

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

4 OCTOBER 2021

1. **CRMP OBJECTIVES**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT Members note the progress of the evidence-based Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) objectives as a key platform for the delivery of the 3-year rolling Strategy.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 This report is submitted to Members to provide the detail of:

- Strategic CRMP objectives which are being developed and will be delivered through the Service's 3-year rolling Strategy.
Additional options that are being progressed in line with CRMP objectives to support the delivery of the 3-year rolling Strategy.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 On the 21 February 2021 the Fire Authority approved the development of CRMP proposals to enable the delivery of its 3-year rolling Strategy.

The development of a CRMP is focused on the statutory role of a fire service which is to reduce, mitigate or manage death and injury, damage to property, economic, damage or damage to the environment.

The role of a fire fighter in achieving this, is to reduce the likelihood of a risk occurring and/or mitigate its impact when it does. This is the basis for the provision of integrated prevention, protection and response activities through the role of a fire fighter,

aligned to the risk that is presented in a local CRMP. West Midlands Fire Service (Service) must seek to ensure that this statutory role can be delivered in the most effective and efficient way, which is able to respond to the changing risk environment.

CRMP proposals

- 3.2 The agreed CRMP proposals are high level and 'evidence based', informed by the review of the Service's CRMP in 2020. This provides an assessment of current and foreseeable risks across the West Midlands conurbation, along with the application of professional knowledge and judgement and is further informed through outcomes from the November 2020 public consultation.
- 3.3 The CRMP proposals agreed in February 2021 are outlined below:
1. A review of the key factors that contribute to survivability.
 2. A review of the current approach to responding to Road Traffic Collisions, Automatic Fire Alarms and Secondary Fires to consider alternative approaches to responding to these current and changing risks.
 3. A review of the future impact of emerging risks on the CRMP, including how prevention, protection and response services may need to change to enable flexibility in the delivery of our services.
 4. To consider the most appropriate interventions to reduce vulnerability to fire and other risks through the CRMP.
 5. To continue to prioritise a range of opportunities to digitally enable the workforce and communities to transform the delivery of services
- 3.4 The Strategic Enabling Team (SET) have refined and developed each of these proposals into specific objectives through a structured and planned approach using dedicated 3PT projects, overseen through the CRMP project. Specific monthly CRMP workshops have supported progression and ensured dependencies across these objectives are effectively captured and planned for.

3.5 The CRMP objectives have been further defined into the following areas:

1. Survivability
2. Review of our approach to responding to Automatic Fire Alarms
3. Establishing a blended approach to the use of our fleet, incorporating reviewing our approach to responding to road traffic collisions and secondary fires
4. Emerging Risks
5. Reducing Health Inequalities

3.6 In developing the CRMP objectives it became evident that the approved approach to 'flexible fleet management' was an additional area which would need to be reviewed.

3.7 The use of flexible fleet management was an approach agreed in 2019 as a financial control measure, enabling the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) to pre-state appliances off the run, to achieve annual efficiency savings of £3.8 million.

3.8 This approach continues to be used in 2021/22. Aligned to the progression of the CRMP objectives and the principles set out in paragraph 3.10 below, a solution is being sought which will identify alternative approaches to meeting these efficiency savings and maximise resource availability. These solutions will aim to put risk, data, and intelligence at the forefront of all our prevention, protection and response activities.

3.9 CRMP objectives and their progress has been updated into Members throughout August and September 2021 and most recently, to all Authority Members via the Policy Planning Forum on 13 September 2021.

3.10 The following principles form the basis of the development of CRMP objectives and alternative options to our approach to flexible fleet management. These principles have a clear focus on transforming the way in which services are provided to local communities.

- To continue to evolve our delivery of risk-based services aligned to the needs of local communities.
- To create opportunities and make the best use of our

- resources to effectively manage changing risk.
- To sustain our delivery of risk-based services to local communities.
- To maintain and enhance our HMICFRS rated 'outstanding' response services.
- To enable sustainable and resilient services for now and the future
- Maintain and expand our offer to partners and communities, delivering services which are in the communities' interest.
- Manage Health and Safety considerations within existing arrangements, ensuring safe systems of work.
- Deliver the most effective CRMP working with our staff.

