

# **THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE**

## **Joint Committee**



## **Thames Valley Fire Control Service**

### **Joint Committee Annual Meeting**

**The next meeting of the above Committee will be held remotely on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 2pm**

**For anyone wishing to observe this meeting, details will be published shortly.**

Notice dated: 6 July 2020

# VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE JOINT COMMITTEE



## Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee Annual Meeting

Monday 13 July 2020 at 2.00 pm,  
Virtual meeting via Teams

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### AGENDA

	Item	Page No.
1.	Appointment of Chairman	
2.	Appointment of Vice-Chairman	
3.	Apologies	
4.	Introductions (including changes of membership, if any)	
5.	Declarations of Interest	
6.	Minutes of the last meeting held on 28 May 2020	Pages 2 - 8
7.	Matters Arising	
8.	Questions from Members (written questions)	
9.	Questions submitted under Standing Order 9.5 (questions from members of the public)	
10.	Chairman's Annual Report 2019/20	Pages 9 - 14

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11.	TVFCS Performance Report Quarter 4 2019/20	Pages 15 - 33
12.	Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) Update	Pages 34 - 37
13.	Forward Plan	Page 38
14.	<p>Meeting dates for 2020/21</p> <p>To agree the times and dates of meetings of the Joint Committee as follows:</p> <p>Monday 21 September 2020 at 2.00 pm  Monday 14 December 2020 at 2.00 pm  Monday 22 March 2021 at 2.00pm</p>	
15.	<p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>To note the time and date of the next meeting</p>	

## Joint Committee Terms of Reference

### 1. REMIT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

- 1.1. The Joint Committee is constituted to provide overall strategic direction and oversight for the TVFCS.
- 1.2. The Joint Committee shall have the following functions:
  - 1.2.1. champion the TVFCS;
  - 1.2.2. act as the link between the TVFCS and the Fire Authorities;
  - 1.2.3. guide recommendations from the TVFCS, that may affect the operational functions of the Fire Authorities, through the governance processes of the Fire Authorities;
  - 1.2.4. assist with the management of the relationships between the Fire Authorities;
  - 1.2.5. monitor the steady state operational benefits and performance of the TVFCS, against the agreed measures and targets;
  - 1.2.6. monitor steady state risks relevant to the TVFCS;
  - 1.2.7. monitor the financial performance of the TVFCS against required and available budget, benefits and efficiencies, and to contribute to the financial processes of the Fire Authorities;
  - 1.2.8. discuss, and contribute to, proposals on future developments for the TVFCS;
  - 1.2.9. provide strategic direction on the future of the TVFCS;
  - 1.2.10. consider and recommend to the Fire Authorities proposals in relation to Fire Authority Decisions including but not limited to:
    - (b) discuss and recommend proposals for additional full partners into the TVFCS;
    - (c) discuss and recommend proposals for the supply of TVFCS services to other fire and rescue services or other clients;
  - 1.2.11. decide upon and determine all matters which are Joint Committee Decisions, any matters referred to the Joint Committee for decision pursuant to the TVFCS decision making process in clause 11 (Decision Making by TVFCS) and any matters reserved by law or otherwise to the Joint Committee.



## Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee Meeting

Thursday 28 May 2020, 11 am, a remote Microsoft Teams meeting hosted by  
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

The business transacted was the agenda for the postponed meeting due to be held on  
Monday 23 March 2020

### Minutes

- Present:** Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE (BMKFA) - Chairman  
Councillor Steven Lambert (BMKFA)  
Councillor Angus Ross (RBFA)  
Councillor David Cannon (RBFA)  
Councillor Judith Heathcoat (OCC)
- In Attendance:** Graham Britten (Director of Legal and Governance, BFRS)  
Dave Norris (Head of Service Delivery, BFRS)  
Katie Nellist (Democratic Service Officer, BFRS)  
Asif Hussain (Principal Accountant, BFRS)  
Rob McDougall (Chief Fire Officer, OFRS)  
Michael Adcock (Area Manager, OFRS)  
Christine Barefield (Personal Assistant, OFRS)  
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, RBFRS)  
Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, RBFRS)  
Mark Arkwell (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, RBFRS)  
Connor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, RBFRS)  
Jim Powell (Area Manager RBFRS)  
Simon Harris (Group Manager, TVFCS)
- Public:** Live webcast broadcast: [https://buckinghamshire.public-tv/core/portal/webcast\\_interactive/488202](https://buckinghamshire.public-tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/488202)

#### 01. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mark Gray (OCC) and Jason Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer, BFRS)

**02. INTRODUCTIONS**

All Members and Officers introduced themselves.

**03. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**04. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2019**

RESOLVED –

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**05. MATTER ARISING**

The Chairman took Members through the actions from the last meeting.

The Group Manager (TVFCS) advised that he had passed on the Members' thanks, personally, to all Control room staff.

The Group Manager (TVFCS) advised Members that the billing error made by BT had been resolved and the revised situation would be reflected in a report to the Committee at the next meeting in July.

The Head of Service Delivery (BFRS) gave Members an update on the Grenfell Tower enquiry report. There were three approaches, the first being the National approach through the National Fire Chiefs Council. The National Fire Chiefs Council wanted the 45 fire and rescue services to take a unified approach to some of the actions identified and that work was in progress. As part of that approach, all three Thames Valley fire and rescue services were represented on the High-Rise Working Group. The second approach was the three Thames Valley fire and rescue services working together. The Area Managers from the three services regularly met to discuss matters arising from the report, including operational alignment, policy alignment, and where possible, procuring the same equipment. Lastly, individually, how each service was looking to understand how the outcomes from the report would be taken within their own service to ensure its own individual practices were consistent with the findings.

