

Safest People, Safest Places

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

25 JULY 2017

EMERGENCY SERVICE COLLABORATION

REPORT OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide members with an update on progress with collaboration between the Service (CDDFRS) and some of the other emergency services in the North East: Durham Constabulary (DC); Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (T&WFRS); Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS); and the North East Ambulance Service.

BACKGROUND

Collaboration with the Police

2. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 places a statutory duty on the emergency services to collaborate, where the collaboration is viewed to be in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness or where it will improve public safety. CDDFRS and DC have a successful track record of collaborating together operationally which has resulted in the joint fire / police station at Newton Aycliffe, the quad station at Barnard Castle, shared operational command training at the training centre at Bowburn and the introduction of community safety tri-responders in Stanhope.
3. In December 2015 the Fire Authority approved a statement of intent to take forward formal collaboration arrangements between CDDFRS and DC. The arrangements have delivered some tangible benefits for both organisations. The Durham Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner (PCVC), Ron Hogg wrote to the Chair on 30 June 2017 congratulating him on his appointment and explaining how he would like to take forward the collaboration opportunities between both organisations. The PCVC also outlined that he had no desire to take forward any changes to the governance arrangements for the fire and rescue service which are available to him under the Policing and Crime Act 2017. A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix A.
4. Unfortunately the letter also explained that the PCVC has decided not to progress with the planned sharing of High Handenhold Fire Station. This proposal formed part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) consultation and was approved by the Fire Authority in March 2017. Although disappointing this change of position will not impact on the positive relationships between the two organisations and the desire to drive forward further collaboration opportunities.

Collaboration with other Fire and Rescue Services

5. Despite the focus of the Policing and Crime Act, collaboration between the emergency services is wider than just between the fire and rescue service and police. Discussions between CDDFRS, T&WFRS and NFRS in relation to collaboration have led to a draft collaboration agreement being developed between the three organisations. The agreement at this stage only covers the three fire and rescue services who cover the same geographical area of Durham Constabulary and Northumbria Police (NP). The arrangement between CDDFRS and DC is replicated between T&WFRS, NFRS and NP and there may well be wider opportunities for emergency service collaboration between the three fire and rescue services and the two police forces. The identified benefits for the collaboration are:
 - Reduced costs through removal of duplication;
 - Shared operational and organisational learning;
 - Better outcomes for the communities who use our services;
 - Increased resilience.
6. To acknowledge the importance of collaborative working and to ensure that the appropriate resources are allocated to progress opportunities, a draft formal Collaboration Agreement - Statement of Intent has been produced which details the commitment of the three organisations to work together.
7. To ensure the correct level of resource is allocated to explore collaboration opportunities and implement them where appropriate, it is intended that a work programme will be established to identify key projects for collaboration which will include areas such as:
 - Fire Investigation;
 - Health, Fitness and Wellbeing;
 - Water and hydrant management;
 - Workforce Development including:
 - Recruitment;
 - Talent management and succession planning;
 - Cross service secondments.
8. Neither of the collaboration agreements restrict CDDFRS, or any of the signatories entering into collaboration agreements with other organisations.

Collaboration with the Ambulance Service

9. Although no formal collaboration agreement is in place CDDFRS is involved in collaborative work with the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS). NEAS have ambulances located at Darlington Fire Station and the new quad station at Barnard Castle. During the day they locate an ambulance at Middleton at Teesdale fire station and various other opportunities to enhance estates collaboration have been discussed.
10. The provision of Emergency Medical Response (EMR) is arguably the greatest example of collaboration that CDDFRS is involved in with other emergency services. The EMR trial has been a great success and there is no doubt it has saved lives in our community. Discussions with NEAS are ongoing in relation to the opportunities to mainstream the EMR provision and look for other operational opportunities for collaboration.

NEXT STEPS

11. Collaboration has been a strategic objective for the Authority for a number of years and has delivered tangible benefits for the Service. Given the Authority has a statutory duty to collaborate with the emergency services under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 further collaboration opportunities will be explored to see if they can deliver further benefits.
12. Providing T&WFRS and NFRS are supportive of signing the collaboration agreement then progress will be made to take forward the initial work programme outlined in paragraph 7, over the summer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The authority is recommended to:
 - (a) **note** the letter from the PCVC, attached at Appendix A;
 - (b) **note** the decision from the PCVC not to progress the planned sharing of High Handenhold fire station;
 - (c) **note** the draft Collaboration Agreement between the Service, T&WFRS and NFRS.

Stuart Errington, Chief Fire Officer, 0191 375 5553