



Crowe



Final Report

Strategic Review:
Cork City Council Fire and
Building Control Department



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to Review

In late 2020, Cork City Council (“the Council”) commissioned Crowe to undertake a strategic review of the Council’s Fire and Building Control Department (“the Department”), assessing the degree to which its resources and delivery of services are “future-proofed” to meet the demands of the City.

1.2 Terms of Reference

The requirements and specifications outlined in the Council’s Request for Tender were for a strategic review of the structures, services, and resource utilisation for the Cork City Fire and Building Control Department, with this review being undertaken in the context of:

- The **evolving role of the Fire Service** in protecting and enhancing the built environment of Cork City;
- The **major boundary extension** of Cork City in 2019;
- **Population growth** – with the physical area under the remit of the Council growing fivefold, the population increased as a result from 125,000 to 210,000. The city is forecast to see a rise in population to 350,000 by 2040, from its current level of 210,000, with further growth forecast beyond this date;
- The **amalgamation of the Cork City Fire and Building Control Sections** in the context of the organisational restructuring programme recently implemented by Cork City Council.

The core aim of this strategic review is to ensure that the Cork City Fire and Building Control Department is enabled to deliver an efficient and effective service for the people of Cork, and is fully equipped for the challenges which the projected scale of development and population growth will entail.

1.3 Method of Approach

The approach employed for this review combined a comprehensive review of documentation provided to us by the Department and Council, along with extensive stakeholder engagement (the results of which are reported in Section 3 below). A breakdown of the key steps within this process can be seen in Figure 1.3 overleaf (with sign-off of our final deliverable in early 2022).

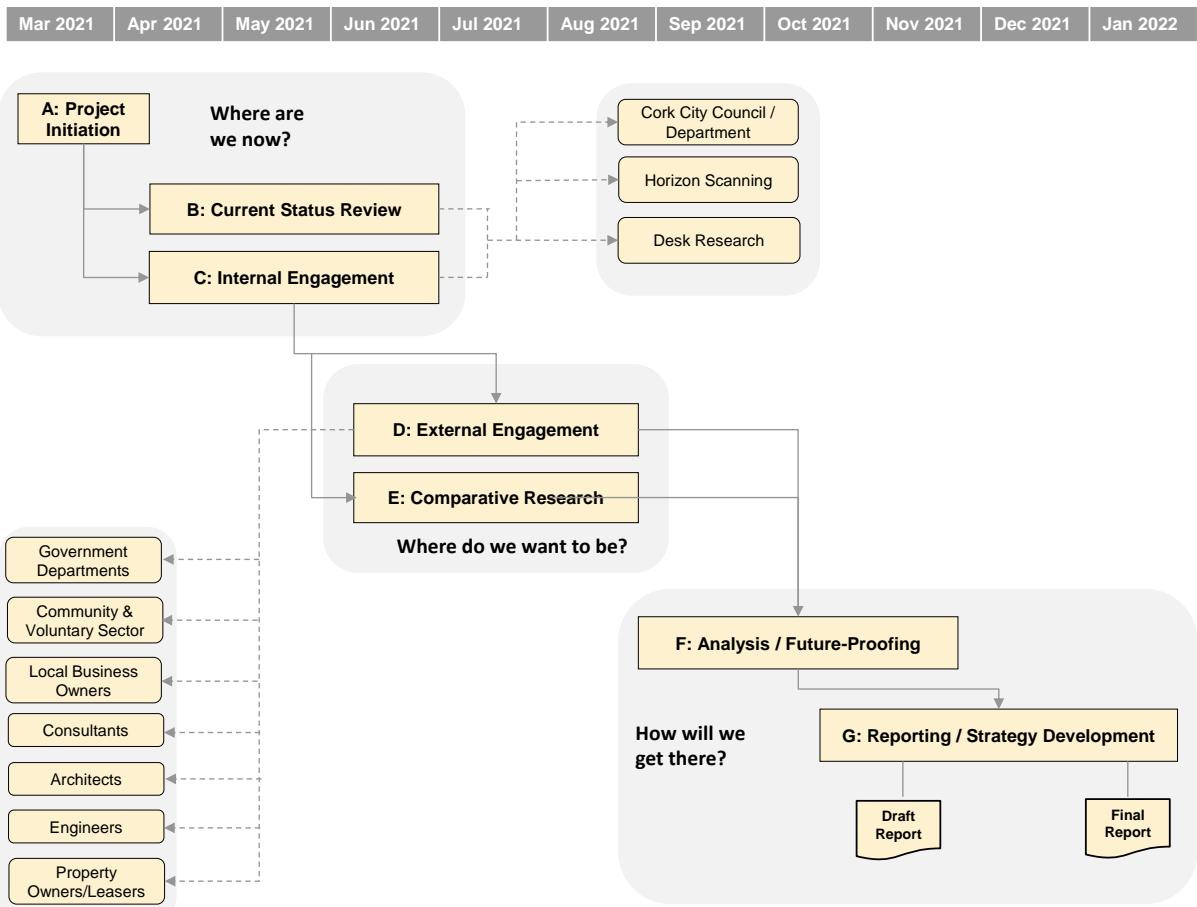


Figure 1.3: Method of Approach for this Review

2 Current Position of Department

2.1 Organisational Structure

The Fire and Building Control Department sits within the Community, Culture and Placemaking Directorate of Cork City Council. The Department is overseen by the Chief Fire Officer, who also acts as the Chief Civil Defence Officer. The Chief Fire Officer reports to the Director of Community, Culture and Placemaking within Cork City Council. The five divisions within the Department are:

- Administration;
- Building Control;
- Civil Defence.
- Fire Operations;
- Fire Prevention;

The organisational chart for the Department is presented in Fig. 2.1 overleaf.

