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Meeting	Performance & Resource Board	Agenda no.	11
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Report Authors	Area Manager Ian Adams & Group Manager Dave Bond		
Presented By	ACFO Andy Smith		
Subject	Protection Strategy Update		
Type of Report	Information		
PFCC Action Point No.		For Publication	Yes

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The paper provides members of the Performance and Resources Board an update on the progress against the new Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) and the Protection functions activity linked to the Protection Strategy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The revised Service Risk Based Inspection Programme started on the 1st of January 2023. Since this date there has been continual improvement with the way RBIP reporting has evolved for premises that fall within the new RBIP. Changes are referenced within the next section of the report to demonstrate the Service will complete the timeframes of 5 years for High and 3 Years for Very High premises.

HMICFRS stated from the inspection publication.

The service's protection strategy is clearly linked to the risks it has identified in its IRMP. It is reviewing its current strategy in line with the development of its new CRMP.

The service has now set itself an achievable RBIP, which is informed by local risk information. It is based on an improved dataset, which the service is continuing to update. It has shown better planning of its workforce to meet the demands of its protection strategy. Therefore, the previous cause of concern has been closed.

The Protection team will now review the process with the National Fire Chiefs Council Protection lead and the Policy and Reform Unit and capture any changes in the Protection Service Delivery plans to ensure:

- 1. Its quality assurance process is effective, so staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard and they are accurately recorded.*

2. *The service should assure itself that its use of enforcement powers prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.*
3. *Recruitment and training remain a priority to ensure the service has 23.8 Full Time Equivalent Inspecting Officers.*

BACKGROUND

ECFRS obtains premises and risk data from Address Based Premium (ABP) from the custodians. ABP is updated on a 6-weekly basis, updating the number of premises and the premises risk categories. At the start of the RBIP process in January 2023, the total number of properties identified were allocated a Service Delivery target of,

1. 3 years for Very High-Risk Premises.
2. 5 years for High – Risk Premises

An evaluation of the ABP data revealed discrepancies in property risk grading compared to the Service's statutory duty under the Fire Safety Order. For instance, ABP categorised individual rooms in care homes as Very High Risk, whereas the service data only considered the entire building. Consequently, the property count exceeded what the Service were required to audit under the Fire Safety Order. To address this, the Protection team has provided a dedicated resource to work with CFRMIS to continually review all properties and remove buildings from the RBIP where necessary. This weekly process will lead to a reduction in the total RBIP property count and subsequently reduce the monthly targets split over the remaining months. As identified in previous reporting, Address Base Premium data will be reviewed on a 6-week cycle and the data refreshed in the RBIP.

A significant amount of work has gone on across the Service functions to provide a way of showing progress within the RBIP against the Service Delivery plan. This was due to monthly performance reports constantly showing under performance against the RBIP.

Whereas the reality, and taking into consideration all activity, the Service is consistently performing where it needs to be with the resources and risk on timelines of 3 years for Very High-Risk premises and 5 years for High-Risk premises.

Therefore, to maintain Service Delivery against the 3- & 5-year strategy the Service has not reacted to the wrong challenge by adding more resources to hit target. Instead transitioned to better reporting to understand the holistic challenge which has led to the Performance Team working with Protection and using data, performance, and resources (both current and projected) to create a dynamic target reporting that maps our planned journey over the next 3-5 years as follows.

DATA

The current monthly performance reporting data identifies one figure, the number of actual High and Very High audits completed at new premises, which have not currently been visited within this cycle of the RBIP. It therefore uses a static target and is not reflective of all audits carried out, in accordance with our commitment to keeping Essex safe, or any other activity undertaken by Protection.

Outcomes

Metric vs Tolerance

Metric	5 Yr Avg	Last Month	Tolerance				
Number of Deliberate Fires	41	62	58	136+	105-136	79-104	0-78
Number of ADF Fires	53	57	62	73+	65-72	58-64	0-57
Number of Non-Domestic Fires	26	27	32	38+	31-37	29-30	0-28
Number of Primary Fire Injuries	2	4	5	9+	6-8	3-5	0-2
Number of ADF Injuries	2	3	4	6+	4-5	1-3	0
Fire Fatalities	0	0	0	3+	2	1	0
Accidental Dwelling Fire Fatalities	0	0	0	3+	2	1	0
Number of Unwanted Fire Signals	107	82	107	94+	83-93	72-82	0-71
Audits (RBIP Very High)*	22	23	15	0-15	16-25	26-35	36+
Audits (RBIP High)*	76	50	79	0-62	63-73	74-83	84+

* Audit data measured for past 3 years.

