

THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE



Thames Valley Fire Control Joint Committee

Monday, 21 September 2020 at 2.00 pm

Virtual Via Teams

AGENDA

1. Apologies Cllr Lesley Clarke OBE Rob MacDougall, Oxfordshire	
2. Introductions	
3. Declarations of Interest	
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 13th July 2020	(Pages 1 - 8)

5. Matters Arising	
6. Questions from Members (Written Questions)	
7. Questions Submitted Under Standing Order 9.5 (Questions from Members of the Public)	
8. TVFCS Performance Report Quarter 1 2020/21	(Pages 9 - 34)
9. TVFCS Members Workshop Report	(Pages 35 - 50)
10. Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) Update - Presentation	
11. Forward Plan	(Pages 51 - 52)
Date of Next Meeting: Monday 14th December 2020 at 2.00pm Virtual via Teams	



Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee Annual Meeting

Monday 13th May 2020, 2pm, a remote Microsoft Teams meeting hosted by
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

Minutes

Present: Councillor Judith Heathcoat (OCC) - Chairman
Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE (BMKFA)
Councillor Angus Ross (RBFA)
Councillor David Cannon (RBFA)
Councillor Mark Gray (OCC)

In Attendance: 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)
Jim Powell (Area Manager RBFRS)
Simon Harris (Group Manager, TVFCS)
Jason Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer, BFRS)
Dave Norris (Head of Service Delivery, BFRS)
Calum Bell (Area Manager, BFRS)
Asif Hussain (Principal Accountant, BFRS)

Public: Live webcast broadcast: <https://oxon.cc/TVFCS13072020>

01. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED -

It being proposed and seconded it was resolved that Councillor Judith Heathcoat from OCC be appointed Chairman of the TVFCS Joint Committee for 2020/21.

02. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED -

It being proposed and seconded it was resolved that Councillor Angus Ross RBFA be appointed Vice-Chairman of the TVFCS Joint Committee for 2020/21.

03. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Steven Lambert, Mark Arkwell, Graham Britten and Conor Byrne.

04. INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Heathcoat thanked Councillor Clarke OBE for her Chairmanship of the committee during the previous year, and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service for hosting the Joint Committee meetings.

All Members and Officers introduced themselves.

05. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

06. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 MAY 2020

The Head of Service Delivery (BFRS) referred to item 8, action point 2 relating to the Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Pay Gap. On 30th June 2020, The Head of Service Delivery (BFRS) and Councillor Lambert had met with the Head of Equality and Diversity at RBFRS and it has been agreed that future reporting will be built in to, the next suite of performance measures. This was agreed by the Committee. Councillor Cannon asked for clarification that the reporting from RBFRS would be taken and included in the report rather than generating separate reporting. This was confirmed as correct by The Head of Service Delivery (BFRS).

RESOLVED –

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

07. MATTERS ARISING

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

Councillor Ross raised the issue of the report that had been due to come to Committee regarding Grenfell however; this had been taken to the Working Group in May 2020. The Chairman confirmed that every Member of the meeting had received an email and been advised that this would come forward to the September meeting as agreed with the minutes being presented. The Head of Service Delivery (BFRS) advised that his understanding of the action from the recent Workshop had been that they would bring forward, to the Joint Committee, matters from the Grenfell Enquiry as they impacted solely on TVFC. Other matters regarding the outputs and outcomes as they affect the Fire Service more broadly would, go through the normal Fire and Rescue Authority meetings. The Chairman thanked The Head of Service Delivery (BFRS) for the clarification and advised that this would show in the minutes from the Members Workshop which would come forward to the September Joint Committee.

08. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (WRITTEN QUESTIONS)

None.

09. QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER STANDING ORDER 9.5

None

10. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Councillor Clarke OBC advised that this is the 5-year anniversary of the TVFCS and, the report shows that the service continues to improve. Councillor Clarke was pleased to report that the targets are being exceeded and, the report shows an underspend which demonstrates the collaborative working. Councillor Clarke went on to thank everyone who are involved in then TVFCS and, particularly through the Covid-19 response. Councillor Clarke advised the Committee that she did not believe the Fire authorities had been congratulated and thanked for, all of the work that they do and asked for this to be formally recorded in the minutes. The Chairman echoed the thanks that Councillor Clarke OBE had raised and stated that she believed that the Fire Service had gone over and, above during the Covid-19 pandemic and asked that it be noted that we are indebted to them for how they have kept our communities safe during this time.

The Head of Service Delivery (BFRS) took the committee through the main points of the report. He highlighted that this was the 5th year anniversary of the TVFCS and he was pleased to report that performance continues to improve across a range of measures notwithstanding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Head of Service Delivery (BFRS) advised that the TVFCS had performed well against the existing measure for how quickly calls are answered during the year, with the target met in every month. Time to mobilise measures have remained comfortably under target for the year with the introduction of new technology in September which has enabled Control Staff to locate 999 callers using mobile telephones therefore; improving the call handling and mobilisation of resources. Call challenging for Automatic Fire Alarms has shown an impact on call handling times and, all 3 Services have committed to review their current policy in terms of its effectiveness over the next period and consider the results. Sickness levels have been consistent with the normal expected levels of seasonal absence. Staff turnover rates have been further reduced during the year and progress has been demonstrated for staff development and succession planning.

In relation to the year end financial position, the actual underspend was £33,387. This figure demonstrates the good financial management both, by Officers in TVFC and, their colleagues in RBFRS plus the oversight by the Senior Responsible Officers and Joint Committee.

The Head of Service Delivery (BFRS) took the Joint Committee through the notable activity for the year and, areas that will be considered going forward.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Service Delivery (BFRS) for a concise report.

Councillor Ross asked if it would be appropriate for the committee to send a message to the TVFCS staff to mark the 5-year anniversary and he presented a few words to the Joint Committee. All present were in agreement with the wording and the Chairman asked for this to go forward.

RESOLVED –

That the contents of the report be noted.

11. TVFCS PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 4 2019/20

The Head of Service Delivery (BFRS) advised that during quarter 4 2019/20 TVFCS handled 7934, emergency calls which had led to 4678 mobilisations. This represents a 5% increase in the number of calls in comparison to the equivalent period in 2018/19 but a decrease in consequential mobilisations of 4.3%. This had been caused predominately by the weather conditions which affected the Thames Valley area during the first 3 months of 2020 when 3 storms had arrived in quick succession. Performance has consistently improved throughout the year.

The Head of Service Delivery (BFRS) advised that efforts are being made to#

sustain this improvement through the, identification and sharing of good practice and the adoption of new technology. The work relating to the focus groups led by the Senior Responsible Officers has been paused due to Covid-19 but will be reintroduced as soon as possible to work with staff.

The business continuity plans for TVFCS were reviewed in late February/early March in response to the developing Covid-19 situation in Italy and a range of measures were put in place to ensure continuity of the service provision. These measures included protecting the Control room areas both in the primary and secondary Control room locations. The Joint Co-Ordination Group believe that the measures taken were incredibly successful and, is a real tribute to the efforts of Simon Harris, Julie Summers and the team.

The Group Manager TVFCS advised that the Covid-19 pandemic had necessitated some changes in how the Control room had to respond. Only 4 staff had personally reported symptoms however; the impact had been larger for staff who reported symptoms within the household. For staff with pre-existing health conditions it had been deemed safe for them to be in the workplace. The arrangements put in place back in February 2020 had led to the level of absence being covered through the commitment and flexibility of the shift-based staff. The service will continue to adapt to move with the national situation and, the Group Manager TVFCS was confident that they could meet that challenge. The Chairman stated that this brought to the fore the attitude of the Fire Service in general and the staff in the Control Room.

The Area Manager (RBFRS) advised that the establishment factor is low and, this is down to the work of the Group Manager TVFCS and the Management Team with their recruitment and succession planning. In the future, the establishment table will look slightly different as the Joint Committee move into the new service measures where there will be a bit more of a focus around staff turnover in relation to the overall establishment which will be more meaningful for Members. Competence levels are driven by the staff turnover and the experience levels are monitored across the Watches to try and balance out and, offer the appropriate support where it is needed. The Area Manager (RBFRS) advised that staff were not all at the same level of development and there is a spectrum of experience. It was felt that the word competence is slightly misleading as everyone within the TVCFCS are competent to undertake the role and, the use of the word in this context this relates to their competence in terms of pay purposes. Looking at the attendance levels, they are slightly lower than the previous year with one long term episode which is one individual and the team are working hard to support them. Councillor Clarke OBE asked whether the long-term sickness related to maternity leave and, it was confirmed that maternity leave is not reported through sickness. Overtime levels are within the expectation and, in line with the budgetary planning and does not demonstrate anything of particular note that was not expected.

The Area Manager (OFRS) drew the committee's attention to the call numbers which were just under 8,000 in quarter 4 which resulted in an average of 2,645 calls answered in the month by TVFCS resulting the staff deploying Fire and

Rescue Service assets 1,559 times. No fallback arrangements had been used during the period and, Ambulance colleagues were supported with Co-responding on an average of 110 times in that reporting period. The figures within the report are in line with previous years, taking in to account the storms earlier in the year and, demonstrates how busy the staff within TVFC are. The Area Manager (OFRS) highlighted the measure on % of occasions where time to mobilise is within 120 seconds and, advised that, the drop in performance had been due to, predominately to the storms and the amount of calls the staff were dealing with.

The Chairman thanked the three Senior Responsible Officers for their presentations.

RESOLVED –

That the Joint Committee noted the report and reiterated their appreciation to the Officers and Staff.

12. EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME (ESMCP) UPDATE

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS) presented a report on the ESMCP programme which provided an update on the status of the Nation Programme (NP) and ESMCP South Central Regions input into this. This report followed the update provided to the TVFCS Joint Committee meeting on 28th May 2020. Due to the meeting delays as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic, it had been a very short timeframe since the last update, and there were no immediate developments with regard to, ESN that directly impact on TVCFS. The National Programme has suspended work on the Full Business Caser as, a consequence of Covid-19 and a revised date for its publication is yet to be set.

In reference to the ESN adoption, the cessation of the Airwave system is now indicating a transition period of between Q2 2022 and Q4 2024. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS) advised that, it is anticipated the revised Airwave cessation date will be announced as part of the Full Business Case publication. It was confirmed that Airwave continues to operate to the standards expected and this reassurance was presented to the Joint Committee. It was highlighted that the National Programme schedule does not include any contingency in its timeline for product delivery and, so it is the Officers view that it is reasonable to expect issues would be identified for resolution for a programme of that size and these consequently could impact the current delivery milestones and the planned transition period which Joint Committee need to be mindful of. Officers continue to monitor the implications of programme timelines against other TVFCS requirements taking account of issues such as hardware and software refreshes.

