

Community Risk Management Plan Annual Report

Executive Summary

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service has made strong progress over the reporting period in delivering the remaining priorities within its Community Risk Management Plan for 2023-2027. With Priorities 4 and 6 already embedded, the Service focused its efforts on further developing and strengthening Priorities 1, 2, 3 and 5. Across these areas, activity has advanced, matured and moved into new phases of development, supporting continuous improvement in the Service's prevention, protection and response arrangements.

Key progress includes improving the Service's understanding of emerging risks linked to climate change, societal change and new technologies; further enhancing horizon scanning and wildfire capability; expanding the evidence base for a more targeted and intelligence-led prevention model; and progressing a substantial programme of work to improve appliance availability, crewing resilience and command capacity. In Protection, ongoing evaluation of the Risk-Based Inspection Programme and revised call challenge arrangements continues to provide assurance that resources are targeted proportionately towards the highest-risk premises.

Overall, the Service is making good progress against its current CRMP commitments, while continuing to build a robust and evolving evidence base to inform the development of the next Community Risk Management Plan. This ongoing work places the Service in a strengthened position to plan for future risk, target resources effectively and support informed governance and decision-making.

Introduction

This report provides the annual update to the Fire Authority on progress against the priorities set out in Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

During the reporting period, the Service has continued to make strong progress in delivering the commitments within the CRMP. At the beginning of the year, two priorities, Priority 4 and Priority 6, had already been delivered. The Service has therefore focused its efforts on the further development, improvement and embedding of priorities: Priority 1, Priority 2, Priority 3 and Priority 5.

Overall, good progress has been made across these areas, with a number of workstreams now delivered, embedded, or advancing into the next phase of development. In several cases, this work is also helping to inform the development of the next CRMP.

Current CRMP Priorities

The priorities that remained in active during the reporting period were:

Priority 1 – We will develop our Integrated Service Delivery Strategy to meet the changing profile of risk in Berkshire due to climate change, societal and technological shifts.

Priority 2 – We will develop a Risk Based Prevention Programme to target those most vulnerable and at risk from emergency incidents.

Priority 3 – We will develop our response model to ensure that we are providing the most effective response to incidents within Berkshire, ensuring that it is aligned to identified risks, sustainable, and provides value for money.

Priority 5 – We will develop our Service to reduce the impact of fire safety issues in commercial buildings.

Progress Against Priorities

Priority 1

Developing our Integrated Service Delivery Strategy to meet changing risk

The Service recognises that the risk environment in Berkshire is continually evolving due to climate change, societal shifts, and technological advancement. The increasing use of alternative and renewable energy systems in reshaping the types of hazards the Service must anticipate and manage. In response, RBFRS has continued to and strengthen its approach so that it remains aligned with these emerging and future risks.

During the year, work has deepened the Service's understanding of risks associated with alternative fuel and energy systems. These have been incorporated into the Strategic Assessment of Risk, supporting structured monitoring of this developing area. This work continues to be informed by sector-wide activity led by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

The Service has also further enhanced its horizon scanning capability, building on the expanding evidence base established earlier in the CRMP cycle. This function plays a core role in the development of the next CRMP, by helping to identify, anticipate and assess future climate, societal and technological risks.

Progress has also continued in strengthening the Service's wildfire capability through the wildfire working group and specialist officer training. Collectively, these ongoing developments demonstrate maturing progress against Priority 1 and provide a stronger platform for long-term risk management and service planning.

Priority 2

Developing a Risk Based Prevention Programme

Priority 2 remains a key and enduring area of focus, centred on ensuring the Service directs its prevention activity towards those individuals and communities who are most vulnerable. Throughout the reporting period, activity has continued to strengthen the evidence base used to understand vulnerability and target prevention interventions effectively.

The Service has worked closely with partner agencies to improve the quality and relevance of referrals for vulnerable individuals, helping ensure that prevention activity is targeted where it will have the greatest benefit.

Alongside this, continued work to integrate data, insight and local intelligence into prevention activity has supported the ongoing development of a more intelligence-led, risk-based approach. This evolving evidence base will remain a critical component of future CRMP development and prevention planning.

Overall, Priority 2 continues to progress, with sustained focus on maturing and refining the Service's targeted and intelligence-led prevention model.

Priority 3

Developing our response model

Significant activity has continued throughout the year to develop and strengthen the Service's response model so that it remains aligned to risk, operationally sustainable and able to deliver value for money.

A central focus has been appliance availability. The Service has continued to build the evidence base needed to understand the causes of extractions (the factors which temporarily mean operational crews are not available on station, for example, training, annual leave, sickness). The Service has been working to identify opportunities to strengthen the availability of 19 fire engines in line with this current CRMP commitment. A broad programme of related activity is underway, with several elements already implemented and others continuing to develop.

The new leave policy - introduced to support improved appliance availability - continues to be evaluated. Its purpose is to achieve a more even distribution of leave across the year to support crewing resilience. Alongside this, additional actions continue to mature, including recruitment of additional firefighters, establishment of a central crewing team (OSIT), enhanced forecasting and coordination, and the use of the training centre appliance where appropriate.

Further ongoing work includes reviewing lightduty arrangements, improving sickness and lightduty management, strengthening workforce planning, implementing daily

and weekly command briefings, reviewing detached duties, and streamlining recruit courses so apprentices can support crewing earlier.

The Service has also continued to review command resource requirements. This work resulted in substantiating six additional Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) posts, strengthening command resilience.

In parallel, a broader specialist capability review has begun. This longterm programme will examine future capability needs beginning with water rescue, followed by command support functions and wildfire capability.

Taken together, these ongoing developments represent substantial and continuing progress against Priority 3 as part of a wider, evolving programme to ensure the Service's response model remains resilient, riskbased and sustainable.

Priority 5

Reducing the impact of fire safety issues in commercial buildings

The Service continues to make sustained progress in developing its protection function to ensure resources are used efficiently and targeted proportionately towards risk.

A key area of focus has been the ongoing evaluation and refinement of the RiskBased Inspection Programme (RBIP). This work continues to provide assurance that the Service is directing its protection activity towards the highestrisk commercial premises and adapting approaches where needed.

The Service has also continued evaluating the impact of changes to the callchallenge policy and associated response arrangements. This ongoing review ensures the revised arrangements remain embedded, effective and aligned with risk.

Overall, Priority 5 continues to advance positively, with evaluation and continuous improvement forming a core part of the Service's approach to maintaining a riskbased and proportionate protection model.

Overall Position

During the reporting period, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service has continued to make strong and sustained progress across the remaining CRMP priorities. The work undertaken has further strengthened prevention, protection and response arrangements, while enhancing the Service's understanding of both current and emerging risks.

Importantly, much of this ongoing development now directly informs the shaping of the next CRMP. This ensures the Service is not only delivering against current

commitments but is continually building a stronger, futurefocused evidence base to support planning, consultation and decision making.

Cllr Paul Gittings

Lead Member for Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)