

MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	FULL AUTHORITY		
DATE:	15 TH OCTOBER 2020	REPORT NO:	CFO/053/20
PRESENTING OFFICER:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AM JAMES BERRY	REPORT AUTHOR:	SM PAUL BAINES
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	GM WATSON, GM HEAD, RIA GROVES, LYNDESEY KILEEN		
TITLE OF REPORT:	FIRE PROTECTION GOVERNMENT GRANT FUNDING		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	BUILDING RISK REVIEW AND PROTECTION UPLIFT GRANT FUNDING LETTER.
	APPENDIX B:	INFRASTRUCTURE FUND LETTER

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Fire Authority of the grant funding received from Government to drive improvement in the Authority's Protection function. This is to enable the Authority to effectively tackle risk in the built environment and support the national Building Risk Review (BRR) programme which aims to review the safety of all in scope high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres or containing six floors and above by December 2021. There are currently 224 known buildings of this type in Merseyside.
2. To request approval from the Fire Authority on the recommendations contained in this report on how the grant funding will be used to bolster our fire protection capability and delivery, that will align with our Integrated Risk Management Plan and Risk Based Inspection Programme. At the same time, enable the Authority to deliver against the demands of the BRR programme.

Recommendation

That Members approve:

3. **Building Risk Review Programme**
 - a. The proposal to establish a temporary team consisting of 1x Station Manager, 1x Lead Inspector (grade 9), 1x Co-ordinating inspector (grade 9) and 1x Admin Support Officer (grade 4) to deliver the programme by December 2021.
4. **Protection Uplift Programme**
 - a. The proposal to recruit 6x temporary full time Fire Safety Inspectors (grade 8) and a Fire Engineering Manager (grade 12) to increase resilience and secure future succession planning.
 - b. In addition to the initial recruitment costs the Fire Safety Inspectors will be required to attend the relevant training courses and achieve Skills for Justice

Level 3 and 4 Fire Safety Inspector qualifications. A newly recruited Fire Engineer will be required to attend UCLAN on a part time basis to achieve a fire engineering degree.

5. Infrastructure Fund –

- a. The proposal to invest in suitable ICT hardware and software to support the efficiency of our inspectors and to ensure the maintenance of skills through effective online training and communication.
- b. The provision of regular training events and CPD seminars to maintain the competence of our staff.
- c. The provision of additional service vehicles will also be required at different locations to support the mobility of our staff to attend visits and audits.
- d. In addition to the Protection requirements, infrastructure expenditure should also be incurred for the purposes of:
 - Ensuring smoke hoods are appropriately available on front line appliances. These have already been purchased with two being available on all frontline pumping appliances.
 - Providing a local Grenfell recommendations co-ordination function, so NFCC and FRSs can track and evidence progress being made against the recommendations.
 - Providing other locally determined activity to respond to the Grenfell recommendations and improve resilience to major incidents and infrastructure. This can include upgrades to control room systems to allow the ability to connect to Multi-Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) system.

Introduction and Background

6. In June 2019, the Government published the 'Building a Safer Future' consultation detailing proposals to achieve long-term reforms. The Government will legislate for these reforms in new primary legislation through the Fire Safety Bill, the Building Safety Bill and further secondary legislation where necessary.
7. In addition, the government has committed to implementing all of the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. Phase one recommendations have been published and Phase 2 has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
8. In December 2019 the Authority anticipated the future demand that is going to be placed on the Protection function and restructured the senior management of the Community Risk Management directorate so that Protection and Prevention have their own Area Managers. This is already proving to be a successful decision with improved productivity and significant progress in project work.
9. To enable Fire and Rescue Service's to bolster their Protection function to meet future demand, the Government has issued £7m worth of grant funding. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority has received a total of seven hundred and eighteen thousand, one hundred and twenty-seven pounds and fifteen pence (£718,127.15). The grant conditions cover three separate programmes with different sums allocated to each:

- i. **Building Risk Review Programme** – which will deliver a review of all high-rise residential buildings by December 2021. (£135,323.69)
- ii. **Protection Uplift Programme** – which will support initial improvements in local Protection capability. (£388,874.83)
- iii. **Infrastructure Fund** – to enable local implementation of Grenfell Inquiry recommendations and will help co-ordinate local activity to support the national work led by NFCC. (£193,928.63)

10. A set of restrictions and conditions have been set by MHCLG for each programme and each will require periodic reporting to be returned. These are contained in the letters received from the Home Office in Appendix A and B of this report.

11. By October 2022 a new regulatory body called the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) will be formed and operated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The BSR will be responsible for all major regulatory decisions made at key points during design, construction, occupation and refurbishment of buildings. It will also oversee a new competency framework that has been created to ensure work is up to scratch. It is highly likely that this will place demands on fire and rescue services to support the set-up and future partnership working arrangements.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the recruitment process for the new roles.

13. Regular equality impact assessments will be produced for the work undertaken by the Building Risk Review team, ensuring that the Authority exercises its duties in line with the Equality and Diversity strategy.

Staff Implications

14. The creation of the BRR team will provide opportunities for staff to learn new skills and to progress their career. It will also provide other Fire Safety Inspectors and Auditors with future progression opportunities.

15. The creation of the Fire Engineering Manager role will reinforce the ability of the Planning and Building Regulations team and will also provide future progression opportunities for staff. The post will require the individual to commit to a Fire Engineering degree course on a part time basis.

Legal Implications

16. The proposals contained within this report are compliant with the grant conditions contained in the grant offer letters (see appendix A and appendix B).

17. Any changes to the structure of the Protection department will be compliant with the Authority's policies and relevant legislation, in particular employment legislation.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

18. The temporary staff positions and associated support costs can be contained within the £0.718m of grant received for these Protection initiatives.

19. The sign-off of grant expenditure by the S151/S112 officer will be required on a quarterly basis until funds are fully spent.

20. The FRS will need to complete a financial return with the type of spend specified. The first report to cover spend up to 31st December 2020 will be required by 31st January 2021 (if funds have been spent) and quarterly thereafter until the funds are fully spent.

21. The FRS will need to complete the monitoring report to confirm how the grant is being used in line with the grant conditions and will need to be signed off by the CFO. The first report will be required by 31 January 2021 and quarterly thereafter until the funds are fully spent.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

22. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, regular workplace risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure the health and wellbeing of our staff.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

23. The proposals in this report will contribute towards our mission, Safer Stronger Communities – Safe effective Firefighters.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

21. N/A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

22.

N/A