

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

14TH APRIL 2014

1. **TRANSFORMATION FUND BIDS**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Authority note the content of this report.

THAT the Authority approve that the submission of any bids can be delegated to the Chair and Chief Fire Officer.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to provide the Authority with an update on the arrangements for Transformation Fund Bids and to consider approving that the submission of any bids can be delegated to the Chair and Chief Fire Officer.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In the 2013 Spending Round the Government announced £30 million of resource funding would be made available to the fire sector for 2015-16 to support transformational change. A £45 million capital fire efficiency incentive fund was also announced to further assist fire and rescue authorities in achieving efficient and effective service delivery. It was indicated that the aim of the fund would be to encourage greater collaboration between the fire service and other emergency services and invest capital to ensure that fire service assets such as fire stations are appropriately located to provide efficient and effective service delivery.
- 3.2 It was proposed that a competitive bidding process would determine the allocation of the £70 million total funding. On 5th March 2014, the details of the bidding process were announced by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

3.3 Projects will be assessed against high level assessment criteria of:

- value for money (40%);
- transformation fund policy alignment (40%); and
- project deliverability, focusing on good project management (20%).

3.4 The bidding process will be broken into 'lots'. Each Authority can only make a maximum of one bid per 'lot'. The parameters are:

- projects valued up to £2m.
- projects valued £2m - £5m.
- projects over £5m.

3.5 Subject to further discussions with partner organisations, there are three potential schemes at this stage which could form the basis of a bid. An outline of those schemes is shown below:

- **Coventry Fire Station** – Explore the opportunity to develop a new fire station and combined training facility at the site of the existing Fire Station at Radford Road, working with Warwickshire FRS. The proposal would involve the potential demolition of some or all of the existing buildings and replacing them with up to date modern facilities that will provide better value for money and a better environment for operational staff to work and train from. This proposal also includes discussions with West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) and West Midlands Police who are also interested in operating from the same site.
- **Fire Control Resilience Arrangements** – As part of the shared fire control project an opportunity has been identified to explore the potential to provide a data link between the three largest fire controls in the country: Staffordshire and West Midlands, London and the North West. These three control centres handle over 40% of all emergency calls to the fire service in England.

By developing shared data systems it may be possible for each fire control to handle the mobilisation arrangements of the others to provide added resilience in business continuity and national crisis. The bid for this funding is being led by London Fire Brigade.

- **Aston Fire Station** – Aston is an old Fire Station built in 1924. An opportunity has arisen to work with WMAS in developing a joint site in Aston where both WMFS and WMAS can operate from. This site would also provide a modern workplace to replace the current facilities.

3.6 The closing dates for bids will be:

- for fire and rescue authority bids – 4th June 2014, and
- for syndicated bids from more than two fire and rescue authorities – 17th June 2014.

3.7 If any Transformation bids are made, a further report would be submitted to the Authority providing details of the proposed arrangements.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out because the matters contained in this report will not lead to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

These are contained in the body of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Budget and Precept Report 2014/2015 – 13th February 2014
Authority meeting

Letter from Neil O'Connor, Director Fire, Resilience and
Emergencies, 5th March 2014

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PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER