

# Fire Alliance Update Report

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton  
Chief Fire Officer or Area Manager Jan Morris, Head of Transformation and  
Collaboration, on 01743 260299.

### 1 Purpose of Report

This report updates Members on progress in the priority projects developed by the Fire Strategic Alliance between Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS).

### 2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to note progress on the programme to date.

### 3 Background

In 2018, members of the Fire Alliance Board agreed four priority projects: to review the future requirements for the fire control mobilising command and control function; to develop organisational arrangements for ICT functions; to prepare options for aligning the community risk management plan (CRMP) process for HWFRS and SFRS; and to review procurement strategies within both Services to examine the potential for alignment.

This report provides an update on progress on the key projects.

### 4 Programme Update

Since the last update both Services have continued to deal with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst resources continue to be directed to support partners and maintain service delivery the new Senior Responsible Owners (SROs) have managed to progress the alliance projects.

Officers previously discussed governance of the four priority projects, and it was agreed that each Project would convene a Project Working Group as outlined on page 16 of the Fire Alliance Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022.

## **5 Progress**

### **5a Communications Strategy**

At the February 2020 meeting of the Fire Alliance Programme Board, members requested an updated version of the Communications Strategy and the supporting Deliverables Plan. This work has been significantly impacted by the pandemic, however communications teams from across the alliance have now successfully completed this work.

### **5b Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)**

The CRMP's for both services were published on 1 April 2021.

Next Steps:

- HWFRS to agree the attendance standards of 10 minutes (urban), 15 minutes (town & fringe) and 20 minutes (rural). This will be done through public consultation.
- Standards will feature in both service Corporate Performance Indicators and a future action will be for both FRSs to report back to Delivery Board to enable comparisons to be made.
- Formalisation of Protection enforcement future workstream.

### **5c Procurement**

In addition to the last update, sharing of information and activity continues, with a renewed focus on larger schemes (particularly aerial appliances) where the wider benefits are achievable.

### **5d ICT**

An agreed structure has been implemented to enable both Services to progress with the key workstreams within the ICT pillar of the Alliance.

With the role of the ICT and Digital Transformation Manager being removed from the structure, the Planning and Performance Manager (SFRS) will provide project management and co-ordination from Shropshire FRS.

This structure will remain flexible as it progresses and may include any external consultants engaged as part of the delivery within one of the key areas.

### **Wide Area Network (WAN) Project**

Progress continues with the implementation of a Wide Area Network that will ensure capacity and resilience across both Services.

SFRS has moved over to a new contract with no additional work required on the existing WAN infrastructure. This move to a new contract took place in August 2021, with associated savings presented previously.

Further work will be undertaken to gradually migrate to SD WAN technology, once assurances into the stability and maturity of the solution are in place.

HWFRS are in the process of signing a contract and will be initialising the SD WAN as soon as possible. Work has begun and some high-level design thoughts regarding its use, in particular, opening up access to further support remote working under a zero-trust network, implementing MFA, have been developed.

### **Helpdesk System Project**

Work has continued with onboarding of the Fresh Serve product within both organisations.

Shropshire went live with the new product on 2 August 2021 and the transfer appears to have not caused any disruption. Initial feedback from the ICT Team is positive and feedback from end users highlights that the system is easy to use.

Colleagues in HWFRS are working towards a launch date, with some processes needing additional work. These include assets, dual roles and custom workflows. These areas all have appropriate solutions in place and the system will go live once assets are updated.

### **Asset Management**

Following conversations with the Head of Resources, SFRS have been made aware that the current supplier of asset management software (TRACE) will no longer be available.

The Service are seeking a new system that will enable Workshop Technicians to operate in an agile manner and provide a fit for purpose product. During the recent Project Board meeting, it was apparent that colleagues at HWFRS use a system called Tranman and feedback to the group was positive in terms of recent updates and support from an ICT perspective.

SFRS will pursue this avenue of work and will keep both HWFRS and West Mercia Police informed of progress and any benefits realised that could lead to a collaborative opportunity, considering the tight deadlines imposed by the existing provider.

### **Opportunities: Future mobilising**

SFRS have recently established a Project team to look at current arrangements for mobilising on call staff. The Project Team also consists of a colleague from HWFRS, to ensure the approach is shared.

The purpose of this is to reduce any immediate risk to the Service with regards to ageing station end equipment. The second objective is to identify a fallback arrangement that is as robust and resilient as the primary mobilising method.