Additionally, to the information within the Performance Report, there is now a separate forward looking performance plan, which is used to provide the narrative within the Performance Report. This plan considers:

1. The number of premises left to audit.
2. Performance to date.
3. Number of premises the Service has reclassified.
4. Resource numbers current and resource numbers projected.
5. It also accounts for the need to reaudit certain premises and accept that these reaudits are required to keep Essex safe but won't contribute to reducing the number of premises left to visit.

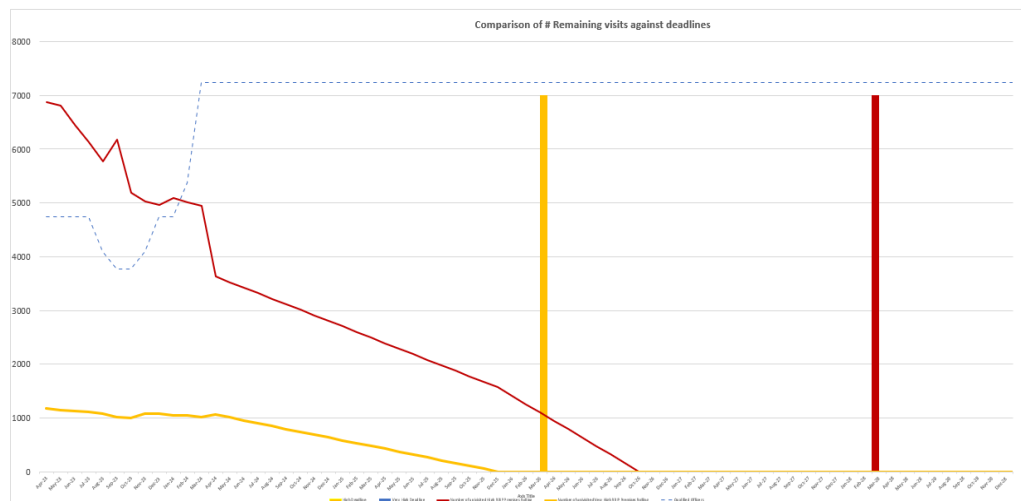
All of this data is analysed to ensure that we remain on track with our 3 year and 5-year plan and generates a monthly confidence score on activity against plan.

Number of Audits Per officer per month	3 Month Rolling Average (Apr-Aug)
6	6.9

Split Between High and Very High	
Very High	High
34%	66%

RBIP Very	RBIP High
Mar-26	Mar-28
Very High Completion	High Completion
Mar-26	Mar-27
0	12

Very High Completion	High Completion
Rolling	Rolling
Nov-25	Oct-26
4	17



The systems have been set up to refresh monthly, replacing projections with actuals, and recalculating to ensure the Service remains on track. This way any slippage in the targets can be addressed immediately to align resources to risk on our 3- and 5-year timeframes.

It is also an innovative approach to monitoring performance, moving away from a static performance metric to reporting on performance against current resources, so the Protection team are delivering the number of audits against the resources available.

For example, each month the Service will have different levels of number of inspection officers available due to training, leave, sickness, retirement, promotions and changes in legislation or enforcement activity creating an additional workload across Protection.

The Service currently has 14.8 FTE inspecting officers working at full capacity across High and Very High audits. Protection also has seven new employees who are due to complete their Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety at the end of March 2024. Once they receive confirmation that they have passed their qualification (which we are working with the examining body to get as soon as possible) they will then be able to audit high risk premises. They are then scheduled to start their level 4 training in May.

The current target being set to all inspecting officers is 9 audits per month. The breakdown of this target is that 6 audits should be at new very high and high risk premises, so directly affecting the RBIP commitment. It is accepted and planned that inspecting officers will need to carry out audits at medium risk premises, if FSO40's carried out by crews identify any non-compliance. They may also need to re-audit premises that have been non-compliant. This is captured within the additional three audits per month, on top of the six at new premises.

Therefore, as part of reviewing the Service Delivery model against the Service strategy, there is absolute confidence in our planning and resourcing to risk that our dynamic modelling will consistently show the actual performance, and when or where intervention is required, to remain on target.

ASSURANCE

The Protection Quality Assurance Policy sets out roles and responsibilities relating to where responsibility at each tier lies within the department. This has been discussed and agreed with the GM of Organisational Assurance and aligns to the services overall approach to quality assurance.

There is work going on within the department to ensure all levels of management are fully aware of their responsibilities at their appropriate tier of QA and are trained.

