

For information

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting
24 March 2022

REPORT AUTHOR: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: COLLABORATION UPDATE

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Background Papers: None

PURPOSE: Portfolio leads update (Response)

RECOMMENDATION: For Information only

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper aims to provide Members with an update on key activities that Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) is engaged in to deliver our Community Risk Management Plan actions for 2019-23 through developing our collaborations.

2. Background

2.1 The Authority is committed to effective collaboration to ensure the service provides both value for money and outstanding service delivery.

- 2.2 Our collaboration work spans all areas of the service, and our officers are working with partners to ensure that we reach our full potential of being both efficient and effective in meeting the needs of our communities.
- 2.3 Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) has engaged in collaboration through both local station based and functional activity as well as our Blue Light Collaboration Strategic Board. Recent events such as covid and new appointments to senior roles has meant we have had to divert some of our attention to other priorities so this group has not formally met for several months. However, the next meeting is now being arranged.
- 2.4 This paper provides a highlights of some of the key activities currently underway whilst the service re-establishes our formal structures for collaboration.

3. Response

- 3.1 The service is part of a fire and rescue service regional programme board, a key aim of which is the full adoption of National Operational Guidance. This work will see the service embed new policies, equipment notes, training packs and ops assurance tools to underpin our safe systems of work and our effectiveness as a service when working with neighbouring services.
- 3.2 This is a significant piece of work that spans most areas of the service but the investment of time now will mean BFRS's interoperability will improve, and the number of policies and equipment notes we will need to create as a single service will reduce. In addition, our development pathways for new starters will become slicker as we move towards the firefighter apprenticeship as we adopt the national product packs.
- 3.3 The Service has been at the forefront of working with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) so it will not be a surprise to Members that our officers are leading the way to deliver a regional Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to simplify the relationship between fire and ambulance services. A common approach to supporting the ambulance service allows all regional fire and rescue services to respond to specific call types in areas where we can improve patient outcomes in rural communities.
- 3.4 In addition to this regional work BFRS are also supporting EEAST with tests and trials of electric vehicles. BFRS is helping EEAST gather data for both organisations about the potential for electric vehicles in emergency response, community safety and logistics activity.

3.5 Due to the national recognition of BFRS activity, the service have received a number of visits from other FRS, the most recent of which was Kent FRS, to understand how we manage and deliver responses to medical emergencies.

4 Resilience

4.1 BFRS continues to play a pivotal role in the management and leadership of the multi-agency COVID response. Officers, under the guidance of the Chief Fire Officer in his role as the Chair of the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum (BLRF) , has led the Strategic Cordination Group, playing an active role in the Tactical Coordination Group and the many support cells that feed into the Pan-Bedfordshire command structure.

4.2 As we now move back towards Recovery our ACFO will chair the BLRF Recovery Group and also the internal Recovery and Adaptation Group as we collective move towards 'living with covid'.

5. Prevention

5.1 The service continues to support many partnerships, but a recent additional collaboration has seen the service attracting funding from the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner to deliver a new road safety initiative using virtual reality (VR) on a vehicle. The service will be delivered later in the year, subject to securing the vehicle from manufacturers and allows several scenarios to be explored from the safety of the VR goggles.

6. Training

6.1 The service is fully committed to delivering training collaborations with local partners and neighbouring fire and rescue services. This includes collaborative approaches to:

1. Driver training;
2. Breathing apparatus live fire training;
3. Specialist response;
4. Incident Command;
5. Exercising;
6. National Inter-agency Liaison Officer (NILO); and
7. Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme (JESIP).

6.2 The training centre are also in collaboration with Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service in the delivery of our new apprenticeships for new firefighter. This work links to our service commitment to embedding National Operational Guidance and will be reported through our performance reports in terms of competent staff at every level.

7. Strategy

7.1 The FRA has previously approved the 5 key principles that will form the basis of a Bedfordshire Tri-Service Estates Strategy covering Fire, Ambulance and Police. These have been incorporated into an initial draft strategy document which is currently being reviewed by the relevant officers from the East of England Ambulance Trust and the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner's office. Once their feedback has been received, a final draft strategy will be presented to the FRA and the appropriate police and ambulance governance forums. Although temporarily paused due to capacity issues, work has now resumed on completing the outline business case for a joint workshop. This too, will be provided to the FRA in due course.

8. Next steps

8.1 As the service moves to normality following the most recent covid surge our attentions, and resources, will turn back towards re-establishing the collaboration board and seeking to increase pace around the strategic collaborations discussed pre-pandemic.

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