Thames Valley FRS colleagues are co-ordinating work with their colleagues in Thames Valley Police and this is contributing to, national work assessing the

ESMCP network coverage and they do this through walk and drive testing across the regions which provides an indication of what coverage of the current ESN provision is like as the network is coming in to being. This will inform and assure that the delivered coverage meets the expected operational standard of the emergency services and, consequently the Control rooms.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS) advised that the, South Central Regional Programme Board continues to have senior responsible owners from the three Thames Valley FRSs. The arrangements for Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight to move across from the South West Region have now been largely finalised with the National Programme and the final move is imminent. The Home Office Fire and Resilience Directorate have approved the 2020/21 business case for the spend of LTR Grant funding in line with the business case submitted by the Region to that Board meaning that it is clear on the funding and spend for the coming year. In relation to point 5.1, The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS) confirmed that the ancillary costs from the LTR funding are only where additional activity is undertaken at the request of the National Programme and, where those costs have been agreed.

The Chairman raised concern regarding the suspension of the National Programme and, that the revised date for its publication is yet to be set and went on to suggest that this appears to be going on for a long time. In addition, the Chairman advised that she is continually concerned about the whole project and would welcome some confirmation on the route and, time this project was taking. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS) suggested that these were questions more pertinent to the National Programme and, emphasised that, a large amount of work was still progressing with products being developed. It is clarity of a full business case that can be brought forward to the FRSs for normal governance processes to consider. The Chairman stated that, whilst she understood that, she did how certain elements could continue without the full business case as you do not know what the financial position is. Councillor Clarke OBE supported this and asked whether Airwave could continue and, be fit for purpose for the extended timeframe now being suggested and, also raised the implications of potential involvement from worldwide companies and the impacts due to current global issues. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS) advised that Airwaves continues to operate to normal standards and assurances have been given and the National Programme have indicated that they would continue to invest where necessary to support the system. The product base for both Airwave and ESN is with Motorola who are, the primary provider, and whilst there are some, other associated products they are not necessarily associated to the firms suggested by Councillor Clarke OBE. Officers continue to operate a very clear view at the Fire Customer Group and The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS) reassured the Committee that he presents a clear and robust view of the concerns.

Councillor Ross presented an observation that, the delay may mean that there is no clash with the upgrade/refresh of the Vision system. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (RBFRS) advised that this is a continual discussion with the relevant parties at TVFCS and ICT RBFRS in terms of potential transition days but also

stressed that there are a small number of providers of Control Room Systems of which Capita is one therefore, there is a clear relationship for Capita in terms of preparing services for ESN and ensuring they have the necessary hardware. Officers continue to monitor the timelines.

RESOLVED –

That the contents of the report on the ESMCP and the delivery of the ESN were noted with continuing concern.

13. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Monday 21st September 2020 at 2:00 pm.

Following the Members Workshop held on 28th May 2020, it was agreed that the date on the agenda of Monday 22 March 2020 will be a workshop rather than a formal meeting.

(The Chairman closed the meeting at 3.00 pm)

Agenda Item 8

THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE



SUBJECT	TVFCS PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2020/21
PRESENTED TO:	TVFCS JOINT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	21ST SEPTEMBER 2020
LEAD OFFICER	AC DAVE NORRIS
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR NOTE

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To provide the Joint Committee with an update report on the performance of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)
- 1.2 The Control Manager's performance report for 2020/21 Quarter 1 (Appendix A) provides a detailed narrative on TVFCS performance together with the agreed set of performance information to enable comparisons.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **That the Joint Committee note the report.**

3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 Demand has been affected by the COVID19 pandemic.
- 3.2 Recruitment activity has taken place to fill establishment vacancies which have arisen.
- 3.3 The report reflects the revised performance measures previously agreed by the TVFCS Joint Committee.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE TVFCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

- 4.1 This report complies with the Steady State Legal Agreement which defines the responsibilities for measuring and reporting on performance.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no implications within this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no implications within this report.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no implications within this report.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no implications within this report

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 None for this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Programme Sponsoring Group Benefits Paper – 11 April 2013.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – TVFCS Control Manager's performance report for 2020/21 Quarter 1.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Simon Harris GM Thames Valley Fire Control Service

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Thames Valley Fire Control Service



Joint Committee Performance Report (Quarter 1 2020/21)



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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

Operational Context

The operating environment for TVFCS during the first quarter of 2020/21 has been significantly affected by the national response to the COVID19 pandemic and in particular, the restrictions on movement and activity which have been applied to the UK population. These changes have impacted on the working environment within TVFCS with the need to operate in accordance with government guidance being paramount to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of TVFCS staff. This guidance has changed as the scientific understanding of the virus and its transmission has developed and has required a flexible and dynamic approach from all staff.

Notable change has also been seen in the volume and nature of calls for assistance being received, with normal seasonal patterns of incidents being affected as communities across the Thames Valley adapted to the guidance on how to control the spread of the virus.

In addition to the impact on the volumes and types of calls received by TVFCS, the response to COVID19 affected working arrangements within TVFCS. The plans developed in February and March continued to be applied throughout the quarter.

