

MEETING: 13 JULY 2020

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON COLLABORATION ANNUAL REPORT

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY), FINANCE DIRECTOR AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a progress update on the Services' collaborative activities from July 2019 to June 2020, including those in to support the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) from March 2020.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Service has a successful track record of collaborating, including co-location at a number of sites and improved operational and preventative activities. The introduction of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, further enhanced the democratic accountability of Fire and Rescue Services (FRS') and Police Forces to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency services through closer collaboration. The following blue light partners form a formalised collaboration group:

- Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS);
- Northumbria Police (NP);
- The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria (OPCC);
- The North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS).

- 2.2** In addition, to the above, the Service continues in Fire-Fire collaboration with County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS); and NFRS. This partnership has undertaken collaboration including; fire investigation, health and wellbeing, water and hydrant management, Emergency Services Network (ESN) implementation, procurement, workforce development including recruitment, talent management, succession planning and cross service secondments.

- 2.3** The partnerships above set out to develop opportunities aligned to the following objectives:

- **Provide improved outcomes** - maintaining or improving the services to local people and communities;
- **Reduce demand** - contributing towards strategic objectives of decreasing risk in communities by reducing demand on services;
- **Deliver better value for money** - producing quantifiable efficiencies

- 2.4** The onset of COVID-19 has strengthened existing partnerships through national and local associations. The Services' response has also initiated interactions with new partners, increasing engagement with the most vulnerable in our community.

3 GOVERNANCE

- 3.1** In ensuring a shared vision for blue light collaboration, multi-agency partners signed a Collaboration Agreement Statement of Intent in June 2016, [Min 20/2017 refers]. Following NEAS' decision to formally join the partnership, an updated Statement of Intent was signed in March 2019, and provided to Members in July 2019 [Min 19/2019 refers]. Formalised governance arrangements are established through the Collaboration Strategy Group and Delivery Group. Details of key collaborative business activities are set out in section 4 of this report.
- 3.2** Fire-Fire collaboration arrangements for the three FRS' has strategic oversight by respective FRS' Principal Officers and supported by the Collaboration Agreement Statement of Intent; provided to Members in July 2019 [Min 19/2019 refers]. Collaboration is being explored across all areas the Services, with business cases and work programmes developed where opportunities are identified. The FRS' have agreed to review progress under this agreement every six months.
- 3.3** To support the rapid developments associated with COVID-19 the Service adopted a command and control structure, detailed in Appendix A. Below highlights the governance arrangements the Service adhered to nationally, regionally and locally to support business continuity arrangements and partner organisations.

3.4 COVID-19 COLLABORATION OVERVIEW

- 3.4.1** At a strategic level the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) had daily contact with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Home Office, including daily briefings and weekly meetings; Fire Authority Members received weekly briefings to keep them apprised of the Services' plans and preparations in response to the pandemic.
- 3.4.2** As part of the NFCC, the Service reported daily to the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) across a series of questions about FRS resilience, staff absence and other related matters, which were consolidated into a single report from the UK Fire Sector and submitted to the Home Office. The Service contributed to the NFCC with policy and procedures relating to staff degradation planning and reengagement of retired staff in support of operational response; developing CPR and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) guidance for Firefighters, flexible crewing arrangements, together with risk assessments and schemes of work enabling risk critical training to be undertaken.
- 3.4.3** The NFCC, National Employers and Fire Brigade Union (FBU) devised a tripartite agreement, which temporarily agreed activities beyond the normal role of a Firefighter, where support could be provided to colleagues in the NHS and Local Authorities. This unprecedented approach enabled the Service to support communities more broadly, whilst continuing to provide statutory emergency services.
- 3.4.4** At a local level, in line with procedures for major incidents, a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) was established and, led by the Chief Executive of North Tyneside Council (NTC). The SCG comprised of members from emergency services, health services, Local Authorities and local government across the Northumbria area, liaising on a daily basis to discuss multi-agency planning.

- 3.4.5** Supporting the SCG, a Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) was established to deal with the day to day multi-agency tasks, managing local impacts through a number of themed sub groups to progress priority work areas. The Service deployed resource to lead the Excess Deaths Group and to support the Multi Agency Information Cell.
- 3.4.6** Members will be aware that the Nightingale Hospital North East opened in April 2020, with the conversion of the existing building into a temporary hospital. Fire Safety staff worked with designers, contractors and clinical governors to address fire safety measures, including fire alarms, improving compartmentation, and internal communications system, whilst staff from Operations and Service Delivery liaised to minimise the risk to crews during any emergency response.
- 3.4.7** The Service made a significant contribution in driving actions across the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF), including establishing a Logistics Cell at Service Headquarters (SHQ) to triage requirements for the Service and other agencies.
- 3.4.8** The Logistics Cell registered 207 volunteers, both existing and retired staff to support the coordination and deliveries of medical PPE, food parcels, prescriptions, delivery of training to partners, and provision of support to local hospital mortuaries. This work made a huge contribution to frontline staff, local communities and the most vulnerable in society, including;
- The establishment of a distribution hub at Newcastle Central Fire Station, subsequently re-located to West Denton Community Fire Station.
 - Distribution of PPE on behalf of the LRF to Local Authority and independent health and social care homes and funeral directors; together with medical PPE delivery to hospitals across the North East and Cumbria.
 - The first two PPE consignments resulted in 509 unit allocations, delivered to 304 addresses. Subsequent allocations were delivered by volunteers to each Local Authority, with a small reserve of PPE held for urgent requests.
 - Support to South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust mortuaries.
 - By the end of May 2020, 225 assignments, over 686 hours undertaken by the Service to support the COVID-19 response.
 - Support to several charities and community organisations, helping the most vulnerable, including Changing Lives, Pallion Action Group, the Salvation Army; delivering food parcels, action packs for children, and prescriptions to people who are shielding; whilst taking the opportunity to provide fire safety advice.

4 PROGRESS UPDATE

Further to the report tabled to Members in July 2019 [Min 19/2019 refers], the following provides an update of the collaborative activities which have taken place over the past 12 months from July 2019 to June 2020:

4.1 Sharing of Knowledge and Information

- 4.1.1** The NFCC have established a Scientific Advisory Cell utilising the Public Health and Scientific team at West Midlands FRS. The Cell will report into the NFCC Operations Coordination Committee (OCC) which is chaired by CFO Lowther and Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Heath is the NFCC representative for that group. A key activity of the Cell is to consider Public Health England, wider Government and health advice and how this is implemented within UK FRS' to ensure safety is prioritised whilst maintaining emergency services.
- 4.1.2** The Service is an integral member of the NFCC's Water Safety Practitioners Board, alongside the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS), Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and other FRS'. The Service actively promotes water safety campaigns including 'Be Water Aware', 'Don't Drink and Drown' and the throw bag programme.
- 4.1.3** In addition, working with the above partners and road safety charities StayWise developing a resource knowledge library for fire, water and road safety to deliver consistent safety messages to schools and the wider public. Due to school closures and COVID-19 restrictions, the programme developed online access to resources.
- 4.1.4** Service staff are supporting Sunderland City Council and Newcastle City Council in risk assessments of open water sites in their localities, by reviewing Personal Rescue Equipment (PRE). Following the deployment of the North East's first throw board at Fatfield, Sunderland in April 2018, a further two throw boards have been installed at Mount Pleasant Lake and Pattinson South Pond, Washington.
- 4.1.5** In 2019, the OPCC received Home Office funding to establish a Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), to conduct research into the causes of violent crime and identify appropriate interventions. To support this work the VRU developed a data led insight report which the Service provided incident and prevention activity data to inform this profile. Other data from partners includes medical data from GPs and Accident and Emergency admissions, housing and school exclusion and other forms of data from public and voluntary organisations. This work will support a strategic needs assessment for partners to inform their ways of working, to target specific interventions.
- 4.1.6** Health and Safety (H&S) collaboration continues with the regional emergency services H&S Collaboration Group (HSCG) with NP, CDDFRS, NEAS, NFRS, Durham Constabulary and Cleveland Police. The Service have shared a number of resources with the group including manual handling and asbestos training packages and H&S related procedures. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Service devised a number of risk assessments, hygiene and decontamination procedures for premises and vehicles, all documents were shared with the HSCG and nationally with the NFCC.
- 4.1.7** In conjunction with the Urban Observatory at the School of Engineering, Newcastle University, weather stations have been installed at several of our sites. This partnership has enabled accurate weather data to analyse in conjunction with incident data. Prior to this, the nearest Met Office weather station was located in County Durham. Our partnership approach has been shared with other FRS'.

4.2 Service Delivery, including; Prevention, Response and Demand Reduction

- 4.2.1** Working with NFRS' Fire Investigation Officers (FIOs) and NP, the Service undertakes a joint approach to establish the cause of suspicious fires, fire fatalities and the detection of crime through the fire investigation (FI) work. Collaborative work continues in support of the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) ISO:17020 FI accreditation will be required by the Forensic Regulator and supported by the Section 22A of the National Police Collaboration Agreement. The Forensic Regulator recently updated their timetable for forensic science practitioners working in fire scene investigation to achieve accreditation by October 2023. Led by NP's Crime Scene Investigator Unit, work progresses to develop joint standard operating procedures as part of a Quality Management System. In support this, the Service are training FIOs to Skills for Justice (SFJ) Award Level 5 and operational Watch/Crew Managers to the SFJ Award Level 2.
- 4.2.2** In July 2019, the Service along with NFRS and CDDFRS launched a 12 month Firestoppers pilot, a deliberate fire reduction strategy supported by Crimestoppers UK, providing an anonymous reporting mechanism for the public. The Service supports this through social media and distribution of information to targeted deliberate fire hot spots. To date this has generated 17 reports, one which led to a successful intervention with the Environment Agency, two passed to NP to support criminal investigations, and one further report to a Local Authority to support an ongoing fly tipping investigation.
- 4.2.3** Anti-social behaviour (ASB) reduction initiatives continue across the five Local Authority areas. An example being the 'Kicks Initiative' which involved NP, NEAS, SCC, Sunderland Football Club, youth groups and fire cadets participating in a football tournament, to build relationships whilst sharing key community safety and ASB messages. The Service also collaborated with NP and NCC during Operation McPhee to target multiple city centre hotspots and engage with individuals associated with deliberate fire setting, public space alcohol and drugs consumption, littering, graffiti, criminal damage, antisocial use of motorcycles and related crime.
- 4.2.4** In 2019, a boxing partnership between the Service and the Sunderland Community Hub (SCH) Boxing Club was established, aimed at reducing ASB in Sunderland whilst developing relationships with young offenders and Firefighters. This was founded to give young people an environment to learn discipline through sport, with the aim to reduce ASB, attacks on Firefighters and deliberate secondary fires. Building on this work the Service participated in the 'Knuckle Down' campaign in partnership with England boxing and NP. Positive community roles models such as Firefighters and Police Officers will educate young people, by highlighting ASB issues and demonstrating that by 'knuckling down' success can be achieved inside and outside the boxing ring. A second boxing hub is to be established at West Denton Community Fire Station following a successful funding bid from the VRU.
- 4.2.5** In addition to youth work, the SCH was awarded funding from the East Community Connectors Programme to deliver exercises classes to older people in Sunderland. The purpose of the sessions are to improve physical and mental wellbeing, with participants identified via home safety checks and partner signposting. Sessions began in February 2020, but were postponed due to COVID-19.

- 4.2.6** The Service continues to collaborate with health and social care partners to deliver falls prevention visits to those aged 65 years and over, whilst raising awareness of frailty and its impact. Service advocates have received training on conducting atrial fibrillation checks, delivered as part of their community engagement work. To support safeguarding, an online training and awareness package has been developed in conjunction with NP, NEAS and NFRS to share safeguarding messages and referral protocol information.
- 4.2.7** Staff regularly participate in engagement activities with the elderly to deliver intelligence led fire safety information sessions supported by Age UK, Hope Group and Essence Sunderland. Staff have also attended an arthritis event at Gateshead Civic Centre supported by Arthritis Support Group and an event in Jarrow with Age UK and the Alzheimer's Society. Princes Trust students volunteered at Orchard Care Home, supporting dementia residents with singalongs, dancing and quizzes.
- 4.2.8** Our 2019 bonfire campaign focussed on reducing deaths and injuries caused by fireworks and our P&E team worked with the Regional Burns Unit at Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) to deliver hard hitting educational sessions to the most at risk young people, focusing on the treatment and long term impact as a result of significant burns. Our Communications Team worked produced a burns case study film, and communicated ASB messaging with NP, highlighting deliberate fires and the potential consequences.

