

# Fire Alliance Strategic Plan

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton  
Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260204.

### 1 Purpose of Report

This report presents a plan to create a strategic alliance between Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services.

### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the report;
- b) Approve the plan to create a strategic alliance between Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services; and
- c) Recommend that the Fire Authority agree the adoption of the Fire Alliance Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022.

### 3 Background

On 15 March 2018, Members of the Strategy and Resources Committee gave approval for officers to examine the strategic options for formalised collaborative working between Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services. This approval was also given by Herefordshire Fire and Rescue Authority at the meeting of their Policy and Resources Committee on 28 March 2018.

The proposed alliance reflects a need to consolidate successful, but largely ad hoc, collaborative work between the two Services, examples of which include the Fire Control Resilience project and the joint initiative to train West Mercia Police Community Support Officers to become On-Call Firefighters in the three counties.

It also responds to the 2017 Policing and Crime Act's statutory duty for emergency services to collaborate in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness.

The proposal extends the existing collaboration arrangements into a more planned and structured formal alliance which will deliver real benefits in terms of aligning processes and procedures, and sharing resources, experience and expertise. It would also provide both Services with the capacity and resilience to remain sustainable long into the next decade.

## 4 Creating a Strategic Alliance

Over the last few months, officers from both Services have worked together to prepare a plan of action to move towards a strategic alliance. Members will have received a draft copy of the Fire Alliance Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 for information and comment in July this year.

The plan has now been completed. It aims to provide the foundation blocks to ensure long-term capacity and resilience to meet the increasing pressures of budgetary restrictions and changing demands, while sustaining first-class fire and rescue services for the communities of the three counties.

To deliver the Plan, five development strands have been identified, each of which has a number of priorities and deliverables, which will form the basis for the implementation of actions in a Programme Plan. The development strands can be seen in the following diagram.



Overseeing the delivery of the Plan is a governance framework, which will ensure that informed decisions are made at a senior level and that all interrelationships and interdependencies between programmes and projects are carefully managed.

The governance framework will be headed by a Strategic Alliance Board, consisting of representatives of the Fire and Rescue Authorities and the two Chief Fire Officers, which will oversee delivery of the Alliance plans and programmes.

It is proposed that the Fire Authority is represented on the Board by the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman. The Board will be supported by a Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board, which will be responsible for managing the process of change, and a number of Strategic Alliance Project Working Group, which will develop and deliver projects.

Full details of the Strategic Alliance aims, development strands and governance framework are set out in the 'Fire Alliance Strategic Plan', (see Appendix A).

## **5 Stakeholder Responses**

Both the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable have been consulted as stakeholders and their responses are attached at Appendix B to the report.

## **6 Conclusion**

The creation of a formal strategic alliance and governance framework is a major step towards collective resilience, capacity and sustainability to effectively meet ongoing financial challenges, while also seizing the opportunity to deliver key joint priorities over the next 3 - 5 years and provide additional value to our local communities.

Once the overall Strategic Alliance plans are confirmed, the next steps will be to set up the governance framework and prepare a programme plan to deliver the actions set out in the Alliance plan. Progress reports will be brought to Members in due course.

## **7 Equality Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of any project management processes recommended.

## **8 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **9 Risk Management**

Risk Assessments will be undertaken as part of any project management processes recommended.

## **10 Legal Comment**

There is a legal requirement for governance consideration.

## **11 Public Value / Service Delivery**

The Alliance Plan supports the Service's Strategic Aim 4:

"To deliver a fire and rescue service which provides value for money for our community now and into the future.

## **12 Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

Fire Alliance Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022

### **Appendix B**

Stakeholder response from Police and Crime Commissioner

## **13 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.



**Shropshire**  
Fire and Rescue Service



HEREFORD & WORCESTER  
**HWFR**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

# Fire Alliance Strategic Plan

---

## 2018-2022

*'Securing a resilient and sustainable future'*

July 2018 (JC3)

# 1 CONTENTS

---

1	Contents.....	2
2	Foreword.....	3
3	Background .....	4
4	Strategic Aim.....	5
5	Purpose .....	5
6	Guiding Principles.....	6
7	Development Strands.....	7
	1. Reassuring our communities.....	8
	2. Making our communities more resilient.....	9
	3. Building safe and secure communities.....	10
	4. Reforming our services.....	11
	5. Managing our performance .....	12
8	Governance .....	13
	▪ Strategic Alliance Board .....	14
	▪ Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board .....	15
	▪ Strategic Alliance Project Working Groups.....	16
9.	Appendix 1 – Summary of Fire Alliance Actions.....	17

## 2 FOREWORD

---

This document sets out the vision of a shared journey for the two fire and rescue services that serve the historic counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. The ambition is to create a strong alliance where both organisations can work together, often as one, to sustain and improve the high-quality prevention, protection and emergency response we currently deliver to all our local communities.

The purpose of the alliance is to build capacity and resilience in both fire and rescue services in order to achieve long-term sustainability. The alliance will do this by delivering a number of key joint priorities over the next 3-4 years. These will provide opportunities to meet on-going financial challenges at the same time as providing additional value to our local communities through working in partnership.

At the heart of this strategic alliance is a shared commitment to collaboration and a determination to work together. We will be successful in delivering change by drawing upon our collective professionalism, expertise, experience and resources; and staying focused on providing our communities with an effective, efficient and economical service that makes them safer.



Rod Hammerton  
Chief Fire Officer

Shropshire Fire  
and Rescue Service



Nathan Travis  
Chief Fire Officer

Hereford & Worcester  
Fire and Rescue Service



Eric Carter  
Fire Authority Chairman

Shropshire Fire  
and Rescue Service



Roger Phillips  
Fire Authority Chairman

Hereford & Worcester  
Fire and Rescue Service

### 3 BACKGROUND

---

The challenge of protecting our communities against ever changing risks has driven our Fire and Rescue Services to seek out collaborative opportunities that provide both value for money and enhance public safety.

To achieve this both organisations have recognised the benefits of creating an Alliance, which can provide all the advantages associated with large organisations without losing the agility of being two small, lean, and community focused fire and rescue services.

Prior to 2012 collaboration between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) had been more informal in nature, but following the Operational Assurance process of that year it became more planned. Both Services have worked together to deliver several notable successes such as: -

- a staff sharing initiative that has combined both budgetary relief for one partner and skills and expertise to address staff shortfalls in the other,
- a fire control resilience project that has brought together the control rooms of Cleveland, Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester FRSs in a resilient triangle, recognised and financially supported by central government with a £3.6 million pound government grant)
- a ground breaking initiative to train West Mercia Police Community Support Officers to become Retained Duty System (RDS) Firefighters across all three counties, and
- the design, procurement and development of a set of Incident Command Units that can provide interoperable support to major incidents across the three counties, providing each other with operational resilience.

The advent of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 and the statutory duty for emergency services to collaborate brought with it new energy and focus towards working together. Both Services were already actively engaged in a Blue Light Collaboration that extended beyond their borders to include both police and fire in West Mercia and Warwickshire, but we recognise the greatest benefit would be from a more planned and structured alliance between the two Services.

At the same time the idea had also been recommended within the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's business case for governance of a 'Fire Alliance' between the two Services. All stakeholders recognise that an alliance has a real potential to deliver benefits from aligning processes and procedures and sharing resources, experience and expertise.



In March 2018, both Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) also concluded that an alliance was a sensible way forward, regardless of which form of governance was ultimately in place, and instructed officers to develop a plan to form a long term and sustainable strategic alliance that would provide both Services with the capacity and resilience to remain sustainable long into the next decade.

All parties agree the future of the Alliance is one of opportunity, enabling us to provide positive outcomes for our communities for years to come.

## 4 STRATEGIC AIM

---

Our core aim is to create a strong alliance between Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services. Resources and expertise will be shared to provide long-term capacity and resilience to meet increasing pressures from budgetary restrictions and changing demands and development of both established and new risks with our communities.. In doing so, we will be able to continue delivering first class, resilient and sustainable fire and rescue services for the communities of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire.

## 5 PURPOSE

---

This document aims to establish the case for change and the way forward in relation to modernising and improving the way services are planned and delivered. In doing so it will: -

- confirm the 'strategic fit' of the two Authorities, which will support a successful programme of change,
- identify options and a recommendation for change,
- facilitate strategic and collaborative planning and the setting of associated budgets,
- identify and cost key components of the strategy (programmes) and enabling deliverables (projects),
- provide the strategic context for subsequent investments, and
- facilitate the timely production of subsequent business cases for related investment.

## 6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

---

The approach that both organisations take in the development of a Fire Alliance Plan will be governed by a set of guiding principles. These principles will permeate all aspects of decision making, helping to add focus and direction to our strategic aim.

1	<b>Public Outcomes</b>	The Alliance will deliver new ways of working that will reduce risk in the communities and provide greater value for money for the public purse.
2	<b>Culture and Leadership</b>	The Alliance will cultivate and establish new ways of working based on openness, shared understanding, mutual respect and shared leadership to create common practices that lead to effective collaboration. The Alliance will review and align processes, structures and leadership wherever it improves capacity, resilience and sustainability.
3	<b>Capacity</b>	A primary aim of the Alliance is to reduce duplication, align processes and share resources to create additional capacity. This new capacity will support areas that are currently stretched and allow the Services to cope with new demands.
4	<b>Resilience</b>	The Alliance will aim to identify areas of organisational vulnerability and create opportunities, by working together, to provide additional resilience through fall back arrangements, mutual aid and by eliminating, where possible, single points of failure.
5	<b>Sustainability</b>	The Alliance will work to ensure that both organisations remain sustainable and are able to meet the needs of their communities through effective use of resources.
6	<b>Technology</b>	Technology will be a key enabler in the way we deliver our services and how we support our staff. The Alliance will exploit and harness new technologies to ensure both Services are correctly positioned to support an increasingly mobile workforce, whilst being agile enough to adapt to future changes in business requirements and working practices.
7	<b>Partner Strategies</b>	The Alliance will be aligned to, and supportive of, the strategies of other key partners; including the PCC's Safer West Mercia Plan. This will ensure the coordinated delivery of services focused on local priorities and a clear demonstration of how the Services meet their duty to collaborate.
8	<b>Intelligence Driven and Evidence Led</b>	The Alliance will seek to ensure that service delivery is targeted and focused through the effective use of data and any business changes are intelligence led relying on a strong evidence base.
9	<b>Security and Governance</b>	Strong security controls and governance processes will ensure continuous compliance with local and national legislation.
10	<b>Innovation</b>	The Alliance will promote creativity from within and will recognise and encourage new ideas that have the potential to lead to meaningful improvements.

## 7 DEVELOPMENT STRANDS

---

In order to move forward, we have identified five Development Strands to help us deliver first class, resilient and sustainable fire and rescue services for the communities of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire.

Each Development Strand has a number of key priorities followed by a number of strategic targets. These targets will become key deliverables and actions in our Programme Plan.



# 1. Reassuring our communities

## Priorities

- Continue to develop the Services' prevention and protection activities aligned to the needs of local areas. This will include a strategic assessment of prevention and protection activities and their relationship with health and wellbeing across all three counties. This will add more value to communities particularly those most vulnerable.
- Provide a standardised and consistent response to Safeguarding across the Alliance area.
- Maintain current Service-level Integrated / Community Risk Management Plans, and align data analysis and methodology to ensure a consistent approach to evidence-based decision making.



## STRAND 1

Reassuring  
our  
communities

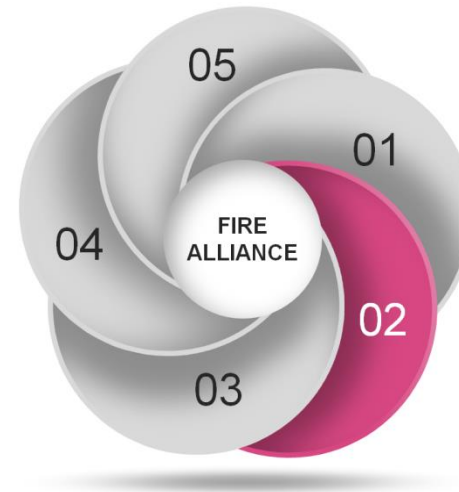
## Key Deliverables

- A unified Alliance Prevention Strategy to deliver against local needs and in support of partners' agendas.
- Review of the Safeguarding process, policy and training to ensure a consistent approach.
- Review of the Integrated / Community Risk Management Plan process to establish a standardised methodology.

