

Notes of the Policy Planning Forum

**5 September 2016 at 10.30 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

Present: Members of the Authority
Councillor Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Idrees (Vice Chair)
Councillors Allcock, Atwal Singh, Barlow, Barrie, Davis, Eustace,
Hogarth, Mottram, Sealey, B Singh, P Singh, T Singh, Skinner,
Spence, and Young
Mr Ager.

Officers: West Midlands Fire Service
Chief Fire Officer (P Loach)
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (P Hales)
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (G Taylor)
M Griffiths (Treasurer), M Hamilton-Russell, P Shergill,
J Connor, S Taylor, S Timmington, S Vincent, M Ward-White,
S Warnes

Clerk and Monitoring Officer

K Gowreesunker (Clerk)
S Sahota (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Apologies: Councillors: Aston, Bennett, Booth, Brackenridge, Cartwright,
Clinton, Craddock, Dad, Tranter and Walsh
M Dudley (Monitoring Officer)

Observers: Nil

14/16 Chair and CFO Announcements

The Chair and Chief Fire Officer welcomed all attendees to the Policy Planning Forum.

Upon commencement of the meeting, thirty seconds silence was held in memory of Watch Commander John Sales.

Following an article published in the Mail on Sunday regarding the decision by the Department of Education that it would not be recommending that sprinklers be fitted in new schools in the future, Cllr Hogarth had written to the newspaper. The Cllr's letter had been published in the following Sunday edition of the newspaper.

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Cllr Hogarth had contacted Julian Knight MP, regarding this issue and as a result, a question would be asked in parliament on the subject of sprinklers within new schools.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that there had been a great response to open days and public events over the summer period and thanked all Members who had supported the initiatives. The number of people signed up to the Community Membership Model had increased as a result. All Members were more than welcome to attend the Headquarters open day which was to take place on 10 September.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members of a number of developments:

- The Service continued to develop its role within the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) as part of public sector reform, with the Service being an example of a public service which had transformed. As part of this, the Chief Fire Officer had been offered the role of public reform within the WMCA, reporting to Steve Eling.
- West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority (WMFRA) had become a member of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, developing understanding of how reducing vulnerability contributes to the economy through the protection work undertaken by the Service.
- The Service had reached number 31 within the top 50 inclusive employers. This was an achievement that the Service was proud of, and wanted to build upon, with a paper to go to the Fire Authority in due course.
- The Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge was coming up in October 2016, with Alasdair Hay, Chief Fire Officer of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, leading a peer team made up of a diverse group of members from the fire sector and beyond, to assess the Service.
- The Service continued to provide a lead support, via Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA), in sector reform and the pending Fire Service Inspectorate, using it as a platform for sector improvement.

15/16 Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge

Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk to the Fire Authority, delivered a presentation on the Operational Assessment (OpA) and Fire Peer Challenge:

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OpA is an established approach to sector improvement, having previously taken the form of the Comprehensive Area Assessment, amongst others. It is a voluntary process supported by CFOA and the Local Government Association (LGA), not mandatory or an inspection, and as a result seen as a strength by the sector as organisations willingly sign up to the process.

OpA has an operational focus with additional key areas of focus regarding corporate capacity and leadership. It consists of two elements: desktop self-assessments, and a Peer Challenge, where a team of peers from the fire sector and beyond visit the Service over a four day period.

The self-assessments cover seven key assessment areas:

- Community Risk Management
- Prevention
- Protection
- Preparedness
- Response
- Health, safety and welfare
- Training and development

The Service had been working on the self-assessments over the previous two months. The seven key area assessment areas are split into a number of questions which the Service have to answer, selecting a descriptor that reflects how developed the Service is within that area (developing, established and advanced), and providing evidence to support its position. The self-assessments are submitted to the peer team who will then review these prior to visiting the Service.

