

<b>Notes of the Policy Planning Forum</b>
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**7 November 2016 at 10.30 am  
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

Present: Members of the Authority  
Councillor Edwards (Chair)  
Councillor Idrees (Vice Chair)  
Councillors Allcock, Aston, Atwal Singh, Barlow, Booth, Clinton, Craddock, Dad, Davis, Eustace, Mottram, Sealey, B Singh, P Singh, T Singh, Skinner, Spence, Tranter, Walsh and Young  
Mr Ager.

Officers: West Midlands Fire Service  
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (G Taylor)  
M Griffiths (Treasurer),  
A Afsar, J Connor, J Danbury, M Hamilton-Russell, M Ward-White, S Timmington, S Warnes

**Clerk and Monitoring Officer**

K Gowreesunker (Clerk)  
S Sahota (Monitoring Officer)

Apologies: Councillors: Barrie, Brackenridge, Bennett, Cartwright, Hogarth  
Chief Fire Officer (P Loach)  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (P Hales)

Observers: Nil

**21/16 Chair and CFO Announcements**

The Chair and Assistant Chief Fire Officer welcomed all attendees to the Policy Planning Forum.

The Fire Peer Challenge had taken place week commencing 17 October. Alasdair Hay, Chief Fire Officer of Scotland Fire and Rescue Service, had led the diverse peer team who had undertaken a rigorous review of the self-assessments submitted as part of the Operational Assessment, along with information on the Service and how it operated.

It was clear that the Service was at the forefront of public sector reform and the peer team understood the aims of the Service and what it was doing to achieve these, including that the Service was based on personal responsibility and accountability with Members and staff at all levels buying into the Service's vision.

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The peer team not only assessed the Service, but stated that they would take a number of ideas back to their respective organisations.

A presentation and feedback session was provided by the peer team on the final day of the visit. The peer team provided positive feedback with some areas to focus on in terms of improvement. One such area was how the Service communicated what it was achieving and wanted to achieve with its communities and businesses, how the Service told 'our story'.

The full report would be submitted to the Service shortly, in time for a comprehensive presentation to be delivered to Members at the Policy Planning Forum scheduled for 12 December.

The Independent Review of Conditions of Service for Fire and Rescue Staff in England had been published by the Home Office on 3 November. The report represented a balanced view of the sector and contained a number of recommendations for the sector to consider. One such recommendation was unconscious bias, an area in which the Strategic Enabling Team had already committed to participating in a development programme.

The Service was mentioned twice within the report, firstly the Safeside facility and the Marmot principles with the work undertaken to establish fire as a health asset, and secondly acknowledging the complexity of the Service, being the second largest Fire and Rescue Service in England and having the closest risk profile to that of London.

A detailed assessment of the review including a gap analysis and work programme would form part of a presentation which will be delivered at the Policy Planning Forum scheduled for 12 December.

### **22/16 Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation**

Mark Hamilton-Russell, Strategic Enabler of Communications delivered a presentation on the imminent consultation of the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP):

#### Background:

- The Fire Authority is committed to enabling our communities to gain a greater understanding in the risk based approach we take in our decision making in an open and transparent way
- Under the National Fire & Rescue Framework the Service is required to consult on our IRMP every three years, or at a time where there is a material change to it
- The last time the Service consulted on its IRMP was in 2013

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- It will be an appropriate time to complete an informative and meaningful consultation with our communities, partners and businesses

### Aims and intentions for consultation:

- Primarily the Service wants to discover if our risk based evidential approach, whilst mapped against our financial achievability and driven through our delivery model is supported by our communities, partners and businesses.
- Additionally, feedback received through the Fire Peer Challenge stated that the Service is rooted in the heart of the community but has challenged the Authority to reflect on how well our communities understand our vision and has asked us to explore communicating our story more
- Therefore, it is also an ideal opportunity to ask our communities their view on our emerging issues such as governance and funding.
- The approach will take into account the findings from the Scrutiny Committee review in 2013/14 with three key areas to focus upon:
  1. Ensure questions are a more open approach and not intended to lead or be repetitive in nature
  2. Our community members will be a key stakeholder
  3. Authority members are actively involved in the consultation exercises

### Key timings:

- 7 November: Policy Planning Forum
- 21 November: Fire Authority paper
- 1 December: consultation begins
- 14 January: consultation finishes
- 16 January: Policy Planning Forum to present plan and initial IRMP consultation outcomes
- 20 February: Fire Authority to sign off The Plan

### Engagement Strategy:

Three main criteria for meaningful consultation:

1. Representative responses from our diverse communities, partners and businesses
2. Responses that can be used across the organisation when delivering level 3 plans and also used for consideration by CFO and SET when shaping our 3 year rolling strategy
3. The generation of qualitative and quantitative data for analysis

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- It is our aim to make this as accessible as is reasonably possible by utilising a multi-platform approach to generate both qualitative and quantitative responses
- Primarily using our website, there will be key responses that will come from social media, face to face conversations and meetings, focus groups and Authority Members.
- Officers will be providing material nearer the time of the consultation with relevant material to all members and members of staff that you will be able to use to your best effect as key members of the community.

