

Annual Report on Collaborative and Partnership Working

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Guy Williams, Assistant Chief Fire Officer on 01743 260196 or Scott Hurford Area Manager Transformation & Collaboration on 01743 260265.

1 Executive Summary

This report provides an overview and audit of collaborative and partnership working being undertaken by the Fire Authority and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service). It also includes an update on contracts and the link to business continuity.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note this report

3 Background

Partnership working is a key element in the Service's strategy to meet its vision of "Making Shropshire Safer" and is also reflected in the Fire Service National Framework. The Service is involved in partnerships which are risk assessed for liability and reputation by the Service's Risk Management Group. The Service maintains a Partnership Register, which is reviewed by the Service Management Team to monitor the outcome and productivity of each partnership.

This report provides an overview of progress and compliance against the Brigade Order and Register.

4 Overview

Fire Alliance Collaboration

The Alliance with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) has been in place since 2018. It provides two relatively small services with the strengths of a large organisation without losing individual identities. Both the Service and HWFRS remain separate organisations which operate independently and have full control of their own resources.

The Alliance was guided by a joint Fire Alliance Strategic Plan (2018-2022), that aimed to provide both services with long-term capacity and resilience. The original plan was closed at the end of 2022, with agreement that the two services would continue to work collaboratively across all opportunities. The focus for the next two years, however, is the joint Command & Control (C&C) system, which will provide fire control resilience for both services.

Partnerships

A selection of partnerships is detailed in sections 5, 6 and 7. This is not an exhaustive list. These partnerships are taken from the Partnership Register. It should be noted that some partnerships have been affected by the pandemic. Many partners have had to look at alternative ways of working and whilst this was initially a temporary measure, many have stated that they wish to review working practices to capture and continue any good practice identified.

Significant work has been carried out by the Service Development team to update the Register to ensure currency, relevance, and accessibility. Department Heads have been asked to review the register to ensure all partnerships are up-to-date and relevant, removing any that are no longer viable or current.

Contracts

A contract is a contract, even if it is called something else. A contract exists where two independent parties agree on actions which benefit both parties:

- Normally one party gets goods or services and the other gets payment (formally consideration), but it could be a reciprocal agreement.
- It does not need to be in writing.
- There is lots of underlying case law to put in place arrangements where they are not documented.

There are several contracts held on the Register upon which the Service relies heavily. These include with CFRMIS, Lampada, IRS, FSR, and Excelerate. It was agreed at the Systems Governance Group (SGG) that Department Heads would become accountable for ensuring contingency plans for these are included within current departmental business continuity plans (BCPs), with links to the BCPs being added to the Contracts Register.

Work is currently ongoing to ensure BCPs are refreshed to include relevant contingency plans for each contract.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

An MoU is a statement of serious intent, voluntarily agreed, of the commitment, resources, and other considerations each of the parties will bring. There is a moral force, but no legal obligations. To stop it being a contract, it needs a disclaimer that it is not legally binding.

Service Level Agreement (SLA)

An SLA sets out services the supplier is expected to provide and to what standards. This typically forms part of a contract.

5 Prevention and Protection Partnerships

Exeter data- Data sharing

Annual release of data that populates the premises of those we visit for safe and well visits (scheduled work).

Baywater HealthCare

Supplies data weekly regarding patients using oxygen therapy at home and in the community. This risk is added to the C&C system by control, and CFRMIS by Prevention admin so patients can be offered a safe and well visit.

RNLI waterside responder scheme

The Throwline Responder Scheme supports the delivery of throwline training by Service staff to various volunteers using RNLI scheme and materials.

MAPPA-Multi-Agency Public Protection Agreement (MAPPA)

This partnership is a means to share critical information about those who are vulnerable or those who may provide a potential threat to the community. The information sharing is signed by statutory partners. The Service is invited to MAPPA meetings when the offender has been convicted of an offence of arson.

Supreme Homecare

Supreme HomeCare are a care provider that give home visit care to clients around Shrewsbury, Telford, Newport and the surrounding areas. The aim of the partnership is to have clients referred to the Service for a Safe and Well visit and to provide training to staff to identify hazards.

6 Operational Response Partnerships and Other Collaborations

Southern Police Vehicle Framework

This partnership assures procurement compliance and efficiency of car and light van purchase. It ensures Service vehicles comply with Police safety standards and there are benefits such as increased warranty terms and lower purchase prices driven by our inclusion within Police volumes.

West Mercia Police Light Vehicle Maintenance

West Mercia Police workshops are maintaining the Service's light vehicle fleet, with an intention to move towards a fully managed service linked in with Service inclusion on the Southern Police Vehicle Framework. This partnership removes the need for the Service to provide additional staff capacity to service its own light fleet. As part of the southern police framework the WMP workshop have enhanced access to dealer diagnostic systems and are able complete warranty work on the Services vehicles.

Police Property Sharing

This partnership seeks to support the rationalisation of the total public sector estate. The police currently use accommodation at Much Wenlock and Newport Fire Stations and have access to other sites as needed. Sharing of sites will enable closer working, release of capital assets and reduced revenue costs.

7 Equality and Diversity Groups & Partnerships

The Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team works with a range of groups, including Shropshire Disability Network, Safe Ageing No Discrimination (SAND), Older People's Forums in Shropshire and

Telford, the Rainbow Film Festival and LGBT History, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin LGBT+ film festival and Fairness, Respect, Equality Shropshire (FRESH).

Disability Confident Employer

The Service is a Disability Confident Employer, which is a scheme designed to help recruit and retain people who have a disability or people with health conditions for their skills and talent.

Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA).

The Service participates in the AFSA regional meetings and workshops, as well as attending national events and conferences.

Women in the Fire Service

The Service is a member of Women in the Fire Service, supporting and encouraging employees to attend events. The Service has also addressed the 2019 HMICFRS inspection recommendation to provide/enable minority support groups within the organisation. In 2020 a Voices Group was created, which is made up from employees who have put themselves forward to be representatives. The Voices Group is working well and was recognised as innovative practice in the Service's 2021/22 HMICFRS inspection report. The Service has recently become engaged with a regional EDI group within which it is hoped to share good practice.

8 Conclusions

There has been significant work carried out over the last 12 months to ensure the Register is up to date, relevant and accessible. Of the 48 partnerships detailed on the Register as open, 21 are showing as out of date and require attention from Department Leads or 11 require a review date.

There are 16 partnerships, which require reviewing over the course of 2024, by department leads.

Service Lead Officers have been contacted to ask the appropriate person in their teams to review the partnerships allocated against their departments where applicable. This work is coordinated by the Transformation & Collaboration team.

9 Fire Alliance / Collaboration / Partnership Working

All departments will continue to explore possibilities for new partnerships and other collaboration.

10 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

11 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

14 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

15 Background Papers

[SFRS Partnerships Register](#)