

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

Strategic Fire Alliance – priority projects update

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on progress on priority projects developed by the Strategic Fire Alliance between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note progress on projects to date.

Introduction/Background

2. 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.
3. At the meeting, Members were also informed that three priority projects had been identified, and approval was given for officers to prepare these jointly with officers from Shropshire FRS.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. An update report was presented to the Authority on 15th October 2019, and highlighted good progress in developing the four projects.
7. The following section provides a further progress update on each project.

Update on project progress

Fire Control

8. An initial draft options appraisal report, containing key baseline data (such as existing staff costs, ICT costs, retirement profiles and call data) was presented to Chief Fire Officers at their meeting on 24th October 2019. Officers have now been tasked with undertaking:
 - a. An in-depth analysis of the technical capability and longevity of the existing Control Rooms, and
 - b. A gap analysis of the Fire Control function against recent reports that have been released, for example the Phase 1 report of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
9. In addition, officers from Shropshire, in conjunction with Fire Control are in the final stages of planning a resilience exercise to determine the current level of capacity and capability to deal with a significant incident. This exercise will be based on a high-rise residential fire, and will involve testing against some of the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report.
10. Learning from this exercise will be shared with the Fire Control Project Team to provide evidence around current capacity and resilience.

IRMP/CRMP

11. The previous update reported that a series of workshops were being arranged to consider joint performance indicators and evaluation criteria to be adopted across both Services and included within the forthcoming IRMP/CRMPs. These meetings have now taken place and officers are currently drafting the final text for sign off by Chief Fire Officers at their next meeting on 10th February 2020.
12. In terms of engaging consultants to model and analyse data, the tendering exercise was delayed from November 2019, due to a request from the Senior Management Board to undertake some additional research prior to the modelling exercise. This work has now been completed, and a modelling specification will be finalised in February 2020.
13. Officers are also considering the feasibility of establishing a focus group within each Service prior to public consultation later this year.

ICT

14. Members have previously been informed that, following the independent review of current ICT provision across both Services, a recruitment process took place and a Strategic ICT Change Manager was appointed on a 3-year fixed term contract.

15. Work is now underway to prepare the future vision and roadmap for ICT and progress will be reported to the next Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board on 10th February 2020, which will include recommendations for future progress.

Procurement

16. 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.
17. 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 Strategic Alliance Programme Delivery Board on the 10th February 2020.

Conclusion/Summary

18. This report 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.
19. Members are recommended 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 /	Risk Assessments will be undertaken as part of any

Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	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.