

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

Strategic Fire Alliance – Alliance Agreement and projects update

Purpose of report

1. To approve the adoption of a formal Fire Alliance Agreement and to update Members on progress in preparing priority projects developed by the Strategic Fire Alliance between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire & Wrekin Fire and Rescue Services.
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Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- i. Officers be authorised to enter into a formal agreement with Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority to give effect to the Fire Alliance, on terms approved by the Fire Alliance Strategic Board, and*
- ii. note progress on projects to date.*

Introduction/Background

2. The Policy and Resources Committee on 12th September 2018 gave approval for this Authority to enter into a strategic alliance with Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority.
3. At the Fire Authority meeting on 19th December 2018, Members were informed that the Strategic Alliance Board had agreed terms of governance and a joint programme plan. The Board comprises the Chairs/Vice Chairs of both Fire Authorities and both Chief Fire Officers.
4. A draft Agreement prepared by the Head of Legal Services to formalise the Alliance's governance and operating arrangements was agreed by the Fire Alliance Strategic Board on 9th September 2019..
5. The Fire Authority meeting on 19th December 2018 was also informed that three priority projects had been identified, and approval was given for officers to prepare these jointly with officers from Shropshire & Wrekin FRS.
6. The priority projects agreed were as follows:
 - a. Fire Control: scoping the future requirements for ensuring a resilient Command & Control function,
 - b. IRMP/CRMP: reviewing options for aligning integrated risk management planning processes, and

- c. ICT: developing organisational arrangements for the provision of Information & Communications Technology functions.
7. An update report was presented to the Authority on 12th June 2019, and highlighted good progress in developing the projects.
8. This report provides a further progress update on the three projects, and also includes an update on the development of a fourth project looking at options to align procurement strategies.

Fire Alliance Agreement

9. At its meeting on 4th March 2019, the Fire Alliance Strategic Board asked officers to prepare an Agreement to formalise the Alliance and its operating arrangements.
10. A draft Agreement has now been drawn up under the provisions of the Policing and Crime Act 2017. It represents an agreement between the two Fire and Rescue Authorities to *“work in collaboration with each other with the intent and purpose of sustaining and improving the provision of first class, resilient prevention, protection and emergency response services across their respective areas...”*
11. It includes the shared intent to deliver the Fire Alliance Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and any collaboration projects, and outlines the current governance arrangements. This will include:
 - *“sharing resources and expertise to provide long-term capacity and resilience to meet:*
 - (a) *increasing budgetary pressures*
 - (b) *changing demands and development of both established and new risks in the community*
 - *undertaking a systematic review of all areas of activity across both Services with a view to identifying and thereafter implementing opportunities for improved Service outcomes, operational efficiencies and financial economies*
 - *wherever practicable, implementing a common approach to:*
 - (a) *the selection and procurement of equipment;*
 - (b) *operational policies and procedures; and*
 - (c) *provision of support services”*
12. Further legal and financial provisions set out the terms of the agreement in relation to liability & indemnities, confidentiality, data protection, TUPE requirements where appropriate, termination arrangements and dispute resolution.
13. The draft Agreement was approved by the Fire Alliance Strategic Board at their meeting on 9th September 2019.

Update on project progress

14. A summary of progress for each project to date is set out below.

Fire Control

15. The previous update reported on one-to-one meetings with key managers to review risks, issues, constraints, dependencies and options. These meetings have continued with further stakeholders to help firm up delivery outcomes. Officers have also continued to research lessons learnt from other similar projects in the Fire Sector, including meetings with West Midlands, Staffordshire and Nottinghamshire FRSs.
16. An options appraisal workshop with representatives of both Services was held on 4th September 2019 and key baseline data (such as existing staff costs, ICT costs, retirement profiles and call data) has been collated. Following a review of the outcomes of the workshop, a final report will be drafted.

IRMP/CRMP

17. The previous update reported on a series of review workshops with managers of both Services to examine approaches to the Prevention, Protection and Response functions. A further six joint workshops have now been held to examine how risk is identified utilising a 'PESTLE' analysis looking at the potential impact of **P**olitical, **E**conomic, **S**ocial, **T**echnological, **L**egal and **E**nvironmental concerns over the duration of the new CRMP/IRMPs. Future workshops will consider performance indicators and evaluation criteria. The outcomes of the workshops will inform the overall strategies for the three key functions.
18. In terms of engaging consultants to model and analyse data, the tendering exercise is now due to take place in October/November 2019 following further consideration of the data modelling requirements.
19. Finally, a common template for the CRMP/IRMP document has been drafted and agreed by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer of Shropshire & Wrekin FRS, who is the Senior Responsible Officer for this project.

ICT

20. The FireAuthority, was previously informed that, following the independent review of current ICT provision across both Services, a recruitment process would take place to appoint a Strategic ICT Change Manager on a 3-year fixed term contract.
21. That process has now taken place and an appointment has been made, subject to references and the vetting procedure. Work is now underway to prepare a further report to the next Fire Alliance Strategic Board which will include recommendations for future progress.

Procurement

22. At their meeting on 17th December 2018, the Fire Alliance Programme Delivery Board agreed to incorporate a fourth project into the original programme of works. This project involves reviewing procurement strategies within both Service to examine the potential for alignment.
23. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer of Hereford & Worcester FRS has been appointed as the Senior Responsible Officer for this project, supported by the Head of Operations Support at Hereford & Worcester FRS as Project Manager.
24. While both Services have aligned contracts and jointly procured items and services in a number of areas, this process has not been formalised. In other areas, individual, national and regional procurement processes have been more appropriate.
25. Officers from both Services have discussed the current arrangements and have highlighted a number of important instances where joint procurement may be a better option; for example, where there are immediate and medium term opportunities by using an agreed joint process. These opportunities are being explored further and the project aims to present a draft joint procurement strategy to the next Fire Alliance Strategic Board on 19th November 2019.

Conclusion/Summary

26. This report asks Members to authorise officers to enter into the formal Fire Alliance Agreement between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authorities. The report also provides an overview of each work programme and outlines the next steps over the coming months. Each project is progressing well and updates are reported regularly to the Strategic Board and Programme Delivery Board.
27. Members are recommended to adopt the Fire Alliance Agreement and to note the overall progress on projects. Further updates will be brought to future Fire Authority meetings.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	There may be financial, legal and human resource implications arising from the implementation of the priority projects. These will be considered within each project as they develop.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	The projects are designed to address the Government's Fire Reform agenda as embedded in the Fire and Rescue National Framework . Fire Alliance Strategic Plan

Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Risk Assessments will be undertaken as part of any project management processes recommended.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Not for this progress report. Each project considers consultation requirements.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	Each project will complete full equalities impact assessments in due course.

Supporting Information

None

Background papers

None

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