2.2 Department Resources

2.2.1 Overview of the Department

The Department operates across three operational locations (illustrated in Fig. 2.2.1 below):

- Anglesea Street Administration and Fire Station (Headquarters, pictured on the front cover of this report);
- Ballyvolane Fire Station (full time sub-station);
- Ballincollig Fire Station (retained).

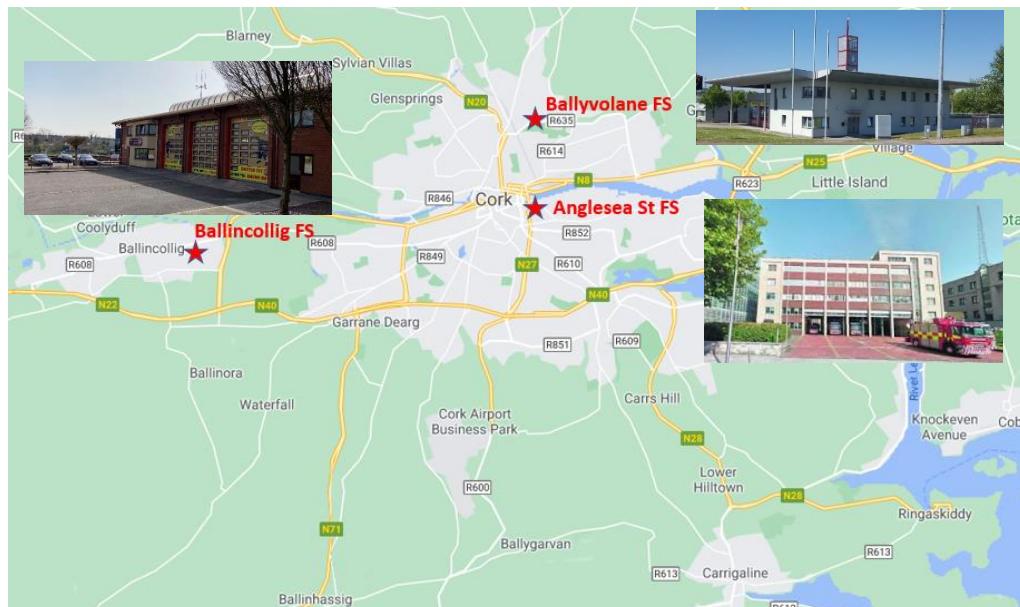


Figure 2.2.1: Location of Cork City Fire Stations

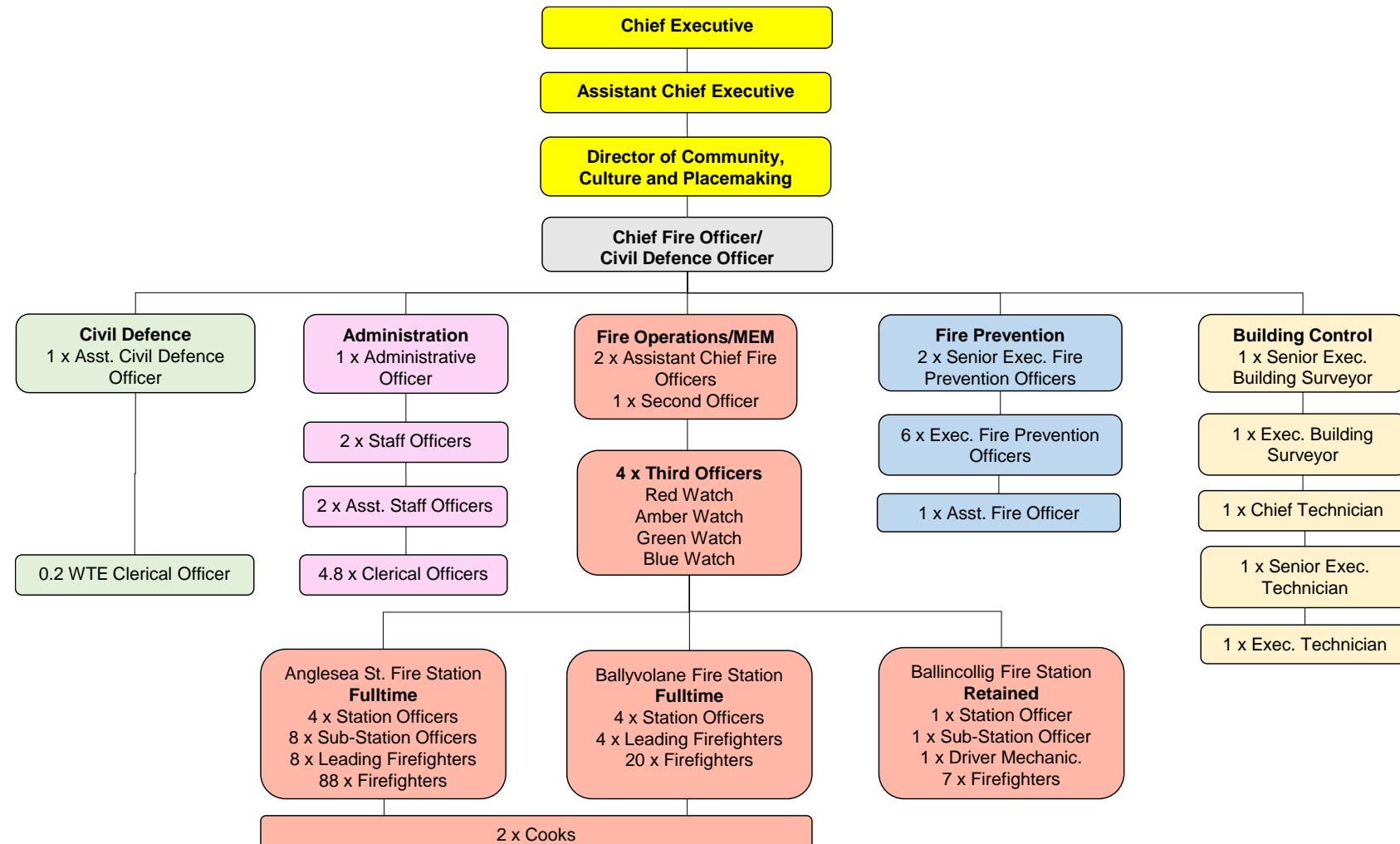


Figure 2.1: Organisation Structure of Cork City Council Fire and Building Control Department, as of March 2021
 (Please note that the chart is intended to show staff numbers and reporting lines; positions on the chart are not intended to indicate relative grades or seniority).

Anglesea Street Fire Station is located in the city centre and, with a headcount of 112 operations staff, is by far the largest of the three stations. The station also houses the non-operations staff within the Department. Ballyvolane Fire Station is located on the north side of the city, and Ballincollig Fire Station is to the west of the city, a recent addition to the Department following the 2019 boundary expansion. Ballincollig is a retained fire station, while Ballyvolane is served by a full-time complement of staff.

2.2.2 Operational Fire Service Responses

Between 2014 and 2020, the number of incidents to which Cork City Fire Brigade has responded has been relatively consistent, ranging between 2,600 and 3,019 across the seven years. The breakdown of incidents has also remained broadly consistent, as shown in Figure 2.2.2 below:

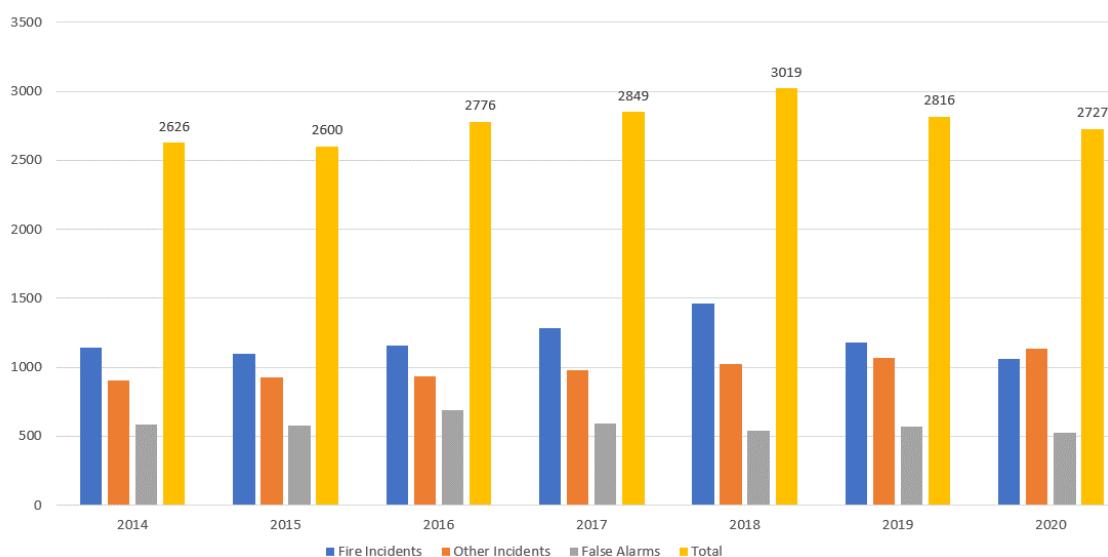


Figure 2.2.2: Operational Fire Service Responses in Cork City, 2014-2020
(Number of Incidents by Type)

2.2.3 Human Resources

As of August 2021, the Department had an establishment of 181 staff, along with a further 85 volunteers in the Civil Defence division. A breakdown of the Department's human resources, excluding Civil Defence volunteers, is presented below:

Division	Management	Full-Time Staff	Retained Staff	Cooks	Total
Chief Fire Officer	1				1
Administration	1	8.8	—		9.8
Building Control	1	4	—		5
Civil Defence	1	0.2	—		1.2
Fire Operations	3	140	10	2	155
Fire Prevention	2	7	—		9
Total	9	160	10	2	181

Table 2.2.3 – Breakdown of Department's Staff Resources

3 Stakeholder Engagement

3.1 Range of Stakeholder Engagement

Given that a key element of this strategic review is to consider the future direction and outlook of the Department, we considered it important to capture the vision of those who work within and with the Department as to what the future for fire and building control services in Cork City might look like. We therefore conducted a series of engagements with stakeholders, both internal and external, through a variety of methods including direct interviews, workshop sessions, online surveys, and email engagement. We also had valuable input from the trade unions representing staff within the Department.

In addition to internal stakeholders from across the Department and the wider City Council, we also engaged with:

- National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management;
- HSE National Ambulance Service;
- Munster Regional Control Centre;
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- National Building Control Office;
- Construction Industry Federation;
- Professionals involved in planning, architecture and construction.

3.2 Surveys

During the course of this review, we undertook three surveys, which were conducted confidentially using the LimeSurvey online platform. These surveys were with:

- Members of the public;
- Elected Members of Cork City Council;
- Staff within the Fire and Building Control Department.

3.3 Issues Raised During the Stakeholder Engagement Process

On the whole, the views expressed by all stakeholders were broadly positive regarding the Department and the services which it provides, and this affords a solid base for the future development of the services. With that said, there were nevertheless several specific and consistent themes which arose frequently in these consultation approaches, and included the following:

- **Integration across Department:** the need for enhanced integration across the functional divisions of the Department, and for better communication between them. We would add that the theme of integration also surfaced the need to understand the significance of different cultures across the Department, and the need to develop closer culture alignment as part of better communication. (See also the bullet point below regarding workforce diversity.)

- **Training Facilities:** there are limited training facilities at the Anglesea Street Station. Recruits are trained at Ballyvolane, where again facilities are limited. Consequently, most operational training is conducted at external centres. The option of looking at a regional solution for training could be explored, not just for the practical benefits that could arise in terms of difficulties of releasing staff, but also as part of continuing to grow the status and standing of Cork as Ireland's burgeoning second city.
- **Diversity within the Workforce:** the need for the Department to better reflect the population of Cork City in terms of gender and ethnicity was highlighted, with recognition of a need for greater diversity to be targeted in future recruitment campaigns. Alongside this, however, there is also a need to ensure that the value of the diversity across the different divisions of the Department is acknowledged and appreciated.
- **Sufficiency of Staff Resources:** ensuring that the Department has sufficient staff resources to meet a changing profile of demand, and in line with the City Council boundary extension and the city's growing population.
- **Recruitment and retention:** dealing effectively with challenges in recruiting and retaining experienced staff. This relates both to retained firefighter positions, where at a national level there are low levels of interest (but high demand for full-time posts), and to fire prevention positions.
- **Communications and engagement with developers:** the need to maximise the clarity of communications between the Council and developers in respect of building control requirements was cited as important, in the context of the continuing growth of the city. (We make some important observations on this issue in Section 4 below.)
- **Proactive Building Control:** stakeholders commented that a focus on proactive building control would be beneficial, and this would support the revitalisation of the city centre if derelict sites and older buildings were to be modernised (and it is highly likely that modernisation will be part of a blended development strategy).

4 Key Issues for Consideration

4.1 Building on a Solid Foundation

Throughout our engagement with staff at all levels across the Fire and Building Control Department of Cork City Council, we have been struck by the levels of commitment and pride shown in all aspects of the Department's activities. Many of the staff with whom we engaged have worked within the Department for lengthy periods of time, have built up extensive experience in their professional fields, and are deeply committed to the work which they perform. This is also reflected within the public consultation responses, with a high proportion of respondents providing a positive view of the Department and its staff.

These positive aspects represent a very solid foundation for the future development of fire and building control services within Cork, and the Council should be rightly proud of the levels of professionalism and commitment shown across the Department.

Within that context, our findings and recommendations within this report are focused on those areas where there is room for improvement, and where the changing demands for the services offered by the Department need to be taken into account in planning for the future.

4.2 The Need for Modernisation

Notwithstanding the impact of the boundary changes and the organisational realignment which saw the creation of the Fire and Building Control Department as it is currently constituted, the present service model – particularly in respect of operational response services – is largely based on traditional patterns of fire service operations. Much of the Department is set up on those lines, with operational staff numbers remaining static for several decades. In the meantime, the national (and international) focus has shifted to reflect changing patterns of risk and to strengthen prevention, protection and safety. This review, therefore, creates a timely opportunity to get more in step with that shifting focus, and there is an appetite across the Department to modernise and adopt a more “future-proofed” model.

Of course, the nature of fire service operations has changed greatly over the last 20-30 years. House fires (and to a degree commercial fires) have reduced significantly, and this is largely a result of modern and safer building materials, greater use of fire alarm systems (especially domestic smoke detectors), and changes in household cooking practices and equipment. Correspondingly, there has also been a substantial reduction in the number and severity of road traffic collisions and the resultant injuries and fatalities. This is because of improved road safety, enhanced enforcement, and safer vehicle designs, as well as other factors.

