

MINUTES OF SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2015

Present: Councillors C Atkins, J Chatterley, D Franks and J Mingay (Chair)
DCFO G Ranger, SOC G Jeffery, SOC J Roberts, SOC T Rogers,
AC C Ball, and GC I McLaren

15-16/SD/26 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown and Downing.

15-16/SD/27 Election of Vice Chair

Following the recent election of Councillor Mingay to the position of Chair from Vice Chair arising from the vacancy created by the resignation of Councillor Castleman from the Fire and Rescue Authority, there was now a need to elect a new Vice Chair of the Policy and Challenge Group.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Franks be elected as Vice Chair of the Policy and Challenge Group for the remainder of the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

15-16/SD/28 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

15-16/SD/29 Communications

The Chair welcomed SOC G Jeffery, the Service's new Head of Community Safety, to the meeting.

He also advised that DCFO Ranger had accepted a position as a patron of the Road Victims Trust.

RESOLVED:

That DCFO Ranger be congratulated for his appointment as a patron of the Road Victims Trust.

15-16/SD/30 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2015 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

15-16/SD/31 Service Delivery Performance Monitoring Report and Programmes to Date

Members received a report on the performance against the Service Delivery Programme, Projects and performance indicators and associated targets for Quarter 2 of 2015/16.

SOC J Roberts gave an update on the RMS project. There had been further delays as a result of network issues. The anticipated go-live date for Essex was now the end of February 2016. This Service would cut-over approximately a month later to ensure that the system was reliable and stable, as once cut-over took place in Bedfordshire it would be difficult to revert back to the old system.

The contingency limit of £300,000 was being approached and it was acknowledged that the delay had created budget pressures as the Service was effectively paying for two systems when it could only utilise one. Work was ongoing to identify the 'hidden' costs resulting from the delay of the project. It was noted that the original cut-over date had been envisaged as the end of 2014.

Significant pressure was being applied to Remsdaq to resolve the outstanding issues by both Bedfordshire and Essex and other Fire and Rescue Services that were awaiting delivery of systems, such as East and West Sussex. This was being applied at both Principal Officer and operational level. The complex legal issues were being examined on behalf of the Service by Essex's procurement and legal teams. This involved the examination of every specification in the tender documentation as well as the contractual financial penalties.

In response to questions, Members were assured that the likelihood that the system would not be delivered was very low. Remsdaq was a large multi-national organisation that had provided a number of systems for Fire and Rescue Services in the past, including the Service's current mobilising system. The final version of the software had been developed and only the network issues remained outstanding.

DCFO Ranger reported that he was attending a meeting later that day with Essex at which a communication to Remsdaq was being discussed.

SOC Roberts added that software and network specialists from the Service were heavily involved in the testing of the RMS and often travelled down to Essex to contribute to the content of the tests and to oversee the testing process.

The current mobilising system was still operational and the Service also had secondary and tertiary backup plans in place so that it would always be able to mobilise.

Members expressed concern over the significant delay and the resultant costs to the Service.

DCFO Ranger provided an update on the Retained Duty System Improvement Project. The project was progressing well and the Service had procured Gartan, a new RDS Availability and Payroll System. The project officer, Martin Statham, was retiring and a new project officer was being appointed to drive the project forward.

He drew Members' attention to the Quarter 2 performance indicators. All indicators had reached or exceeded target levels and he suggested that there were a number of indicators for which more challenging targets would be recommended to the Policy and Challenge Group's target setting meeting in March 2016. These included the targets for PI03 (primary fire injuries), PI07 (number of deliberate building fires), FS05 (non-domestic fires) and FS06 (AFD FA's/ Non Domestic properties per 1,000 non-domestic properties).

An annual 3% reduction was normally proposed; however, for the above mentioned targets a 5-6% may be put forward for consideration.

The view was expressed that targets should be challenging whilst remaining realistic and achievable.

DCFO Ranger advised Members that the figures quoted for FS02 (total number of fire safety audits completed) and FS04 (total number of fire safety audits carried out on high risk premises) were incorrect and that the corrected figures would be circulated to Members of the Policy and Challenge Group later in the week.

SOC G Jeffery assured Members that the indicators had still exceeded target levels and that the quality assurance process for the data would be revisited to ensure that Members were not provided with inaccurate data again.

