

# **WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**18 NOVEMBER 2019**

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

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

THAT the contents of the report be noted.

## **2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a Strategic summary on the progress of delivery of value through 'The Plan'. The continual representation of value release and investment in the three programmes of Culture, People and Process will enable progression to be tracked.
- 2.2 This report will lead into the subsequent Fire Authority papers that support the delivery of the Strategy in one or more of the programmes. West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) is committed to a digitally enabled platform.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

In July 2019 a request by members was made to the Chief Fire Officer to provide information and understanding on the management of the Portfolio through the 3PT approach.

The Chief Fire Officer presented to the Fire Authority on 30 September 2019 the first report providing the Strategic overview of the approach to managing workstreams through the Portfolio Management and provided a high-level overview of how WMFS delivers value to the communities of the West Midlands.

For reference the Portfolio Management (3PT) approach is detailed in the Fire Authority Report 30 September 2019.

### 3.1 Culture Programme

#### 3.1.1 The Cultural Review Project

The cultural review is a project within the Culture programme. This project has been refined to clearly demonstrate the value that we are seeking to deliver through this project. The organisational value that this project is seeking to achieve is:

- A workforce that has the capability, behaviours, judgement and knowledge and reflects the diversity of the communities of the West Midlands.
- Drive public sector reform, innovation and change and that demonstrates to partners our ability to transform, deliver enhanced services and reduce dependency.

This organisational value will be measured through understanding how **satisfied** all stakeholders are with the report and the changes that the report outcome creates. It will also be measured by how this report and the changes it creates meet the **aspirations** of the organisation and the community. Currently there are high levels of satisfaction with all key stakeholders recognising the report as independent. We are delivering limited amounts of value in relation to our aspirations. Value will be delivered to meet our aspirations once the report is fully understood and an action plan developed.

The cultural review was distributed to all staff on 7 October 2019. This review was independently produced by RealWorld HR (RWHR). This review has produced a report. A further six sessions have been organised where RWHR will answer questions to enable all stakeholders to fully understand the content of the report. A wider stakeholder group which supports the whole cultural programme has also met to discuss the cultural review report. A further stakeholder meeting is being arranged in November.

For the cultural review to meet the aspirations of the organisation, it is essential for all stakeholders to work together to achieve the outcomes that enable WMFS to more effectively deliver 'The Plan' and serve the communities of the West Midlands.

### 3.1.2 HS2

HS2 is captured within a project within the Cultural programme but tasks and dependencies are also captured within the Response and Protection projects. HS2 impacts upon our response capabilities with the introduction of emerging risks such as tunnels and railway infrastructure. Building projects may also cause road closures or temporary road layout changes which could impact upon response times. New builds will have an impact on the number of new planning applications, the amount of building in the West Midlands requiring Fire Safety inspections and the number of Site-Specific Risk Information site visits required.

During the development phase of HS2, there will be impacts on headquarters. The Project Executive has regular meetings with the developers to continually monitor the impact upon staff.

## 3.2 People Programme

### 3.2.1 Attendance Management

A key area that is holding the value release is the low levels of performance in relation to attendance management and the impact on staffing and the ridership factor.

There has been an increase in sickness across the organisation, the impact of which has seen the increase in the ridership factor for staffing (operational staff) at 15.3 and Fire Control 26.3.

The Financial Efficiency Plan set a budget based on a ridership factor of 13.5. An increase of one in the ridership factor equals a financial cost to the organisation of circa £300k.

The main reasons for absence have been attributed to:

- Mental Health
- Joint Problems
- Gastrointestinal
- Muscular Skeletal: Back
- Colds and Flu.

These five reasons describe 52% of duty days lost to sickness. In addition, the percentage balance of Long-Term Sickness and Short-Term Sickness for uniformed staff in the year to date is 69.9% Long Term Sickness and for Fire Control 74.9%.

Further work is being done to understand better the reason for the absence when recorded as mental health.

