

**MINUTES OF SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP
MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2017**

Present: Councillors C Atkins, J Chatterley, P Duckett, D Franks (Vice-Chair) and J Mingay (Chair)

ACFO I Evans, SOC C Ball, SOC G Jeffery, SOC A Peckham and AC D Cook

16-17/SD/14 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Downing, T Khan and D McVicar.

16-17/SD/15 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

16-17/SD/16 Communications

There were no communications.

16-17/SD/17 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2017 be confirmed and signed as a true record, subject to 'clean-up' being amended to 'clear-up' in the second line of the sixth paragraph on page 4.

16-17/SD/18 Service Delivery Performance Monitoring Report Q1 and Programmes to Date

The Group received the performance report for the first quarter of 2017/18 and an update on the progress and status of the Service Delivery projects.

SOC G Jeffery reported on the Co-Responding project, which was RAG rated as Green as was part of a national trial. The project remained live and involved crews from Biggleswade and Leighton Buzzard Fire Stations. Of the 91 calls received to date, the Service had attended 66. On 38 of these occasions, the Service had assisted the Ambulance Service in providing medical treatment and on 6 occasions assisted in achieving the return of spontaneous circulation.

ACFO I Evans advised that it was likely that the co-responding trial would cease from 18 September 2017 pending the outcome of national negotiations between the NJC and the Fire Brigades Union.

SOC C Ball provided an update on the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). This was RAG rated as Amber as there continued to be ongoing delays at national level. Members were reassured that, locally, all the required actions had been

completed to date. Work on the Programme Definition document with Essex Fire and Rescue Service had been deferred as a result of the national slippages that had occurred.

SOC C Ball reported that the Replacement Mobilising System was now reporting as Green and the data mobilising functionality had gone live and was in the process of being rolled out across the fleet. The Service had been able to confirm with the Home Office that all of the resilience benefits it had specified had been completed with the exception of “automatic fail over”. It was hoped to formally close down the project in the performance report at the Group’s next meeting.

In response to a question, SOC C Ball advised that “automatic fail over” referred to the resilience arrangements that automatically switched the mobilising system to Essex, and vice versa, in the event of a failure. This currently was completed manually as the supplier of the mobilising system had been unable to provide this functionality at the time. The Sussex system which was going live imminently would include “automatic fail over” and the Service would be able to have an upgrade to include this functionality once it was satisfied that it had been properly tested.

SOC G Jeffrey updated the Group on progress against the Retained Duty System Improvement Project. This project remained RAG rated as Green and a significant amount of progress had been made. A recommendation from the Working Group had resulted in the Service’s Corporate Management Team agreeing to allow the recruitment of applicants who could respond to an RDS station within 6 minutes (rather than 5 minutes) as this would increase the potential applicant pool by 25% on average.

An RDS standby scheme had also recently been introduced which should improve appliance availability by the flexible deployment of RDS firefighters to provide cover at other RDS stations.

ACFO I Evans added that the improvements to RDS recruitment processes could result in up to 20 new recruits attending the next course scheduled for this autumn. This would be double the number previously achieved.

Members discussed the implications of increasing the turn-out time to RDS stations and the impact that this could have on response times. It was acknowledged that this had to be balanced against the likelihood of an RDS appliance being unavailable due to insufficient crewing.

A new project relating to the procurement and implementation of a Wholetime Duty Management System had been added to the report. It was currently reporting as Green.

ACFO I Evans then presented the performance report for the first quarter of 2017/18.

There had been a significant increase in the number of primary fires (PI01); with the target being missed by 31% for the reporting period. There had been an increase in a range of fire types including accidental dwelling fires and fires involving vehicles, garages, sheds and woodland. The increasing trend in vehicle fires related to deliberate fires due to criminal activity.

The Group was advised that there was an increasing trend of primary fires nationally and that this was not just a local issue. The Service continued to monitor this situation and work in partnership with other agencies, such as the Police, to address this increase.

In relation to primary fire fatalities (PI02) and primary fire injuries (PI03), a Member requested that the terminology be changed from “aim to achieve fewer than * annual fatalities/injuries” to “aim to have fewer than * annual fatalities/injuries.”

PI02 and PI03 had also missed their targets with 2 fatalities and 12 injuries reported during the first quarter. The coroner’s inquests for the fatalities had not yet concluded; however, it was unlikely in either case that Service could have prevented those fatalities.