With regards to assurance against performance and targets, Protection can demonstrate a 'three lines of defence' model, which links to a holistic assurance methodology to ensure a framework of control for the RBIP and other activity carried out within Protection:

First Line of Defence

- The Group Manager Protection will directly own the Delivery Activity and work across the Service Functions to record any associated risk via JCAD.

Second Line of Defence

- The Area Manager Prevention and Protection(P&P) will review activity on performance via the P&P monthly Governance Board attended by the Group Manager and Performance team with independent scrutiny from the PFCC Head of Performance and Scrutiny.

Third Line of Defence

- Independent Scrutiny
 1. Monthly updates to the ACFO Operations
 2. A culture shift from Operational Assurance to Organisational Assurance
 3. Performance and Resource Board

The new reporting tools demonstrates that with the current 14.8 active inspecting officers and plotting in the fully trained officers over the 3- and 5-year cycles, the Service is on target to complete both the VH's and H's ahead of the deadlines that have been set, and we are delivering against the Service Delivery plan for the RBIP.

UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS

Protection is also in the process of identifying options in a paper for the Service Leadership Team with further recommendations on our approach to responding to UwFS.

While we work through the options and recommendations, campaigns have already started to look at ways in which we can reduce the number of UwFS being received.

Social media campaigns have been run, and continue to be run, with activity against those posts captured and analysed. Leaflets have also been developed and are in the process of being delivered to all fire stations. The instruction to operational crews is that one of these leaflets should be left at any premises they attend due to a UwFS at a non-domestic premises. The leaflets give those responsible for the building clear guidance on their legal responsibilities, the consequences of UwFS on businesses and on the fire service, and a reminder that failing to address UwFS at their premises can lead to enforcement action being taken.

Action against premises that are responsible for UwFS has always sat with the Service Delivery Points within Protection. This takes them away from activity in other areas of the strategy, such as audits. To address this, the Protection recruited and established a Business Engagement Team, and UwFS will sit within the Business Engagement 2024/25 Delivery Plan.

Meetings are taking place during the first two weeks of March to review and define what our preferred approach should and will be. Station Manager Tim Rickard, who manages our Business Engagement Team, and our High-Rise Task Force, supports the UwFS workstream within the NFCC and his expertise and knowledge in this area will allow us to move to a proactive response, rather than just a reactive one.

TRAINING

Eight LearnPro modules were released on 28th 2023 July for all operational personnel to complete (On-Call did not need to do the module). The frequency within pdrPro and LearnPro have been set with the requirement for operational firefighters to complete these every 24months.

Module completion as of February 28th, 2024, is as follows (**number of learners completed so far/ percentage of total**):

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) – **684 (70%)**
 Active and Passive Fire Protection – **646 (66.1%)**

Emergency Escape Lighting – **653 (66.8%)**
Fire Detection and Alarms – **654 (67%)**
Fire Signs and Notices – **647 (62.9%)**
Firefighting Equipment – **664 (67.9%)**
Means of Escape – **656 (67.1%)**
FSO40 Training – **371** WT personnel (**85%**) plus an additional 99 On Call staff and 31 other Operational staff.

The Group Manager Protection will continue to monitor completion rates, however responsibility for completion rates will now move across to the Response AM and GM's.

LEVEL 2 QUALIFICATION IN FIRE SAFETY

The Level 2 Course in Fire Safety that was developed by the Protection Training Team received accreditation in October 2023.

The wholetime squad that Passed Out in December 2023 received the first Level 2 award, and the Protection Training Team were also assessed during delivery of this, as it was the first course that they delivered. I am pleased to say that all the wholetime squad passed, as did our Protection Training Team. The training will now form part of the curriculum for all recruit courses.

We are now well into the development of a training programme for 2024, to start delivering this qualification to all wholetime personnel. It's not mandatory training for On-Call, but Protection have worked with the finance team and have budgeted for a 25% completion rate within the On-Call in the 2024/25 fiscal year.

It should be noted, that as much as we want to roll this training out at pace, we need to consider the wider training requirements and CPD that the Protection Department require when devising this delivery plan. This may result in it taking 2 years to deliver the training to all personnel, but we will be able to provide clearer timeframes in future reports, once we have finalised the training schedule.

FIRE STANDARDS

The department has undergone a full review against the Fire Standards, and Protection currently is fully compliant in 89 areas, partially compliant in 3, with no areas of non-compliances.

The partially compliant areas link to activity around UwFS, and work is continuing in this area, as mentioned earlier in report.

