

**MINUTES OF SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP
MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2016**

Present: Councillors C Atkins, J Chatterley, P Downing, P Duckett, D Franks,
J Mingay (Chair) and M Riaz

DCFO G Ranger, SOC I Evans, SOC G Jeffery, SOC A Peckham and
AC C Ball

16-17/SD/22 Apologies

There were no apologies.

16-17/SD/23 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

16-17/SD/24 Communications

The Chair referred to the email sent to Members advising them that the Replacement Mobilising System had gone live.

16-17/SD/25 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2016 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

16-17/SD/26 Service Delivery Performance Monitoring Report Q2 and Programmes to Date

DCFO Ranger submitted a report on performance for the second quarter of 2016/17 and an update on the progress and status of the Service Delivery Programme and projects to date.

The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) was rated as amber as there had been a national delay.

In relation to the Replacement Mobilising System (RMS), AC Ball reported that the Incident Command and Control System (ICCS) had gone live on 24 November 2016, with the 4i mobilising system going live on 29 November 2016. No major issues had arisen since the cut-over and control staff were pleased with the new system. The full implementation of the new mobilising system would not be completed until March 2017 when all appliances would be fitted with mobile data terminals to allow for dynamic mobilisation.

Members acknowledged the hard work of the Officers to reach the stage where the RMS was operational.

It was suggested that the contractual arrangements could be examined to identify if any lessons could be learnt from this experience.

It was noted that the Service had a long history of successfully managing procurement and contractual processes.

The Retained Duty System Improvement Project (RDSIP) was reporting as green, although there were still issues with RDS availability at some stations and this would be discussed later in the meeting.

DCFO Ranger drew Members' attention to the performance indicators for the second quarter.

PI01(primary fires) had missed its target by 5%. There was generally a spike in incidents during the summer but the situation would continue to be monitored.

DCFO Ranger reported on a fire fatality that had occurred during the previous week in Boswell Court, Bedford.

SOC Evans advised that BPHA properties had been retrofitted with devices to prevent cables from falling from the ceiling during a fire and potentially entrapping firefighters. Falling cables had led to a number of firefighter fatalities in other areas.

These devices were not currently required through the building control process. There had been some lobbying to change the building control regulations to include a requirement for these devices to be fitted and the Head of Community Safety would provide an update on this issue to a future meeting of the Group.

In relation to the incident at Boswell Court, the Group discussed which Service had primacy at the incident site and how the legislation set out how the Service could access a site for a fire investigation following an incident.

PI04 (deliberate (arson) fires) had missed target by 15%. These types of fires were also subject to seasonal trends and a similar spike in arson incidents had occurred in other areas. PI06 (number of deliberate building fires) was being reported as a separate indicator and this had met target and was reporting as green for the quarter.

PI10 (the percentage of occasions global crewing is enabled 5 and 4 (while-time)) had missed target by 4%. This was down to high staff turnover. A number of firefighters had left the Service to become train drivers. It was anticipated that the changes to the pension scheme would have an adverse effect on retention rates. The number of firefighters leaving the Service in the last two years was twice that of the five year average. It was predicted that this would increase and that over the next ten years, approximately 30% of wholetime firefighters would leave the Service.

The Service currently had a waiting list for transfers-in from other areas and had recently concluded a recruitment campaign. The Service had a large number of applicants for every vacancy and a very robust selection process.

DCFO Ranger highlighted the positive performance against PI05 (accidental dwelling fires) in the context of the new stretching targets that had been set for the current performance year.

PI11 (the percentage of occasions when our response time for critical fire incidents were met against agreed response standards) had also missed target by 5%. There was a separate report on this indicator later in the agenda. Members were advised that 22% of the 55 incidents during the first two quarters of the year were due to Kempston attending two pump incidents on the far side of Bedford when the Bedford RDS pump was unavailable.

Performance against PI17 (percentage of calls mobilised in 60 seconds or less) had returned to target levels following the last quarter when it had been reported as amber as a result of a period of staffing deficiency.

In response to a question about the impact of the new mobilising system on this indicator, DCFO Ranger advised that the target would be increased to higher than 60% once the mobilising system was fully operational as it had the ability to identify out of scope calls where an immediate response was not required.

