

# **WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**15 FEBRUARY 2020**

## **1. THREE YEAR ROLLING STRATEGY 2021-24 AND ANNUAL PLAN**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

### **RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 THAT Members note the outcomes of the evidence-based Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) review.
- 1.2 THAT Members approve the CRMP proposals that will be developed for implementation over the period of the three-year rolling Strategy 2021-24.
- 1.3 THAT Members re affirm the Authority's Vision statement for the Authority's Strategy.
- 1.4 THAT Members note the context of planning for the three-year Strategy and Annual Plan.
- 1.5 THAT Members approve the three-year Strategic objectives 2021-24 and refresh of the annual plan priorities for delivery in 2021-22.

## **2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 This report is submitted to Members to provide the detail of:
  - Strategic CRMP proposals which will be delivered through the Services three year rolling Strategy.
  - The proposed re affirmation of the Authority's Strategic Vision and
  - the proposed three-year rolling Strategy objectives and Annual Plan priorities for delivery during 2021-22.
- 2.2 These proposals form our three-year rolling Strategy for 2021-24 and have been developed following a review of the outcomes of

the CRMP planning process for 2021-2024, CRMP consultation outcomes and a detailed review of our internal and external operating environments. These have formed an understanding of the strategic planning considerations which the Service has or will have to plan for within the three-year Strategy.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

#### **Role of a Fire Service**

- 3.1 West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) has primary responsibility for risk management through the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, as well as the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999; ensuring the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventive and protective measures for its staff and its communities.
- 3.2 This is enabled through the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 (Framework), which sets out the expectations of all Fire and Rescue Services, providing an overall strategic direction aligned to their role as set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The framework identifies several priorities for Fire and Rescue Authorities to:
- make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents.
  - identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face.
  - collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide.
  - be accountable to communities for the service they provide; and
  - develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.
- 3.3 The Framework aligned to bullet point 2 above, requires the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) to cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary. The requirements are set out in more detail in section 4.6 of the Framework.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/705060/National\\_Framework\\_-\\_final\\_for\\_web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/705060/National_Framework_-_final_for_web.pdf)

## **Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)**

- 3.4 The NFCC have developed the CRMP process to support sector wide consistency in how local IRMPs are developed. The NFCC CRMP process aligns to the expectations set out in the Framework. Officers within the Service are integrated into this ongoing national work.
- 3.5 WMFS has used the detailed stages within the NFCC CRMP process to guide its IRMP review. As a result, WMFS has recently changed its reference of the IRMP to the CRMP. This enables consistency and alignment to the national approach, which will also form part of the NFCC Professional Standards and will be reviewed through Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
- 3.6 WMFS ensures compliance with the expectations as set out in the Framework through ensuring its CRMP is the starting point in the development of the three-year rolling Strategy. The CRMP focuses purely on the risk that exists across the West Midlands area.
- 3.7 WMFS consult on their CRMP every three years, or when there is a material change that will impact on the services communities will receive. The CRMP is continually reviewed to ensure it provides a current assessment of risk.

### **Three Year rolling Strategy.**

- 3.8 The Authority's three-year rolling Strategy reflects the expectations of a CRMP, the Vision, as well as the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The three-year objectives reflect the high-level goals of WMFS to achieve the CRMP and Vision.
- 3.9 The Authority's ability to plan beyond three years is difficult given the ever-changing external environment, its impact on community risk and the length of any comprehensive spending review period, which can range from one to three years.
- 3.10 The three-year rolling Strategy contains three key layers which are considered after CRMP outcomes have been realised and considered. These are People, Finance and Digital and cut across all objectives, to ensure the delivery of the Strategy is focused against the competences needed for staff, ensuring that they are delivered in the most efficient and effective way and a continued focus on how these can be transformed digitally. This will ensure

that we both support staff in their delivery, as well as enable our communities.

- 3.11 One-year priorities form the 'annual plan' within the three-year rolling Strategy. This provides more detail of the outcomes WMFS aims to achieve in that year to:
- reduce vulnerability,
  - increase public safety through removing, reducing, controlling; and/or
  - mitigating risk in the community through prevention, protection and response priorities.
- 3.12 The structure of the three-year rolling strategy is set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.13 Enabling Outcomes have been formed internally, highlighting the value of existing ways of working which significantly contribute to the way in which WMFS delivered and continued to deliver services during the COVID pandemic. These outcomes form more detailed internal mechanisms by which the three-year objectives and one-year priorities will be delivered. The Enabling Outcomes are set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.14 The annual plan and its priorities are measured through WMFS Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and the Statement of Assurance provides assurance around the delivery of services to the public.

### **CRMP Review and Outcomes**

- 3.15 The review of the CRMP for WMFS for 2021-24, has incorporated the identification, review and assessment of existing, and potential future risks to the community within the West Midlands conurbation.
- 3.16 This identifies 'foreseeable risks' that exist or are emerging across the West Midlands, which fall within the scope of the Fire and Rescue Services Act, the Regulatory Reform Order, Civil Contingencies Act and other relevant legislation; as well as the objectives of a Fire and Rescue Service which are to reduce, mitigate or manage death and injury, damage to property, the economy and/or environment.
- 3.17 The CRMP review has been achieved through gathering data and information to evidence:
- understanding of current risks and trends;

- learning and understanding of emerging risks through trends, developments, externally available research and analysis and professional knowledge; and
- identifying and learning from unprecedented events.

3.18 Through this process WMFS can identify the causes and consequences of foreseeable risks, how they have changed or indeed, how new risks are emerging. This then enables the future approaches of how prevention, protection and response interventions need to be maintained, developed and/or changed to meet changing risk, to be determined.

3.19 The WMFS risk analysis process is fully integrated within its strategic and resource planning, to ensure the three-year rolling Strategy is informed and driven by evidence. This understanding allows the Service to identify suitable methodologies and risk reduction measures which are proportionate and tailored to the needs of the individuals/groups targeted. We are then able to support the community with greater prevention and protection measures being offered to those who we can evidence are at a greater risk of fire and other emergencies.

3.20 The WMFS CRMP process is set out in Appendix 3.

3.21 The foreseeable risks identified through the CRMP process are set out in Appendix 4.

3.22 An overview of the CRMP outcomes, which provide the basis for the development of the Authority's proposed Vision and three-year rolling Strategy, is set out below as presented to Members at the Policy Planning Forum 11 January 2021.

- 2019-20 has seen a reduction in total incidents to previous years, however high-risk incidents continue to rise and secondary fires (2,171 less than in 2018/29) whilst reduced still account for 17.3% of our total incidents (and are likely to fluctuate significantly again during periods of prolonged hot weather).
- WMFSs 5 minutes high risk response attendance standard remains our core response (mitigation) method for high-risk incidents achieved through a diverse fleet arrangement.
- We have achieved an average attendance of 4 minutes and 48 to high risk incidents in 2019/20.
- Road Traffic Collisions have increased over the three-year period, although our response in extricating has reduced by

- approximately 20% (52 incidents).
- Whilst road incidents are increasing the majority (80%) of RTCs that WMFS have responded to in 2019/20 have necessitated a 'Services Only' response.
- Safe and well interventions continue to provide effective prevention focusing on identifying causes of causes, enabled through targeting those most vulnerable to fire related incidents.
- A range of protection interventions aligned to the RBIP provide a robust approach to the prevention and protection of community and local economy.
- Current protection and prevention interventions provide effective up stream controls to risk causation factors.
- Risk causation factors are likely to change over the coming three-year period 2021-24 due to:
  - Increasing societal changes resulting from the impact of COVID are likely to impact on causation factors of existing risks.
  - An economic downturn creating changing behaviours and circumstances within the home and across businesses.
  - Changing Fire Safety legislation placing additional pressure on business owners
- 'Unexpected events' such as Grenfell, Manchester arena and more recently the COVID pandemic, whilst not usual are foreseeable and require continual planning locally, regionally and nationally. This ensures a co-ordinated response across agencies in protecting public safety.
- Emerging risks such as environmental change, extreme weather-related incidents such as flooding and woodland fires, also require national and regional resilience capabilities.