Fire Investigation compliance against the Fire Standards is currently behind target due to resourcing and competing Protection priorities. With two new Fire Investigation Officers joining the service in March 2024, we expect to show dramatic improvements in this area over the coming months.

PROHIBITION AND ENFORCEMENT NOTICES

Protection has an embedded table on our website, which shows all live enforcement, prohibition, and alteration . Prohibition and Alteration Notices **can stay live indefinitely**, as the RP may decide not to do the building work and choose not to use the prohibited area of the building.

Current Live Prohibition Notices

Live Prohibition Notices

Address	Notice ID	Issue Date	Notice Type	Articles	Status
Gleen House, Hawkins Road, Colchester	166	04/07/2023	Prohibition	8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 17	In force
Amleen House, Hawkins Road, Colchester	164	26/06/2023	Prohibition	8, 14	In force
Curry Cottage, 47 High Street, Burnham on Crouch	140	04/05/2022	Prohibition	13, 14	In force
JCOCI, Meppel Avenue, Canvey island	137	12/07/2021	Prohibition	13, 14	In force
Shuhug, 16 Highbridge Street, Waltham Abbey	98	22/12/2020	Prohibition	13, 14	In force
Marks American Diner, 277 London Road, Westcliff on Sea	89	13/08/2019	Prohibition	13, 14	In force
Abbe Butchers, 55 Duke Street, Chelmsford	88	11/04/2019	Prohibition	13, 14	In force
Island Buffet, 112 Pier Avenue, Clacton on Sea	86	26/07/2018	Prohibition	13, 14	In force
Munchies Kebabs, 161 St Chads Road, Tilbury	67	11/08/2015	Prohibition	13, 14	In force
Colchester Dry Cleaners, 132 High Street, Colchester	65	15/06/2015	Prohibition	13, 14	In force
Arabian Food Centre, 1 Hawkins Road, Colchester	60	21/10/2014	Prohibition	13, 14	In force
Jays Convenience Store, 664 London Road, Grays	57	20/08/2014	Prohibition	13, 14	In force
The Royal Oak, Oakhill Road, Stapleford Abbots, Romford	40	01/02/2011	Prohibition	13, 14	In force

Current Live Enforcement Notices

Live Enforcement Notices

Address	Notice ID	Issue Date	Notice Type	Articles	Status
Rochford Lofts, Pollards Close, Rochford	181	14/02/2024	Enforcement	8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, (Regs 4, 7, 8, 11)	Live
Rochford Lofts, Pollards Close, Rochford	180	14/02/2024	Enforcement	8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, (Regs 4, 7, 8, 11)	Live
Terminus House, Terminus Street, Harlow	176	18/12/2023	Enforcement	8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 22, 38	Live
Kings Tower, Marconi Plaza, Chelmsford	171	06/12/2023	Enforcement	8, 9, 17, 21, 14, 38	Live
Charles House, St Peters Street, Colchester	170	06/12/2023	Enforcement	9, 11, 15, 17, 18, 21, 38	Live
Stuart House, St Peters Street, Colchester	169	06/12/2023	Enforcement	9, 11, 15, 17, 18, 21, 38	Live
Block 190-207 Sycamore Field, Harlow	157	03/04/2023	Enforcement	8	Live
Block 154-189 Sycamore Field, Harlow	156	03/04/2023	Enforcement	8	Live
University of Essex, University Square, 36 Queens Road, Southend on Sea	133	26/05/2021	Enforcement	8	Live

** Please note, we have 3 EN's issued in February against two premises. As these are currently within the 21-appeal period, they aren't on our website or the list above.

We also have 3 EN's that are under appeal. While an EN is under appeal, the notice is "paused" while we wait for a court date. These also don't appear on our Enforcement Register, or the list above.

Two of the EN's under appeal were issued against Joseph Rank House on 27th December and were appealed by Places for People. We have received an initial court date for 11th April at 10:30 hrs.

Current Live Alteration Notices

Live Alterations Notices

Address	Notice ID	Issue Date	Notice Type	Status
Pizza 45, 49 Duke Street, Chelmsford	A179	16/01/2024	Alteration	Live

This is the first alterations notice issued by ECFRS.

An Alteration Notice can be issued against a premises when, following an audit we have no concerns with the current use of a room or building, providing the use stays the same. In this instance, an upstairs room wasn't being used at all, which means the premises is compliant at the time of inspection. However, if the room was to be used then this would give us concerns. The alterations notice raises this and prevents this from happening.

