

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group
7 March 2019
Item No. 4**

**MINUTES OF SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP MEETING HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2018 AT
10.00am**

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

DCFO A Hopkinson, SOC I Evans, SOC G Jeffery and GC I McLaren

18-19/SD/025 Apologies

25.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chatterley and McVicar.

18-19/SD/026 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

26.1 There were no declarations of interest.

18-19/SD/027 Communications

27.1 There were no communications.

18-19/SD/028 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2018 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

18-19/SD/029 Service Delivery Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2

- 29.1 DCFO Hopkinson submitted the Quarter 2 2018/19 performance report and the Group discussed the exception reports for the eight indicators that were RAG rated Amber or Red.
- 29.2 SOC Evans reported that PI01 (primary fires) had missed its target by 4%. However, due to the seasonal variety of primary fires, with a greater number of incidents historically occurring in Quarters 1 and 2, it was hoped that this indicator would reach its target by year-end. Performance was higher than both Quarter 2 2017/18 and the 5 year average, with the number of all categories of fire decreasing.
- 29.3 This was evidenced by the performance against PI05 (accidental dwelling fires) which was currently exceeding its target by 18%.
- 29.4 PI04 (deliberate fires) had also missed its target; however, like PI01, the majority of these fires occurred during the summer months and it was anticipated that the rate of deliberate fires would decrease in Quarters 3 and 4. Performance against this indicator had also improved in comparison to Quarter 2 2017/18 and the five year average. This was recognised as an achievement, given the long, hot summer during which more deliberate fires would be anticipated.
- 29.5 DCFO Hopkinson advised that consideration was being given to reporting performance against these indicators in a different way that was more reflective of seasonal variation and expected performance, rather than a linear target divided evenly amongst the quarters. If changes were made, an algorithm could be run against historic data to provide the five year average and other comparative data. The targets for 2018/19 would be set at the Group's next meeting in March 2019.
- 29.6 It was noted that PI04 measured the Service's definition of "deliberate fires", the majority of which would not be incidents of arson. It was suggested that the word "arson" be removed from the target to clarify this.
- 29.7 SOC Jeffery advised that PI08 (average response time to primary fire incidents) had missed its target and the average response time at the end of Quarter 2 was 11.8 minutes. 73% of the incidents related to non-addressable locations. There had also been a step-change in performance against this indicator from 2016/17 to 2017/18 and the reasons for this were being investigated.

- 29.8 SOC Jeffery reported that PI11 (average call handling time to mobilise to primary fires) had missed its target by 36%. Whilst recognising that 60 seconds was a challenging target, there were also two calls of 401 seconds and 215 which had increased the average significantly. Both of these related to outdoor fires.
- 29.9 PI09 (average response time to dwelling fires), which measured response time to the fires posing the greatest risk to life, had exceeded its target.
- 29.10 It was suggested that performance against the response indicators may be related to the introduction of the new mobilising system which measured calls from point of connection rather than at incident creation. The Service had adopted this particular measure for comparative purposes as it was similar to that used to prepare nationally published statistics.
- 29.11 In relation to PI14 (number of “false alarm, good intent” mobilised to), SOC Jeffery reported that over 51% of these mobilisations in Quarter 2 were to controlled burns or fires on open ground. Performance against this indicator would continue to be monitored to identify if this was a trend or the result of the unusually warm and dry weather conditions.
- 29.12 SOC Evans advised that PI16 (number of fire safety audits/inspections completed) had missed its target as a number of additional inspections had been undertaken to multi-storey cladded buildings following the Grenfell disaster. This had resulted in the routine audit programme being temporarily suspended. The programme had also been affected by vacancies and secondments in the specialist fire safety inspection team. This was being addressed, however, the specialist qualifications required in order to undertake this work did take time to achieve, so performance against this indicator may be affected for the remainder of the performance year.
- 29.13 The Chair noted that the number of road traffic collisions attended by the Service continued to increase. There was a time lag on the data relating to people killed or seriously injured in these collisions. SOC I Evans advised that the Service had recently been granted access to collision data from Highways England and this was being used to inform community risk management.

RESOLVED:

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

18-19/SD/030 Service Delivery Programmes to Date Report Quarter 2

- 30.1 DCFO Hopkinson introduced a report detailing the progress and status of the Service Delivery Programmes and Projects to date.
- 30.2 He reported that the Mobile Data Terminal Project had been combined with another project and had been added to the Group's programme report. The Service was leading a national aggregation procurement project on this and Kent Police and Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Services were the initial partners, with other fire and rescue services expressing an interest. This could lead to a significant saving in the unit cost.
- 30.3 DCFO Hopkinson advised that, due to ongoing national negotiations, it was proposed that the Co-responding Project be put on hold until progress could be made. In the interim period, the DCFO was meeting with the East of England Ambulance Service to discuss how this Service could support the Ambulance Service in relation to a wide range of areas. The local FBU representatives had agreed that these discussions could continue but not be implemented until a national agreement was reached.
- 30.4 Members requested an update on these discussions and DCFO Hopkinson suggested that these be reported under the Co-responding Project at the Group's next meeting.
- 30.5 The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme was rated as Amber as revisions to the strategic direction of the project had not yet been agreed at national level.
- 30.6 It was noted that, with the exception of two projects, all other projects were on target and reporting as Green.

RESOLVED:

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

18-19/SD/031 New Internal Audit Reports

- 31.1 DCFO Hopkinson submitted the internal audit report for the Use of Risk Information. The auditors had awarded this substantial assurance.
- 31.2 SOC Jeffery added that the auditors had provided positive feedback and that the good practice of the Service in this area had been recognised.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made to date be acknowledged.

