

**For Publication**

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
Service Delivery Policy and Challenge  
Group  
14 September 2017  
Item No. 4**

**MINUTES OF SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP  
MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2017 AT 10.00am**

Present: Councillors C Atkins, J Chatterley, P Downing, P Duckett,  
T Khan, D McVicar and J Mingay (Chair)

DCFO G Ranger, SOC C Ball, SOC I Evans, SOC G Jeffery,  
GC J Clayton and GC D Cook

17-18/SD/001 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Franks.

17-18/SD/002 Election of Vice-Chair 2017-18

**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Downing be elected as Vice-Chair of the Policy and Challenge Group for 2017-18.

17-18/SD/003 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

17-18/SD/004 Communications

**Grenfell Tower Fire**

DCFO Ranger provided an update on the Grenfell Tower Fire. He and SOC G Jeffrey had taken the opportunity to visit the scene when they were in London the previous day attending a course in Regent's Park. There they had spoken to operational staff and gathered valuable information about the construction of the building which would be used internally to review the procedures and inspection programme in place for high-rise blocks in Bedfordshire. This experience would be invaluable in identifying and implementing lessons learnt from the incident locally.

DCFO Ranger added that the message that had been sent to Members regarding the incident would be revised and released to the media and the public at the appropriate time.

SOC G Jeffrey reported that the fire had started in the early hours of the morning and the first fire crew arrived within 6 minutes of the emergency call being received to attend the fire in the 24 story tower block. Over 200

firefighters were on scene at the height of the incident. The latest fatality count was 12 but it was anticipated that this would rise significantly following the completion of a thorough search of the building.

He further advised that it was highly unusual for a building fire to spread from top to bottom as had been the case at Grenfell Tower as high-rise buildings were built to be compartmentalised to contain the spread of fire.

The Service had also adopted a “stay put” policy whereby members of the public were advised to stay within their flats with the doors shut if they were on a floor/compartment that was not affected by the fire. This policy was predicated on the fact that the compartmentalisation of the building was still fully functional.

SOC I Evans highlighted that the “stay put” policy was more likely to keep a greater number of people out of risk of harm. The evacuation of a large number of people, with a range of mobility, was also likely to hamper firefighting operations.

A previous tower block fire in Lakanal House in 2009 had resulted in an inspection of all the high-rise properties in Bedfordshire and a re-inspection of all high-rise premises in Bedfordshire would now be undertaken following the fire at Grenfell Tower.

SOC I Evans assured Members that the Service worked closely with the local authorities and housing associations in the county.

In relation to publicity and reassurance to residents living in high-rise buildings, DCFO Ranger reported that the inspections of the premises would be very visible. It was also likely that the organisations responsible for the management of such premises would be reassuring their residents of the fire safety measures in place.

The Chair requested that a written statement outlining the Service’s response to the Grenfell Tower incident be prepared for the Members responsible for feeding back to the constituent authorities.

In response to a question, SOC I Evans confirmed that operational response arrangements, including access, were regularly reviewed.

The community spirit demonstrated in response to the fire was recognised.

DCFO Ranger reported that following a motorbike accident, a member of the Service was currently being treated in University Hospital, Coventry after sustaining life-changing injuries. It was hoped that he would be transferred to a more local hospital in the near future.

The individual and his family were being supported by the Service.

## **Award from Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce**

DCFO Ranger reported that the Service had been awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce as it had been a member of the Chamber for 20 years.

It was noted that the Service's membership provided a good link with the business community for the Service to spread fire safety messages.

### 17-18/SD/005 Minutes

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2017 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

### 17-18/SD/006 Terms of Reference

The Group received its terms of reference. In recognition of the cessation of the FiReControl project, it was agreed that the reference to that, set out as point 8 of the terms of reference, be removed.

It was suggested that the terms of reference should also be amended to include the monitoring of collaboration projects with the other blue light services.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Fire and Rescue Authority be recommended to approve the following amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group: to remove point 8 (to monitor and review matters arising from the former FirReControl project) and the addition of a point to monitor progress of blue light collaboration projects be included.