Work is being monitored through the SFRS Service Transformation Board, with a proposal approved for replacement of station end equipment and new alerters for all on-call staff.

The long term aim is to allow the end user to have a choice in terms of the mobilising method they prefer, and it is envisaged that staff will migrate over time to new technology, once confidence and acceptance of new methods is reached.

Colleagues stated that HWFRS are seeking to procure approximately 300 alerters, whilst looking at new technology. Work is currently underway to identify the benefits of a joint approach to App based technology trials, to prevent duplication of effort and in the spirit of sharing information and intelligence.

HWFRS are also in the process of replacing Station End equipment and a tender is currently being created.

### **Other Activity**

Both Services are now utilising and taking advantage of the functionality within the Office 365 platform, inclusive of SharePoint and some functionality within the Power BI environment.

Work is also underway within both Services to implement Multi Factor Authentication (MFA), that will enable access to corporate facilities from a range of devices and any location.

HWFRS are currently using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for cyber security protection and prevention of networks, devices and email systems. SFRS are currently undertaking a cyber security review with Zurich as part of the current insurance provision. Findings and recommendations will be considered upon completion and any best practice guidance shared across the Alliance.

### **Alliance ICT Project Board meetings**

The SRO for the ICT pillar has now established a Project Board that will meet approximately 2 weeks prior to the Delivery Board. The rationale behind this timeline is to enable the Project Board to carry out appropriate scrutiny and due diligence to any of the workstreams and confirm any items for decision and approval by the Delivery Board.

The Project Board will provide a mechanism to identify priorities and develop well-formed business cases to present to the Delivery Board.

### **Next Steps**

- a) Continue with the implementation of the selected service desk software and obtain feedback from end users.
- b) Work to commence on the alignment of policy and process to ensure the Helpdesk workstream meets the original objective of creating capacity and resilience for both Services.
- c) Continue to progress with WAN workstream with the primary objective being to increase resilience across both services.

- d) Explore opportunity in relation to joint procurement of asset management systems now and into the future.
- e) Develop and share understanding of Service activities and continue to share intelligence and information, including:
  - 1. Alerter Project
  - 2. Cyber Security

### **Conclusion/Summary ICT**

- A review of the existing structure has concluded and required actions have been implemented.
- Work continues to progress towards agreed outcomes.
- Members are requested to note the work undertaken to date and the range of areas being considered now and into the future.

## **5e Fire Control**

Emphasis has moved from strategic options appraisal, to creating a specification for a new Command and Control system.

On 1 October 2021, officers met to discuss the draft user specification for a replacement fire control system. HWFRS has produced the draft specification, business case and risk assessment and has asked for comment / additions with the aim of the finalised business case being presented to the Alliance Board in December 2021.

The business case details the need, specification and resource requirements for a replacement system and approximate timescales for delivery. In December, the Board will be asked to agree the business case and initiate the project

## **5f Environmental Management**

The Services continue to share learning. When the finalised building assessments are received by HWFRS, these will be shared with SFRS as the basis for similar assessments of their estate. This will enable sharing of work already carried out, and an assessment of its performance and impact.

Development of a joint environmental strategy is being considered and it is proposed to base this on the Earthshot Prize goals of:

- Protect and restore nature.
- Clean our air.
- Revive our oceans.
- Build a waste-free world.
- Fix our climate

These goals are relatively simple and understandable, while not being narrowly focussed on climate change. They can be used as a basis for explaining complex and potentially competing priorities and give the opportunity to build on the Earthshot publicity.

If adopted, this strategy could then fit above both Services existing and future strategies which will feed in to, and support, the alliance strategy.

## **6 Summary**

Officers continue to make progress on each priority project, though some delays have been inevitable, given the ongoing impact of COVID-19. The tempo of delivery is increasing as teams across both Service's become more accustomed to the evolving new ways of working.

Members are requested to note the progress to date.

## **7 Collaboration / Partnership Working**

The Area Manager Transformation and Collaboration will continue to explore opportunities both within and outside the Alliance.

## **8 Equality Impact Assessment**

This report sets out factual details of the Alliance. An equality impact assessment has not been completed for this report. These assessments will be conducted as part of the individual projects as has been done for CRMP.

## **9 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **10 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **11 Appendices**

There are no appendices attached to this report.

## **12 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.