3.11 As set out in this report, the development of CRMP objectives have been developed from a position of risk reduction and making the most effective use of resources. Both current and future budget considerations (which form part of the medium-term financial planning within our 3-year rolling strategy) will inform how these proposals are implemented.

4 **Progression of CRMP objectives and anticipated impact on our 3-year rolling strategy**

4.1 **Survivability:** The CRMP review undertaken in 2020 proposed, *'SET will commission the review of those key factors that contribute to the survivability timeline and research, through the technical CRMP group'*.

4.2 This objective in its first phase, will provide an evidence base to understand the key stages in the development of an incident, which may influence the number of personnel needed to resolve the incident. Research will seek to understand the impact of response times and crewing levels on the overall effectiveness and speed at which category 1 (high risk) incidents are addressed. The outcomes of this research are to identify if getting to a fire earlier on in its development impacts on the amount of people and resources that are required to resolve the incident. The development of this research and its outcomes will enable the delivery of the aims set out in both Risk Based Crewing and Blended Fleet CRMP objectives.

4.3 This objective is in its early stages of development and officers are in discussion with the University of Central Lancashire, with the

aim of working in partnership to progress the work.

- 4.4 **Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs):** The CRMP review undertaken in 2020 proposed that: *'the current approach to responding to AFAs, will be reviewed to determine the opportunities these changing risks provide in considering alternative approaches to responding'*.
- 4.5 The CRMP public consultation, conducted between November 2020 and January 2021, identified 88% of respondents agreed that the Service should consider alternative approaches to AFAs.
- 4.6 As part of the development of CRMP proposals identified earlier in the report, a review of the approach to the Service's attendance at AFA's is being undertaken across three timed phases. This is to ensure that the appropriate resources (people and appliances) are mobilised proportionate to risk.
- 4.7 Fire control already dynamically mobilise** resources to AFAs, which enables the right resource to be sent based on what is known about the incident.
- ** (Dynamic Mobilising - using resources flexibly and efficiently allowing Fire Control to alter or amend the level of initial response to best match the incident needs with the resources available)
- 4.8 The aim of this work is to:
- provide options for the appropriate resource(s) (people and vehicles), to respond to an AFA within the 3 category types: *non-sleeping, sleeping non-managed and sleeping managed*.
 - review our approach to dynamic mobilisation to identify opportunities to respond more efficiently.
 - ensure that WMFS responds appropriately to all AFAs where there is a fire.
- 4.9 Phase 1 of this proposal has already delivered a re-categorisation of AFAs.
- 4.10 We know that from the AFA calls received between 2019 and 2021, 0.9% of these resulted in a fire incident. Therefore, phases 2 and 3 will go on to continue to gather and analyse data to

support the review of response options and resource allocations.

- 4.11 Once all options are appraised and considered by the Strategic Enabling Team and Chief Fire Officer, it is anticipated that a revised approach to responding to AFAs will be implemented in April 2022 as part of phase 3.
- 4.12 **Blended Fleet, including review of our response to Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) and Secondary Fires:** The CRMP review proposed that the *'current approach to responding to RTCs, AFAs and Secondary Fires will be reviewed to determine the opportunities these changing risks provide in considering alternative approaches to responding'*
- 4.13 The Blended Fleet proposal is developing to further focus on the type of fleet the Service uses to respond to incidents, prevention and protection interventions in the future.
- 4.14 West Midland Fire Service (WMFS) delivers services to the community through its blended fleet. This is currently made up of Pump Rescue Ladder (PRL) appliances and Brigade Response Vehicles (BRVs) and a number of specialists vehicles such as Business Support Vehicles (BSVs) and Hydraulic Platform Vehicles (HPVs). These specialist vehicles are used dependent on the need of certain types of incidents.
- 4.15 The review of AFAs (as detailed in the above section), Road Traffic Collisions and Secondary Fires (which are being considered within this proposal) all seek to understand how the Service can respond differently to non-life risk incidents.
- 4.16 The Blended Fleet proposal aims to further diversify the use of fleet when responding to current and known risks. This enables the Service to protect the availability of appropriate resources for Category 1, high risk incidents, as well as ensuring they remain available to deliver key community risk reduction activities. It will also consider how the fleet should develop for the future aligned to changing risks within the CRMP.
- 4.17 The following principles have been determined by the Strategic Enabling Team for the development of this proposal:
- A fleet that enables simultaneous activity across all prevention,

protection and response activities, maximising the value release of every resource.

- Commitment to diversifying the current fleet, with more environmentally efficient vehicles which meet external targets.
- A fleet that facilitates a proportionate and flexible response to all incident types.
- Support the principles of people-based mobilising, with the ability to provide enhanced flexible staffing to deliver community risk reduction.
- Enabling our people, to select the most appropriate resource to direct activities to risk reduction.

- 4.18 Reviews of Road Traffic Collision, AFA and Secondary Fire incidents response will identify opportunities when considering alternative approaches to responding. This work is currently reviewing initial data and considering the options for trial. These trials are anticipated to commence between Q3 and Q4 2021/22.
- 4.19 This proposal is in its initial stages of development and will work across other CRMP proposals, as well as Risk Based Crewing to identify the best approach to further evolving our fleet. It is anticipated that initial outcomes will be considered by the Strategic Enabling Team and Chief Fire Officer in March 2022.
- 4.20 **Reducing Health Inequalities:** The CRMP review proposed *'the most appropriate interventions to reduce vulnerability to fire and other risks will be determined through the CRMP, using the principle of an integrated approach to prevention, protection, and response activity enhancing the 'up stream' approach to fire fighting.'*
- 4.21 The public consultation undertaken in November 2020 identified 75% of those who responded, agreed the Service should tackle the wider issues causing vulnerability to fire and other risks. These findings align to those of the Marmot Report, which has linked health inequalities, to risk and vulnerability to fire and other emergencies, i.e., the cause of the cause.
- 4.22 The Service's targeted 'person-centred' approach to prevention interventions uses the principle of 'upstream activity'. Identifying and tackling the causes of the causes of preventable death and related injury, underpins our prevention activity.

4.23 This proposal seeks to develop the Service's approach to upstream firefighting through prevention interventions, aiming to reduce health inequalities across an individual's life course. These interventions will:

- Be targeted at reducing health inequalities through engaging with people about their health and wellbeing.
- Allow the community to take action to reduce health inequalities through community access to digital services
- Identify people in the community at risk and vulnerable to fire and other emergencies through intelligence from data shared between partners
- Enhance working with partners to reduce health inequalities, reduce risk and vulnerability to fire and other emergencies.
- Engage with people about health and wellbeing where the issue impacts on their risk and vulnerability to fire and other emergencies

4.24 Digital transformation of prevention services is a focus of this work as it can enable communities to become more independent and resilient in reducing health inequalities. Many of the interventions that will contribute to the development of this objective, will seek to use existing resources and work collaboratively across our partners.

4.25 It is anticipated that our future work with partners to reduce health inequalities as a cause of risk and vulnerability to fire will involve being commissioned to do this. Some of these future interventions are anticipated to have clear links to the wider fire fighter role map considerations.

4.26 **Emerging risks:** As a key outcome of the CRMP review the identification of new and emerging risks requires a greater understanding and assessment, to identify the potential new and increased hazards these present and how they may therefore result in risks to the community.

4.27 Emerging risks include climate change, terrorism, complex built environment, high-profile events (e.g. Commonwealth Games 2022) & major infrastructure projects (HS2).