The corporate capacity and leadership element of the Peer Challenge is comprised of six cross-cutting themes which enable the peer team to understand the whole picture, how the Service is lead, and how the Service prioritises across the organisation:

- Understanding of local context and priority setting
- Delivering outcomes for local communities
- Financial planning and viability
- Political and managerial leadership
- Governance and decision making
- Organisational capacity

Additionally, a number of specific focus areas have been requested by the Service:

- Wider prevention agenda
- Integrated duty response
- Governance and decision making

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- Section 13 and 16 FRS Act
- Fire Control
- Equality and diversity
- Strategic Management and Leadership

The peer team are comprised of:

- Alasdair Hay - Chief Fire Officer - Fire Service Scotland (Lead Peer)
- Councillor Rebecca Knox – Dorset and Wiltshire FRS (Member Peer)
- Mark McAteer – Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications – Fire Service Scotland
- Nick Page – Chief Executive Solihull Borough Council
- Geoff Howsego – Director of Professional Services, Hampshire FRS
- David Sibbert - Fire Safety and IRMP Advisor
Fire Brigades Union
- Gill Elliott, LGA Peer Challenge Manager

The Fire Peer Challenge involves interviews with Members, Principal Officers, Strategic Managers, and staff at various levels, engagement with members of partner organisations, focus groups, and visits to Fire Stations and functional areas.

The peer team would be visiting the Service 17 to 20 October 2016, culminating with a presentation to the Chair and the Strategic Enabling Team. A draft report would be submitted via the WMFRA, along with an accompanying action plan which would be managed by the Scrutiny Committee.

DCFO Hales provided an overview of the forthcoming Fire Service Inspectorate:

- The Policing and Crime Bill reintroduces the Fire Service Inspectorate
- The Home Office was developing the Inspectorate for Fire in liaison with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)
- The sector, including WMFS, had the opportunity to shape and influence
- It was acknowledged that Peer Review was an embedded process for improvement and there was an aim to ensure that any Inspectorate took a similar approach to Peer Review, a well-rounded approach that was not too direct, and one that was proportionate to the sector
- A pilot could be run by the Home Office next April (2017)

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16/16 Fleet Management

Martin Ward-White, Integrated Risk Manager, delivered a presentation on fleet management:

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 informs Fire and Rescue Services what is expected. The Act references the Fire and Rescue National Framework which is a high level document enabling the flexibility for Fire and Rescue Services to develop their respective service delivery models. However, the requirement of an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is a consistent requirement for every Fire and Rescue Service.

The IRMP is owned by the Chief Fire Officer and it identifies all risk and potential incidents, with the Service demonstrating how it applies its prevention, protection and response activities to deal with these. The IRMP, in conjunction with the FRA Constitution, supports the effective delivery of The Plan.

There are four elements to the IRMP:

- Risk analysis
- Community Safety Strategy
- The Plan
- Annual Assurance Report to the FRA

Level two, three and four plans are based on, and aligned with, The Plan, ensuring decisions made are within the strategic plan.

Research undertaken into survivability has demonstrated that a five minute response time is essential for category 1 incident types. This evidence accompanied by data has indicated the need for the Service Delivery Model (SDM).

The challenge has been how to afford this SDM in light of cuts to government funding (approximately 50% reduction between the years 2010 and 2020). This has meant that the Service has had to be inventive in how it provides the SDM, looking at the fleet and how it is staffed, culminating in new initiatives including the introduction of:

- Brigade Response Vehicles (BRVs)
- Business Support Vehicles (BSVs)
- Dual crewing of special appliances
- Resilience groups
- Voluntary additional shifts

Decisions have not been based purely on finances but also on the IRMP, making the SDM more efficient.

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Not all of the fleet is available all of the time. This can be due:

- Reasons the Service can control:
 - Training and exercising
 - Shift patterns (late and core)
 - Vehicle maintenance
- Reasons the Service can't control:
 - Sickness
 - Incidents
 - Unplanned / exceptional circumstances
 - Critical incident debriefs

Many scenarios are managed by senior managers and Fire Control as part of resource management, ensuring resources are available for high risk communities and ensuring the five minute attendance standard is maintained.

Historically, resource management had been carried out using professional judgement. However, in recent years software has been developed which analyses data which supports officers in the decision making process. This has enabled a greater degree of flexibility with fleet availability, with the ability to analyse and identify when peaks in demand occur and where, allowing resources to be positioned accordingly.

Additionally, Section 13 and 16 arrangements provide the ability to request resources from other Fire and Rescue Services, for example the Smethwick fire.

