

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Service Delivery Policy and Challenge
Group
1 December 2016
Item No. 4**

**MINUTES OF SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP
MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 10.00am**

Present: Councillors C Atkins, J Chatterley, P Downing, D Franks, J Mingay (Chair) and M Riaz

DCFO G Ranger, SOC I Evans, SOC G Jeffery, SOC A Peckham and AC C Ball

16-17/SD/011 Apologies

There were no apologies.

16-17/SD/012 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

16-17/SD/013 Communications

There were no communications.

16-17/SD/014 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2016 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

16-17/SD/015 Service Delivery Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 and Programmes to date

DCFO Ranger submitted a report on performance for the first quarter of 2016/17 and an update on the progress and status of the Service Delivery Programme and projects to date.

AC Ball provided an update on the Replacement Mobilising System. The go live date for Essex Fire and Rescue Service had been delayed from 13 September to 21 September 2016 as some issues had arisen the previous weekend. All the issues had been resolved with the exception of one which the provider was still progressing and had expressed confidence that this would be resolved by the end of the week. A meeting was being held on 16 September 2016 where progress would be discussed and AC Ball would provide an update to Members following that meeting.

Within the Service, all 4i training had been completed and the feedback from Control staff on the new system had been very positive. Previous issues with the Integrated Command and Control System (ICCS) were being resolved.

SOC Evans reported on the progress of the Retained Duty System Improvement Project. The Gartan availability module had been launched on 27 July 2016 and this improved the management of retained firefighter availability by improving the way RDS staff could book on and off call and how the Service could access this information. This could be done by text, via the mobile app or a computer and provided real-time information on the availability of individuals and appliances. This would enable the Service to explore more flexible working arrangements which should assist in the recruitment and retention of RDS staff.

As a result of the Gartan module being introduced, a phased alerting system had been implemented at Leighton Buzzard and Biggleswade Fire Stations. This enabled the Service to alert only the individuals required for the appliance needed and would result in less inconvenience to RDS staff as well as savings for the Service.

Workstream leads for the project working groups had been allocated and work was progressing well. Recruitment of new RDS staff had been identified as a priority. The Service had utilised a variety of methods to recruit staff to RDS stations but was constrained by the proximity these individuals must live or work to the stations. Employers were also more reluctant to release their employees as had previously been the case.

Job satisfaction, in the context of reducing fire calls, was also an issue. Co-responding could improve job satisfaction and motivation, as well as improving the financial remuneration available.

In response to questions, SOC Evans advised that the app was produced by Gartan and that the Service was not solely reliant on the app to determine RDS availability.

AC Ball updated the Group on the progress against the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). Work was progressing at a local and regional level, although there were delays at national level.

DCFO Ranger introduced the performance report for Quarter 1 2016/17. He reminded Members that a number of indicators had been set more stretching targets for the current performance year.

PI01 (primary fires) was still meeting the target even though a more challenging one had been set. It was noted that this indicator was reported as per 100,000 population to make the numbers more meaningful.

Both PI02 (primary fire fatalities) and PI03 (primary fire injuries) had missed the target for the first quarter. There had been one fire fatality in Luton in May 2016 and 8 fire injuries during the reporting period. There did not appear to be a trend to explain the increased number of injuries and this situation would be monitored.

PI04 (deliberate (arson) fires) had exceeded its target even though a more challenging target had been set.

Members noted that qualified fire investigation officers undertook arson investigations in partnership with the Police Scene of Crime Officers. There was a possibility that the introduction of joint investigation teams could be considered in future as the teams had very similar competencies.

PI06 (number of deliberate building fires) separated out the acts of arson against buildings and permanent structures. 16 of the 170 arson fires had been in this category in quarter 1.

DCFO advised that PI10 (the percentage of occasions global crewing enabled 5 and 4 (whole-time)) was reporting as amber for the quarter. This was the result of a higher than predicted turnover of staff and some instances of long-term sickness. Private companies were targeting firefighters with a very attractive pay package and a higher than anticipated number of firefighters had left the Service. 26 whole-time firefighters had been recruited to address the shortfall in the establishment, 19 new recruits and 7 transfer-ins.

The Chair reported that 4 of the new recruits were females.

In response to a question, DCFO Ranger referred to recent Police recruitment campaigns that appeared to have attracted a high number of BME applicants. He would be speaking with the Deputy Chief Constable to obtain the details.

PI17 (percentage of calls mobilized to in 60 seconds or less) had missed its target by 9% during a period of staffing deficiency. During the reporting period, new members of Control staff had been trained to handle calls independently and new training for existing staff on the RMS had been delivered.

The staff establishment for Control was small with 20 Control staff split across four Watches. So whilst this period of staff shortage could have been foreseen, it was unlikely that the Service would have been able to backfill and cover those posts. As the new staff had now completed their training and were fully operational, it was anticipated that performance would improve during the current quarter, although the situation would continue to be monitored.

SOC Evans advised that during the reporting period, it would have taken longer for the trainees to deal with calls as they were still gaining experience in handling calls quickly and utilising the Service's call challenge procedures. If an emergency call came in, it would have been taken over by an experienced operator so that it could be mobilised to more quickly.

Members discussed the value of a non-emergency fire number similar to that introduced for the health service. However, it was recognised that the fire service received a smaller number of calls and it was unlikely that an additional number could be justified.

There had been a spike of calls reported under PI20 (number of calls to False Alarm Good Intent (FAGI) – mobilised to) during the reporting period. The cause for this was unknown and performance against this indicator would continue to be monitored.

