Fire Strategic Alliance Update Report

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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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 the report.

3   Background

The alliance with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (the Fire
Alliance) has been in place since 2018. The purpose of the Fire Alliance is to
enhance the capacity and resilience of both Services supporting their long-
term sustainability. It provides both Services with the strengths of a larger
organisation without losing individual identities. Both SFRS and HWFRS
remain separate organisations, operating independently, with full control of
their own resources.

The Services have identified 4 key areas that are currently being developed.
These areas were identified as foundation activities that would also support
wider future working.

- Fire Control
- Integrated Risk Management (IRMP)[1]
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Procurement

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[1] HWFRS Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

4   Programme Update

There have been several changes in personnel across both Services. As a result, the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) roles for the following projects have been reallocated as follows:

IRMP/CRMP	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Dan Quinn, SFRS
Procurement	ACFO Jon Pryce, HWFRS
ICT	Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer (T/DCFO) Dave Myers (until 31 December 2020) and then ACFO Simon Hardiman, SFRS
Fire Control	T/DCFO Keith Chance, HWFRS

In addition, officers have discussed governance arrangements for the priority projects and have agreed that each Project would convene a Project Working Group under the terms set out in the Fire Alliance Strategic Plan 2018-22.

Members will be aware that both Services continue to be closely involved in dealing with the impact of COVID-19. SFRS, for example, are committing resources to support the vaccine role out. The pandemic continues to have an impact on some of the project work, however the new SROs supported by the project managers are developing the new ways of working that have evolved over the last 12 months to support the delivery of these projects.

5   Progress

5a   Project 1: Fire Control

This project explores the potential for creating a shared Fire Control function for both Services. Work is ongoing to finalise the strategic options appraisal of the sixteen options. Officers are currently producing a shortlist of options and a preferred choice. The process is taking into consideration the significant learning from the tragic events of the Grenfell Tower fire and the Manchester Evening News Arena bomb attack.

Timetable.
The shortlist of options, with a full appraisal of each will be completed by early 2021 after which a preferred option will be agreed by the Delivery Board. The appraisal, with a recommendation, will then be put to the Strategic Alliance Board for consideration prior to developing a full business case for the approval of both Fire and Rescue Authorities; initially aiming for April 2021.

5b   Project 2: Integrated/Community Risk Management Plan (IRMP/CRMP)

This involves aligning each Service's processes for preparing their overall strategies for keeping people, their homes, communities and environment safe from fire and other emergencies.

The consultation report for the Shropshire IRMP was presented to, and approved, by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 16 December 2020. Minor amendments and design improvements are subsequently being carried out, these include a new title, "Making Shropshire Safer" and also changing IRMP to CRMP (Community Risk Management Plan) in line with anticipated national guidance to be issued later in 2021 by the National Fire Chiefs Council

Officers continue to liaise with HWFRS as the Service develops performance indicators for the CRMP.

The updated timetable is shown below.

Action	Timeline
IRMP Consultation launch with ongoing programme of publicity, meetings and press releases	6 July 2020 - complete
Public focus groups	August 2020 – complete
Public consultation reminder	August- September 2020 - complete
Consultation closes	30 September 2020 - complete
Equality Impact Assessments prepared	November 2020 - complete
Process to collate, monitor and report on Performance Indicators to be established	September 2020 – March 2021
Consultation results submitted to respective Fire Authorities	SFRS-December 2020- complete HWFRS-February 2021
IRMPs to be updated	January 2021 - ongoing
IRMP publication date	1 April 2021

5c   Project 3: Information and Communications Technology

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) functions form the crucial infrastructure behind the smooth running of a modern fire and rescue service. It is important in enabling good communication and integration between emergency services locally, regionally and nationally.

To support delivery across this project, a Project board has been established consisting of the SRO, Mark Jarvis (ICT Change Manager), Jean Cole, Sally Edwards and Peter Chatwin.

The purpose of the project board will be to set and agree the priority pieces of work for the project and provide updates and options for consideration by the Strategic Alliance Board.

Since the last update, progress has been made in the following areas:

Wide Area Network (WAN) Project
Creating a single Wide Area Network, that combines two ICT infrastructures currently operating under different models, is a challenge.

Mark Jarvis is currently in the process of producing a specification and entering the tendering process. This is following consultation surveys within both Services to capture current and future end user requirements.

Helpdesk System Project
The contract has been awarded to a supplier and work is underway to begin implementation within both Services.

Further work is underway to ensure capacity is sufficient and also to determine how the product will be used within each Service, with the aim of enabling both ICT teams to support each other and increase resilience.

Software Analysis
A review of all software currently used across both Services, which included input from many stakeholders at all levels, has been completed.

Once the software strategy has been published, agreement regarding priorities and budgets will need to be made and a plan of action drawn up.

This is part of the work that the ICT Project board will develop prior to approaching the Strategic Alliance Board for corporate sign-off of proposed priorities

Joint specifications will need to be developed across functional areas of both Services to ensure the scope of work is not restricted. LEO is a good example whereby HWFRS have analysed the product and wish to move their online learning platform to LEO. SFRS will assist with on boarding and sharing of training content where applicable.

5d   Project 4: Procurement

This project is aimed at achieving efficiencies through aligning contracts, where practical, and jointly procuring goods and services where this makes sense – although it has to be recognised that both services already take considerable advantage of economies of scale through national and regional frameworks wherever possible.

Both Services are now working to a revised Procurement Plan, encompassing seventeen areas or items. The delivery of this plan is coordinated by ACFO Jon Pryce from HWFRS who chairs a board of Alliance stakeholders. This Board will meet on 5 February and will continue to meet regularly throughout 2021 and provide updates on areas of progress or where decisions are required.

Procurement overlaps with other projects including ICT. As such the ICT project is evaluating ICT related hardware to identify any future procurement opportunities.

5e   Communications Strategy.

Work on preparing the Communications Strategy was initially delayed as team members were required to prioritise communications to support the ongoing pandemic response.

With resources now in place a draft strategy has been produced and will be submitted for scrutiny to the Alliance's Programme Delivery Board in February.

6   Summary

The SROs have met and discussed their vision for developing the Alliance in 2021. Members should be aware that future progress may continue to be impacted by the many challenges arising from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Updates on progress and any issues arising will continue to be regularly reported to the Alliance's Programme Board and Programme Delivery Board.

Members are recommended to note the overall progress on the projects. Further updates will continue to be brought to future Fire Authority meetings.

7   Identified Revenue Funding

There is no additional revenue funding required at this stage

8   Capacity

Capacity to support the communication strategy will continue to be challenged by the need to prioritise internal pandemic communications.

9   Collaboration / Partnership Working

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

10   Community Safety

There are no community safety impacts arising from this report.

11   Environmental

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

12   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 the IRMP.

13 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

14 Health and Safety

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

15 Human Rights (including Data Protection)

There are no human rights impacts arising from this report.

16 ICT

There is no impact on ICT.

17 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

18 Public Value / Service Delivery

Strategic Aims 1 -4

19 Reputation

There is a reputational risk if the Service fails to deliver on Alliance obligations.

20 Security

There are no security impacts arising from this report.

21 Training

There are no training implications within this report.

22 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

23 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.