



BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Collaboration – Policing and Crime Act 2017

REVISED FINAL

Internal audit report: 2.17/18

9 November 2017

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CONTENTS

1 Executive summary	2
2 Detailed findings	4
Appendix A: Scope	8
Appendix B: Further information.....	9
For further information contact	10

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Draft report issued	9 August 2017		Anand Mistry, Assistant Manager Rahi Rahman, Internal Auditor
Responses received	2 November 2017		
Final report issued	2 November 2017	Client sponsor	Chris Ball, Head of Operational Support
Revised final issued	9 November 2017	Distribution	Chris Ball, Head of Operational Support Ian Howarth, Partnership Development Manager

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background

As part of the approved Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) annual internal audit plan for 2017/18, we have undertaken a review of the collaboration processes being introduced.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 included provisions to increase the level of collaboration between the emergency services, including the Fire Rescue Services and Police Forces. This includes the option for the Police and Crime Commissioner to be the areas Fire and Rescue Authority. In Bedfordshire, this option is not being progressed at this point in time, however, a commitment to increase collaboration has been agreed.

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority have recruited a Partnership Development Manager who is operationally responsible for all collaboration activities. Bedfordshire Police recruited a Project Officer in April 2017 who is responsible for collaboration activities for the Police, and together they are driving forward the collaboration initiative.

The Blue Light Collaboration Board was formally established in December 2016 in advance of the Police and Crime Act 2017. An Activity and Milestone Plan has been established and is updated and presented at each meeting reporting on the current status of each collaborated project.

1.2 Conclusion

The testing and discussions undertaken as part of this review has found that the Service have established a basic control framework for managing its emergency services collaboration agenda. However, we found that the processes are currently very informal and our testing showed the need for development in the way in which ideas are raised, potential projects are planned, appraised and approved for delivery. Furthermore, the systems through which delivery is monitored need to evolve to take into consideration the agreed milestones and benefits to ensure they are achieved.

We acknowledge that the Authority's collaborative agenda is in its infancy, with operational leads only being recruited to the Fire Service and Police Force in December 2016 and April 2017 respectively, and therefore over the coming months significant changes are planned to establish a more robust and formal project planning and appraisal process, as well as the development of the performance management systems to take account of the additional planning information.

Taking account of the issues highlighted above and the early stages of progress made by the Authority, in partnership with its blue light collaborative partners, we have undertaken this work in an advisory capacity and are not providing a formal opinion. If actions are not taken as planned to formalise and strengthen the control framework, there could be a significant risk to the success of the collaborative agenda.

1.3 Key findings

The key findings from this review are as follows:

A collaborative board has been established with representation from the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Bedfordshire Police Force. The East of England Ambulance Service is also invited to these meetings but had not attended any to the time of this audit.

Small (simple) projects are being delivered; these include the sharing of estates, operational collaborations and the joint procurement of a drone.

Staff Engagement

Staff engagement with the Blue Light Collaboration project is currently ad hoc without a formal and robust process to ensure that all levels of the organisation are engaged and involved in generating potential ideas. In discussion with the Partnership Development Manager, we agreed that a direct route to submit ideas directly to them would not be the most productive method, however the Authority would need to develop a process which allows potential collaboration opportunities to be triaged by those with an appropriate level of knowledge prior to being highlighted to the Blue Light Collaboration Boards.

Planning and Delivery

Our testing in respect to the planning of projects has confirmed that the processes are in need of greater formality to align to Blue Light Collaboration Board terms of reference which sets out the expectation for robust options appraisals and implementation plans.

We confirmed that a standard collaboration project planning template is not currently in place to ensure that projects are appropriately appraised prior to a decision to implement projects is made. We would expect that even basic projects are assessed in respect to key considerations such as financial and resourcing matters, delivery timescales, legal implications, training impacts, and the expected operational and community benefits.

There is a risk that projects are not being appropriately appraised prior to being implemented which could result in the adverse performance of the collaborative agenda through the in effective use of resources. This issue has resulted in the agreement of a **medium priority** management action.

Furthermore, our testing found that the systems through which delivery is monitored need to evolve to take into consideration the agreed milestones and benefits which will be agreed as part of a more robust planning process. As the size and complexity of the projects increase, they will be a need to establish workstream groups and more robust performance reports to help control large projects.

Collaboration Governance

A Partnership Development Manager has been recruited by the Service in December 2016 to take a leading operational role in managing the wider collaboration agenda. The Blue Light Collaboration Board was formally established in December 2016 and integrated into the wider governance structure through the Head of Operational Support who sits on the Corporate and Service Delivery Management Teams.

In addition to the one medium priority actions discussed above, we have also agreed four low priority actions for management which are detailed further within the Detailed Findings in Section 2 of this report.

