

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
7 February 2018
Item No. 15

REPORT AUTHOR: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
SUBJECT: BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION UPDATE

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Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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:

The Authority acknowledges the content of the report and the continued efforts to pursue collaboration with our blue light partners.

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

- 2.1. Due to a lack of availability of attendees, the last 2 bi-monthly CSB meetings were cancelled. However, all parties remain committed to supporting the various collaboration workstreams as evidenced by the updates later in this report. The next meeting is scheduled for 4 March 2019.
- 2.2. The work of the CSB is now supported by the sub-ordinate “Blue Light Collaboration Delivery Group” (note this was reported previously as Tactical Delivery Group) which met for the first time on 9 November 2018. With the exception of the Joint HQ project, all key projects and workstreams are being operationally managed by this group who will report to the CSB.

3. Estates Collaboration

3.1. Joint Headquarters:

- As previously reported, both BP and BBFRS have re-affirmed their commitment to working towards co-locating the functions based at our respective HQ sites.
- To move the project forward, it was agreed to establish a specific joint project team, reporting into the Blue Light Collaboration Strategic Board. It was agreed in principle to appoint a dedicated project manager on an initial 6 month fixed term contract. Our Head of Finance and Treasurer, Gavin Chambers, is scheduled to meet in January with Assistant Chief Officer Philip Wells from BP to appoint from a shortlist of candidates. This appointment will allow progression of the key priority to revisit and finalise user requirements/specifications, drawing on the knowledge and experience of relevant stakeholders from each organisation.
- A 1 day workshop will subsequently be established to bring the key stakeholders, brief on requirements and use the time to review requirements and specifications.

3.2. Co-Location Sites with activity since last FRA:

- An evaluation of the shared use of Bedford Community Fire Station operating with six Police staff based there and the shared office operating as a 'drop-in' for members of other community policing teams will be shared at next Collaboration Strategic Board.
- The improvement works at Leighton Buzzard Community Fire Station to increase the number of female toilet units and shower facilities on site has commenced.
- An initial meeting with BP has been scheduled to explore the sharing of Toddington Community Fire Station with local police officers.
- The HFAT is meeting with the Head of Estates at EEAS on 30 January to explore further opportunities for co-locating EEAS assets at BFRS sites both in terms of ambulance response and support functions such as workshops.

3.3. Vehicle workshops / Operational Hubs:

- BFRS and BP have met to ascertain mutual needs for vehicle servicing, stores facility, Parking and Garaging and office space if a project to combine our respective workshops was pursued.
- There are ongoing discussions with EEAST to explore the feasibility of collaborating on fleet/workshops for maintaining ambulances including joining as a third party to a combined Blue Light workshops or whether a model based on more localised hubs would be a better option.

4. Response Collaboration

4.1. Effecting Entry:

- The current arrangements for BFRS being mobilised to effect an entry to premises where Medical emergencies are reported been evaluated and we will continue to support this initiative with BP and EEAST.

4.2. Co-Responding:

- This workstream remains on hold due to on-going national negotiations linked to pay and conditions.

4.3. What3Words:

- BFRS is currently working with BP and a commercial provider to explore use of a new Mobile Geo-Application which provides pinpoint location accuracy to 3m x 3m to aid in locating 999 callers. BP adopted this in December 2018 and BFRS Control is examining the process and how it relates to current work in progress with technical equipment. There is a mobile phone loaded with the App in each vehicle.

4.4. Drone (UAV):

- Training was completed in November and the Drone will be fully operational in early 2019. The Drone was successfully deployed to the Kimbolton Road fire in Bedford on 3 January. BP are leading on work to establish a Regional Fire/Police Memorandum of Understanding to provide joint regional support and interoperability.

4.5. Fire Service Control:

- Local inter-control room processes have been agreed which will offer improved communications when serious incidents occur and Police are routinely emailing all Control staff with details of any incidents which could impact upon BFRS mobilisation and passage.
- Station Commander Fire Control is working with Police Control to explore additional collaboration opportunities around capacity and peak demand management and shared space.

4.6. Red Routes:

- The first 3 months have operated as planned and only one issue has been identified, double parking down some Luton backstreets where large vehicles cannot pass through. This is being addressed with BP.

4.7. Motorcycle Deployment and Training:

- A scoping exercise is underway to explore opportunities for training Blood Bike Charity motorcyclists to help them expand their network. We are also considering the implications of providing response in that network. We now have permission from College of Policing to train Police motorcyclists for response under Blue Lights. Work is continuing to establish a cohort of Trainers which could enable an expansion of activities.

4.8. Response Driver training (cars):

- Work continues to identify ways in which BFRS could provide response driver training to Police to alleviate their lack of capacity and backlog. There is a possibility of using income from motorcycle training to pump-prime this arrangement. The scoping exercise includes consideration of recruitment or commissioning of additional trainers who are appropriately qualified.

5. Support Services:

5.1. Communications and Engagement/Public Relations:

- Work to explore the potential extent and options for collaboration between BFRS and Police Communications departments which were previously reported as starting in January has been deferred.

5.2. Procurement:

- BFRS and BP will meet in February to explore potential for benefits achievement in working together more closely at a local level. Police Procurement is a Tri-Force function for Beds/Cambs/Herts save for a limited range of in -county activities.

5.3. Estates and Facilities Management:

- There will be a meeting in February led by Bedfordshire Police to explore collaborative working regarding the management of space utilisation, estate scheme project management and contracts for building servicing and maintenance.

5.4. Training:

- As part of the Joint HQ project, work is underway to detail and map current BFRS and BP shared training provision. The second stage of the exercise will to review the capacity and usage of training spaces and facilities to seek further joint provision.

6. Blue Light Collaboration Workshop

- 6.1. Following on from the successful August Conference, a second workshop event is planned for Monday February 18th. The central theme will be “Managing Community Risk”. The purpose is to map the Community Protection and Prevention activities of BFRS and BP and to seek ways in which shared intelligence, time and capacity could produce benefits for the community and efficiency savings.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1. The Authority acknowledges the content of the report and the continued efforts to pursue collaboration with our blue light partners.

ANDREW HOPKINSON
DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER