

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	25 JUNE 2020
SUBJECT	COMMUNITY SAFETY HUB: WARGRAVE
LEAD OFFICER	MARK ARKWELL, ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / DIRECTOR OF COLLABORATION, CHANGE & FINANCE
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR DAVID CANNON
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	TO NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. In understanding potential opportunities for the Wargrave fire station building a feasibility study, considering the potential for a 'Community Safety Hub' (CSH), was commissioned by the Service and noted by Members of the Management Committee on 3 December 2019.
- 1.2. In the intervening period RBFRS has sought dialogue with potential partner stakeholders to understand if a CSH could be a useful facility in supporting effective and efficient delivery of respective services to the citizens of Wargrave and the surrounding areas.
- 1.3. Engagement with potential partners has determined that, at this time and within foreseeable future plans, there is limited desire for, or perceived advantage in, creating a community hub arrangement.
- 1.4. Whilst a shared asset of this nature could offer some advantages, in some locations, RBFRS concludes that there is currently no evidence of a collective appetite for the development of such a CSH in Wargrave, in terms of operational effectiveness or sustainable financial support.
- 1.5. RBFRS are committed to the continued delivery of prevention and fire protection activity, in line with our IRMP and Local Safety Plans, to all citizens of Royal Berkshire. Regular reviews will continue to be undertaken to ensure targeting of activity responds to changes in community risk.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1. **NOTE** that there is currently no collective appetite for the development of a 'Community Safety Hub' in Wargrave and that further feasibility work will now cease.

3. REPORT

Background

- 3.1. The closure of Wargrave Fire Station was a decision taken as part of the Service Redesign IRMP consultation that ran from December 2016 to March 2017. The implementation of the extant decision has been subject to a number of deferrals, most recently supported by the Fire Authority in January 2020.
- 3.2. In anticipation for the potential station closure a range of impacts were considered, including opportunities arising from the availability of the building in support of delivering wider public services to the people of Wargrave and surrounding areas. This included the creation of a shared CSH with blue-light partners and the local Borough and Parish Councils.

Potential Partners

- 3.3. Engagement with South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) and Thames Valley Police (TVP) considered the potential to use the building as a shared base location or 'drop-in' centre for staff. For example, the prospect of a storage and response support location for Community First Responders or Community Policing was discussed as well as delivering RBFRS's own public safety agenda through the volunteers programme.
- 3.4. Peter Smith, TVP's Strategy and Assets Manager, said that the location "does not have a substantive role to play for TVP... due to TVP's existing locations at both nearby Woodley and Henley-on-Thames." Furthermore, the Wargrave Fire Station would require extension, and the associated investment, to create a formal space that might be of use.
- 3.5. Paul Cross, Head of Estates for SCAS, and following consultation with his operations colleagues, thanked RBFRS for considering them as a partner but confirmed that they "won't have any need for Wargrave" at this time.
- 3.6. Initial interest in the exploration of potential joint models from both Wokingham Borough Council and Wargrave Parish Council was identified early. However, this has not developed into a firm commitment of intent or related financial support.
- 3.7. In summary, there is no evidence of a collective intent or sufficient support to progress a shared facility in Wargrave. Both TVP and SCAS have confirmed that this does not represent a viable opportunity currently and confirmed that they would not wish to explore this project further.

Future Prevention Activity

- 3.8. RBFRS are committed to proactively identifying opportunities to work more closely with partners in delivering our respective services and remain open to considering those ideas presented by other organisations, where it is in the best interests of the citizens of Royal Berkshire.
- 3.9. In the Wokingham Borough Local Safety Plan (LSP) RBFRS have committed to a range of activity in seeking to address local risks in a collaborative way. These include, but are not limited to:
- Share information with local authority and blue-light partners to address common problems.
 - Continue to react swiftly to high priority arson referrals from Thames Valley Police with a focused Safe and Well visit.
 - Continued commitment to working with fire setters in a structured programme, which has shown that early intervention and education can help to address the issues of fire-setting behaviours.
 - Work with local partners on joint targeted campaigns.
 - Work with other agencies to identify premises that fall under fire safety legislation e.g. Local Authority, Care Quality Commission.
- 3.10 RBFRS will continue to regularly review the targeting of our prevention work in response to any changes in community risk.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1. Commitment 4 - We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
- 4.2. Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- 4.3. Commitment 6 - We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are no identified financial implications

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The recommendations arise after the exploration of collaboration opportunities under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 have been duly considered.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no identified equality and diversity impacts.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are no identified direct risk implications. Community safety activity will continue in line with Service commitments and local safety plans.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1. The feasibility study has been conducted in line with the requirements of the duty to collaborate in seeking to identify improvements in efficiency or effectiveness with emergency service partners.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1. The Chief Fire Officer has noted the contents of this report.
- 10.2. The Monitoring Officer has noted the contents of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Below papers are available on request and on the website

- 11.1. Agenda item 4 'minutes of Management Committee 3 December 2019
Management Committee 5th February 2020.
- 11.2. Wokingham Borough Local Safety Plan 2019-20

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 No appendices.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

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