

# Essex Fire Authority

## Report to the Constituent Authorities of the meeting held on 3 December 2014

### 1. Operational Incidents Report and Incidents of Notable Interest

For the period 1 April 2014 to 30 September 2014 Essex County Fire and Rescue Service had attended 7270 incidents compared with 7522 for the same period last year. Primary<sup>1</sup> fires continued to reduce from 1190 to 1125, with a decrease in secondary fires, 1143, attended compared to 1391 for the same period last year.

Special Service incidents also decreased from 1800 to 1751, with the majority being road traffic collisions (RTCs).

False alarms have had a slight increase with the number of those being due to apparatus attended increasing from 1249 the previous year to 1337 from April 2014 to September 2014. The table on page two provides further detail.

Incident Type	2012/13	2013/14
<b>Fires</b>	2607	2292
<b>Special Services</b>	1800	1751
<b>False Alarms</b>	3115	3227
<b>Total</b>	<b>7522</b>	<b>7270</b>
<b><u>Fires</u></b>		
<b>Primary Fires</b>		
Dwelling	444	446
Other building	258	224
Vehicle	365	346
Other	123	109
<b>Secondary Fires</b>	1391	1143
<b>Chimney Fires</b>	26	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>2607</b>	<b>2292</b>
<b><u>Special Services</u></b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
RTC	606	618
Effecting entry	225	189
Lift release	218	177
Flooding	179	209
Removal of objects from people	78	81
Animal	74	48
Spills & leaks (not RTC)	69	82
Other rescue/release persons	58	77

<sup>1</sup> Definitions on page 2 of this report

Assist other agencies	53	41
Making safe (not RTC)	45	46
No action (not false alarm)/Service not required	42	33
Removal of people from objects	30	33
Hazardous materials incident	25	23
Other transport incident	22	16
Standby	20	24
Medical Incident	17	18
Suicide	14	14
Rescue or evacuation from water	8	10
Advice Only/Other advice	6	2
Evacuation	6	4
Advice Only/Fire safety advice	5	4
Water provision	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>1751</b>

#### **False Alarms**

False alarm due to apparatus	1249	1337
False alarm good intent	1770	1798
Malicious false alarm	96	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>3115</b>	<b>3227</b>

#### **Definition of “Primary Fire”:**

This group of fires includes those occurring in buildings fit for occupation; caravans; non-derelict vehicles; outdoor storage, plant and machinery; agricultural and forestry premises and property; outdoor structures such as post-boxes, tunnels, bridges etc. If a fire would normally be defined as a secondary fire and also involves casualties, rescues or escapes; spread from one secondary fire location to another; or is attended by five or more appliances where either the fire fighters, appliances or equipment were employed in fighting the fire, the definition changes to a primary fire.

#### **Definition of “Secondary Fire”:**

A fire confined to single derelict buildings, single trees, refuse containers, attended by four or fewer appliances and which did not involve casualties, rescues or escapes.

#### **Definition of “Emergency Special Service”:**

Incidents including RTC's, extrications, lift rescues, lock in's/out's, Hazardous Materials or Chemicals (Hazchem), ladder/ALP rescues, water rescues and any other incident not falling into the previous categories with confirmed fatalities, casualties or rescues or first aid rendered by Service personnel.

#### **Recent incidents of notable interest**

**Fire on industrial site, Tiffaynes Farm, Burnt Mills Road, North Benfleet  
12/08/2014 @ 17:12**

**Incident Number: 14515.**

**In attendance: 2 x Southend, 3 x Rayleigh Weir, 2 x Basildon, 1 x Leigh, 1 x Canvey, 1 x Wickford, 1 x Corringham**

More than 40 firefighters tackled a major fire on an industrial site in Basildon. The blaze, which began outside, quickly spread to a building used as a workshop. Crews wearing breathing

apparatus used two main jets, two hose reel jets and a ground monitor to bring the fire under control.

Firefighting operations were hindered because acetylene cylinders were involved in the blaze. The site was difficult to access, and due to this, and the intensity of the fire a fire appliance was damaged from the heat.