## 2. Making our communities more resilient

### Priorities

- Deliver an aligned Command & Control function that takes advantage of the opportunity to work closely with West Mercia Police. This will improve operational resilience, resulting in better support to both operational personnel and the public. It will also ensure a more effective and efficient use of the public purse.
- Support and nurture the On-Call Duty Systems such as RDS to maintain and improve operational availability, engagement and competence across both urban and rural areas; and develop this resource to provide proactive prevention, protection and support to local communities.
- Continue to improve Local Resilience Forum (LRF) capabilities and ways of working to provide more effective, efficient and co-ordinated use of people and resources from across partner agencies.



### STRAND 2

**Making our  
communities  
more  
resilient**

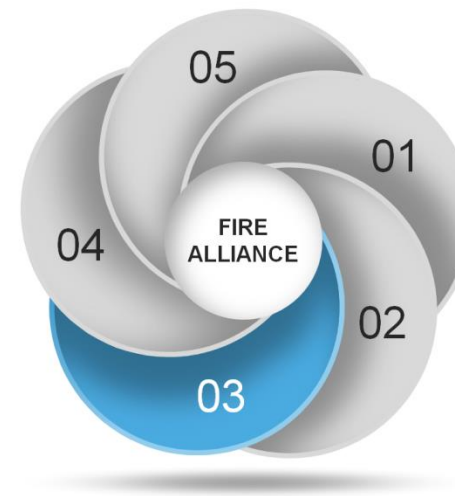
### Key Deliverables

- Review and scope future requirements for a 5-year vision for Command & Control.
- Review and scope future requirements of the On-Call Duty Systems.
- Enhance support to LRF by reviewing how training and exercising can be expanded and developed.

### 3. Building safe and secure communities

#### Priorities

- Expand the Safe and Well concept to Safe, Well and Secure. This will support Police and other partners' objectives by harnessing the power of prevention expertise and capacity.
- Continue to develop the work of the Blue Light Collaboration Group which has identified; Community Safety and Harm Reduction, Operational Deployment, Supporting Infrastructure, Estates and Training as its key work streams.
- Review and align Technical Fire Safety resources, policies and procedures to support resilience across the Alliance and to ensure appropriate capacity, including multi-agency enforcement, is available and complies with current and future legislative requirements.



#### STRAND 3

**Building safe  
and secure  
communities**

#### Key Deliverables

- Review Community Safety provision including systems, skills, capacity and legislation.
- Support the Blue Light Collaboration Group by developing the five key work streams into the Programme Plan.
- Review Technical Fire Safety provision including systems, skills, capacity and legislation.

## 4. Reforming our services

### Priorities

- Support and nurture a shared culture and values that will promote and champion cultural change and workforce reform across both Services. This will provide the foundation block for delivering better ways of working in complex environments, for our teams and improving engagement in diverse communities during difficult and uncertain times.
- Unify strategies including operational and training policies to enable the alignment of procurement practices and key Fire-specific contracts.



### STRAND 4

## Reforming our services

### Key Deliverables

- Review management and workforce policies and practices to support Service reform, including measures to: -:
  - continue positive engagement in the National Fire and Rescue Service Reform programme,
  - review and align senior leadership teams,
  - develop operating rules and governance arrangements for the Fire Alliance,
  - establish recruitment processes that meet the varied needs of the Alliance as well as challenging inequality,
  - review organisational development and future planning for the provision of ICT and Human Resources functions,
  - review the delivery and future planning of internal, external and corporate communications provision, and
  - reinvest savings, where appropriate, to support service reform.
- Review and align operational and training policies, procedures, team resources and processes, including measures to: -
  - review and align operational training to deliver a single training framework,
  - review contracts to be delivered, and
  - design and implement a single procurement process, including developing ethical options such as 'whole life costings'.

## 5. Managing our performance

### Priorities

- Drive improvement through performance management.
- Where possible provide standardised performance data to the public, partners and employees.
- Ensure the Alliance provides transparency for communities and staff, including the development of appropriate feedback mechanisms for our communities.



### STRAND 5

## Managing our performance

### Key Deliverables

- Develop a standardised performance management framework for both governance and public understanding.
- Create a suite of shared, strategic performance indicators.
- Review of learning following HMICFRS Inspections with transparent improvement plans as necessary.

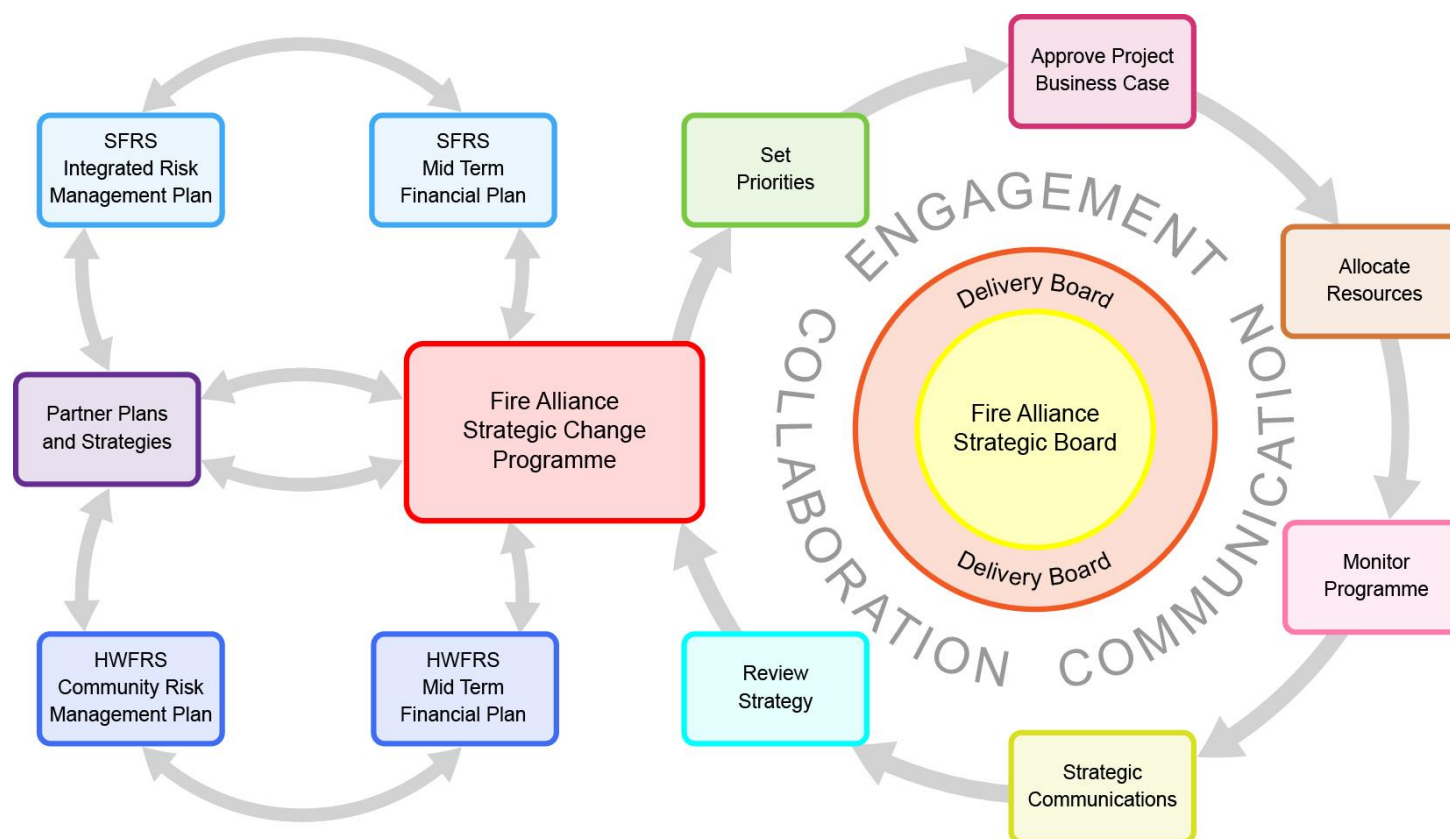


## 8 GOVERNANCE

A Governance Framework will be adopted to ensure that informed decisions can be made at a senior level, and to enable the delivery of the Fire Alliance Strategic Plan.

### Fire Alliance Governance and Planning Model

This is the business plan for delivering the strategic change programme with recognition of related planning models and their associated influence.



It is critical that the governance and programme management arrangements seek to understand the interrelationships of all projects undertaken within the Alliance, including the interdependencies and impacts of other programmes or projects, being undertaken by both Services, either individually or with other partners.