The early planning and preparation which took place enabled focused proactive planning and communication to take place and drove a number of key activities, including a supportive local agreement with representative bodies and a clear and detailed TVFCS degradation plan, agreed collaboratively between the three FRS, setting out what mitigating steps could be taken as the situation evolved and how this would affect the way the service was provided.

Early action was taken to restrict access to both Primary and Secondary Control sites to reduce the potential exposure of Control staff to the virus and to maintain the integrity of the environment.

Steps were taken to provide additional support to Control room crewing in a number of ways, which included the reemployment of a small number of staff who had recently left TVFCS on casual contracts and the provision of 24 hour advice and support to the duty Control room watch from the Control management team and Senior Responsible Owners.

A combination of the actions taken and an overall focus on increased hygiene has allowed TVFCS to manage the staff extractions associated with COVID19 without compromising crewing levels at any times.

TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

The Senior Responsible owners, working with the TVFCS management team, are reviewing the actions taken to identify which might be beneficial to adopt as 'business as usual' once the pandemic period is passed.

TVFCS Managerial and technical staff have worked in collaboration with colleagues from BFRS and Capita during Quarter 1 to prepare TVFCS staff and systems for the introduction of the new 'Blue Light Hub' in Milton Keynes. On June 30th 2020, this work culminated in a seamless transition from the former BFRS stations at Great Holm and Bletchley to the new station at West Ashland.

Resourcing

Recruitment has taken place to fill a vacancy caused by staff movement in January 2020 and to cover maternity leave. Two new members of staff joined the TVFCS team in late June on fixed term contracts. They will complete their initial induction training during July and will join their shifts at the start of August.

During April, May and June, 2 further members of staff left TVFCS. This represents 5% of the total establishment. The staff members leaving have moved onto careers in Fire Safety and operational firefighting with Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service and Surrey Fire & Rescue Service respectively.

A recruitment campaign to fill the establishment vacancies created by this turnover is underway, with successful candidates expected to start their training in October 2020. The recruitment activity during the quarter has attracted a high number of applicants, and it is expected that we will identify a number of suitable candidates over and above those required to fill existing vacancies that we will be able to approach should further staff movement occur.

As expected, Sickness levels in the first quarter of 2020/21 have reduced compared with Quarter 4 2019/20 but slightly higher than for the equivalent period in 2019/20. These patterns are consistent with the seasonal variation that we would expect to see.

TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Sickness absence in April 2020 was affected by COVID19, with two staff members requiring a period of short term absence due to suffering from symptoms associated with Coronavirus. No sickness absence relating to COVID19 was recorded in May and June, with absences being caused by other factors. One member of staff has remained shielded during the quarter and is undertaking other work for the TVFCS Management team from home until it is safe for them to return to the workplace.

Measure	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020
Short-term Sickness Episodes	4	1	4
Long-term Sickness Episodes*	1	1	1
Total Days lost to Sickness	30	22	33
Average days lost per FTE	0.75	0.56	0.81

*A sickness episode is considered to be 'long-term' once the individual has been absent for more than 28 days.

Staff Development

TVFCS staff have been working with colleagues from the RBFRS Resourcing and Development team to replace the NVQ system with the new Development and Assessment Pathways (DAPS) for all roles within TVFCS. These pathways have been approved by Skills for Justice and will now be used to evidence full competence in role for TVFCS staff. The pathways identify the key development required for each role and the evidence requirements to confirm knowledge and understanding and are directly linked to the National Operational Standards for Fire Control staff.

Development status

Role	Current staff	Number who have completed role Development pathway	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	12	4	8	67%
Fire Fighter	20	16	4	20%
TOTAL	39	26	13	32%

The information provided in the table shown above relates to those who have successfully completed the development pathway associated with their substantive role, which qualifies the individual to receive the 'competent' rate of pay for that role. All TVFCS staff are assessed for their ability to perform safely in a role before being considered for promotion to that role.

The relatively high number of staff at Crew Manager level currently going through their development pathway is a reflection of the number of TVFCS staff achieving promotion within the department over the preceding 18 months and is evidence of the progress that has been made in developing TVFCS staff.



Prevention and Protection

TVFCS staff have contributed to prevention activity during the quarter through the identification and referral of 29 members of the public with defective smoke alarms in their homes and through the handling of 34 safeguarding notifications, helping some of the most vulnerable members of our communities receive the assistance they require.

TVFCS also deal with notifications from partner agencies, primarily Thames Valley Police, when a credible threat of arson has been received against a person or premises. The notifications are then passed to the relevant Fire & Rescue Service to be dealt with in line with their respective procedures. TVFCS have processed 6 notifications of this type during Q1 2020/21.

TVFCS staff have worked with colleagues from RBFRS during June, contributing to the production of a fire Safety video for use in schools.

