

Housing Select Committee			
Title	Emergency services review	Item	6
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager		
Class	Part 1	Date	16 May 2013

1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed that its select committees will carry out a review of emergency services in Lewisham. The Housing Select Committee has been tasked with determining impact of the changes as they relate to the borough's housing.
- 1.2 At its meeting in March, the Committee requested that officers provide further information about how it might approach this task. A scoping report was considered by Members at their meeting on the 3rd of April 2013 and it was agreed that the Committee would receive evidence for the review at the Committee's meeting on 16th May 2013.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- consider the content of the attached officer report and the other appendices to this report
- direct questions to officers at the meeting on the 16th of May
- consider what information will be required to complete the review at the Committee's meeting in June

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on the 11 February 2013 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a scoping report, which set out the terms of reference for a review into emergency services in Lewisham. At the meeting, it was decided that the review would be co-ordinated across all select committees. Members of the O&S Committee considered the proposed terms of reference and they agreed that the review would aim to:
- clarify the key policy initiatives and financial constraints impacting on emergency services locally
 - identify the local implications for services
 - consider the potential impact of any service changes
- 3.2 As part of the review, the Committee resolved that the Housing Select Committee would:

- identify the related impact on services and performance locally, particularly in relation to tenants and housing providers (Lift call outs, fire safety checking responsibilities etc)
- consider the potential impact of any service changes specifically in relation to tenants and housing providers

3.3 The Housing Select Committee agreed that its contribution to the emergency services review would focus on:

- Prevention, engagement and enforcement
- Potential future implications of the proposed changes

4. Key lines of enquiry

4.1 The terms of reference for the review have been established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee has agreed to address these areas by seeking answers to a set of key questions:

Prevention, engagement and enforcement

- How will the proposed changes impact on work to prevent fires in Lewisham's housing stock?
- How will partners continue to ensure that effective prevention work takes place?
- How much training for housing providers was carried out in previous years- and how much is expected to be carried out following the proposed changes?
- What plans do housing providers have in place to engage with residents on the issue of fire safety?
- How many issues and enforcement notices have been issued by the fire brigade for Lewisham's public housing?
- How will support be maintained for enforcement activity to be carried out?

Future implications

- Do the proposed changes take into account the anticipated growth in Lewisham's population, as well as likely increases in housing density?
- How will the changes to the lifts policy impact on housing providers in the borough?
- Have housing providers assessed the potential impact of the proposals to charge for multiple false alarms and unnecessary lift call outs?

5. Fire service proposals

- 5.1 In January 2013 the Commissioner of the London Fire Brigade (LFB) published proposals for the Draft Fifth London Safety Plan¹ (attached at appendix C). The plan details proposals to make savings worth £28.8m over the next two years. The plans include the intention to close 12 fire stations, seven fire stations that currently have two fire engines moving to one fire engine, and four stations gaining a fire engine.
- 5.2 Two of the stations proposed for closure are in Lewisham: New Cross and Downham. The plans also include proposals to alter services in neighbouring boroughs, including reducing the number of fire engines at Peckham fire station from two to one. The Commissioner has stated that, if implemented, the Brigade would maintain its existing average target response time of getting its first fire engine to an emergency within six minutes and the second fire engine, if needed, within eight minutes.
- 5.4 The Commissioner of the London Fire Brigade also stated: "In the last four years, we have cut £52m without reducing frontline services. Additional savings cannot be found without making significant changes to how we keep London safe. In the last decade, demand for the Brigade's service has changed dramatically and it's time to reflect that in how our fire stations, engines and staff are organised".
- 5.5 The draft plan sets out the 'high level objectives', that the Brigade will focus on delivering over the next three years:
1. Prevention
 - Including work with Local Authorities, housing and care providers to increase safety and reduce risk, especially for sections of society that are most at risk from fire
 - Focusing resources on the community
 - Using social media to encourage behaviour change
 2. Protection
 - Working to increase fire safety measures
 - Working with developers
 - Targeting enforcement action
 - Improving access to information and data
 - Working with government to provide legislative clarity
 3. Response
 - Responding quickly and effectively
 - Closing underused stations
 - Reorganising staffing
 - Recovering costs for repeated false alarms, charging for unnecessary lift call outs and billing surrounding authorities for calls on resources
 - Working with airports to reduce unnecessary call outs
 - Improving handling of emergency calls