FIRE INVESTIGATION AND ISO 17020

A paper was submitted to SLT in July 2023 recommending a move to a dedicated Fire Investigation Team. This was agreed in principle, subject to a business case and budget bid. The paper mentioned ISO accreditation, but the purpose and benefits of the dedicated team focused on the benefits to Essex, regardless of ISO accreditation status.

In December 2023 new information was received from the ISO Project, which ECFRS are part of along with four other fire and rescue services, stating that the ISO project was going to need to be extended by 2-years (taking it to 2027) due to UKAS not having written the ISO marking criteria for Fire Investigation.

This led to detailed conversations taking place between AM Ian Adams, GM Dave Bond, and the Project Team at Hampshire & Isle of Wight FRS, with the concerns being raised also captured in a SLT paper, along with the recommendations that we withdraw from the ISO project at this time. This paper is going for a SLT decision on 19 March 2024.

The second draft of the Forensic Scientific Regulators Code still classes fire scene investigation as an activity not requiring accreditation. This is likely to have led to the shift in timeframe by UKAS, as creating a marking criterion to accredit fire investigation, at a time where it is not required.

The concerns raised by ECFRS to the project team that this lack of could result in the timeframe continuing to move. Other concerns raised considered the finances, as this would require additional investment for a further two years than currently planned. We were also told that should any fire service drop out then that cost would be shared across other fire services. This created additional questions around the stability of the project.

The SLT paper recommends that the Service withdraw from the current ISO 17020 accreditation process, focus on fire investigation within Essex, and review ISO 17020 accreditation once the national landscape settles and there is more certainty around criteria, funding, and expectation.

If the landscape settles and ISO accreditation forms part of that, then it would still be the Service's ambition to achieve this status. However, by developing our collaborative working relationships with Essex Police, who are experienced in the ISO processes, we, along with other four services, would also be engaging with the Home Office for additional funding to cover this change in expectation.

The SLT paper also makes a commitment that the dedicated team would require no additional investment, and costs would be covered through use of grant funding within other areas of Protection, reallocation of roles, and reallocation of budget, including the budget set aside currently for the ISO project.

Activity with the Fire Investigation space continues to increase as additional roles join the team. The Service has a Station Manager, dedicated to managing our Fire Investigation response, and has recruited two additional Fire Investigation Officers.

Initial work within the team is focusing on fire investigation training and CPD. This includes working towards getting Tier 1 Fire Investigation Course accredited by Skills for Justice.

A review of the mobilisation criteria of our Tier 2 Officers is being conducted, to ensure all fires are receiving the most appropriate investigation, the most accurate data is being collected, and ensuring the Service is continuing to support colleagues in Essex Police with their criminal investigations.

There will also be a focus on increasing our compliance against the Fire Investigation Fire Standards now that resources allow.

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT TEAM (BET)

Now that BET has been established, thousands of businesses have been engaged across the county since September 2023.

The 2024/25 Business Engagement Service Delivery Plan has also been drafted, which builds on the original 2023/24 plan, and includes clear KPI and performance metrics. Dashboards are now being developed to allow performance to be tracked accurately against both the delivery plan, and the overall Protection Strategy.

Within our BET, we have our Rural Engagement Officer. It should be noted that many fire services carry out rural engagement activity, however this has generally sat within Prevention. ECFRS is the first service nationally to have recruited a dedicated, fully qualified, Fire Safety Inspecting Officer, to work with farmers, to ensure that farms across Essex are compliant with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

By educating and working with farmers, we can make farms safer, therefore reducing the risk from fire. We are also working with them to educate on our needs as a fire service regarding water supplies. This means that we will be able to respond much more quickly and effectively should there be a fire. As well as working with farmers, there has been

a lot of work going on with other key stakeholder. This has included engagement with the National Farmers Union (NFU) and farm suppliers.

This work led to a partnership being created with Crawfords Group, who have provide the Protection Team a tractor, on loan, which has been liveried up in ECFRS branding, and can be used at events and shows to attract more people, allowing us to deliver even more safety messages.

An inter-departmental Wildfire Tactical Group has been set up, to review and develop our response to wildfires in the future.

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

None for the update report.

LINKS TO FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

None for the update report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None for the update report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None for the update report.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

None for the update report.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None for the report

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

UwFS Consultation – Extraordinary JNCC Consultation – March 18th
Revised Quality Assurance Document – Agreed

FUTURE PLANS

As part of the CRMP planning, Prevention and Protection will develop a single Prevention Protection and Response Strategy

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES