

## **WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**10 OCTOBER 2022**

### 1. **PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT (3PT)**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the contents of the report be noted.

### 2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 This report provides a Strategic summary of the progression of the delivery of Portfolio Management through 'Our Plan'. The updates provided are based on the continual assessment of Investment and Value release of projects being delivered through the three Programmes of Community Risk Reduction, Enabling Services and People.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 To inform Members of the approach taken under Portfolio Management and the resulting outcomes of the workstreams within current Projects and Programmes, which support the effective leadership of the Service in continual improvement.
- 3.2 This report will lead into the subsequent Fire Authority reports that support the delivery of the Strategy in one or more of the Programmes.

### 4. **DELIVERABLES**

- 4.1 The Brigade Managers are accountable to the Chief Fire Officer (CFO), through the programme objectives to deliver the Strategy of the WMFS. The Portfolio is led by the CFO to enable the delivery of the Authority's Strategic priorities, aligned to the CRMP objectives.

- 4.2 The Portfolio is ultimately accountable for the Programmes and will provide assurance that the aims and objectives are being achieved. The Programmes are accountable for Projects.
- 4.3 The deliverables (aims and objectives) of the three Programmes are shown below, supported by recent Programme achievements.

## 5. **COMMUNITY REDUCTION RISK PROGRAMME (CRR)- HIGHLIGHTS**

There has been significant work conducted by Community Risk Reduction (CRR) over the last reporting period.

CRR are pleased to announce Martin Ward-White formally strategic lead for Organisational Policy, Assurance and Response has moved into a new role, overseeing our operational response function as Area Commander (Strategic Enabler) for Operations.

### 5.1 Operations

- 5.1.1 The recent heatwave saw a substantial increase in incidents triggering our Heatwave Plan and as such spate condition action plan. The plan is activated when receiving over 50 incidents over a 30-minute period for 2 hours or more. Our Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) and Risk Based Crewing (RBC) model ensured our response was dynamic, resourcing incidents via a people-based mobilisation taking into consideration the level of risk, this ensured the appropriate weight of attack could be mobilised.
- 5.1.2 Site Specific Risk Information has been a key focus with extensive work been conducted to ensure our risk information is up to date and regularly reviewed.
- 5.1.3 Ben Behan, OLPD, and Paul Duxbury, TRU, have represented WMFS at the World Rescue Organisation, Trauma Challenge. After a complex scenario and amazing performance, they were awarded with the following achievements 3rd place best standard in the world and 2nd overall in the world.

- 5.1.4 Operations have held a number of station open days over the summer, which started with Sutton Coldfield Technical Rescue station in early May. These events have been a huge success and continue to attract large numbers of the community.
- 5.1.5 Fire Control (FC) are now using the Vision 4 mobilising system.
- 5.1.6 In response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations, Fire Control, Response, and our Digital and Data team have developed an app-based solution to support a digital CS10b. The CS10b has been live for 3 months and used to record and share Fire Survival Guidance information at Tall Building incidents between Fire Control and the incident ground, via a dedicated support appliance.
- 5.1.7 Extending our collaborative working with external partner agencies there is ongoing engagement with transport for West Midlands about use of/access to road network CCTV cameras in the control room. This would allow Fire Control (FC) to utilise cameras to support resourcing incidents. This could provide FC a live feed of incidents as they evolve which can then be communicated to responding appliances supporting the organisations 5-minute attendance standard
- 5.1.8 The FC review is now underway, with a dedicated project now in place to ensure Fire Control is fit for the future.
- 5.1.9 FC National Willowbeck exercise report completed and National Operational Learning submitted (now to be shared with stakeholders)

## 5.2 Prevention

- 5.2.1 Sparks visits in schools with key stage 2 children have now resumed, with WMFS teams delivering key learning and safety messages face-to-face.
- 5.2.2 Service User evaluation of Safe and Well (SAW) is now integral to our service delivery. The data from the surveys indicates that SAW is improving people's health, wellbeing, and quality of life

and reducing risk and vulnerability to fire. Some examples of what the data is showing include:

- 91% of the 2,278 respondents to date say that they have a greater understanding of the risks of falling
- 95% of those who smoke from the 2,278 respondents say they have a greater understanding of the risks of smoking
- of those who smoke, the 145 people who were referred to us have stopped smoking
- just under 1/3 of those who responded told us that they had been referred to services for further support for one or more of the following - smoking cessation, child safety, loneliness, winter warmth and alcohol services.

5.2.3 WMFS is now a member of the 3 new Integrated Care Partnerships (ICP) in our service area (Birmingham & Solihull, Black Country, and Coventry & Warwickshire). The service has been recognised for the success in our shift from response to prevention and opportunities for the service to be engaged in local 'place based' working arrangements that will help to embed Prevention activities to improve, health, wellbeing and quality of life whilst reducing fires and other emergencies

### 5.3 Protection

5.3.1 Two Fire Engineers have now completed their 4-year course and have successfully graduated with First Class Honours. Fire Engineering is the application of scientific and engineering principles, rules (Codes), and expert judgment, based on an understanding of the phenomena and effects of fire and of the reaction and behaviour of people and buildings to fire; to protect people, property, and the environment from the destructive effects of fire and its by-products.

5.3.2 The Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA's) project supporting our CRMP is now live. The new approach to mobilising to AFAs allows Fire Control to mobilise a proportionate level of response in line with dynamic mobilising with additional information gained. This could

include utilising BRVs crewed at 2 or 3 when BSVs are unavailable protecting frontline PRLs for CAT 1 response

5.3.3 The blended fleet CRMP project is now live. The project will support our CRMP seeking to develop a fleet that enables simultaneous activity across all prevention, protection, and response activities, maximising the value release of every resource.

#### 5.4 Recent action

5.4.1 WMFS hosted the UKRO festival of rescue event between September 29<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> October 22 on the Smithfield site in Birmingham. The event welcomed Fire and Rescue Services from across the UK to compete in a multitude of disciplines to include Road Traffic Collision, Trauma, Water Rescue, Rope Rescue, Urban Search and Rescue and Fire fighter fitness.

5.4.2 Teams worked closely with West Midlands Police and wider external partner agencies during the planned Autumn Conservative Party Conference which is being held in Birmingham city centre at the start of October 2022.

5.4.3 Our WMFS teams supported Birmingham Pride at the end of September. WMFS had several floats in the parade which included a dedicated Fire appliance. Our teams were available throughout the event engaging with members of the community.

### 6. **ENABLING SERVICES PROGRAMME (ES) – HIGHLIGHTS**

#### 6.1 Digital Transformation

Over recent months:

- Further enhancements to our cyber security posture have prevented attacks and disruption, which were increased during the Commonwealth Games. We are continuing towards recognised security accreditation, Cyber Essentials Plus.

- Development of enhanced connectivity for our stations and back office digital infrastructure, which will enable our mobile devices as well as improve our business continuity posture.
- Working towards a restructure of the Digital and Data team to align our resources to the areas to deliver our CRMP and improve efficiency and effectiveness whilst improving retention and attraction in a challenging job market.

## 7. **Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)**

- 7.1 This is a government led project that seeks to deliver the updated communications devices that will enable our Fire Service and our blue light colleagues to communicate more effectively, at a reduced cost into the future, by providing enhanced data capabilities.

Over recent months:

- The governance structures have changed which mean we are now supporting our regional FRS colleagues in the delivery of the programme.
- We have completed all required tasks to this point and await the next steps from the national programme.
- There have already been delays to the go live deadlines and there are further delays anticipated past 2028.

## 8. **Operations Digital Mobile Devices**

- 8.1 This project seeks to move us to individually delivered mobile devices for our frontline teams. This will give them all a voice, allow them to spend more time in the communities they serve, as well as increase their efficiency and effectiveness.

Over recent months:

- We have signed a contract to deliver an innovative trial to transform our incident command digitally, with a view to

improving firefighter safety and outcomes for our communities. This trial will be delivered in the Coventry and Solihull Command area, with interest from other Fire Services nationally.

- We continue to await the arrival of our mobile devices which have been delayed due to the "chip" shortage to deliver the devices across our five "innovation" stations

## 9. **Vision 4**

9.1 This is in place to upgrade our command-and-control system, responsible for mobilising our resources across the West Midlands and Staffordshire to an upgraded and fully supported software.

Over recent months

- The upgrade has been completed and Fire Control are using the new version to mobilise resources.
- There have been some snagging issues which are limited to back-office reporting and with a dedicated Teams allocated to provide immediate 'work arounds' and fully resolve these issues.

## 10. **Legacy Systems Project**

10.1 This project seeks to replace our Time and Attendance, Fleet and Asset Management systems. This will digitally transform our working in these areas and deliver mobile and secure systems as well as enhanced reporting.

- The initial focus of this project has been to identify a replacement time and attendance system as our existing suppliers have given us notice of withdrawal of support.

## 11. **Sustainability**

11.1 We are proactively taking steps to meet the needs of the community to tackle the symptoms of climate change and to meet our net zero responsibilities.

- 11.2 We have a commitment to sign the Emergency Services Environment and Sustainability Group Charter, as the principles behind it directly align to our developing Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) framework which is shaping our sustainability strategy. As part of our ESG framework, Operational adaption and resilience to climate change is our first defined theme. We understand that our role is not just in responding to the effects of climate change but also engaging and influencing our communities through our protection and prevention work. Educating them on the changes they can make to help mitigate the progress and effects of climate change through circular economy, better waste management, energy efficiency and community spirit, amongst other things.
- 11.3 We have a corporate membership with Sustainability West Midlands, providing us a network to share and develop best practice specific to our communities and have representation at local and regional sustainability groups.

## 12. **Communications and Engagement**

### 12.1 **Rewards and Recognition**

- 12.1.1 West Midlands Fire Service paused Reward and Recognition (R&R) events during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, a large backlog of awards and honours developed, specifically with Long Service and Good Conduct (LSGC) awards. Following our exit from the pandemic this calendar year has seen several different R&R events taking place with some key events scheduled to take place prior to the year end.
- 12.1.2 The year has seen over 200 recipients being awarded 20 Year LSGC, and 30 recipients receiving their 30 Year awards. Friends and families are invited to personalise these ceremonies as much as possible, meaning only 15-20 recipients receive their awards at one sitting.
- 12.1.3 We have more of these planned for the end of this year and throughout next year as well. In addition, we have a more formal Recognition event scheduled in December that will see many staff thanked and recognised for their contribution to keeping the

West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier. More details on this event will follow in due course. Our annual Carol Concert is also scheduled for Sunday 11 December.

## 13 **Resourcing**

### 13.1 **Funding, Budget Preparation and Monitoring**

- 13.1.1 Ongoing budget monitoring continues to take place and is reported on a monthly basis. Any in year budget pressures or opportunities are identified by budget holders and are actively managed through adjustments and in collaboration with other budget holders supported by the Finance Team. The six-month budget revision process that takes place in October of each year is a planned milestone for the wider budget to be reviewed.
- 13.1.2 Budget pressures are being experienced in the current year for a range of reasons which include price increases linked to supply chain difficulties. In addition, there are budget concerns relating to pay award levels, linked particularly to the 'Cost of Living' crisis, given the budgeted pay award assumption of 2%. This matter will require specific focus with a report being prepared for the Fire Authority to proactively consider options and approval.

## 14 **Planned Procurement**

- 14.1 Whilst supply chain issues continue to present challenges across several goods and services there has been a marked improvement in the supply of smoke alarms, which was a particular concern highlighted to the Authority some time ago. Through pro-active contract management by the WMFS Corporate Procurement Team on behalf of the Fire Sector, the level of smoke alarms available both locally and nationally has removed any immediate concerns around smoke alarm supplies and the related impact this could have on prevention-based activity. The WMFS Corporate Procurement Team have received a number of positive messages from FRSs expressing their thanks to the positive way the situation has been managed over the last 12 months.

As referenced above there is an impact on the supply of some digital devices due to the global 'chip' shortage.

## 15. **Vehicle Replacement Programme**

15.1 During July and August six new PRLs were commissioned at the following Fire Stations:

- Handsworth
- Billesley
- Sheldon
- Brierley Hill
- Solihull
- Smethwick

### Response

## 16. **National Operational Guidance (N.O.G.)**

16.1 National Operational Guidance is the foundation for developing operational policies, procedures, and training to support firefighters to deal with incidents effectively and safely. It is 'industry good practice' for all Fire and Rescue Services to draw on. As of April 2022, WMFS have now implemented all 44 pieces of national guidance and associated training packages in relation to operational procedures and now established a dedicated Team to implement N.O.G. for Fire Control procedures.

## 17. **Organisational Assurance - Fire Standards**

17.1 The Fire Standards Board was created to deliver industry standards to the UKFRS which ranges across all areas of FRS functions. WMFS have been involved in the development of a number of these standards in Operational Preparedness, Fire Investigation and Prevention. To date 12 standards have been released and an extensive gap analysis has been completed on 11 of these, with no areas of concerns raised around WMFS compliance. The standard for Data Management has just been released and is going through a gap analysis to identify any areas of focus for the Service.

17.2 Two Leadership and People Fire Standards have just been through a consultation period and are due to be released in December 2022, with a further five Fire Standards are currently in development; envisaged by the Fire Standards Board to be delivered by the end of next year (2023).

## 18. **Grenfell Outcomes**

18.1 The Service continues to monitor the outcomes of the Grenfell Inquiry and conducting the necessary assurance work against any findings.

18.2 The Service has recently identified and approved a supplier for BA (Breathing Apparatus) Radio replacement, this will ensure that fire fighters wearing helmets and BA can effectively communicate, including when operating in high rise buildings. It is anticipated delivery of radios is November 2022.

## 19. **BA Procurement**

19.1 We are currently in the process of tendering for the procurement of new Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets as part of our BA SET Replacement Process. Our specification will challenge the sector to ensure that we have access to the most innovative, technologically advance BA Sets which will future proof ourselves in the years to come. The tender for this is due to begin in early 2023 and is being developed collaboratively with our regional FRS partners.

## 20. **DICE Considerations**

20.1 At the end of 2021 work was commissioned by CFO to review the Services uniform policy, specifically around facial hair with a view to enabling uniformed personnel who are not likely to be required to wear BA to wear facial hair.

20.2 Providing greater flexibility for staff to have facial hair would be more inclusive to certain faiths who on religious grounds would like to have facial hair, but also includes those who have medical reasons which may make it difficult to shave regularly. This policy

is progressing towards consultation.

20.3 The review of our uniform policy also extends to what our people choose to wear. We understand that members of staff, including operational employees, may consider the wearing religious or cultural dress and symbols an important expression of an individual's religion, belief, or identity and WMFS will, wherever reasonable, support these wishes. Some individuals may also wish to avoid certain materials in their clothing/dress due to a belief or lifestyle choice. Each circumstance will be judged on its own merit and consider an appropriate risk assessment.

## **21. PEOPLE PROGRAMME – HIGHLIGHTS**

### **21.1 Managing Vacancies and SHL**

21.1.1 A review of the Managing Vacancies policy has taken place enabling inclusive contribution and feedback to ensure a policy which creates openness and transparency in this process. The new policy provides for consistency from a sector perspective and is aligned to our behavioural framework and associated toolkit.

21.1.2 The newly launched Managing Vacancies policy advises how temporary vacancies will be managed with behavioural assessments introduced to support the identification of positive behavioural indicators which would support candidates enter a supervisory recruitment process (Crew Commanders).

21.1.3 Behavioural assessments are currently on hold to enable a review and feedback from those that have undertaken the assessment to support how this approach develops for the future.

## **22. Oracle HR Help Desk**

22.1 As part of our commitment to digital transformation and our investment in Oracle we are continually designing and implementing new features and functionality that will maximise our financial investment through service value.

22.2 Most recently we have implemented an Oracle tool called HR Helpdesk, that enables all members of staff to raise a support ticket against any areas relating to people support services, time and attendance and other help services.

22.3 This has been live for approximately four months and has already seen over 900 tickets of support raised with almost 700 of these tickets being resolved i.e., help provided.

22.4 This ongoing approach will provide robust business intelligence enabling us to identify support themes to address through organisational intelligence, measure and improve the speed of response providing a more enhanced employee experience and finally enable us to move critical processes into this system like grievances and disciplines that will help with consistency and policy driven timeframes.

### 23. **Core Code of Ethics – Mission to Mars**

23.1 With the release of the NFCC Core Code of Ethics and the creation of 'Our Values' within the service, we designed the 'Mission to Mars' project to find some excellent role models that could help to bring 'Our Values' to life.

23.2 We received 135 nominations, with a number of our colleagues receiving multiple nominations, all in all there were nearly 100 different colleagues nominated, which was a fantastic response. From those 100 colleagues nominated a group of stakeholders from across the service and from the Representative Bodies came together and selected, based on a robust criteria, the final 15 individuals who will be the Mission to Mars: Value Champions.

23.3 An event has been organised to celebrate all the nominations and the final 'crew' will be announced after that. Once the winners have been informed, we will then move on to the next stage where we get final 15 value champions to discuss their approach, work etc relating to their specific value so that we can start to bring these values to life through positive role models.

## 24. **Emerging Risks**

- 24.1 The third Technical Rescue Station at Sutton Coldfield went live in May 2022, this helps to enhance the Service's ability to deliver a specialist response capability, whilst retaining the ability to respond to high risk (Category 1) incidents in the area. The project has allowed increased diversity and positive action initiatives to be undertaken.
- 24.2 Another element of the Project profiled as an emerging risk, was to review and assess our current level of involvement with (and understanding of) 'Prevent' as an organisation. Prevent is a government led programme which aims to safeguard vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. The review has identified and proposed some key training requirements to ensure all of our staff and volunteers are able to recognise signs of radicalisation exhibited by some of the most vulnerable in our communities and then to refer any concerns confidently, this will help to create a safer, stronger and Healthier West Midlands.

## 25. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 25.1 In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out because the matters contained in this report will not lead to a policy change.
- 25.2 Areas of policy changes that are identified in Project(s) are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment

## 26. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 26.1 The course of action recommended in this report does not raise issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

## 27. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 27.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

28. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

28.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Portfolio Management - Fire Authority Report June 2022  
10706222 FRA Portfolio Management (3PT).docx

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