

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

Collaboration and Transformation Committee

You are summoned to attend the meeting of Collaboration and Transformation Committee to be held on Monday, 11 November 2019 at 13:30

at Fire Service HQ, 99 Vauxhall Road, Nechells, Birmingham B7 4HW

for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Agenda – Public Session

- 1 To receive apologies for absence (if any)
- 2 Declarations of interests in contracts or other matters
- 3 Minutes of the Collaboration and Transformation Committee 7 October 2019 **3 - 10**
- 4 Collaboration and Transformation - Developing Strategic Direction **11 - 20**

Distribution:

Nicolas Barlow - Member, Jasbinder Dehar - Chair of the Collaboration and Transformation Committee, John Edwards - Member, Peter Hogarth - Member, Zafar Iqbal - Member, Seamus Walsh - Member, Patricia Young - Vice Chair of Collaboration and Transformation Committee

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This agenda and supporting documents are also available electronically on the West Midlands Fire Service website at www.wmfs.net

Collaboration and Transformation Committee

Item 3

7 October 2019

Present: Councillors Barlow, Dehar (Chair), Edwards, Hogarth, Iqbal, Walsh and Young

Prof. Simon Brake

1/19 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

2/19 Declarations of Interests in Contracts or other Matters

There were no Declarations of Interest on this occasion.

3/19 Collaboration and Transformation Committee Terms of Reference

The Committee received the draft Terms of Reference of the Collaboration and Transformation Committee.

The establishment of the Committee was approved at the Annual General Meeting of the Authority in June 2019, to ensure the appropriate consideration and oversight of new and developing areas of strategic collaborations. The Terms of Reference had been changed from those submitted to the Fire Authority at the Annual General Meeting on the 24 June 2019. If approved the Terms of Reference would need to be submitted to the Authority for approval.

The Authority's commitment to collaboration was set out in its three-year rolling Strategy, Our Plan, and has been an accepted way of working for the Fire Service in delivering joint community outcomes.

The Terms of Reference set out the role of the committee in 'the strategic development and assurance of transformational collaborative working agreement (up to implementation) aligned to

the 'Duty to Collaborate' (Policing and Crime Act 2017) and/or the delivery of the Authority's Strategy.

The Authority's review of future governance and outcomes of the Future Governance Working Group clearly highlighted the benefits of wider collaboration in services delivered for local communities. The Members of the Committee considered the following points in the review and enhancement of the current terms of reference:

- The role of the committee in championing digital transformation across the Service as a core consideration for collaboration;
- The role of the committee in enabling the Service to improve and evolve new and existing areas of collaboration through providing clear strategic direction, aligned to the Authority's strategy, Our Plan
- Member involvement in supporting collaborative relationships through links within respect local authorities.

Members were asked to consider making additions to the Terms of Reference.

Members felt that the new Terms of Reference were very useful

Resolved:

1. that the changes to the terms of reference for the Committee be approved
2. that the changes be submitted to the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

4/19 Strategic Collaborations – An Overview

Members of the Committee noted the ongoing areas of Strategic Collaboration across the Authority and Service with other public service and blue light service providers.

The three-year rolling strategy "Our Plan" is the accepted way of working for the Fire Service in delivering joint community outcomes. This approach to joint working has been legislated through the Policing and Crime Act.

The Act sets out a ‘duty to collaborate’ with other blue light services stating that ‘the three emergency services should consider opportunities to collaborate with other services. If it is in the interests of the efficiency or effectiveness of at least one of the parties to collaborate, then the relevant service (i.e. the service that originally considers the opportunity) must notify the other service of the proposed collaboration.’”

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 doesn’t exclude other collaborations.

A broad range of examples of current collaborative activity were provided in an Appendix to the report examples of which were:

- National Fire Chiefs Council Support Hub
- West Midlands Police – sharing of estates
- West Midlands Combined Authority – Road Safety Strategy, Digital, Portfolio and Project Management
- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service – Share Fire Control
- Local Resilience Forum
- Digital – Shropshire, Staffordshire and South Wales Fire and Rescue Services
- Primary Authority Scheme – Fire Safety
- High Rise Training Oldbury – FRSs
- Health Consensus Statement
- Emergency Services Working Group
- National Procurement Framework

In 2017 for every £1 spent with the Fire Service, West Midlands communities receive £5 of ‘social value’.