Responsibility for the management and delivery of the collaboration programme sits at three levels:

- Strategic Alliance Board
- Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board
- Strategic Alliance Projects Working Groups

## ▪ **Strategic Alliance Board**

### Membership

- Representatives of Fire and Rescue Authorities or PCC's Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Chief Fire Officer – Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS)
- Chief Fire Officer – Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)

### Key responsibilities

- Provide the high level governance for the Alliance.
- Recommend strategic priorities identified for the Alliance to the Fire Authorities.
- Support the Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board through the provision of appropriate resources.
- Hold the Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board to account for the delivery of the Alliance Programme.

The Strategic Alliance Board will meet four times a year.

## ▪ **Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board**

This group will be responsible for managing the process of change.

### Membership

- Chief Fire Officers – HWFRS and SFRS
- Deputy Chief Fire Officers – HWFRS and SFRS
- Assistant Chief Fire Officers – HWFRS and SFRS
- Treasurer – HWFRS
- Head of Finance – SFRS

### Key responsibilities

- Delivery of the Alliance Programme.
- Identify and agree the strategic priorities with the Strategic Alliance Board.
- Recommend the scope for Business Justification Cases (BJCs).
- Analyse and approve submitted BJCs.
- Consider the impacts and interdependencies of the programme on individual organisational priorities.
- Delegate authority to the Strategic Alliance Project Working Groups for the delivery of agreed projects.
- Support the Strategic Alliance Project Working Groups through the provision of appropriate resources and appointment of strategic leads.
- Hold the strategic leads responsible for delivery of individual Alliance projects to account.

The Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board will meet four times a year.

## ▪ **Strategic Alliance Project Working Groups**

### Membership

- Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board Lead Officer (Chair)
- Executive Sponsor
- Designated project lead (Vice Chair)
- Subject matter experts (as determined by the Chair) – HWFRS and SFRS
- Independent external advisor (as determined by the Chair)

### Key Responsibilities

- The Strategic Alliance Project Working Groups will act under delegated authority from the Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board.
- Develop and deliver projects to meet the requirements set out within approved BJs.
- Adhere to the three key principles of project management; cost, quality and time.
- Manage the interdependencies with other programmes and projects.
- Effectively manage capacity and secure resources for planned activities.
- Manage identified and emerging risks and issues, escalating where necessary.
- Ensure the effective day-to-day delivery of projects.
- Take accountability for the delivery of project benefits.
- Report progress of projects, quarterly, to the Strategic Alliance Programme Board.

The Strategic Alliance Project Working Groups will meet monthly or as required.

## 9. APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF FIRE ALLIANCE ACTIONS

	Development Strand	Key Deliverables
1	Reassuring our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A unified Alliance Prevention Strategy to deliver against local needs and in support of partners' agendas.</li> <li>▪ Review of the Safeguarding process, policy and training to ensure a consistent approach.</li> <li>▪ Review of the Integrated / Community Risk Management Plan process to establish a standardised methodology.</li> </ul>
2	Making our communities more resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review and scope future requirements for a 5 year vision for Command &amp; Control.</li> <li>▪ On-Call Duty Systems project review with position statement.</li> <li>▪ Enhance support to LRF by reviewing how training and exercising can be expanded and developed.</li> </ul>
3	Building safe and secure communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review Community Safety provision including systems, skills, capacity and legislation.</li> <li>▪ Support the Blue Light Collaboration Group by developing the five key work streams into the Programme Plan.</li> <li>▪ Review Technical Fire Safety provision including systems, skills, capacity and legislation.</li> </ul>
4	Reforming our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review management and workforce policies and practices to support Service reform, including measures to: -</li> <li>▪ continue positive engagement in the National Fire and Rescue Service Reform programme,</li> <li>▪ review and align senior leadership teams,</li> <li>▪ develop operating rules and governance arrangements for the Fire Alliance,</li> <li>▪ establish recruitment processes that meet the varied needs of the Alliance as well as challenging inequality,</li> <li>▪ review organisational development and future planning for the provision of ICT and Human Resources functions,</li> <li>▪ review the delivery and future planning of internal, external and corporate communications provision, and</li> <li>▪ reinvest savings, where appropriate, to support service reform.</li> <li>▪ Review and align operational and training policies, procedures, team resources and processes, including measures to: -</li> <li>▪ review and align operational training to deliver a single training framework,</li> <li>▪ review contracts to be delivered, and</li> <li>▪ design and implement a single procurement process, including developing ethical options such as 'whole life costings'.</li> </ul>
5	Managing our performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a standardised performance management framework for both governance and public understanding.</li> <li>▪ Create a suite of shared, strategic performance indicators.</li> <li>▪ Review of learning following HMICFRS Inspections with transparent improvement plans as necessary.</li> </ul>



Nathan Travis CFO for Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service

Rod Hammerton CFO Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Our ref: JPC/MW

Dear Nathan and Rod,

Thank you for your email dated 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018 attaching the SFRS & HWFRS "Fire Alliance Strategic Plan 2018 -2022".

