

Title	Chief Fire Officer Report Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Chief Fire Officer suite of Services	Fire and Rescue Service, Trading Standards, Coroner Service and Civil Protection Team.
Date of meeting	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2019
Purpose of Report	To provide a strategic update on issues and key areas of service provision.

## 1. Fire and Rescue Service

### 1.1 HMICFRS Inspection update

Tranche 1 reports have now been published. A national summary report has been produced, along with individual reports for the 14 Services that have been inspected. Each of the Services was given a graded judgment, focused on: **Effectiveness, Efficiency and People**. The information in these reports will be used to inform GFRS's preparations, ensuring that the organisation is in the best possible position for the forthcoming inspection.

The third HMICFRS data request will be made during January. The postponement of this request was to allow the data analysis team to finalise their work with CIPFA to improve the way that they request and gather FRS financial data. Tranche three inspection dates are set out in the below table, exact timings will be confirmed in due course.

Tranche 3 Activity	Timing
Data request	January 2019
Document request	January
Self-assessment deadline	April
In Service Discovery activity	April – June
Strategic briefing	Two weeks before inspection
Fieldwork	May - July
Pre-publication checks	October
Publication	November/December

**Service Action Plan** – In order to ensure a consistent approach and standardisation moving forward, identified action owners attended an internal HMICFRS 'clinic'. This meeting facilitated a discussion around the SMART objectives ensuring they best reflected and took into account the official HMICFRS 'Graded Judgement' criteria. The action plan progress will continue to be included in subsequent SLT updates, together with a verbal update from department heads.

### 1.2 Recruitment of on-call Firefighters

GFRS has been working to recruit more on-call Firefighters in rural communities. Demographics in the many market towns make this particularly challenging, however significant progress has been made in the last 12 months. In order to support the on-call stations, a commitment was made to increase the number of recruits trained at the tri-service training centre in Avonmouth and also facilitate an internal course.

This has led to a 56% increase in the number of on-call Firefighters that have started and completed their training within this calendar year (50). 22% of these are female Firefighters which is far in excess of the national ratio of female staff (5.7%). These successes have occurred with significant investment in supporting a positive working environment. The next stage of the on-call staffing plan is to actively engage in the development of retention.

### 1.3 Health, Fitness and Wellbeing of Firefighters

GFRS will be introducing an annual fitness test for staff, which is nationally recognised and meets guidelines agreed by the NJC following extensive studies. This forms part of the 'Safer Firefighter Programme' ensuring that staff are fit and able to carry out their duties without risk to themselves and others. It also supports the Services commitment to the wellbeing of staff in general and helps support healthier lifestyles.

In addition, GFRS has agreed to introduce a tailored package of "Trauma Incident Management", (TRiM). TRiM is utilised by a number of emergency services and the armed forces, to manage the welfare of those exposed to traumatic incidents as part of their work. GFRS will be working with GCC OHU to develop a tailored package, that delivers trained practitioners internally, but also signposts and refers to the specialist counsellors within OHU and the Firefighters Charity.

### 1.4 Road Safety Update and RTC Statistics

The joint GCC/OPCC Safe and Social Driving, Road Safety Coordinator is now fully embedded. At present, a number of firefighters are receiving training to become Road Safety Educators. Of these, eight will receive GB Road Safety accreditation (a requirement set by the National Fire Chief Council). These plans will increase the capacity to deliver education talks to Schools and Sixth Form Colleges about drink/drug driving, being a passenger, and also to deliver the Drive iQ program.

In February and March 2019 GFRS will be collaborating with the OPCC and Constabulary to deliver the "What if?" Roadshow run successfully for the last two years, which aims to educate young drivers in the County about the dangers of drink/drug driving, and also improve driver behaviour. All campaigns will be delivered through social media from GRFS, Gloucestershire Police and the new Safe and Social Driving Twitter account.

