

Partnership Working

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the partnership working being undertaken by the Fire Authority and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service).

2 Recommendation

The Fire Authority is asked to note this report.

3 Background

Partnership working is a key element in the Service strategy to meet its vision of “Putting Shropshire’s Safety First”. It is also a key theme of the Fire Service National Framework. The Fire Authority and the Service are actively involved in a number of partnerships, which are risk assessed for liability and reputation by the Service’s Risk Management Group. The Service maintains a partnership register, which is reviewed by the Service Management Team in order to monitor the outcome and productivity of each of the partnerships.

Over recent years the Service has developed several partnerships, which primarily support its prevention activities, in particular, providing a means to target some of the most vulnerable people in the community. Some partnerships bear immediate results, whilst others deliver a longer term solution to reducing vulnerability in the communities, building relationships with other service providers within both public and private sector.

Duty to collaborate

The Government has introduced a “duty to collaborate” within the Police and Crime Act 2017. This has imposed a statutory duty for the Service to “consider whether entering into a collaboration will be in the interests of efficiency, effectiveness or public safety”, in particular with other emergency services.

This report focusses primarily on the partnerships that help the Service to meet its community fire safety aims and objectives. More information about the wider collaborative arena, the Service is now working in, will be presented to Members at the Fire Authority meeting in October 2017.

4 Prevention Partnerships

Supporting the Health and Wellbeing agenda to drive down demand is a significant topic of discussion in the public sector. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and a number of fire and rescue services are supporting this drive with a range of initiatives, including for example Community Risk Intervention Teams, dedicated staff working across public services.

This Service is heavily engaged in a number of areas locally to examine how it can best use limited resources to make every contact with the public count. Given below are details of some of the partnerships established to achieve this goal.

Telford & Wrekin Council

In 2014 the Service embarked on an ambitious new partnership project by embedding a supervisory officer within Telford & Wrekin Council. The purpose of the partnership was to produce a data-sharing protocol to enable the passing of data sets held by the Council to the Service. Much work has been undertaken by both organisations to ensure that the protocol meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Following the six months' secondment, a robust data-sharing protocol now exists to enable important data, held by the Council, to be sent securely each month to the Service.

The scheme has resulted in over 650 visits to households deemed to be vulnerable, with over 450 smoke alarms fitted. Work is in progress for the next dataset to include Adult Social Care commissioned services, which will represent a significant proportion of the prevention work for the Service.

This protocol has since been used as a template to create and service other partnerships with organisations, such as Bluebird Care Ltd, with the assurance that the agreements comply with legislation and essentially provide a robust number of referrals to the Service. These agreements came into force in June 2015 and will result in scheduled work for Shrewsbury wholetime watches and the retained service, as well as the Prevention Team's Vulnerable Persons Officers, who will be assigned the most vulnerable cases.

In February 2017, the Service further developed fire safety in the social care arena by entering into an agreement with Adult Social Care to provide a referral opportunity to the Service for all households who are in receipt of a care package.

Make Every Contact Count

The adoption of the NHS principle; “Make Every Contact Count” (MECC), which is a scheme aimed at maximising the opportunity to improve a person’s health and wellbeing whenever they engage with any Public Service, has been a hugely positive step.

Telford & Wrekin Council has funded the training of over 140 firefighters across Telford, Wellington, Newport and Tweedale in MECC in recent months. This has been an essential step in preparation for the migration from Home Fire Risk Visits to more holistic “Safe and Well” checks.

Family Nurse Partnership

The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) is an American concept, adopted by the NHS, aimed at young teenage mothers to provide support and education in the early years. Agreement has now been reached to enter into a partnership agreement.

Due to re-structuring and a period of sickness, this partnership has been on hold but will be progressed in 2017.

