

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
7 October 2019
Item No. 8

REPORT AUTHOR: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION UPDATE

For further information Andrew Hopkinson
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Tel No: 01234 84 5112

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 Blue Light CSB, jointly chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) and the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC).

2. Programme Governance

- 2.1. The work of the CSB is now supported by the sub-ordinate “Blue Light Collaboration Delivery Group” which has met four times since it was established in November 2018. With the exception of the Joint HQ project, all key projects and workstreams are being tactically managed via this group with the CSB providing strategic oversight and scrutiny.
- 2.2. DCFO Andrew Hopkinson and ACO Gavin Chambers had a productive meeting in September with the new Deputy Chief Constable, Trevor Rodenhurst, and ACO Phil Wells, reviewing the governance arrangements to identify further opportunities to improve their effectiveness. Both parties recognised that whilst the introduction of the Collaboration Delivery Group had been successful, there is an opportunity to further strengthen the governance arrangements by establishing a jointly funded strategic post to lead the range of collaboration projects across both BP and BFRS. The post, potentially at Area

Commander or Chief Superintendent level, would be 50% funded from the BFRS Collaboration Reserve for a period of 12 months initially on a secondment basis from either BFRS or BP as a development opportunity. The postholder would be Chair of the Collaboration Delivery Group, accountable to the Collaboration Strategic Board and would be afforded authority to direct resources across both BP and BFRS. It is anticipated that recruitment to the post would be completed before December.

2.3. The next meeting of the CSB is scheduled for 1 November 2019.

3. Estates Collaboration

3.1. Joint Headquarters:

- As previously reported, both BP and BFRS continue to work towards co-locating the core functions based at our respective HQ sites.
- Efforts by BP to recruit to the role of project manager were unsuccessful so the CSB is exploring alternative options.
- Spatial and functional requirements for the Workshops functions of both Police and Fire have been captured and work to explore potential sites is being progressed alongside discussions with EEAST who have identified a need for two ambulance 'operational hubs' in the Bedford and Luton areas.

3.2. Toddington Fire Station co-location

- Agreement has been reached for BP to establish a Police station within Toddington Fire Station. Works to adapt the accommodation are anticipated to commence before the end of 2019.

4. Response Collaboration

4.1. Emergency & Non-urgent Medical Response:

- The DCFO is hosting a meeting with the EEAST in October to explore, at their request, how BFRS can support EEAST with Emergency and Non-urgent Medical Response calls. Although this will be influenced by the lack of progress with the on-going national negotiations linked to pay and conditions, we are keen to explore this area in anticipation of securing a national agreement, especially in light of the increased demand that occurs over the winter period.

4.2. Video Live Streaming from the Incident Ground:

- BP and BFRS are at the early stages of sharing a live video streaming service, initially to be deployed to police officers in October or November that will enable live streaming of video footage from the incident ground into police and fire control rooms. The service will enable:
 - Text to Video by SMS – Call handlers trigger the live stream by sending a link to the recipient by SMS.
 - Live streaming by officers using an application on their smart phone.

5. Support Services:

5.1. Response Driver training (cars):

- This project has progressed to the stage where our lead driving instructor will, in the very near future, be shadowing a Police Response Driver training course before finalising the BFRS course content to ensure it meets Police requirements and allow BFRS to train police officers in blue light response driving skills.

5.2. Chaplaincy:

- BP and BFRS have jointly recruited a multi-faith team of Chaplains who will provide a joint county-wide service. We are at final stages of the necessary HR and security vetting checks.

5.3. Communications and Engagement/Public Relations:

- Charlotte Parker has been seconded, for a 6 month period, from Bedfordshire Police as our Interim Communications and Engagement Manager, managing all aspects of the department's work. We are exploring other opportunities with the police in this area, such as improving the resilience of our out of hours on-call arrangements.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1. 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