4.3 Estate and Asset Integration

- 4.3.1** The Service continues to explore co-location opportunities to maximise its estate footprint, support collaboration and generate revenue income. The Organisational Management Review impacted the spatial occupancy rates across our sites. The utilisation of our estate by partners supports the sustainability of the buildings and demonstrates a proactive approach to managing our infrastructure and building environment. Over the last three years the Service have seen a substantial increase in the number of partners and agencies who operate or conduct activities from our locations and at present 29 partners operate from our estate (see Appendix B) with lease agreements yielding circa £333,000 per annum.
- 4.3.2** A bunkered fuel pilot commenced in November 2019, with NEAS and NP accessing fuel at Tynemouth Community Fire Station. The purpose was to reduce the time and distance first responders spent refuelling; whilst improving resilience, delivering cost savings, reducing vehicle downtime and excess mileage and improving the management of fuel stock. The pilot is progressing well and up to May 2020, 4,182 litres of fuel has been extracted, however during the pandemic a reduction has been observed as BP offered free fuel to UK emergency services from 21 March to 7 June 2020. All frontline and support vehicles with Service livery were eligible to withdraw fuel.
- 4.3.3** The Service continues to exploring the sale of surplus land and assets, with the land to the rear of Tynemouth Community Fire Station and Fulwell site now complete; and the former Gateshead Service centre sale is nearing completion.
- 4.3.4** A feasibility study has been undertaken for the proposed site for the relocation of Hebburn Community Fire Station, utilising the One Public Estate (OPE) grant funding. Meetings with NP and NEAS have taken place to discuss the scope and quantum of works required for the proposed Hebburn Tri Community Fire Station. Site investigations and land acquisition now continue apace.

4.3.5 Members of the public can now access Community Public Access Defibrillators (CPADs) at five of our community fire stations, Chopwell, Sunderland Central, Farringdon, Gateshead and Byker. In 2018, the Service was approached by the charity Cardioproof Community Interest Company who offered to provide five external cabinets free of charge if the Service purchased the defibrillators. The PFI management company funded the infrastructure works to assist with the installation of CPADs at Byker, Farringdon and Gateshead Community Fire Stations. Engie, our facilities management provider funded the onsite fitting and connection works free of charge. NEAS's Community Development Officer will provide free defibrillator training to station staff and partners in close proximity to the station. The Service now has 37 defibrillators, five CPADs and the remaining 32 are located across response vehicles, SHQ, the Occupational Health Service (OHS), the Brigade Training Centre (BTC), the Technical Services Centre (TSC) and Safetyworks.

4.4 Service Support Functions

4.4.1 Following the Services' successful Firefighter recruitment campaign with CDDFRS and NFRS in July 2018, with 23 wholtime Firefighters appointed, (course 49/18), the talent pool was used to identify candidates for the 50/19 course with 17 commencing Firefighter training on 16 September 2019.

4.4.2 A second joint recruitment campaign took place during autumn 2019, and on 14 April 2020, 24 Firefighter recruits commenced training with the Service (course 51/20). The 2019 campaign has provided a talent pool for an anticipated September 2020 course (52/21), with role related, medical/fitness tests ongoing. In addition to Firefighter recruitment, the Service continues to collaborate with partners for other roles such as joint Area Manager recruitment with CDDFRS in December 2019. The ACO recruitment process in October 2019, partners were involved in the assessment process and invited to participate in a mock SCG. Representatives from NP, NEAS, NCC, the Royal Navy, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the LRF participated.