3.23 The assessment of the WMFS CRMP presents a picture of developing change, requiring further understanding to establish how this will impact on the delivery of future services, in the most efficient and effective way.

3.24 As part of understanding risk, the CRMP process recognises the following variables are significant when determining an increased level of risk and vulnerability across the West Midlands:

- housing type
- employment status

- health (physical and mental - illness, disability)
- income
- crime rate of area

3.25 Whilst the longer-term impact of COVID is yet to be fully evidenced across the assessment of our CRMP and influencing external factors, the outcomes of COVID will reach further than the physical illness this disease presents and may contribute to the risk factors that cause vulnerability to fire.

3.26 Through continuing to understand the causes of risks being realised in the community and continually monitoring and reviewing the way in which we prevent and mitigate the impact of those risks occurring, we can maximize the opportunities for our prevention, protection and response interventions, as well as the capability and capacity of the workforce to deliver them.

### **CRMP Consultation 2021-2024 Outcomes**

3.27 To support the review of the CRMP and meet the requirements set out in the Framework, the Authority engaged in a 10-week consultation exercise from 7 October to 16 December 2020.

3.28 The purpose of this consultation was to engage with local communities, our staff, partners and businesses to understand their views and opinions about how WMFS currently provides its services, as well as how this could continue within the Authority's three-year rolling Strategy 2021-24. Questions were asked in five key areas:

- Response: Management of resources
- Prevention: Digital Approaches
- Prevention: Causes of the Causes
- Protection: Approach to Automatic Fire Alarms
- Funding

3.29 Overall, responses to our consultation themes showed a significant majority of respondents overwhelmingly agreeing or strongly agreeing with consultation proposals with the most divisive question being Question 3. This asked whether we should be tackling the wider social issues that contribute to an individual's vulnerability to fire and other risk, however still 75% of responses still either agreed or strongly agreed.

A detailed breakdown of the consultation outcomes is set in Appendix 5 and are referred to throughout the remaining sections

in this report.

## **CRMP Proposals**

- 3.30 The proposals set out below are high level 'evidence based' CRMP proposals, taken from the consideration of the broad outcomes set out earlier in this report (CRMP review and outcomes), the WMFS Strategic Analysis for 2016-2019 and 2017-2020, assessments of individual risks through the CRMP process, 2020 CRMP consultation outcomes, as well as the application of professional knowledge and judgement.
- 3.31 These CRMP proposals have been determined through the Strategic Enabling Team (SET) as risk priorities for planning and implementation over the three-year rolling Strategy 2021-24.
- 3.32 Survivability Study.** The survivability study undertaken in 2015/16 provided WMFS with a sound evidence base to the overall timeline for the survival of a victim of fire in the home (and other emergency incidents) and the impact that a 5-minute response time could have risk to life.

### **CRMP Proposal 1 (to note):**

- 3.33** *SET will commission the review of those key factors that contribute to the survivability timeline and research through the Technical CRMP group. The outcomes of this review will form the evidence base for future CRMP proposals.*
- 3.34** This report is identifying areas of change within the CRMP that need to be understood more. These changes impact on the outcomes we want to achieve. As we embrace new ways of working, as well as delivery of services which reach wider than traditionally fighting fires, there is a firm rationale to widen this research to understand how these changes impact on survivability across wider risks to communities and the economy.
- 3.35 Current Risks:** Our strategic analysis evidences an increase in our response to high and low risk incidents over the last three years. Road Traffic Collision (RTCs) have seen the most significant over this period while secondary fires still account for a significant proportion of our overall incidents.
- 3.36 We also know from our analysis that we overperform in attendance times across incidents which fall into category 2-5.
- 3.37 There are many factors that contribute to increasing incidents



which impact on determining the level of risk they present to the community and the level of resource required from the Service. For example, RTCs are a category 1 incident as they generally present a risk to life. Our data helps us to understand that whilst these are increasing, the severity of RTCs is decreasing and our interventions to 'extricate' individuals using specialist tools and skills is required less.

