

MINUTES OF SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2017

Present: Councillors C Atkins, D Franks, T Khan and J Mingay (Chair)
ACFO I Evans, AC C Ball, SOC A Peckham and AC D Cook

17-18/SD/26 Apologies

26.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Chatterley, P Downing, P Duckett and D McVicar.

17-18/SD/27 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

27.1 There were no declarations of interest.

17-18/SD/28 Communications

28.1 There were no communications.

17-18/SD/29 Minutes

- 29.1 SOC Ball gave an update on the “developer pays” scheme in relation to fire hydrants in new developments. The Service has had a number of meetings with the three unitary authorities in Bedfordshire requesting a formal agreement whereby the provision of fire hydrants was included as a condition on the planning permission for new developments. This would ensure that the developer was funding the provision rather than it being funded by public funds through the Fire and Rescue Service budget.
- 29.2 The annual cost of the provision of the fire hydrants on new developments was approximately £240,000.
- 29.3 The Service applies the principles of a “developer pays” scheme without a formal agreement. The provision of fire hydrants is being put forward by the Service as a condition to be added through the planning process. This generates additional work for the Service; however, the financial benefit of this to the Service and Council Tax payers outweighs the resource currently being used to check and comment on planning applications being submitted to the three unitary authorities.
- 29.4 In response to a question, SOC Ball advised that a formal agreement has not been reached with the three authorities, even though in principle, each authority is supportive of the scheme.
- 29.5 The Chair volunteered to write a letter to the Chief Executives of the three unitary authorities requesting their commitment to a formal agreement. This could be hand delivered to each Chief Executive by a Fire Authority Member from the same authority to ensure receipt.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2017 be confirmed and signed as a true record.
2. That a letter be drafted for the Chair of the Authority to sign requesting the commitment of the Chief Executives of the three unitary authorities in Bedfordshire to formally agree a “developer pays” scheme in relation to the provision of fire hydrants in new developments.

17-18/SD/30 Service Delivery Performance Monitoring Report Q2 and Programmes to Date

- 30.1 The Group received the performance report for the second quarter of 2017/18 and an update on the progress and status of the Service Delivery projects.
- 30.2 ACFO Evans advised that the co-responding project had been put on hold pending the outcome of national negotiations on the broadening of the role of the fire fighter and remuneration for these responsibilities. He reiterated that this was not a local issue.
- 30.3 SOC A Peckham provided an update on Collaborative Working Projects. An announcement was due on 7 December 2017 in relation to the bid for One Public Estate funding for a scoping study to investigate the potential for a joint Fire and Rescue and Police Headquarters.
- 30.4 Co-location has been successfully implemented at a number of the Service’s stations with evaluation now being undertaken.
- 30.5 The tender process for an aerial drone to be funded in conjunction with Bedfordshire Police has commenced and should conclude in February 2018.
- 30.6 STORM access for Control staff has been arranged to allow them access to the Police incident system. Training of the Watches is ongoing to support this.
- 30.7 In relation to the forced entry pilot, the Service has been called out to over 500 incidents. An evaluation is currently in process.
- 30.8 Members noted the progress made in relation to the collaborative working schemes and thanked Officers for driving this forward.
- 30.9 SOC Ball updated the Group on the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). He reported that the Service continued to work with its regional partners to meet any deadlines set.
- 30.10 SOC Ball also reported that the 4i Mobilising System. Data mobilising is being rolled out to all stations and a project closure report is being drafted.
- 30.11 ACFO Evans advised that work continued to progress on the Retained Duty System Improvement Project. 15 new on-call recruits had recently attended a Retained Foundation Training Course. 10 are attending Breathing Apparatus Training after which time they would have a significant positive impact on retained availability.
- 30.12 The specification process for the replacement Wholetime Duty Management System is progressing towards procurement.
- 30.13 ACFO Evans then reported on the performance indicators, a number of which had not achieved target levels.