4.4.3 The Service is working with CDDFRS and Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) on a regional scoping exercise for an OHS provider, to conclude in spring 2021. CDDFRS and CFB both currently buy in OHS from external providers and both are approaching the end of their current contracts. TWFRS currently operates a mixed model, with an in-house OHS and buys in physician, physiotherapy, counselling and psychologist services. Participating in the regional process will give the Service the option of retaining existing provisions or using a chosen provider, subject to a detailed business case and options appraisal.

4.4.4 NPs Community Engagement Team provided an overview of the Workplace Hate Crime Champion scheme to our Equality Committee and conducted staff training in March 2019. The Service now has 23 hate crime champions offering support and advice to colleagues. The Hate Crime Charter, led by the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Network Group was approved by Members in January 2020 [min 64/20 refers] and adopted by the Service and representatives from FBU, UNISON, and GMB. Ongoing work in support of the Charter includes participating in the Hate Crime Walk of Solidarity in Gateshead, the Hate Crime and Community Tension Monitoring Group with Safeguarding Newcastle, NP, Newcastle Libraries, and representatives from Newcastle University. Staff also attended a hate crime event at the Newcastle Eagles Centre in collaboration with NP, the NHS, and NCC.

4.5 Training and Development

- 4.5.1** Staff regularly undertake collaborative training with partners to capitalise on skills and resources through enhance shared learning. Fire Safety staff undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD) with NFRS, CDDFRS and CFB, with each Service hosting an event each quarter to ensure compliance with the competency framework of providing 25 hours CPD training for Fire Safety Officers.
- 4.5.2** To support resilience the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team have hosted and participated in numerous collaborative training opportunities around the UK including events in Merseyside, Waddington and Glasgow with multiple FRS USAR, K9 teams and International Search and Rescue (ISAR) teams. The Service's USAR team have also conducted trained alongside NPs Dog Section, Traffic Section and Marine Unit in addition to training with NEAS and Hazardous Area Response Teams (HART). Service staff participated in a hazardous materials advisor initial course at the BTC with colleagues from NFRS, CDDFRS, South Yorkshire FRS and CFB. This course was HazMat certified, Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) accredited CPD and forms part of the regional hazardous materials training plan.
- 4.5.3** Police negotiator awareness sessions for operational crews took place at the BTC between August and November 2019, to provide greater awareness of steps to be take prior to police negotiators arriving on scene, with reciprocal training to police negotiators by the Services' line rescue team; with the aim to improve joint responses at these types of incidents.
- 4.5.4** Road Traffic Collision (RTC(i)) refresher courses are frequently delivered at the BTC, supported by a NEAS paramedic and a member of NP's Collison Investigation Team who provide input to operational instructors. This is an example of localised partner training arrangements, which are conducted on an ad hoc basis.
- 4.5.5** The Services interactive training centre SafetyWorks continues to work in partnership and more recently hosted the annual Newcastle Emergency Medicine Society (NEMSOC) pre-hospital Emergency Medicine competition with candidates from medical, para-medicine and nursing. Safetworks also hosted Arriva UK bus operator to deliver realistic training for their drivers at risk of being involved in an incident. The Service, in collaboration with Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) and the Gateshead Housing Company, were awarded £11,170 of funding from the MHCLG to provide Syrian refugees with kitchen safety training at Safetyworks.

4.6 Public Engagement and Accountability

- 4.6.1** Staff conducted outreach work in support of the NFCC Home Safety week in September 2019, sharing dementia friendly safety information at the Grainger Market, Newcastle in collaboration with North East Dementia Alliance (NEDA) and NCC. In February 2020, staff promoted a Kitchen Safety campaign and delivered kitchen safety sessions to the public at Morrison's supermarket, Killingworth, Wallsend Forum and the Beacon Shopping Centre, North Shields.
- 4.6.2** In conjunction with South Tyneside Council (STC), RNLI, NEXUS, Northern Powergrid and the NHS, the Service participated in a Reduction of Accidents at Play (RAP) two week event at South Shields Community Fire Station. The event delivered safety awareness in road, fire, water, drugs and alcohol in addition to electrical safety in the home and safe behaviour on the Metro. This learning was delivered to 1,326 pupils from 32 schools. The Service also engaged with Road

Safety Officers from the five Local Authorities which involved reviewing best practice, plans for developing road safety and the introduction of RAP events across all local authority areas.