- 3.38 Whilst the need to continue to respond to RTCs that present a risk to life is critical; through further research to understand the changes in this risk, we can consider the opportunities these changes will have to how we respond to those RTCs which do not present risk to life. This could incorporate the increased use of technology, responding in a different vehicle with a different level of resource and/or working with partners to consider respective roles and the wider role of WMFS.
- 3.39 These principles can be applied across a number of other incident types such as secondary fires, where a greater understanding of current and forecasted causes and impacts, will support the determination of the most efficient and effective response interventions to ensure public safety.
- 3.40 There is no legal duty for Fire Authority's to respond to calls originating from Automated Fire Alarm (AFA) systems to establish if there is a fire, However, as part of the Service Delivery Model (SDM) WMFS responds to automatic fire alarm calls using three Business Support Vehicles (BSV), therefore protecting front line appliances by attending calls.
- 3.41 There is an opportunity to take a risk-based approach to mobilising to automatic fire alarms. Mobilising to life risk where the site is not managed will not change.
- 3.42 Exploring alternative options will further protect the Service Delivery Model, to ensure resources are available for immediate deployment to high risk incidents.
- 3.43 Those responding to the CRMP public consultation agreed with the development of alternative approaches to Automated False Alarms to enable businesses to comply with their fire safety responsibilities – 88% of respondents.
- 3.44 By refining our approaches to response interventions, where this is appropriate, we can ensure the most appropriate availability of resources for Category 1 high risk incidents, where they can

achieve the most impact.

### **CRMP Proposal 2:**

- 3.45 *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.*
- 3.46 **Emerging Risks** - The CRMP analysis supports the identification of new and emerging risks, which require 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.
- 3.47 The development of HS2 over the next three years 2021-24, the Commonwealth Games taking place in 2022 and the impact of BREXIT are some of the most obvious emerging risks, which have the potential to impact on how we deliver our services, as well as the skills required of our staff to achieve this. HS2 and the developments which exist as part of it, new buildings, etc. will present longer term risks to our communities, which will need to form part of our CRMP now and into the future.

### **CRMP Proposal 3:**

- 3.48 *The future impact of these emerging risks on the CRMP will be incorporated in the three-year rolling strategy. This will include how Prevention, Protection and Response Services may need to change to enable flexibility in the delivery of our services.*
- 3.49 **Enhanced Community Risk Reduction** - WMFS data shows a link between health status of an individual and Fire & Rescue related risks such as fire. This is supported by strong correlations between health conditions such as mental illness, physical disability or mobility issues, with both the increased risk of fire and severity of such incidents on the individual in relation to injuries. These are set out in the Marmot principles.
- 3.50 WMFS has a targeted person-centred approach to its prevention interventions with Safe and Well activity and Complex Needs Officers being a core delivery mechanism for this. Our Strategy uses the principle of 'upstream activity', identifying and tackling the causes of the causes of preventable death and related injury, underpins our prevention activity.