In parallel with these trends of reducing activity, though, the nature of the risks associated with the role of fire services has changed. This is linked to the effects of climate change, the impact of demographic change, the terror threat, and the use of new materials and modern methods of construction. The phenomenon of the changing nature of community risk is not unique to Cork (or indeed to Ireland) and very much follows the trends internationally. Comparative experience across the developed world in how to address this, however, shows that much greater emphasis has been placed on risk management by local authorities and that greater prominence and weight have been given to preventative measures, fire safety, community engagement, and better and safer building designs.

With that in mind, we believe that a number of critical features need attention within the Department in order to further strengthen services and to ensure that they reflect a modern approach. These include the needs for the following:

- A new strategic vision for the Department, one which strikes an effective balance between operational and preventative services, reflecting contemporary thinking in relation to community safety and the built environment, and taking account of a changing risk profile and changing demands that affect all divisions of the department;
- A full and comprehensive review of standards of fire cover, using the existing Area Risk Categorisation (ARC) template published within the *Keeping Communities Safe* document, to inform the future strategic positioning of resources, within the revised boundary;
- A strategic review of staffing arrangements, shift patterns and work routines having regard to the ARC, together with the requirement for the development of family friendly and flexible staffing arrangements;
- A strategic review of existing crewing arrangements, including existing crewing levels, the potential for mixed crewing, employing both full-time and part-time staff, and the dual crewing of special appliances;
- A more integrated approach within the Department, with greater cohesion and professional support/interworking between staff within the operational functions and their colleagues involved in building control, inspections, fire safety and prevention;
- The positioning of the Department within Cork City Council to ensure that it can function effectively as a fully integrated professional service working closely with colleagues in other functions and, in particular, those colleagues with responsibility for planning and spatial development;
- The enhancement of training facilities necessary to meet the needs of Cork City Council firefighters today, but also to encompass the requirements of a changing risk profile as well as a rapidly expanding population;
- The continued development of staff within the Department, and a focus on progressing a positive and integrated culture that values the contribution of the everyone across the whole Department;
- Examination of the means by which a more diverse workforce, reflective of the population of the city, might be achieved, particularly within operational response services;
- Leadership development within the Fire and Building Control Department in order to provide effective succession planning, to develop management capabilities and to offer enhanced career development opportunities for staff;
- Adoption of management, business and operating processes across the Department, both in terms of performance management and reporting techniques, as well as the use of standard operating procedures;
- Close analysis of the infrastructure employed by the Department, including operational locations/buildings, equipment and technology, with assessment of any necessary capital investment which may be required.

4.3 The Development of Cork City

Of critical importance to the City Council is the role played by the Department in relation to building control, fire prevention and fire safety, particularly in the context of the growth of Cork

and the ambitious plans of the Council and other parties for its continued growth and development. In that regard, we note that Cork is already the location of Ireland's highest building, and that planning permission has recently been granted for a new 34-storey tower as part of the Docklands Development, with indications that other similarly structured buildings may follow.

In providing a proactive and responsive service to meet these ambitious plans, close engagement between officials within the Fire and Building Control Department and developers and planners is important, as reflected in the stakeholder feedback reported in Section 3 above.

In respect of this issue, however, we feel it necessary to inject a note of caution. The importance of the Department working with developers and planners as part of the city's expansion cannot be overstated, and there is undoubtedly scope to do better, and we say more about this in our recommendations. However, for many reasons, developers will inevitably seek to push the boundaries of design and new materials and new methods of construction. Whilst the Department would want to provide an enabling function as part of the City Council, it also fulfils a parallel and vital role of safeguarding public safety. This can be a difficult balance to strike, and speaks to a need to ensure that the sufficiency of resources theme flagged above encompasses not just staff numbers, but staff with the right skills and knowledge to provide a flexible service.

4.4 Civil Defence

We note the important role played by Civil Defence personnel in emergency planning and incident response, and that the effective provision of Civil Defence services depends on the recruitment, training and operational readiness of a committed cohort of volunteers. This function appears to be relatively self-contained within the Department and to work effectively, both at times of crisis and at less busy periods. The Civil Defence function works closely with Operations colleagues within the Department and across the City Council generally to deal with floods and severe weather events, but nonetheless needs to be integrated more fully into mainstream activity within the Department and should be included within the programme of change recommended later in this report.

The above findings for the Department as a whole are presented at a relatively high level, in order not just to show the main issues which need to be considered by the Department and Council, but also to recognise their interdependencies. We provide more detailed commentary on these issues within the recommendations which follow in Section 5 below.

5 Recommendations

5.1 A Future Vision for the Department

Within the context of the considerations presented above in Section 4, it will be important for the Department to set down a future vision which is compelling and which strikes the correct balance between the various responsibilities with which it is charged. This will set the framework for the more detailed recommendations which appear in this section of our report.

We suggest that an appropriate vision for the Fire and Building Control Department might be as follows:

Our vision for Cork is to be a vibrant, prosperous, and safe city, with a fire service that seeks to enable prosperity whilst simultaneously securing the health and safety of its diverse community.

We will do this by seeking to prevent fires and other emergencies occurring, through a proactive and risk driven approach to engaging, informing, and educating citizens in their homes, in their workplaces and in their communities. We will also use our safety and prevention resources, alongside our regulatory, inspection, and enforcement powers, in a proportionate way, ensuring that fire safety is implanted in the design of the built environment and other infrastructure in Cork.