To provide assurance to the Service and Authority, data for the previous four years illustrate response times have been met although fleet availability is rarely 100%.

17/16 Business Development Update

Preith Shergill, Strategic Enabler of Business Development, delivered a presentation and update:

One of the key aims of business development is to support the £10m budget deficit and the SDM.

The capability and capacity of staff has enabled an integrated business delivery model, part of the SDM, allowing it to be cost effective for both the Service and the commissioner. The Service is looking to use the public pound most effectively and the scope allows the Service to work more collaboratively and in innovative ways.

The Service has placed a focus on prevention work, taking into account resources available including Vulnerable Persons Officers and

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Partnership Officers, as well as access to 30,000 Safe and Well visits, to enable a holistic approach. This work has created a lot of credibility for example the Marmot endorsement and the Royal Society for Public Health partnership, upskilling firefighters to understand health issues, and acknowledging the Service's contribution to health.

The offer provided by the Service includes:

- Cost effective /business benefit
- Trusted brand
- 24/7 cover
- Rapid response
- Local community fire stations
- Causes behind the causes
- Capability and expertise
- Evaluation / data sharing

The Service is meeting the strategic outcomes within the NHS Outcomes Framework and Public Health England Framework, building upon the existing Marmot work.

Examples of tangible community health outcomes include:

- Reducing;
 - Slips, trips and falls
 - Hospital admissions / discharges
 - The pressure on GP surgeries
 - Winter pressures
 - Ambulance conveyances
- Delivering wellbeing messages within peoples' homes

These opportunities are in addition to existing income generation avenues such as the primary authority. The Service is also to explore additional areas within protection such as investigating the potential for Fire Control to act as an alarm receiving centre.

Social value will be explored in more detail during years two and three.

Income worth £119k was generated during 2015/16, comprised of preliminary work and pilots that had been carried out. A target of £250k had been set for 2016/17, with current projections indicating the generation of approximately £220k.

The work involved in flexible funding is about more than simply raising money. It is about providing services to vulnerable communities, for example the Telecare Falls Response provides potential access to approximately 1300 homes. Additionally, the percentage of calls that resulted in no referral to the Ambulance Service has been 90.6% in Coventry, and 85.8% in Wolverhampton.

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There are a number of challenges that the Service faces including:

- the research and design of services whilst simultaneously delivering services
- a constantly changing environment
- a number of opportunities at the conceptual stage
- very tight deadlines

The Service acknowledges that there is an amount of calculated risk due to new ways of working. It is important that the Service takes employees and representative bodies on this journey.

Emerging opportunities include:

- Alarm Receiving Centre: calls would go direct to Fire Control rather than an alarm handling centre
- Fire Control to deal with Telecare calls
- Subcontracting domiciliary care provision
- Patient transfers (from hospital)
- Befriending services for vulnerable people and 'frequent flyers' (tie in with Safe and Well visits)
- New technologies
- Hospital discharges (currently commissioned in Coventry as a proof of concept)

In answer to Members' questions:

Taking on the role of an alarm receiving centre would entail Fire Control receiving calls directly from social housing organisation rather than through an alarm centre.

In terms of capacity within the workforce, the current principle of delivering such services is via an integrated delivery model, with the majority of commissioning opportunities based around the SDM. All opportunities are analysed by the Strategic Hub in terms of resources.

With regard to domiciliary care, it is acknowledged that this a new area for the Fire Service, and that currently a lot of firefighters are not equipped to undertake such a role, and it is not an area that is seen as a role of a firefighter, at least at this current time. This raises the question as to whether the Service may employ people directly to undertake such roles, or to potentially use sub-contractor(s).

DCFO Hales noted that the Policy Planning Forum was a vehicle for discussing ideas, with requests for advice and Member involvement. The Telecare Falls Response is an example of a new area of work that was initially raised 12 months ago with some justified concerns, but 12 months on, the Service was in the process of implementing and

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delivering the service. It was acknowledged that there may be times where the Service may look at options and note that the Service does not possess the capacity or skills required at that time, but such options would still be explored.

The meeting closed at 12:25 hours.

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