Divisional Officer Neil Fenwick, incident commander, said: "The fire involved a derelict vehicle workshop and developed rapidly because the building was made of wood.

"Firefighters worked swiftly to tackle the blaze from all angles and we had to get additional resources to the scene quickly as there was a shortage of water on site and we needed more manpower for breathing apparatus. There was the complication of cylinders but once we were able to satisfy ourselves they were not a danger, we were able to get on with the job of dealing with the fire itself.

"At the height of the incident eight appliances were on the scene and a hose layer."

The fire was under control in around two-and-half hours.



**Two deliberate fires set over gas mains. London Road, Westcliff  
17/08/2014 @ 22:48 & 18/08/2014 @ 04:15  
Incident Number: 14812  
In Attendance: x2 Southend**

Crews in Southend were called to two fires which had been deliberately set over gas mains near homes and shop in London Road Westcliff on the night of August 17 and 18.

The first incident involved vehicles and the main gas supply to a block of 16 flats; the flats were evacuated as a result of the fire. Using two hose reel jets and one main jet crews had extinguished the fire in under an hour. An ambulance was called for a 70 year old man, a resident of the block, who suffered shock.

The second incident took place at the rear of a Tesco Metro with a block of fifteen flats above it. On arrival crews were confronted by a well-developed fire involving a number of traffic

cones and a propane cylinder which had been set alight on the gas main. Around 30 people were evacuated from their flats as a result of this fire.

Assistant Divisional Officer Martyn Hodder said: "These incidents appear to have been a deliberate attempt to damage gas mains. There seems to have been a very serious attempt to cause havoc and crews did a fantastic job tackling the fires and getting everyone safely out of their flats."



**Fire in an 8,000 ton woodpile. Thoby Lane, Mountnessing**  
**18/08/2014 @ 06:48**  
**Incident Number: 14816**

Crews were continuously on site for nine weeks after a fire broke out in a huge pile of disused wood in Mountnessing.

The wood pile covered an area of 50 metres by 30 metres and was up to 20 metres high at its peak. Initially eight appliances attended to ensure that the fire did not spread to neighbouring scrap yards and businesses.

The decision was taken to allow a controlled burn to take place to reduce the environmental impact of the fire and run-off of water for which hoses were used to contain and control the blaze. Special measures were put in place to pump waste water directly into the sewer so as to not pollute the surrounding area.

The controlled burn continued for nine weeks with the Service maintaining at least one crew on site at all times to monitor the fire and ensure there was no danger of it spreading.

On Friday October 17 mechanical diggers were taken onto the site and used to create a fire break around the burning pile which meant that the majority of the remaining wood was isolated and would not become involved in the fire.

The work was successful and crews were able to safely leave the site in the care of the owner on Monday October 20 after having been on site for 1,524 hours.

The task of warning and informing local residence about the on-going incident was supported by the Safer Communities department utilising Community Safety Liaison Officers' and crews from Ingatestone fire station. Four members of Ingatestone fire station visited homes across the whole of Ingatestone and parts of Fryerning affected by the fire. In all 2200 homes were visited enabling crews to provide advice and answer questions.



Acting Chief Fire Officer Adam Eckley, who visited the site to see crews as they prepared to leave, said: *“This has been a significant incident to deal with, using considerable resources and presenting a number of challenges over the weeks on site.”*

*“Our response has involved a huge effort from our people right across the Service. There is hardly a firefighter or officer in Essex who hasn’t had some involvement in this incident but crews have received a lot of support to enable them to carry out their work at the scene.”*

*“Our Stores team has played a vital role making sure crews had everything they needed including food, water and replacement firefighting equipment. Our Fleet team has had to maintain appliances at the scene, Water section has been heavily involved, particularly in the early days when water supply presented a significant issue. Control operators have done a fantastic job in dealing both with the initial incident and later planning reliefs to make sure ECFRS was able to carry on with our business as usual while we maintained a presence here.”*

*“Throughout this incident we have worked closely with our partners at Brentwood Borough Council and the Environment Agency to make sure that the fire had the minimum impact on the local area and those living nearby and the environment. The decision taken early on not to use large amounts of water on this fire drastically reduced the environmental impact it has had.”*

The cost to the Service was in the region of £460,000.

