

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY & PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	2ND SEPTEMBER 2021	REPORT NO:	CFO/052/21
PRESENTING OFFICER	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AM JAMES BERRY	REPORT AUTHOR:	GM DAVE WATSON
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	GM MASSIE		
TITLE OF REPORT:	PROTECTION GRANTS		

APPENDICES:	N/A
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Purpose of Report

1. To provide a current update and future proposals in the spending of the various grants provided by Her Majesty's Government ('HMG') to enhance the ongoing and emerging Protection work.

Recommendation

2. That Members :
 - a. Note the current spending allocation of the various grants
 - b. Approve the spending proposals and anticipated expenditure in line with HMG guidelines

Introduction and Background

3. Following the Grenfell Tower Fire in 2017, Dame Judith Hackitt's report: Building a Safer Future, and the ongoing Grenfell Tower Inquiry, HMG have provided a number of grants to assist FRSs in the number of outcome areas.
4. The three grants provided are:
 - a. Protection Uplift – [MFRS Allocation 2020/2021: £388K / MFRS Allocation 2021/2022, £493K*]. This is a general uplift grant to bolster the fire protection capability and delivery, aligning with IRMPs and RBIPs to support Protection provision and ensure Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) have the technical expertise required to fulfil the function and that officers have the skills they need. The grant can be used for building long term capability within the function, increasing protection resource, training,

competency and accreditation, technology and digital development. Evidence of grant expenditure is provided on a quarterly basis.

*The second allocation (£493k) is provided in two instalments, with 50% allocated in May 2021 and the second 50% held in reserve until the existing Uplift provision has been utilised; however, the second 50% can be allocated now but will only be paid in March 2022 once proof of expenditure has been provided. A forecast is required to Home Office, via the Protection Policy Reform Unit, in January 2022 to allow HMG budgeting for final quarter 2021/2022.

- b. Building Risk Review – [MFRS Allocation: £135K] – To support FRS in their assistance to MHCLG and National Fire Chiefs Council building risk review work into residential high rise buildings over 18m, and is based on the perceived number of high rise buildings in the area. The current total list of buildings in scope is 256; however, MFRS only received funding for 129 buildings. MFRS must implement a framework for identification and inspection of in scope buildings, evidence of grant expenditure is provided on a quarterly basis, with returns detailing triage process, number of audits, and enforcement action undertaken.
- c. Infrastructure – [MFRS Allocation: £194K] – To support FRS in delivering change and implementing the recommendations of the GTI Phase 1 report. It is to progress improving resilience to major incidents and infrastructure, including technical investments and equipment provision. Evidence of grant expenditure is provided on a quarterly basis.

Expenditure and Allocation

5. A total of £107K has been spent or allocated to date from the Protection Uplift Grant. This has financed 50% of the costs of three roles in BRR (see below), along with training of Protection staff. In summary:
 - Staffing = £73k
 - Training = £33k
 - Communications = £1k
6. A total of £102K has been spent or allocated to date from the BRR Grant. This has predominantly financed 50% of three roles, and 100% of the Administrator project posts in BRR, supported by the Uplift grant. The BRR team was established in October 2020 and has been operational since, coordinating and completing 180 high rise audits to date, identifying the external wall systems, and monitoring the progress of remediation. The four posts created from both Uplift and BRR are:
 - BRR Coordinator –
 - BRR Lead Inspector –
 - BRR Local Authority Liaison –
 - BRR Administrator –

Total BRR allocation to date is:

- Staff = £101k
- AV/IT = £1k

7. A total of £94K has been spent or allocated to date from the Infrastructure Grant. This has procured Multi Gas Detectors and Smoke Blockers for every pumping appliance as part of the GR29 Evacuation workstream, along with expenditure for CFRMIS implementation in Protection, Preparedness and Prevention, and necessary IT equipment. In summary:
 - Multi Gas Detectors = £28k
 - Smoke Blockers = £18k
 - CFRMIS = £30k
 - IT Devices / Infrastructure = £18k

Proposal

8. It is proposed the remainder of the Protection Uplift Grant is used to add resilience to the FSI cohort and support succession within the department over the medium term. The restrictions only allow for fixed term contracts; however, it is envisaged staff turnover may be increased in the short to medium term through private sector expansion in fire safety and other public sector bodies. A separate paper will cover this IRMP Protection Staffing.
9. The BRR Grant has been mostly utilised for staff costs and has provided excellent value for money on the delivery of the BRR programme. The programme is on track to deliver by the December 2021 target as directed by the Secretary of State. It is proposed to utilise the remaining BRR amount to support training of all Protection staff in external wall systems, to enhance the function's transition of this project into business as usual post March 2022. Any remaining BRR grant can be transferred into the Uplift fund.
10. It is proposed the remainder of the Infrastructure Grant is held against the requirements of the GTI Project workstreams and will likely be utilised for:
 - a. Further training products to support GTI recommendations
 - b. FSG Application technology / VISION 5 adaptation
 - c. Further adaptation to CFRMIS
 - d. Incident Command Unit enhancements (GR29)
 - e. GR29 search audit development
 - f. Other High Rise Firefighting Equipment

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. The spending will be used to enhance all protection activity across business locations as per the RBIP, including high and very high risk sites. This will include the assurance of high rise buildings which statistically house higher percentages of people that identify as BAME and are situated in areas of higher deprivation.
12. The recruitment of personnel will be according to MFRS recruitment practices and standards, affording equality of opportunity. A current EIA exists for recruitment and no further EIA is anticipated at this time.

Staff Implications

13. The recruitment of staff to fulfil a number of roles will be necessary, with selection processes and contract requirements, both fulltime and fixed term in nature, and training of many staff may be required depending on the existing experience and qualifications of applicants.
14. The procurement of Fire Safety Level 3 Certificates and Level 4 Diplomas are highly likely, but an existing contract framework is in place with an external provider.

Legal Implications

15. MFRA is the enforcing authority for the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005, and has a legislative duty to enforce the order.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

16. All grant spending is in line with the financial conditions and restrictions issued by HMG and NFCC, with periodic reporting and governance both internal and external.
17. Personnel spend will predominantly be fixed term in nature. However, the uplift in Protection work may necessitate commitment of financial resources in the long term to sustain particular fire safety and enforcement operations.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

18. MFRA is the enforcing authority for the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005, and has legislative duties to undertake. Having trained competent staff to undertake audits and inspections is a critical component, and the function continues to experience staff turnover, particularly amongst its more

experienced inspectors. The recruitment proposals reduce the risk of MFRA being unable to fulfil its statutory duties in the medium to long term.

19. The continued expenditure into the GTI recommendations establishes a safer position from which operational personnel can operate, whilst enhancing safety of residents of high rise accommodation.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK*

Our Purpose: Hear to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.

20. Use of the grant as detailed will improve both firefighter and public safety through more effective monitoring and enforcement of premises within our RBIP.
21. The infrastructure grant will be used to further equip our operational response, enhancing our response to a fire in a large building, as stated in IRMP 2021-2024

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BRR	Building Risk Review
CFRMIS	Community Fire Risk Management Information System
FSI	Fire Safety Inspector
GTI	Grenfell Tower Inquiry
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
RBIP	Risk Based Inspection Programme
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service