In the last 12 months, GFRS responded to 236 Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's). Of these, 107 required the Fire and Rescue Service to make the vehicle safe. Eighty-two involved casualties being cut free from their vehicles. On 47 occasions, GFRS attended for inspection purposes only. In terms of injuries and deaths, the latest data shows that the decline in serious and slight injuries is likely to continue, however the number of deaths on Gloucestershire roads may not.

	Fatal	Serious	Slight
2015	26	228	992
2016	27	252	888
2017	20	294	790
2018 January to September	19	154	427

### 1.5 Personnel and Organisation Development Update

GFRS has recently completed a Supervisory Manager promotion process for operational staff and fire control. In total there were 82 applications to be a supervisory manager, almost half of which were external candidates. One substantive Watch Manager and three temporary Watch Managers have been appointed internally. A further two substantive Crew Managers, and six temporary Crew Managers have been appointed internally. There are

also two external candidates appointed to supervisory positions. A number of others have been added to a holding pool that will remain live for 18 months. As part of GFRS's ongoing workforce planning, seven new Firefighters are also starting in 2019, who were selected out of the holding pool from the last firefighter recruitment process.

Fire Control had nine applicants for supervisory roles resulting in the appointment of two permanent Watch Managers, one temporary Watch Manager, two permanent Crew Managers and one temporary Crew Manager. A new Fire Control Operator has also been appointed.

### **1.6 Cyber Essentials Plus Accreditation**

GFRS IT Team have successfully gained the "Cyber Essentials Plus" accreditation for the second year running. The accreditation is carried out by an independent certification body and ensures that there are robust and resilient protections to counter the most common forms of cyber-attacks. The process follows three phases:

1. Verification of Security – A set of detailed requirements are provided to ensure that your information technology is protected.
2. Completion of a self-assessment questionnaire – To ensure that the installation, configuration and maintenance of your IT meets the required standards.
3. Inspection by an independent body – This gives an external, independent validation. The independent body is audited by the accrediting body to ensure their standards of inspection are robust.

The work carried out by GFRS IT Team to prepare for this accreditation delivers a high level of confidence in the business continuity management of the delivery and protection of GFRSs information technology and infrastructure.

### **1.7 Gloucestershire Strategy to Tackle Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)**

In support of the County Councils ACE's strategy GFRS have been working with partners in GCC to create a network of ACE champions as part of the strategy action plan. GFRS staff are currently undergoing training and all wholtime firefighters, on-call supervisory managers, support staff (Green Book) and over 50 SkillZONE volunteers will be trained as ACE's champions by April 2019. The training to firefighters has focused on the link between the childhood trauma experienced by the adults and families and the direct impact this has on the demand for GFRS services such as tackling hoarding, managing reduced mobility, poor fire safety and coping with more challenging Safe & Well visits. The intensive work with child and juvenile firesetters now incorporates a discussion about ACE's to understand the experiences of the adults in the family and how this has affected the child. The direct link between trauma and child firesetting has been communicated to practitioners and to firefighters to ensure the first contact with GFRS is effective in building resilience and reducing further trauma.

## **2. Civil Protection Team and Business Continuity Planning**

### **2.1 BCM Review and Testing Programme 2018/19**

To ensure that all GCC service areas have strong BCM plans in place, a council-wide review and testing programme was undertaken across all cluster areas. This review was completed in December.

Service managers/leads were asked to complete the questionnaire so that an assessment of service delivery resilience within GCC could be made. This questionnaire will also highlight those service areas that do not currently have arrangements in place, as well as finding out when plans were last reviewed, tested or activated. In addition, there were specific

questions relating to how service areas carried on providing their services during and after the period of heavy snowfall earlier this year. This questionnaire has been well received and the return rate has been high.