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**News**

<b>5,000</b> Number of tonnes of wood that were burnt	<b>63</b> The number of days the fire burnt	<b>9</b> The length of time the fire burnt for in weeks	<b>1,514</b> The number of hours spent on site by firefighters	<b>1</b> Dog named Rex helped cheer everybody up
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**Firefighters' morale is lifted by 'fuzz ball' Rex**  
German Shepherd happy to be friends and take biscuits

Josh Nicholls  
joshnicholls@brentwoodgazette.co.uk

A "LOVEABLE fuzz ball" named Rex helped lift firefighters' spirits as they maintained a constant vigil at the Thorpe Lane wood blaze for nine long weeks.

The inferno at the 5,000-tonne woodland in Mounting began on August 18 and was finally extinguished on Monday – 1,514 working hours later.

Firefighters used diggers to look at the remaining wood on the heap as it did not catch fire, in a bid to free up crews who had maintained a constant vigil at the site since the blaze started.

But firefighters, who came from across the county, made up a tight-knit friend throughout their stay in a German Shepherd named Rex.

Adam Hopworth, 22, explained: "Rex is a completely loveable fuzz ball and he has kept us all entertained. We have been feeding him a few biscuits and playing with him. "It was great when he would turn up, we would pet him and play with him it would just provide a nice distraction."

With work controlling the blaze a laborious process for Adam and his team, he said Rex provided them with entertainment not dissimilar to a famous pooch from the big screen.

**Energy**

"I think he was just like one of those dogs you see in films," said Adam.

"He is like Beethoven because he was always full of energy and always up to mischief."

"Every time we got a water bottle out he would be jumping up at us trying to take it out of our hands."

"He is great dog because he just loves human contact and just wants to be loved."

It is believed Rex lives on one of the car scrap yards adjacent to the site of the blaze.

Firefighters left Thorpe Lane at 1pm on Monday and Adam described the fire's termination as a "weight being lifted off the shoulders" off him and his co-workers. He said being on site was a thankless task at times, adding that Rex would always be on hand to cheer the firefighters up on even the dreariest of days.

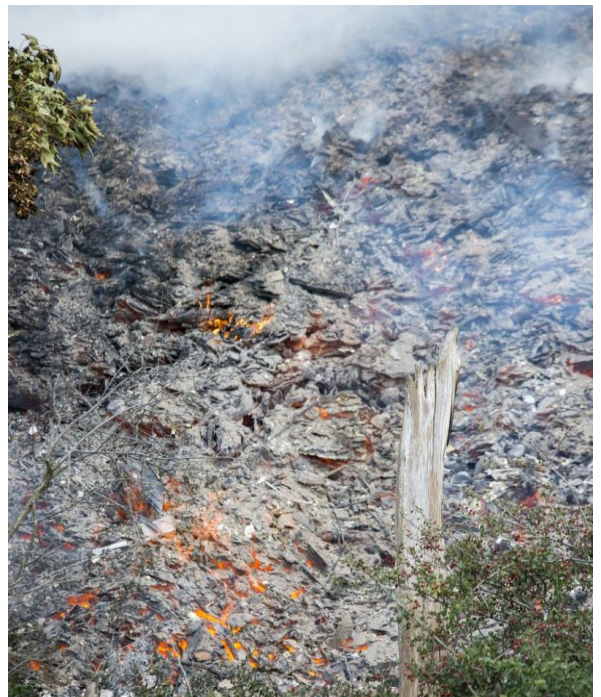
"Every time Rex turned up we always used to get excited, we all loved playing with him," he said.

"He just seemed to be able to pick everybody up and lift our spirits no matter what the day had been like."

"It has been a very draining job, it has not just been a physical job, it has to be thinking all the time about how to react as things change."

"Having Rex has helped take our mind off the job but not too much. He has definitely kept our spirits up."

