# Report to Scrutiny Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Chief Fire Officer Report</th>
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<td>Committee:</td>
<td>Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>22nd November 2016</td>
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<td>Chairman:</td>
<td>Councillor Rob Bird</td>
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<td>Presenting Officer:</td>
<td>Stewart Edgar, Chief Fire Officer and Operations Director</td>
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<td>Purpose:</td>
<td>To provide the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee with an update on the portfolio of services provided by the Chief Fire Officer on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council. Detailed performance information is provided separately as part of the Quarterly Monitoring Report.</td>
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<td>Background documents:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>Appendices:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>Recommendations:</td>
<td>To note the content of the report.</td>
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1. Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service

1.1 Fire Reform

1.1.1 Fire Minister Speech at CFOA Conference

The Rt Hon. Brandon Lewis, Minister for Policing and the Fire Service made a speech at the CFOA Conference in Sutton Coldfield on 13th September 2016. The Minister commended the efforts being made in the UK Fire Service in order to transform the existing model, but made it clear that further change was needed. The reform agenda comprises of 3 distinct areas: efficiency and collaboration, accountability and transparency, and workforce reform.

Future efforts are seen as a ‘partnership’ being led by the sector through the new National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), with support being provided as and when necessary by Government; this includes changes to legislation where necessary to enable reform to take place.

1.1.2 Adrian Thomas Independent Review

Last week saw the release of the long awaited report by Adrian Thomas, titled “Independent review of conditions of service for fire and rescue staff in England February 2015.” The independent review was commissioned to consider terms and conditions of Fire and Rescue Services in England, and whether changes could help build the Fire and Rescue Services of the future.

The report reflects that a majority of Fire and Rescue Services are well managed, effective and good places to work. Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service has welcomed publication of the Adrian Thomas Review and see this as an opportunity to incorporate the review’s recommendations into the overall fire reform programme where it is appropriate for the communities of Gloucestershire.

1.2 Response & Resilience

1.2.1 Fire Control

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service Control have now gone live with a new, state-of-the-art command and control system putting us in the forefront of Fire Service mobilising technology. The new system is a Vision DS 4.20, which is the most current system available in the United Kingdom. This system enables Fire Control staff the ability to identify the precise position of each available fire appliance and officer.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service has partnered with our colleagues in Avon Fire and Rescue Service to deliver an improved resilience and quality of service. This has been achieved by allowing access to each other’s radio and telephony in disaster recovery scenarios. Completion of the project has attracted a visit from the Home Office by Shehla Husain (Home Office Director for National Resilience and Fire Programmes) who will be visiting along with a number of Home Office staff on the 23rd November 2016.

1.2.2 GCHQ Exercise

The Service was involved in the planning and delivery of a major three day exercise to test the response and business continuity for an incident at Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in Cheltenham. Fire appliances from Cheltenham and Gloucester along with senior managers attended the site and supported the exercise through our Fire Control room and with both tactical and strategic co-ordinating group functions at Tri-Service Headquarters.

1.2.3 Fire Fleet Workshops

Following a full review of fleet maintenance arrangements within GCC and GFRS conducted earlier this year, Fire workshops have now incorporated the maintenance of GCC fleet in the Services workshop facility at Waterwells. This was part of the organisations strategic intent to reduce duplication and provide the most effective and efficient use of existing resources. The Fire and
Rescue Service and GCC propose to make a £95k annual saving through this arrangement.

1.2.4 Cardiac Care

GFRS has continued to develop its support for South West Ambulance Service, (SWASFT) by delivering "Cardiac Care" services to communities around our full-time stations. In instances where a Fire Appliance is closer than a paramedic responder, GFRS can be mobilized to deliver basic life support skills (CPR), as well as use a defibrillator if necessary. Firefighters already have a high standard of first aid skills, so the training that SWASFT has delivered in support of this initiative has built on this existing knowledge.

The scheme builds on the co-responding services already being delivered by on-call Firefighters, with all full-time appliances now responding to medical emergencies. To date GFRS has responded to 20 cardiac incidents throughout the County.

1.3 Prevention and Protection

1.3.1 Gloucester takeaway prosecuted for serious breaches of fire safety legislation.

On Tuesday 27th September 2016 at Gloucester Crown Court, the owner of “Best Takeaway,” Eastgate Street, Gloucester was sentenced to 4 months imprisonment suspended for 24 months, he was also ordered to pay full costs of £11,228.04 plus victim surcharge. The Fire Safety breaches identified in the premises were so serious that death or serious injury would be imminent in the event of fire. Further investigations found that the ‘prohibition notice’ was being breached and staff were sleeping on the first and second floors.

1.3.2 Anti Slavery Partnership Working

GFRS’ Protection team are now making anti slavery referrals to Gloucestershire Police if they become suspicious following visits to commercial premises. Issues that will instigate a referral include:

- HMOs with poor fire safety conditions
- Overcrowding issues
- Persons who have informed officers that they are here illegally
- Officers with concerns regarding modern day slavery

Fire Safety Officers have been able to provide premises information to the Force Intelligence Bureau and are able to carry out joint visits if necessary. Joint visits with immigration officers have also taken place when acting on intelligence, along with sharing information regarding employers or employees who may be working illegally or employing persons illegally. Premises that may present a risk to Fire Safety Officers are being highlighted by our partners and Fire Safety Officers have received training from the National Crime Agency and Force Intelligence Bureau.
1.4 Statement of Assurance 2015/16

1.4.1 In line with legislative requirements GFRS have completed production of the draft Annual Statement of Assurance covering the 2015/16 year. The statement contains detail on financial and operational information and subject to internal audit the document will be published in electronic format via GFRS Intranet and external website thereby demonstrating openness and accountability to both staff and the communities we serve.

