

# Annual Report on Collaborative and Partnership Working

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton Chief Fire Officer or AM Guy Williams Head of Transformation and Collaboration on 01743 260299.

### 1 Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of collaborative and partnership working being undertaken by the Fire Authority and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service).

### 2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is 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" this 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 in order to monitor the outcome and productivity of each of the partnerships.

The Service has amended the Partnership Brigade Order and Partnership Register to meet the recommendations of Internal Audit. This was completed in October 2019.

A Service priority is the methodology to identify and access some of the most vulnerable people in the community. Partnership and Collaborative working are key enablers in this work. This report sets out to explain what partnerships and collaborations are whilst presenting the strategy that underpins collaboration. The report also provides examples of collaboration and current partnerships.

## 4 Collaboration

Within the Police and Crime Act 2017 the Government introduced a “duty to collaborate.” This has imposed a statutory duty for the Service to “consider whether entering into a collaboration will be in the interests of efficiency, effectiveness or public safety.”

### What is Collaboration?

Collaboration can be simply seen as people’s aspirations to come and act together.

Collaboration can be defined as;

*“a process in which organisations exchange information, alter activities, share resources, and enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose by sharing risks, responsibilities, and rewards.”*

Collaborating is characterised by substantial time commitments, very high levels of trust, and extensive areas of common ground.

### How does a Collaboration differ from a Partnership?

Partnerships are more formal and, in many cases, incorporate formal agreements on outcomes and procedures. (As seen in the Partnership Register)

Collaboration can encompass just about any activity where two or more organisations are working together, where as a partnership sets out some clearly defined guidelines and expected results that the collaborative efforts will be measured against.

In a collaboration, each organisation operates independently and has complete control over the individual resources they bring to the table. In a partnership, there is more of a co-mingling of resources and a separate structure is developed to oversee or manage the engagement. Hence the partnership agreement and its register.

### SFRS Collaborative Strategy

#### We will

- identify and develop the common ground (synergy) between our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and the strategy of our Partners.
- exchange information, alter activities, share resources and enhance capacity of other organisations to achieve a common purpose and or mutual benefit.

Any such benefit will be achieved through the efficient use of the time and resources available and will align to SFRS Service aims.

## 5 Fire Alliance Collaboration

The Alliance with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) has been in place since 2018. It provides both Services with the strengths of a large organisation, without losing individual identities, both SFRS and HWFRS remain separate organisations that operate independently and have full control of their own resources.

The Alliance is guided by a joint Fire Alliance Strategic Plan (2018-2022), which aims to provide both Services with the long-term capacity and resilience to meet the increasing pressures of budgetary restrictions, changing demands and specialist skills requirements. At the heart of this lies collaboration and the benefits are already coming through.

The Services have invested resources, altered activities and exchanged information in the four key areas that are currently being developed. These areas were identified as key enablers to support wider future working.

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

The Appendix to the report sets out the progress of the Alliance.

## 6 Partnership Overview.

A selection of partnerships is detailed in sections 7, 8 and 9. This is not an exhaustive list. These partnerships are taken from the Partnership Register.

## 7 Prevention and Protection Partnership

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, Her Majesty's Revenue and Custom.

MATES is aimed at focusing 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

## **Telford & Wrekin Council**

Recent work has been undertaken by both organisations to ensure that previous and future protocols meets the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

This agreement has been further developed with Adult Social Care and now means that when a care package is reviewed (annual) the client is given the option of a receiving a Safe and Well visit.

This Council protocol has also been used as a template to create and service other partnerships with organisations, such as Bluebird Care Ltd, with the assurance that the agreements comply with legislation and essentially provide a robust number of referrals to the Service.

## **NHS; Falls and Frailty.**

Officers have recently designed a partnership with the NHS for the prevention of falls and injuries in frailer older people. The NHS will be able to use Stations to carry out support sessions.

## **NHS; General Practitioners**

“Exeter” \* data consists of the names, gender, date of birth and address of those individuals who are over the age of 65 within the community. The Service has been working with partners in the Health Service to use this data to identify the most vulnerable adults in the over 65s group. This partnership is still the backbone of Prevention activity.

\* The Exeter system is a database of all patients registered with an NHS General Practitioner in England and Wales. It is used by all health authorities in the two countries and is one of the largest population databases in operation in the UK.

## **British Red Cross, Home from Hospital Service, Telford and Shrewsbury**

The Red Cross will complete a fire risk assessment on each client within Shropshire/Telford & Wrekin that use the 'Home from Hospital' service. Referrals are then made to the Service. The Red Cross co-ordinators also complete a SFRS checklist for new service users.

## **Oswestry Care and Supreme Homecare Partnerships**

Oswestry Care are a private care agency for which the Service has agreed to train and deliver refresher training to the carers that work in the community. This gives them the knowledge of identifiable fire risk within their client's homes and an avenue of referral. Oswestry Care also fill in the SFRS fire safety checklist and return it to the Prevention Team. Supreme Homecare replicate this service.

## **Housing Association Support**

The Service offers and delivers Safe and Well advice to Housing Association residents (Wrekin Housing Group) and has delivered numerous visits as part of the programme. The major housing groups offer vulnerability referrals to SFRS. This support now includes hoarding case management. SFRS currently embed the Telford & Wrekin Vulnerable Persons Officer within The Wrekin Housing Group (WHG) for 1 day a week visiting high risk residents.

WHG have also given SFRS access to the WHG Portal. This allows us to communicate directly with WHG for a host of issues. Fire Control can directly request boarding up at WHG properties.

### **Rural Partnerships**

The Service's Fire Crime Officer writes regular articles for the National Farmers Union (Midlands), Shropshire Rural Hub and Neighbourhood Watch, raising awareness of rural fires, especially those involving farms and barns.

The Outreach vehicle and members of the Prevention Team also support Police rural crime events in Shrewsbury and at Harper Adams University.

### **Support to young carers**

This incorporates the former British Red Cross scheme which supports young carers across Shropshire. These young people look after adults in the family home, often parents, with a variety of issues. An agreement provides a referral pathway that has been built into an annual review form. Clients who have consented to such a visit are referred on a monthly basis.

### **Domestic Abuse Sub-Group, Sanctuary Scheme and MARAC**

The purpose of this group is to encourage agencies and organisations to work in partnership in order to create an environment where domestic violence and abuse is not tolerated and to reduce the impact on victims in Shropshire. This comes under the Safer Stronger Community Partnership. The partnership is supported by Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and referrals to SFRS are triaged by West Mercia Police. The Service's Fire Crime Officer liaises with partners to address areas and individuals of specific concern and measures, such as lockable letterboxes, are employed to target harden premises against the risk of attack.

### **Team Shrewsbury**

Team Shrewsbury is a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which forms the basis of an Integrated Community Management Partnership between various public sector partners, and the business, community and voluntary sectors. This is split into both Strategic and Tactical working groups.

### **Shropshire Council Adult Social Care**

The Service is still waiting for Shropshire Council to authorise this ground-breaking concept. This has already been the subject of media enquiries. This work is awaiting a final sign off from Shropshire Council due to various reasons including GDPR and adopting the new liquid logic system.

## **8 Operational Response Partnerships and Other Collaborations.**

### **Gaining Entry.**

Using our fire crews and rescue equipment to help the Ambulance Service gain access to premises where someone needs urgent medical attention. In the year ending 31 March 2020 the Service assisted at 127 incidents

### **Missing Persons Search.**

Fire crews assist Police with searching for high risk missing persons, this utilises water and line rescue, drones, thermal imagery, multi terrain vehicles and boots on the ground. In the year ending 31 March 2020 the Service attended 11 incidents and fire crews located 3 missing persons.

### **Incident Command Vehicle Procurement.**

The fleet is expected to be operational very shortly (early 2020). This joint venture has provided good experience and learning which will support future Alliance projects and working.

### **Burns Care Network**

The Burns Care Network was set up to share casualty information on casualties with burns-related injuries at incidents attended by various stakeholders. The lead hospital for this network is University Hospital Birmingham. This Service and several other regional and national stakeholders within the Midlands region have signed up to this protocol.

### **Light Vehicle Maintenance**

West Mercia Police now carry out SFRS light vehicle maintenance. The Service has access to the Police diagnostic centre and the discounts available to the Police.

### **Telford Central Development**

Re-develop the Telford Central site in a way that maximises the benefits to the public purse, through working in collaboration with partner agencies, the public and charities.

Proposal includes facilities for:

Emergency Planning Unit - Shropshire

Emergency Planning Unit - Telford and Wrekin

Training Facilities - West Mercia Police

Tactical Command Centre - Multi-agencies Shropshire

Virtual Strategic Command Centre - Multi-agencies Shropshire

Meeting, conference and community use facilities - public, charities and partners both public and private.

## **9 Equality and Diversity Groups and 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, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin LGBT+ film festival and Fairness, Respect, Equality Shropshire (FRESH).

SFRS 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. In 2019 SFRS had their first supported internship through Enable.

SFRS are members of the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA). In 2018 SFRS were awarded a certificate for being a founder member of this group. SFRS participate in the AFSA regional meetings and workshops, as well as attending National events and conferences.

The Service was among the first corporate members of FRESH, which was established in 2013 to support improved equality and anti-discrimination policy and practice within and beyond Shropshire. The Service is committed to FRESH and its work, and hosts many of FRESH's meetings at Service Headquarters.

SFRS are members of Women in the Fire Service. The Service is also addressing the HMICFRS recommendation that the Service should provide/enable minority support groups within SFRS. SFRS hold regular Dyslexia Networking Meetings and have held an operational Women's meeting.

## **10 Identified Revenue Funding**

There is no additional revenue funding required at this stage

## **11 Capacity**

No capacity impacts have been identified.

## **12 Collaboration / Partnership Working**

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

## **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**

This report sets out factual details of partnerships, in which the Service is involved. An equality impact assessment has not been completed for this report.

## **16 Financial Implications**

Information on income and expenditure within partnerships is collected and updated in line with the frequency of monitoring, which takes place on each partnership and is recorded on the Partnership Register. The Service Management Team reviews the Register every six months.

## **17 Health and Safety**

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

## **18 Human Rights (including Data Protection)**

There are no human rights impacts arising from this report.

## **19 ICT**

There is no impact on ICT.

## **20 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising from this report. The functions exercised within the partnership working arrangements fall within the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the aims and objectives of the Fire Authority.

## **21 Public Value / Service Delivery**

Strategic Aims 1 -4

## **22 Reputation**

There is a reputational risk if the Service enters into an inappropriate partnership or fails to deliver on a partnership's obligations.

## **23 Security**

There are no security impacts arising from this report.

## **24 Training**

There are no training implications within this report.

## **25 Appendix**

Fire Alliance Progress Report

## **26 Background Papers**

None



# Fire Alliance Update Report

## 1 Purpose of Report

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

## 2 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 Fire Alliance is guided by a joint Fire Alliance Strategic Plan (2018-2022), which aims to provide both Services with the long-term capacity and resilience to meet the increasing pressures of budgetary restrictions, changing demands and specialist skills requirements. At the heart of this lies collaboration in sharing resources, knowledge and expertise.

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

- Fire Control
- Integrated Risk Management (IRMP)<sup>1</sup>
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Procurement

## 3 Progress

### Project 1: Fire Control

The project was designed to be able to set out a joint vision for Fire Control. This project explores the potential for creating a shared Fire Control function for both Services.

