



Classification	Official		
Meeting	ECFRS Performance and Resources Board	Agenda no.	10
Meeting Date	24th April 2024		
Report Authors:	AM Head of Response - James Palmer		
Presented By	T/Director of Operations – Andy Smith		
Subject	Response Strategy Update		
Type of Report:	Information		
Action Point No.		For Publication	Yes

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board note the progress against the Response Strategy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been produced to provide P&R with a progress update against the implementation of the Response Strategy and activity completed since the launch of the Response Strategy in late 2021. Key headlines are:

- Launch of the use of strategic stations to ensure effective cover across the service
- A drive to use people not appliances as the most cost-effective way of using our resources.
- Steady increases in availability across stations that are key to the service being able to maintain cover.
- Significant increases in the volume of Home Fire Safety Checks carried out by operational crews since the inception of the strategy.

BACKGROUND

Since the launch of the Response Strategy a review of our reporting methodology has been developed to enable progress against this strategy to be identified.

The Response function continues to be committed to delivering against the Response Strategy and is continuing to evolve governance to ensure this progress is measured in all areas of Response.

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

This report highlights the key areas of progress thus far against the implementation of the Response Strategy.

STRATEGY LAUNCH

Launching the Response Strategy focused on both internal and external stakeholders, ensuring clear, concise messaging, and importantly outlining the direction of travel for the lifetime of the Strategy.

GOVERNANCE

Since the launch of the Response Strategy the governance structure has been developed and a review of the Directorate meeting has been carried out. The new meeting structure provides greater transparency of decision making and accountability. This board feeds into Continuous Improvement Board by exception through Extended Leadership Team and the Head of Response. The board has as its attendee's key staff across the Response function and other areas of the business that are vicariously responsible for delivery of key elements of the Response Strategy such as Prevention and Protection.

The Directorate updates will be performance focused to enable board members to provide: -

- Strategic and tactical updates on performance targets and projects and continually improve Service delivery through the PPR directorate.
- Create a shared vision and understanding of Service priorities.
- Inform reporting to other appropriate boards to enable working in collaboration and reduce isolation and duplication of efforts.
- Highlight concerns for decision for escalation to appropriate boards or departments.
- PFCC awareness on P-P-R performance and Service priorities

This meeting has now been aligned to the production of the performance report to enable scrutiny and provide updates to SLT members ahead of Performance and Resource Board to ensure they are adequately briefed to answer the OPFCC questions.

Further to this the Director of Operations has established a Service Delivery Board which pulls together the key participants from the Prevention and Protection Performance Board and the Response Performance Board for that holistic overview and scrutiny across all teams that are responsible for strategy delivery in the operations directorate.

ACTIVITY SINCE STRATEGY LAST UPDATE:

- 1) The service has delivered the 17-point availability action plan. This has resulted in the following metrics changes.

	Target measure of success	Baseline position where known	Current Position
1	Increase availability by 10% by end of Dec 23	65% September 23	Availability is at 73% for the month of March representing an 8% increase

2	Average on call availability of 80 % by end of financial year for Strategic stations.	65% September 23	74% for March. If on call. If second pumps are removed from this metric, then availability is 91%
3	Operate close to or under on call budget by Dec 23	August £150k overspend	February £209k overspend which has slowed down the rate of overspend.
4	Reduced standby pump movements	Sept: 339 moves made Oct: 390 moves made	February 254 standby moves

- 2) Strategic workforce planning is effective and has enabled the service to flex its recruitment options to match the needs of the response function. This is monitored through the operational resourcing board which gives oversight and monitoring of numbers of staff, budgets and provides the evidence to support effective recruitment decisions.
- 3) To further support response, the team have implemented the following activities:
 - Use of wholtime crews primarily to cover strategic stations. On call only to be used at shift change overs.
 - Standby moves only to be made to strategic stations other than in spate conditions.
 - Increased use of on-call to on-call additional shift workers to put on-call strategic stations on the run.
 - Mixed crewing to be utilised more regularly.
 - Day Duty Officers to be used more often and department heads to be encouraged to release their people to work at on call stations. This will become mandated and move from a voluntary position.
 - Increased focus on progress through the phases of development.
- 4) Response have worked collaboratively with operational training to deliver increases in Breathing Apparatus course provision with the following phase 1 firefighter metrics being a measure of that:
 - 42.5% (54 FFs) are BA qualified.
 - 74 FFs do not hold a BA qualification.
 - 75% (55 FFs) that do not have a BA qualification are currently engaged in the BA training programme. (either booked or passed at least 1 area of the prerequisites)
 - All P1 FFs that currently have all the prerequisites are booked onto a 2-week BA course prior to end of June 2024.
 - All On-Call BA initial courses that run from 1st July 2023 to end March 2024 have achieved 100 % utilisation.
- 5) To support availability levels the Resource Management Unit have been working in conjunction with command teams to review and increase the number of times

a day duty officer (DDOR) has been used and the number of times the service has used mixed crewing.

For the last 12 months the following numbers have been used at on-call stations.

- DDOR: 244. With 182 of those taking place since the availability action plan was implemented in October.
- Mixed Crewing: 24. With all of these coming since the availability action plan was implemented.

These numbers continue to increase and will continue to be used as they are a more cost-effective way of crewing on call appliances and support the strategic aspiration of moving people not appliances.

- 6) The service has effectively recruited external competent firefighters from other services which results in a more expedient way of increasing competent wholetime establishment.
- 7) Resource Management Unit has developed and will continue to develop more efficient ways of maximising and reporting on availability.
- 8) Work continues understanding and improving wholetime firefighter productivity. The key home office metric of Home Fire Safety Checks as a measure of this continues to increase from the position the service was in when the Response Strategy was implemented. There remains further work to be done in this space.

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

None specifically linked to this update.

LINKS TO FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

Fire and Rescue Plan Priorities

Prevention Protection and Response

Promote a positive culture in the workplace.

Make Best use of our Resources.

IRMP Priorities

Response

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None associated with this paper.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has a legal duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act to provide a resilient response to emergency incidents. This update is intended to demonstrate the work being done in the response function.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

None associated with this paper.

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 work that has been and will continue to be done in delivery of the response strategy.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None associated with this paper.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

None required for this update paper.

FUTURE PLANS

The Response function is committed to continual improvement in line with the service's strategic intent. Further update papers will be provided to show the direction of travel.

The future plans included delivering the remaining elements of the availability action plan as BAU these are:

- 1) ASW's to reduce to minimum crewing as opposed to standard crewing.
- 2) Review and analysis of Strategic Stations
- 3) Improve process for WT crews becoming dual riders.
- 4) P2 firefighters driving under blue light conditions.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES

Response Strategy: [2020-2024 Response Strategy.pdf](#)