

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

**23 OCTOBER 2023**

### **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 summary of the progression of the delivery of Portfolio Management towards delivering 'Our Plan'. The updates provided are based on the continual assessment of investment and business benefits 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 Programmes and Projects, which support the Service to deliver continuous improvement and transformation.
- 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 Programme Executives (Brigade Managers) are accountable to the Portfolio Executive (Chief Fire Officer (CFO)) through their 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 Community Risk Management Plan (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 recent Programme achievements are detailed below and supported through the Programme deliverables.

## 5. **COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP) - HIGHLIGHTS**

### 5.1 Wider roll-out of our Risk Based Crewing (RBC) Model

RBC went live on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at the Service's three "multi-pump" stations, Coventry, Highgate, and Walsall. The feedback via our Joint Working Party (JWP) has so far has been positive, with increased fleet availability (vehicles on the run), fewer standbys (where firefighters are based at a station other than their usual home station) and improved staff morale.

It was further expanded to include our seven lates stations (not including Oldbury and Tettenhall) on 4th September 2023, initially running until 31st December 2023. This will be evaluated throughout the period through our Organisational Intelligence (OI) function and staff engagement.

### 5.2 Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)

In July 2021, the incident type for mobilising to AFAs changed, and reduced to 3 categories to support the management of risk and efficiency in proportionate level of response to these types of incidents. The 3 categories are non-sleeping, sleeping – managed and sleeping – non managed.

By September 2022, the level of response to AFAs at hospitals became proportionate and where possible this wouldn't be a PRL unless there were additional reason/s. By sending a proportionate response this would leave resources available to attend incidents of higher risk and be more readily available to deliver community risk reduction (CRR) activities across Protection and Prevention.

Based on the positive reduction of numbers of PRLs attending AFA's from 27.4% to 8.6% the next step for the project is looking at if the numbers can be reduced any further. A report has been commissioned to review the attendance of resources at Care Homes, which also have 24/7 management, with a view of taking a similar approach to the mobilisations to hospitals.

### 5.3 **BLENDED FLEET**

#### **Brigade Response Vehicles (BRV) replacement**

The Service needs to replace a significant number of our BRV's in the next 12 months, as existing vehicles reach their end of service life. A specification for new vehicles has been produced and suppliers have been invited to provide feedback.

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

### 6.1 **Prevention**

#### 6.1.1 **Fire Investigation and Prevention Section (FIPS)**

Prevention have improved the systems and processes used to manage Complex Needs (CN) cases, which support those in our communities who are at most risk and the highest levels of vulnerability to fire. This has had a positive impact on both the number of people waiting for a Complex Need Officer (CNO) to be assigned and the length of time it takes from referral to appointment.

The month of August placed a significant strain on the FIPS team with 19 full investigations and 7 fire investigation dog team deployments, including supporting the Crooked House incident in Staffordshire. During this time the team maintained 100% investigation and support cover ensuring they were always available to be mobilised.

### 6.2 **Protection**

#### 6.2.1 **Building Safety Regulator (BSR)**

WMFS are leading the regional team, working with the NFCC and the Health and Safety Executive to ensure services across our region, (including our own) meet the upcoming “Go Live” date of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 for new legislation.

We were delighted to have hosted a National BSR workshop in our FSHQ on 31st August 2023.

6.2.2 Several Fire Safety Advisors (FSA’s) and Fire Safety Inspectors (FSI’s) have recently passed fire safety qualifications at level 3 and level 4, increasing our ability to protect buildings and businesses across the West Midlands communities.

### 6.3 Response

#### 6.3.1 Breathing Apparatus (BA) Procurement

In collaboration with four other Fire Services (Cleveland, Hereford & Worcester, Staffordshire and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Services) BA equipment was put through many rigorous scenarios over the course of a week at the Fire Service College and evaluated using members of WMFS as part of the wider Team.

MSA Safety was awarded the contract to supply the new BA sets and associated equipment for the next ten years. Work is underway to prepare our staff to use the new equipment when rolled out next year.