**ON SCENE**  
Firefighters water down the last of the woodland blaze







**Pub fire – Horse and Groom, Warley Road, Great Warley**

**14/09/2014 @ 12:09**

**Incident Number: 16618**

**In attendance: 2 x Brentwood, 1 x Orsett, 1 x Basildon, 1 x Chelmsford (water bowser) 1 x Grays (aerial ladder platform) 2 x LFB**

Crews tackled a fire which engulfed the roof of the Horse and Groom pub in Warley. The fire spread from the roof to affect 20% of the first floor.

Assistant Divisional Officer Sean Dolton, Incident Commander, said: *"The pub was under conversion and builders had been working on site. The fire had broken out in the roof and spread to the first floor of the building".*

*"The first class work carried out by the crews contained the fire to the pub and prevented it from spreading to the semi-detached house adjoining the pub. The residents of that property can stay in their own home tonight thanks to the crews hard work."*

The fire was started accidentally by building work being carried out at the pub.





## **2. Essex Fire & Rescue Service and Essex County Council flood & Water Management Alliance**

### **BACKGROUND**

During January 2014, CFO Johnson directed that ECFRS should play a much more pro-active part in flood risk management throughout the County. As part of this work ACFO Hill appointed ADO Farrant as Liaison Officer, embedded in the Essex County Council Flood Team based at County Hall. The main objectives were to explore joint working initiatives and to find ways of maximising the information and resources available that would be benefit all stakeholders. ADO Farrant was also to examine the feasibility of a more permanent collaborative arrangement with the Essex County Council Flood Team, notwithstanding the existing responsibilities ECFRS has for the rest of the County, including the Unitary Authorities of Southend and Thurrock.

The Essex County Council Flood Team has been through strategic management change and so the final direction and governance is still somewhat fluid. This has not hindered progression of the alliance in any way, and in fact has highlighted a number of issues with a potential combined service.

- Flood incidents, and the inability for any single agency to resolve immediate problems generates much negativity and anger amongst the affected members of the public. If the Flood Team became part of the Fire Service, the Fire Service would become the focal point for complaints.
- The current location of the Flood Team at County Hall is best placed to work with other agencies such as Essex Highways, Environment Agency, Licenced and Approved Contractors, Elected Members and Local Councils and Authorities.
- Transport links and access to work are established for those who work in the department.
- Incompatible I.T systems hinder remote working and communications.

### **Current achievements and on-going projects include –**

- 3 practical flood alleviation schemes delivered at Maldon, West Horndon and Rayleigh, with more planned.
- Dedicated flood risk management vehicle (to support the above activities).
- Fire Service critical incident team support.

- Operational crew involvement in flood alleviation.
- Surface water drainage information for operational crews.
- Dedicated flood website.
- Mobile device flood reporting 'App'.
- Automated warning signs at known highway flood sites.
- Countywide watercourse mapping exercise.
- Maximise the potential of existing face to face public interactions with flood advice.

Since the formation of the partnership, the following work streams have progressed –

**Flood alleviation schemes** – utilising information from the Essex County Council Flood Team, the local Flood Authority Leads of Southend and Thurrock, supplemented by data generated by the Fire Incident Register, and involvement from local residents, parish and district councillors, areas of open watercourse that have been neglected or overgrown that have caused floods, or have the potential to cause floods, have been identified. These are cleared utilising the services of the Fire Service volunteers and other willing individuals with great success. Our work has not only prevented floods, but has galvanised the relationships between the involved organisations and promoted a 'can do' culture. The main benefits of this work is the reduction of misery and inconvenience to residents at risk from property flooding, a reduction in blue light responses to flood incidents, and time spent pumping out flooded properties and freeing up resources for other emergencies.

We are also working with other Lead Local Flood Authorities, voluntary, community and public sector agencies that will support the delivery of these schemes.

In addition to this the Alliance is embarking upon a project to work with Anglian water and Southend Borough Council to assess and clear a number of flood prone sites in the Southend Area.