NHS General Practitioners

“Exeter” * data consists of the names, gender, date of birth and address of those individuals who are over the age of 65 within the community. The Service has been working with partners in the Health Service to use this data to identify the most vulnerable adults in the over 65s group. Lone working arrangements have now been extended which has increased the Service’s capacity to delivery increased precision visits to those most vulnerable.

* The Exeter system is a database of all patients registered with an NHS General Practitioner in England and Wales. It is used by all health authorities in the two countries and is one of the largest population databases in operation in the UK.

Children’s Services

The Service supports young volunteers during the busy Crucial Crew weeks in the summer months. The project has resulted in a number of young people receiving valuable opportunities to re-engage and participate in team activities. Following engagement in previous years, individuals have gone on to secure employment or back into education. Three young people have been recruited in 2017 to support Crucial Crew.

Better Care Fund

The Group Manager for Prevention and Protection has recently taken over the Chair of the Better Care Fund Reference Group, a sub-group of the Health and Well Being Board. This Group meets to ensure that the various schemes, set up by partners to address the integration of Health and Social Care, are fulfilling their objectives and report into the Health and Well Being Board. An assessment of the merits of the partnership has yet to be made but the sheer number of partners participating promises a successful outcome.

Safeguarding Adults and Children's Boards

Membership of the Boards and/or associated working sub-groups gives the Service access to other agency members. This allows the Service to identify and address any individuals or groups and explore the best way in which to intervene and protect them from fire or other emergencies.

Taking part in significant event reviews or serious case reviews allows lessons to be learned and communicated across the multi-disciplinary teams. Additionally, officers can ensure that services, including the "I learn" fire setting intervention programme, are widely known and freely available according to identified risk. Other benefits to the Service include access to the free training modules for Prevention Team members to increase their skillsets to recognise and address all areas of vulnerability.

Sevenside Housing and Other Housing and Care Organisations

Sevenside Housing own and manage in excess of 5,300 homes in Shrewsbury and its surrounding villages. The Service offers and delivers home safety advice to its residents and has delivered numerous visits as part of the programme.

Sure Start

The Service's Outreach Worker carries out visits to Sure Start centres, which enable people to have a basic 'Safe and Well' visit carried out in an independent environment instead of their home.

Rural Partnerships

The Service's Fire Crime Officer writes regular articles for the National Farmers Union (Midlands), Shropshire Rural Hub and Neighbourhood Watch, raising awareness of rural fires, especially those involving farms and barns.

The Outreach vehicle and members of the Prevention Team also support Police and Crime Commissioner rural crime events in Shrewsbury and at Harper Adams University, Edgmond.

The Women's Institute

To date 15 groups (more than 300 members in total) have offered their services and training has been given. Some groups will carry out 'Safe and Well' visits and fit smoke alarms; others have offered to report derelict properties; action removal of fly tipping; or just be more aware of home safety, when visiting friends and family, signposting to the Service, if necessary.

The British Red Cross – Young Carers

The British Red Cross supports a number of young carers across Shropshire. These young people look after adults in the family home, often parents, with a variety of issues. An agreement has recently been reached to ensure that 260 of these young people are visited by Prevention Team members to ensure that the relevant smoke detection is present and escape planning information has been delivered

Domestic Abuse Forum

The purpose of this Forum is to encourage agencies and organisations to work in partnership in order to create an environment where domestic violence and abuse is not tolerated and to reduce the impact on victims in Shropshire. This comes under the Safer Stronger Community Partnership.

Sanctuary Scheme

This group meets quarterly and is made up of representatives from West Mercia Police, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, Shropshire Council and Severnside Housing.

The group's aims include looking at providing a secure and a safe environment from domestic violence, raising awareness of domestic abuse, ensuring that people affected by domestic abuse have access to appropriate advice and support at an early stage and driving forward the good practice developed in tackling domestic abuse in Shropshire. This Service provides smoke alarms and lockable letterboxes, where appropriate.