- 4.6.3** The Service along with NP, NEAS and NFRS participated in the Road Sense Common Sense campaign, which involves bereaved families presenting a theatrical style production to deliver road safety awareness with real life stories and outcomes. This presentation is delivered to hundreds of young people across the NP area and a special presentation was delivered at SHQ on 7 October 2019, to Fire Authority Members and dignitaries to promote the production.
- 4.6.4** The first Tyne and Wear Biker Down course of 2020 took place on 15 February 2020, in collaboration with NP, NEAS and the Drivers Standard Agency. This free initiative is aimed at keeping motorcyclists safe on our roads and the course covers what to do in an accident, scene safety, first aid and the 'science' of being seen. The sessions are delivered at SHQ and 29 people attended the February course.
- 4.6.5** The Service participates in the 'Don't Drink and Drown' partnership campaign each December at Fatfield, Sunderland and Newcastle Quayside. Staff deliver water safety awareness to the public, conduct throw bag demonstrations and disseminate information. The Service continues to work with the RNLI on refresher throw bag community responder training across various venues in Tyne and Wear. In September 2019, staff attended Northumbria University's Fresher event with NP and the St John's Ambulance to educate new and current students about the dangers in and around open water, in addition to providing fire safety advice in the home. Staff were also asked to attend Oxclose Community Academy, Washington to deliver water safety messages to pupils following reports of pupils swimming in the River Wear. Scheduled visits were postponed due to COVID-19 however, a video was developed for the Academy featuring localised danger hot spots.
- 4.6.6** The Disability Network Group (DNG) hosted their first national conference 'Ability not Disability' on 3 December 2019, which coincided with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The conference promoted good practice, shared learning, and included employee reflections from personal experiences, and organisational approaches to disability support and awareness. A wide range of stakeholders attended, with 90 delegates from 30 organisations and included representatives from MIND, South Tyneside Adult Carers Service, Local Authorities, NEAS, NP and personnel from other FRS'. Lee Ridley 'Lost Voice Guy' opened the conference with a video message and the Blue Light Choir and children from the Percy Hedley Northern Counties Signing Choir participated in a collaborative performance.
- 4.6.7** Staff and DNG members joined with Journey Enterprise to participate in a young adults job fair at North and South Tyneside Colleges. Journey Enterprise had contacted the Service following a recommendation from NFRS, with a view to supporting their fair for young adults with learning disabilities. Operational crew from Wallsend Community Fire Station delivered a skills demonstration, discussed their roles and the diverse roles within the Service available to all parts of society.
- 4.6.8** The Service supports the Mental Health North East Programme collaborative project into mental health across Tyne and Wear, working with the NP Suicide Protection Officer and key health practitioners, the Probation Service and mental health charities, bringing together frontline services to review 'high risk groups' and how best to support them to reduce suicide incidents in the region. A North East

and North Cumbria Suicide Prevention Network Regional Multi-Agency Plan 2019/24 is being developed to support the initiative.

