



## **Police and Crime Panel**

**1 December 2017**

## **Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner**

### **BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION**

#### **Introduction**

The Police and Crime Panel have requested an update on blue light collaboration with partners in Devon and Cornwall. This report sets out work being taken forward regionally, through the SW Emergency Services Forum as well as local activity with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service and the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service.

#### **Background**

Fire, ambulance and police boundaries in Devon and Cornwall are not coterminous. There are three fire services in our policing area: Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue, Cornwall Community Fire and Rescue and the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service. A single ambulance service, the South West Ambulance Service Trust operates across the area which covers Devon, Cornwall, Dorset, Avon and Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and the Isles of Scilly.

Historically there has been a strong history of collaboration between emergency services at the operational level in recognition of their shared objectives of keeping our communities safe and the reality that incidents often require the involvement of more than one of our emergency services. However under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 a new formal duty has been introduced for all three emergency services to collaborate.

The Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Plan 'Safe, Resilient and Connected Communities' 2017-2020 published in January 2017 states: "The PCC and the Chief Constable will formalise and expand our collaboration programme with local fire and rescue services – seeking deep operational collaboration across organisations where it provides benefits for our communities. The PCC and the Chief Constable will focus on identifying new ways that we can share back office functions to generate savings as well as exploring ways we can provide better services to the communities we serve and protect people at risk of abuse and those who are vulnerable. A clear plan for blue light collaboration will be in place by September 2017".

#### **The national context**

In January 2016 the Government announced that responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services would transfer to the Home Office from the Department of Communities and Local Government. This transfer has now completed and Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary has formally taken on inspection responsibilities for fire.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 set out a number of provisions with regard to collaboration and governance between the police and fire and rescue services, in recognition of the close relationship between their work. In addition to the broad duty placed on all emergency services to collaborate

(referred to above) the Act contained specific measures to bring governance arrangements between fire and police closer together.

This ranges from the introduction of combined Police, Crime and Fire Commissioners (with the first such Commissioner taking up this combined role in Essex in October 2017) to including Police and Crime Commissioners on Fire Authority Boards – to ensure a better strategic link up between policing and fire and rescue services.

The Government has not mandated which options should be adopted locally. The Commissioner has stated that it is not her intention at this time to seek to take responsibility for governance of fire services within Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The Commissioner prefers to focus on supporting deep operational collaboration and integration and working in partnership with fire governance leads to improve the strategic alignment between the services.

### **The regional context**

Emergency services across the south west are working closely together – through the South West Emergency Services Collaboration programme at both the strategic and operational levels. This collaborative initiative brings together 5 police constabularies, 6 fire and rescue services (including the three operative in Devon and Cornwall) and the South West Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST) along with their respective strategic and governance bodies, including the Police and Crime Commissioner and the local fire authorities.

The vision for this collaboration is ***Working together to meet local needs***. The agreed strategic objectives for this collaboration are to:

- provide more effective and efficient outcomes for our communities
- reduce risk within our communities
- improve services
- reduce demand on all public services
- reduce duplication
- create efficiencies; and
- demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively.

The South West Emergency Services Collaboration is supported by the secretariat function of the existing south west police collaboration service. An officer level working group has been established, chaired by Chief Inspector Holmes from Devon and Cornwall Police to take forward a number of projects and this work is supported by personnel drawn from across the south west emergency services.

There are 9 operative workstreams under the South West Emergency services Collaboration which are detailed in Annex 1 to this report. Each workstream is led by a Chief Officer from one of the emergency services and is supported by officers and staff.

This report draws the Panel's attention to two specific collaboration initiatives from the programme which are currently in place within Devon and Cornwall: the collapsed behind closed doors project and the high risk missing person searches project.