The Burns Extrication Partnership

The Burns Extrication Partnership is working well since its introduction and crews are utilising the forms and reporting injuries as they occur. The Prevention Station Manager is also closely connected to the Clinical Commissioning Group and is able to check on the status of any reported casualties to ensure that the Service's performance measure for serious fire injuries is reported accurately.

West Mercia Youth Offending Service (YOS)

The Service works in partnership with the YOS to educate clients in the judicial system, charged with arson and vehicle crime, with the aims of reducing the number of people killed or injured on the roads; the number of arson incidents; and the re-offending rate by young people through education. The Service delivers fire crime courses and the vehicle crime course to young people as part of their court order. These are for either arson crime or driving-related incidents and are delivered on a 2 to 1 basis (2 x Fire Service and 1 x young person) at fire stations around the County. Each subject session lasts 3 hours.

Arson Task Force

The West Mercia Arson Task Force aims to reduce the frequency of arson and increase the rate of arson detection by prevention, education, detection, and investigation.

Working with partners to concentrate efforts on the Service's statutory duties, such as prevention and fire education, is of key importance to the Service. Officers are, however, also involved in a number of road safety initiatives.

The Honest Truth Partnership

This project involves the Safer Roads Partnership, local authority road safety officers and the Fire and Rescue Service forming a partnership with driving instructors. This is a Devon and Somerset initiative, which is sweeping across the UK as a way of changing behaviours of young people at the point when they take the wheel for the first time. The programme, through a half-day seminar, is delivered jointly, initially to interested Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs). Then, using the Honest Truth pack, the ADIs incorporate the behaviour lessons into the usual lesson curriculum

The Institute of Advanced Motoring (IAM) and Safer Roads Partnership

This partnership supports up to 10 private drivers per annum through the IAM Advanced Motoring Scheme. There is the potential for a positive impact on the personal safety of the driver, wider public safety and the economic impact of reduced road traffic collision risk to private and public finances.

The Chief Fire Officer is President of the IAM. The Service is also a member of the Safer Roads Partnership in West Mercia, which directs road safety education across the County.

Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Joint Committees

The Service continues to maintain strong links with the statutory partnerships, such as the Safer and Stronger Communities Board (Shropshire) and the Safer Cohesive Communities Partnership (Telford & Wrekin) and a number of sub-groups focussing on specific areas. The Chief Fire Officer attends the Telford & Wrekin Local Strategic Partnership and the Shropshire Chief Officers meetings.

The Service also attends Local Joint Committee meetings, to provide information to the local population on matters of interest from the Service. Meetings are normally attended by local station personnel, demonstrating commitment to local issues.

Bronze Level Tasking Groups

These Groups operate both centrally as well as specifically in Shrewsbury town centre and are well attended by multi-agency partners, co-operating in joint initiatives. The “Day of Action” programme provides a joined-up approach from partners for a specific 24-hour timeframe. This benefits both the community and targeted groups with services collaborating with a shared vision and resources. The statistics demonstrate that the rubbish removed by the Council, the visits to schools by the Fire Service and the increased Police presence all contribute to a reduction in calls and a general improvement in people’s lives in the targeted areas.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

This multi-agency agreement provides the most effective means to share critical information about those who are vulnerable or those who may provide potential threat to the community.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

Domestic violence is a particular area of concern, as fire can often be used by offenders as a method of threatening individuals or families or as retribution. The Service's Fire Crime Officer liaises with partners to address areas and individuals of specific concern and measures, such as lockable letterboxes, are employed to target harden premises against the risk of attack.

Team Shrewsbury

Team Shrewsbury is a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which forms the basis of an Integrated Community Management Partnership between various public sector partners, and the business, community and voluntary sectors.

It was established to demonstrate the parties' commitment to collaboration and innovation in the delivery, management and use of the public realm. The MoU defines and formalises the relationship between the parties and sets out their roles and responsibilities within the Team Shrewsbury partnership.