1.4 Additional information to support our conclusion

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made. The detailed findings section lists the specific actions agreed with management to implement.

Area	Control design not effective*		Non Compliance with controls*		Agreed actions		
					Low	Medium	High
Collaboration	2	(7)	5	(7)	4	1	0
Total					4	1	0

* Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area.

2 DETAILED FINDINGS

Categorisation of internal audit findings

Priority	Definition
Low	There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality.
Medium	Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible regulatory scrutiny/reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.
High	Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: Substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, regulatory scrutiny, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
Area: Collaboration								
1.1.1	The Bedfordshire Blue Light Collaboration Project Board (the Blue Light Collaboration Board) has been formally established between the Fire Authority, the Fire Service and Bedfordshire Police Force (the Police) in December 2016. The East of England Ambulance Service are also invited to the Board.	Yes	No	<p>We reviewed the Blue Light Collaboration Board terms of reference and confirmed that it adequately outlined its responsibilities and purpose.</p> <p>We did however find that it did not detail the group's membership, meeting frequency, reporting requirements and general integration into the wider governance structure.</p> <p>We also noted that the document did not detail the date it was produced and approved nor did it prescribe a review frequency. These are seen</p>	Low	<p>The Blue Light Collaboration Board will develop its terms of reference periodically and include key information in respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership; • Meeting frequency; • Reporting requirements; • Its integration into the wider governance structure; and 	31 March 2018	Partnership Development Manager and Blue Light Collaboration Board

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	The Blue Light Collaboration Board has a terms of reference which sets out their roles and responsibilities in respect to the collaboration agenda.			as good practice sections of such as document. If the terms of reference are not complete, there is a risk that the group may not be fulfilling its responsibilities which could result in a failure to maximise the collaborative potential between the blue light services.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resourcing agreement (including cost sharing expectations). This will then be approved by the Blue Light Collaboration Board at subsequent meetings.		
1.1.3.a	<p>The Partnership Development Manager attends periodic departmental meetings (e.g. community safety, operations etc.) which provides opportunities for staff to escalate potential collaboration ideas for consideration.</p> <p>In addition to this, the Partnership Development Manager also engages in ad hoc conversations with operational staff to get ideas from a different pool of staff and identify potential collaborative opportunities.</p> <p>There is however no formal platform and engagement activities to encourage staff to generate and share</p>	No	No	<p>We discussed a range of the current projects with the Partnership Development Manager we were advised that each of these projects had been developed in various ways including addressing known historical needs of Bedfordshire Police and BFRS, opportunistic staff feedback and service debriefings. We confirmed that the collaboration project had been widely publicised internally and that the PDM had briefed team meetings in order to open a route for suggestions either through BFRS suggestion scheme or through line management.</p> <p>The PDM recognises that those projects of a greater magnitude or complexity will require multi-disciplinary input to ensure a triage process for opportunities.</p>	Low	The Blue Light Collaboration Board will consider further opportunities for emergency service staff to engage in identifying potential future collaboration opportunities and that there is an effective route to submit, triage and feedback ideas prior to consideration by the Blue Light Collaboration Board.	31 December 2017	Partnership Development Manager and Blue Light Collaboration Board
1.1.3.b				Through discussion with the Partnership Development Manager and through review of Blue Light	Low	The Blue Light Collaboration Board will review the Emergency	31 March 2018	Partnership Development Manager and

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	collaboration opportunity ideas for the Blue Light Collaboration Board to consider.			<p>Collaboration Board meeting minutes we were unable to confirm whether the Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group National Overview 2016 document was considered to identify potential collaboration ideas.</p> <p>There is a risk that nationally endorsed collaboration ideas are not being considered which could result in the ineffective use of resources at the Authority.</p>		Services Collaboration Working Group National Overview 2016 document and ensure that any potential themes are considered.		Blue Light Collaboration Board
1.1.4	<p>Collaboration projects are required to be approved at Blue Light Collaboration Project Board meetings prior to implementation.</p> <p>The Board reviews the costs, benefits and timescales required for the delivery of projects before they are approved.</p> <p>A standard collaboration project planning template is not currently in place to ensure that projects are appropriately appraised prior to a decision to implement projects is made.</p>	No	No	<p>We have selected the following sample of projects for review:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sharing Ampthill Fire Station 2. Sharing Leighton Buzzard Fire Station 3. Exploring options to procure a joint drone <p>Review of the planning documentation for each, and through discussion with the Partnership Development Manager, we could not confirm that all costs, benefits and timescales for each project had been reviewed formally in a structured manner.</p> <p>Future projects would benefit from a more structured approach, especially as they are likely to increase in complexity. This was agreed to be important when</p>	Medium	<p>The Blue Light Collaboration Board will develop a standard collaboration project planning template to appraise all projects prior to their implementation.</p> <p>This will include ensuring consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive and operation leads; • Financial and resourcing matters; • Delivery timescales; • Legal implications; • Training impacts; and • Expected operational and community benefits. <p>The templates will be reviewed and approved</p>	31 December 2017	Partnership Development Manager and Blue Light Collaboration Board