#### *Collapsed behind closed doors scheme*

This scheme – which came into effect in October 2016 in Devon and Cornwall relates to incidents where there is a concern for the safety or welfare of a patient inside premises and the ambulance service are unable to gain access to the premises. Traditionally the ambulance service will contact the police for assistance in gaining entry. Under this new scheme, which is based on similar pilots elsewhere in the country, it is the fire service who provide the assistance to ambulance crews to access the building. Our fire and rescue services have additional equipment, such as ladders and equipment for accessing

doors, which can speed up the process of gaining entry – providing a better service and improving the likelihood of better clinical outcomes for the patient. The scheme has been a great success to date – with the reduction in deployments by the police in Devon and Cornwall estimated at around 1000. There are also positive outcomes for the emergency services in terms of reduced ambulance time used per incident.

#### *High risk missing person searches*

This collaboration allows the police to call upon fire service resources (Urban Search and Rescue team – USAR) and other specialist fire personnel to assist in searching for high risk missing people. Devon and Cornwall have higher than the national average of missing persons, many of whom are vulnerable due to their age, health or mental wellbeing. This collaboration opens up opportunities to use advanced equipment, such as thermal imaging and air scent dogs which are available within the fire service to support searches. It also provides additional personnel – who have been specially trained. The involvement of the fire service will augment and enhance the support provided by specialist volunteer search and rescue teams and existing police personnel – leading to improvements in search provision to help us locate and protect vulnerable missing people. The project is already underway. In the first 6 months we have seen the USAR team assist the police Devon and Cornwall Police 26 times in addition to assistance from wider specialist teams within the fire service. Both teams are working well with the dedicated volunteer search and rescue organisations across Exmoor, Cornwall and Dartmoor.

#### *Other regional initiatives*

A broad range of other collaborative initiatives are also underway under the regional programme and are being progressed as part of the work streams set out in Annex 1, including:

- enhanced data sharing and tasking co-ordination
- community safety and safeguarding – identify possible duplication and opportunities to align activities
- drone capability and deployment – opportunities to avoid duplication and share resources
- enhancing links between control rooms to support real time communications – to aid quicker sharing of information and live time incident management
- wellness initiatives for staff – including trauma management and debriefs and access to gymnasiums
- road safety –collaboration with the fire service in handling highway obstructions by animals

The Chief Fire Officer for Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue has been seconded to Avon and Somerset Police for 18 months to lead work on data analytics and information exchange on behalf of all emergency services within the region. This is a very visible demonstration of the collaborative approach being adopted within the south west region and the long term commitment that all the emergency services have to delivering this ambitious agenda.

### **Additional blue light collaboration in Devon and Cornwall**

In addition to collaboration at the regional level there is a significant volume of work taking place locally in Devon and Cornwall to enhance collaboration between the emergency services. This work is directly in support of the Police and Crime Plan 2017-2020 and the Chief Constable's vision.

A new operational Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in May 2017 between Devon and Cornwall Police, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service and the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service to improve joint working. The MOU confirms the existing working relationship between Devon and Cornwall Police and the fire services operating in our policing area and how they will work together to ensure communities will receive greater benefit from collaborative working. The Chief Fire Officer for Cornwall, Paul Walker has recently taken on

responsibility for the Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service which will further enhance opportunities for collaboration and alignment.

An internal project team is working in Devon and Cornwall to:

- Identify current national good practice and seek to implement locally
- Understand current levels of collaboration
- Develop operational projects for short, medium and long term delivery in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
- Understand and implement enabling service changes that can affect demand.
- Keep new practice under constant review
- Communicate existing collaborations across all of the services and develop a communication method to regularly update.

A significant number of collaborations exist within Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly – these range from education and awareness campaigns to shared estates, to multi agency personnel deployed within communities, and long standing collaborative work on emergency planning, eg flooding. Operational commanders are working closely with their colleagues in fire and rescue services and with the centralised support team based at Middlemoor Fire Station to identify new opportunities that will benefit efficiency and effectiveness and enhance the service that can be provided to our communities. Localised initiatives are examined closely during pilot phases and early operation, with a view to identifying the potential for wider deployment across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and into the wider region.

Some of the key areas of collaboration are set out below for the Panel's information.