Response

Measure		April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	Reporting period average	Q1 2019/20	Rolling 12 month average
1	Total Emergency calls answered	2399	2884	2889	2724	3119	2922
2	Number of Mobilisations	1496	1714	1748	1653	1831	1784

*Definitions are available in appendix A

The number of incoming emergency calls handled by TVFCS reduced by 12.66% in comparison with the equivalent quarter in 2019/20. The reduction in calls was most noticeable in April, where the number of calls received was 21.24% lower than in April 2019. This reduction coincided with the restrictions on public movement and activity introduced as part of the national response to COVID19 on March 23rd 2020 and

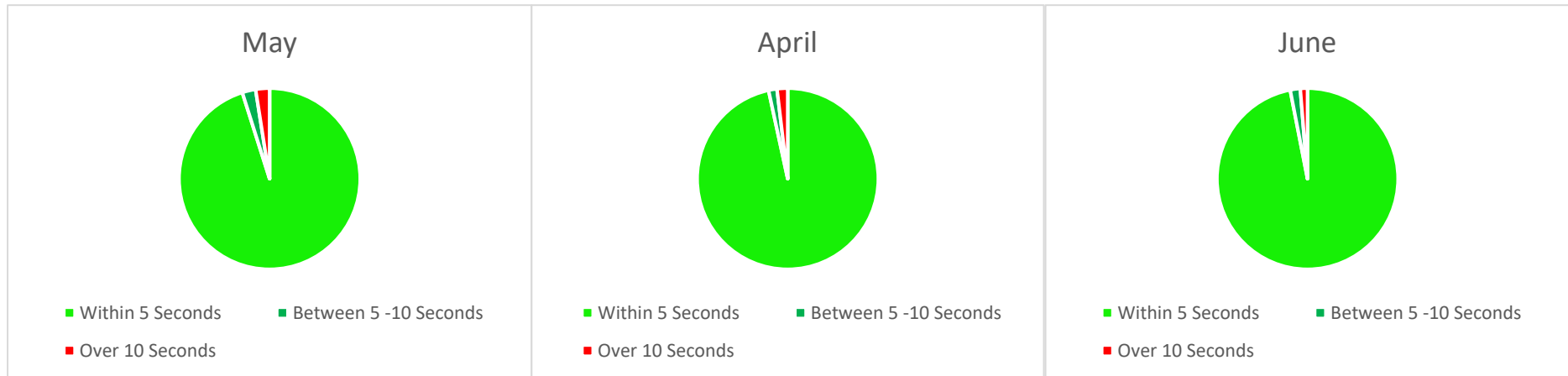
TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

it is likely that the change observed was a result of the reduced social and economic activity nationally. Whilst calls to some types of incident rose during this period, the overall effect of the national 'lockdown' seems to have created reduction in demand on TVFCS.

The same pattern is also shown in the number of mobilisations which took place during the period with an overall drop in mobilisations of 9.28%. Again, the largest reduction was seen in April where mobilisations were 16.98% lower than in April 2019.

Measure*		2020/21 Target	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	Reporting period average	Q1 2019/20	Rolling 12 month average
3	Emergency calls answered within 5 seconds	92%	96.60%	95.12%	96.93%	96.22%	95.63%	95.87%
4	Emergency calls answered within 10 seconds	97%	98.10%	97.52%	98.72%	98.11%	97.86%	97.92%

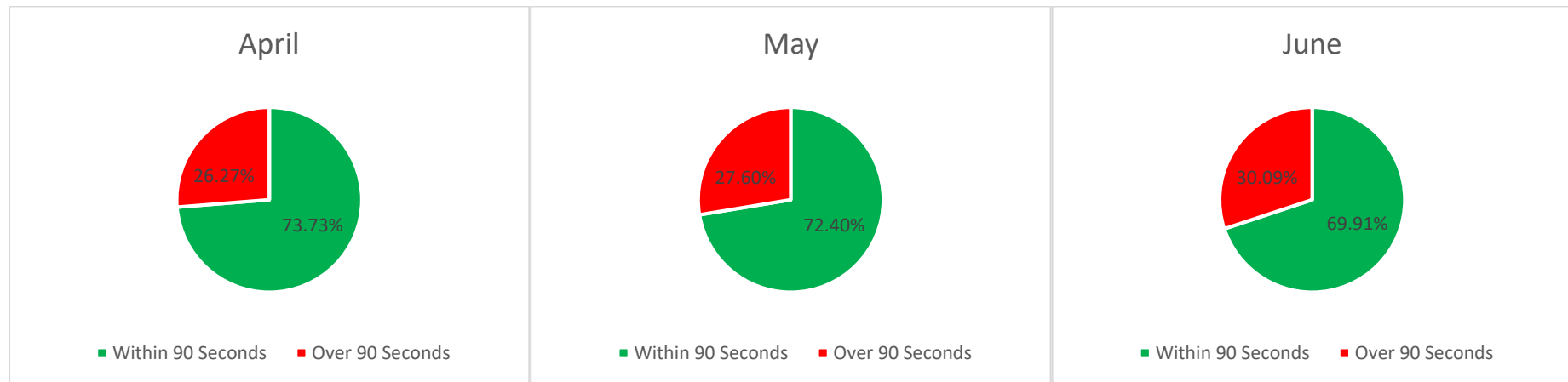
*Definitions are available in appendix A



TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

When answering emergency calls, TVFCS targets are that no more than 3% of calls received should ring for more than 10 seconds with a second, more demanding, target that no more than 7% of calls should ring for longer than 5 seconds. TVFCS staff continue to exceed these targets, with only 3.78% of calls ringing for more than 5 seconds across the quarter and 1.89% of calls ringing for over 10 seconds. The small number of occasions where these times are exceeded are associated with periods of higher demand where a number of calls are received simultaneously, often all reporting the same incident. A small improvement in performance can be seen in comparison with Q1 2019/20, which would be expected based on the reduced overall call volume during the period. There is a strong link between high performance against this measure with the maintenance of appropriate crewing levels to meet anticipated demand levels.