- 4.6.9** Our Blue Light Choir was established to raise awareness of mental health within the emergency services. The Choir comprises of staff and personnel from NP, CDDFRS, NEAS, the NHS and HMP Prison Service. The Choir were invited to sing with the Edinburgh Police Choir at the Emergency Services Day '999' event in Edinburgh on 6 September 2019. The Choir have also supported a Fact Charity event hosted by their patron Jimmy Nail and the Army Benevolent Fund Charity 75th anniversary celebrations at HMS Calliope in November 2019. The Choir also organised a Blue Light Christmas Carol Service at the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Newcastle on 18 December 2019.
- 4.6.10** The Services' BAME Network Group hosted their first national conference, 'Challenging Perceptions' on 26 February 2020, with over 90 delegates from 23 organisations in attendance. The conference was sponsored by Gentoo and organised in conjunction with the Asian Fire Service Association, NP, NCC, Young Asian Voices, Sunderland BME Network, South Tyneside Asylum Seekers, Refugees Church Help, and the Action Foundation. In addition, the conference was attended by representatives from other FRS's, Durham Constabulary, and New Hope. The conference focussed on three areas, recruitment and diversifying the workforce, supporting and retaining staff and community engagement.
- 4.6.11** The Services' Community Engagement team frequently participate in a number of cultural events and meet with religious and community leaders to share fire safety messages and to support the diversifying the workforce agenda. Staff interact with a wide range of community members and regularly attend Friday prayers. Staff visits include the Sikh Gurdwara Sunderland, Turkish Mosque Gateshead and the Turkish and Kurdish Community Centres in Newcastle. Staff have attended BAME recruitment events at Kingston Park Rugby Club and St James Park along with NP, the NHS and representatives from the Military. Staff attended a recruitment fair at the Al-Azhar Mosque, Laygate to discuss recruitment opportunities within the Service.
- 4.6.12** Staff engage with refugees and asylum seekers attending drop in sessions at the Newcastle Deaf Centre supported by the British Red Cross and NP. Staff regularly attend citizenship ceremonies in North Tyneside and Sunderland. Our Princes Trust students supported Community Environmental Educational Development (CEED) asylum seekers to complete a gardening project to clear pathways in Sunderland and the Comfrey Project, aiding asylum seekers in making Christmas decorations to sell at a craft fair to raise money for their project. Staff have also participated in refugees Christmas parties at Gateshead Civic Centre along with St Mary's Church.
- 4.6.13** In collaboration with the North East Chinese Association staff and volunteers attended the Luna New Year celebrations 2020, in and around Stowell Street, Newcastle with NP and NEAS. Operational crews from Newcastle Central Community Fire Station attended with an appliance. Staff also participated in Chinese New Year 2020 celebrations at the Winter Gardens Sunderland and in preparation for the event liaised with the Chinese Association Luncheon Club to share fire safety information and literature, translated into Mandarin and Cantonese. Staff participate in the Newcastle Mela celebrating diversity and art and collaborated with the NHS, NP, NCC, Army and Sea Cadets at the Mela. Staff attended the Mini Mela at Hadrian School with CREST, Apna Ghar, Bangladeshi

Youth Organisation, Education and Health Watch. Staff participated with NP in Diwali celebrations at Gateshead Civic Centre and the West Road Hindu temple.

- 4.6.14** The Service collaborated across a range of events as part of the twelfth annual Northern Pride celebration in Newcastle 19-21 July 2019, and Sunderland Pride on 29 September 2019. The Service worked with Pride organisers, NCC, NEAS, YHN, NP, SCC and STC. As part of the celebrations, Newcastle Ravens Rugby Football Club the North East's inclusive rugby team attended the BTC to participate in a team building and leadership session. Staff, volunteers and cadets supported Newcastle Ravens annual Hadrian Cup Rugby tournament at Percy Park Rugby Club North Shields with blue light partners on 6-8 March 2020. This is the largest inclusive rugby tournament in the UK with over 700 people in attendance, delivered in partnership with UK Pride 2020 and supported by Greggs, Sainsbury's and Asda.
- 4.6.15** Following the success of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + (LGBT+) Network Groups national conference in November 2018, representatives from a number of FRS' formed a national LGBT+ Network. The inaugural meeting to launch the Network took place in Manchester in January 2020 and was attended by 13 FRS'. A mission statement and core values were discussed and officers appointed to committee roles. A national LGBT+ Network Twitter page has been created and it was agreed to hold the Network's annual conference the Friday before every future UK Pride event in the host city.
- 4.6.16** Staff collaborated with the young LGBT+ community by participating in an 'Out and Proud' event on 13 October 2019, at the Arts Centre in Washington. This event was supported by staff, fire cadets, NP, Washington Mind, Gentoo and the Foundation of Light. In addition, staff were invited Heworth Grange secondary school by their Pride Society to talk to pupils about the Services' LGBT+ Network, this was a great engagement opportunity to support the diversifying the workforce agenda and for staff to discuss the different roles available across the Service.
- 4.6.17** In collaboration with NP and the OPCC the Service supports the White Ribbon campaign whose objective is the elimination of male violence against women. The charity works with organisations to ensure workplaces and communities are made safer for women, and they actively challenge male cultures that lead to harassment, abuse, and violence. The Service launched its commitment to the campaign in November 2019 and was awarded the White Ribbon accreditation. To achieve the accreditation the Service produced an action plan, which covered a number of items including raising awareness, changing cultures, and engagement. On 25 November 2019, the Service along with NP and the OPCC signed the White Ribbon Promise.
- 4.6.18** Work continues with the Girls Network with 11 female mentors participating in cohort 2019-20, working with three schools; Cardinal Hume Catholic School (CHCS) Gateshead, Park View School, Chester le Street and Bede Academy, Blyth. An introduction to careers within the Fire Service workshop was held for 15 girls from CHCS, who participated in networking sessions with female staff from a variety of job roles. Between 2018 and 2019 staff attended the end of year celebrations interacting with over 120 teenage girls. To date female mentors have participated in 156 hours of mentoring. In addition, seven male mentors are supporting the Boys Network at Jarrow School and CHCS. The 2019-20 mentoring programme commenced in October 2019, however, due to COVID-19 restrictions these appointments are on hold. Mentors also attended school careers fairs to provide pupils with an insight into the different career paths within the Service.