## **Estates**

### *Fire station access pilot (North and West Devon)*

A pilot is taking place in 17 retained fire stations within rural communities in North Devon for police officers and staff to use the fire station (and wifi). Through these buildings police officers and staff have access to welfare facilities like toilets and kitchens, a quiet local space in which to complete paperwork and update incidents and are able to use the station facilities to meet with members of the public to take statements or discuss specific matters in a private space. This directly supports our focus under the Police and Crime Plan on connectivity with communities – helping us to enhance the police presence in rural locations which can be some distance from a police station. This pilot scheme is due to complete at the end of May 2018 and subject to a successful outcome for the pilot it is hoped that it can be rolled out more widely across Devon and potentially into Cornwall.

### *Shared premises*

Devon and Cornwall Police have a strong record of facilitating co location of facilities and services with the both Devon and Somerset and Cornwall Fire Services. Successful collaboration includes the following;

**Hayle Tri Blue light Facility:** Devon and Cornwall police joined with Cornwall Fire and SWAST in the funding of a Tri Service facility where all three services are collocated and the first tri Service officer role was successfully implemented.

**Middlemoor Community Fire Station:** The relocation of a new Community Fire Station at Middlemoor was facilitated by Devon and Cornwall Police estates on a 99 year lease to DSFRS. The building also houses the Operational Blue Light lead, Inspector Tom Holmes and the integration team.

**Lynton Fire Station:** Local neighbourhood team collocated within the Fire Station

Axminster Fire Station: Police neighbourhood team located in jointly funded new build extension to the Fire Station.

St Columb Fire Station: Local neighbourhood team located within retained Fire Station.

Future estates collaboration schemes include Wadebridge Fire Station where the OPPC and Devon and Cornwall Police are working towards the re-provision of the existing Wadebridge Police Station through the colocation to the Fire Station. In St Ives we are intending to collocate the neighbourhood team from existing premises in St Ives to the Fire Station. Joint working opportunities are being explored at a number of existing police and fire workshops to assess the viability of Police, Fire and Ambulance light vehicle fleets being managed in a holistic manner.

## **Personnel**

### *Tri service safety officers (Cornwall)*

The Tri Service Safety Officer (TSSO) initiative launched in November 2014 in Hayle supported by £100,000 of funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The Tri-Service Safety Officer brings together the skills and responsibilities of a retained firefighter, a PCSO and an emergency 1<sup>st</sup> responder into a single individual based within the community. The TSSO worked out of the new tri-service station hub in Hayle.



*Hayle Tri Service Safety Officer*

This project was the first of its kind nationally. It won the Emergency Services Partnership of the Year (2015) award and has been the subject of significant nationwide interest. Following the successful completion of the pilot it has been expanded to two more areas for the next stage of the pilot. Two new TSSO officers have been put in place in Bude and Liskeard and took up their operational responsibilities following a significant period of training.

### *Bi-service Police and Fire Community Support Officers (North and West Devon)*

Under this pilot scheme six PCSOs have been trained as 'on call' fire fighters for Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS) so they can respond to fires in their PCSO duty time. This pilot helps both organisations to increase their resilience and presence in rural communities and to provide a more joined up service to our communities – for example by combining the provision of crime related advice and fire safety advice. This is a pioneering pilot which can provide both services and the community with significant benefits and has attracted national interest.

## **Joint working, awareness raising and information sharing**

There are a significant number of collaborative initiatives underway which relate to joint working, awareness raising and information sharing, including:

- Improving information exchange between police and fire services to aid operational activities. This includes the provision of direct radio access into each other's control rooms, a commitment to sharing information to assist in post trauma debriefs, ability for fire service to quickly access information relating to vehicles blocking access roads for fire and ambulance services