Measure*		2020/21 Target	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	Reporting Period Average	Q1 2019/20	Rolling 12 Month Average
5	% occasions where time to alert station is within 90 seconds of the emergency call being answered.	80%	73.73%	72.40%	69.91%	72.01%	72.27%	74.39%



TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

Performance against the measure for alerting crews within 90 seconds of emergency calls being answered had seen small incremental improvements over the last 12 months. Call handling times are expected to increase slightly during the summer months, as more calls to outdoor locations are received which involve extended questioning of the caller and the use of location identification technology to ensure that the most appropriate resources are mobilised. Whilst some variance was expected in this area, the performance in June fell by more than would normally be anticipated. Analysis of the data and interviews conducted with Control room staff indicate that difficulties were experienced during June with calls to Alarms in Industrial, Commercial, Retail and Public Assembly premises. The call challenge procedure operated by TVFCS on behalf of OFRS and RBFRS for these premises requires TVFCS to contact the premises to ascertain whether the alarm can be confirmed as 'false' before mobilising a response. During June, it proved difficult to make contact with these premises to gain this confirmation. It would appear that this is a result of the reopening of these premises with reduced staffing numbers following the national 'lockdown'. Premises have often opened without fully staffed reception facilities and with reduced staff available on site to carry out the required checks, leading to extended call handling times prior to an eventual mobilisation.

During the quarter, TVFCS did successfully challenge 813 emergency calls. In addition to calls to alarms where FRS attendance is not required in Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire, this figure also includes a large number of calls to other incident types where, through extended questioning of the caller, it is identified that an agency other than the Fire & Rescue Service is more appropriate to provide the assistance that the caller requires. Whilst this call challenge process can lead to extended call handling times, it is a vital aspect of the overall response strategy of the FRS as it preserves the availability of resources to attend incidents where life and property are threatened and simultaneously reduces the risk posed to the public and firefighters when responding to incidents under 'blue light' conditions.

Measure	2020/21 Target	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	Reporting period average	Q1 2019/20	Rolling 12 month average
6 Average time to alert station in seconds – Primary Fires	N/A	61	71	66	67	78	67
7 Average Time to alert station in seconds – Secondary Fires	N/A	79	66	73	72	69	78
9 Average time to alert station in seconds – Road Traffic Collisions	N/A	76	76	90	81	80	83

*Definitions are available in appendix A

TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

The average time taken to alert a station following a call being answered is a useful measure to determine how quickly Control staff are able to handle calls relating to certain key subsets of incidents. The incident types included in this reporting measure are those which are most often dealt with by the Control room with the potential to involve a threat to life and/or damage to property. On average, TVFCS staff take 90 seconds or less to handle these types of calls, which evidences the role they play in supporting all three FRS' performance against their Integrated Risk Management Plans and in protecting communities across the Thames Valley.

Primary fires are typically incidents which pose a higher risk to life and property, as they generally relate to fires occurring within buildings. Throughout the period, TVFCS have consistently mobilised to these incidents within 90 seconds and a notable improvement can be seen compared with the equivalent period in 2019/20.

Secondary fires tend to be smaller, predominantly outdoor fires, which can often be more difficult to locate than fires involving buildings. It is therefore expected that Control staff will take slightly longer to handle these calls and this is reflected in the statistics for the period. The average speed to mobilise is on average 3 seconds slower than in the same quarter in 2019/20, but still comfortably within 90 seconds.

Road traffic collisions typically take longer to locate than many other incident types, as callers are often not familiar with the area they travelling in, and are often only able to pinpoint their location as being between two notable points, for example roundabouts or other landmarks, which can make identifying a precise location challenging. A large number of calls to road traffic collisions are passed to TVFCS by the Police or Ambulance Service, which means that assistive technology for location identification such as BT Advanced Mobile Location cannot be used. Despite the challenges associated with calls of this type, TVFCS staff still have an average call handling time of 90 seconds or less.

Resilience

During the Quarter, agreed minimum crewing levels were maintained on 100% of occasions. In order to maintain these crewing levels, 17 hours of weekend cover were provided by members of the Control room management team.

TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report



On June 4th, a business resilience exercise took place which simulated a scenario where TVFCS calls needed to be diverted to the Staffordshire & West Midlands Fire Control (S&WMFC). During the exercise, S&WMFC staff were able to correctly identify and notify the appropriate Thames Valley Resources for each call passed to them using the agreed resilient 'fall back' systems.

Data and Intelligence

During Quarter 1 2020/21, all requests for change submitted by the FRS to TVFCS were processed within 5 working days of the request being received. These included requests to amend the Pre-determined attendance for specific locations, add or amend details of newly promoted FRS officers, changes to details relating to fire appliances and changes to FRS procedures carried out by TVFCS staff when dealing with particular types of events.

On 30th June 2020, the new Milton Keynes 'Blue Light Hub' became fully operational. Throughout Quarter one, TVFCS staff worked with colleagues from BFRS and Capita making the changes to the Command & Control platform required to support this change. The switchover to these new arrangements on June 30th progressed extremely smoothly, with the first mobilisation from the new station taking place at 13:59.

A number of requests for information to assist with investigations have been received from Thames Valley Police during the quarter. These requests are referred to the relevant FRS for approval before being released to ensure all relevant data protection legislation is complied with.



