

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group
29 November 2018
Item No. 4**

MINUTES OF SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 10.00am

Present: Councillors C Atkins, J Chatterley, D Franks, and J Mingay (Chair)

DCFO A Hopkinson, SOC I Evans and SOC G Jeffery

18-19/SD/013 Apologies

13.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor McVicar.

18-19/SD/014 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

14.1 There were no declarations of interest.

18-19/SD/015 Communications

15.1 There were no communications.

18-19/SD/016 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2018 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

18-19/SD/017 Service Delivery Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 and Programmes to date

- 17.1 DCFO Hopkinson submitted the Quarter 1 2018/19 project and performance report. The format of the report had been amended so that the exceptions were reported with the relevant section of the report rather than having both the project and performance exception reports together.
- 17.2 In relation to the project exceptions, DCFO Hopkinson reported that the Co-responding Project was RAG rated Red as the co-responding trials remained on hold subject to the ongoing national negotiations around pay and terms and conditions.
- 17.3 The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme project was RAG rated Amber awaiting the outcome of a national review of the project.
- 17.4 DCFO Hopkinson advised that the Policy and Challenge Group would be receiving a separate report on the Replacement Mobilising System later on in the meeting.
- 17.5 The Asset Management and Fleet Management System had been updated to Green as a report was being submitted to the Fire and Rescue Authority at its next meeting to request that a reduced budget for the project be brought forward into the current financial year to allow the project to progress.
- 17.6 The Collaborative Working project was RAG rated as Green with a number of initiatives continuing to be progressed. The initial options appraisal for a joint Headquarters undertaken would be submitted to the next meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority. A drone had now been purchased and joint training with the Police had commenced. The Red Routes trial in Luton and would commence on 1 October 2018.
- 17.7 The Blue Light Collaboration Event held on 1 August 2018 had been very successful and was well received by staff and others who attended, such as the Chair of the Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner. Another workshop would be held in the New Year focussing on community safety.

- 17.8 The PPE project was RAG rated Green as the call-off contract had been signed and a contacts set-up meeting with the new supplier had taken place.
- 17.9 The Retained Duty System Improvement Project was RAG rated Green. The supplier of the availability module for the Retained Duty System had also been selected to provide a system for the Whole-time Duty Management System Improvement Project.
- 17.10 Members who had attended the station visit the previous evening reported that some firefighters had expressed concern about collaboration, and that there was some misinformation about what this included. DCFO Hopkinson advised that the Corporate Management Team was seeking to address this in a number of ways, including the extension of management briefing days, more internal communications and visits of senior Officers to stations.
- 17.11 SOC Jeffrey introduced the performance report for the first quarter of 2018/19 and referred to the exception reports.
- 17.12 PI08 (the average response time to primary fire incidents) had missed its target by 13%. The indicator measuring average response times to dwellings (PI09) had performed at 9% above target levels, indicating that the average response time had been missed for incidents that were in more remote parts of the County and were not the most high-risk. There were also incidents that had been identified where the arrival of the second appliance had overwritten the arrival of first appliance and these had had to be manually overwritten.
- 17.13 DCFO Hopkinson reported on a large piece of work that was being undertaken as part of the development of a new Community Risk Management Plan that sought to identify risks and requirements for the Service at both the present time and 10-15 years in the future, taking into account the extensive growth planned for in the County. This would also evaluate if the Service's resources were in the right locations to mitigate against the risks identified. He confirmed that this would also take into account growth at both London Luton Airport and Cranfield Airport.
- 17.14 In relation to Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funding, SOC Evans reported that all three constituent local authorities had agreed that developers would be required to provide fire hydrants by condition in planning permission for large developments. It was understood that very large developments, such as Cambourne in Cambridgeshire, could release funding for the provision of a new fire station, although this had not yet been the case in Bedfordshire.