Over the last year, both Services have jointly funded the post of a dedicated officer to take this work forward and who has overseen the delivery of an in-depth analysis of the technical capabilities and longevity of the current Fire Control arrangements in both Services, as well as an overall risk assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> HWFRS Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

Since the project commenced there has been significant learning from the tragic events of the Grenfell Tower fire and the Manchester Evening News Arena bomb attack. This learning has informed the project on the critical needs associated with effectively managing major incidents in terms of capacity, use of technology and inter organisation communications and co-ordination. Other recent events such as Covid-19 are also providing valuable information on how to ensure resilience of a critical function. This work is detailed as the future landscape of emergency control has subsequently evolved and continues to change.

Following an initial options appraisal, the following solutions have all been identified as viable, but with varying strengths and weaknesses:

- Continue to operate as two independent control rooms, providing each other fall-back resilience and over-flow capacity – both operating on a single, updated system.
- Pursue a more regional solution with both services partnering with a third party.
- Consolidating resources to a single site and achieving resilience through a third party
- Operating as one control over two sites, possibly, with a primary and secondary control room, that provides mutual resilience and spare capacity.

A joint resilience exercise is also being planned to determine the current level of capacity and capability to deal with a significant incident, such as a high-rise residential fire in the light of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry findings but this has been postponed due to both services now having been in Major Incident status, due to flooding followed by the pandemic, since March 2020. It is anticipated learning from this exercise will help to shape the requirements of any new technology and ways of working.

The next phase of the project is to undertake a deeper and more detailed analysis of the options, gain a greater understanding of the technological opportunities and requirements and to develop a system specification that reflects these. Both Services recognise the potential to increase their joint capacity and capability, as well as extra resilience across the three counties, by updating the technology and sharing the Fire Control function.

## **Project 2: Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)**

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.

Over the last year, officers from both Services have worked together to develop a shared understanding of risk and have undertaken an assessment of the direct and broader impacts of a wide range of risks on our communities.

A shared agreement on the range of prevention, protection and emergency response activities both Services will be carrying out to manage and reduce risks has been achieved. The best ways of measuring the impact services are having on reducing risk is being examined and officers have begun to develop joint performance indicators and evaluation criteria.

Independent analysis and modelling have been provided to test plans for aligning attendance standards across both Fire and Rescue Services. The attendance standard is a measure of how long fire engines take to reach incidents wherever they are in the three counties.

Communication strategies and a shared communication process for carrying out the public consultation required prior to publishing the new Plans has been agreed and both Services will deliver this throughout the summer and early autumn.

By aligning processes such as the IRMP, we can not only learn from each other and share best practice, but we can also plan joint activities across protection, prevention and response for the next four years and continue to work together better.

### **Project 3: Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**

The 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.

An in-depth review of the current ICT provisions across both Services has been carried out, and to take this work forward, both Services have jointly appointed a Strategic ICT Change Manager for a three-year period.

A joint vision has been agreed by the Fire Alliance Governance Board that sets a path for exploiting modern, agile technologies such as “cloud”, thereby improving effectiveness and resilience for both services. A detailed plan for delivering this vision will be presented to the Fire Alliance Delivery Board within the next quarter. It is recognised that harmonising and merging systems will also provide greater capacity and resilience within the existing, stretched workforce.

The Services are already working together to investigate how to replace and align systems infrastructure, have a single “help-desk” and bring together separate Wide Area Networks with a shared facility that is able to integrate with the forthcoming national Emergency Service Network. This will improve overall resilience with ability for the Services to support each other across the three counties, as well as supporting wider national resilience when required.

### **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.

Joint procurement not only helps to achieve cost and process savings, but also encourages closer working and sharing of procured resources, which in turn helps to reduce the procurement demand further. It can also provide many other opportunities including sharing the development of operational procedures, operating instructions and equipment risk assessments, reducing training costs and minimising maintenance costs.

To this end a formal Fire Alliance Procurement Strategy, together with a Procurement Programme of actions in the short, medium and longer term, has been agreed by both Services.