- 3.51 Protection interventions also form part of the ‘up stream’ approach to the delivery of services to our communities. The outcomes of Grenfell are forecasted to place greater demand on the service through the development of control measures to manage the risks of fires in tall buildings. The wider capacity and capability of our workforce in delivering against these emerging demands will be instrumental in managing risk in an integrated way.
- 3.52 As causes as well as consequences of incidents begin to change, WMFS will need an increased focus through the capability and capacity of the workforce, to identify and understand the causes of the causes. This is the best way of enabling the development and implementation of targeted prevention and protection interventions, adapting to the changing needs of our communities, delivered in an integrated way through the workforce.
- 3.53 Firefighters are employed to reduce the likelihood of a risk occurring and/or mitigate it 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.
- 3.54 Through being clearer about this prevention and protection activity and how it supports the delivery of the CRMP, WMFS can build the understanding and skills in the workforce through its approach to organisational development, to deliver these services.
- 3.55 Building prevention and protection capability and capacity across our operational workforce provides:
- an increased understanding of the causes of incidents when they do occur, enabling a greater understanding of the risk environment.
  - capacity in our operating model to deliver services in a more efficient and effective way.
  - an up-stream approach which focuses on addressing the causes of the causes. Prevention and Protection interventions provide effective controls to a risk occurring and can therefore contribute directly to reducing the fire or other related risks which WMFS would have to attend in a response capacity. This activity contributes to the protection of resources to respond to high risk and high impact risks when they occur.
- 3.56 Our most recent consultation outcomes have highlighted that amongst the 10.6k respondents, 75% agreed that West Midlands

Fire Service should be tackling the wider issues that make people more vulnerable to fire and other risks.

- 3.57 Respondents considered WMFS to be well placed to engage in this work and commended us for our willingness to tackle the wider social issues. Further encouraging WMFS to work with other public services to tackle these issues and address vulnerability.
- 3.58 Whether or not the workforce had the required skills to deliver this work was a common theme for response. Primarily concerns were around government funding and whether WMFS had the capacity to deliver this effectively whilst maintaining or key services in the light of government cuts.

#### **CRMP Proposal 4:**

- 3.59 *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 intervention, protection and response activity enhancing the 'up stream' approach to fire fighting.*
- 3.60 **Digital Transformation.** Digital transformation is a key supporting priority for the delivery of the Strategy and more recently through establishing enabling outcomes for WMFS has achieved a greater level of understanding across middle management.
- 3.61 Digital is underpinned by our use, access to and analysis of data. WMFS uses digital tools in several ways already to manage risk to our communities, through the allocation of the most appropriate resources, to movement of resources to risk, the delivery of critical prevention and protection interventions at a time where COVID makes it more difficult to provide these services in person.
- 3.62 Digital as a mindset is far more developed across the workforce, as we have very quickly moved to working from home as a main mode of delivery of support services.
- 3.63 The CRMP consultation undertaken in 2020 has highlighted that most respondents, 84%, agreed that the use of technology and digital solutions would complement face-to-face engagement and delivery of Safe and Wells.
- 3.64 Digital will continue to transform the way in which WMFS operates to enable the most effective delivery of services to our communities in a targeted way. WMFSs digital approach will also

focus on how. through the digital provision of services, we enable our communities to learn and understand more about the risks they face and how these can be prevented.

### **CRMP Proposal 5:**

- 3.65 *The Service will continue to research, understand, implement a range of opportunities to digitally enable its workforce and communities to transform the delivery of services to our communities.*
- 3.66 The proposals in this report highlight several areas of development and change within the West Midlands CRMP. As stated earlier in the report, the detail of these proposals need to be further developed and understood to enable implementation within the three year rolling Strategy. An efficient and agile approach to the management of resources to risk will be a critical factor for consideration.
- 3.67 It should also be noted that the detail in this report and the recommended proposals are from a community risk perspective. There are a number of variables that have been considered in the preparation of these proposals and some additional of which the detail is currently unknown. As these variables continue to change, they may vary the development and implementation of the proposals.
- 3.68 It is anticipated that the proposals detailed in this section will be developed for presentation into Fire Authority in Autumn 2021 as options for implementation, which provide for more efficient and effective delivery of community outcomes within a balanced budget.

## **4. VISION STATEMENT**

- 4.1 The evidence based CRMP and CRMP proposals set out in this report fully support the continued focus of the recommended Authority strategic direction. This is set out in the current Authority vision of:

‘Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier’.

- 4.2 It is recommended that this vision statement is reaffirmed in recognition of the risk that continues to exist and increase across the West Midlands and our ability as a Fire and Rescue Authority to seek to prevent and mitigate these risks through our statutory

functions of Prevention Protection and Response.

## 5. **THREE YEAR ROLLING STRATEGY 2021-24 AND ANNUAL PLAN**

### **Strategic Planning Considerations**

- 5.1 As highlighted so far in this report the CRMP outcomes provide an evidence-based assessment of the risks that exist in the community.
- 5.2 To enable effective planning for the coming one year (annual plan) a range of tools have been used to understand how internal and external factors will influence the CRMP risks and the future delivery of Services. An ongoing STEEPLE assessment has informed the development of the Strategy and influenced the wider CRMP proposals.
- 5.3 An overview of these key planning considerations is set out below:

### **Government expectations and Statutory Requirements**

- 5.5 At a government level the planning environment currently presents several changes, which have contributed to the proposed objectives and priorities set out in paragraphs 5.37-5.38 over the rolling three-year period.
- 5.6 The Fire Minister has clearly set intentions to focus on the professionalism, people, performance, governance and collaboration of Fire and Rescue Services. This has created an expectation that whilst further efficiencies may need to be achieved, these should be driven through the diversification of services and increasing value for money.
- 5.7 The Home Office 'Fire Reform Implementation Plan' will define the role of Fire and Rescue Services for the future, aligned to the delivery of a CRMP and will provide direction for a number of recommendations identified in the HMICFRS State of Fire report 2019.
- 5.8 Changing legislation in response to independent reviews such as Kerslake and Hackett are already creating a strong focus on the direction of risk-based protection services and the competencies of the workforce to meet these new and emerging expectations. These changes stretch across prevention, protection and

response services and will be supported by further embedding the basis of our 'integrated' Service Delivery Model.

- 5.9 The HMICFRS State of Fire Report 2019, by Sir Tom Windsor, highlights five areas for change across the sector which align to these changing expectations of the fire sector. To support wider transformation in the delivery of services across the fire sector, these have been considered through the National Fire Chiefs Council and are contained in focused objectives via the NFCC 'Fit for Future' programme.
- 5.10 The independent HMICFRS led inspection programme will assure the delivery of services and any changes to these driven by government and legislative changes. Aligned to government expectations, there is a keen focus on evidencing the efficiency and effectiveness of prevention, protection and response services as well as understanding how well the workforce is looked after.
- 5.11 The most recent HMICFRS (COVID) assessment of WMFS praised how it has evolved its ways of working and has recommended that it 'should determine how it will adopt, for the longer term, the new and innovative ways of working introduced during the pandemic, to secure lasting improvements'. (COVID Inspection letter paragraph 6)

### **Value for Money**

- 5.12 Whilst the Authority's government funding for 2021-22 provides for a level of stability, there is anticipated to be further impacts during the year of reduced council tax and business rate collection levels due to the impacts of COVID.
- 5.13 Beyond this, there is recognition of the need to plan for further funding reductions across years 2022-24 as part of the three-year rolling Strategy and scenarios of 2, 5 and 10% reductions will be considered against this.
- 5.14 Over the coming 12 months (2021-22) the Authority's priorities will be achieved financially by utilising a flexible approach to fleet management, delegated to the Chief Fire Officer, ensuring the right resources are available to attend high risk incidents in high-risk areas within 5 minutes. This approach has been supported through the CRMP consultation undertaken in October-December 2020, with 93% of respondents agreeing that the Service should continue to adopt flexible approaches to managing our resources.

Many responses cited the need to be flexible to adapt to the changing demands on the service whilst embracing new technologies. There was also recognition of funding cuts which needed to be addressed.

- 5.15 Through the development of CRMP proposals, with more detailed options for delivery in 2022 onwards, WMFS will seek to meet these anticipated funding reductions through focusing on how we are able to re-configure and transform our use of resources and assets in more efficient and effective ways. Focusing on maintaining and enhancing our Service Delivery Model through ensuring public safety, delivering this within a balanced budget.