- 4.28 The Fire Authority agreed that the impact of Emerging Risks on the CRMP would need to be planned for and Prevention, Protection & Response resources adapted to reduce and mitigate their impact.
- 4.29 To ensure that the Service has the capability and capacity to deal with identified and emerging risks, the Chief Fire Officer approved the introduction of a third Technical Rescue Unit (TRU) station for WMFS, located at Sutton Coldfield fire station in the Birmingham Local Authority area. The project has a 'go-live' date of May 2022, in time for the Commonwealth Games event to be hosted in Birmingham and at remote sites across the West Midlands.
- 4.30 The development of this enhanced specialist capability will mitigate risks in an agile and flexible way. It will also increase levels of assurance and resilience in the provision of these services both locally within the West Midlands, as well as through National Resilience requirements.
- 4.31 It is also anticipated that the Service will enhance its contribution to the 'Prevent Strategy' around extremism and terrorism, which will improve staff awareness and contribution to this agenda. This will continue to demonstrate our role as a key partner in supporting community cohesion, as well as support and enhance the Service's cohesion' element of the DICE strategy.
- 4.32 This objective will not impact on the response for category 1, high risk, incidents and category 2,3,4 incidents. Prevention & Protection activity will be supported by other stations.
- 4.33 The personnel requirements are likely to require staff movement and as such there is clear engagement with representative bodies taking place and this will continue through the Employee Relations Framework.
- 4.34 As part of the developing work a feasibility study into how additional resilience may be available to support specialist response activity (e.g. HQ and/or departmental staff) is being undertaken.
- 4.35 **Risk Based Crewing:** The Risk Based Crewing Proposal seeks to maximise resource availability whilst transforming the way in which we deliver our Response, Prevention or Protection based

activities.

- 4.36 Aligned to the Authority's budget arrangements, the Services current approach using the flexible management of fleet, is to reduce the numbers of BRVs available at any one time, due to the requirement to make in year savings of £3.8 million. This is achieved by not utilising voluntary additional shifts to meet organisational shortfalls in staffing.
- 4.37 The Risk Based Crewing approach will look to increase fleet availability through the flexible use of staffing (rather than fleet as the current approach) across different vehicles at Fire Stations. It will deliver enhanced efficiency through more closely matching resource to risk across Prevention, Protection and Response and support the expansion of the 'blended fleet' which will be a key dependency. This will maximise community risk reduction activity through the increased availability of resources, and the proportionate crewing of each vehicle based on the activity being attended.
- 4.38 This approach will require station-based staff to adopt an agile approach to how they utilise, and crew our blended fleet in a way that is appropriate to the activity being undertaken and the associated risk.
- 4.39 The principles of risk-based crewing are scalable, and there is scope to 'flex' the approach to accommodate further financial efficiencies if required.
- 4.40 This proposal will be trialled across several fire stations to understand impacts and benefits. A 3-month trial will take place between November 2021 and January 2022. To ensure evaluation of the trial outcomes and the progression of other CRMP objectives such as Blended Fleet, it is anticipated implementation of Risk Based Crewing will commence in April 2022

5 **Alternative options**

- 5.1 As this report identifies, the CRMP objectives focus on how the Service can continue to evolve and improve the delivery of services to communities. The objectives seek to achieve this in different ways and are aligned to the principles set out in paragraph 3.10.

- 5.2 Officers and the Fire Authority have considered alternative options to support the delivery of CRMP objectives, although some of these are not aligned to the principles of the CRMP planning (paragraph 3,10) or the 3-year rolling Strategy 2021-24.
- 5.3 The development and implementation of a retention policy has been agreed and will support the Service and CRMP objectives. This will enable where needed, the retention of skills and expertise required to deliver CRMP objectives through the 3- year rolling Strategy.
- 5.4 The use of reserves and commercial use of estates have been considered and it has been agreed they are not viable options for enabling the progression and implementation of CRMP objectives as part of the 3-year rolling Strategy. The use of estates is an ongoing area of work which can support development from a narrow financial perspective. Assurance of progress of estates will be provided through the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 5.5 The options of compulsory redundancies and station closures have also been considered. These are not desirable options for both the Authority and Officers. These options do not align to the CRMP planning principles. The progression and implementation of CRMP objectives over the 3-year planning period are designed so that these options should not need to be explored.