The Chair of the Committee suggested that income could be made by using empty office space or empty properties could be used for the homeless.

The Treasurer stated that there were limited opportunities but options that could be looked at. The matter had been raised at the Audit and Risk Committee and a further report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee. It was suggested that members of the Committee may wish to attend the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee scheduled for the 11 November and prior to the Collaboration and Transformation Committee.

One Member suggested collaboration with Councils/Combined Authority and the Fire Service in respect of road safety as councils were cutting back on signage, white lining and decluttering of the roads from sandbags, banners and redirection signs that we no longer needed or applicable.

Another Members stated that this was the first meeting of the Committee and requested that an hour was set aside for training on the purpose of the Committee and its Terms of Reference.

The Clerk confirmed that this could be arranged, however, the following report set out the key factors which contribute to collaborative working across the Service to enable the Committee to determine a definition for Collaboration for the Authority.

5/19 Collaboration – Developing Strategic Collaboration Definition

The Committee considered the key factors which contribute to collaborative working across the Service and discussed the definition for collaboration for the Authority which will support the Service in considering future strategic direction.

The Committee had received details of the Services collaborative working and details of the ‘Duty to Collaborate’ as set out the Police and Crime Act 2017, which required them to look for transformational ways to enhance public safety and/or efficiency with other blue light services. It was noted that collaboration was not restricted to blue light organisations.

In developing the definition there should be an alignment of purpose for the respective organisations and purpose of those we want to collaborate with.

The collaboration should also meet with the Authority’s priorities as set out in “Our Plan”.

The Duty to Collaborate aims to strengthen and deepen cross-emergency service collaboration opportunities.

- Keeping Communities safer
- Increasing collaborative momentum
- Developing a wider understanding of good collaborations
- Value for Money

The Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group is a cross blue light service group which report to government and provides an example of how the sector is meeting the duty to collaborate.

The duty does not set out a specific definition on but seeks to enable it and provide a few high level provisions and in particular the development of a collaborative agreement.

The dictionary definition of collaboration was set out as:

“the situation of two or more people working together to create or achieve the same thing”.

The dictionary definition of transformation is:

“a change in the appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that that thing or person is improved.

In developing the definition it was suggested that there should be alignment of purpose for the respective organisation in the collaboration and preferably in wider organisational values, strategy and process.

There were several considerations that ultimately ensure communities receive the most effective and efficient service and these include:

- People resources
- Financial resources
- Agreement on risk
- Internal communications
- Clear perspective

An example of a collaborative agreement was the Shared Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire and West Midland Fire Service Fire Control.

Collaboration for West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority could be seen as where:

“two or more public service organisations agree to work together to deliver something of public value (public safety, efficient and/or effectiveness), which supports the priorities of the organisations and community outcomes”

“collaborations will use the IRMP to forecast risk and future capability and will meet digital expectations as set out the Service’s Digital Declaration”.

In recommending the definition for the Authority, Members would be enabling the strategic direction for collaboration to be determined by the Authority, in alignment with the approval of strategic priorities and outcome and the Authority budget setting meeting in February 2020.

Officers will work within this framework to develop and engage in structured collaborative relationships in line with the delegations set out in the Authority’s constitution.

The Committee agreed to further explore the definition of Collaboration at its meeting scheduled for 11 November 2019.

A member expressed a word of caution in respect of collaboration and past experiences where a lot of work, time and effort had been put into projects that had not subsequently come to fruition. There were also risks associated with working with some partners.

The Clerk stated that these points would be set out in a report to the next meeting.

Members discussed previous collaborations that had been successful or unsuccessful to varying degrees. A discussion took place on the possible negative outcomes of collaboration with certain organisations and resistance experienced previously and felt that the Authority should be cautious.

Members wanted the community to benefit from the effects of collaborative working.

The co-opted member joined the meeting at this point and apologised for being late.