### 17-18/SD/007 Service Delivery Performance Monitoring Report (Annual Review) and Programmes to date

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

In relation to the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Project (ESMCP), SOC C Ball advised that an updated project timeline was expected to be released by the end of June 2017.

He also reported that the Replacement Mobilising System (RMS) had recently been awarded the Code of Connection (COCO) by the Home Office. Testing of the mobile data terminals and production system would now be undertaken. Upon the successful completion of these tests, the mobile data terminals would go live.

In response to a question, SOC C Ball reported that the review of the Service Level Agreement with Essex was nearing completion. A number of issues identified by the legal and procurement teams had been considered by Essex and a response was due by 16 June 2017. It was then anticipated that the final document could be signed off.

DCFO Ranger advised that progress was being made against the Retained Duty System Improvement Project (RDSIP).

In presenting the year-end performance report for 2016/17, DCFO Ranger reminded Members that they had set more stretching targets for the performance year.

PI01 (primary fires) had missed its target by 2%, with 23 fires more than the target of 1010. It was noted that this was an improvement on the five-year average.

PI02 (primary fire fatalities) had also missed its target as there had been 4 fatalities during the year. However, it was noted that two of the deaths were caused by situations that were outside the control of the Fire Service and that the number of accidental dwelling fires (measured by PI05) had decreased and was below the target levels. These were the fires in which fatalities were most likely to occur.

PI03 (primary fire injuries) had missed its target by 3. The Service was looking to improve its performance against this indicator.

PI04 (deliberate (arson) fires) had missed its target by 4%. Performance was better than the five-year average but had not recovered from a spike in Quarter 2. The number of deliberate building fires (PI06) had reduced and met its target.

The Service classified fires as either accidental or deliberate.

Councillor Downing, as the Member representative on the Collaboration Working Group, commented on the low “clean-up” rate relating to arson incidents. He expressed the view that collaborative working on arson would be beneficial to both organisations (Fire and Police). Out of the 757 incidents recorded by the Service, the Police had only recorded 207. Out of 27 crimes of arson endangering life, only 5 had been solved.

SOC I Evans advised that not all deliberate fires were reported to the Police. Fires where there was no evidential value and no likelihood of prosecution were not referred to the Police. Six categories of fire were reported to the Police by Fire Control staff. These were: all fatal fires, all fires resulting in serious injury, all deliberate fires involving property (building or vehicles), all deliberate fires resulting in injury, all fires that were hate crime related and all fires that were part of a series or pattern.

The Service had a Memorandum of Understanding with the Police whereby the Police agreed to attend the scene of reported deliberate fire incidents.

Regular meetings with the Police and local authorities to reduce the opportunities for arson were held.

SOC G Jeffrey added that the Service employed two Arson Reduction Officers. Part of their job was to study all the data and identify if there were trends or patterns that could then be reported to the Police or used to target community safety activities.

Deliberate fires were recognised as a considerable strain on the Service's resources and SOC I Evans suggested that a report providing a breakdown of the types of deliberate fires attended by the Service be presented to the next meeting of the Policy and Challenge Group.

PI11 (the percentage of occasions when our response time for critical fire incidents were met against agreed response standards) had missed its target by 5%. This had been affected by the availability of RDS staff and it was hoped that, upon conclusion of the RDSIP project, target performance levels would be achieved.

Configuration issues had resulted in data for PI16 (percentage of calls answered in 7 seconds) not being able to be abstracted for the performance report. It was hoped that this should be resolved by the next meeting.

PI17 (percentage of calls mobilised in 60 seconds or less) had missed its target by 9%. Performance was being investigated and an update would be given to the next meeting of the Policy and Challenge Group.

PI18 (number of FAM/hoax calls mobilised to) and PI19 (percentage of FAM and hoax calls- not attended) had missed their targets. This was about call challenge and ways to improve performance were being investigated.

PI26 (total number of fire safety audits carried out on high and very high risk premises) had missed its target as there were no longer as many high risk premises in the County. This target was being reported as a percentage from the 2017/18 performance year to resolve this issue. The number of audits undertaken would also be provided to Members for information.

PI28 (Automatic Fire Detectors (AFD) False Alarms in non-domestic properties) had missed its target for the year-end, but with the introduction of the new mobilisation procedure would improve performance for the next performance year. Since the introduction of the new policy in April 2017, the Service was attending approximately one third less activations than before.

