

Strategic Fire Alliance - Alliance Agreement and Projects Update

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report updates Members on progress in preparing priority projects developed by the Strategic Fire Alliance between Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the report and the progress it details; and
- b) Consider and approve the draft Fire Alliance Agreement.

3 Background

At the Fire Authority meeting on 18 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.

The Board also recommended that options be prepared for three priority projects, and your Authority gave approval for officers to prepare these jointly with officers from Hereford & Worcester FRS.

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.

- c. **ICT:** developing organisational arrangements for the provision of Information & Communications Technology functions.

This report provides progress updates on the three projects and includes an update on the development of a fourth project looking at options to align procurement strategies. The report recommends that a draft Agreement, prepared by the Head of Legal Services at HWFRS, to formalise the Alliance's governance and operating arrangements be approved. This Agreement has already been approved by the Fire Alliance Strategic Board on 9 September 2019. (Attached at Appendix to report)

4 Fire Alliance Agreement.

At its meeting on 4 March 2019, the Fire Alliance Strategic Board asked officers to prepare an Agreement to formalise the Alliance and its operating arrangements.

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...”
(paragraph 3.1, page 4)

It includes the shared intent to deliver the Fire Alliance Strategic Plan 2018-2020 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”* (paragraphs 3.11-3.1.3, page 4)

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.

The draft Agreement was approved by the Fire Alliance Strategic Board at their meeting on 9 September 2019, and they requested that the Agreement be submitted to both Fire Authorities for their formal consideration and approval.

The full draft Agreement is attached for your consideration in the appendices of this report.

5 Update on project progress

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

Fire Control

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.

An options appraisal workshop with representatives of both Services was held on 4 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

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 political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental concerns over the duration of the new IRMP. Workshops have also considered performance indicators and evaluation criteria to measure future progress. These workshops will continue to inform the overall strategies for the three key functions.

A series of staff engagement visits, designed to help identify risk, have now commenced. This process will also include a PESTLE analysis and will incorporate approximately 40 visits, including some supported by Fire Authority Members.

In terms of engaging independent consultants to model and analyse data, the tendering exercise is now due to take place in October / November 2019. This will follow further consideration of the data modelling requirements.

Finally, a common template for the IRMP document has been drafted and agreed by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer of Shropshire FRS, who is the Senior Responsible Officer for this project.

ICT

The Authority 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.

That process has concluded, and Mark Jarvis has been appointed. Work is now underway to prepare a further report to the next Fire Alliance Strategic Board on 19 November 2019, which will include recommendations for future progress.

Procurement

At their meeting on 17 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.

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.

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.

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 19 November 2019.

6 Summary

This report asks Members to consider and approve a formal Fire Alliance Agreement between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire 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. Further updates will also be brought to future Fire Authority meetings.

7 Capacity

The timescales for the delivery of these workstreams ensures that resources have and will continue to be allocated to the task. This use of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service resources is likely to increase as the programme develops.

8 Collaboration / Partnership Working

This is a strategic collaboration that is forming the backbone for more widespread partnership working.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required. Each project will complete full equality assessments as the projects develop.

10 Financial Implications

There may be financial implications arising from this report however they will be considered within each project and communicated appropriately.

11 ICT

The ICT team will be at the forefront of Alliance working especially with the Change Programme

12 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report. Any legal impact will be assessed and addressed as part of each individual project.

13 Public Value / Service Delivery

There are no public value or service delivery impacts arising from this report. The Alliance is designed to enhance capacity and resilience within SFRS.

14 Reputation

A reputational impact arising from this report is the risk of failing to deliver these first significant Alliance projects.

15 Training

There are no significant training impacts arising from this report however it should be noted that the new ICT Change Manager will require appropriate support.

16 Appendix

Fire Alliance Agreement.

17 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.