**Provision of a purpose designed (non-emergency) Flood Risk Management vehicle** – Essex Fire has invested in a purpose built flood risk management vehicle, which is in the process of being equipped and prepared so it can be used Countywide by volunteers and Fire personnel for the clearance of neglected watercourses and culverts, and will carry everything needed for such initiatives. It will also provide practical support with equipment for fire investigations, and act as a highly visual focal point at gatherings where public education on flooding issues would be beneficial. This is not a new vehicle but a change of use of an existing Safer Communities transit van, maximising the efficient use of resources.

**Critical Incident Team Support** – During busy periods and spate conditions the Fire Service Critical Incident Team (CIT) will be activated, managing the resources of the Service. The reliance on accurate and timely information is critical to the team's operational success; the Flood Alliance is working to identify a supplier of flood prediction software to support this function. Currently Essex County Council and the two Unitary Authorities of Southend and Thurrock work with a computer programme called 'Wateride'. Essex Fire and the Emergency Planning department are looking to follow suit to ensure a County wide cohesive and common approach where information can be shared effectively.

All three Essex Lead Local Flood Authorities will be attending a demonstration and product development day at Fire HQ in November 2014 to ensure there is continuity and opportunities to work as one as and when required.

**Operational crews support** – work is currently underway to provide local flood risk information to operational fire stations, with a view that on receipt of severe weather and



rainfall warnings crews can be pro-active and check the causes of floods in their areas (e.g. Pinch points such as trash screens and piped underways). Once checked, minor works could be undertaken locally to clear the problem, or reported to the relevant Authority for further action. Local 'at risk' properties could also be visited and the occupants informed. This may negate the need for crews to respond in an emergency and free up resources for other emergencies.

**Surface Water Drainage information** – Work is underway with the local Water Authorities for them to provide electronic information on all of their assets and surface water drainage systems countywide, to enable Incident Commanders at flood incidents to make calculated and informed decisions as to where to direct pumped flood water. This information, which will be available on scene via the mobile data terminals on fire appliances, could prevent escalations of the flood further downstream, or supercharging of the drainage system causing further flooding elsewhere.

**Dedicated Website** – ECFRS media department are working closely with the Essex County Council flood team, and the Local Flood Leads of the two Unitary Authorities of Southend and Thurrock to design and deliver a dedicated flood website which will be a 'one stop shop' for all flooding matters. The public will be able to report actual or potential floods: The enquiry will be diverted to the correct authority, whether it be Essex County Council, either of the Unitary Authorities of Southend and Thurrock, or the water companies, alleviating the need to be passed from department to department. Information will be available on what to do and how to protect yourself from floods. We will be able to manage public expectations by making clear what we can and cannot do, for example not providing sandbags etc.

**A Reporting 'App'** – In a similar way to the website, work is started with a specialist 'app' provider for mobile phones and other mobile devices to design a flood 'app'. Members of the public will be able to report actual and potential flood sites from anywhere in the County, and even upload photos and videos via their mobile device. This will help target alleviation activities.

**Automated flood warning signs** – A feasibility study into automated solar/wind powered electronic signs to warn drivers of deep floodwater across roads and fords, with an aim of preventing vehicles from becoming trapped is soon to start. Recovering vehicles and people in these known risk areas places a large burden on Fire Service time and resources.

**Countywide watercourse mapping** – This project has started to recruit volunteers to map all of the watercourses in the county. A joint instructional video has been made by ECFRS and all of the necessary literature has been produced in a joint effort with the Essex County Council Flood Team. By mapping all of the watercourses and assets we will assist all organisations in planning to prevent floods in the future. The initial phase will involve pilot Essex County Council areas, and on successful completion the remaining ECC areas will be done and the two Unitary Authorities of Southend and Thurrock will be invited to participate.

**Maximising face to face interactions** – Planned and targeted interactions with members of the public to check and discuss fire safety in the home is currently taking place. This is delivered by Operational Crews, Community Safety personnel and Volunteers meeting the public during house to house visits, community events and specific campaigns. We plan to maximise the benefits of these interactions and to supply flood information and advice to those properties in areas at risk of flooding.

