

County Council

8 December 2015

Update on Collaborative Working with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

Recommendation

That Council note the progress to date.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In December 2014 the Fire Authorities of both Warwickshire and Hereford and Worcester considered an Options Appraisal which contained five collaborative options for future working. After full consideration both Authorities agreed to progress with an Operational Collaboration and to also explore greater collaboration working towards a 'Strategic Alliance Light' by late 2015.

2.0 Update on Progress

- 2.1 The implementation of an Operational Collaboration commenced in March 2015 and is making progress. Key activity to date has incorporated the following areas of both Fire and Rescue Services:

- Operational Support
- Training
- Fire Protection & Prevention
- Technical Services
- Non-operational fire support

- 2.2 As a result of the Operational Collaboration between the two Fire and Rescue Services further opportunities that support more sustainable, viable and resilient service delivery and greater long term financial efficiency have now been identified and mirror a number of wider developments across emergency services nationally.

- 2.3 These have been progressively discussed at the Joint Project Board which is attended by cross party members of both Fire Authorities as well as relevant officers. Cross Party members have indicated strong support for further proposals to be brought forward in the new year that will potentially move the present relationship to one of a 'Strategic Alliance Light' in 2016.

- 2.4 The Joint Project Board considered the work to date at its last meeting on 19th November 2015. In doing so it also took account of wider recent national developments such as the recent Government consultation on “Enabling Closer Working between the Emergency Services” as well as the potential future role of Police and Crime Commissioners. A further meeting is intended in February 2016 where more detail will be provided on opportunities and implications. Attention is being especially paid to the opportunities to harmonise Fire and Rescue activity in a range of operational support areas across the two services where this can enhance effectiveness and resilience and potentially reduce costs.
- 2.5 A further report will be provided to the County Council in 2016 detailing progress and proposals.

Background Papers

1. Project Arrow Options Appraisal - Warwickshire County Council 9th December 2014.

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