

THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE



REPORT TITLE: TVFCS ANNUAL REPORT

PRESENTED TO: JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 25 JULY 2016

PRESENTING REPORT: COUNCILLOR ANGUS ROSS

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1. To provide an overview of the activities and work undertaken in relation to Thames Valley Fire Control Service during 2015/16.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Joint Committee:-

- 2.1. **Note** the report.

3. BACKGROUND AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1. The TVFCS became fully operational at 19:08 hrs on the 23 April 2015. This is the first Annual Report. Chairmanship of the Joint Committee will rotate through the three constituent authorities annually.
- 3.2. **Governance**
 - 3.2.1 The Joint Committee held its inaugural meeting on the 28 May 2015, at which Councillor Ross of RBFA was elected as the first Chairman and Councillor Roger Reed of BMKFA was elected as Vice-Chairman. The 22 April 2015 Legal Agreement relating to the Steady State Operation of TVFCS is currently the basis for operation and governance of the Joint Committee.
 - 3.2.2 There have been three public and one confidential meetings to date, with all meetings being fully attended and quorate, for which all Members are thanked.

- 3.2.3 Agendas and papers are now available on all partner websites, which supports clarity of governance and process.
- 3.2.4 The Officer Coordination Group has met monthly since “go live” with Area Manager Matt Carlile (OFRS) taking the role as Chairman. All meetings have been undertaken within the parameters of the Steady State Legal Agreement.

3.3. Programme Team

- 3.3.1 As the programme has yet to conclude, there are still members of the programme team working on issues and finalising programme actions.
- 3.3.2 The outcomes of the Gateway Review will inform progress going forwards.
- 3.3.3 The commitment of officers and their colleagues toward the programme should be commended by Members of the three Authorities.
- 3.3.4 Some officers have now left their posts and this is to place on record our thanks for their efforts before and since cut-over. DCFO Nathan Travis (OFRS), Bryan Morgan (RBFRS) and Greg Smith (BMKFA) all had prominent roles.

3.4. Technical Issues

- 3.4.1 Work is still ongoing to complete the contractual delivery requirements and until these are all complete the mobilising system will not be considered to be fully functional. The continuing delays are regrettable but much pressure continues to be put on Capita to complete their initial installation contract.

3.5. Staffing

- 3.5.1 A full complement of staff has yet to be achieved, despite several recruitment campaigns. Since go live, there has been a consistent staff shortage which, together with greater than anticipated training requirements, has had an impact on both staffing levels and associated performance.
- 3.5.2 Staff absence rates have been higher than anticipated and intervention measures have been and continue to be taken in an attempt to reduce absence rates.
- 3.5.3 A Control Resolution Team was formed, which was attended by members of control, to identify and propose solutions to issues arising in the control room and its systems. The team has now been replaced by regular control management team meetings.

3.6. Performance

- 3.6.1 Performance within the Control Room continues to improve and in a number of areas emergency response performance is better than when the stand alone Control Rooms were live in Buckinghamshire and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services.
- 3.6.2 Although performance is improving, further progress is needed to achieve the Oxfordshire Control Room performance prior to go-live. It is anticipated that this upward trend will continue (as staff become more settled and familiar with the systems, and as the mobilising system issues are resolved) until levels previously achieved in Oxfordshire are attained or exceeded. It also should be noted that RBFRS and BMKFA did not have the pre-alerting function that OFRS employed in the stand alone Control Rooms.

- 3.6.3 Until the end of March 2016 a total of 28,060 emergency calls have been answered.
- 3.6.4 A total of 17,623 emergency mobilisations have been made.
- 3.6.5 A total of 78,963 administrative calls have been answered.

3.7. Operational Incidents

3.7.1 There have been several significant incidents over the last 11 months including:

- The Randolph Hotel, Oxford
- Wokefield Park Hotel, Reading
- Lakeside Hotel, Reading
- Didcot Power Station, Oxfordshire
- Concurrent 6 pump incidents in Bucks/MK

3.8 Gateway Review

3.8.1 In November 2015, the Chief Fire Officers of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services commissioned a Gateway Review of TVFCS. The review was conducted in January 2016. The headlines arising from the review are;

- Thames Valley has a functioning fire control system, but it is not in steady state.
- The Programme Team project can be closed down once a transition plan has been put in place and is sufficiently underway.
- The objectives and deliverables have been partially delivered.
- Much effort has been put in to getting TVFCS to its current state. The achievement should be recognised and as confidence in TVFCS grows it should be celebrated.
- A properly resourced transition plan is needed to take TVFCS forward so that the Vision can be delivered.
- Leadership at the strategic level is needed to agree the future direction for TVFCS.
- Good communication, internally and externally, will be needed and the users of the system need to be engaged to take ownership of TVFCS and drive improvements.

4. JOINT COMMITTEE

4.1 The Committee in its meetings has reviewed and commented on progress of the project, reviewed the spend and prepared the budget for 2016/7 which was submitted to the constituent authorities for agreement. It has been particularly concerned at the contract progress and staff issues. Also it was concerned at the consequent slow progress towards performance at least equal to pre-cutover. It has recognised the longer period necessary to reach 'Steady State' which will then enable future progress better to be agreed and planned. It fully supports the efforts made by the residual officer Project Team

and awaits the findings of the Gateway Review and Transition Plan, called by the three Chief Fire Officers, to assist in the essential short and medium term planning.

5. FINANCIAL LEGAL, RISK MANAGEMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are no financial, legal, risk, environmental or equality implications arising from this report

6. COMPLIANCE WITH THE TVFCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

6.1. This report complies with the Steady State Legal Agreement – see 3.2.1

7. CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE AIMS

7.1 The report provides performance information to support the Service aims.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1. None.

Authors: Paul Southern
Assistant Chief Fire Officer, RBFRS
and
Councillor Angus Ross
Chairman, Joint Committee

Date of report: 23 June 2016