

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
COLLABORATION AND TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE
5TH SEPTEMBER 2022

1. DIGITAL, DATA AND INNOVATION UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

THAT Members of the Collaboration and Transformation Committee:

- 1.1 Note the embedding of digital ways of working across the service and acknowledge our investment in our staff to understand and support digital, data and innovation.
- 1.2 Note the ongoing developments and progress from continuing phases of Oracle Cloud, CRMP Projects, Digital Transformation on Stations. Introduce our new projects around Incident Command Transformation & Legacy Systems aligned to the feedback from our staff and the “Next Steps” outlined in the previous report.
- 1.3 Note the emerging opportunities for collaboration with new partner brigades to deliver better more efficient services to our communities and reduce risk nationally.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide an update on progress aligned to the West Midlands Fire Service Digital, Data and Innovation Strategy.
- 2.2 To provide an update on projects that are already giving value to our communities and introduce the latest projects that will shape and support the fire service of the future.
- 2.3 To provide information on further collaboration opportunities and wider adoption of our Tymly system by other fire services across

the country. Meeting our statutory responsibilities for collaboration as well as providing value for money for the public purse and reducing risk for communities.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 **Digital, Data & Innovation Strategy**

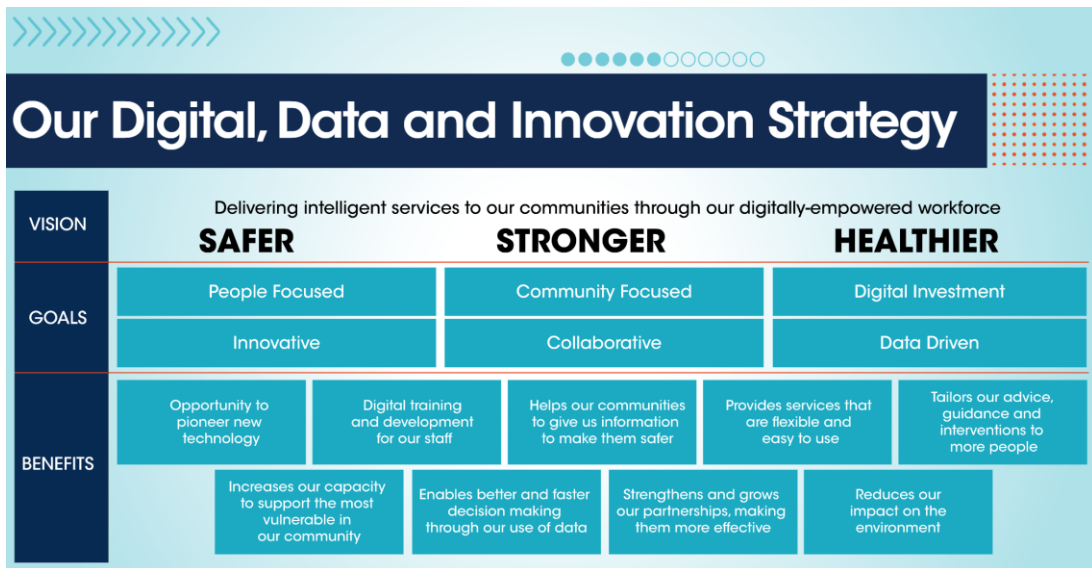
The digital, data and innovation strategy was introduced to the Authority in December 2021.

Since then, this has been communicated with the wider service and a Digital Leadership Skills course has been delivered to Middle Managers to embed this approach.

This has led to positive understanding as the strategy embodies our commitment to take our staff with us on this transformation journey. This has led to many new workstreams considering our “digital first” philosophy enabling us to be one of the most digitally enabled fire services in the UK. This has had the additional benefit of helping our teams to be more change ready for the newer digital initiatives now underway.

The digital, data and innovation strategy is focused on people first, using technology and data to improve our performance, efficiency, and service to our communities.

The strategy is delivered through 6 keys goals outlined in the following diagram.



This might mean creating new systems or reimagining current processes to work in the digital world around us.

The intended outcome being that we have greater capability and capacity to spend time with the most vulnerable in our community, rather than teams spending hours entering information at computers at stations.

3.2 **Digital Inclusion in the West Midlands**

We recognise that it is important that our use of technology does not isolate members of our community. More than 1 in 5 people in the West Midlands do not use the internet, which is the highest rate in the UK.

This has an impact as the world around them becomes more technologically advanced and they become “digitally excluded.”

Through the Digital Leadership Skills training, our ongoing projects and collaborative working with the West Midlands Combined Authority Coalition for Digital Inclusion we are working to ensure that we help all our communities.

This is not a problem we can solve in isolation, and collaboration with wider partners as well as increasing the offer the fire service can provide in this space are key to ending digital exclusion and poverty.

3.3 **National Impact and Collaboration**

We are continuing to work with partners that are part of the WMFS 5G testbed, Coventry Smart Cities, and leading suppliers on and new ways of gathering information to reduce risks.