I am pleased to recognise the progress that has been made on collaboration since I first raised it 18 months ago when there was little or no prospect of greater co-operation between yourselves, as well as with the police. I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on the draft "Alliance plan", and I hope you find my feedback useful as you continue to refine the plan further prior to the transfer of Governance.

I am concerned that the overall aspiration of the plan is not far reaching enough. The forward for example states **"The ambition is to create a strong alliance where both organisations can work together, often as one, to sustain and improve the high-quality prevention, protection and emergency response we currently deliver to all our local communities."** I would expect this aspiration to be more forward thinking and that the two FRS should "act as one" as a default position, except where there is clear and evidenced rationale why they shouldn't.

The forward also states **"The purpose of the alliance is to build capacity and resilience in both fire and rescue services in order to achieve long-term sustainability."** Whilst I concur with these statements I am concerned about the lack of recognition of the community the FRS serves. I would suggest "improving value for money and efficiency" and "improving public safety" should also be core purposes of the alliance. Being outwardly facing is in my view vital if we are to continue to meet the needs of the community. The current focus of the plan is on resilience and sustainability of current service levels. There is very little reference to how a more structured and far reaching alliance between the two services will lead to service improvement, increased effectiveness and efficiency. This should be evident throughout the document.

Explicit reference to "improving efficiency and effectiveness" should be included in the Strategic Aim of the plan. I am surprised at the reference to "budgetary restrictions" in this section when the reduction in demand is not referenced.

On the same theme, the Purpose clearly sets out the means through which the Alliance will move forward in relation to modernisation and service planning, there is no reference to organisational learning or service improvement. The development of mechanisms to evaluate success and deliver organisational learning could be included within the Purpose to complete the planning circle (i.e. identify options for change – produce business cases – evaluate success). This final step would demonstrate the Services' commitment to learn from the strategies, projects and investments referenced within the plan, and continually improve the service provided to the public.

I had expected more explicit reference to partnership collaboration beyond the two fire services within the priorities and key deliverables. Whilst I am on record as stating that my first priority will be to create a Fire/Fire Alliance, I am also on record as stating that I will also drive greater collaboration with the Police and other partners. This is a stark omission in my view and indeed "police" are only mentioned five times in the whole seventeen page document. Whilst I appreciate that the plan sets out how the two fire services will come together as an Alliance, I think it is necessary to formally recognise the need to further develop collaborative opportunities. There may be some scope to have a greater emphasis on partnership collaboration within the 'Reassuring our communities' or 'Reforming our services' strands.

It is also stated within the purpose that the plan will enable the two services to:

- ***provide the strategic context for subsequent investments, and***
- ***facilitate the timely production of subsequent business cases for related investment.***

Whilst of course some investment will be required, either in terms of upfront investment or reinvestment of savings delivered by the plan, the plan is silent on development of funding/investment.

I welcome the overall approach contained within the guiding principles, though I am concerned that within the "Cultural and Leadership" section of the principle it states ***"The Alliance will review and align processes, structures and leadership wherever it improves capacity, resilience and sustainability."*** I would expect that efficiency and effectiveness should also feature as a reason as to why "processes, structures and leadership would be aligned" between the two organisations.

Within the "Sustainability" statement of the principles it states ***"The Alliance will work to ensure that both organisations remain sustainable and are able to meet the needs of their communities through effective use of resources."*** Both organisations do not currently have self-sustaining budgets. The guiding principle in my view should be that both organisations become sustainable as a result of the alliance.