It remains equally vital that we deliver our vision of an excellent operational service and provide an emergency response that is well led, well trained, and with good facilities and equipment to anticipate and resolve the range of emergency incidents possible in the burgeoning and thriving city of Cork.

We will develop the Fire and Building Control Department in a progressive and integrated way to ensure that our statutory responsibilities are met, that we can respond to changing demands, and that we invest in our people, equipment and premises to provide the best service possible to the people of Cork.

5.2 Summary of Key Recommendations

In the context of the above vision, we have presented earlier in this report a series of findings relating to the current position of the Fire and Building Control Department at Cork City Council, and we follow these up with various recommendations presented below:

No.	Recommendation
<i>Theme: Strategy and Planning</i>	
1	A new strategic vision should be developed for the Department, one which strikes an effective balance between operational and preventative services, reflecting contemporary thinking in relation to community safety and the built environment, and taking account of changing demands. (The outline draft vision presented in Section 5.1 will be a helpful starting point.)

No.	Recommendation
2	<p>The initial outline vision which we have presented in Section 5.1 above needs to be further debated and refined by the Council and Department, in line with recommendations 4 to 6 below; following this, a detailed strategic plan for the next three to five years should be developed and endorsed by the Council, covering all aspects of the responsibilities of the Fire and Building Control Department.</p>
3	<p>Supporting the strategic plan should be an annual business plan for the Department, setting out its various objectives for the year ahead in terms of operational services, people development, capital investment, and major projects, linked in with the annual budgeting cycle. The business plan should also form the basis for an annual performance report to be presented to the Council.</p>
4	<p>The role of the Department should evolve in order to best address the operational, fire safety and resilience implications of the 'Our City, Our Future Strategy'.</p>
5	<p>Within this context, the Department should consider the operational implications of the risks associated with the potential of increased medium and high-rise development, as well as new transport infrastructure and commercial development. In doing so, it should utilise Area Risk Categorisation (ARC) published within the <i>Keeping Communities Safe</i> document as the basis for its approach, and work with planners, architects, communities, and other sections of the Council to properly model the risk implications of a variety of scenarios.</p> <p>The output of this work should be a full and comprehensive review of standards of fire cover, using the existing ARC template, to inform the future strategic positioning of resources, within the revised boundary.</p>
6	<p>The Department should adopt a Unified Risk Model as advocated by the Fire Safety Task Force Report. As part of the adoption of this model, the Department should conduct a thorough review of its critical plans which constitute its overall risk model for the local community, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Operations Plan (Section 26 Plan); ■ Cork Major Emergency Plan; ■ Statutory Fire Prevention Plan; ■ Community Fire Safety Plan; ■ Pre-Incident Plans; ■ Training Plan; ■ Safety Management System.
<i>Theme: Organisation and People</i>	
7	<p>A more integrated approach should be developed within the Department, with greater cohesion and professional support/interworking between staff within the operational functions and their colleagues involved in building control, inspections, fire safety and prevention.</p>
8	<p>Attention should be given to the positioning of the Department within Cork City Council to ensure that it can function effectively as a fully integrated professional service working closely with colleagues in other functions.</p>
9	<p>A culture audit should be conducted to ensure that staff across the Department share common goals and commitment to Department-wide objectives, and to examine their values within their current roles, and how workplace procedures, behaviours, policies, working relationships, and staff expectations affect how the work of the Department is done.</p>