The co-opted member stated that during his 18 months on the Authority he has been impressed that the Fire and Rescue Service is doing a good job. It was suggested that the Fire Service could spread its skills and abilities across the communities. He informed the Committee of his experience when visiting the New York Fire Service and their work with paramedics. He said that if a 911 call is received for a person with a cardiac arrest in New York, the fire service attended first and then hand over to paramedics and they

have worked in this way for 20 years. The prompt for this way of working was due to the loss of fire stations and adding value to the community.

One member felt this way of working would be difficult following the recent experience with falls response.

The co-opted member stated that firefighters exhibited care for the community and the response times were impressive and the attendance times can make a significant difference to saving lives. In New York it was about sharing capacity and not changing roles.

Other Members noted that the co-responding approach had historically been used for example with the Birmingham City Fire and Ambulance Service.

It was also noted that this type of work is already undertaken in some rural areas by other fire and rescue services and the NJC have stated nationally that the Fire Brigades Union do not have a problem with their members responding to cardiac arrest. There had also been a trial undertaken in Manchester and a detailed report had been published.

This type of work would require funding and national agreement, as well as agreement between the fire and ambulance service and it was felt that in rural areas, retained firefighters are more community based and are keen to do this type of work because of the rural atmosphere. However, this is a sensitive area of work.

If anyone were to fall outside of the fire station, firefighters would instinctively assist.

The contents of the report were considered and the Committee decided to further discuss the definition of Collaboration, to support the development of future strategy, for recommendation to the Fire Authority, as its next meeting scheduled to take place on the 11th November.

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

COLLABORATION AND TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE

11 NOVEMBER 2019

1. **COLLABORATION & TRANSFORMATION – DEVELOPING STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT Members consider the contents of this report and approve the framework as set out in section 3.22 to support the development of future collaborations for recommendation to the Fire Authority.
- 1.2 THAT Members approve the revised definition for Transformation and Collaboration as considered and contributed to at the Committee's meeting on 7 October 2019.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 To enable Members to agree the proposed framework which will support the determination of strategic direction for transformational collaborative partnerships for the Authority.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 **Definition**

On 7 October 2019 (the first meeting of the committee), members considered a sample of the wide range of collaborative partnerships the Service is currently engaged in all of which demonstrate alignment to the achievement of priorities and outcomes as set out in Our Plan and to the transformation of services to communities.

Ref. C&T/2019/Nov/22810192

(Official – WMFS – Public)

The committee also discussed the proposed definition of collaboration, aligned to a dictionary definition of both transformation and collaboration. This sought to identify what a transformational collaborative partnership would look like for the Service based against its 3-year rolling Strategy, Our Plan.

The definition proposed to members on 7 October 2019 is set out below:

‘two or more public service organisations agree to work together to deliver something of public value (public safety, efficient and/or effectiveness) which supports the priorities of the organisations and, importantly, community outcomes’.

‘Collaborations will use the IRMP to forecast risk and future capability and will meet digital expectations as set out in the Service’s Digital Declaration’.

In considering this definition, members cited the importance of the community benefitting from the effects of collaborative working. It was also recognised the Service could spread its skills and abilities across communities, using co-responding with the Ambulance as an example of a service delivered across some Fire Services in the UK. In addition, some members expressed caution that collaborative partnerships should ensure risks to implementation were explored. This latter consideration will form part of the framework set out later in this report.

Taking into account member feedback, the expectations set out in the ‘Duty to Collaborate’ as part of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 and the work of the Emergency Services Working Group (ESWG) as cited in the (background) paper to the committee on 7 October 2019, a revised definition is set out below:

‘West Midlands Fire Service will collaborate with other organisations to enable the transformational delivery of value-based services to local communities in a way which supports the priorities of each partner.’

The Service’s commitment to providing community outcomes through collaborative partnerships is set out in Our Plan 2019-2022.

The Duty to Collaborate, as set out in the Policing and Crime Act 2017, sets out the expectation that all blue light services will look for innovative ways to enhance public safety and efficiency through collaboration with public service organisations.

A framework for collaborative partnerships should enable alignment of purpose for the respective organisations in the collaboration and preferably in wider organisational values, strategy and process.

