

Annual Report on Collaborative and Partnership Working

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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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) was put in place in 2018. It provided 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 were affected by the pandemic. Many partners have had to look at alternative ways of working and 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.

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

Partnership highlights:

Multi Agency Targeted Enforcement Strategy (MATES)

This consists of West Mercia Police, Immigration Enforcement, Gangmasters, Probation Service, Shropshire Council Regulatory Enforcement, Telford and Wrekin Council Regulatory Enforcement, His Majesty's Revenue and Customs

MATES is aimed at focusing the enforcement work of a multitude of departments on high-risk premises where there are links to:

- Illegal working
- Sales of counterfeit and smuggled tobacco
- Rogue landlords and unlawful houses of multiple occupation
- Dangerous breaches in fire safety and other safety regulations
- Exploitation of workers
- Modern slavery
- Human trafficking
- Child sexual exploitation

AICO

AICO provides fire protection systems and works alongside local authorities and housing associations to create bespoke solutions so that tenants can be safer in their homes. AICO support the Service in the delivery of training to Prevention, Fire Investigation and Protection officers. More recently they are providing their site in Oswestry for Fire Authority meetings and Business Fire Safety Education seminars, and will sponsor community, commercial and other Service events.

Home Instead

Home Instead are a care provider that give home visit care to clients around Shropshire. The aim of the partnership is to have Home Instead clients referred to the Service for a Safe and Well visit and to provide training to Home Instead staff to identify hazards in the home.

Institute of Advanced Motoring (Young Driver/Young Rider schemes)

The main objective of this partnership is to reduce the number of people killed or injured on the roads of Shropshire, through advanced driver training of young drivers and motorcyclists.

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.

Royal National Lifeboat Institute (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. This supports water safety in the county.

6 Operational Response Partnerships and Other Collaborations

Environment Agency

This partnership provides a joint assurance for each organisation to ensure that a rapid and proportionate response is made to either pre-planned or 'rising tide' incidents.

The partnership also makes provision for the equipment to mitigate pollution in the early stages of an incident and new equipment such as water gates to stem the flow of larger water courses or in flooding situations.

Police Property Sharing

This partnership seeks to support the rationalisation of the total public sector estate. There is currently provision of Police accommodation at Whitchurch, Bridgnorth and Church Stretton Fire Stations. Sharing of other sites will enable closer working, release of capital assets and reduced revenue costs.

Southern Police Vehicle Framework

This partnership assures efficiency of vehicle procurement processes of cars and light vans. It ensures Service vehicles comply with Police safety standards and there are benefits such as increased warranty terms and lower purchase prices.

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.

7 Equality and Diversity Groups & Partnerships

The Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team works with a range of partnerships and 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).

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.

The Service is a member of the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA). The Service participates in the AFSA regional meetings and workshops, as well as attending national events and conferences.

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 recent HMICFRS inspection report.

The Service has recently become engaged with a regional EDI group within which it is hoped to share good practice.

The Service has also won awards and shares its work around dyslexia with other fire services. It holds regular Dyslexia Networking Meetings.

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.

Service Lead Officers are regularly requested to review the partnerships allocated against their departments. This work is coordinated by the Transformation & Collaboration team.

9 Capacity

There are no capacity impacts arising from this report.

10 Fire Alliance / Collaboration / Partnership Working

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

11 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

12 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

13 Community Safety

There are no community safety impacts arising from this report.

14 Environmental

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

15 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required.

16 Health and Safety

There are no health and safety impacts arising from this report.

17 Fire Standard Core Code of Ethics and Human Rights (including Data Protection)

There are no impacts on compliance with the Fire Standards Core Code of Ethics or human rights arising from this report.

18 ICT

There are no ICT impacts arising from this report.

19 Insurance

There are no insurance impacts arising from this report.

17 The On-call Service

There are no impacts on the On-call service arising from this report.

18 Public Value / Service Delivery

There are no public value or service delivery impacts arising from this report.

19 Reputation

There are no reputational impacts arising from this report.

20 Security

There are no security impacts arising from this report.

21 Training

There are no training impacts arising from this report.

22 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

23 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.