18-19/SD/032 Audit and Governance Action Plans Monitoring Report

- 32.1 DCFO Hopkinson reported that he had no changes to report and that all actions had been completed subject to follow-up audit.

RESOLVED:

That progress made against current action plans be acknowledged.

18-19/SD/033 Customer Satisfaction Survey Report Quarter 2 2018/19

- 33.1 SOC Evans presented the results of customer satisfaction surveys conducted from 1 July to 30 September 2018. During this period, the Service had achieved a 99% customer satisfaction rate.
- 33.2 The return rate had improved from Quarter 1, with 500 surveys being sent out to a sample of addresses where Safe and Well visits had been completed. The overall return rate at Quarter 2 had doubled from Quarter 1 but this continued to be monitored.

- 33.3 The importance of a high return rate in identifying and addressing vulnerabilities was acknowledged, and SOC Evans reported that he was raising this issue with Station Commanders to ensure that fire crews were aware of the importance of encouraging individuals to complete and return the surveys.
- 33.4 SOC Evans advised that there was the provision for the completion of surveys online; however, many of the vulnerable individuals who were targeted for Safe and Well visits preferred to complete paper surveys.
- 33.5 DCFO Hopkinson advised that following the replacement of the Mobile Data Terminals, it was envisaged that the surveys could be completed on tablets on site in future.
- 33.6 Councillor Atkins commented positively on the presentation given by David Lynch at the Neighbourhood Watch meeting the previous evening.

RESOLVED:

That the report and the continuing good levels of customer satisfaction be acknowledged.

18-19/SD/034 Operational Decision Making Procedures – Exception Report

- 34.1 There were no exceptions to report.

18-19/SD/035 Corporate Risk Register

- 35.1 GC McLaren presented the review of the Corporate Risk Register in relation to Service Delivery. There had been no changes to risk ratings during the reporting period.
- 35.2 Three risks had been updated: CRR02 (if we cannot recruit or retain adequate numbers of part time fire fighters, particularly in relation to day cover, then we will not be able to fully crew our fire appliances and thus have a detrimental impact on our service delivery due to the unavailability of our fire appliance), CRR22 (if we have inadequate or incomplete operational pre planning policies, procedures or information available to us then we can potentially risk injury or even death to our firefighters and staff and CRR44 (if the Service does not have a reliable accurate system for continuously monitoring and updating the

availability and skills of Retained Duty System (RDS) operational personnel and RDS appliances then there could be delays in mobilising the nearest available appliance to emergency incidents. This could significantly impact upon the effectiveness and mobilising of our emergency response, increase risks to firefighters and the communities, reduce our ability to monitor performance, undermine RDS employees confidence in the Service and could result in negative media coverage).

RESOLVED:

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

18-19/SD/036 Liaison with HM Prison Bedford

- 36.1 SOC Evans introduced his report which provided information in relation to the Service's liaison with HMP Bedford following an increase in the number of incidents requiring a Service response over the last five year period. There had also been a significant disturbance at the prison in November 2016 which had resulted in £1million worth of damage to two wings of the Prison.
- 36.2 13 out of the 14 deliberate fire incidents requiring rescue had occurred at the Prison, and it was recognised that, due to the nature of the Prison, it was difficult to access in the event of an emergency.
- 36.3 In May 2018, the Prison had been placed in special measures by the Government as the result of safety concerns. An "urgent notification" process had been triggered in September 2018 regarding concerns over a lack of control in parts of the Prison. The inspection identified a high level of assaults on staff and poor and overcrowded living conditions. These conditions may have led to the increase in incidents.
- 36.4 The Prison was identified as a special risk and the Service made regular risk gathering visits and had site specific plans for both minor and major incidents in place. There had also been a number of multi-agency exercises conducted to test the emergency arrangements. However, the Service's operational debrief process had highlighted concerns with prison staff being unaware of agreed procedures leading to difficulties in gaining access.

- 36.5 There was a Memorandum of Understanding in place between the Prison and the Service and this was reviewed in September 2017. This was sent by the Service to the Prison in March 2018 for signature and to date had not been received.
- 36.6 As the Prison was a Crown Premises, the statutory enforcing authority for the fire safety arrangements was the Crown Premises' Fire Inspection Group and the CFO had written to the Group detailing the concerns raised by Members of the FRA. A response was received on 25 October 2019 which indicated that the Prison would be subject to a two-day inspection in the early part of 2019.
- 36.7 Councillor Atkins, as Ward Member for the ward in which the Prison was located, commented on the particular difficulties arising from the cohort of the Prison who were subject to short-term confinement.
- 36.8 DCFO advised that GC Cook had been tasked with meeting with the Governor or Deputy Governor of the Prison to discuss our concerns. He would also be asked to request that the Prison representatives sign and return the Memorandum of Understanding to the Service.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received.
2. That the report and the associated correspondence with the Crown Premises' Fire Inspection Group be referred to the next meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority.
3. That the Group receive an update following the inspection of HMP Bedford by the Crown Premises' Fire Inspection Group in early 2019.

18-19/SD/037 Work Programme

- 37.1 The Group received its work programme and noted that it had requested an update report on HMP Bedford to be submitted to its next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be received.

18-19/SD/038 Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1: Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to Sections 100A(2) and 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the discussion of the following item on the grounds that the matters to be discussed involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended):

Item

Fire Fatality

The meeting finished at 11.36am.