

Partnership Working and the Outcomes

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an overview of the outcomes of partnership working within The Fire Authority and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to note the contents of this report.

3 Background

The Fire Authority and SFRS are actively involved in a number of partnerships which are assessed and scrutinised by the Service's Partnership Scrutiny Group. SFRS maintain a partnership register and monitor the outcome and productivity of the partnerships that they are involved in. This report shows ongoing progress of how SFRS in conjunction with other organisations, continue to create a 'Safer and Stronger Shropshire'.

4 Partnership Assessment Group

The Partnership Assessment Group has been renamed and is now called the Partnership Scrutiny Group (PSG) and a second tier has been added in the form of the Community Safety Partnership Management Group (CSPMG). The Partnership Scrutiny Group will perform the same functions as before but will look more in depth in to the benefits and costs of each partnership. The Community Safety Partnership Management Group has been set up to monitor the outcomes and actions of the Local Joint Committee (LJC) Meetings.

5 Local Joint Committees

Since the councils within Shropshire became unitary (2009), SFRS is attending a number of LJC's on a quarterly basis. The aim of the Service's attendance at these meetings is to make the local communities within the Shropshire area aware of the dangers of fire, educate in the reduction of fire crime and to reach out and communicate to vulnerable groups within the local communities.

6 Vulnerable and Youth Partnerships

Elderly

SFRS have been working in partnership with other local organisations to support specific vulnerable groups. One of which is the elderly and a number of partnerships have been established in order to support the elderly members of our community. These partnerships include START, Age Concern, Keep Shropshire Warm, Market Drayton Homecare Services and Rubens Support and Care Agency.

The groups receive training provided by the Service's Community Fire Safety Team to perform fire risk assessments within their clients' homes. From this, the groups promote fire safety awareness and educate the elderly as to the risks of fire. They also provide referrals to SFRS for fitting smoke alarms and performing home fire safety checks. The aim of these partnerships is to reduce injuries and death caused by fire.

START in particular is an organisation that provides short term care and support of elderly people who have just come out of hospital. They conduct Fire Safety Checklists on behalf of the Service and make referrals depending on the outcome of the survey. They carry out approximately 250 checklists per year and this work has contributed to the continued effort to reduce deaths and injuries in the county from accidental house fires.

Youth

SFRS also contribute to a number of youth partnerships, such as those set up with the Youth Offending Service, the Driver Rehabilitation Workshop and the Institute of Advanced Motoring. All partnerships aim to make young adults aged between 17 years and 25 years aware of the dangers of fire and road traffic collisions (RTCs).

In the last year, there have been at least thirty people aged between 17 year and 25 years that have undertaken the Institute of Advanced Motoring course and six of those thirty have either taken their test or are in the process of doing so (source: Chairman of IAM).

7 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP)

Shropshire County Council has now become part of a unitary group falling under the heading of Shropshire Council. As a result of the re-organisation, there is now only one CDRP as opposed to one for each of the previous five districts. This is now called the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and is chaired by your Chief Fire Officer. The CSP's primary focus is on the strategy and structure of the partnership as opposed to actions required to improve a community.

Under this new structure there are three bronze level tasking groups which cover the Northern, Central and Southern Districts. These tasking groups focus on major issues within their district and work together in order to tackle issues such as anti social behaviour etc. within specific high risk areas.

This new structure was established in July 2010 and will be reviewed after the first six months of its existence. A new protocol and terms of reference have been established and will be sent to SFRS in due course.

The Telford and Wrekin Partnership has developed a document called 'Vision 2026' which sets out the aspirations for the Telford and Wrekin borough. All members of the Telford and Wrekin Partnership are working to 'Vision 2026'.

8 Leonardo Exchange Programme

The Leonardo Exchange Programme has now been existence since 2006, with over 130 elected Members and staff participating in one-week exchange placements. To date, the Service has partnered with fire and civil protection agencies operating in over 10 European countries. During 2010 placements will be undertaken in Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Poland.

The programme is funded by the European Commission.

9 Equality and Diversity

The Service's Equality and Diversity Department deals with a number of partnerships including the Shropshire LGB, Shropshire Equalities Forum and the Telford Race Equality and Diversity Group (TREDP).

TREDP also provide grant funding to small organisations which contribute to the Primary Care Trust's (PCT) Health Improvement programme and the Older People Joint Commissioning Team's objectives. Around £25,000 was made available in 2009 by NHS Telford and Wrekin and Telford and Wrekin Council for small grants of up to £1,000. The scheme has been administered by TREDP. An example of this funding is through the Ethnic Minorities Award Scheme for Environmental Projects (EMAs). This is a small scheme aimed at schools, community groups and individuals undertaking projects which concern the environment and involve people from ethnic communities (source: TREDP website, grants and funding).

10 West Midland Regional Management Board

The Fire Authority, together with the remaining four fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) from the region constitutes the West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB). Following publication of the Audit Commission's 'Rising to the Challenge Report' (December 2008) the frequency of meetings and activity of WMRMB has declined. The Commission's report concluded that: *'Formal regional management boards (RMBs) have not driven effective regional collaboration; government and FRAs need to reform them or abandon them.'*

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (Section 21 (7)) requires all FRAs to – *'have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions.'* The National Framework imposes the requirement for FRAs to establish and collaborate through RMBs.

Nationally, FRAs are awaiting guidance from the new Coalition Government regarding the future of RMBs. The recent publication – The Coalition: our programme for government states – *'We will...stop plans to force the regionalisation of the fire service'* (Section 4, Page 12).

11 Local Strategic Partnership with Shropshire Partnership and Telford and Wrekin Partnership

SFRS support a number of Local Area Agreement (LAA) Indicators in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. These targets are set out for the period 2009/10. Whilst many indicators have now been abolished, they remain a useful indicator of performance. The results of these outturns are monitored at the Audit and Performance Committee meetings.

12 Conclusion

The Service continues to invest in supporting international, national, regional and moreover local community initiatives where tangible benefits can be demonstrated.

13 Financial Implications

Information on income and expenditure within partnerships is collected and updated in line with the frequency of monitoring that takes place on each partnership and are recorded on the partnership register. Any changes to income and expenditure are logged and discussed in the PSG and CSPMG. Income and expenditure also forms part of the risk assessment of the partnerships.

14 Legal Comment

All partnerships are required to have protocols and an agreement in place and are risk assessed for liability and reputation.

15 Equality Impact Assessment

The report contains information on monitoring and historical data and therefore, has no impact on people. An Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

16 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

17 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk); the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Area Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings	*	Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	*
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*
Integrated Risk Management Planning			