## **Digital**

- 5.16 Digital is a strategic layer within the three-year rolling Strategy and an enabler to the delivery of one year priorities.
- 5.17 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.
- 5.18 Our communities already benefit from new technologies such as the Dynamic Cover Tool which allows us to ensure our resources are strategically placed to achieve our high risk attendance standard. More recently, our advancement of Microsoft 365 has supported our workforce to work from home throughout the COVID pandemic, where their role allows, ensuring the safety of our staff and the ability to operate effectively as an emergency service.
- 5.19 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. There is recognition from responses that those most vulnerable may not have access to the technology required, and/or the skills to engage with it. Therefore, digital innovation would allow WMFS to target the skills of its workforce to enable face to face engagement to gain a full picture of an individual's vulnerability.
- 5.20 Our three-year rolling Strategy will continue to focus on understanding how data and technology can improve our performance, efficiency and services to the community. A critical part to this is enabling our workforce to understand why, that they



have skills and work together to make changes by being part of the journey.

## **People**

- 5.21 The delivery of the three year rolling Strategy centres around ensuring the Service's workforce have the opportunity to develop the right competences, skills and behaviours, to ensure we are fit for the future and continue to provide the most effective and efficient delivery of services in an ever changing environment.
- 5.22 To enable the delivery of prevention, protection and response priorities the competencies of a professional fire fighter are set out through the Competency Risk Assessment, which focuses on developing operational competencies to meet current and future expectations. This ensures the delivery of assertive, effective and safe services to communities and ones which make the biggest difference for the most impact.
- 5.23 The WMFS Organisational Development Strategy is centred around enabling our workforce to understand how, in whichever role, they contribute to making West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier. The way in which we work together both internally and externally, to provide these services is underpinned by our core values and behavioural framework. From staff on the front line to those providing critical support services which enable the provision of services to our communities, the Authority's three-year strategy will be supported to ensure we are leading with a purpose, for a purpose.
- 5.24 Defining the role of a Fire fighter is a key focus for the government and Home Office. This will become clearer over coming months, as expectations around the role of Fire Services and expected reform are delivered.

## **Community Risk Based Services**

- 5.25 Aligned to the NFCC CRMP scope of a Fire Service, nationally, the role of a fire fighter is to manage and or mitigate risk to life or property. This is delivered through the services of prevention, protection and response.
- 5.26 The WMFS CRMP outcomes set out earlier in this report have highlighted increasing high-risk incidents and we can reasonably foresee that this trend will continue. The Service Delivery Model is based on having the right resources in place to ensure that high

risk category 1 incidents are responded to in the most efficient and effective way, thereby aiming to mitigate the impact on loss to life and property.

- 5.27 The three-year objectives and one-year priorities set out in this report will seek to consider alternative approaches to responding to medium and low risk incidents, which will enable further protection of the resources needed to respond to high risk category 1 incidents.
- 5.28 The influence of the outcomes of independent and sector led reviews and new legislation as cited earlier in this report, will have a significant impact on our one-year priorities and overall three year strategy. There is a keen focus to ensure our people, processes and systems are well placed to manage this changing environment, as well as ensure through our Risk Based Inspection Programme that we continue to support and advise business owners and where needed, enforce legislation to ensure the safety and prosperity of our communities.
- 5.30 Prevention priorities will focus on maintaining and enhancing the delivery of targeted interventions such as safe and wells, safe and strong and road safety education. The delivery of these interventions using a variety of methods to reach and target different audiences will be important, not least because of the impact COVID has had and continues to have, on the ability for face-to-face engagement with our communities.
- 5.31 The impact of COVID on our communities over the next 12 months, will continue to exacerbate those factors that make individuals, communities, and businesses more vulnerable to fire and other emergency incidents.
- 5.32 The continuation and widening of collaborative partnerships will support the enhancement of our prevention and protection interventions. The evidence that has supported these interventions undertaken over several years has clearly demonstrated the close link between health and social inequalities to the vulnerability to fire. This work is aligned to the Marmot principles which the Service has been awarded 'Marmot Status' by Professor Marmot in recognition of those interventions.
- 5.33 The support that we have given to wider local and national health priorities throughout the COVID pandemic, has created an increased understanding of the role that the Service can/does provide through an up-stream approach to firefighting, in targeting

those most vulnerable. Collaborating on what services are provided, how and who to, will enhance the ability for the Service to target individuals and communities more effectively, as well as those that have been harder to reach. This will deliver enhance the Service's ability to deliver our vision of a Safer, Stronger and Healthier community