¹ London Fire Brigade Draft fifth London Safety Plan
<http://www.london.gov.uk/LFEPA/mgAi.aspx?ID=1016#mgDocuments>

4. Resources

- Considering shared services
- Reviewing property services
- Providing nine new PFI fire stations, delivering the Brigade's capital programme and reviewing arrangements for minor repairs at stations
- Bringing forward proposals for replacing equipment and fleet
- Enhancing youth work

5. People

- Working with training providers to secure a modern training programme
- Providing two new and nine refurbished training facilities
- Offering three business apprenticeships per year

6: Principles

- Improving the health, safety and welfare of staff
- Reducing CO² emissions
- Continuing to develop partnerships that target hard to reach members of the community
- Developing an environmental management system.
- Reviewing costing of capital projects
- Reviewing and setting equality objectives to improve the diversity of the service

Headline targets:

5.6 The plan includes a number of targets. These include standard targets and 'stretch targets'. Further information about 'stretch targets' is included in the draft plan. Standard targets for the period of the plan are:

- Fires in the home (2% reduction by March 2016)
- Home safety visits (9 fire safety visits per crew each month, 8 out of 10 targeting households most at risk from fire)
- Fires in care homes and sheltered housing (3% reduction by March 2016)
- Fires in non-domestic buildings (4% reduction by March 2016)
- Fire related fire deaths (4% reduction on the ten year average by March 2016)
- Rubbish fires (14% reduction by March 2016)
- False alarms from automatic systems in non-domestic buildings (9% reduction by March 2016)
- Shut in lift releases (8% reduction by March 2016)

Supporting documents

5.7 The Plan has 21 supporting documents, which provide additional information and analysis:

- 1 Our aims, objectives, risks, commitments and targets
- 2 Incident profiles
- 3 Historical data 1970/2011
- 4 2030 incident projections

- 5 Targeting those most at risk from fire
- 6 Management of calls to Automated Fire Alarms
- 7 Review of shut in lift policy
- 8 Getting to emergency incidents as quickly as possible
- 9 Working with neighbouring brigades
- 10 Station workloads and capacity
- 11 Fire service modelling
- 12 Charging for attendance at incidents
- 13 Three year headline targets 2013–2016
- 14 Fire service performance comparisons
- 15 Deliberative research and polling results
- 16 Equality analyses
- 17 Sustainable development impact assessments
- 18 Crewing of appliances
- 19 Adjustments to officer rota cover
- 20 Operational efficiency work
- 21 The Draft Fifth London Safety Plan 2013/2016 – Report to Authority 21
January 2013

These documents can be accessed online at: <http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/LSP5-supporting-documents.asp>

- 5.8 Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and the Cabinet Member for Community Safety attended an evidence gathering session, hosted by Central London Forward, for inner London Councils to consider the potential impact of the fire service changes. Information from this event, which is relevant to the Housing Select Committee, is attached at appendices B, C, D and E.

6. Timetable

The proposed timetable for the completion of the Committee's review is:

- 16 May 2013 – information gathering and evidence session
- 19 June 2013 – evidence session/recommendations to O&S committee

Appendix

Appendix A: Emergency Services Review- report by the Executive Director for Customer Services

Appendix B: London Fire Brigade statements to Central London Forward

Appendix C: Fire Protection Association - critical emergency preparedness note

Appendix D (to follow): BRE (Building Research Establishment) Central London Forward fire scrutiny- tall buildings/high density residential units

Appendix E (to follow): Guild of Architectural iron mongers- fire and escape doors in high rise/high density residential units

If you have any questions about this report please contact Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) on 02083147916.