### 3.2.2 Key Areas of Focus

The command delivery project within the People programme has prioritised pieces of focus.

A task and finish group has been established with key stakeholders to include the Command Delivery team, People Support Services, Representative Bodies, Occupational Health and OLPD.

Video and information in ensuring the HRMS data is completed.

Development sessions and presentations to the middle managers and support staff. Four sessions have already been delivered in the Coventry and Solihull and Birmingham commands.

Review of the Attendance Management Policy – further improvement within the Process programme needs to be established and an understanding through Organisational Intelligence how the policy is being applied.

The next steps will be for middle managers to deliver the development sessions with their supervisory managers with People Support Services, completion date 30 November.

## 3.3 Process Programme

### 3.3.1 Vehicle Replacement Programme

Budgets are being managed effectively across the projects. However, there is a £1.4m underspend within the Vehicle Replacement Project which was outlined to the Fire Authority on 30 September 2019. This is due to the delayed introduction of:

- 5 Pump Rescue Ladders (PRL) due to issues with suppliers.
- 1 Command Support Vehicle (CSV) due to technical specification.
- 1 Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) support vehicle awaiting government funding clarification.

### 3.3.2 Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)

In 2011 the government set up the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme to look at options to replace Airwave when the contracts expire. The programme's objectives are to replace the Airwave service with one that matches it in all respects and:

- Makes high-speed data more readily available to the Emergency Services to improve their performance.
- Provides more flexibility to take advantage of new technologies as they emerge.
- Costs less.

There have been a series of issues and delays where it is now anticipated to be delivered (at best) in December 2022 and will be over budget by £3.1 billion. Over the course of the programme there have been a number of reviews which have been critical of progress. Most recently in July 2019 following the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report, the ESMCP has reviewed its management structure. The PAC report also stated that: *"The programme faces substantial levels of technical and commercial risk and failures to date have undermined the confidence of users that the programme will deliver a system that is fit for purpose and meets their needs. On current evidence, it seems inevitable that there will be further delays and cost increases."*

Across the fire sector FRS's are working together regionally to develop implementation plans which are coordinated with our blue light partners. This is then managed in WMFS through a dedicated project which also links to Staffordshire FRS due to the Shared Fire Control. As part of the Process programme, the ESMCP project has a total investment of £2.168m to deliver an anticipated Value Release of 100% currently and, due to a number of risks and issues highlighted in the project, there is an Actual Value Release of 64%.

Key matters for the Fire Authority to be aware of:

- Confidence in ESMCP nationally, regionally and in WMFS is low.
- National ESMCP budget is under increasing pressure and therefore cutting back on the scope and forecasted benefits.
- Unclear financial picture and we are still waiting on Grant, Resource and Data Usage costs.
- Planning is difficult as ESMCP is constantly caveating their statements.
- It is now unclear if 'Data' will still be included in the standard ESMCP product. If it's only a voice provision, then it will be a costly replacement for the current Airwave solution.
- Coverage is still a concern across the country, even in areas of the West Midlands where there are high levels of infrastructure in place.
- Apps are not currently included which will restrict WMFS digital transformation or represent increased costs.
- Unsure if ESMCP devices will be able to be partitioned to allow dual usage (if not, we will need to provide our staff with two devices to carry out their duties).

There are a number of critical dependencies which are monitored through the project, most significantly for the Fire Authority to note:

- Current West Midlands' ESMCP deployment is 2022. This coincides with the Commonwealth Games and both WMFS and West Midlands Police have raised concern.
- Unsure if current Mobile Data Terminals will be able to work with an ESMCP modem or whether new devices will be required across all WMFS frontline appliances.
- Currently there are no plans for ESMCP to embrace the West Midlands 5G testbed.

This position is also reflected in the Corporate Risk Register but whilst Airwave remains available, we are satisfied the risk is being managed so have specifically maintained Corporate Risk 7.1 as 'Medium'. The associated impacts on other related corporate risks are also being monitored on an ongoing basis.

### 3.3.3 High Rise Incident Assurance (Culture/People/Process)

- (a) Following the Grenfell tragedy in 2017, the organisation has been proactively reviewing intelligence and its preparedness for incidents in high-rise buildings which can present the most challenging environment for the community and firefighters. The approach WMFS has taken to managing high rise properties and the risks they present was positively acknowledged in the recent HMICFRS report. Due to the wider ranging scope of this area of activity, the three programmes have worked cohesively and monitored progress through an assurance plan. Key areas of activity are highlighted below:
- Policy Revisions – the High-Rise Policy has been constantly reviewed as intelligence has emerged both nationally and locally. The policy is aligned to National Operational Guidance where appropriate and enhanced where we feel this will provide additional support locally. The revised policy has followed the recognised consultation process through the Employee Relations Framework (ERF) and is supported by a robust training and communication plan. Whilst operational in its nature, key policy matters for the Fire Authority to be aware of are:
    - The Regulatory Reform Order (RRO Fire Safety) considerations.
    - Building Construction (and construction failure).
    - Different types of High-Rise/Tall buildings (residential, office, shops).
    - Dry/Wet Risers (use of and failure).
    - Evacuation (Stay Put/Simultaneous/Full).
    - Fire Control (Fire Survival Guidance/Evacuation Status).
- (b) Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI) System – the Fire Authority has a responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act to provide information as necessary and reasonable practice for its employees.

One of the ways that this is done in relation to high-rise buildings is through the SSRI system. This provides a record of all high-rise buildings and any pertinent information that Incident Commanders would need to effectively manage an emergency incident.

The system is also designed to provide supporting operational plans to help manage an incident, e.g. Initial Operational Plan, Water Plan, Environmental Plan.

Whilst the organisational policy sets out initial actions, quality assurance, review schedules (based on risk) and training expectations, the high-rise assurance plan has highlighted a number of areas that require additional focus and rigor alongside enhancements in digital support. There is also a growing number of new builds across the West Midlands area which fall into this high-risk category of building that are not being included within the SSRI system in a timely manner.

- (c) Incident Commander Competence – This is a critical area where the organisation has responsibility to both the community and its staff. A significant investment is made into systems to provide acquisition, ongoing maintenance and assurance of incident command competence. To provide the higher levels of health and safety compliance we have introduced ‘Standardised Assessments’ to ensure all of the core competencies required of a firefighter/officer are consistently assessed and recorded.
- (d) However, to support the Health & Safety Framework, the organisation undertakes an annual Competency Risk Assessment which reviews the frequency of existing operational activities and any new activities being considered. To provide enhanced assurance around high-rise incidents, the organisation sets an expectation that every officer would complete a standardised incident command assessment specifically based on a high-rise fire. Additional investment has been made to create capacity to accommodate increased demand for these assessments over the next six months. There is also a similar requirement to assess the competency of flexi-duty officers using a standardised assessment process.
- (e) Training Materials and Support – to support the revised policy and staff achieve excellence, there have been a number of enhancements to training and support materials. This includes new Ecademy packages and XVR incident command simulations undertaken both at the Command Development Centre and remotely where the simulations are taken to stations using a mobile platform. This is further supported by the high-rise training facility at Oldbury.
- (f) Research and Development – To support ongoing improvement to our capability and approach to dealing with fires in high-rise buildings, there are a number of new pieces of equipment being considered for inclusion on our frontline appliances. Items being considered are:



- Cleveland Coil Hose – an alternative way to use firefighting hose.
- Smoke curtains and smoke hoods to support evacuation.
- Electric PPV to support firefighting operations, e.g. failure of Wet Risers.

#### 4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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. Areas of policy change that are identified at Project are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

#### 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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.

#### 6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

This report does not contain any financial information.

#### 7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Background Papers  
Fire Authority Report 30 September 2019.

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