Summary considerations

- 5.6 Each of the CRMP objectives detailed in this report are focused on reducing risk to our communities and increasing the capacity and skills of staff for community risk reduction activity.
- 5.7 The CRMP objectives do not seek to change the Authority's agreed 3-year rolling Strategy, or annual plan and priorities. They aim to transform our approach to delivering the 3-year rolling Strategy so that this can be achieved in the most effective and efficient way.
- 5.8 The planned approach to the delivery of CRMP objectives will be progressed using operational decision making, through Chief Fire Officer delegations set out in Part 3 of the Authority constitution, Scheme of Delegations.

- 5.9 A key planning assumption (aligned to earlier principles) is that our future services will be delivered in a more flexible and agile way. To achieve this the Service aims to put person-based mobilising at the forefront of determining how an incident will be resourced, depending on the type of risk it presents. This will enable a more dynamic approach to mobilising to incidents. This will not result in a change to our response levels to high-risk incidents and as such, the CRMP objectives seek to ensure that the 5-minute attendance time to high-risk incidents is maintained.
- 5.10 Maximising community risk reduction activity will enable the role of a fire fighter to continue to focus on reducing risk through both prevention and protection activities. The majority of CRMP objectives will have an impact on how we deliver prevention activity for the future. The Reducing Health Inequalities objective will specifically engage partners and the workforce on how we can deliver interventions, which seek to reduce these inequalities, as a recognised contributor to risk and vulnerability of an individual to fire and other incidents.
- 5.11 The CRMP objectives are each developing at a different pace, and some have been prioritised to enable early implementation and transformation. Dependencies across objectives are carefully managed through 3PT, to ensure that these can release the most benefit to local communities. For example, the outcomes of the AFA objectives, Road Traffic Collision and Secondary Fires review will inform the progression of the Blended fleet in the short term.
- 5.12 Individual CRMP objectives will engage with staff and stakeholders in a proactive way and as determined by the 3PT project plan. A wider CRMP communication and engagement strategy supports informing and awareness across the workforce and stakeholders. Where CRMP objectives result in a change to working practices, these will be engaged and developed through the WMFS Employee Relations Framework.
- 5.13 Being able to deliver services in a different way, to meet the changing operating environment as well as the diverse needs of communities requires 'smarter' ways of working. The WMFS CRMP consultation outcomes have told us that our communities agree with the ongoing the use of technology and digital solutions, to complement our face-to-face engagement and delivery Safe and Wells. Digital innovation is a consistent consideration in the

planning and design of CRMP objective deliverables. Increasing our digital ways of working will allow the Service to focus the capacity and skills of staff on engaging each other and the community, targeting the skills of its workforce focus on delivering community risk reduction services those most vulnerable.

6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

6.1 The matters contained in this report. Each individual CRMP proposals will require an individual Equality Impact Assessment to enable its most effective approach to planning.

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The recommendations in this report ensure the effective and efficient delivery of Fire and Rescue Authority Services as set out on the Fire and Rescue Services' Act, Regulatory Reform Order, Emergency Order, Civil Contingencies Act and the National Framework which incorporates the duties of these Acts, but also the requirements for governance and assurance of performance.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 It is anticipated that each of the options in Section 4 of this report would lead to an improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of the Service.

8.2 Whilst the CRMP objectives primarily focus on transforming services in response to changing risks, some of the options in Section 4 have the potential to enable financial efficiency savings. This is particularly the case with the Risk Based Crewing option, which could achieve annual financial efficiency savings of at least £3.8M, with scope to 'flex' the approach to accommodate further financial efficiencies if required.

8.3 Progress on the CRMP proposals will be reported to future Fire Authority meetings, with any associated financial efficiency savings being reflected within the budget report, due to be considered by the Authority on 14 February 2022.

9. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no environmental implications.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Policy Planning Forum - 6 September 2021

FRA report - CRMP and 3 year rolling strategy - 21 February 2021

Our Plan 2020-23

IRMP 2021-23

SET Report - CRMP Proposals - 6 January 2021

SET Report - CRMP Consultation Outcomes - 13 January 2021

West Midlands Fire Authority Constitution (June 2021)

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