- 30.14 PI01 (primary fires) had missed its target by 16%. Whilst this was of significant concern, it was noted that the performance against this indicator had improved from missing its target by 32% in the first quarter. The majority of fires attended involved dwellings and road vehicles. The increase in vehicle fires was part of an increasing trend in deliberate fires due to criminal activity.
- 30.15 PI02 (primary fire fatalities) had missed its target as there had been three fire fatalities in the year to date. Coroner's inquests had not been completed. Two of the deaths appeared to be suicides with the third a late call of fire.
- 30.16 PI03 (primary fire injuries) had missed its target as there had been sixteen fire injuries in the reporting year to date. Thirteen of these had been reported during quarter 1, with an additional three occurring in quarter 2.
- 30.17 PI04 (deliberate (arson) fires) had missed its target by 56%. Performance against this indicator had been adversely affected by the type of fires reported under PI01. There was also a seasonal impact of outdoor fires during the first two quarters of the reporting year.
- 30.18 It was noted that there had been a national increase in deliberate fires.
- 30.19 ACFO Evans assured Members that the Service worked closely with Bedfordshire Police in relation to incidents of arson and anti-social behaviour.
- 30.20 Given the difference in the definition of arson (which must relate to property and involve intent or recklessness) and deliberate fires, it was recognised that the number of deliberate fires recorded by the Service would always be higher than the number of arson incidents recorded by the Police.
- 30.21 PI05 (accidental dwelling fires) had narrowly missed its target by 2%. This was an improvement from the first quarter, when the target had been missed by 6%. Trends and Exeter data were analysed to inform the Service's prevention work.
- 30.22 PI11 (percentage of occasions when our response times for critical fire incidents were met) had missed its target by 12%. ACFO advised that this was a stretching target that the Service had not achieved for a number of years. The target may benefit from being revisited at the target setting meeting. A number of factors contributed to adverse performance against the indicator, mainly the increase in traffic density, particularly in the urban areas, and on-call availability.
- 30.23 The final indicator that had missed its target was PI26 (percentage of fire safety audits carried out on high and very high risk premises). The audits were undertaken in accordance with an annual programme and the Group was assured that 100% of the premises would be audited by the end of the performance year. ACFO Evans advised that the audit programme had been reprioritised following the fire at Grenfell Tower so that audits of all high rise residential premises had been undertaken as a matter of priority.
- 30.24 ACFO Evans also highlighted a number of areas of high performance, including PI28 (automatic fire detector false alarms in non-domestic properties) which had exceeded its target by 17%. The introduction of a new mobilisation policy had resulted in a decrease in the number of mobilisations by 44% compared to the same period the previous year. This reduction in mobilisation to occupied commercial premises during

business hours reduces disruption to risk management activity such as prevention and protection duties and training. It also reduces road risk by fewer blue light responses.

30.25 In response to a query from the Chair as to why the water deaths and injuries identified in the information bulletin were not included in the information provided in the performance report, ACFO Evans advised that he would investigate this matter and report to the Group's next meeting.

30.26 High performance levels had also been recorded in relation to non-domestic fires, crewing percentages and HOAX calls.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress made on the Service Delivery Programme and Performance be acknowledged.
2. That in addition to the challenges discussed during the discussion on the performance indicators, the good performance also be recognised.

17-18/SD/31 Audit and Governance Action Plan Monitoring Report

31.1 ACFO Evans submitted the report on progress made to date against current action plans arising from internal and external audit reports. He confirmed that there were no outstanding actions.

31.2 The Group was advised that an internal audit of Collaboration had recently been completed and the audit report would be submitted to its next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That progress made against current action plans be acknowledged.

17-18/SD/32 Arson State of the Nation Report

32.1 ACFO Evans introduced an overview of the State of the Nation 2017 report produced by the Arson Prevention Forum.

32.2 The report identified a national increase in incidents of arson in 2016/17. There had been an overall 11% increase in deliberate fires since 2014/15 and an increase of 44% in deliberate road vehicle fires.

32.3 In comparison to the national average, Bedfordshire had experienced an overall rise of 9% in deliberate fires, which was 2% less than the average increase. There had also been a decrease of 26% in deliberate fires involving dwellings, compared to a 3% increase nationally. The increase in deliberate fires involving road vehicles was 10%.

32.4 In relation to the key points raised within the report, ACFO Evans advised that the Service had a strong working relationship with the Police, including information sharing and the co-location of Community Safety Teams.

32.5 The report suggested that there should be a link with the Police and Crime Commissioner Crime Plan and the Community Risk Management Plan where arson was a local risk and ACFO Evans confirmed that the Service and Police were committed to working together on this issue.

- 32.6 In response to comments on the difference in the definition of deliberate and arson fires and the low rate of prosecution for arson, ACFO Evans reported that the Service had recently assisted the Police in securing the prosecutions of two prolific arsonists in Leighton Buzzard.
- 32.7 In response to a question, ACFO Evans advised that partnership working in this area would form part of the inspection, although this would most likely not be carried out at the level of detail that would require a formal 'link' with the Police and Crime Plan if the Service could demonstrate that it was working collaboratively with its partners.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report and the information contained within the document attached to the report be acknowledged.

17-18/SD/33 Customer Satisfaction Report

- 33.1 ACFO Evans presented the results of customer satisfaction surveys conducted from 1 July 2017-30 September 2017. During this period, 100% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the Service. The Service had also achieved an overall 66% response rate.
- 33.2 The feedback received from the visits illustrated that the Service was engaging with and assisting local residents with particular vulnerabilities.
- 33.3 Two complaints had been received during the reporting period, both of which had been resolved. The Service also received 13 compliments during the reporting period.
- 33.4 Members noted that the most common comment was that the Service staff visiting them were polite, friendly, helpful and professional.

