

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
18 October 2018
Item No. 12

REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION UPDATE

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Background Papers: Blue Light Collaboration Updates

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL		FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	
	New	CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE

To provide Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) with a regular update on progress with key collaboration initiatives between Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS), Bedfordshire Police (BP) and East of England Ambulance Service (EEAS) as managed through the Blue Light Collaboration Strategic Board (Blue Light CSB).

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to **receive** the content of the report.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 places a statutory duty on the emergency services to collaborate, where the collaboration is viewed to be in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness or where it will improve public safety. BFRS, BP and EEAS have a successful track record of collaborating together operationally on a number of initiatives in recent years.
- 1.2. Collaboration between the three primary emergency services within Bedfordshire is co-ordinated through the bi-monthly Blue Light CSB, jointly chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Constable.

2. Programme Governance update

- 2.1. To further strengthen the programme governance arrangements, DCFO Andrew Hopkinson and DCC Garry Forsyth, have established a Tactical Delivery Group (TDG) that will report into the Blue Light CSB.
- 2.2. Jointly chaired by a BFRS Group Commander and a BP Chief Inspector, the TDG will be convened for the first time during October 2018. BFRS will be further represented by the Partnership Development Manager and BP will be represented by the Superintendent, Intelligence and Corporate Services a liaison for the two organisations.
- 2.3. Improvements to the way in which the numerous projects are tracked and reported to the CSB have been implemented including an initial feasibility assessment proforma designed to facilitate potential collaboration initiatives to be quickly assessed in a more streamlined and consistent manner.

3. Blue Light Collaboration Workshop 1 August 2018

- 3.1. On 1 August, the CSB hosted a successful one-day 'Blue Light Collaboration Workshop' at Dunstable Community Fire Station to involve and encourage front line staff from BFRS and BP to identify and influence future collaboration opportunities. Supported by the DCFO, DCC, FRA Chair Cllr Paul Downing, Cllr David McVicar in his capacity as Member Collaboration

Champion and the Police and Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway, the event brought together a vertical slice of 36 predominantly operational staff from Firefighter to Group Commander and Constable to Chief Inspector.

3.2. Under the banner of 'Together We Are Better', delegates participated in a number of exercises to help identify barriers to communication and collaboration between BFRS and BP, to develop their understanding of the duties and functions of the two services and to encourage them to identify areas they felt had real potential to improve collaboration. A report detailing the activities and outcomes of the day is being finalised and will be shared separately with FRA members in the very near future. The success of the workshop has influenced the CSB to host a further workshop early in the new year in February that will bring together a different group of staff and potentially include EEAS to focus on collaboration that will improve community safety.

4. Collaboration Projects - update

4.1. Collaboration projects are currently structured under the 5 headings of Estates, Operations, Response, Resource Sharing and Support Services. The following sections summarise progress of the key projects that have progressed since the last update report.

4.2. Estates:

- **Joint Headquarters:** This is the subject of a separate briefing presentation under Part B.
- **Police Co-Location:** The co-location of police staff at Ampthill, Bedford, Leighton Buzzard, Harrold fire stations and joint use of the Bury Park Community Centre office is reported to be working well and becoming more embedded. Works to increase the number of female toilet and shower facilities at Leighton Buzzard fire station is underway.
- **Ambulance Co-Location:** The DCFO has recently had a productive initial meeting with Simon King, EEAS Senior Locality Manager for Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire to revisit and explore collaboration opportunities with EEAS including sharing estates and in other operational areas.

4.3. Operations:

- **Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (Drone):** The drone has been delivered and the necessary actions regarding registration with Civil Aviation Authority and the provision of insurance cover are underway. Joint training with police colleagues is

underway with completion expected in early November. Subject to CAA approval, the drone should become operational shortly afterwards. Agreement has been reached with Police Tri-Force Joint Protective Services and Hertfordshire FRS to formulate a regional MoU for joint response and interoperability.

- **Red Routes:** The 6 month Red Routes pilot scheme that will see BFRS appliances routing back to station via known burglary 'hotspots' to act as a visible crime deterrent commenced on 1 October.

4.4. Response:

- **Missing Vulnerable Person Searches:** The evaluation of current arrangements for BFRS being mobilised to support BP in searches for vulnerable persons has influenced the revision of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which has now been signed by both parties.
- **Co-Responding:** Remains on hold due to on-going national negotiations linked to pay and conditions. DCFO Hopkinson has engaged with EEAS about how BFRS can support their response in anticipation of a positive outcome from the national negotiations.

4.5. Resource Sharing:

- **Datashare Agreements and Information Sharing:** BFRS has met with BP Information Services team and agreed the way forward to produce an overarching cross service datashare agreement. BFRS which will provide for any specific activity where data is shared e.g. Herbert Protocol. Community Safety staff now have access to Police Control to undertake known risk flag checks on premises to be visited.

4.6. Support Services:

- **Police Driver Training:** The separate projects exploring the provision of motorcycle and car driver training have been merged into a single 'driver training' project. BP has identified a significant need for the provision of response (non-pursuit) driver training for their police officers over the next 2-3 years that they are struggling to resource due to a national shortage of suitably trained instructors. BFRS already employs suitably trained ex-police driving instructors and the College of Policing have confirmed BFRS can be licenced to deliver such training so a feasibility assessment is being progressed to identify how to accommodate this extra demand.

- **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):** Discussions continue with Police Tri-Force Information Governance team to progress the agreement in principle for them to support BFRS in achieving GDPR compliance in a very cost effective way and without increasing our staff establishment headcount.
- **Vehicle Workshops:** Discussions continue to assess the feasibility of co-locating BFRS and BP workshop facilities. In addition, BFRS have received training to service EEAS ambulance vehicles at BFRS workshops and this should commence on a trial basis in the near future.

5. Further updates will be presented at future meetings of the FRA.

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