- 17.15 The target for PI11 (the average call-handling time to mobilise to primary fires) had been missed by 40%. This related to 9 calls which had call-handling times ranging from 61 seconds to 440 seconds. The top five in terms of length had been analysed and the reasons for the length of time had been identified as wrong information given by the caller, the caller not knowing the location of the incident and over the border incidents which required coordination with other Fire and Rescue Services. It was recognised that this only related to a small number of incidents, which would be fully investigated, and that performance would continue to be monitored.
- 17.16 Members asked for information on the 440 second call.
- 17.17 PI12, (number of “false alarm malicious”/”hoax calls” mobilised to) 13 (number of “false alarm malicious”/”hoax calls” not attended) and 14 (number of “false alarm good intent” mobilised to) had all missed their targets.
- 17.18 In relation to PI12, there had been 58 calls during the reporting period and 33 were mobilised to. The calls would need to be monitored to ensure that there was enough call challenge.
- 17.19 There did not appear to be any identifiable trends, although there were repeat offenders.
- 17.20 Over half of the mobilisations to false alarm good intent calls were to controlled burning or fires on open ground.
- 17.21 It was noted that there was a process by which landowners could advise the Service that they were undertaking controlled burns and this could then be entered onto the mobilising system to prevent mobilisations to those fires. Councillor Franks suggested that this should be publicised more widely to raise awareness of this facility.
- 17.22 PI17 (the percentage of fire safety audits carried out on high and very high risk premises) was an annual target and the audit scheduling throughout the year was not evenly distributed. SOC Evans reassured Members that the target would be met by the end of the year.
- 17.23 PI18 (the rate and number of fires in non-domestic buildings) had missed its target by 18%. There were a small number of fires of this type and therefore performance was subject to fluctuation. Of the 37 fires during the quarter, 9 were classified as

deliberate, including 3 separate incidents at HMP Bedford. 20 were minor fires contained to the first item ignited and 7 were confined to the room of origin. The fire at Bedfordshire Growers was one of the incidents reported under this indicator.

- 17.24 SOC Evans advised that HMP Bedford had experienced a high number of fires people had to be rescued or led to safety. This was of a significant concern and the decision had been made to write to the authority responsible for the Prison as previous concerns had been raised with the Deputy Governor.
- 17.25 Members requested that a report on the Service's liaison with HMP Prison be submitted to a future meeting of the Policy and Challenge Group.
- 17.26 It was noted that HMP Bedford was currently in special measures, as well as being the subject of an official warning letter submitted to the Justice Secretary.
- 17.27 Of the 37 non-domestic premises, 29 had previously received a fire safety audit. After fire inspections had been undertaken by a Fire Safety Inspection Officer at 28 of the premises. No specific issues had been identified as part of that process.
- 17.28 The Policy and Challenge Group was advised that the Service worked closely with local authorities and registered social landlords on fire safety issues.
- 17.29 SOC Jeffrey referred to the appendix of the report setting out the information measures. There had been 116 road traffic collisions during the quarter and 2 water deaths, both in Bedford Borough.
- 17.30 SOC Evans reported that the Service had recently been involved in a pilot project to develop an innovative new water rescue device being used as an alternative to the traditional lifebuoys that are placed alongside the banks of rivers and water ways, including the River Ouse in Bedford. Designed in partnership, the Portsafes rescue system uses an extendable 'reach and rescue' pole that is contained in a lockable box and stands on the water's edge similar to the traditional lifebuoy. But unlike the lifebuoy, it is secure and tamper proof. To get the pole they'll need to call the Fire Service on 999 for a code to unlock it, which means we'll also be on our way to assist.

17.31 DCFO Hopkinson reported that this product had been developed by the supplier in conjunction with the Service's technical support team. The Community Safety team had been recognised at the Service Awards evening for their efforts to deploy these devices along the River Ouse in Bedford. An article had been published in a fire publication explaining how the device worked and this could be circulated to Members for information.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress made on the Service Delivery Programmes and Performance be acknowledged.
2. That a report on the Service's liaison with HMP Bedford be submitted to a future meeting of the Policy and Challenge Group.

(Note: at the end of the meeting, SOC G Jeffrey reported that the 440 second call had been received from a caller driving down the M1 reporting a fire on the opposite side of the carriageway. The driver did not know his/her location and was unable to provide information on landmarks that would allow the location of the fire to be identified.)

18-19/SD/018 Audit and Governance Action Plans Monitoring Report

- 18.1 DCFO Hopkinson reported that all actions had been completed. The action arising from the audit of Collaboration was to be confirmed by follow up audit.
- 18.2 DCFO Hopkinson advised that a number of improvements to the Blue Light Collaboration Board's performance monitoring and reporting mechanisms had been made following the audit recommendations. The first meeting of the Board's Tactical Delivery Group had been arranged for October 2018.
- 18.3 He further reported that it had been agreed to store the performance monitoring and reporting documents on Resilience Direct, which was available to Officers in both the Police and Fire and Rescue Service.

RESOLVED:

That progress made against current action plans be acknowledged.