If we did not work in partnership, or engage with flood prevention and alleviation activities, it would impact upon the Services' Strategy to reduce emergency calls and blue light movements, there would be environmental impacts, appliances would not be available for other incidents, and insurance claims, misery and inconvenience would increase during these more common weather events.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The potential risk to reputation is captured in the body of this report.

There is a risk that there are more floods and flooding events if we do not continue to engage with this work.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

So far the alliance project has not attracted additional human resource costs, and other incidental needs have been met using existing employed staff and volunteers. It is not anticipated any additional human resource costs will be generated as the members of the alliance are happy to provide any specialist resources and skills in the spirit of partnership working and mutual benefits, notwithstanding operational priorities which take precedence.

With the current arrangements, Essex County Council remains responsible for the Flood & Water Management Team staff costs and any risks associated with these.

To date, other financial investment including the equipping and preparation of the Flood Vehicle, and other one off costs, have been met by the Safer and resilient Communities budget.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 gives upper tier Local Authorities in England responsibility for preparing and putting in place strategies for managing flood risks from ground water, surface water and ordinary watercourses in their areas.

Section 6 of this act defines risk management Authorities, and introduces the concept of 'Lead Local Flood Authorities' of whom Essex County Council, and the Unitary Authorities of Southend and Thurrock are identified as adopting this role.

Section 19 of this act requires the Lead Local Flood Authority to carry out formal investigations into certain flood incidents that meet criteria set by the Authority.

The Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 makes provision in Part 2 (sec 11 & 12) for powers to respond to other eventualities, and as such will work with the Essex County Council, and the Unitary Authorities of Southend and Thurrock to achieve this.

The legal aspects of our involvement with flood alleviation schemes is routinely checked and risk assessed prior to any work being undertaken, utilising the specialist knowledge available from Essex County Council or the ECFRS legal team.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

Although there may be specific areas of the work streams that may not be suitable for everyone, for example physical limitations for watercourse clearance work, there are no equality implications for the formation and development of the alliance or partnership between our two organisations.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The prevention or limitation of floods has a positive impact upon the environment. The work we do in relation to watercourse clearance is always carried out under the guidance and expertise of the relevant Authorities such as the Environment Agency, Wildlife Trust and other appropriate organisations to minimise or eliminate any negative impacts on the environment.

Having access to more accurate and timely information at incidents will assist operational crews to make more calculated and informed decisions about floods and flood waters in order

to minimise or eliminate any 'knock on' effects from pumping and impacting on the environment.

Reducing the time appliances are active and pumping water, or driving from incident to incident, will have a positive effect on the environment.

### **3. Parish Safety Volunteers**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The concept of the Parish Safety Volunteer came from a need identified by ECFRS Community Builders, as part of the Strengthening Communities programme and the drive from the joint Principal Officers (ECFRS and EP) working group.

The scheme will support the Whole Essex Community Budget - Strengthening Communities workstream. It will do this by engaging with and supporting Parish Councils and the delivery of safety messages and advice.

This scheme will significantly increase the number of homes that ECFRS are able to make safer and allow both organisations to engage with a far wider audience utilising a more cost effective delivery model.

#### **The Role**

The Parish Safety Volunteers will be recruited from the local community and trained jointly by ECFRS and EP to deliver Home Safety Visits (HSV) to residents of that parish. Once recruited, screened and trained the volunteers will be provided with uniforms and the required HSV equipment. They will then work with the Parish Council supported by ECFRS' Community Builders and EP's Architectural Liaison Officers.

The visit will include detailed information on all areas of home safety within the remit of ECFRS and EP, including installing smoke detectors, devising an escape plan and advice on property and personal security and safety.

#### **Recruitment**

##### Application & Interview

Volunteers will be recruited on recommendation from the Parish Council where the volunteer will be operational. Applicants will complete an application form which will be returned to ECFRS for processing and will be reviewed by all parties. If successful, the applicant will be invited to attend an interview.

##### Screening

Considering the autonomous nature of this role and recognising that once volunteers are recruited and operating in their Parish neither ECFRS nor EP will be directly involved in the coordination of the volunteers, it is essential that the screening process is rigorous. The following checks will be completed:

- Two References
- Criminal Background Check
- Financial Background Check
- Occupational Health (for suitability to carry out that role)

In addition the potential candidate will need to demonstrate a working knowledge of their local community and an understanding of the key risks they face.



