

## **Report of Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Director of Prevention and Assets**

### **Strategic Fire Alliance Update**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To update the Fire Authority on progress against the programme of priority projects developed by the Strategic Fire Alliance between Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).
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#### **Recommendation**

***It is recommended that progress on the programme to date be noted.***

#### **Background**

2. At the meetings held on 24 September and 17 December 2018, agreement was made to prioritise four projects:
  - i) to prepare options for aligning the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) process for Hereford & Worcester FRS and Shropshire FRS;
  - ii) to review procurement strategies within both Services to examine the potential for alignment;
  - iii) to develop organisational arrangements for ICT functions; and
  - iv) to review the future requirements for the fire control mobilising command and control function.
3. This report provides an update on the four key projects.

#### **Programme Update**

##### **CRMP**

4. The CRMPs for both FRSs were published on 1 April 2021, and therefore this project is complete. HWFRS have requested permission from the Fire Authority to carry out public consultation on aligning attendance standards to those of SFRS, as outlined in the CRMP. Public consultation closed on 16 September 2022 and analysis is currently being finalised, outcomes will be presented to the Fire Authority when completed.

##### **Procurement**

5. SFRS has taken over as project lead for procurement and liaison continues. Highlights include HWFRS committing resources to support the regional Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) Breathing Apparatus replacement

programme. HWFRS have developed joint specifications and contracts for the testing and repair of life jackets, pneumatic equipment and hose, with an option for SFRS to join the contract. Furthermore, reviews including those for; vehicles, ladders, pumps and small gear continue to be assessed to ensure that further benefits are achieved where appropriate. This work stream has become business as usual across both Services, and hence this alliance project area is closed.

## **ICT**

6. Following the last update, an agreed structure has been implemented to enable both Services to progress with key workstreams within the ICT pillar of the Alliance. This structure will remain flexible as we progress and may include any external consultants engaged as part of any key work areas. This work stream has become business as usual across both Services. Since the last update, progress has been made in the following areas:
  - a. a new Wide Area Network (WAN) has commenced in HWFRS with nine sites now connected, with a planned completion date by the end of December 2022. SFRS has negotiated an offer from their existing supplier so withdraw from the WAN procurement. Assurance has been provided in relation to the overall objective of creating resilience across both services, through having the ability to link SFRS and HWFRS WANs; and
  - b. both Services have installed the same helpdesk software.

## **Fire Control**

7. The Strategic Alliance emphasis is now mainly focussed on the procurement of a new Command and Control system. Following completion of a strategic options appraisal a joint specification, along with procurement documents, is nearing completion prior to going out to formal tender soon. The joint specification has been developed by HWFRS and focusses on the latest technology available, allowing both Services to deploy operational resources from either control room, providing enhanced resilience to both organisations.
8. A project team leader has been appointed and the team will be built as the project progresses. As well as the joint specification, a resource plan together with a detailed project plan have been developed and agreed with SFRS. This will be an extremely important and complex multi-million pound project which forms a key part of the Response element of any Fire and Rescue Service, therefore this will need careful oversight and management over the next few years.

## **Conclusion**

30. The existing Alliance plan concluded in April 2022, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is now leading on developing a new Alliance plan. The key Strategic Alliance focus for the new plan is the procurement of the Command and Control system, which continues to progress as a significant project across both organisations. There are a number of other areas of collaborative work being undertaken, such as Fire Investigation, Training, Fire Safety etc., which will continue and be highlighted in future reports as they reach the delivery stage.

## Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	N/A
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	Government's Fire Reform agenda as embedded in the <a href="#">Fire and Rescue National Framework</a> , other links are to the Fire Alliance Strategic Plan.
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores)	N/A
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	N/A
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b> (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	N/A