Examples of joint specification, procurement and mutual support include:

- The provision of officers' command support vehicles. The original needs assessment and market research was carried out by HWFRS with SFRS taking this work and using it to introduce new vehicles and move away from leasing to ownership. Ongoing collaboration has enabled refinement of the vehicle and warning device specification and maintenance arrangements. All vehicles are purchased through a national framework.
- The introduction and evaluation of electric vehicles has been led by SFRS, who have used these vehicles for 18 months. Further market research has led to the joint identification of a suitable vehicle for both Services and common procurement is now planned.
- The introduction of gas monitors was led by HWFRS, with further development by SFRS as technology improved. Shropshire have now purchased the same product as Hereford and Worcester, with a limited number of units with enhanced capability. The learning which led to this enhanced capability has been fed back to Hereford and Worcester for their consideration. The use of common equipment has enabled shared stocks, reduced reserve numbers, improved resilience, and common operating procedures.
- Shropshire has supported Hereford and Worcester in their development of a specification for thermal imaging cameras. Although Shropshire has no need to purchase these items, the shared specification development provides a more diverse perspective on need and performance, leading to an improved specification.
- Although the Services response models remain different, as they address differing community needs, full-sized pumping appliance specifications have been shared and brought together. This has led to the provision of additional water capacity on HWFRS appliances and enabled a common procurement approach, supported by West Midlands Fire Service. Hereford and Worcester have been leading on the introduction of smaller appliances and SFRS are working with them to use their learning and apply it within Shropshire. That learning is being fed back to HWFRS as we jointly look to further develop the principles.
- The Services are working together to develop workwear clothing of a suitable quality and cost, with resilient supply.

## 4 Efficiencies and Savings

Both Services have a well-established history of collaborating on procurement projects. Of the eight projects delivered prior to the formal establishment of the Fire Alliance, an estimated joint overall saving of £307,920 has been achieved either through allocated budget reductions, efficiencies in shared usage, or based on average bid price versus winning bid. Both Services have also achieved the benefits from jointly using National Frameworks that are quick and easy to use, with no sign-up fee, and with quantity price breaks available.

Non-cashable savings have also been made, as neither Service has had to incur the total costs of running a full tender process, which can involve an extensive and lengthy process with high demands on staff and additional risks of legal challenge from suppliers. Collaborative purchases have also jointly resulted in improved resilience and interoperability aligned to the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) and new Incident Command Units.

A total of three Incident Command Units (ICUs) have been jointly procured, which has successfully enabled both Services to satisfy operational requirements through a collaborative approach to manage risk across both Service areas. The three vehicles are strategically located with one in Shropshire and two within Hereford & Worcester and, due to the shared capability and ability to act on each other's behalf, this is a reduction on the previous 5 held across the Services. This represents a capital saving of £186,000 per Service. This joint approach has realised financial savings due to shared capability, negating the need for staff from each Service to provide resilience arrangements.

This approach supports interoperability for both Services and therefore enhances resilience when dealing with significant incidents, due to matching specifications allowing for seamless use across the West Mercia area. The effective use of technology has enhanced the incident command capability of both Services and will provide a fit for purpose resource for years to come.

Through a positive assessment of need, the Services have been able to jointly identify areas of commonality and other where divergence is appropriate. This is most obvious in the appearance of the vehicles, while the functionality, operating principles and significant cost elements are the same, the low-value branding on the vehicles is different, supporting the principle of providing both Services with the strengths of a larger organisation without losing their individual identities.

## 5 Summary

The Alliance is taking positive steps forward and is become embedded in the day to day workings of both Services. This change is being carried out at a sustainable pace which enables the people of both organisations to understand and buy in to the collaboration. Both proposed IRMP/CRMPs for each Service provide examples of how the Services are coming together by aligning department aims where service delivery and public safety can be enhanced. The Alliance continues to learn from the challenge's other alliances both in fire and beyond have faced and remains focussed on enhancing capacity, resilience and public safety.

### Further Information

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260210, or Area Manager Guy Williams, Head of Transformation and Collaboration, on 01743 260299.