### Areas proposed for consultation:

- Three themes that will help us determine if our risk based evidential approach whilst mapped against our financial achievability and driven through our delivery model is supported by our communities, partners and businesses - whilst also engaging with members of the public around the key organisational issues - namely governance and potential future funding.

### Governance:

- Proposed introduction of legislation around greater collaboration and devolution to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) through an elected mayor provides an opportunity for West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) to explore the benefits for future governance options for WMFS. It is also an ideal timing for any findings to be introduced to the Future Governance Working Group ready for their findings to be published in Feb 2017

Potential areas that we may consider looking at in consultation:

- Reformed Fire Authority
- PCC
- Mayor
- combinations such as Fire / Fire

### Funding:

- Medium term financial plan that takes us to 2020. This includes working with public sector partners - for example the falls response we do in Wolverhampton and Coventry
- What about the long term future? With all the uncertainties we face we need to consider how we are going to maintain and improve upon our SDM with a financial lens on. What do the public think about private/public partnerships for example?
- And what do the public think of the authority potentially getting its money through the Business Rate Retention Scheme where their fire service might have to fight with other public services for it?

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### Service Delivery:

- The Authority deliver a range of services through an integrated approach where our prevention, protection and response work to make the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier
- Academic research provides evidence that communities have a greater chance of survivability in a life threatening incident with a 5 min response time. Do our communities, business and partners support our evidence based approach?
- How well understood is our vision and do our communities think that our priorities really do make the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier, and should we be doing anything else?

In answer to Members' questions, the following points were raised:

- More qualitative feedback would hopefully be achieved by engaging directly with Community Members as stakeholders, reaching out to them to create focus groups which would allow greater understanding and the collation of in-depth feedback. The Future Melting Pot / Youth Emergency Services would also be involved to ensure engagement with young adults.
- The Service would like Members to attend the focus groups.
- Partner organisations and agencies were also being involved in the consultation process.
- Members would be happy to help and to facilitate focus groups, in particular by utilising existing community events.
- Station Commanders would advise Members of any focus groups being held within their area to maximise engagement.
- Members agreed the proposals put forward and would support the process

### **23/16 Management of Information**

Jason Danbury, Strategic Enabler of ICT, delivered a presentation on the Management of Information:

The purpose of the presentation was ensure Members remained informed of developments. A paper would be submitted to the Fire Authority at the meeting on 21 November which would include consultation on a revised standing order.

The Management of Information could be broadly split into four areas:

- Classification and marking
- Requests for information
- Data sharing
- Handling instructions

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The aim of the management of information was to provide a single approach, bringing everything together, and to make it simple for all, bringing requests together, ensuring that the right information is provided to the right people at the right time.

An evidence based approach had been taken to the use of data. The aim was to obtain the right balance between accessibility and legal duty.

The Information Commissioner's Office had the ability to fine organisations for breaches of the applicable regulations. Fines could be up to a maximum of £500k. Additionally, any such breach could cause significant damage to reputation and involve a strong media focus.

The Government Data Classification Scheme had been developed to assist the public sector in how it managed information. However, it had proved to be too prescriptive and as a result it had since been simplified, with the introduction of three classifications:

- Official
- Secret
- Top Secret

The majority of information and data held, used and shared by the Service fell within the Official classification. However, there was a huge variety of information and data within this classification and therefore, the classification had been broken down into four sub-categories:

- Official WMFS – Public
- Official WMFS – Low
- Official WMFS – Medium
- Official WMFS – High

Each organisation deciding its own sub-categories adds complexity of how the information and data is shared with other organisations with handling instructions being key to this area.

Progress to date had included the:

- revising of six standing orders into one
- creation of an information asset register
- allocation of the DCFO to the role of Senior Information Risk Owner
- Members of the Strategic Enabling Team (SET) allocated the roles of Information Asset Owners

Next steps would include the development of a 'request for information' system, the provision of classification tools, and the provision of awareness and training, including Member development.

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In answer to Members' questions, the following points were raised:

- Developments such as the live streaming of incidents via social media and the introduction of 999eye did represent some challenges in how the images are shared. There would be a duty to protect, but one size did not fit all. A member of SET would make the decision to share images captured by 999eye.
- Live streaming of incidents and the use of body worn cameras could potentially make the subject more complex, increasing the potential for something to go wrong. In theory the safest thing to do would be to not use such technology at all, but that would not be moving with the times. It may be a challenge, but it is a challenge that the Service needs to rise to.
- It was acknowledged that there was a need to ensure staff were comfortable with the use of such technology and fully aware of the associated procedures.
- The Service would always anonymise as many requests as possible and wherever practicable, to promote openness and transparency.

It was noted that the Management of Information would be brought back to the Policy Planning Forum in early 2017 for further Member development and familiarisation.

The meeting closed at 11:30 hours.

<p>Contact Officer: Stephen Timmington Strategic Hub West Midlands Fire Service 0121 380 6680</p>
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