Two of the indicators measuring performance against mobilisation to false alarm calls, PI19 (percentage of False Alarm Malicious (FAM) & Hoax Calls – not attended) and PI20 (number of calls to False Alarm Good Intent (FAGI) – mobilised to) were reporting as red for the quarter. The reasons for the increase were being investigated. It was not always possible to identify these calls through call challenge. Members were reminded that PI19 was a new measure that had only been introduced at the beginning of 2016/17.

SOC Jeffery reported on PI26 (total number of fire safety audits carried out on very high risk and high risk premises). He explained that the audit programme was spread across the calendar year and that the indicator would be reporting green at year-end.

Performance against PI24 (the percentage of building regulation consultations completed within the prescribed timescale) had been affected by the poor quality of some of the plans received as well as software incompatibility issues.

The view was expressed that the time should only be recorded from the day that a good quality plan was submitted, as was the practice adopted by some local authorities.

PI28 (AFD AFAs in non-domestic properties) continued to miss target. DCFO Ranger reported that performance would not improve against this target until the new Automatic Fire Alarm mobilisation procedure that had been agreed by the Fire and Rescue Authority at its last meeting had been introduced after all affected parties were written to advising them of the changes in mobilisation. It was anticipated that the implementation date would be in March 2017.

RESOLVED:

1. That the hard work undertaken by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and his team to ensure delivery of the replacement mobilising system be acknowledged.
2. That the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group be recommended to receive a report on the contractual arrangements for the delivery of the RMS to identify if there are any lessons that could be learnt to apply to future large procurement projects.
3. That the progress made on the Service Delivery Programmes and Performance be acknowledged.

16-17/SD/27 Attendance Standards

SOC Evans introduced his report on investigations into performance against attendance standards following a Member query about the apparent significant decrease in performance from the five year average of 96% to a 2015/16 year-end figure of 78%. Current performance against this indicator was 75%.

This had been investigated and it had been identified that human error had resulted in the incorrect reporting of the five year average as 96%, when the five year average was 78%.

SOC Evans explained that there were a number of factors which impacted on attendance standards, including the availability of RDS staff. As reported earlier in the meeting, 22% of the 55 incidents that had not met the attendance standards during the first two quarters of 2016/17 were due to Kempston having to provide two pumps to incidents on the far side of Bedford when Bedford's RDS pump was not available.

SOC Evans advised that three new RDS firefighters had been recruited to work out of Bedford Fire Station. However, they did not yet have all the competencies required to crew an appliance at this stage.

The development of RDS firefighters was a lengthy process and this was one of the reasons why consideration was not given to recruiting from transient populations, such as university students.

There was very limited availability between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday and employers were more reluctant to release employees for on call duties.

Given the particular problems of recruiting on call firefighters at Bedford Fire Station, consideration was being given to extending the catchment area from five minutes to six minutes 'turn in' time. The increase in the number of people who could be recruited from a larger area would have to be balanced against the increase in attendance time that would result.

The full implementation of the new mobilising system should help to improve response times as all appliances would be fitted with mobile data terminals and the system would be able to identify which appliances would be able to attend an incident more quickly.

In response to a question, DCFO Ranger reported that traffic holding up the progress of emergency vehicles during peak times had never been raised as issue as vehicles on blue lights were able to make progress using the exemptions which applied to them.

RESOLVED:

That the report be acknowledged.

16-17/SD/28 Operational Decision Making Procedures - Exception Report

There were no exceptions to report.

16-17/SD/29 Customer Satisfaction Report

SOC Jeffery introduced the customer satisfaction results for the second quarter of 2016/17 (1 July - 30 September 2016). 99% of respondents across all survey areas were either very or fairly satisfied with the overall service provided.

SOC Jeffery highlighted that the number of incidents attended continued to decrease, although surveys relating to the support for the ambulance service to gain entry to premises were beginning to increase. A major source of Home Fire Safety Checks was referral from medical or social work professionals.

The report contained a selection of compliments received. It was noted that two complaints had been received during the quarter. Both had been resolved although one was subject to further internal investigations.

RESOLVED:

That the report and the continuing good levels of customer satisfaction be acknowledged.

16-17/SD/30 Corporate Risk Register

SOC Evans submitted the update on the review of the Corporate Risk Register in relation to Service Delivery. There had been no changes to individual risk ratings and he provided the Group with the following updates:

CRR44 (if the Service does not have a reliable accurate system for continuously monitoring and updating the availability and skills of Retained Duty System (RDS) operational personnel and RDS appliances then there could be delays in mobilising the nearest available appliance to emergency incidents. This could significantly impact upon the effectiveness and mobilising of our emergency response, increase risks to firefighters and the community, reduce our ability to monitor performance, undermine RDS employees confidence in the Service and could result in negative media coverage): had been updated as the risks had decreased significantly following the introduction of the Gartan RDS availability system. The effectiveness of this system continued to be monitored. One of the next steps to further reduce the risk was the integration of the Gartan system with the new mobilising system.

CRR46 (due to a range of factors which deplete the number of staff available to crew fire appliances the cost of using of pre-arranged overtime to cover wholtime crewing has become excessive and crewing arrangements lack resilience): had been added as a new risk as the levels of voluntary overtime to maintain crewing levels had become financially unsustainable. New measures would be introduced to address this issue following consultation with representative bodies.

RESOLVED:

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

16-17/SD/31 Review Of Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group Effectiveness

The Policy and Challenge Group considered the following overarching questions:

- I. Does the Group consider they have been effective and discharged their responsibility in regard to the Group's terms of reference?
- II. Considering the Group's terms of reference are there any areas that have not been considered and should be addressed?
- III. Does the Group consider any training and development would assist them with the areas of work of the Group?

Members noted the difficulty of self-assessment, but agreed that meetings of the Group were informative and useful.

The Group provided a considerable level of challenge to the Officers and an example of this was the questioning of the performance figures relating to the attendance standards that resulted in an error being identified.

The performance targets that had been set by Members for 2016/17 were also considered stretching for the Service.

It was acknowledged that there may be areas within the Group's terms of reference, such as the work of the Fire Special Operations Team, which could be placed under greater scrutiny.

The Service was seen by Members as very effective and professional.

There were no requests for further training or development.

RESOLVED:

That the discussion of the Group's effectiveness as set out in this Minute be fed into the facilitated meeting to be held on 17 January 2017 to review the Fire Authority's effectiveness in 2016/17.

16-17/SD/32 Work Programme 2016/17

The Group received its updated work programme for 2016/17.

The Chair reminded Members that the Christingle Christmas Celebration would take place on the evening of 15 December 2016 at Woburn Parish Church and that all Members of the Authority were invited to attend.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation from Station Commander Robertson on Police and Ambulance Collaboration be deferred to the next meeting of the Policy and Challenge Group.

16-17/SD/33 Police and Ambulance Collaboration

DCFO Ranger reported that the Police would be moving into Ampthill Fire Station in the middle of December. This would be one of the Police's community hubs and was the first of a number of fire stations that had been selected for this purpose as part of a wider project looking at how the two services could share their estates.

A Memorandum of Understanding had been signed with the Police in relation to the Service providing assistance for vulnerable persons searches.

A further meeting of the Collaboration Working Group was being held towards the end of the month and these discussions would be reflected in the presentation to be received by Members at the Policy and Challenge Group's next meeting.

SOC Evans provided an update on the co-responding trial. The local trial was part of a wider trial in the Eastern region as well as a larger national trial. The local trial commenced on 21 June 2016 from Leighton Buzzard Fire Station, with crews responding to calls of cardiac arrest within a five mile radius of the station. Crews from Biggleswade Fire Station had also been taking part in the trial from July 2016.

There had been 42 calls to date, of which the Service had attended 28. A number had been stood down on route. The fire crews had reached the scene of the incident first on 10 occasions, although it was noted that the pilot was not about reducing the attendance time but about improving patient care.

Fire personnel had assisted approximately 14 times, 4 of these being for the return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC).

Unfortunately the fire crews had had to attend a number of incidents where intervention had not succeeded and there had been a fatality.

It was acknowledged that, although it was a very small number of incidents, attendances at cardiac arrests could be very distressing and the Service was reviewing its debrief and support arrangements for the firefighters taking part in the pilot.

A national evaluation of co-responding would also take place.

RESOLVED:

That the update on collaborative working with the Police and Ambulance Service be received.

The meeting ended at 12.05 pm