Minutes of the Collaboration and Transformation Committee

15 May 2023

Conducted as a public meeting at Headquarters and digitally via Microsoft Teams

Present: Councillor Dehar (Chair), Councillor Atwal, Councillor Iqbal, Councillor Hogarth and Councillor Kettle

Virtual: Councillor Lloyd, APCC Wasim Ali and Prof Simon Brake.

Officers: Wayne Brown, Tom Embury, Mike Griffiths, Hannah Spencer, Kash Singh and Kamla Devi-Ahir and Kirsty Tuffin

Please note: Councillor Kettle joined at 10:50am (Agenda item 5).

01/23   **To receive apologies for absence (if any)**

No apologies for absence were received.

02/23   **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

03/23   **Minutes of the Collaboration and Transformation Committee held on 27 February 2023**

Resolved:
1. That the Minutes of the Collaboration and Transformation Committee held on 27 February 2023 were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

04/23   **Consultation Update**

Hannah Spencer, CRMP Manager, presented the CRMP Consultation Update report in relation to the collaboration elements of the consultation.

The Committee were advised that the Authority would need to develop the next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for a further three-year cycle, in line with the National Fire and Rescue Framework. A public consultation must take place, with the last one conducted in 2020. The five key themes highlighted were:

1. Prevention
2. Protection
3. Response
4. People
5. Sustainability

Emphasis was placed upon the need for responses representative of the West Midlands. Collaboration with West Midlands Police and the Ambulance Service would be essential in reaching the most vulnerable in the community. Members were advised that any additions desired by Members could be included with emphasis being put on the following questions to Members:

1. How could Members further promote our consultation to support meaningful and representative responses from the public, staff, and partners?
2. Are you aware of any other stakeholders that are not listed in Appendix 1 that we should engage with as part of the consultation?
3. Is there anything you need in order for you to support and promote the consultation? (e.g., we are developing a consultation pack to provide the relevant background information to support our staff to promote the consultation).

Following queries, Hannah advised Members that the last public consultation received 11,000 responses during the covid period. Tom Embury, Deputy Clerk, advised Members that as part of initial engagement, emails circulated would not be generic and personalised emails be sent to all relevant groups. The surveys would also be designed for three different stakeholder groups – staff, partners and the public. The CFO emphasised the desire and value for member support in circulating the survey via their contacts, public and partners. It was agreed that a list of stations and open days be circulated to Members once established. Councillor Iqbal advised that the consultation could be circulated through the Council ward forums, once the consultation goes live.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed that the report be noted.
2. That members provide responses to the questions outlined in paragraph 3.5.2 to officers.
3. That it be agreed that a list of stations and open days be circulated to Members once established.

05/23 **Collaboration and Transformation – Digital, Data and Innovation**

Kash Singh, Head of Digital and Data, presented the Collaboration and Transformation – Digital, Data and Innovation report that outlined the ongoing digital transformation introduced through the West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) Digital, Data and Innovation Strategy and provide an update on the key transformation projects.

The Committee were advised that WMFS had been working with partners and charities as part of the West Midlands Coalition for Digital Inclusion to provide digital access to as many individuals in the community as possible. Initiatives such as 'Warm Spaces' continued to develop and enhance access in the communities. The team had also been working with universities such as Aston. WMFS continued to provide digital services to South Wales, Staffordshire and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services.

The Committee were advised that WMFS Innovation stations would be trialling new technology for Incident Command software to try and help spend more time in communities but also, ensuring that the firefighters involved remain safe. Investment would also be looked into for the emergency response and 999 call handling systems and updates would be provided to the Committee.

Following queries around employees with dyslexia, the CFO advised Members that WMFS had been an inclusive employer and where reasonable adaptations could be made, the service would ensure this is done to support employees. All employees had to go through a rigorous appointment/training process and should an individual not pass the risk critical standard for the job than they would be

unsuccessful. Support would always be given if required but safety would also not be impacted.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed that the ongoing commitment organisational to digital transformation and collaboration be noted.
2. That it be agreed that the progress on Oracle cloud project, legacy systems transformation and operational mobile device projects be noted.

06/23   **Flexible and agile working impacts on the service [verbal]**

Kamla Devi-Ahir, Senior Business Partner, People Support Services, provided an overview of the flexible and agile working impacts on the service.

The Committee were advised that the service was working in a hybrid manner, blending both working from home and the office environment. Employees are expected to attend the office the majority of the time and had been reminded of this via the Chief Fire Officers (CFO) updates at the All-Staff Engagement Forum. Should employees wish to reduce this number, managers would assess their requirements on a case-by-case basis. The Joint Consultative Committee approved the revised agile working policy three times since July 2021 to adapt.

Following queries, the Committee were advised that one grievance relating to flexible/agile working had been received and had been resolved. HR had not been made aware that individuals had left the service as a result of the hybrid approach which would be reflected in the 'exit interviews' conducted for all leavers. Mike Griffiths reassured Members that agile working had helped retain employees and had been in line with market expectations.

Following concerns with the transfer of knowledge through a digital approach, the CFO advised the Committee that following COVID, the service had adapted and brought a new way of working – fully digital/hybrid. The importance of

connectivity of all levels of the services was emphasised alongside the need for flexibility.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed that the verbal update on the Flexible and agile working impacts on the service be noted.

08/23 **Collaboration and Transformation Committee Work Programme 2022-2023**

Tom Embury presented the Collaboration and Transformation Committee Work Programme that outlined the planned agenda items for the Committee 2022-2023.

The Committee were advised that those reports that had not been brought to committee would be included in the 2023-2024 work programme, as per the document. The draft plan would be included on the next Committee meeting.

Resolved:

1. That the Collaboration and Transformation Committee Work Programme 2022-2023 be approved.

09/23 **Any other business**

Thanks was given to the Chair of the Committee and Officers for all their work conducted throughout the last municipal year.

The meeting ended at 11:15am.

Kirsty Tuffin
Democratic Services Officer
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