4.7 Threat, Harm and Risk

4.7.1 To support our emergency planning and preparedness staff regularly participate in exercises and training with highlights of joint resilience exercises set out below:

- Exercise Poseidon, High Volume Pump, took place in September 2019 at Derwent Reservoir in Durham / Northumberland with other FRS', HART, the Police, Military and the Rapid Relief Team (RRT).
- Exercise Zonesa was a two-day USAR exercise which took place in 29-30 October 2019, hosted by the Service and RAF Spadeadam which involved working with other FRS USAR teams, HART, the Police, Military and the NRAT.
- Exercise London Bridge took place in October 2019 at the Fifth Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Headquarters, which involved a tabletop exercise with multiple agencies and organisations.
- Exercise Bodega took place in January 2020, at SHQ and comprised of a marauding terrorist attack (MTA) tabletop exercise with NP, NEAS, and HART.
- Local ad hoc mass decontamination exercises with HART took place at Tynemouth Community Fire Station. Durham Constabulary attended one exercise as an observer, with the possibility participating in the future.
- Staff have participated in rope rescue training exercises at Marsden cliffs in South Shields with the Coastguard, Volunteer Life Brigade (VLB) and HART.

4.8 Finance including funding opportunities and procurement

4.8.1 The principles of our partnership working is to seek to maximise value for money; e.g. reducing costs through joint procurement, removing duplication and optimising the utilisation of resources, including co-location; with any cross partner recharge being on a full cost recovery basis only and is in line with the Chartered Institute of

Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Best Value principles. Whilst nothing in either statement of intent is binding upon each party, it does not preclude the parties from collaborating with other agencies, the spirit in which the principles are approached is key to successful collaboration.

4.8.2 Procurement Officers from the Service, CDDFRS, NFRS and CFB have formed a regional Procurement Collaboration group to work together to improve the way goods and services are procured across the region.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Since the previous report significant areas for collaboration have been explored with several areas of clear and effective progress, as set out in section 4 above.

5.2 Decisions made and collaborative activity undertaken has already identified improved:

- Outcomes for people and communities
- Inter-operability
- Staff welfare
- Value for money.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The financial implications in respect of this report are fully reflected within the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 6.2** Some of the activities outlined above have already generated income for the Service. Further income and financial savings are expected to be realised as work progresses and agreements are reached. Analysis of value for money will be subject to future reports to Members.
- 6.3** The income generated from collaborative activities including co-locations and NFRS Service Level Agreement in 2019/20 was £841k; an increase of £18k on the 2018/19 income. Cumulatively, since 2011/12, these activities have generated a total of almost £5.8 million income.

7 HR IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** There are no HR implications as a result of this report.

8 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** The principles of collaborative working support the Authority's drive to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

9 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1** The Authority is recommended to:
- a) Note progress on collaboration
 - b) Support and champion the continuation of collaboration between the Service and its partners.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Update on collaboration, 15 July 2019
- Update on collaboration between Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and Northumbria Police, 17 July 2017