The Service aimed through its preventative and protection work to prevent all fire fatalities in the community. ACFO Evans highlighted the significant reductions in fire deaths nationally since their peak in the 1980s. Actions taken by fire and rescue services contribute to reducing fire deaths and nearly all fire and rescue services in the country set targets for reducing fire fatalities.

None of the 12 fire related injuries had received inpatient hospital treatment.

In response to a question, ACFO I Evans confirmed that firefighter injuries are not included in the performance indicator. Injuries to firefighters are reported under the health and safety accident reporting system and this information is reported to the Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group.

There had been an increase in accidental dwelling fires (PI05) and the indicator was reporting as Amber as the target had been missed by 6%. There had been no clearly identifiable trends although there had been small increases in fires resulting from the careless handling of ignition sources and those caused by people over the age of 65.

Members were advised that the safe and well visits and Home Fire Safety Checks were targeted at vulnerable groups including those aged over 65.

Reference was made to a campaign being led by the London Fire Brigade that provided information on white goods that had been recalled. Members were advised that there had not been an upward trend in fires due to faulty white goods locally.

ACFO I Evans highlighted the good performance against PI06 (the number of deliberate building fires) and PI10 (the percentage of occasions global crewing enabled 9 riders on two pump responses (wholetime)). Performance against PI10 had improved from 83% for the first quarter in 2016/17 to 99% for the same period in 2017/18 as a result of recruitment and improvements to crewing arrangements.

PI11 (the percentage of occasions when our response times for critical fire incidents were met) had missed its target by 6% and was reporting as Amber. Approximately half of the incidents where response times were missed were in the large urban areas of Bedford, Dunstable and Luton. Work to increase availability of RDS appliances and implementation of ‘dynamic mobilising’ may lead to improved performance against this indicator.

In response to questions, ACFO I Evans reported that the new mobilising system could be configured to take into account traffic conditions and road works, as well as other issues that may impact on travel time to an incident. This would then allow the system to identify the appliance with the fastest response to the incident.

Information on road works is provided to both Control staff and the operational station-based staff.

Performance information in relation to PI16 (the percentage of 999 calls answered in 7 seconds) and PI17 (the percentage of 999 calls mobilised to in 60 seconds or less) was not available as there was an ongoing investigation into how these indicators had been affected by the replacement of the mobilising system.

PI24 (the percentage of Building Regulation consultations completed within the prescribed timescales) was also reporting as Amber. It had only missed its target by 1%. There were continuing difficulties with submissions from Approved Inspectors and the provision of further education to inform inspectors of the Service's requirements is ongoing. The Service is not able to "stop the clock" in these cases.

The target could be revised at the Group's annual target-setting meeting if Members felt this was necessary.

Councillor Franks referred to an application that had been considered by the Development Control Committee and the detailed hydrant arrangements requested by the Service and stated that he would send the ACFO the application for comment as Luton Borough Council Officers had not been able to provide clarification at the meeting as to whether these requirements were covered by the standard building regulations as they did not appear to be detailed in the planning conditions.

PI26 (the percentage of fire safety audits carried out on high and very high risk premises) was currently reporting as red as the audits were carried out in accordance with an annual programme. As such, the indicator should be reporting as Green by the end of the reporting year. Audits of high-rise premises in the County had been carried out as a high priority following the Grenfell Tower incident.

Following the introduction of a new Automatic Fire Detector (AFD) call handling and mobilisation procedure, performance against PI28 (the rate of automatic fire detector false alarms in non-domestic properties (per 1,000 non-domestic properties) and PI28b (the number of automatic fire detector false alarms in non-domestic properties) had improved significantly and performance against the indicators was 26% better than target.

The Service mobilised to 261 non-domestic AFD incidents during the first quarter of 2016/17 and this had decreased to 144 incidents for the same period in 2017/18. This freed up resources to attend other incidents or to carry out prevention and protection work.

As Members requested at the last meeting of the Group, information on the working streams of missing persons, effecting entry and co-responding incidents was now included in Appendix B of the report for information.

ACO I Evans reported that since 1 July 2017, the Service had responded to 396 of effecting entry incidents at the request of the ambulance service. Of these, in 246 cases, the Service had effected entry. No damage had been made to the property on 147 occasions. This was having a significant positive impact on the community.

It was intended that a report would be submitted to Members following the formal evaluation of the pilot.

It was noted that there was a general upward trend in the number of road traffic collisions (RTCs) attended by the Service. Members expressed their opinions on possible reasons for this such as poor driving standards, lack of enforcement of speed limits and improved construction of cars leading to higher survival rates in the event of an accident.