- 5.34 A key influencing factor to the way in which our prevention, protection and response interventions are delivered is the changing risk in the community caused by environmental, physical, social and human behavioural factors. The review of the survivability study and its key components will provide a renewed evidence base to how the aforementioned factors and any new or emerging factors, impact on the risk of fire and other emergency incidents in our communities and those most vulnerable. Thereby helping WMFS to determine where change may be needed to ensure targeting of risk in the most effective way.
- 5.35 This direction for our Strategy is supported through the CRMP consultation outcomes which tell us that most respondents (75%), believe the Service should be tackling the wider risk related issues that make people more vulnerable to fire and other risks.
- 5.36 Feedback from respondents identified that it was thought WMFS are well placed to engage in this work and commended us for our willingness to tackle the wider social issues.

### **Three Year Rolling Strategy - Strategic Objectives**

- 5.37 To provide greater clarity in the Strategic intentions of our three year rolling Strategy, the SET have considered the outcomes of the CRMP, the STEEPLE and strategic planning considerations and have refreshed the one year priorities in the annual plan, as well as setting broad Strategic objectives for the three year Strategy. The proposed objectives are set out below.

**Response:** Dealing excellently with incidents

**Prevention:** Delivering interventions which support safer and healthier communities

**Protection:** Protecting life and property to make businesses stronger and communities safer

### **One-year Strategic Priorities**

- 5.38 The following proposed priorities set out in more detail how the three-year objectives will be worked towards and achieved during 2021-22.

## **Response**

- We will aim to get the right resources to incidents as quickly as possible, and with five minutes in high-risk areas, to save life, reduce harm and protect homes and businesses.
- We will, through our highly trained firefighters, deliver an assertive, effective and safe response to all incidents to make the biggest difference for our communities.
- We will lead rescue operations and work collaboratively with partners to deliver an effective response.
- We will deliver a local, national, and international response to major incidents, new risks and humanitarian situations, through our firefighters and specialist teams.

## **Prevention**

- We will, work with our partners to, reduce fire-related risks faced by the most vulnerable in our communities.
- We will improve the safety, health and well-being of the most vulnerable people in our communities, through targeted prevention activities directly linked to vulnerability from fire.
- We will educate to prevent arson-related incidents, supporting safer and stronger communities through our partnership working.
- We will reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads through education and prevention, working with strategic partners.
- We will work in partnership to support and protect the most vulnerable in our communities throughout the COVID pandemic and beyond.

## **Protection**

- We will protect life and property by targeting high-risk buildings and vulnerable businesses through an advice, compliance and enforcement approach to fire safety legislation, with a focus on residential tall buildings.
- We will continuously improve our community safety outcomes by implementing the learning from independent and sector-led reviews.
- We will improve community safety through innovative and smarter approaches, using digital technology to enhance the delivery of protection activities.
- We will assist in the restoration of economic growth through prevention, education and support to businesses, including collaboration with other regulators and partner agencies.

- We will develop and adopt innovative approaches to reduce disruption to businesses, communities and West Midlands Fire Service caused by unwanted fire signals.

## 6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The matters contained in this report will not lead to and do not relate to a policy change.

## 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 There are no direct financial implications to the approval of recommendations in this report.

## 9. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no environmental implications.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Our Plan 2020-23

IRMP 2021-23

CRMP Proposals, SET Report, 6 January 2021

CRMP Consultation Outcomes SET Report 13 January 2021

HMICFRS COVID 19 Inspection Letter 22.01.21

HMICFRS Sir Tom Windsor State of Fire report 2019

NFCC Fit for Future recommendations 2020

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