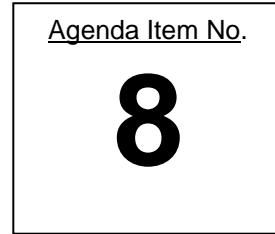


HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT
CABINET PANEL**

FRIDAY 4 MARCH 2016 AT 10.00 AM



**PROPOSED MEDICAL RESPONSE IN ASSOCIATION WITH EAST OF
ENGLAND AMBULANCE SERVICE**

Report of the Director Community Protection (Chief Fire Officer)

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Executive Member:- Richard Thake, Community Safety and Waste Management

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This paper sets out the current regional and local position regarding the utilisation of fire and rescue service resources to respond to medical emergencies in order to deliver basic life support and defibrillation interventions to the public.
- 1.2 Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is currently working under the umbrella of the Chief Fire Officers Association Eastern Region (CFOA ER), and in partnership with the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAS), to produce appropriate response protocols that form part of a regional strategy but also take account of local need.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Discussions are now well advanced between the six Eastern Region fire and rescue services that are co-terminus with the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAS) in order to establish a set of guiding principles for both First Responder and Co-responder schemes.
- 2.2 The regional guiding principles will be not be legally binding nor replace the need for individual fire and rescue services to facilitate their own partnership arrangements with the East of England Ambulance Service.

- 2.3 To facilitate both a regional and local approach, each FRS will provide a single point of contact to EEAS. Proposals also include the establishment of a governance board, with agreed Terms of Reference, and a regional working group to support the sharing of best practice and maintain regional consistency.

Definitions:

The Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) defines a co-responder as:

“a member of a professional body (e.g. police, fire, military, coastguard, mountain rescue) who responds to 999 calls on behalf of the ambulance service to a level specified by that trust.”

Definition of First Responding:

For the purposes of this paper, First Responding is based on the Community First Responder scheme administered by the EEAS, where personnel respond to potential cardiac arrest patients with a limited amount of equipment, including a defibrillator. FRS could undertake this approach but could only seek to recoup additional costs, which would not normally include salary costs.

Definition of Co-responding:

For the purposes of this paper, Co-responding is considered to be where established emergency responders from a FRS act on behalf of the EEAS and attend all emergency medical calls within a specified geographical area. Since co-responders are able to provide a higher level of medical provision, and thus positively impact upon EEAS performance targets, FRS would, in agreement with EEAS, seek to recoup additional cost, including salary cost. It is envisaged that under a Co-responding agreement, periods of availability will be agreed in advance and shall be subject to regular monitoring.

Hertfordshire Proposals:

The high level trauma care skills of firefighters in Hertfordshire present a very positive opportunity to assist EEAS to meet their attendance times for certain incident types but without doubt the most significant benefit is for the public in terms of quicker medical interventions which, it is hoped, will have a positive impact on patient outcome. It is therefore proposed that a Hertfordshire Fire

and Rescue Service Partnership Agreement (PA) will be developed, aligned and in accordance with the Eastern regional governance board.

First steps will be to carry out a number of pilot First Responder schemes at identified sites across the County for a period of six months.

It is proposed that the first trials will be conducted at two whole-time fire stations (sites to be confirmed), these sites will be chosen following consultation with EEAS.

In addition, the Eastern regional Co-responding group has also begun work to identify mobilising arrangements to ensure resources are mobilising as quickly and effectively as possible. The proposed trial in Hertfordshire will support the regional work by providing a body of evidence to establish the feasibility of more permanent schemes in the future.

At this stage it is proposed that HFRS crews would only be responding to cardiac arrests and chest pain calls over the initial six month trial period.

When an appropriate location has been identified, EEAS will carry out a training needs analysis to ensure that HFRS staff are suitably skilled and equipped to attend medical incidents. Where gaps are identified these will be facilitated by HFRS, but delivered by EEAS.

3. Recommendation/s

3.1 The Cabinet Panel acknowledges the contents of the paper and;

- i) endorses on the formation of a Partnership Agreement between Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and East of England Ambulance Service.
- ii) endorses a 6 month First Responder pilot scheme initially at two HFRS sites (to be identified).

4. Background

4.1 The development of both first responder and co-responder schemes over the course of the last ten years has seen a number of fire and rescue services entering into partnerships with their respective ambulance trusts.

4.2 To date, this has predominantly seen retained firefighters operating under a number of different arrangements to provide medical interventions in rural areas. These schemes have continued to develop but significantly, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, an

exclusively whole-time service, now responds to cardiac arrest incidents as a matter of course.

- 4.3 The recent move by the Executive Council of the Fire Brigades Union to remove its long held objection to co-responding is also significant.
- 4.4 Blue light collaboration has gained real momentum and traction over the course of the last eighteen months since the joint statement of intent from AACE, CFOA and ACPO (now NPCC).
- 4.5 This commitment has been further strengthened through the work of the Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group (ESCWG), and in particular the joint working now taking place between AACE and CFOA (see appendix A).

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Cost recovery arrangements between HFRS and EEAS will be clearly defined prior to the commencement of the proposed trial and as a central pillar of the Partnership Agreement.
- 5.2 During the trial period and analysis phase, the expected call volume and associated costs are expected to be low but will be continually assessed. It is proposed that a reasonable level of cost be underwritten for the period of the trial and, due to the limited cost, it is expected that this can be absorbed within the Community Protection budget.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 6.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 6.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant

protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- 6.4 As with all emergency response arrangements, it is not expected that the proposal would create any equalities impacts.

- 6.5 An initial impact assessment has been undertaken and revealed that there are no direct equality issues arising from this report. The Equalities Impact Analysis will remain under review throughout the trial and will be used to inform development of any expansion of the project. There are no equalities implications for any persons with protected characteristics.