- Working together on key awareness and educational campaigns to keep the public safe, for example #Coastsafe Cornwall 2017 to raise awareness about the dangers of activities such as tombstoning to residents and visitors and the wide range of road safety educational collaborations such as Learn2Live and the Honest Truth.
- Identifying opportunities to link up our work on community safety and safeguarding. A pilot is currently underway in Exeter, East and Mid Devon to see if we can better support the fire service in identifying people who may be at risk of fire. A question on whether a 'home fire safety visit' may be appropriate is asked as part of the police questionnaire used to assess vulnerability (the ViST) when they attend an incident.
- Joining forces through a new arson reduction project to share intelligence and information and reduce incidents of arson, in particular anti-social behaviour related arson.
- Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, the OPCC and operational policing are working together to support the further enhancement and expansion of CCTV services across towns in Cornwall. We are also working together to explore the opportunities provided by new technology to improve connectivity between the CCTV monitoring station and police control rooms and the potential for connectivity with hand held devices at the scene. This work is being taken forward as part of the Commissioner's CCTV Investment project.

## **Future plans**

Collaboration between emergency services is progressing well – there is an ambitious but deliverable regional programme in place which is supported by a local collaboration framework and dedicated resources. The Commissioner expects to see significant new inroads made over the next 12-18 months as the projects under development regionally begin to come online and the results of pilots start to emerge.

There remain some challenges, including the challenges around ambulance attendance at incidents – as the Police and Crime Panel may be aware after press coverage and debates in the House of Commons earlier this year. Progress is being made and emergency services are actively working together to ensure that challenges are overcome and good outcomes delivered for the public.

As we move forward with collaboration locally I am particularly keen to explore enhanced opportunities for collaboration in a number of areas. I see significant opportunities for us to work more closely with fire services to increase and enhance connectivity with communities and to support our work on road safety, in particular the potential to assist with the enhancement and expansion of community speedwatch.

As we progress it is important that we share information with partners and the public about our blue light collaborations and the Commissioner will be developing a new section on her website to give greater prominence to this work and to enable others to track its progress.

## **For further information contact**

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### **1. Community risk (data index)**

*To develop a community risk map for the SW region using a range data sets*

- The risk map will be a 'live' document available to all services;
- Enable targeted prevention activity;
- Support community resilience capability;
- Inform operational deployment innovation;
- Understanding organizational demand;
- Identify at risk groups in our communities.

### **2. Early intervention (prevention)**

*Delivering a healthier, safer and more secure community through education and promoting self-help*

- Reducing demand on public services;
- Focus on identified 'at risk' groups in our communities;
- Introduce relevant multi agency interventions to reduce known risk;
- Seek to intervene at the earliest possible stage where risk 'ACE' criteria are identified;
- To support the community resilience agenda.

### **3. Sharing good practice**

*To explore examples of collaborative projects, plans and initiatives from across the UK suitable for upscaling on either a regional or sub-regional basis*

- To avoid duplication of effort;
- To seek to implement initiatives that have proven to be successful elsewhere (*borrow with pride*);
- Balancing demand across services to ensure the provision of the most appropriate resource at the right time.

### **4. Community resilience/capacity building**

*To work with and support Town and Parish Councils to help reduce the risk from emergencies in their communities*

- To support the existing Town and Parish Council emergency plans;
- To provide resources (facilities) to support emergency preparedness;
- To support the coordination of emergency preparedness activity;
- Dramatically improving people's ability to help themselves;
- Educating residents about when to call upon public services;
- Reducing demand on public services;
- Support public services by having expert residents as their eyes and ears in communities.

### **5. Policy and service redesign (from first principles where not able to be 'lifted and shifted' from elsewhere)**

*Seeking new and innovative solutions to provide better joined up service for our communities*

- Constant evaluation of current practice to identify opportunities for improvement.

## **6. Culture/leadership (how we do business)**

*Explore and conceptualise the potential for a fully integrated public service*

- Integrated leadership and management development training;
- Explore the ability of our organisations to merge our cultures to a desired end state.

## **7. Communication/engagement (staff/public)**

*Ensuring a coherent communication strategy exists to engage and inform staff and public of our direction of travel*

- Achieve economy of scale by mandating regional campaigns for recurring themes;
- Maximising the effectiveness of communication mechanisms;
- Cross-pollination of messaging across public services.

## **8. Strategic planning/programme (governance)**

- The provision of robust Governance processes and structures to support collaborative working.