ACO I Evans advised that a new Strategic Road Safety Partnership Board was being established. The first meeting of this group had been arranged and the terms of reference and membership would be discussed at this meeting. Updates would be provided to this Group.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made on the Service Delivery Programme and Performance be acknowledged.

16-17/SD/19 Audit and Governance Action Plan Monitoring

ACFO I Evans reported that all the actions in the report had been completed.

RESOLVED:

That progress made against current action plans be acknowledged.

16-17/SD/20 Customer Satisfaction Report Q1

SOC G Jeffery presented the results of customer satisfaction surveys conducted from 1 April 2017-30 June 2017. During this period, the Service received a 100% satisfaction rate from survey respondents. Eleven compliments and no complaints had been received during the reporting period.

Surveys relating to safe and well visits were now collected at the end of the visit to improve the quality of the information received.

Members noted the variety of topics discussed during safe and well visits and the number of respondents who stated that the visit improved their knowledge about the maintenance of smoke/deaf alarms.

In response to a question, SOC G Jeffery advised that the Service used 'Exeter' data to identify vulnerable individuals and aimed to visit the top 1000 individuals for a safe and well visit within one year.

RESOLVED:

That the continuing high levels of customer satisfaction be acknowledged.

16-17/SD/21 Re-Inspection of High Rise Residential Tower Blocks in Bedfordshire

SOC G Jeffery provided an update on the re-inspection of high rise residential tower blocks in Bedfordshire following the fire at Grenfell Tower. A significant amount of work had been undertaken nationally and locally following the incident.

The initial work undertaken had confirmed that there were no residential high rise blocks in the County with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding. Full joint safety audits with the responsible person of all occupied residential tower blocks had been undertaken and the Service continued to work closely with these responsible persons, which included housing associations, local authorities and private landlords.

SOC G Jeffery confirmed that there were no significant safety concerns that had arisen out of the joint safety audits and that the Service had good working relationships with the responsible persons in the County.

ACFO I Evans reported that, as a result of the issues that had arisen at Grenfell around the recovery phase and the response of the local authority, the Local Resilience Forum would be undertaking work to ensure that the recovery arrangements in Bedfordshire are resilient.

In relation to the stay put policy, the Group was advised that the evacuation policy was a decision for the responsible person. Where appropriately applied the Service supported a stay put policy as it was the safest approach in the majority of circumstances and there were significant risks associated with mass evacuation. The advice was for residents to stay put unless directed to evacuate by the fire service. The need to evacuate is reassessed continuously throughout an incident.

In response to a question, SOC G Jeffery assured the Group that a number of other high risk premises, such as care homes, were audited regularly.

Members commented on the importance of reassuring members of the public, particularly those residing in high rise tower blocks.

RESOLVED:

That the update be received.

16-17/SD/22 Breakdown of Deliberate Fires Attended by BFRS

SOC G Jeffery introduced his report on the breakdown of deliberate fire data for 2016-2017 as requested by the Group at its last meeting.

The number of deliberate fires had increased by 6% in comparison to the previous year. There had been reductions in building and dwelling fires (other/unknown other) but increases in fires within dwellings (own property), outdoors and to vehicles.

It was noted that the number of outdoor fires correlated to weather conditions, with a greater number of fires occurring in drier months.

As discussed earlier in the meeting, the increase in vehicle fires was linked to criminality and these occurred mainly in the larger urban areas of the county.

The Service continued to work with partners across a wide range of activities to reduce incidents of arson and deliberate fire. These included joint fire investigations and environmental action days.

Members were assured that the Service worked closely with the Police, but that it could be difficult to secure a conviction for arson as there was often not enough evidence. ACFO gave examples of how the difference between the definitions of 'deliberate fire' and 'arson' can result in variations in statistics between police and fire.

Councillor D Franks requested that he be sent the figures relating to Luton Borough as these were not included in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the report and the data contained within be noted.

16-17/SD/23 Operational Decision Making Procedures - Exception Report

There were no exceptions to report.

16-17/SD/24 Corporate Risk Register

AC 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 to ensure consistency in the application of firefighting standards across all Fire and Rescue Services. There may be additional work streams arising from the completion of this programme.

RESOLVED:

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

16-17/SD/25 Work Programme 2017/18

The Group received its updated work programme for information.

ACFO I Evans suggested that Members receive a demonstration of the forced entry kit used by the Service to effect entry at the Group's next meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the work programme be received.
2. That the Group receive an update on the establishment of the Strategic Road Safety partnership at its next meeting.
3. That a demonstration of forced entry equipment be arranged to take place at the next meeting of the Group.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am