Telford College of Arts and Technology (TCAT)

This partnership enables the Service and TCAT to benefit from an exchange of services. The Service will support the BTEC Public Uniformed Services course at TCAT by providing lectures and allowing students to attend the Service's Training Centre. In return TCAT will provide the Service with two places on their Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector courses. This promotes greater understanding of the Fire Service and help in training and development within the Service.

5 Operational Response Partnerships

Baywater Healthcare Ltd

An agreement with Baywater Care has resulted in operational crews being aware of the location of medical oxygen cylinders throughout the County, providing improved safety for firefighters. At the same time, the Prevention Team is able to direct resources to carry out home safety visits with oxygen users, who tend to be suffering long-term or chronic illness.

Tri-Service MoU for Fire Control Fall-back Arrangements

Cleveland Fire Brigade, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service have agreed a tri-service memorandum of understanding in relation to control room fall-back arrangements. The three Services are engaging with a view to establishing robust resilience arrangements, in which each can provide anything up to a full call-handling and mobilising service for the others, should there be a situation where it was needed. The arrangements are based upon each Service having already implemented the SEED BRIGID Command and Control mobilising system in their respective control rooms and also using the same type of integrated communications control system.

Environment Agency (EA)

By working as one of the EA's partners, using their equipment, the Service mitigates and reduces the impact of fires and other incidents. The partnership aims to protect and enhance the environmental conditions for the communities and stakeholders of Shropshire.

It enables an immediate response to environmental issues with little or no cost to the Service by way of providing equipment required to deal with environmental issues. The Service is also in partnership to reduce fires at waste and recycling centres through joint site visits and consultation.

The British Red Cross – Fire Emergency Support Service

In May 2013 the Service, in partnership with the British Red Cross, took ownership of a new Fire Emergency Support Service vehicle. This is operated by a cadre of British Red Cross volunteers, who provide support to victims of fire and other emergencies, either whilst fire crews are still on scene or when they have left.

FP McCann Partnership

This is a joint collaboration with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and FP McCann Concrete Products. It involves both Services using surplus concrete blocks to train crews in urban search and rescue techniques. The advantage to the company is that it does not bear the cost of breaking up the concrete blocks, as this is done by fire crews during training.

Local Resilience Forum

This Forum is required under the Civil Contingencies Act. The purpose of the Forum is to ensure effective delivery of those duties under the Act, which need to be developed in a multi-agency environment. A shared approach is taken to dealing with risk and responding to incidents.

Burns Care Network

The Burns Care Network was set up to share casualty information on casualties with burns-related injuries at incidents attended by various stakeholders. There are seven specialist burns units throughout the Midlands Burns Care Network. The lead hospital for this network is University Hospital Birmingham. This Service and a number of other regional and national stakeholders within the Midlands region have signed up to this protocol.

6 Equality and Diversity Groups and Partnerships

The Service's Equality and Diversity Team works with a range of partnerships and groups, including Shropshire Disability Network, Safe Ageing No Discrimination (SAND), Older People's Forums in Shropshire and Telford, the Shropshire Hate Crime Reporting Group, Gender Matters, the Rainbow Film Festival, and Fairness, Respect, Equality Shropshire (FRESH).

The Service was among the first corporate members of FRESH, which was established in 2013 as a Community Benefit Society (community co-operative) to support improved equality and anti-discrimination policy and practice within and beyond Shropshire. The Service is committed to FRESH and its work, and hosts many of FRESH's meetings at Service Headquarters.

7 Financial Implications

Information on income and expenditure within partnerships is collected and updated in line with the frequency of monitoring, which takes place on each partnership and is recorded on the Partnership Register. The Service Management Team reviews the Register every six months.

8 Legal Comment

The functions exercised within the partnership working arrangements fall within the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the aims and objectives of the Fire Authority.

9 Initial Impact Assessment

This report sets out factual details of partnerships, in which the Service is involved. An impact assessment is not, therefore, required.

10 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

11 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.