

## **Report of the Chief Fire Officer**

### **Creating a Strategic Alliance**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To present a plan to create a strategic alliance between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services.

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#### **Recommendations**

##### ***It is recommended that:***

- i) Members consider and approve a plan to create a Strategic Alliance between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services.***
- ii) Members nominate the Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman to represent the Authority on the Strategic Alliance Board to be set up to oversee the Strategic Alliance.***

#### **Background**

2. On 28 March 2018, Members of the Policy and Resources Committee gave approval for officers to examine the strategic options for formalised collaborative working between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services. This approval was also given by Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority at the meeting of their Strategy and Resources Committee on 15 March 2018.
3. The proposed alliance reflects a need to consolidate successful, but largely ad hoc, collaborative work between the two Services, examples of which include the Fire Control resilience project and the joint initiative to train West Mercia Police Community Support Officers to become On-Call Firefighters in the three counties. It also responds to the 2017 Policing and Crime Act's statutory duty for emergency services to collaborate in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness.
4. The proposal extends the existing collaboration arrangements into a more planned and structured formal alliance, which will deliver real benefits in terms of aligning processes and procedures, and sharing resources, experience and expertise. It would also provide both Services with the capacity and resilience to remain sustainable long into the next decade.

## Creating a Strategic Alliance

5. Over the last few months, officers from both Services have worked together to prepare a plan of action to move towards a strategic alliance. Members will have received a draft copy of the Fire Alliance Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 for information and comment in July this year.
6. The plan has now been completed. It aims to provide the foundation blocks to ensure long-term capacity and resilience to meet the increasing pressures of budgetary restrictions and changing demands, while sustaining first-class fire and rescue services for the communities of the three counties.
7. To deliver the plan, five development strands have been identified, each of which has a number of priorities and deliverables, which will form the basis for the implementation of actions in a Programme Plan. The development strands can be seen in the following diagram.



8. Overseeing the delivery of the Plan is a governance framework, which will ensure that informed decisions are made at a senior level and that all interrelationships and interdependencies between programmes and projects are carefully managed.
9. The governance framework will be headed by a Strategic Alliance Board, consisting of representatives of the Fire and Rescue Authorities and the two Chief Fire Officers, which will oversee delivery of the Alliance plans and programmes. It is proposed that the Fire Authority is represented on the Board by the Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman. The Board will be supported by a Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board, which will be responsible for managing the process of change, and a number of Strategic Alliance Project Working Group, which will develop and deliver projects.
10. Full details of the Strategic Alliance aims, development strands and governance framework are set out in the 'Fire Alliance Strategic Plan', attached as Appendix 1.

## Conclusion/Summary

11. The creation of a formal Strategic Alliance and governance framework is a major step towards collective resilience, capacity and sustainability to effectively meet ongoing financial challenges, while also seizing the opportunity to deliver key joint priorities over the next 3-5 years and provide additional value to our local communities.
12. Once the overall Strategic Alliance plans are confirmed, the next steps will be to set up the governance framework and prepare a programme plan to deliver the actions set out in the Alliance plan. Progress reports will be brought to Members in due course.

## Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	There is a legal requirement for Governance consideration
<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).	Project Supports to 'Our Strategy' through: The effective use of resources and resourcing for the future.
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Risk Assessments will be undertaken as part of any project management processes recommended
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	No public or staff consultation has been carried out at this time.
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of any project management processes recommended.

## Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Fire Alliance Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022

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