



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

21 September 2020

Government Funding for Fire Protection

Report of Deputy Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with details of additional government funding which has been allocated to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to support fire protection work during 2020/21.

Background

2. On 29 April 2020 the Service received a letter from the Home Office providing further information on the £20 million grant funding that was being made available to support protection work. The letter outlined that of the £20 million, £4 million would be provided to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and £16m directly to FRAs in 2020/21 to drive improvement in fire and rescue services (FRSs) across the country. The aim of the additional protection funding is to enable FRSs to have the technical expertise required to fulfil this function and ensure fire protection officers have the skills they need. The funding has been allocated in two grants:
 - (i) £10 million Fire Protection Board funding from MHCLG focused on ensuring fire safety in high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres and
 - (ii) £10 million Protection Uplift funding from the Home Office to bolster work targeting other higher risk buildings.
3. On 16 July 2020 the Service received a further letter from the Home Office setting out the Minister's intention to provide a further £7 million (Infrastructure

Fund) to support delivery of the lessons and relevant recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report.

Details of Funding Received by the Service

4. The Service has been allocated the following sums from each of the three funding streams:

Building Risk Review Programme	£60,000
Protection Uplift Programme	£49,255
Infrastructure Fund	£65,661
Total	£174,916

5. It should be noted that the above funding is for the current year (2020/21) only.

Building Risk Review Programme

6. The purpose of the Building Risk Review Programme is to ensure that in scope high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres identified in each FRS area are subject to an initial risk assessment and depending on that outcome, visited or audited by the end of December. The funding allocation has been based upon the number of high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres within each FRA area and is to be used to deliver the wider building risk review programme. Each FRA received a minimum of £60,000 which is roughly the costs associated with one inspection officer.

Protection Uplift Programme

7. Whilst the focus has been on high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres following the Grenfell Tower fire, the Government is keen to ensure that other high-risk buildings receive appropriate attention. The Protection Uplift Programme funding is to support protection work in ensuring the safety of other high-risk buildings. The funding is to be used to support improvements in protection work and its delivery in line with locally agreed integrated risk management plans (IRMP) and risk-based inspection programmes.

Infrastructure Fund

8. The Infrastructure Fund has been earmarked to help support FRSs to deliver genuine change, to increase their resilience in managing a major fire with a particular focus on communications infrastructure, including the management of multiple life safety calls. From the £7 million, a total of £5.4 million has been allocated to FRS's based on the 2020/21 Fire Settlement Funding shares with

the remaining £1.6 million being used to support activity around communication related costs with details of the allocation of funding to follow.

Grant Conditions and reporting Requirements

9. The Building Risk Review Programme and Protection Uplift Programme grants are ring-fenced to expenditure in discharging fire protection duties in 2020/21. Regular financial and monitoring returns are required to the Home Office via the Protection Board secretariat until both of the grants are fully spent.
10. No specific conditions or reporting requirements have been attached to the Infrastructure Fund grant at this stage however, further details are expected to follow on the process for updating Government on how the funding has been utilised.

Intended Use of the Grant Funding

11. The additional funding will enable the Service to enhance its Business Fire Safety (BFS) capability to meet the expectations outlined by Government. We intend to utilise the funding to invest in the following areas:
 - Restructuring our central BFS team to provide additional capacity and to introduce an additional duty rota to ensure we have qualified staff who are available to take enforcement action at all times.
 - Continuing to train and qualify more of our Emergency Response staff to the Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety to ensure compliance with the Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators and to maintain and improve our delivery model.
 - Reviewing and updating our business address database in CFRMIS to ensure we have all relevant business premises in our risk-based re-inspection programme.
 - Exploring innovative technology solutions to improve efficiency and effectiveness for both Emergency Response crews and central BFS inspecting officers.
12. In respect of the Building Risk Review Programme, the Service received one premise to inspect which has been risk assessed and all necessary data and information has been returned to the Fire Protection Board. The inspecting officers time, travel and administration costs have been offset against this grant.

Recommendation

13. Members are requested to **note** the contents of the report.