

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/17/19
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY (ORDINARY MEETING)
DATE OF MEETING	12 JUNE 2017
SUBJECT OF REPORT	EMERGENCY SERVICES COLLABORATION
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the work being undertaken on emergency services collaboration, as outlined in this report, be noted and that continued political and professional support be given to making even greater progress in terms of collaboration in the months and years ahead.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This report updates the Fire Authority on Emergency Services Collaboration within the South West Region.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Nil.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	The contents of this report are considered compatible with existing equalities and human rights legislation.
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Nil.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Fire Authority Members may be aware of the work that the Service has been leading in the last year with respect to collaboration between Emergency Services. However, given the number of new Fire Authority members, it is felt timely to recap on achievements to date but also articulate a future that will increasingly be characterised by closer working across all public services and Emergency Services in particular.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In a desire to improve working arrangements between the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (“the Service”) and the other emergency services worked with (namely Devon & Cornwall Police, Avon & Somerset Police and the South West Ambulance Service Foundation Trust [SWAST]), the Chief Fire Officer called a meeting of Chief Officers to explore how working arrangements might be improved, with a specific focus on improving public safety and also reducing duplication (and costs). During these discussions, it was suggested that other emergency services be invited to participate and this naturally formed into a regional grouping across the South West.
- 2.2 Recognising the varied governance arrangements as well as a distinct lack of co-terminus borders which are present within the Region (including three stand-alone fire and rescue authority’s; two County Councils; five Police and Crime Commissioners and a Foundation Trust) it was vitally important that political oversight, leadership and support for this work be explored.
- 2.2 As such, an Emergency Service Forum was established. This brings together the five Police and Crime Commissioners for the region, three fire and rescue authority chairs, two County Council portfolio holders with responsibility for fire and the Chairman of SWAST. In addition, the Regional Director of Public Health and an NHS representative also attend. This Authority’s Chair currently chairs this Forum and Chief Officers from each of the 11 Emergency Services also attend. The Forum receives an update on the work being undertaken and sets the strategic direction and pace for this work. The Forum meets twice a year.
- 2.3 The Forum is supported by a South West Emergency Service Collaboration Programme Board which delivers the strategic intent through a number of work streams (outlined in more detail below). The Chief Fire Officer chairs this Programme Board and Chief Officers from each of the 11 Emergency Services also attend. In turn, the Programme Board is supported by an Officers Working Group. The Programme Board meets monthly/every six weeks.
- 2.4 Whilst this work started before the recent duty to collaborate was enacted under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, it nonetheless fully supports this new duty. This is significant given that the Minister for Policing and Fire has been clear that he would expect to assess, via Her Majesty Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) inspections, the extent to which collaboration is being implemented at a local level. Discussions with Police colleagues has confirmed that HMIC is aware of the collaboration work being undertaken in the South West and that this is being captured in the current round of inspections.
- 2.5 This Authority’s Chair and the Chief Fire Officer have already briefed the Minister for Policing and Fire on the work being undertaken, with Emergency Service Forum minutes being sent to the Minister, for information, following each meeting. In addition, the Chief Fire Officer has also briefed the lead Police and Crime Commissioner for Collaboration (Association of Police and Crime Commissioners) on progress.

3. CURRENT POSITION

3.1 The Programme Board has agreed the following seven workstreams with :

- Strategic Planning and Programme Governance – Chief Fire Officer Lee Howell (DSFRS)
- Demand Management – Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Watson (Avon and Somerset Police)
- Community Risk – Professor Debra Laphorne (Public Health England) and Chief Operating Officer Neil Le Chevalier (South West Ambulance Service Foundation Trust)
- Early Intervention / Prevention – Assistant Chief Fire Officer Simon Shilton (Avon Fire and Rescue Service)
- Community Resilience - Assistant Chief Constable Andy Boulting (Devon and Cornwall Police)
- Culture and Leadership - Assistant Chief Constable Kier Prichard (Wiltshire Police)
- Communication/ engagement - Assistant Chief Constable Mark Cooper (Dorset Police).

3.2 The initial focus has been to deliver specific projects so that organisations get used to working with partners, building trust and confidence as well as testing pressure points in decision making processes and risk appetite. This has created strong buy-in from all organisations at all levels and improved knowledge, confidence and willingness to progress further.

3.3 Some tangible improvements to public safety have already been secured with costs to both Police and Ambulance Services reduced. A particularly successful initiative in this respect is the “collapsed behind closed doors/concerns for welfare” initiative which now sees fire and rescue resources mobilised in these cases.

3.4 Other tactical/operational examples include:

- arson reduction (seconded Devon and Cornwall Sergeant embedded within DSFRS);
- improved data sharing;
- shared staff support arrangements;
- joint road safety initiatives;
- joint Community Safety and Safeguarding approaches;
- “Safe & Well” visits to the homes of vulnerable people;
- fire station access;
- shared use of Drones;
- Special operations & joint training including in a counter-terrorism response capacity.

3.5 Other areas being explored include:

- Development of the successful 999 Academies;
- Fire/Police cadets (possibly extending to become 999 cadets);
- possible expansion of Police and Fire Community Support Officers;
- Missing Persons search;
- Highways disruption work;
- Body retrieval.

4. MOVING FORWARDS

4.1 Now improved working practices are in place, the existing regional collaboration can start to become more strategic and ambitious in its approach. For example, development of a shared community risk index, informed by public health as well as National Health risk profiles, is in train.

4.2 This will ensure that not only are emergency services directing resources to areas needed most but will also ensure that demand can be reduced by early intervention and support (an example being improved mental health, which will reduce demand on police and ambulance resources in particular).

4.3 This work will be informed by predictive analytics and intelligent use of data. At present, each organisation focuses effort and attention on the areas that they believe to be important but there is a risk that this silo-type approach will not maximise the use resources. For example, a vulnerable adult might receive separate visits from the fire and rescue service (home safety check), the police (crime prevention visit), the local authority (social care and health support) and in addition, Public Health England may be commissioning others to provide a discrete service to the vulnerable adult.

4.4 Not only is this frustrating for the individual receiving multiple visits, it is also undoubtedly a less efficient way of working. It is hoped that, through the work already in train, a wider range of support through fewer visits can be secured, delivered by appropriately trained staff. A focus on wider safety, threat harm and vulnerability will therefore characterise the prevention work moving forward.

4.5 Regional police collaboration activity will be captured and factored in to ensure the Emergency Service Forum work compliments and does not duplicate effort. It will also be important that learning from others is captured and shared.

4.6 Future endeavours will ensure that other organisations are aware of the benefits of this collaborative programme and that key stakeholders (including the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the Local Government Association, senior civil servants and Ministers) are kept informed of progress.

4.7 Ultimately, this work will improve public safety and reduce costs by better collaborative working. Fire Authority members are therefore invited to note the report and continue to support the programme.

LEE HOWELL
Chief Fire Officer