#### 6.3.2 Drone Capability

In early May 2023, the drone capability celebrated two years of successfully aiding crews at incidents around the West Midlands and beyond.

WMFS has recently trialled and purchased a new larger drone to further enhance our drone capabilities. It can fly in inclement weather, allowing it to be airborne in almost any weather unlike our smaller drones allowing it to be mobilised to more incidents.

### 6.4 Fire Control

National Operational Guidance (NOG) 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. The NFCC have now applied the same guidance for Fire Control (FC). In total, over the next 18 months there will be circa 20 pieces of guidance for FC that will require developing into product packs for the Service to deliver. Work on this exciting project has begun with 1 piece having now been fully implemented into the Service, Survival Guidance was released in July 2023 and went live in September 2023.

## 6.5 Operations

Crew Manager Iain Hughes was reported missing as he swam the English Channel for charity. Very sadly, despite efforts involving the Coastguard, French warship and Belgian helicopters, Iain's body was recovered a few weeks later. He had been training for the solo swim for two years and had hoped to raise £21,000 for three charities: The Midlands Air Ambulance, British Heart Foundation and Firefighters' Charity. Since the news that he was missing broke, donations soared to more than £80,000. Inspired by Iain, and his passion to raise money for charity, in order to support him as best we could, colleagues from the West Midlands Fire Service hosted car washes across the region and have been able to raise more than £20,000, which has been added to Iain's fundraiser. His funeral was held on 1st September 2023.

During the period of July and August, over 20 of our stations held open days to welcome our communities into our fire stations as well as attend local community events. These events provide a unique opportunity to engage with the community and are used as a way of sharing safety advice with them.

Working in partnership with the Daniel Baird Foundation and local partners, we have been distributing and promoting the use of bleed kits, which provide emergency care for incidents such as knife crime or other medical emergencies where an individual is losing significant amounts of blood. This work has been promoted by Ladywood Fire Station who has been the main driver behind getting these kits placed in secure units outside six fire stations to date. The aim is to have them placed outside all fire stations in the West Midlands. This initiative is also

supporting the service demonstrate our commitment to the Serious Violence Bill and our statutory responsibility on fire and rescue services to support the introduction of mitigation measures to make our communities are safer.

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

### 7.1 HQ Inclusion and Collaboration

Following completion of the first phase of the project where all current HQ staff are now working on the same floor, work is undergoing to move the classroom-based learning elements of the Trainee Firefighter Development Programme (TFDP) to the ground floor of HQ, with a desired outcome of a more enhanced connection for our trainees from their first day. This should be completed for the next recruit intake in January 2024.

### 7.2 Corporate Communications

Corporate Communications has supported the Portfolio team with the 12-week CRMP Consultation (now closed) in achieving diverse and reflective responses from our communities, partners, and staff.

The launch of our 'We Are' campaign (designed to identify and promote who we are as a Service and what we stand for, whilst also championing our brand through real lives reflecting the Service's approach to 'People, Professionalism and Pride') went live in the middle of September. The refresh of our WMFS branding also went live at the same time.

Planning is now underway for a busy end of year event season which includes, amongst others, the Emergency Services Show (ESS), our flagship Rewards & Recognition (R&R) event held at the International Conference Centre and the annual Christmas Carol Concert.

### 7.3 Finance and Procurement

The draft Statement of Accounts 2022/23 have been published and the external audit is scheduled to be completed by December 2023.

Monthly budget monitoring reports have now been updated to highlight any key risks and issues. This approach will continue to be reviewed following further user feedback.

Procurement policy compliance training has been scheduled to be provided to Middle Managers in November 2023 and it is anticipated that the Procurement Act 2023 shall come into force on 1st October 2024, which may be implemented in successive stages.

#### 7.4 Digital & Data

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for business-as-usual (BAU) ICT support remain on-track and continue to be in line with the targets set. Ongoing upgrades to connectivity and server hardware continue as part of our normal practices to enable digitally enabled working practices at our stations and other sites.

The software used on our frontline Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) installed on each frontline fire engine has been upgraded, bringing improved cyber security and more reliable information for our crews. We have concluded our early trial of Incident Command Software in Coventry and Solihull and are working towards a plan to roll this out for an additional trial across Birmingham and for enhancements to our Incident Command Unit capabilities.

#### 7.5 Sustainability

A Sustainability Strategy has been created in collaboration with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to align our sustainability policies. The draft has been produced and will be further refined through our community feedback through our CRMP engagement.

Our Organisational Development (OD) approaches to increase learning and awareness within the Service have been created which include development courses for staff, an organisational roadmap to a 'gold level', considering sustainable organisation and potential options for delivery of this. Bespoke training will also be provided to the

procurement team to begin to take an environmental and ethical value-based approach to purchasing goods and services.

The Innovation & Sustainability team will have their own stand at ESS this year; this is to demonstrate the areas we are working and focusing on. They will include firefighting robots and composters.

In collaboration with our data analyst team, work has begun on analysing air quality impact from fires.

The Clean Hub/Clean Firefighter concept has been mapped out for first time, which seeks to address health and safety issues faced by firefighters regarding contaminants they can potentially be exposed to.

WMFS will be hosting the annual in person conference for the Emergency Services Environment and Sustainability Group (EESG) in our FSHQ Hub during September. Representatives from Fire, Police and Ambulance across the UK will be attending to listen to guest speakers, talk about their sustainability journey and take part in networking.

## 7.6 Oracle

A post Implementation evaluation process has begun with Oracle to help identify further areas where we can maximise our existing investment by realising further benefits.

The Single Point of Contact model is progressing well to provide additional support to all staff as end users of the system. This approach is helping to address concerns received from staff, representative bodies and highlighted through What's Happening Visits (WHV's) and Fire Authority members.

SET have taken a decision to focus further on staff feedback and slow the rate of pace of development of Oracle to just those elements that deliver against key business priorities. This will also allow a greater time for further embedding and understanding of the system.

## 8. **PEOPLE PROGRAMME – HIGHLIGHTS**



### 8.1 Distributed Training Model (DTM) Review

The DTM review has commenced, the communications have been shared with the workforce and the timeline for completion is January 2024. A range of stakeholders will be engaged with as part of the review to ensure the widest range of views can be considered. As part of the Training Development Scrutiny Review, Fire Authority Members have engaged with a range of groups from across the Service. The feedback collated during the session will support the DTM review; observations from staff who engaged in the session was that it was valuable.

### 8.2 Trainee Firefighter Development Programme (TFDP) revised programme

Following an evidenced based review of the TFDP, the course structure has developed from an 8-week programme into a 12-week programme; the revised programme commenced in August. The course now comprises of additional role critical elements across prevention, protection and response. Extensive feedback is being gathered by the OI team to capture the user experience to enable the course to be reviewed and were appropriate developed.

The Trainee Firefighters, where appropriate, are based in HQ and as part of the Enabling Services Transformation Project, the planned relocation of TFDP and Command Development Centre (CDC) will continue to create an inclusive environment.

### 8.3 Health and Wellbeing Framework Launch

In August 2023 we launched the revised Health and Wellbeing framework and we are now in the final stages of developing a Mental Health Policy. The Service takes the wellbeing of all staff extremely seriously and is continually reviewing and developing the services it offers through Occupational Health (OH). This is done through feedback and engagement with staff.

### 8.4 Station Commander and Crew Commander Development

Throughout September, October, November and December 2023, a programme has been developed to support Firefighters who are considering progressing into the Crew Manager role. There is a specific focus on understanding the barriers from those in under-represented groups.

## 9. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 Areas of policy changes that are identified in Project(s) are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

## 10. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 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.

## 11. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## 12. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Portfolio Management - Fire Authority Report June 2022

[10706222 FRA Portfolio Management \(3PT\).docx](#)

Portfolio Management – Fire Authority Report Oct 2022

[12009221 FRA Portfolio Management \(3PT\) - Oct 22.docx](#)

[12301233 FRA Portfolio Management \(3PT\) - Feb 23.docx](#)

[1076238 FRA Portfolio Management \(3PT\) - June 23 \(1\).docx](#)

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