The "Partner Strategies" statement of the principles state ***"The Alliance will be aligned to, and supportive of, the strategies of other key partners; including the PCC's Safer West Mercia Plan. This will ensure the coordinated delivery of services focused on local priorities and a clear demonstration of how the Services meet their duty to collaborate."*** I would suggest that the Alliance should not only aspire to align its strategies to be supportive of other organisations' strategies, but to aspire to influence them to ensure they support the two services' aims. I would also expect a clearer reference to local Government, Police and Health services in this principle also.



With reference to the ***“Intelligence Driven and Evidence Led”*** and ***“Innovation”*** principles there is a danger that they can be perceived as insular. The alliance is an opportunity to develop talent within, but it is also an opportunity to capitalise on best practice from others in public and private sector organisations. I would not want the alliance to “reinvent the wheel” as it seeks to act as one.

Some more detailed observations in relation to each individual strand are provided below.

***Reassuring our communities:***

I support the focus on prevention and protection activities, particularly targeting the most vulnerable. Whilst the priorities outline how the Alliance will continue to identify needs and risks within local areas, there is no reference to community engagement, visibility, accessibility or transparency.

The wording of the Risk Management Plan (RMPs) priority appears counterintuitive; suggesting that each service will maintain current RMPs whilst simultaneously aligning analysis and methodology. This should be amended to clarify the future vision to align and combine RMP analysis and methodology. Similarly, under Key Deliverables, the aspiration should go beyond standardisation of methodology to include identification of areas for future alignment.

The “Key Deliverables” talk about reviewing and developing plans/strategies. I would hope these could be more action based rather than policy/process focused.

***Making our communities more resilient:***

The first two priorities within this strand focus on delivering an aligned Command and Control function and the development of the On-Call Duty Systems. These priorities appear more relevant to operational resilience than community resilience, and may sit more comfortably under ***‘Reforming our services’***.

I am also not clear as to the difference between this strand and the ***“Reforming our services”*** strand.

***Building safe and secure communities:***

The priorities and key deliverables within this strand are all welcomed. I would however welcome more explicit reference to the drive to “join up” the community safety work that partners are involved in to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

***Reforming our services:***

The focus on cultures and values within this strand welcomed this will be essential to the success of the Alliance. However, this should be further emphasised and given greater attention, given its importance. The services should consider what they are aiming for in terms of culture(s), shared or individual identities, and how this vision will be delivered.

I am unsure as to the reference to ***“This will provide the foundation block for delivering better ways of working in complex environments, for our teams and improving engagement in diverse communities during difficult and uncertain times.”*** What are the difficult and uncertain times being referred to? Are they Community-based or organisational?



Further clarity could be given to the key deliverable relating to the senior leadership team which is currently ambiguous and lacking clarity of direction and how this will then cascade through the alliance. I would also expect more reference to alignment of processes etc. along the theme of commonality within the new alliance.

***Managing our performance:***

Inclusion of performance management as a key development strand is also welcomed. The priority relating to the standardisation of performance data could be more ambitious. The priority should reflect the standardised performance management Key Deliverable which is more aspirational and sets the right tone for the future.

The priority relating to transparency for communities and development of feedback mechanisms may be better aligned with the 'Reassuring our communities' development strand. As stated above, the 'Reassuring our communities' strand currently lacks sufficient reference to transparency, accessibility and community engagement. The community should have the confidence in the way its FRS acts, including a default position that it will be open and transparent, and continuously engage with the community it serves.

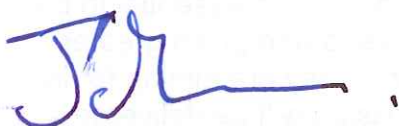
With reference to the proposed fire alliance governance and planning model, the infographic, whilst useful, could be simplified to illustrate how the RMPs and mid-term financial plans feed into the change programme (i.e. 2 boxes instead of 4).

As it stands, the proposed governance arrangements include PCC representation at Strategic Alliance Board level only. I would suggest that PCC representation at the Programme Delivery Boards should be included as this is where strategic priorities will be identified and business cases analysed and approved.

The above is intended to be constructive and to help you understand my priorities for when the governance of both services transfers. The above comment is not exhaustive nor does it fetter my discretion in the future.

As I stated at the start of this letter, I welcome the progress both services have made over the last 18 months around collaboration. This is an opportunity make sure the ambition in this work is bold and far reaching to ensure we maximise the benefits of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability for the community that we all serve.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JC', followed by a horizontal line and a comma.

John Campion  
Police and Crime Commissioner  
**West Mercia**