

## AVON FIRE AUTHORITY

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Avon Fire Authority</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>14 December 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Service Plan Overview and Key Assumptions</b>

### 1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates the Avon Fire Authority (AFA) on the key assumptions and findings identified by the Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP) and Business Planning teams which will inform the updated Service Plan (SP) for 2023-2026.
- 1.2 The key findings were presented and discussed during the AFA Member's Briefing session on 4 November 2022. Therefore, this report provides a further and formal opportunity for consideration.
- 1.3 The [SP for 2022-2025](#) was substantially renewed and consulted upon. Based on key findings and analysis to date, it is anticipated that relatively minor changes and updates to the SP will be implemented for 2023-2026. These changes will likely include updated narrative in relation to key challenges and community risk findings, updated performance metrics and financial information, and recent Service achievements. A final draft of the SP 2023-2026, with accompanying consultation report following a four-week public consultation in January, will be submitted for review and approval by the AFA in March 2023.
- 1.4 Following publication, the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee (PRSC) monitors the performance and delivery of the Authority's plans and objectives, and ensures the Authority has an effective performance management framework in place to deliver the Service Plan.
- 1.5 The AFA will be updated annually on progress for each of the objectives within the SP enabling Members to gain assurance that the strategic aims are being met.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the emerging community risks and keys findings identified to date in this report.
- b) As these key findings inform the development of the SP for 2023-2026, consider whether there are further priorities or objectives for inclusion in the Plan at this stage and prior to the draft being submitted for review and approval in March 2023.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 This report has no direct financial implications.

## **4. KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP) Findings**

4.1 The Baseline Report 21/22:

- Results show a year-on-year increase across all incident categories, though totals are still below the pre-pandemic five-year average. This indicates a gradual return to pre COVID-19 norms.

4.2 Initial release of the 2021 Census data:

- Above national average population increase across our Service area.
- Nationally, our population is aging. North Somerset has a particularly high population of over 65s.
- Above national average increase in population density across our Service area.
- Significant increase in the number of households in B&NES, South Gloucester, and North Somerset.

4.3 Lithium-ion batteries:

- Significant increase in use from mobile phones, e-scooters, e-bikes and e-cars, both public and privately owned.
- Behaviours, including the use of unregulated products such as chargers and conversion kits pose a particular risk.
- The number of fire incidents involving lithium-ion batteries is an emerging risk nationally.

4.4 Fires in tall buildings:

- Our Service area contains a high number of tall buildings, including commercial, residential, and mixed-use properties.
- Analysis shows fluctuations in the number of tall building fires over the last five years.

4.5 Heatwaves and climate change:

- The unprecedented heatwave in 2022 could indicate an increased likelihood of future extreme weather events.
- Increased likelihood of primary and secondary fires, including a higher risk of wildfires of increased severity.

- Drought conditions and reduced water availability.
- Increased risk of storm conditions and flash flooding.
- Changes to normal patterns of precipitation.
- Disruption to transport networks.
- Increased pressure on partner emergency services.

#### 4.6 Changing economic climate:

- High inflation and rising interest rates driving up the cost of living.
- Potential increase in levels of deprivation, wider areas of deprivation, and increase in fuel poverty.
- Impact on mental and physical health leading to increased pressure on emergency services.

#### 4.7 Community health and wellbeing:

- Increase in diagnoses of depression and anxiety since the start of the pandemic. National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), research into the links between mental health and fire risk is upcoming.
- Increased smoking rates in Bristol.
- Increased levels of obesity.

### **Challenges and Themes**

#### 4.8 National and global challenges:

- Increase in the cost of living including escalating energy and fuel prices.
- The war in Ukraine and its impact on financial markets and supply chains.
- Living with COVID-19 and the prolonged impact of the pandemic.
- The changing role of the fire service (based on capacity and capability).
- Climate change emergency.

#### 4.9 Existing themes within AF&RS:

- With uncertainty around funding and increased operational costs, finance and budgets remain a challenge.
- To keep pace with advancements in technology and societal changes and expectations around work, we acknowledge that we must continue to invest in our staff, including opportunities for development, career progression, leadership development, direct-entry, attraction and retention of staff.
- As a public sector organisation, we have a responsibility to demonstrate strong ethical leadership and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), including the Service's net zero carbon target for 2030.
- We have committed to investing in digital technology and delivery of the Service's Transformation programme designed to review, develop, and improve policies, processes, and systems across all areas of the Service.
- Our cultural journey continues, recognising that the communities we serve are diverse, and ensuring that Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality (DICE) is embedded in the Service's organisational culture and decision-making.

## **5. RISKS**

- 5.1 The Fire Authority is responsible for putting in place a sound system of control, including arrangements for the governance of its affairs, and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 5.2 The Corporate Risk Register includes a specific corporate risk CR14 – Governance, which is monitored and reported to the Service Leadership Team (SLT) each month. The Corporate Risk Register is presented to the Audit, Governance and Ethics Committee twice yearly for scrutiny and approval.

## **6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The requirement for an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), is included in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, which was given statutory effect by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
- 6.2 Section 4.6 of the National Framework states that consultation must '*reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners*'.
- 6.3 There is a well-defined set of legal principles (known as 'the *Gunning Principles*') for a lawful public consultation process:
- The consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage.
  - The proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response.
  - Those consulted should be aware of the criteria that will be applied when considering proposals and which factors will be considered decisive or of substantial importance at the end of the problem.
  - Adequate time must be given for consideration and response.
  - The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any statutory proposals.
- 6.4 The AFA can be assured that the consultation process for the Service Plan 2023-2026 will comply with the *Gunning Principles*.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Service Plan 2022-2025 – [Modern.Gov](#)
- Baseline Risk Report 2021 – [Modern.Gov](#)

## **8. APPENDICES**

None.

## **9. REPORT CONTACT**

Caroline Taylor, Head of Corporate Assurance, Planning & Continuous Improvement. Scott Ward, Corporate Assurance & Business Planning Manager.