HIWFRA Full Authority

Purpose: Approval

Date: **10 OCTOBER 2023**

Title: **SAFETY PLAN 2025-30: APPROVAL OF STAGE 1 REPORT AND AGREEMENT TO STAGE 2**

Report of Chief Fire Officer

SUMMARY

1.   Earlier this year, the Fire Authority agreed a proposal to produce its next Safety Plan covering 2025-2030. This was based around an innovative two-stage approach: Stage 1 involved assessing all foreseeable fire and rescue related risk with Stage 2 identifying and consulting on possible mitigations.

2.   Stage 1 is now complete. This paper seeks Fire Authority approval to publish a report (attached at Appendix A) summarising our findings of what reasonably foreseeable fire and rescue related risks we face in the community.

3.   Work will now begin on Stage 2, namely, working with directorates across the Service to identify possible mitigations to the risks we have identified. This work will commence immediately, and a new Safety Plan covering the period 2025-30 will come to the Fire Authority for approval in Autumn 2024.

4.   The Safety Plan will provide the Fire Authority's strategy and priorities, as well as strategic work packages and commitments over the period of the plan. In developing priorities and mitigations, we will need to formally consult our communities which we will do next spring/summer. An indicative timetable for Stage 2 is attached at Appendix B.

BACKGROUND

5.   Last Summer, Executive Group agreed a business case to produce the Fire Authority's next Community Risk Management Plan ("CRMP"). This plan is known locally as the 'Safety Plan.' The plan will cover a five-year period: 2025–2030. Our two-stage approach will meet – and should exceed - the requirements of the CRMP national fire standard.

Stage 1: ASSESSMENT OF RISK

6.   An outcome of Stage 1 is a report detailing our external risk (Appendix A). This is in part based on National Operational Guidance (NOG) hazard groups for fire related risks, as well as other risks affecting Local Resilience Forum partners. This document captures the likelihood and consequence of each risk and if there is a particular geographical area where these are prevalent. It also includes other pertinent additional data analysis outside of NOG hazard groups to provide the fullest possible risk picture. The report is shared with the Fire Authority for approval and follows the design principles of the recently agreed performance report. Should the Authority be content, it will be published on the Service's website.

7.   Evidence used to complete the report includes:

    i.   Internal: We sought qualitative assurance from our teams across the organisation to understand the context of the risk in the communities in which they live and work. To do this, our Performance team carried out a significant amount of analysis to split our data into geographical areas around station areas covering elements such as the local risk profile (e.g., those above 70 and known deprivation), local incidents, availability, response times, prevention and protection activity. Staff were asked to provide us with assurance and/or additional local context.

    ii.   Local partners: we wrote to our local partners to understand:

        (a) the risks that they currently face

        (b) whether we support them to mitigate these, and

        (c) what future risks have they identified

    iii.   Communities: in conjunction with the Consultation Institute, we also conducted engagement with our communities to understand their perception of risk. This included running a series of focus groups with under-represented groups including those with cognitive impairments, elderly, those with a disability and individuals where English is not their first language. In July 2023, we also ran an online survey which generated almost 1,200 completed responses.

8.   We calculated each hazard's risk score by determining its likelihood and consequence:

Likelihood: our analysts carried out extensive trend analysis and mapping (of our data and, in some cases, data from our partners and other sources), considered national fire risk methodology (where available) and used other forecast data, for example on housebuilding, to predict likelihood. This resulted in a likelihood score of 1 to 5 based upon how many times a year an incident could take place:

Likelihood class	Likelihood Score	Frequency (incidents per year)
High	5	365 or more
Medium high	4	52-364
Medium	3	12-51
Medium low	2	1-11
Low	1	Less than 1

Consequences: we used a business standard strategic tool (PESTLEO covering seven factors: political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental and organisational impact) to identify the consequence from a worse-case scenario with no fire service involvement/mitigations. This assessment was carried out by the risk team and validated by those across the Service. Each factor was scored between 1 to 5, with 1 being very low impact up to 5 being very high. These scores were then used to calculate an average.

9.   Headline findings include:

- We found that fires in residential tall buildings and wildfires are our highest risk hazards. In addition, health related risks which we can influence also scored highly.

- Our communities appear to be strongly influenced by what is topical in the media with concern being raised about wildfires, climate change and electric batteries. However, they are also concerned around broader public issues such as anti-social behaviour and the pressures on the NHS.

- Our staff were largely focused on impacts that were happening now and the impacts this would have on risk. Teams were concerned with the volume of new housing increasing demand, the impacts of climate change and local concerns such as the type and cargo of vehicles on our busy A roads (e.g., specifically the A34) and the seasonal impacts of tourism in the New Forest and on the Isle of Wight.