2.1 Road Safety Partnership

2.1.1 What If... Roadshow
Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership has developed and delivered a hard hitting road show aimed at keeping young drivers safe behind the wheel. Through the story of two young men that survived a horrific crash, the students have the chance to experience a serious road accident without actually being involved. 35 Shows at 31 schools reached 5008 16-19 year olds, delivering an important message to students that have just started, or are about to start driving.

2.1.2 Road Safety Community Engagement Hub
The 14th October saw the official launch of the Gloucestershire ‘Road Safety Community Engagement Hub.’ The hub looks after the concerns of anybody who has road safety issues in Gloucestershire. These include concerns over the state of the roads themselves or if they are being used in an unsafe way. Reporting can be carried out online at http://roadsafety-gloucestershire.org.uk/communityhub/

2.1.3 No Mobile When Mobile Campaign
A new campaign will be launched in November to persuade drivers to leave their phone alone when driving. This will be achieved using a combination of awareness raising, education and enforcement. The campaign will begin with the unveiling of a new piece of equipment that can detect the presence of a mobile phone signal in an approaching vehicle. The clever device then lights up a very clear sign to the driver showing a picture of a mobile phone in a red circle with a line through it.

3.1 Civil Protection / Emergency Planning/BCM

3.1.1 Gas Outage, Cheltenham Sunday 23rd October 2016
On Friday 21st October, Severn Trent Water damaged a Wales and West Utilities gas pipeline resulting in 212 properties being without a gas supply in the Hester’s Way area of Cheltenham. Local Authorities were not made aware of this until the morning of Sunday 23rd October. Cheltenham Borough Council responded by arranging shower facilities and hot food at a nearby leisure centre, all of which was paid for by Wales and West. CPT arranged for 10 accredited volunteers to provide support at the Leisure Centre on the Sunday.

The gas pipe was fixed on Sunday afternoon and engineers went door to door to safely reinstate the gas supply to affected properties. By 1900hrs on Sunday evening the gas supply had been restored to all except 8 properties (where residents were not at home).
4.0 Registration & Coroner Services

4.1 Registration

4.1.1 General Register Office, Annual Review

The General Register Office Compliance Officer recently met with Registration Services for their annual review. The GRO was happy with the level and quality of service that is provided in Gloucestershire. They were particularly impressed with the technical assessment that our staff provide to ensure that a high quality of service is delivered. This is not done in many registration districts and is considered best practice.

4.1.2 New European Passport Return Service

Registration Services implemented a new service on October 1st. The European Passport Return Service (EPRS) was set up in partnership with the UKVI (UK Visa and Immigration). This may be the start of other services which the UKVI may want to work with the Local Registration Service on following the Brexit decision. These services are discretionary and will only be implemented if the fee we can charge covers the cost of delivery. Fees are set locally.

4.2 Coroners

4.2.1 Human Tissue Authority: Inspection Results

The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) licence all mortuaries in the UK and inspect them all every couple of years. The inspection is extremely thorough and takes into account all operating procedures, communication and working relationships with other partners, the working environment and equipment. The Gloucestershire mortuary received an excellent review and the inspectors have taken away some areas of good practice which will be shared with other mortuaries. The team put in a lot of preparatory work and should be commended for their achievement.

5.1 Trading Standards

5.1.1 Brexit Update

It has been confirmed that the EU legislation currently enforced by Trading Standards, amongst others will be converted ‘en masse’ into domestic legislation by the repeal of the European Communities Act 1972 (ECA), replacing it with a new Act which will reintroduce all the same provisions under UK legislation.

Once the ECA is repealed, the UK may decide to leave much of the legislation unchanged as this is by far the easiest option; the ECA is responsible for the incorporation of nearly six thousand pieces of European legislation (including amendments). If all of the current Europe based legislation becomes entirely UK owned in one go there will be certainty for enforcers, businesses and consumers. Parliament and pressure groups may then argue at their leisure over what they will accept and adopt long-term, and what they see as legal bureaucracy that should be removed or redefined.

5.1.2 Collaboration on scams

Since August 2016, in collaboration with the Registration Service, Trading Standards are ensuring that all recently bereaved in the County are aware of the dangers of scams. Bereavement can affect an individual's ability to deal with scams and unfortunately 'scammers' are all too aware of this and have been known to target those who have been recently bereaved. The Registration Service issues approximately 500 information packs a month to people who have registered a
death, and that information pack now contains a Trading Standards leaflet to raise awareness of scams following a recent bereavement.

5.1.3 Better Business for All Initiative

Glouceshershire Growth Hub has requested a meeting at Director level with Glouceshershire County Council regarding corporate commitment to a Better Business for All (BBfA) partnership initiative in Glouceshershire. BBfA are looking for agreement from all involved to sign up to a partnership charter for a joint commitment in putting forward and implementing an action plan and sharing good practice. The aim of the charter is to support relationships between businesses and regulators, built on trust and understanding along with a desire to improve compliance and support business growth in Glouceshershire.

5.1.4 Fire Risk from Cheap Chargers

Over October Trading Standards and GFRS warned people of the dangers of using cheap electrical chargers. Batteries or chargers without overload protection can overheat, leading to electrocution and burns. They can also explode causing serious house fires. Many of these chargers are bought online and come direct from China. They are often made with poor quality components and fail to meet UK safety regulations. The amount of technology people own has vastly increased with 1.8 million mobile phone chargers bought online in the UK each year and an estimated 2.1 million people now using e-cigarettes in Great Britain.