Financial Position

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	<i>Total Annual Budget</i>	<i>Actual Expenditure To 30th June 2020</i>	<i>Forecast Outturn at Year End</i>	<i>Variance = Forecast - Annual Budget</i>	<i>Variance %</i>
Staff	1,764,060	413,349	1,710,540	-53,250	-3.03%
Corporate	308,250	77,063	308,250	0	0
Other	35,740	-5,853	36,700	960	2.69%
Technology	247,060	10,144	246,884	-176	-0.07%
Total Budgeted Expenditure	2,355,110	494,704	2,302,374	-52,736	-2.24%



Appendix A

Performance Measure Definitions

Measure	Description
% of occasions where the time to answer emergency calls is within 5 seconds	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.
% of occasions where the time to answer emergency calls is within 10 seconds	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.
% of occasions where time to mobilise is within 90 seconds	This measure is calculated from when emergency calls are answered to when control room staff operate equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to respond.
Average time to alert station in seconds – Primary Fires	The average number of seconds elapsed between an emergency call being answered and control staff operating equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to mobilise when responding to primary fires. Primary fires are defined as ‘more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property’
Average time to alert station in seconds – Secondary Fires	The average number of seconds elapsed between an emergency call being answered and control staff operating equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to mobilise when responding to secondary fires. Secondary fires are defined as ‘generally small outdoor fires, not involving people of property’.
Average time to alert station in seconds – Road Traffic Collisions	The average number of seconds elapsed between an emergency call being answered and control staff operating equipment at a station notifying crews that they are required to mobilise when responding to road traffic collisions.



Appendix B
Budget Summary

TVFCS Budget Monitoring 3 Months to 30th June 2020						
	<i>Total Annual Budget</i>	<i>Actual Expenditure To 30th June 2020</i>	<i>Forecast Outturn at Year End</i>	<i>Variance = Forecast - Annual Budget</i>	<i>Variance %</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
Staff						
Employment Costs	1,753,010	412099	1,699,766	-53,244	-3.04%	Staff resignations and two members of staff taking maternity leave in the period since the budget was set, have reduced the amount of salary expenditure and other associated costs. COVID19 restrictions have meant that it initially took longer than normal to recruit replacement staff, causing posts

TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report



						to remain vacant for longer than would normally be expected. Recruitment arrangements have now been refined to account for the restrictions created by COVID19.
Mileage and Subsistence	7,000	867	5,300	-1,700	-24.29%	COVID19 has meant that the majority of physical meetings, both within the Thames Valley and nationally have either been cancelled or held virtually. This has greatly reduced travelling and associated costs for members of the TVFCS management team.
Uniform Allowances	3,000	556	2,224	-776	-25.87%	This expenditure relates to a locally agreed allowance relating to work

TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report



						<p>wear payable to eligible female members of staff. Staff movements have reduced the number of staff claiming this allowance. Work is ongoing between the RBFRS SRO, TVFCS Group Manager and the representative body to remove this allowance and provide the relevant uniform items directly.</p>
Training	750	-172	750	0	0%	<p>The negative expenditure shown relates to the refund of costs for external training cancelled as a result of COVID19. It is anticipated that the training course which utilise this budget will resume when social distancing</p>

TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report



						measures are relaxed.
Recruitment	300	0	2,500	2,200	733.33%	The budget set was based on the aptitude testing of potential new recruits being carried out by TVFCS and RBFRS staff on site. COVID19 restrictions has meant that this approach has not been possible during Quarter 1 and testing has had to be moved to online platforms with higher costs.
Sub Total	1,764,060	413,349	1,710,540	-53,250	-3.03%	
Corporate						
Facilities	98,180	24,545	98,180	0	0%	
Finance	22,720	5,680	22,720	0	0%	
HR	73,070	18,268	73,070	0	0%	

TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report

ICT	91,530	22,883	91,530	0	0%	
Liability and Equipment Insurance	7,090	1,773	7,090	0	0%	
Management	15,660	3,915	15,660	0	0%	
Sub Total	308,250	77,063	308,250	0	0%	
Other						
Professional Services and General Equipment Purchase	5,500	-5,853	6,460	960	17.45%	TVFCS have needed to purchase additional equipment in order to meet the 'COVID Secure' government requirements. It may be possible to recoup some or all of these costs, which may reduce the overspend currently forecast.
OFRS Costs (secondary control facility)	42,140	42,140	0	42,140	0%	
TVFCS Alarm Receiving Centre income	-11,900	0	-11,900	432	0%	

TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report



Sub Total	35,740	-5,853	36,700	960	2.69%	
Technology						
Capita Mobs System (maint)	69,210	0	69,034	-176	-0.25%	There is a small variance in expenditure in this line, due to a difference in the RPI rate between the budget being set and Capita providing their invoice.
DS3000 (for primary and secondary) ICCS	87,200	0	87,200	0	0%	
Telephony and Network costs.	49,510	7,894	49,510	0	0%	
EISEC Services (Primary and Secondary Control)	9,000	2,250	9,000	0	0%	
Smart services to switch 999 lines to secondary control or elsewhere	17,340	0	17,340	0	0%	
Airwave rental (SAN I ,B) (14,100	0	14,100	0	0%	

TVFCS Joint Committee Performance Report



Primary,secondary) (7+8)						
Sub Total	247,060	10,144	246,884	-176	-0.07%	
Total Budgeted Expenditure	2,355,110	494,704	2,302,374	-52,736	-2.24%	

THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE



REPORT TITLE:	OUTPUTS FROM TVFCS JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS WORKSHOP – 1ST JULY 2020
PRESENTED TO:	JOINT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING:	21 SEPTEMBER 2020
OFFICER PRESENTING REPORT:	AC DAVE NORRIS

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

To record the agreed outputs from the Joint Committee members workshop held on 1st July 2020

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Joint Committee:-

AGREE the contents of the report as an accurate record of the business conducted at the workshop.