- Our partners are similar to ourselves in that they are looking ahead to plan effectively, however planning cycles differ. Key areas identified were the

impacts of an ageing population, increasingly unhealthy communities and the impacts of climate change on our environment and individuals.

- Our communities were surprised at the breadth of activity we carry out and welcomed the opportunity to engage with us on a more regular basis.

- Most of the under-represented groups we engaged with spoke about the difficulties they faced accessing information digitally.

- Our partners told us they recovered at difference speeds from the pandemic. Most have now returned to business as usual, but some remain in recovery stage and anticipate remaining that way for some years.

10. The National Framework requires all fire and rescue services to make their assessment of risk publicly available. The report has been designed for that purpose, enabling our communities, as well as Fire Authority members, other political representatives and others, to understand what risk we are facing. While this report may be a snapshot in time, we want to enable regular consultation to continually inform our view of the world.

Stage 2: IDENTIFICATION OF MITIGATIONS

11. Stage 2 involves writing the Safety Plan and designing mitigations. The Safety Plan provides the Fire Authority's strategy and priorities, as well as strategic work packages and commitments over the period of the Plan. The Plan needs to be in place by 1 April 2025 on the expiry of the exiting Plan, however there is no need to wait until the commencement of the new Plan to implement any improvements which can benefit our communities now. This can be whilst design and implementing mitigations for the new Plan continues.

12. An important element of this work will be to identify mitigations. For each community risk identified, we will map:

    i.   What we must do – our statutory and regulatory responsibilities

    ii.   What we should do – sector guidance/approved codes of practice

    iii. What we could do – the options available to the Service

    iv.   What we can do – what we could do when considering our resources and other risks we need to mitigate

13. We anticipate being able to replicate this approach across the totality of the Service including corporate and people areas. By mapping what we must and should do, we may find we are over-resourced in some areas, enabling us to make informed decisions about where and how best to use our resources.

ONGOING ACTIVITY

14. Since beginning the project, we have recognised the value in the above activity becoming more frequent rather than a once in five-year event to keep up with a rapidly changing world. We are working with directors to identify appropriate resources to establish a permanent function and how we can routinely engage with our communities and hear more from our staff, including through our existing staff network groups. Work is underway to consider changes to the Policy, Planning and Assurance Directorate, including whether to re-prioritise existing resource where it is considered necessary.

SUPPORTING OUR SAFETY PLAN AND PRIORITIES

15. This project will develop the priorities and improvements for the 2025 – 2030 Safety Plan. Stage 2 will ensure full alignment with both the CRMP Fire Standard and the Fire and Rescue National Framework. The project will demonstrate our commitment to our existing priorities of Our People, Our Communities, Public Value and Learning and Improving and may identify alternatives.

CONSULTATION

16. Engagement has formed an important element of Stage 1. We have engaged extensively with staff, partners, representative bodies, and our communities throughout Stage 1 to both enhance our understanding of risk and develop pathways for effective Stage 2 consultation.

17. We commissioned the Consultation Institute to support us develop an approach to effective consultation. We have benefitted from their expertise and propose procuring further support for the remainder of the project. They are also contributing to our Stage 1 evaluation.

18. Effective consultation in Stage 2 is arguably more important than in Stage 1 as we seek views on proposals and future mitigations. We will ensure our learning is reflected in our consultation plan as in some instances we did not get the engagement from some groups we had hoped (e.g., young persons). While we will consult during Stage 2 to get a mandate for priorities and proposals, as part of our routine change activity, mitigations will need to be consulted upon separately when it is appropriate to do so.

COLLABORATION

19. The two-stage approach to develop the Safety Plan was designed through learning from our previous risk programmes and alignment to national best practice. We have collaborated with a number of fire services and the NFCC through family groups, our regional liaison officer and the NFCC's risk lead to design our approach.

20. In September, Kent Fire and Rescue Service peer reviewed Stage 1 with their findings forming part of our evaluation. We received a positive outcome whereby they recognised the breadth and innovation of our approach to date.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

21. In Summer 2022, Executive Group agreed the Business Case for Stage one of this project and agreed in principle the approach for Stage two, albeit it may need to change depending on the outcome of Stage one. Now that Stage 1 is complete, we are content that our original design for Stage 2 remains appropriate. Funding is being provided through existing annual Safety Plan funds and has been part of the routine annual budget setting process.

22. Future work, including the implementation of mitigations, should be considered business as usual and be part of our normal planning and budget setting process. Depending on the nature of particular work packages, some may come to Fire Authority for approval, for example, if they require financial approval.

23. We are considering how to make this a permanent – rather than a time limited – function. The DCFO intends to shortly bring forward a plan to fund a small team to provide a continuous planning function.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

24. This project fully complies with the impact assessment and change management procedures. This includes on data protection to reflect our processing of information and on people impact to cover our engagement to add context and validation to the data. This engagement was due to take place in varying forms including face to face, internal comms, a digital survey plus letter direct to external partners. The face-to-face engagement sessions would include external focus groups with members of our under-represented community groups across all four unitary areas.

25. As a result, the CRMP project team worked closely with HIWFRS Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team to ensure a robust and thorough People Impact Assessment Stage 2 document was in place. Taking advice from the EDI team and an external professional from the Consultation Institute, we ensured our approach to the engagement was being conducted in the most appropriate and inclusive way available.

26. At the point work packages and proposed mitigations are agreed, each of these activities will be subject to its own impact assessment ensuring further compliance with the Service's change management procedures and that we are meeting our people and other legal considerations.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

27. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires the Fire Authority to have a CRMP. This work will ensure the Fire Authority fulfils this requirement.

28. Through effective evaluation against legislation and regulation during Stage 2 we will ensure all our statutory duties continue to be delivered and current legislation, including those relating to equality, are met throughout this project.

BENEFITS

29. The production of an approved CRMP will provide assurance that our resources and future improvement activity reflect the identified risk across all areas of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This will enable an effective improvement plan and optimised provision of services to our communities. This will generate many benefits including:

- The creation of a new permanent way of identifying and considering internal and external risk and the effectiveness of our mitigations.

- Ensuring our resources are most appropriately aligned to the risk our communities face, thereby enabling us to respond to the needs of our communities as best we can.

- Contribution to our People Strategy, ensuring a safe and healthy workplace for HIWFRS personnel.

- Evidencing ongoing management of risk, and effective planning of improvement activity demonstrating how we meet the CRMP Fire Standard, HMICFRS' assessment of how we assess risk and requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

- Shaping the Service's approach to strategic assessment of risk, providing an opportunity for organisational learning and effective planning of improvement activity.

OPTIONS

30. We deliberately designed a break point between stages 1 and 2 to assess progress and determine whether any changes are necessary to successfully complete Stage 2.

31. Following a local evaluation and peer review at the end of Stage 1, we are satisfied with progress to date and that the approach and supporting structures are in place to complete Stage 2 as planned. We therefore recommend continuing as planned to produce a high-quality strategic plan to set the Service's direction until 2030. Every fire service needs a CRMP and so we propose to do nothing by ceasing the project is not a valid option. As outlined above, this will create a legal risk. The size of the team is not large and so reducing it in any way will impact upon what its able to achieve. Work is underway to consider how to make this a permanent function.

RISK ANALYSIS

32. The CRMP team is continually capturing learning, risks and issues related to the delivery of the project which are shared across the Service as appropriate for governance, scrutiny and evaluation. All risks are recorded, reported and managed in line with HIWFRS' Risk Management procedure, appropriately reflecting our tolerance, appetite and agreed control measures.

33. As the CRMP methodology is in its infancy there are limited tool kits available from NFCC to provide assurance of the approach, therefore the team is working with the NFCC's liaison, other fire and rescue services, the Consultation Institute and academia to ensure we have access to experienced practitioners and knowledge. This collaboration should assure the Fire Authority that the approach being taken demonstrates good practice and the requirements of the National Fire Standard and National Framework.

EVALUATION

34. While there will be a full evaluation of the whole project post-completion, there will also be a formal evaluation of the effectiveness of Stage 1 in the Autumn 2023. This end of stage evaluation includes a peer review (with Kent Fire & Rescue Service) facilitated by NFCC and assurance from the Consultation Institute. To inform this evaluation, we also completed a gap analysis of our methodology against the National CRMP Fire Standard. The evaluation report will be shared with Executive Group for comment and will be made available to the Fire Authority upon request. Any learning from Stage 1 will be taken forward into Stage 2 where appropriate and relevant.

CONCLUSION

35. While fire authorities have a statutory duty to produce a CRMP, it is also necessary to ensure each fire service and its resource are appropriately aligned to the risks it may face. There are also other benefits including enabling us to consider how we can better forward plan and consider how we are most effectively and efficiently using our resources.

36.   We are now well into our project to produce the Fire Authority's next plan having conducted extensive work to build our understanding of local fire and rescue related risk. The next stage will give us the opportunity to consider whether we are using our resources in the most optimal way, ensuring our communities are best served now and in the future. We will ensure the Fire Authority is sighted on progress.

RECOMMENDATION

37.   That our continuing approach to produce the Fire Authority's next Safety Plan be noted by the HIWFRA Full Authority.

38.   That the Stage 1 report (at Appendix A) capturing our foreseeable fire and rescue related risk be approved by the HIWFRA Full Authority and published on the HIWFRS's website.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

39.   Outcome of Stage One Report - Appendix A

40.   Stage 2 Proposed Timeline - Appendix B

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