In response to a question, DCFO Ranger emphasised that the high level of performance was underpinned by the significant amount of preventative work that was undertaken by the Service.

In response to a further question, DCFO Ranger confirmed that the Service responded to all calls relating to road traffic collisions (RTCs) and that no assessment occurred prior to mobilisation as Fire and Rescue Services had a statutory responsibility to respond under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Appliances could be called back if subsequent information was received that attendance of the Service was not necessary. He advised that on most occasions, the intervention of the Fire and Rescue Service was required, either to release people from vehicles or to make vehicles safe.

It was noted that Members would receive information on the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions when it was available. This indicator was presented to Members for information only.

RESOLVED:

1. That progress made on the Service Delivery Programmes be acknowledged.
2. That Members' extreme concerns about the delays in the delivery of the Replacement Mobilising System by Remsdaq be recorded.
3. That Members' expectations that Remsdaq deliver to the project specifications on budget and that the Authority receive recompense for additional costs caused by the delay be recorded.
4. That all Fire Authority Members be sent the updated performance information for FS02 (total number of fire safety audits completed) and FS04 (total number of fire safety audits carried out on high risk premises) by email.

15-16/SD/32 Operational Decision Making Procedures - Exception Report

GC C Ball advised that there were no incidents to report.

15-16/SD/33 Amey/OSCAR Road Safety Programme

SOC G Jeffery introduced his report on Amey's OSCAR ('Our Safety Car') project used to promote road safety to young drivers in Central Bedfordshire. Amey charged £250 per day for the use of OSCAR outside of the Central Bedfordshire area.

Members were asked whether they wished to continue the current arrangement, whereby the initiative was supported through the Casualty Reduction Partnership and the Service's Prevention Team utilised OSCAR at events in the Central Bedfordshire area, whether the use

of OSCAR should be considered more widely across other areas of the Service or if the Service should await the findings of the project evaluation before making a decision on the future use of OSCAR.

In response to a question, SOC Jeffery reported that it was unlikely that the project evaluation would be completed during the first six months of 2016.

A Member commented that OSCAR was a valuable resource when targeted at particular groups.

It was noted that Amey's highways maintenance contract with Central Bedfordshire Council was coming to an end in March 2016 and it was not known if OSCAR would be available for local use after that time.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be acknowledged.
2. That the use of OSCAR be considered across other areas of the Service and that the Service pay any associated costs.
3. That Officers make enquiries to determine if OSCAR will still be available for use in Bedfordshire following the cessation of Central Bedfordshire's highways maintenance contract with Amey at the end of March 2016.

15-16/SD/34 Corporate Risk Register

SOC T Rogers introduced the review of the Corporate Risk Register in relation to Service Delivery. There were no updates to individual risks in the Register.

He provided the following update to CRR02: if we cannot recruit or retain adequate numbers of part time fire fighters, particularly in relation to day cover, then we will not be able to fully crew our fire appliances and thus have a detrimental impact on our service delivery due to the unavailability of our fire appliances: the Service had made a successful bid for Government funding for the review and improvement of the Retained Duty System (RDS) arrangements. The review had commenced and the initial phase had now been completed. As reported earlier in the meeting, a new RDS availability and payroll system had been procured. A recent recruitment campaign had resulted in the employment of 10 new RDS firefighters.

RESOLVED:

That the review by the Service of the Corporate Risk Register in relation to Service Delivery be approved.

15-16/SD/35 Review of Fire Authority's Effectiveness

Members were given hard copies of the questionnaire to complete at the conclusion of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the effectiveness of the Group be considered.
2. That the results of the questionnaires completed by Members be fed into the facilitated meeting to be held on 27 January 2016 to review the Fire Authority's effectiveness in 2015/16.

15-16/SD/36 Work Programme 2015/16

The Group received its updated Work Programme for 2015/16.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Policy and Challenge Group was its annual target-setting meeting.

The Chair thanked SOC J Roberts, who was retiring at the end of December 2015, for his 30 years' service and his help to Members of the Policy and Challenge Group.

RESOLVED:

1. That the work programme for 2015/16 and the 'cyclical' agenda items for each meeting in 2015/16 be acknowledged.
2. That the Policy and Challenge Group's thanks to SOC J Roberts for his 30 years' service and their wishes for him to have a long and happy retirement be recorded.

The meeting ended at 11.15 am