18-19/SD/019 Customer Satisfaction Survey Report Quarter 1 2018/19

- 19.1 SOC Evans presented the results of customer satisfaction surveys conducted from 1 April 2018- 30 June 2018. During this period, the Service had achieved a 100% customer satisfaction rate.
- 19.2 The response rate for surveys had decreased significantly during the reporting period following a change in the way that surveys were being delivered. They used to be sent through the post to individuals following the surveys and had now been left for individuals to complete and this had led to a drop in the response rate to 14%. This would be investigated to improve the return rate in future reporting periods.
- 19.3 SOC Evans expressed that view that the questionnaires were valuable, not only for the feedback on the service received, but also in identifying the vulnerabilities of individuals receiving the Safe and Well visits.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and the continuing good levels of customer satisfaction be acknowledged.
2. That the Fire and Rescue Authority be recommended to consider ways of improving feedback of its meetings to the constituent authorities, such as a video presentation being provided by the Chief Fire Officer outlining the extensive activities undertaken by the Service that Members of the constituent councils may not be aware of.

18-19/SD/020 Operational Decision Making Procedures – Exception Report

- 20.1 There were no exceptions to report.

18-19/SD/021 Replacement Mobilising System

- 21.1 SOC Jeffrey submitted the report on behalf of SOC Ball, which provided an update on the Replacement Mobilising System, including some background information, focusing on the option that had been selected as the way forward and the scope of the work being undertaken in partnership with Cambridgeshire (CFRS) and Suffolk (SFRS) Fire and Rescue Services.

- 21.2 SOC Jeffrey reported that the Service's current Replacement Mobilising System was procured in partnership with Essex Fire and Rescue Service in 2012. The contract with the supplier was coming to an end and Essex had decided to not renew the contract. This had led to the Service needing to identify another way forward and consultants had been engaged to provide an options appraisal.
- 21.3 The Authority had agreed at its meeting on 26 April 2018 to proceed with the procurement of a new system in collaboration with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service.
- 21.4 Following this, a joint Executive Project Board had been established between the three Services. A number of project teams had also been established to progress a variety of work streams including the technical specification, procurement strategy and resources and ICT requirements.
- 21.5 It was noted that there would be no requirement for a secondary control room as this function would be provided by another Service. This improved resilience and provided opportunities for cost savings through economies of scale.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided be received.

18-19/SD/022 Arson Case Study

- 22.1 SOC Evans introduced a case study commissioned by the DCFO on how the Service responded to incidents of deliberate fire setting in domestic dwellings
- 22.2 The case study related to a fire reported in the early hours of 22 June 2018 in a residential area in Luton. The first appliance arrived at the scene at 01.00, within eight minutes of receiving the call. Another two appliances were mobilised to the scene.
- 22.3 The whole building was affected by fire and smoke damage. The fire had been declared as "persons reported"; however, the property was found to be unoccupied at the time of the fire. It was subsequently identified that the owner was an elderly individual who resided in a care home.

- 22.4 Upon attendance at the incident, it was established that there were clear signs of forced entry and two seats of fire in both the kitchen and a bedroom, indicating that the fire had been caused by arson. A balance was therefore struck between scene preservation and extinguishing the fire.
- 22.5 Uniformed police attended the incident and there had been excellent on-scene liaison from the Police with immediate house to house enquiries on the night. An after fire 'hot strike' was conducted after the incident to 10 properties in the immediate vicinity. It was noted only 2 of the 10 households contacted responded to enquiries.
- 22.6 Group Commander Allen, who attended as part of the initial response, visited the scene the next day as he was a member of the Service's specialist Fire Investigation Team. A joint fire investigation was undertaken in partnership with the Police in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding for Fire Investigation. Evidence at the scene suggested that the fire was deliberately set following a burglary at the property.
- 22.7 The forensic investigation recovered blood within and outside the property and this was identified as belonging to a known individual for whom an arrest warrant was served. The individual was subsequently arrested.
- 22.8 A formal Fire Investigation report was completed which may be presented in evidence in criminal proceedings.
- 22.9 Members recognised the close working relationship between the two Services in dealing with the incident and thanked those involved in the co-ordination involved which would hopefully lead to a successful prosecution.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report provided be received.
2. That the Policy and Challenge Group's thanks to all those involved in the incident for the excellent demonstration of strong partnership working and co-ordination between the Police and Fire and Rescue Service which would hopefully result in a successful prosecution be recorded.

18-19/SD/023 Corporate Risk Register

23.1 DCFO Hopkinson presented the review of the Corporate Risk Register in relation to Service Delivery. There had been no changes or updates to risk ratings over the reporting period.

RESOLVED:

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

18-19/SD/024 Work Programme

24.1 The Group received its work programme and noted that the additional report on the liaison with HMP Bedford would be scheduled for the Policy and Challenge Group's next meeting.

24.2 DCFO Hopkinson advised that a report on the national data set published by the Home Office for benchmarking purposes would be presented to the Group when it was available in its entirety, as at this point in time, only half the data set had been published.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be received.

The meeting finished at 11.21am.