3 BACKGROUND AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 On July 1st 2020, an on-line members workshop was held to consider a range of items regarding the future direction and development of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)
- 3.2 The workshop was attended by Cllrs; Clarke (Chair), Heathcoat, Ross, Lambert, Gray, Cannon. CFO Thelwell, CFO Ferguson, CFO MacDougall, AC Norris, AC Powell, AC Adcock,

4 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING FREQUENCY

- 4.1 Members agreed that from December 2020, meeting frequency will move to 6 monthly formal meetings, with budget setting to take place in December and an annual report and change of chair in June/July. Member's workshops will take place in March and September which can be escalated to full meetings if required. Equally these workshops may be cancelled if they are not required.

- 4.2 The TVFCS Joint Committee Meetings scheduled for July, September and December 2020 will take place as planned.

5 CONTROL SYSTEM REPLACEMENT

- 5.1 It was agreed that a copy of the presentation given by the SROs to members would be shared (**Appendix A**)
- 5.2 The recommendations contained in the Capita report expected in August will be considered first by the Senior Responsible Officers and brought to the March 2021 Members workshop for discussion.
- 5.3 The respective post-COVID financial positions of the Fire and Rescue services and Local Authorities will continue to be monitored.
- 5.4 The progress of Emergency Services Network and ESMCP implementation, and the corresponding impacts on any contract extension or procurement, will continue to be monitored.
- 5.5 Rolling extensions to the current Mobilising system arrangements, providing maximum flexibility and opportunity, will be considered and discussed by Members at future workshops.
- 5.6 It was agreed that a significant return on investment has been secured thus far and that all remain keen not to compromise this.
- 5.7 The Mobilising system replacement cycles of other FRSs will be considered, as far as possible, to avoid our Control Service being caught in a procurement 'queue'.
- 5.8 The appetite for new partners joining TVFCS will be considered.
- 5.9 The SROs expressed a view that, at this stage, they are likely to recommend to Members a 4 year extension to provide sufficient space for many of the above considerations to play-through.

6 BRIEFING ON MAJOR INQUIRIES

- 6.1 Members agreed that they are content with the current major inquiry reporting arrangements through the various fire authority committees, and that the SROs are considering any impacts on TVFCS. Any matters requiring Members attention or decision will be brought to the relevant Joint Committee forum. Such inquiries include the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

7 FINANCIAL, LEGAL, RISK MANAGEMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5 COMPLIANCE WITH THE TVFCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

This report complies with the "Principles of Collaboration".

6 CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE AIMS

It is a statutory duty for Fire and Rescue Services to make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and summoning personnel (Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004).

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 TVFCS Steady State Legal Agreement.

8 APPENDICES

8.1 **Appendix A** – Copy of SROs presentation

Author: Area Commander Dave Norris, BFRS

Date: 27th August 2020

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Thames Valley Fire Control Service

Members workshop

1 July 2020

Agenda

- Joint Committee meeting frequency
- Command and Control system contract
- Addressing matters from major inquiries – Grenfell Tower



Meeting Frequency

- Currently a quarterly full Joint Committee, followed by Collaboration Steering Group
- Introduced refreshed performance measures, workplan and focus towards mobilising system refresh
- Propose: 2 x 6 monthly- full Joint Committee meetings
 - December – budget setting
 - June/ July – Annual Report, change of Joint Committee chair
- And 2 x 6 monthly Members workshops
 - September – Mobilising system contract
 - March – Annual workplan



Thames Valley Fire Control Service

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Vision Command & Control System Contract

Overview

- Frame the challenge
- Understand the influencing factors around decision making
- Provide members with an overview of key dates



Contract history



Key Influences

- ESN/ESMCP
- Impact of change
- Potential Benefits

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ESN/ESMCP

- Projected timeline

Extend

- Potential for future costs of ESN integration

Replace

- Opportunity to specify ESN compatibility in user requirement

- Capacity in TVFCS



Impact of change

Extend

- Continuing with current Service Level Agreements.
- Continuing with current maintenance and support costs
- Identifying hardware upgrades
- Long term development

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Replace

- Higher capital outlay.
- Disruption to Control room operations.
- Staff retraining
- Impact on performance.
- Resourcing implications of tender process and evaluation.
- Developing New supplier relationship

Potential benefits

Extend

- Low capital expenditure.
- A known, stable platform
- No staff retraining
- Good relationship with current supplier.
- Build on current performance improvements

Replace

- New system, supporting future development
- Supports longer term strategic planning
- New terms and conditions
- Longer term ESN integration

Timeline

August 2020

- Capita provide system report

November 2020

- Cut off for questions and clarification

December 2020

- Final contract meeting

October 2021

- Final decision 6 months before contract expiration



Reporting from major inquiries

- Grenfell Tower report – phase 1 released in October 2019
- Recommendations being addressed nationally through Fire Protection Board
- Structures in place to address matters affecting TVFCS
- Local matters specific to each FRS, not in scope for this forum
- Therefore – proposal that TVFCS specific recommendations are raised through this forum.

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TVFC Forward Plan

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

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