## **Training**

### Parish Safety Volunteers (PSV) Induction

The inductions will be delivered jointly and include organisational/scheme policies, procedures, equality & diversity training, health & safety regulations and safeguarding adults and children training.

### Essex Police Specific

One-day: Personal and home security and safety currently delivered by Crime Prevention Tactical Advisors.

### Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

One day: Delivery of home safety guidance, developing fire escape plans, installing smoke alarms, currently delivered by Home Safety Technicians.

## **Uniform & Equipment**

PSVs will be provided with a collaboratively (ECFRS/EP) branded uniform, which will consist of a polo shirt, fleece, hi-vis jacket, utility trousers and shoes and the equipment required to carry out the practical elements of the visit.

The volunteers' equipment and literature packs will be provided to the Parish Council.

ECFRS and EP will provide the Parish Council with the details of homes that have been identified as being at risk of crime and/or fire. The PSV will be required to make contact with the occupants and will arrange to carry out visits. On completion of the visit, the paperwork will be returned to the Parish Council, who will forward to ECFRS and EP for reporting and assessment purposes.

PSVs will receive continued support from ECFRS Community Builders, who will be on hand to provide guidance when required and will be the point of contact for general enquiries.

## **Pilot Scheme**

The initiative will start with a pilot in two Parishes that are identified as at high risk of crime and/or fire. The scheme will be piloted for a period of three months after which all parties will review the outcomes and effectiveness of the PSVs. If successful the scheme will be expanded to include all Parish Councils throughout Essex, Southend and Thurrock in a controlled, sustainable manner.

It will provide an opportunity for both organisations to work with and support targeted and specific initiatives being coordinated by the Authorities, improve community resilience and help to reduce reliance on public services. The scheme will enhance the service we provide to the public and increase capacity to reach a wider audience.

## **Unitary Authorities**

Following the planned pilot scheme the initiative expansion will include the Unitary Authorities' of Southend and Thurrock. The PSVs will be able to work with existing embedded Local Area Coordinators, Community Builders and partners to identify homes most at risk from fire and crime and increase local engagement opportunities for both ECFRS and EP.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Due to the autonomous nature of this role, ECFRS and EP will maintain regular contact with the Parish Councils to ensure that visits being carried out are in accordance with the policies

and processes set by both organisations and that they are recorded correctly and paperwork returned.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

ECFRS will provide the budget for the initial pilot areas. Considering the areas in which the volunteers will be operating it is expected that the expenses relating to mileage will be very low. The costs for two Parishes for 12 months will be £2,786.35.

The initial costs are outlined below;-

Volunteers x 2 Training, uniform & mileage	£1,113.60
Equipment	£279.58
<b>Per Parish Cost</b>	<b>£1,393.17</b>

If the pilot is successful we will explore alternative funding opportunities, with a goal to make the scheme 'cost neutral' or as close to that as possible. It is likely however that the scheme will require funding in the immediate future.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

It is commonly accepted that volunteers should not enter into any form of legally binding agreement or contract, either in writing or verbally, as this would suggest the presence of an employment relationship.

A contract of employment is created when an individual agrees to undertake a task in return for something, usually of economic value, legally referred to as 'consideration'. If this rule is applied to volunteers, then a contract could be argued to have been created where the volunteer receives anything of economic value, for example training unrelated to their role, 'expenses' that are not related to actual documented expenditure, gift vouchers, membership of sports and social clubs, etc.

Volunteers who receive such consideration may well be regarded as working under a contract of employment. This means they may be entitled to relevant workers' and employees' rights, which could have significant implications for ECFRS.

All volunteers joining the Parish Safety Volunteer initiative will enter into a 'Volunteering Agreement' which expresses the nature of volunteering, with no expectation of employment.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this paper. Parish Safety Volunteers provides an opportunity to increase engagement with, and the participation of, black and minority ethnic groups and the elderly.

**Councillor Anthony Hedley**  
**Chairman**