Performance against FSO1 (the percentage of Building Regulation consultations completed within the prescribed timescale) had dipped below target by 4% as a number of poor quality plans had been received during the period from non- local authority building inspectors.

SOC Jeffery advised that these were plans relating to the change in layout or structural alterations to business premises. On average, the Service responded to 400 to 500 plans per annum and this work was carried out by a small dedicated team of Fire Safety Officers.

SOC Evans reported that the Service had a statutory responsibility to be consulted on and respond to plans of this type and was legally prohibited from making a charge for this activity.

PI26 (total number of Fire Safety audits carried out on very high risk and high risk premises) was reporting as red for the quarter as the programme of audits was still unevenly spread following the significant reduction in the number of premises classified as very high risk and high risk. The target would be achieved by year-end and efforts were being made to spread the audits more evenly across the year.

There had been an increase in the quarter of AFD FA's in non-domestic properties (PI28). It was likely that numbers against this indicator would continue to be high until a new non-mobilisation policy was introduced. It was unlikely that this would affect performance before Quarter 3.

Members also received performance measures on road traffic collisions and water related incidents for information only.

DCFO Ranger expressed the view that performance against many of the primary performance indicators continued to reach and/or exceed target levels following the introduction of more challenging targets.

In response to a question about the six-month pilot to provide entry for the Ambulance Service, which had commenced in July 2016, SOC Evans reported that the Service had already responded to 80 incidents where it was required to force entry. The average anticipated call rate was approximately one per day.

Anecdotal evidence suggested that the pilot had been a success as it was providing an enhanced level of response to the Ambulance Service and utilising the capabilities and resources of Fire Service personnel.

RESOLVED:

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

16-17/SD/016 Attendance Standards

Following the consideration of the 2015/16 year-end performance indicators at the Group's last meeting and the scrutiny of performance against P111 (the percentage of occasions when our response time for critical fire incidents were met against agreed response standards), which had missed its target by 2%, SOC Evans advised that he had been investigating the performance against that indicator at the request of the Group.

It appeared that there had been a technical error in the collection of the data behind this indicator and a written report including an accurate performance figure would be submitted to the next meeting of the Group.

RESOLVED:

That the update on attendance standards be noted and that a report on attendance standards be submitted to the next meeting of the Group.

16-17/SD/017 Operational Decision Making Procedures – Exception Report

There were no exceptions to report.

16-17/SD/018 Annual Review of Partnerships 2015/16

SOC G Jeffery submitted an overview of partnerships following the 2015/16 annual review of Community Safety partnerships. These were primarily the main partnership groups rather than sub-groups or individual organisations. The Service regularly worked in partnership with other organisations to share information and public information campaigns.

In response to a request to allow local Looked After Children access to the Community Fire Stations for activities during the school holidays, SOC G Jeffery suggested that he be contacted to progress this.

RESOLVED:

That the outcomes from the 2015/16 review of Community Safety partnerships and the partnership policy and supporting documentation have also been subject to review be acknowledged.

16-17/SD/019 Customer Satisfaction Survey Report End of Year

SOC G Jeffery presented the results of Customer Satisfaction surveys conducted from 1 April 2015- 31 March 2016. Overall, the Service had received a 99.6% satisfaction rate from local people for the services provided to them.

The decreased percentage of survey response returns had been recognised and the Service was experimenting with different methods to increase return rates in 2016/17.

DCFO Ranger reported that the results of the customer satisfaction survey would be included in the Service's Blue Bulletin.

RESOLVED:

1. That the high levels of customer satisfaction achieved throughout the year be acknowledged and that the changes in the method of gathering data to be trialled during 2016/17 be noted.
2. That the low number of complaints received during the year, particularly those that were progressed past Stage 1, be recognised as another indicator of the high level of service provided by Fire and Rescue staff.

16-17/SD/020 Corporate Risk Register

SOC I Evans presented the review of the Corporate Risk Register. He reported that CRR01 (If we do not plan properly for major operational incidents then we may not be able to resolve the incident appropriately and thus adversely affect our service delivery provision) would be moved to the tolerate section of the register following a review of the risk and its controls.

The risks associated with the renovation of London Luton Airport were discussed. It was noted that the increase in passenger numbers using the airport presented an additional risk.

The Group was advised that the Service worked closely with the airport to ensure that it was kept informed of the physical changes at the airport. The Service did have alternative routes to access the airport in the event of an emergency.

In response to a comment, DCFO Ranger confirmed that the Service would have command of a major incident at the airport as the airside fire service was responsible primarily for initial operations.

The two updates to CRR02 and CRR44 relating to the Retained Duty System had been discussed under the project update in Minute 16-17/SD/015 above.

RESOLVED:

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

16-17/SD/021 Work Programme

The Group received its updated work programme for 2016/17.

DCFO Ranger suggested that a presentation be given to the next meeting on the work of the Special Operations Team and that this also be presented on the Member Development Day.

Arising from a request for the results of the forced entry pilot with the Ambulance Service, it was noted that the six month pilot concluded in December 2016 and that the results could be presented to the first meeting of the Group in 2017.

The Chair reported that the MP for Bedford and Kempston had advised him that the Service had been recognised in Parliament as a beacon for its collaborative work with the Police and the Ambulance Service.

RESOLVED:

1. That a presentation on the Special Operations Team and an update on collaboration with the Police and Ambulance Service be received by the Group at its next meeting.
2. That the results of the forced entry pilot be presented to the Group's meeting in March 2017.

The meeting finished at 11.30am.