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	Options appraisals and implementation plans are required to be completed for each project as per the Blue Light Collaboration Boards terms of reference.			<p>evaluation of service and community benefits were to be undertaken. In addition to this, through review of the Blue Light Collaboration Board meeting minutes, we were unable to see the consistent application of a gateway review of project plan before they are agreed, initiated and delivery is started.</p> <p>There is a risk that projects are not being appropriately appraised prior to being implemented which could result in the adverse performance of the collaborative agenda through the in effective use of resources.</p>		<p>by the Blue Light Collaboration Board prior resources being used to initiate and deliver the project. The approval will be clearly documented within the Blue Light Collaboration Board meeting minutes.</p> <p>In addition to this, the performance reporting mechanisms will need to be reviewed to ensure that milestones and benefits are monitored appropriately.</p>		
1.1.5	<p>The Blue Light Collaboration Board terms of reference identifies five workstreams under which collaboration ideas will be identified and managed. These are: Estates, Operations, Response, Support Services and Resource Management.</p> <p>An Activity and Milestone Plan (the Plan) has been developed to track the delivery of each project.</p>	Yes	No	<p>We obtained and reviewed a range of Activity and Milestone Plans.</p> <p>We noted that the workstreams used within the Plans did not align to those set out within the terms of reference.</p> <p>Through discussions with the Partnership Development Manager we confirmed the workstreams used within the Plans should align to the terms of reference to ensure that there was consistency.</p>	Low	The projects on the activity and milestone tracker would be appropriately updated to reflect the five themes agreed within the terms of reference.	31 March 2018	Partnership Development Manager and Blue Light Collaboration Board

APPENDIX A: SCOPE

The scope below is a copy of the original document issued.

Scope of the review

The scope was planned to provide assurance on the controls and mitigations in place relating to the following areas:

Objectives of the area under review

To ensure that Bedfordshire Fire Authority is working towards achieving their responsibilities in respect to the Policing and Crime Act 2017

When planning the audit, the following areas for consideration and limitations were agreed:

Areas for consideration:

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 included provisions to increase the level of collaboration between the emergency services. This includes the option for the Police and Crime Commissioner for an area to be the fire and rescue authority for that area.

In Bedfordshire, the Police and Crime Commissioner is not taking up this position at this point in time, however, other arrangements are being agreed to increase collaboration between the emergency services.

This review will aim to understand how the Authority aims to discharge its duty to collaborate, this will include confirming:

- The establishment of a collaborative Project Board with senior ranking representation from the local emergency services;
- The clear executive and operational ownership of the collaboration agenda within the Authority;
- The processes undertaken to ensure potential collaborative opportunities are captured and explored taking into account the Projects Terms of Reference.
- Work streams have been established for agreed opportunities. This includes the ensuring that appropriate governance arrangements have been established to report progress into the Project Board;
- Appropriate project documentation has been created to manage the delivery of adopted workstreams
- The collaborative workstreams are not introspective and whether it can be demonstrated that opportunities within the wider community are also an influence to work undertaken.
- The Authority and senior management are regularly updated on the performance of the collaborative project.

Limitations to the scope of the audit assignment:

- We will not confirm that the Authority will achieve their duty to collaborate as per the Policing and Crime Act 2017;
- We will not confirm that benefits identified will be achieved;
- We will not confirm that all collaborative options or opportunities within the wider community have been identified;
- We will not confirm that the financial and human resource implications have been fully considered;
- We will not confirm that the option appraisals are accurate;
- We will only provide an opinion on the activities undertaken by the Fire Authority as part of our work;
- All testing will be compliance based sample testing only; and
- Our work will not provide any guarantee against material errors, loss or fraud or provide an absolute assurance that material error, loss or fraud does not exist.

APPENDIX B: FURTHER INFORMATION

Persons interviewed during the audit:

Ian Howarth, Partnership Development Manager

Gavin Chambers, Head of Finance and Treasurer

Documentation reviewed during the audit:

Blue Light Collaboration Board terms of reference

Blue Light Collaboration Board meeting agenda, minutes and papers

Blue Light Collaboration Board meeting timetable

Activity and Milestone Plans

Partnership Development Manager Job Description

Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group National Overview 2016

Draft Relationship Management Strategy

Corporate Management Team meeting minutes

Service Delivery Management Team meeting minutes

Policy and Change Group meeting minutes

Fire Authority meeting minutes

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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