RESOLVED:

That the continuing high levels of customer satisfaction, and the compliments received on the professionalism and politeness of staff, be acknowledged.

17-18/SD/34 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

- 34.1 ACFO Evans reported that, following the presentation of a draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to this Group in June, the need for a corporate project to review the Service's response arrangements and risk profiling had been identified. This would also allow the Service to consider how it may be able to utilise new technology. This project may result in proposals to make response arrangements more efficient and effective.
- 34.2 In light of this ACFO Evans proposed to update the current draft of the CRMP, to make reference to the project. It was expected that the revised draft CRMP would be submitted to the Authority by the end of the financial year. ACFO Evans highlighted that there would be a need for community consultation on the CRMP.

RESOLVED:

That the Group receive a report on the Community Risk Management Plan at its next meeting.

17-18/SD/35 Mobilising System Project

- 35.1 ACFO Evans provided a verbal update on the 4i mobilising system and advised that the five-year contract period was due to expire in November 2019.
- 35.2 Due to the cost of the upgrade to ensure compliance with the Emergency Services Network, Essex Fire and Rescue Service had indicated that they would not seek to extend the contract and would be retendering the contract.
- 35.3 Whilst Members expressed disappointment at this outcome, as the mobilising system had only just been implemented, it was recognised that this provided the Service with an opportunity to explore other options, including collaboration with other Fire and Rescue Services that were closer to the Service geographically, or Bedfordshire Police.
- 35.4 External consultants would be engaged to assist the Service with an options appraisal. Options would then be presented to the full Authority for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the Mobilising System Project be acknowledged.

17-18/SD/36 Corporate Risk Register

- 36.1 AC Cook presented the review of the Corporate Risk Register. There had been no changes or updates to risks in the Service Delivery Risk Register.

RESOLVED:

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

17-18/SD/37 Update on Strategic Road Safety Partnership

- 37.1 ACFO Evans provided a verbal update on the formation of a Strategic Road Safety Partnership for Bedfordshire. The Partnership had met once and following this meeting Terms of Reference had been drafted. A second meeting would be held shortly.
- 37.2 It was envisaged that resource would be allocated to conduct a strategic assessment of road safety risk to inform strategy.
- 37.3 Councillor Franks advised that Luton Borough Council was currently undertaking a scrutiny review of the setting and enforcement of speed limits. This had uncovered a lack of enforcement of 20 mph speed limits.
- 37.4 ACFO Evans advised that one of the challenges was that the three unitary authorities in Bedfordshire had different approaches and that road safety would benefit from a consistent, agreed approach.
- 37.5 He added that a Tactical Group would be created to consider operational issues and this could be the group that would discuss issues such as the enforcement of speed limits.
- 37.6 The view was expressed that there would be a more local benefit if fees from the fixed penalty notices could be kept for use locally rather than directed to central Government.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update on the Strategic Road Safety Partnership be acknowledged.
2. That a written report on the progress of the Strategic Road Safety Partnership be submitted to the Group's next meeting.

17-18/SD/38 Operational Decision Making Procedures - Exception Report

38.1 There were no exceptions to report.

17-18/SD/39 Review of the Fire Authority's Effectiveness

- 39.1 The Group considered the following questions in reviewing its effectiveness:
- i. Has the Group been effective and discharged its responsibility in regard to its terms of reference?
 - ii. Have there been any areas of their terms of reference which have not been considered and should be addressed?
 - iii. Is there any Training and Development that would assist Members with the areas of the work of the Group?
- 39.2 The Group agreed that it was well supported by Officers and that the Groups' consideration of issues had been wide-ranging, informative and useful for Members.
- 39.3 A comment was made on the frequency of meetings. It was noted that, if the need arose, the Chair would be able to convene an additional meeting of the Group.
- 39.4 It was noted that the record of Member attendance at meetings would be submitted to the Audit and Standards Committee meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Group's discussion of its effectiveness be fed into the facilitated meeting to be held on 18 January 2018 to review the Fire Authority's Effectiveness in 2017/18.

17-18/SD/40 Work Programme 2017/18

- 40.1 The Group received its updated work programme for information. The demonstration of forced entry equipment had been postponed and would now take place following the Group's next meeting.
- 40.2 It was noted that, earlier in the meeting, Members had agreed to receive reports on the Strategic Road Safety Partnership, the Community Risk Management Plan and the Mobilising System.
- 40.3 The Chair wished everyone a very Happy Christmas.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be received.

The meeting ended at 11.57 am