Access to information such as CCTV, National Police Air Service Cameras and data collected from sensors will ensure that the communities and our staff are safer, stronger and healthier through an enhanced ability to respond.

We have always focused on collaboration and already deliver digital services to South Wales, Staffordshire and Shropshire fire and rescue services.

We are developing leading software in our protection area and there are a number of services that are contacting us to adopt our approach which is cutting edge and targets the highest risks. This

is an area that has been highlighted by our recent HMICFRS inspection and is fully aligned to the Grenfell Tower Enquiry outcomes.

These fire–fire collaborations provide economies of scale and reduce costs for all involved and maximise public sector funding by spending it in the public sector twice.

The successes previously reported around National Data Collection through the COVID period mean we continue to have interest from the Home Office around national provision.

3.4 **Service Innovation**

Our “digital transformation on stations” working group continues to bring together a diverse team of operational firefighters to look at our working practices. We are awaiting delivery of our personal issued mobile devices and tablets.

As per our indicated next steps in the previous report to the Collaboration and Transformation Committee, we have widened the scope of the trial to include Incident Command, which will be trialled in Coventry and Solihull Area Command. This will transform our paper-based incident processes.

This will focus on providing flexible and more effective working for our crews and Fire Control teams. This will reduce the need to enter information multiple times and provide better information sharing at large incidents as well as an enhanced ability to manage incidents as they escalate.

This will improve firefighter safety and lead to better outcomes. Our approach to digital transformation of incident command will bring about new ways of working a project that is receiving a great deal of interest from other brigades.

This project has been delayed slightly due to the wider shortage of semiconductors, but this has provided a great opportunity for further engagement with our service around this change.

We are also working to include Virtual Reality as a delivery means for education as well as training. This immersive experience will mean that we can target a wider range of people as well as reduce the costs associated with physical delivery.

Fire safety inspecting officers are now fully digital, using handheld devices to undertake critical protection activities.

The WMFS drone fleet continues to play a critical role in major incidents and can now be streamed to the incident room. This enables key decision making as well as providing a bird eye view of complex incidents.

Our digital CS10B which was a Grenfell Tower Enquiry Outcome has digitised how we work at high rise incidents.

We continue to deliver value from our investment in Surface Hubs post Covid, continuing our all-staff briefings and utilising them for training activities and communications between key stakeholders.

Our dedicated sustainability project focuses us on digital innovation to reduce risk for our communities and firefighters. This project also focuses on a sustainable fire service that limits its impact on future generations.

3.5 **Legacy Systems Transformation**

We continue to embed the notable change Oracle has brought for our service. Our updated processes continue to deliver value for the service with the latest planned deliveries to be focused on training and development of our staff.

We have successfully delivered an updated mobilising system prior to the commencement of the Commonwealth Games. This ensured that we had the best possible cyber security position heading into this event as well as providing additional functionality to our Fire Control teams.

We continue to look at options to further enhance our ways of working and further improve our mobilising systems and increase our ability to collaborate with other blue light agencies as part of this change.

We are now focusing on our Time & Attendance and Fleet systems; these replacements have been on our roadmap for some time. Support for our existing systems is being withdrawn by our suppliers and the replacements will give great functionality and be easier to use for our operational teams and be fully aligned to our Digital, Data & innovation Strategy.

The implementation of newer systems in these areas will provide an enhanced level of reporting and allow us to use data more to make faster and better decisions.

3.6 **Next Steps**

We will continue to embed our systems transformation. This will include delivering additional elements in Oracle and ensuring we are delivering value for money from our investments.

We will deliver our mobile device and incident command trials and provide a sound evidence base for their wider rollout.

We will continue work towards the replacement of our last remaining legacy systems, improving our user experience for our staff as well as providing greater flexibility for our CRMP Projects.

We will continue to enhance our reporting and data capabilities to ensure we are making evidence-based decisions and information for wider auditing and scrutiny.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 In preparing this report, an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been conducted.

4.2 Our progress in digital technology should be considered as having a positive effect on our neurodiverse staff and communities.

4.3 We are working with the neurodiversity working group to ensure our new digital ways of working are easily understood and ensuring that our new systems are effective and easy to understand for all.

4.4 The use of digital technology will also be providing opportunities to engage people that do not have English as their first language.

4.5 As we are looking to roll out more services to the public this will help with engagement but also enhance the quality of responses.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct legal implications.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct financial implications.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There has been a positive shift towards our [sustainability approach](#) due to the digital investments and transformed ways of working.

7.2 Staff are now able to work in a hybrid way so they can be as effective if they are in the office or working remotely.

7.3 We have also been able to deliver services to our communities digitally which is much more efficient and has a positive impact on the environment for low risk

7.4 This has been enabled through technology but is supported by our agile working policy and our HQ Transformation pilot. This flexible work area brings together people from all over the service and allows them to work together and collaborate.

7.5 This also provides opportunities for the reduction of dedicated staff areas spaces in HQ providing more opportunities for use of the space.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Collaboration and Transformation – Digital, Data and Innovation 6 December 2021](#)

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