Members agreed that the Grenfell report findings, and how it related to the TVFCS, should be a regular item at these meetings for the foreseeable future and would be added to the Forward Plan for the next meeting.

Dave  
Norris

The Democratic Services Officer (BFRS) advised Members that the workshop had been postponed due to the current situation. Another workshop would be arranged before the next meeting in July.

Katie  
Nellist

## **06. PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2019/20**

The Area Manager (OFRS) advised Members that as they were aware, this report was due in March, but due to Covid-19, it had been delayed, so now most of the information was two months old. During Quarter 3 there had been a 5.5% reduction in the number of calls received and a 2.8% reduction in the number of mobilisations. This was in line with expected seasonal variations in demand. Recruitment had taken place within this reporting period to fill the vacancies that had arisen as a result of staff turnover and to cover forthcoming maternity leave. The standards of applicants had been high and four new starters had joined in January 2020.

The Area Commander (BFRS) advised Members that the key 90 second measure showed an improvement of 4.32% compared with the same period in 2018/19. In December 2019 the target was achieved on 76.5% of occasions, which compared favourably with the figure of 70.05% achieved in December 2018. The HMICFRS Inspection report for BFRS was the last of the three services and was published in late December, with no areas for improvement relating to TVFCS specified within the report. With regard to TVFCS, the report identified that "The training for Control staff is well managed and mobilisation is generally good".

The Area Commander (BFRS) also advised Members that with regard to 'Areas for Improvement', changes were planned to the mobilising gazetteer used to identify addresses and to the way incidents were categorised during call handling with a view to improving the workflow for call handling and speeding up call handling times.

Also, the initial contract for maintenance and support of the Command & Control system expired in April 2022, with the option to extend the contract for up to eight years. Information was expected from Capita Spring 2020 outlining the costs associated with any extension of the contract, this had not yet been received, but it was hoped that a report would be provided to the September meeting for consideration.

Councillor Lambert asked if the report was not due back until September and there was the possibility of a tender process, there could be a requirement for an extension to the contract, or it could cause disruptions if a new provider was appointed, was there flexibility to extend the contract beyond April 2022? The Group Manager (TVFCS) advised Members that the contract with Capita gave an option to extend the existing arrangements for between two and eight years.

Councillor Ross asked if the new gazetteer arrangements had caused any disruptions to the system and was advised that due to Covid-19, it had been

delayed. An update would be brought to a future meeting.

The Area Manager (RBFRS) advised Members that with regard to the contract for maintenance and support of the Command & Control system with Capita, as it was such a significant piece of work and fundamentally important to the Control room, work had already commenced in service with the procurement team.

The Area Manager (RBFRS) advised Members that staff absence levels were as to be expected over the seasonal period. During the current period of Covid-19, there was a reduction in absence levels and some of the processes that were in place around infection control, would be taken forward into the future. Overtime levels were broadly consistent with absence levels and seasonal variations.

The Chairman advised Members that two members of the Control room staff had been rewarded for their commitment to the service and asked that the thanks of all Members be passed onto them.

The Area Manager (RBFRS) confirmed that Simon Harris and Julie Summers voluntarily began to provide 24 hours, out of hours, phone cover for staff. Also, from the initial period, they looked at all the guidance and how it would work in terms of crewing, which enabled the Control room to operate without any crewing issues.

Councillor Heathcoat, asked a question regarding the 2019/20 target of emergency calls answered within 5 seconds of 92% and the emergency calls answered within 10 seconds of 97%. How was this calculated? The Group manager (TVFCS) advised that the targets referred to the same volume of calls. Of all calls received, the aim was to answer 92% within 5 seconds and then if it goes over 5 seconds, 97% of calls were answered within 10 seconds and with 3% it may be over 10 seconds.

The Area Manager (RBFRS) advised Members that on the financial costs, under 'telephony and network costs' the billing error caused by BT, as already discussed, would have an impact on the year end variance.

RESOLVED –

That the Joint Committee note the report.

## **07. TVFCS FIVE YEAR REPORT**

The Area Manager OFRS firstly wanted to thank the Group Manager (TVFCS) for all his hard work. The improvements that had been seen since his appointment had been vast. The turnover of staff had reduced, the budget had improved, performance was improving, and new performance measures had been agreed. The management structure was working really well and the resilience and robustness of the Thames Valley Fire Control had worked especially well throughout this Covid-19 period.



Also, over the last five years, the relationship between the three services had been built, operational alignment had led to the same fire appliances being purchased, all three services would be purchasing the same breathing apparatus sets, which would allow further borderless mobilisations and working together across the Thames Valley.

The Chairman asked if the Capita report was the same report that was expected at the September meeting and was advised that it was. The report would show the performance levels against the service levels. Monthly meetings were held with the Capita Contract Manager to review the overall performance against the service levels with Capita.

Councillor Heathcoat thanked officers for the five-year report and also the work that had been undertaken with the Control room staffing.

Councillor Heathcoat asked if exit interviews were held to find out why people were leaving and was advised that exit interviews were built into the normal HR procedures and all staff had an exit interview. Any issues would be reported back to the Group Manager TVFCS. There were no repeating themes causing people to leave the Control room, it was for a variety of reasons, retirement, relocation and other employment within the service.

Councillor Lambert asked if the Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Pay Gap reports were covered in this report and was advised that as the Control room staff were technically RBFRS employees, that information was covered by their duty as the employer. This information could be made available to Members and fed into future reporting. Members agreed they would like to see it.

Councillor Ross shared with Members that over the last five years, he had seen an incredible increase in good atmosphere, the willingness of the Control room staff to share their views and opinions, which illustrated the success of the journey of the Control room.

The CFO (OFRS) asked if thought had been given to the fact that as there were now more operational joint control rooms, further benchmarking across other control services could be undertaken, to evidence further, what a good value for money service was being provided. Again, this would be useful for the renewal of contracts and potential new contracts moving forward.

The Area Commander (BFRS) advised Members that there were some comments in the HMICFRS report received by BFRS. The senior responsible officer commissioned a piece of work with TVFCS and the Area Commanders across the three Thames Valley fire and rescue services, to review the response to automatic fire alarms, across the three fire and rescue services. Methodology had been established with which the review would be carried out. The findings of the report would be fed back to Members of this committee.

Dave  
Norris

RESOLVED –

That the Joint Committee note the report.

## **8. EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME (ESMCP) UPDATE**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS) advised Members that as they were aware, the Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme was delivering the Emergency Services Network, which would replace the current Airwave System, which was used across all emergency services in the UK. The report sets out the position, prior to Covid-19. Since the report was written, there had been some updates. The National Programme had been working to bring the Full Business Case for the ESN forward for consideration and approval by the Minister, but due to the current situation, it had been advised that currently the Full Business Case had been suspended, and there were indications that this would not be brought forward until the end of the year.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS) advised Members that work was still ongoing to consider arrangements for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Services to move to the ESMCP South West Region. Officers across services in both regions were in agreement with the move, as was the National Programme and Fire and Resilience Directorate. This was anticipated to be completed within the coming weeks. What this would mean, was that the ESMCP South Central Region would comprise of the three Thames Valley fire and rescue services and that would be useful and supportive of their collaborative way of working.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS) advised Members that as previously reported, the Home Office Fire and Resilience Directorate now maintained scrutiny of the use of the grant funding, providing clearer guidance on how this grant funding could be spent and receiving quarterly reporting of ESMCP Transition Grant spend. It was a requirement for all regions to submit a business case for this year 2020/21 on how they would spend the grant. The business case for the South Central Region was approved by the Fire and Resilience Directorate and there was sufficient funding for the coming year.

Councillor Ross asked if the current provider Airwave was holding up and was advised that Airwave was working fine and there was assurance by the programme, that the necessary support for Airwave would continue until such time as the transition to ESN.

RESOLVED –

That the contents of the report on the ESMCP and the delivery of the ESN be noted.

## **9. FORWARD PLAN**

It was agreed that a Member's Workshop be held before the next meeting to discuss forward planning and future direction. Also, to be discussed would be the frequency of meetings of the Joint Committee.

The following reports would be added to the Forward Plan for the July meeting:

1. Grenfell update report
2. Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Pay Gap reporting

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

#### **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Monday 13 July 2020 at 2:00 pm.

(The Chairman closed the meeting at 12.05 pm)

## THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE



<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20</b>
<b>PRESENTED TO:</b>	<b>TVFCS JOINT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2020</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>AREA COMMANDER DAVID NORRIS</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TO NOTE</b>

### 1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 To provide a summary of progress made by TVFCS during the year 2019/20.

### 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the Joint Committee **NOTE** the annual report

### **REPORT**

3.1 An annual report is produced each year by the Chairman of the TVFCS Joint Committee.

3.2 This report provides a high-level summary of the progress made against plans, the performance of TVFCS against agreed measures, an overview of staffing changes and a summary of the financial position at year end. Finally, it will provide a look forward to 2020-21 and the key areas of work required to continue making improvements to TVFCS on behalf of the three FRSs.

- 3.3 TVFCS went live in April 2015, handles calls and mobilises resources for the three Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services, and this year celebrates its 5-year anniversary.

#### 4. TVFCS PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 The TVFCS Joint Committee identified that the previously agreed performance measures for TVFCS required a review, to provide relevant and current performance information to Members. A series of Member workshops took place and a proposal for a new suite of performance measures was agreed at the September 2019 meeting of the Joint Committee. The performance of TVFCS from April 2020 onwards will be reported against these new measures.
- 4.2 TVFCS has performed well against the existing measure for how quickly calls are answered during the year, with the target met in every month and comfortably exceeded on the majority of occasions.
- 4.3 Levels of performance against the 'time to mobilise' measures have remained below the target during the year, but following the introduction of new technology in September 2019, which enabled Control staff to locate 999 callers using mobile telephones via the Command & Control system, and an increased focus on call handling technique from the TVFCS management team, a steady increase in performance has been reported.
- 4.4 Call challenging for Automatic Fire Alarms has been shown to have an impact on call handling times. Call challenging is an integral part of the response process for both OFRS and RBFRS and offers significant benefits by reducing the number of emergency vehicle movements. This preserves resources for more urgent incidents, improving the overall response standard, reducing costs and reducing the road risk posed by 'blue light' response.
- 4.5 Sickness levels have been consistent with the normal expected levels of seasonal absence. Some spikes in overall sickness levels have occurred as a result of long term absences for individual staff members who have suffered more serious health issues. The COVID 19 pandemic has had a minor impact on sickness levels in the final quarter of the year.
- 4.6 The overall performance of TVFCS has improved slightly against all measures in 2019/20 in comparison with 2018/19. The overall demand on the service has also increased by a small amount compared with the previous year.
- 4.7 An overview of performance is included as **Appendix A**

#### 5 Staffing Position

- 5.1 Staff turnover rates have further reduced during the year, with only two staff leaving employment with TVFCS compared with seven during 2017/18 and four during 2018/19. Of these, one was a member of staff retiring after thirty years' service.
- 5.2 It has continued to be possible to fill all internal vacancies at both Supervisory and Middle Management roles with internal candidates, demonstrating the progress that has been made in terms of staff development and succession planning.
- 5.3 A number of staff have been absent during the year as a result of maternity. The increased capacity within the management team has allowed better planning for covering maternity and it has been possible to recruit staff on fixed term contracts to cover these short term vacancies.

### **6 YEAR END FINANCIAL POSITION**

- 6.1 The budget for TVFCS is set at the December meeting of the Joint Committee each year. The budget for TVFCS for 2019/20 was £2,263,438. At year end, the actual expenditure was £2,230,051 giving an underspend of £ 33,387. The principal causes of the underspend were staff leaving employment during the year and maternity leave leading to lower than budgeted expenditure on employment costs.

### **7 NOTABLE ACTIVITY**

- 7.1 In September 2019, TVFCS began using the BT Advanced Mobile Location system for 999 callers using mobile phones, this has greatly improved the ease with which incidents reported using mobile telephones are located.
- 7.2 TVFCS staff have worked alongside colleagues from the RBFRS Resourcing & Development team to introduce a new framework for staff development across all roles. The Development and Assessment Pathways (DAPS) is now being rolled out to TVFCS staff to replace the NVQ system previously used.
- 7.3 TVFCS was involved in the BFRS HMICFRS inspection, with the results published in December 2019. There were no areas for improvement relating to TVFCS specified in the report. In relation to TVFCS, the report identified that "The training for Control staff is well managed and mobilisation is generally good"
- 7.4 The TVFC Senior Responsible Owners have led a series of staff workshops to identify potential ways in which the service can be developed and improved as it moves into its second five years of operation. The opportunities identified by this process will be explored with members of coming months.
- 7.5 TVFCS is now represented fully in the national forums relevant to Fire & Rescue Service control rooms, both at the tactical and strategic levels. This allows TVFCS to have early sight of the issues arising which will affect Control room services and to be fully involved in developing solutions to those issues.
- 7.6 A significant amount of work has taken place in the final months of the year as a result of the global COVID 19 pandemic. Plans have been reviewed, redrawn and implemented to address the crisis. Although TVFCS has been impacted by absence

related to COVID 19, it has been possible to maintain crewing levels and continue to provide the Service without interruption or degradation.

- 7.7 TVFCS have been involved in a number of incidents which have demonstrated the effectiveness of the service. Most notably this includes an incident in Olney, Buckinghamshire which occurred in December 2019, where the Fire Survival Guidance given to a family trapped in their home by Fire undoubtedly contributed to a positive outcome with no loss of life.

### **8. LOOKING FORWARD**

- 8.1 TVFCS and the Joint Committee will be considering the options available relating to the extension of the current contract for the Vision command and control system.
- 8.2 TVFCS will consider the adoption of new technologies over the coming months. This will include the Multi Agency Incident Transfer system (MAIT), which will improve the speed and accuracy with which incident information is transferred between Control rooms and address some of the issues identified in the Grenfell Tower enquiry.
- 8.3 Following Staffordshire & West Midlands Fire Control's upgrade to their Command & Control system, fall back arrangements will be upgraded to provide an improved technological solution.
- 8.4 We continue to be involved with the Fire & Rescue Services as they continue their business changes and strategic planning processes.
- 8.5 Work will continue with staff groups, Senior officers and members to identify suitable changes which can be made to the TVFCS environment to further enhance the service.

### **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The year has seen TVFCS consolidate its position further and begin to lay the foundations for the next five years.
- 9.2 New, performance enhancing technology has been adopted and preparations are underway to take further technical upgrades which will allow the introduction of new innovative solutions to further enhance the service.
- 9.3 Work has taken place with staff groups to consider how the branding and identity of the Control room service can be enhanced and how changes can be made to the physical environment to enhance the service provided along with the health and wellbeing of staff.
- 9.4 The resilience of the Control room and its staffing arrangements have been demonstrated through the robust response to the challenges posed by COVID 19.

10. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

a. None

11. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

a. None

7. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 N/A

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Not applicable

10. **PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 Not applicable

11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None

12. **APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A: TVFCS Performance 2019/20

13. **CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Group Manager Simon Harris – TVFCS



## Appendix A – Thames Valley Fire Control Service Performance 2018/19

Metric	Target	2019/20 Performance (12 Months average)	2018/19 Performance (12 Months average)
Admin calls answered within 15 seconds	N/A	82.68%	81.81%
Emergency calls answered within 5 seconds	92%	95.76%	94.35%
Emergency calls answered within 10 seconds	97%	97.98%	97.34%
Mobilisations within 60 seconds	60%	49.86%	47.17%
Mobilisations within 90 seconds	80%	74.09%	72.31%
Mobilisations within 120 seconds	95%	85.07%	83.86%
No of times Emergency fall-back instigated	N/A	0	0
Average shifts sick per FTE	N/A	0.73	1.13
Number of mobilisations	N/A	1853	1805
Total Emergency calls answered	N/A	3063	2952
Total Admin calls answered	N/A	7410	6627

Key	
Red	Target missed by more than 10%
Amber	Target missed by 10% or less
Green	Target met or exceeded by less than 10%
Blue	Target exceeded by 10% or more
Grey	Data accuracy issues make judgement not possible

# Thames Valley Fire Control Service



## Joint Committee Performance Report (Quarter 4 2019/20)

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## Introduction

The Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) performance report presents information on the performance of the joint control room. This is to provide structure and governance that enables TVFCS to measure, monitor and manage outputs and outcomes in a timely manner, allowing us to respond and make informed decisions to ensure that our statutory and partnership obligations are successfully delivered.

The aim of this report is to share how TVFCS has performed over the previous three months, offer explanation, analysis and mitigation for target outcomes, and to suggest positive means of carrying effective performance into the future.

### Key to Icons and Colours

	Target exceeded by more than 10%
	Target met or exceeded by up to 10%
	Target missed by up to 10%
	Target missed by more than 10%
	NA or data accuracy issues affect confidence in reporting

## Key Highlights

### Context

During Quarter 4 2019/20 TVFCS handled 7934 emergency calls which lead to 4678 mobilisations. In comparison with the equivalent period in 2018/19, this represents a 5% increase in the number of calls received, but a decrease in consequential mobilisations of 4.3%. This was caused by the weather conditions which affected the Thames Valley Area during the first 3 months of 2020. Overall, demand is in line with expectation based on normal seasonal variations.

During February and March 2020, the Thames Valley area was affected by Storms Brendan, Ciara and Dennis in relatively quick succession. Whilst none of these storms in isolation created a level of demand which stretched the capacity of TVFCS, the cumulative effect of the rainfall experienced caused significant flooding on the regions road network. This created a sustained heightened demand for TVFCS. Calls relating to flooding incidents on highways require extended questioning of callers to identify whether the Fire & Rescue Service is the most appropriate agency to provide assistance, or whether the call should be passed to the Police or Local Authority highways department for action. This in turn leads to extended call handling times, which has had a consequential impact on the associated performance measures for the time taken to mobilise resources. This extended questioning is also the primary causal factor for the increase in calls and reduction in mobilisations mentioned above, as a significant number of calls received by TVFCS via the 999 system were passed on to other agencies for action, with no mobilisation of FRS resources.

### Successes

TVFCS continue to exceed the target for how quickly calls are answered once they have been routed into the Control room. A considerable amount of effort has been made by the TVFCS Management team and, in particular, the TVFCS Station Manager in maintaining the levels of staffing required to perform strongly against this measure.

Although performance against the measure for the amount of time taken to mobilise after a call has been answered remains below target, performance has consistently improved during the course of the year. The factors mentioned elsewhere in this report had some negative impact in both February in March, but performance across

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

the whole quarter still shows an improvement of 3%, in the number of occasions where mobilisation takes place within 90 seconds of the call being answered, when compared with the equivalent period in 2018/19.

### Areas for Improvement

Although the percentage of mobilisations which take place within 90 seconds of the call being answered continues to show sustained improvement, further efforts are being made in order to sustain this improvement through the identification and sharing of good practice and the adoption of new technology. Due to the restrictions placed on the workforce by the national response to COVID 19, it has not been possible to progress some pieces of work in line with original timescales. As restrictions are loosened, key work, in particular technical upgrades, will be rescheduled for implementation.

Work related to the focus groups hosted by the TVFCS Senior responsible owners in December, which identified potential ways in which the Service TVFCS provides could be enhanced, has been temporarily postponed as the FRS focuses on its response to COVID 19. It is hoped that it will be possible to resume some of this activity as restrictions are eased.

### Emerging Issues & Risks

TVFCS activity towards the end of the quarter and in the early parts of Q1 2020/2021 has been dominated by the need to respond to the arising threat posed by the COVID 19 pandemic.

In early late February and early March, the TVFCS business continuity plans were reviewed in response to the developing COVID 19 situation in Italy. A number of measures were put in place as a result of this review to protect TVFCS and to ensure continuity of Service provision during the outbreak.

TVFCS planning for COVID 19 was focused in three areas. Firstly, the need to minimise the risk of infection within the workplace for TVFCS staff, secondly, to make arrangements which maximised the availability of existing TVFCS to crew the Control room and to bolster those staff numbers where possible and, thirdly, to determine what elements of the service could still be provided in the event that the large numbers of staff were absent as a result of COVID 19.

A number of actions were taken to prevent staff infection, including the 'Lockdown' of the Control room areas at both the primary and secondary Control room locations. The restriction of movement of staff into the areas adjacent to TVFCS in the RBFRS headquarters building, removing access to kitchen, shower and toilet facilities in that area for all but Control room staff. Furthermore, enhanced cleaning regimes were put in place along with additional facilities for hand and personal sanitation and

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

working arrangements have been altered wherever possible to allow staff to maintain social distancing within the workplace.

Measures have been taken, following consultation with and agreement from staff representative bodies, to maximise the availability of Control room staff and to identify and train former Control room staff to provide a limited 'bank' facility in addition to the normal resilience arrangements in the event that high staff absence levels were experienced.

From the middle of March and throughout April, TVFCS recorded a number of staff absences related to COVID 19. These were caused by either staff themselves or a member of their household developing symptoms. In addition, a small number of staff were identified as having a high clinical risk of complications from COVID 19 due to pre-existing health conditions which necessitated 'shielding' from the virus. Staff who are 'shielded' are working remotely, but unable to carry out their normal Control room duties.

Of the staff that developed potential symptoms of COVID 19, only one was able to access testing at the point that they became symptomatic and received a negative test result. Once reliable antibody testing becomes available, the TVFCS management team will explore the capability to test all eligible members of TVFCS staff.

The table below shows the level of COVID 19 related absence within TVFCS from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 to May 31<sup>st</sup> 2020.

Reason for workplace absence	Number of staff affected	Total working days lost
Self-Isolation	4	19
Household Isolation	6	24
Shielding	3	84
Total	13	127

Despite these staff absences, the measures put in place as described above proved effective in maintaining staffing at or above the agreed minimum levels.

As part of the FRS overall response to COVID 19, additional questioning of callers was introduced to identify premises where COVID 19 symptoms were present. This had the effect of slightly extending call handling times from the middle of March.

## Establishment

The authorised establishment and current staffing position are shown below. It details the number of people in their substantive posts and those in temporary positions.

Role	Authorised Establishment	Staff in substantive Posts and FTE	Staff in temporary Posts and FTE	Vacancies
Group Manager	1	1-1 FTE	0 – 0 FTE	0
Control Manager	1	1-1 FTE	0 – 0 FTE	0
Control Training Manager	1	1 – 1 FTE	0 – 0 FTE	0
Watch Manager	4	4 – 4 FTE	1 – 1 FTE	-1
Crew Manager	12	10 – 9.75 FTE	1 – 1 FTE	1.25
Fire Fighter	20	22 - 20.45 FTE	0 – 0 FTE	-0.45
Non Uniformed	1	1 – 1 FTE	0 – 0 FTE	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40 – 38.20 FTE</b>	<b>2 – 2 FTE</b>	<b>-0.20</b>





## Competence Levels

Role	Current staff	Number Competent in Role	Number in Development	% of Current Staff in Development
Group Manager	1	1	0	0%
Control Manager	1	1	0	0%
Control Training Manager	1	0	1	100%
Watch Manager	4	4	0	0%
Crew Manager	10	3	7	70%
Fire Fighter	22	16	6	27%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>36%</b>

Please note, the above figures relate to the actual numbers of staff employed, not the Full Time Equivalent used for establishment. Figures have been rounded up/down to the nearest full percentage point.

## Attendance/ Absence

Measure	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020
Short-term Sickness Episodes	9	5	7
Long-term Sickness Episodes*	1	1	1
Total Days lost to Sickness	53	36	46
Average days lost per FTE	1.27	0.88	1.14

\*long-term sickness is sickness absence of more than 28 days.

Despite the impact of COVID 19 and the long term absence mentioned above, the figures for Q4 2019/20 show an improvement against the equivalent period in 2018/19. The average number of days lost per FTE in 2019/20 was 1.10 per FTE, compared with a loss of 1.27 days per FTE in 2018/19. During January, TVFCS staff continued to be affected by a number of season illnesses. Overall absence levels were also impacted as a result of a member of staff suffering a serious health event on January 1<sup>st</sup> that will keep them out of the workplace for a prolonged period of time. Sickness levels began to improve in February, but declined in March. Of the sickness episodes recorded in March, 4 were as a result of staff members experiencing symptoms associated with COVID 19 which necessitated each member of staff being isolated from the workplace for at least 7 days. As no testing was available at this early stage of the outbreak it has not yet been possible to confirm whether any of these absences were caused by the novel coronavirus but it is hoped that, should reliable antibody testing become available, it will be possible to identify where absences may have been a direct result of exposure to the virus which will help planning for potential future waves. In addition to those that displayed symptoms personally, a number of staff members had to enter a 14 day period of household isolation as a result of other members of the household displaying symptoms. These absences were not included as sick leave, and are shown in the emerging risks and issues section of this report.



## Overtime Claims and Payment records

(Excluding Bank Holiday Pay and Handover Pay)

Measure	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020
Number of Staff Claiming OT	13	11	14
Hours Worked	176	226	231
Total Paid	£4,081.48	£4,716.86	£4,836.88

## Performance Measures (Data accurate as of 31/12/2019)

Measure		January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	Reporting period average	Same period 2018/19	Rolling 12 month average
1	Total Emergency calls answered	2757	2541	2636	2645	2512	3063
2	Number of Mobilisations	1638	1536	1504	1559	1630	1853
3	No. of times Emergency Fall-back instigated	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Number of Co-responding incidents	116	129	86	110	84	136

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

5	Total Admin Calls answered	7123	7207	6513	6947	6157	7410
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Measure*		2019/20 Target	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	Reporting period average	Same period 2018/19	Rolling 12 month average
6	Emergency calls answered within 5 seconds	92%	97.29%	97.49%	95.26%	96.68%	96.35%	95.76%
7	Emergency calls answered within 10 seconds	97%	98.84%	99.33%	97.29%	98.48%	98.32%	97.98%
8	% occasions where time to mobilise is within 60 seconds	60%	51.59%	50.78%	49.87%	50.75%	47.51%	49.86%
9	% occasions where time to mobilise is within 90 seconds	80%	76.25%	73.63%	73.60%	74.49%	71.48%	74.09%
10	% occasions where time to mobilise is within 120 seconds	95%	87.00%	83.72%	85.57%	85.43%	82.64%	85.07%
11	Admin calls answered within 15 seconds	n/a	84.32%	83.03%	84.98%	84.11%	82.86%	82.68%

\*Definitions are available in appendix A



Financial Position

Data accurate as of 31/12/2019

TVFCS Budget Monitoring 12 Months to 31 March 2020						
	<i>Total Annual Budget</i>	<i>Actual Expenditure To 31st March 2020</i>	<i>Forecast Outturn at Year End</i>	<i>Variance = Forecast - Annual Budget</i>	<i>Variance %</i>	<i>Commentary</i>

# TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Staff						
Employment Costs	1,673,370	1,636,076		-37,294	-2.23%	The underspend in this area is a result of staff leaving employment since the original budget was set and a member of staff being granted a career break.
Mileage and Subsistence	6,000	6,424		424	7.07%	The original budget for 2019/20 was set before a full year's data relating to the new Management team was available. The expenditure relates primarily to travel costs and accommodation for attending NFCC meetings and other similar events, as well as day to day travel between sites within the Thames Valley.

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Uniform Allowances	3,000	2,396		-604	-20.13%	This expenditure relates to a locally agreed allowance relating to work wear payable to eligible members of staff. Variance has been caused by TVFCS employing less eligible members of staff than when the budget was set.
Training	1,000	351		-649	-64.90%	Due to restrictions on movement as a result of COVID 19, a number of training courses scheduled for March 2020 were cancelled, leading to an underspend.
Recruitment	300	790		490	163.17%	Costs related to recruitment in 2018/19 had not been billed due to an error by the company which provides testing. These costs were billed in 2019/20. New requirements

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

						for checks when recruiting staff have also caused costs to increase slightly.
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,683,670</b>	<b>1,646,037</b>		<b>-37,633</b>	<b>-2.24%</b>	
<b>Corporate</b>						
Facilities	89,455	89,455		0	0	
Finance	22,276	22,276		0	0	
HR	71,636	71,636		0	0	
ICT	89,736	89,736		0	0	
Liability and Equipment Insurance	6,405	6,405		0	0	
Management	15,353	15,353		0	0	
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>294,861</b>	<b>294,861</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Other</b>						
Professional Services and General Equipment Purchase	6,000	13,603		7,603	126.72	In addition to the building survey undertaken in the Control room environment, an



## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

						outstanding invoice relating to final acceptance of the work to interface the Commontime paging system was received. This cost had originally been included in the 2018/19 budget.
OFRS Costs (secondary control facility)	42,215	42,215		0	0	
TVFCS Alarm Receiving Centre income	-9,000	-8,568		432	4.80%	Income received from Alarm Receiving Centre Contracts was slightly lower than expected.
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>39,215</b>	<b>47,250</b>		<b>8,035</b>	<b>5.33%</b>	
<b>Technology</b>						
Capita Mobs System (maint)	68,386	72,770		4,384	6.41%	As a result of staffing changes, a need arose for TVFCS and FRS staff to attend a technical course on the administration and maintenance

## TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

							of the Command & Control System leading to a small overspend.
DS3000 (for primary and secondary) ICCS	85,737	81,643		-4,094	-4.77%		This contract is subject to an annual increase based on RPI. The rate of RPI when the budget was set was higher than the rate of RPI when the supplier applied the increase in cost leading to an underspend.
Telephony and Network costs.	52,188	48,109		-2,679	-5.27%		Previously reported issues over a refund due from BT have been resolved, which has resulted in a small underspend.
EISEC Services (Primary and Secondary Control)	9,000	9,000		0	0		
Smart services to switch 999 lines to secondary	16,323	16,323		0	0		

# TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

control or elsewhere						
Airwave rental ( SAN I ,B ) ( Primary,secondary ) (7+8)	14,058	14,058		0	0	
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>245,692</b>	<b>241,903</b>		<b>-3789</b>	<b>-1.54%</b>	
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>2,263,438</b>	<b>2,230,051</b>		<b>-33,387</b>	<b>-1.48%</b>	

## Appendix A

### Performance Measure Definitions

Measure	Description
<b>% of occasions where the time to answer admin calls is within 15 seconds</b>	This measure uses the time taken from when the Fire Control Room system receives an admin call alert to the moment they are answered by a TVFCS Operator
<b>% of occasions where the time to answer emergency calls is within 5 seconds</b>	This measure uses the time taken from when the Fire Control Room system receives an emergency incoming call alert to the moment they are answered by a TVFCS Operator
<b>% of occasions where the time to answer emergency calls is within 10 seconds</b>	
<b>% of occasions where time to mobilise is within 60 seconds</b>	This measure is calculated from when emergency calls are answered to when control room staff request stations to mobilise the appliance.
<b>% of occasions where time to mobilise is within 90 seconds</b>	
<b>% of occasions where time to mobilise is within 120 seconds</b>	

## THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE



<b>SUBJECT</b>	<i>Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) update</i>
<b>PRESENTED TO:</b>	<i>Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee</i>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<i>13 July 2020</i>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<i>DCFO Steve Foye</i>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<i>None</i>
<b>ACTION</b>	<i>For Note</i>

### 1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report follows the update of the ESMCP programme provided to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee at the virtual meeting held on 28 May 2020.
- 1.2 The report updates the status of the National Programme (NP) and ESMCP South Central Region input into this. It has been a relatively short period since the last update and no immediate developments in regard to ESN that directly impact TVFCS
- 1.3 The National Programme suspended work on the Full Business Case as a consequence of Covid-19 and a revised date for its publication is yet to be set.
- 1.4 The most recent schedule issued by National Programme shows a transition period onto ESN for the fire and rescue sector of between Q2 2022 and Q4 2024.
- 1.5 The Home Office Fire and Resilience Directorate have approved the 2020/21 business case for spend of LTR grant funding in line with the business case submitted by the ESMCP South Central Board.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

The Joint Committee are asked to:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the contents of this report on the ESMCP and delivery of the ESN.

## **3. REPORT**

- 3.1 This report is provided as the quarterly update requested by the TVFCS Joint Committee in regard to the continued work in respect to ESMCP and delivery of the Emergency Services Network that will replace Airwave. The report follows the update provided to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee at the virtual meeting held on 28 May 2020.

- 3.2 There are no immediate developments in regard to ESN that directly impact TVFCS, however the following summarises the timeline of ESN delivery and the implications for adoption by Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services.

### **National Programme**

- 3.3 The National Programme postponed development of the revised Full Business Case (FBC) as a result of the Covid-19, with a number of staff being redirected to other activity in support of the response. A revised date for delivery of the revised FBC is not yet known.
- 3.4 These impacts have also been experienced within the three fire services within the Thames Valley and officers have been primarily focused on core service activity and the wider multi-agency response to Covid-19. Consequently this update is limited to a summary position.

### **ESN Adoption Position (Thames Valley)**

- 3.5 Cessation of the Airwave system is now indicated as being the end of December 2023. However, the most recent schedule issued from the National Programme indicating a transition period onto ESN for fire and rescue services being between Q2 2022 and Q4 2024. Consequently, we anticipate that a revised Airwave cessation date will be announced as part of the Full Business Case publication. Airwave continues to operate to the standards expected.
- 3.6 It should also be noted that the National Programme schedule does not include any contingency in its timeline for product delivery and it is officers view that it is reasonable to expect issues will be identified for resolution and these could impact current delivery milestones and the planned transition period.
- 3.7 Thames Valley officers continue to have a preferred position that transition to full ESN is implemented no later than 12 months prior to the confirmed Airwave cessation date. This would allow for managing delivery in context of

other commitments and create a prudent period of overlap between the old and new systems. Officers will continue to plan flexibly within this planning assumption and in response to new information from the programme.

- 3.8 Officers continue to monitor for the implications of programme timelines against other TVFCS requirements, such as hardware and software changes and contracts, capability and capacity of suppliers to deliver the work necessary to make all control rooms ESN ready and cost and funding implications stemming directly from the ESN National Programme.
- 3.9 Thames Valley FRSs are currently contributing to the National Programme objective of assuring that ESMCP network coverage is adequate through walk and drive testing of the region. This work is co-ordinated with colleagues in Thames Valley Police with results fed back to the National Programme to share with the ESMCP network supplier. This will inform and assure that the delivered coverage meets the expected operational standard of the emergency services and consequently that control rooms, including TVFCS can effectively communicate with operational teams.

### **Governance**

- 3.10 An ESMCP South Central (SC) Regional Programme Board is in place and is one of a number of ESMCP FRS regions across the UK. The SC Board meets monthly and includes senior responsible owners from the three Thames Valley FRSs.
- 3.11 As highlighted in the update of 23 March 2020, arrangements for Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight FRS's request to move to the ESMCP South West Region have now been finalised and agreed with the National Programme.

## **4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE TVFCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

- 4.1 This report and its contents are considered to offer no conflict to the Steady State Legal Agreement.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Regional grant funding from the National Programme is administered by Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's Finance Team and is overseen through the South Central Programme Board. Services draw down funding to cover costs of work-streams leads and ancillary costs, such as attendance at meetings, workshops etc.
- 5.2 As previously reported, the Home Office Fire and Resilience Directorate maintain scrutiny of the use of grant funding with expenditure allowed against clear guidance and based upon an agreed business case for the financial year.
- 5.3 Confirmation of the 2020/21 business case for the SC region has been approved by the Home Office Fire and Resilience Directorate and there remains sufficient grant funding from previous years provision from the National Programme to meet the costs within this business case.

5.2 Separate full funding from the National Programme was provided for control room upgrades and DNSP connections into TVFCS. This funding is based upon the original regional delivery plan and full payment has been made to the providers without direct impact on FRS budgets. With the change to the incremental delivery plan, we are seeking assurance that additional costs incurred will be met by the National Programme.

5.3 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.4 None

7. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The ESMCP SC Board considers risks and, as appropriate, report these through the National Fire Chiefs Council team working alongside the National Programme. This, in-turn, informs the fire sector risk register so that common risks across services can be taken up with National Programme.

8.2 Each Service is expected to consider its own Corporate Risk associated with the ECMCP Programme and record treatments to mitigate this risk. By example, a corporate risk is recorded on the RBFPS Corporate Risk Register concerning ESMCP.

9. **CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE AIMS**

9.1 This report complies with the “Principles of Collaboration”

10. **PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 None

11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None

12. **APPENDICES**

12.1 None

13. **CONTACT DETAILS**

Steve Foye  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
Tel: 07887 830208



TVFC Joint Committee Forward Plan

ITEM	NEXT REPORTING DATE	FEEDING FROM/TO	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme	21-Sep-20	N/A	note	Steve Foye	N/A	Part I
Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring	21-Sep-20	N/A	note	Dave Norris/Simon Harris	N/A	Part I
Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme	14-Dec-20	N/A	note	Steve Foye	N/A	Part I
Proposed Budget 2021/22	14-Dec-20	To OCC, RBFERS and BMKFA	Agree and recommend to OCC, RBFERS and BMKFA	Conor Byrne	N/A	Part I
Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring	14-Dec-20	N/A	note	Dave Norris/Simon Harris	N/A	Part I