Information on the number of searches for vulnerable people and forced entries that the Service attended as part of its collaboration work with the Police and Ambulance Service was requested for inclusion in the report.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That progress made on the Service Delivery Programmes and the high level of performance against the indicators be acknowledged.
2. That the Policy and Challenge Group receive a breakdown of the deliberate fires attended by the Service at its next meeting.
3. That the number of searches for vulnerable people and forced entries that the Service attended as part of its collaboration work with the Police and Ambulance Service be included in the performance report as information items.

17-18/SD/008 Audit and Governance Action Plans Monitoring Report

DCFO Ranger reported that all actions in the report had been completed.

**RESOLVED:**

That progress made against current action plans be acknowledged.

17-18/SD/009 Customer Satisfaction Survey Report End of Year Report – 1 April 2016-31 March 2017

SOC G Jeffery presented the year-end results of customer satisfaction surveys conducted from 1 April 2016-31 March 2017. During this period, the Service received a 99.6% satisfaction rate from survey respondents.

Improvements had been made throughout the year to improve the quality of the information received from the surveys.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the high levels of customer satisfaction achieved throughout the year be acknowledged and that it be noted that changes in the method of gathering data have been trialled during 2016/17 and will be implemented in 2017/18.
2. That changes in the way customer satisfaction surveys will be conducted in 2017/18 following the change from Home Fire Safety Checks to Safe and Well Visits be noted.

17-18/SD/010 Operational Decision Making Procedures – Exception Report

For the benefit of the new Members of the Policy and Challenge Group, SOC I Evans advised that the Service had a policy to allow Incident Commanders to operate outside Standard Operating Procedures in exceptional circumstances.

There were no exceptions to report.

### 17-18/SD/011 Corporate Risk Register

GC D Cook presented the review of the Corporate Risk Register. There had been no changes to risks in the Service Delivery Risk Register.

There had been an update to CRR22 (*if we have inadequate or incomplete operational pre planning policies, procedures or information available to us then we can potentially risk injury or even death to our firefighters and staff*). The National Operational Guidance programme was due to be completed in August 2017 to ensure consistency in the application of firefighting standards across all Fire and Rescue Services.

In response to a question, Members were advised that there may be additional risks added to the register arising from the Grenfell Towers incident.

#### **RESOLVED:**

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

### 17-18/SD/012 Draft Community Risk Management Plan

SOC G Jeffery submitted the first draft of the 2017-2021 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The CRMP was refreshed the previous year; however, it was decided that, in order to reflect the significant increase in collaboration and in response to the reform agenda, a complete revision of the CRMP was required to communicate these improvements to partners and the public. As this was the first draft, there were still minor amendments to be made. The final draft would be resubmitted to the Policy and Challenge Group prior to its publication.

In response to comments about the amount of information contained within the CRMP, SOC G Jeffery advised that a summary leaflet would be produced for wider publication with the full version available for partners, in electronic form and on the Service website.

Both social and traditional media would be used to publicise the CRMP at its publication.

It was suggested that the Council Tax figure should be broken down to its weekly amount to highlight the cost effectiveness of the Service.

The inclusion of deliberate fires in the chart on the number of fires 2009/10-2015/16 was also requested.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the progress made on developing the new Community Risk Management Plan for 2017-2021 be acknowledged.
2. That a Council Tax figure broken down into tax per week and the number of deliberate fires in the number of fires in 2009/10-2015/16 be included in the next draft of the Community Risk Management Plan.

### 17-18/SD/013 Work Programme

DCFO Ranger suggested that Members visit the Specialist Rescue Unit following the Policy and Challenge Group's next meeting.

An update on the re-inspection of high-rise residential tower blocks in Bedfordshire was requested for submission to the Policy and Challenge Group's next meeting.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Work Programme be received.
2. That a tour of the Specialist Rescue Unit be arranged to follow the next meeting of the Policy and Challenge Group.
3. That an update on the re-inspection of high-rise residential tower blocks in Bedfordshire be submitted to the next meeting of the Policy and Challenge Group.

The meeting finished at 11.28am.