's) – Medium Risk**

Within our Medium Risk category, we had 22,470 premises. To audit all these just isn't practical for the Protection Department, so it's within our Medium Risk category that we issue FSO40's. These are fire safety checks that are currently carried out by our Wholetime crews. Following completion of an FSO40, these are returned to our Fire Safety Officers within the Delivery Team and the outcomes of those checks are used to determine if a follow up audit is required.

There is an ambition to train On-Call crews so they can carry out FSO40's, however the monthly allocation of FSO40's will remain consistent as any increase in the number of FSO40's being issued will lead to an increase in medium risk premises requiring audits. This will divert resources away from our VH & H risk audits. Distributing FSO40's over a 6-year period allows us to manage the number of follow up audits required at each month at medium risk premises too. As On-Call aren't currently trained, we are continuing to issue the FSO40's to the stations and watch's directly, however once all personnel are trained, we will move to allocating FSO40's to the Command, allowing the GM and SM's to distribute their FSO40 allocation as they feel appropriate.

## **Business Engagement – Low Risk Premises**

A Business Engagement Strategy has been written, outlining our approach to business engagement. Activities already carried out or booked in to support our educational work, across all risk levels of the RBIP include:

- 1) Media/ press releases
- 2) Events/ conferences
- 3) Magazine content
- 4) Online seminars
- 5) Sprinkler awareness training days
- 6) Educational visits to specific premises

Due to the new Fire Safety (England) Regulations that came into force on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023, and the requirements under BSR, the Protection approach was to educate Responsible Persons for High Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs) on their legal duties and update the Service website.

We have allocated a member of the Business Engagement Team to specifically pick up responsibility for our more rural risk. They have developed a good relationship with the NFU (National Farmers Union) and are working with farmers across the county to educate them on their responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, as well as the additional responsibilities they have under NAMOS.

### **Conclusion**

By end of June the monthly variable targets will be updating on a weekly basis, with those targets clearly visible on the PowerBI RBIP Dashboard, as we continue to cleanse the data and carry out audits across the RBIP premises.

### **OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**

N/A

### **RISKS AND MITIGATIONS**

One of the biggest risks in Protection is the retention of trained personnel. It takes around 18 months to 2 years for a new Fire Safety Officer to become fully competent to audit our highest risk premises.

To reduce this risk, we are currently awaiting representative body feedback on new Fire Safety Advisor role profiles that have been developed by the Department. Once agreed, this will allow creation of clear pathways into the department for both Green and Grey book personnel, to be developed while in the department, and provide succession planning for the department in the future.

Another risk to be aware of is the potential for the removal of future Uplift Funding. A separate SLT paper will be submitted giving specific detail around the Uplift Fund.

### **LINKS TO FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN**

Current commitment within the Fire & Rescue Plan include:

- Ensure ECFRS have a systematic, transparent, well targeted, and effective fire safety inspection programme.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

An under establishment within Protection has resulted in significant underspend against budget. The department are approximately £123k underspent, with £93k of that being due to vacancies.

Successful recruitment campaigns have meant that the majority of vacant posts have now been recruited and are due to start within Protection at various dates between now and 1<sup>st</sup> August.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

## **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

N/A – as purely an update on progress against the RBIP commitment.

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

The actions being taken will not have a disproportionate impact on individuals with protected characteristics (as defined with the Equality Act 2010), when compared to all other individuals and will not disadvantage people with protected characteristics.

Race	n/a	Religion or belief	n/a
Sex	n/a	Gender reassignment	n/a
Age	n/a	Pregnancy & maternity	n/a
Disability	n/a	Marriage and Civil Partnership	n/a
Sexual orientation	n/a		

The Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard has been fully considered and incorporated into the proposals outlined in this paper.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

## **CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

N/A

## **FUTURE PLANS**

The CRMP is going to be reviewing the way in all risk is calculated across Essex, including commercial risk. Protection are going to be involved in those conversations to ensure the potential impact on the RBIP is factored into those conversations.

Once the CRMP work concludes, as much as we're not expecting significant change, the RBIP commitment will be reviewed to ensure that it is still appropriate.

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES**

None