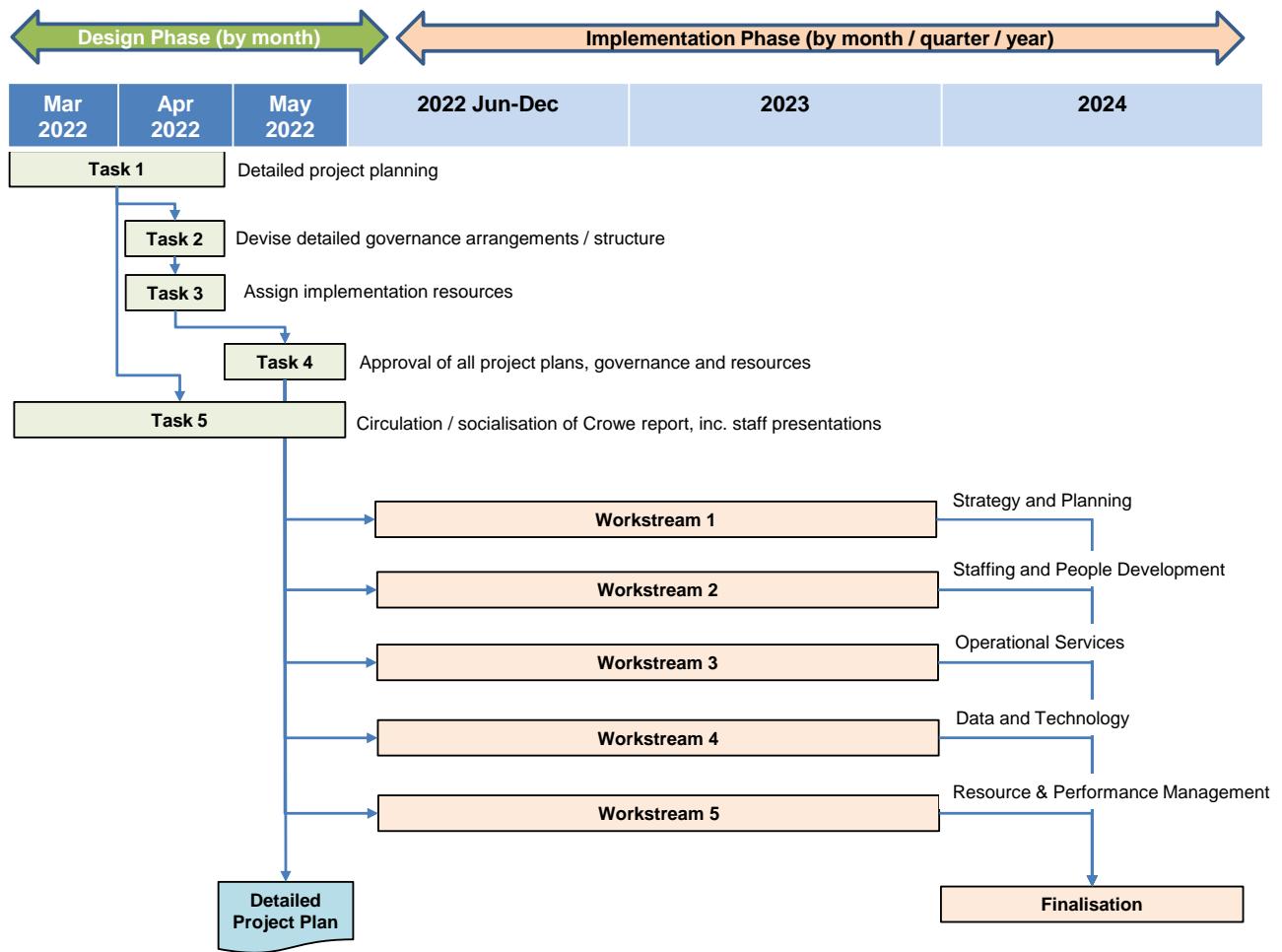
No.	Recommendation
10	Following on from the culture audit, a plan should be developed to deal with any issues arising and to aim for better cohesion and functional integration across the Department, whilst retaining current divisional structures.
11	As an immediate step, a formal Management Team structure should be put in place, with (for example) a weekly or fortnightly meeting chaired by the Chief Fire Officer and involving each of the divisional heads / other senior staff as necessary. The focus of these meetings should be to provide a 360 degree view of activity across the Department, an opportunity to focus on progress with regard to strategic and business plans, and facilitation of discussions on cross-Departmental projects, initiatives and matters of relevant concern.
12	Better opportunities for collaborative working across the Department should be explored – for example, project teams or working groups drawn from the five divisions to work on specific initiatives, including “corporate” projects such as a workforce plan or quality initiative, or more functional / technical matters such as fire safety and prevention initiatives or community engagement projects.
13	The Department should introduce a more structured basis of performance management. Much of this can be derived from the strategic and operational planning processes referred to above, which will involve the agreement of clear performance measures and targets to be set within the various planning documents. A system such as the Balanced Scorecard should be considered to assist this process.
14	A detailed workforce plan should be prepared which can examine current and future demand, assess any gaps which exist in terms of resource numbers or skills/expertise, and prepare a set of detailed recommendations for the Council in the specific positions required across the Department to ensure that its strategic and operational objectives can be met over the next five years, including succession planning, workforce development, upskilling, and building / developing resources for the future. This workforce planning exercise should encompass: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A strategic review of staffing arrangements, shift patterns and work routines having regard to the Area Risk Categorisation (ARC) template, together with the requirement for the development of family friendly and flexible staffing arrangements; ■ A strategic review of existing crewing arrangements, including existing crewing levels, the potential for mixed crewing, employing both full-time and part-time staff, and the dual crewing of special appliances.
15	Leadership development within the Fire and Building Control Department should be considered in detail, in order to provide effective succession planning, to develop management capabilities and to offer enhanced career development opportunities for staff in all functional areas of the Department.
16	A comprehensive review of fire cover should be undertaken within Cork City to determine the level of need, and to determine the optimum resource plan to meet current and future operational demands. This should consider whether the city's requirements in relation to operational fire services are best met by a wholly full-time Brigade, and assess the future role of retained firefighters following the completion of the National Review of the retained fire service.

No.	Recommendation
17	Cork City Council should take active steps to review how best it can make recruitment to the Fire Brigade more attractive to female applicants, and to those from ethnic minorities, and also ensure that recruitment competitions can provide equal opportunities to such applicants.
18	The potential for developing a regional training facility for operational firefighters should be examined by the Council, using economic appraisal techniques to analyse the costs and benefits involved in a capital scheme of this nature.
Theme: Operations and Processes	
19	The Department should review and revise as necessary its management, business and operating processes across all functional areas, both in terms of performance management and reporting techniques and the use of standard operating procedures, in line with the Unified Risk Model recommended above.
20	There should be close analysis of the infrastructure employed by the Department, including operating locations/buildings, equipment and technology, with assessment of any necessary capital investment which may be required.

5.3 Implementation of Change – a 36-Month Roadmap

The 20 recommendations presented above are closely inter-related, and many independencies exist between them. All are important; none should be regarded as dispensable or of low priority. For Cork City Council to implement these recommendations successfully, it will be essential to regard them as part of an overall package of change within the Fire and Building Control Department.

Notwithstanding that an early task within the implementation approach will be the development of a detailed implementation plan and assignment of resources, an outline plan for the completion of this work over a 36-month timeframe is presented below.



We would expect that considerable progress will be able to be achieved within the first two years of the change programme, with tangible results evident during this period. The third year of the programme will be one of finalisation of the implementation actions, with the expectation that all elements will have been successfully concluded by the end of 2024 (assuming commencement of the change programme in Q2 2022).

The first three months of the programme will entail a Design Phase, involving the following tasks:

■ **Task 1 – Detailed Project Planning**

Development of a detailed project plan for implementation of all 20 recommendations, showing tasks / sub-tasks, inter-dependencies, critical paths, deliverables, timescales, milestones and other factors, presented within a professional project management structure (ideally using an appropriate methodology / software tool).

■ **Task 2 – Devise Detailed Governance Arrangements / Structure**

Creation of an appropriate governance structure for the implementation project, including nomination of a Project Owner, establishment of a Project Steering Board, definition of reporting arrangements, etc.

■ **Task 3 – Assign Implementation Resources**

Determination of the resources required to achieve effective implementation, including internal staff assigned to project roles (we would expect most of these to be part-time), and any external / professional resources or support required for the implementation / change management programme

■ **Task 4 – Approval of All Project Plans, Governance and Resources**

Approval of the project plans, governance and resources determined from Tasks 1-3 through the executive structures of the Council, and signed off as necessary by the Council itself or appropriate committee(s).

■ **Task 5 – Circulation / socialisation of Crowe report, inc. staff presentations**

As this programme of change will affect all staff across the Department, and others in the wider City Council, it will be essential to share the Crowe report with staff at any early juncture, and to keep staff informed progressively through the project planning and implementation periods.

Once the project design work is complete and all plans are approved, we would expect that the implementation process will then commence, towards the end of Q2 in 2022. Whilst the project plan will define how the implementation work is to be done, we would expect that it will be based around a number of workstreams. These might consist of the following:

- Strategy and Planning;
- Staffing and People Development;
- Operational Services;
- Data and Technology;
- Resource and Performance Management.

The use of workstreams will enable linked recommendations to be addressed in a cohesive way, and will also permit the assignment of small implementation teams to focus on these issues in an integrated manner.

5.4 Resources Required

Ownership of the change management process is absolutely essential: managers and staff within the Department, and the wider City Council, must have a strong sense that this is their process, and that they are taking charge of making meaningful, lasting improvements designed to strengthen the work of the Department for many years into the future. For that reason, the vast majority of the work to be done must be tackled by in-house resources. We would expect that whilst some of this work may require staff to be assigned to specific tasks on a full-time basis, most of it should be able to be done on a part-time basis, although that will probably require other duties to be reallocated to colleagues.

That said, we are also conscious that the Council probably lacks some of the skills and experience needed to deliver a change programme of this nature. External consultancy support will, in our view, be required to provide assistance to the change programme at various levels, and also to provide assurance to the Council that all implementation activities are proceeding according to plan. The scale and cost of such support can be determined at the time of project design, in early 2022.

5.5 Project Management and Governance

As noted above, a robust project management and governance structure is required for a major change programme of this nature. We would expect that this should include the nomination of a Project Owner (ideally the Head of Department), and the establishment of a Project Steering Board, most likely composed of a small number of senior officials from the City Council and the Head of Department. A Project Manager should be appointed to take on the day-to-day responsibility of running the change programme / implementation project, and staff assigned to workstreams as determined by the project plan. Clear reporting arrangements will need to be put in place, in order to provide visibility on progress, and an appropriate project management methodology such as PRINCE2 should be employed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

During this review, we have considered a wide range of published sources of information, relating to both the background to current fire service and building control requirements and services in Ireland, and comparative international experience in these fields. Whilst there is a wide body of published information available on these topics, some of the key documents and online resources we considered included the following:

Farrell Grant Sparks: *Review of Fire Safety and Fire Services in Ireland* (2002) – commissioned by the Department of the Environment .

National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management: *Keeping Communities Safe – A framework for Fire Safety in Ireland* (2013)

Fire Services External Validation Group: *Fire Services in Ireland - 'Local Delivery – National Consistency'; First report of the Fire Services External Validation Group* (2016)

Prof Sir George Bain: *The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives - The Independent Review of the Fire Service* (2002) – this was the outcome of a review of fire services in the UK

Philip Schaenman, TriData / Centres for Disease Control and Prevention / National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control (US): *Global Concepts in Residential Fire Safety Part 1, Best Practices from England, Scotland, and Norway* (2007)

Dr. I Weewer and Prof. Dr. Taco C.R. van Someren: *Fire Service of the Future - The Revolutionary Dutch Case* (2009)

Greater Manchester Fire Service: video showing means of extinguishing fires without entering the building – ['keyhole surgery for firefighting'](#) – YouTube (2.3 mins)

National Fire Safety Task Force: *Fire Safety in Ireland – Report of the Fire Safety Task Force* (2018)

Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report (2019): <https://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/phase-1-report>