Report findings will be completed in April 2019 and reported to the Business Continuity Management Assurance Board (BCMAB), chaired by Mark Astle, Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

## **2.2 No Notice Call-Out Exercise - Exercise Star - 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

Members of the Civil Protection Team carried out a no notice call-out exercise on the 18<sup>th</sup> December at 10:00 hrs. The purpose of this exercise was to test GCC's emergency call out procedures as well as the District Councils Rest Centre Teams. This exercise provided staff with a timely reminder about availability over the Christmas and New Year period.

The no-notice call out exercise received a very positive and prompt response from the emergency teams that took part. The results of the exercise confirmed that Gloucestershire's County and District Council staff, as well as the Gloucestershire Emergency Support Team volunteers, could provide support to respond to a major emergency if required within the County.

## **2.3 BREXIT Preparations**

In preparation for BREXIT, the Government have referred LRFs to technical notices on their website. On 14<sup>th</sup> December 2018 the LRF met to run through some scenarios based on possible issues that may be a result of BREXIT. As a result, the LRF are also preparing a risk-based spreadsheet and reviewing partnership plans that may be needed.

An SCG will meet in January to monitor the situation. The SCG will continue to meet once a month or more regularly if required.

## **3. Trading Standards**

### **3.1 Prosecutions Update**

The owner of Costless and the Asian and European Store in Gloucester was prosecuted for his role in the supply of illegal tobacco products. The shops had little legitimate trade, typically stocked with long-life products to present a 'front' of a general grocery store, but existing almost entirely to supply illegal tobacco. Many of the items were counterfeit and unlikely to comply with safety provisions which prevent discarded cigarettes continuing to burn whilst unattended, a significant fire risk. The individual entered a guilty plea to 22 charges, covering counterfeiting and incorrect labelling. He was sentenced to 12 weeks in prison, ordered to pay £1,713.50 prosecution costs and £115 victim surcharge.

Another individual was prosecuted for operating an illegal puppy breeding business. The individual avoided inspections, did not apply for a breeders license and misled buyers by giving the impression that puppies were brought up in a family home and socialised with other animals and children. A guilty plea was entered to 9 charges of misleading customers about the puppies and one of money laundering. £23,000 was withdrawn from his bank account on the day Trading Standards Officers executed a warrant on his home in an effort to hide it from the authorities. He was sentenced to 9 months imprisonment and a fine of £1,800.

Another case was brought by Trading Standards where an individual for the illegal slaughter of a ram that caused the animal unlawful suffering and was sentenced to carry out 150 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay £1,700.

### **3.2 BREXIT Considerations**

A large proportion of the legislation enforced by Trading Standards on behalf of the County Council is drawn directly from European legislation. Although the precise effects of withdrawal from the EU regulatory framework is not known at this time, it is inevitable that the process has the potential to place a large demand on Trading Standards.

The Service is responsible for the enforcement of over 100 Acts of Parliament and many more pieces of subordinate legislation, all of which support consumers and businesses. Areas that may be affected by change are those most closely allied to European legislation, including trading practices in areas of consumer protection, animal health and welfare, product safety and food safety.

Whilst the Government has set out to ensure consumers and businesses do not miss out as a result of the UK leaving the European Union, it has also been reported that law makers see Brexit as a 'once in a generation' opportunity to shape the regulatory environment into one that meets the modern needs of both businesses and Consumers.

The current situation is one of uncertainty. The Service has representation at regional and national level to ensure it is as well informed as possible about the changes and is in the best position it can be at this time, to prepare for any additional training required as well as supporting businesses through transition.

## **4. Coroners Services**

### **4.1 Medical Examiners Project**

The Coroners Service continues to forge close links with the NHS regarding the government's forthcoming Medical Examiner programme. This scheme aims to improve the accuracy of death certification, provide reassurance to the next of kin, identify problems with care at an early stage and ensure the right referrals are made to the coroner.

The programme is scheduled to be introduced in April 2019 and will initially focus on hospital deaths. As Gloucestershire has been a pilot site for a number of years and has worked closely with other authorities and the government in helping shape this project, the County is well-prepared for the introduction of the scheme.

Report Ends