Whilst achieving financial or cost savings can be a benefit of collaboration, this should not be the primary goal. Rather, it is part of several considerations that ultimately ensures communities receive value-based services, delivered in the most transformational way.

3.2 **Delivering Transformation in Services**

Our Plan recognises that *'all staff play a major part in helping people live safer, healthier lives and supporting the West Midlands economy. They do it at a time of continuous change and significant challenge.'*

This is achieved through a flexible and diverse approach to the use of resources, particularly through the way in which the workforce is engaged in collaboration and the way this is enabled in the development of skills and provision of services. These more innovative approaches support the Service to adapt.

The priorities of the Service aim to ensure the most vulnerable communities are targeted in the most effective way to mitigate and, where possible, remove risk of fire related incidents. A critical aspect to this is how the skills of the workforce are developed to respond to this and the changing nature of risk.

This is reinforced by the Service's HMICFRS Inspection which cited within the 'people' pillar that: *'a Fire and Rescue Service that looks after its people should be able to provide an effective service to its community. It should offer a range of services to make its communities safer. This will include developing and maintaining a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse'*.

The HMICFRS report also cited that: *'The Service recognises that the role of a firefighter has changed considerably'* and that:

'The Service wants to create a more flexible and productive workforce. It is choosing to move away from having dedicated specialist staff and teams and is broadening the skills of existing staff instead. For example, it is training operational crews to give basic fire safety advice to businesses.'

There is clear evidence, which is captured in the HMICFRS report, of where transformation and change has and continues to result in improved outcomes for communities; this being a key consideration for members in the definition of collaboration as cited in paragraph 3.4.

Examples of this are detailed in the 'effectiveness' pillar in recognition of the Service's outstanding grading for its approach to responding to incidents where smaller response vehicles and changed shift patterns have been introduced to ensure resources are appropriately allocated to the highest risks.

Digital transformation aligned to the development of skills and knowledge of staff can be seen through the implementation of 999eye, the use of mobile tablets for crews and the Dynamic Cover Tool. These digital solutions provide value-based outcomes for communities by providing staff with tools which enable the delivery of more efficient and effective services.

The 'efficiency' pillar recognised that it was *'good to see the Service is using Control Room staff to operate the safe and well booking system during quieter times and operational crews to carry out low-level business safety checks (safe and strong visits).'*

3.3 **Developing a strategic framework**

A proposed framework for collaboration will need to consider how the Service can ensure its workforce and services continue to adapt and change to ensure the Service is well equipped to deal with this changing environment.

A framework for collaboration and transformation is set out below. The considerations within this framework can be adopted in a flexible way ensuring they enable, rather than restrict. They will recognise the importance of the discrete functions and identities of the Service and partner organisations whilst encouraging a positive culture of seeking opportunities to work more closely together, to transform services, to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

These considerations take into account developments within the ESWG and, importantly, can provide an evidence-based approach to support external bodies and, in particular, HMICFRS when evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of collaborations within with WMFS.

3.4 **Framework - A joint assessment and understanding of risk and vulnerability**

A shared understanding and joint assessment of risk and vulnerability is essential. This will support a shared vision and objectives to deliver value through collaboration which achieves transformational community outcomes. An evidence-based assessment of risk by each Service will highlight areas where collaboration may be considered.

For example, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and Strategy, Our Plan will, aligned to partners' assessment of risk, form the basis of any collaboration for the Service, ensuring alignment to meeting forecasted risk and future capability.

3.5 **Community Outcomes**

A problem-focused collaboration enables an outcome-focused approach. By identifying a problem that the collaboration will address, relevant organisations can be effectively identified and included ensuring a shared vision, plan, approach, and understanding of intended community and organisational value.

3.6 **Shared Vision**

A clear and shared vision will enable the development of mutually agreed objectives to deliver against realistic and timely outcomes. Without a shared vision, effective and sustainable collaboration is unlikely to happen or be supported.

Agreed objectives and outcomes will enable individual organisational priorities to be achieved.

3.7 **Transformational use of resources and information**

The most transformational approach to sharing, dedicating and developing resources (people, finance and assets), as well as the sharing of information, is key for success. This provides a basis for the transformational delivery of Service priorities as often collaborations are focused on the delivery of core activity. This enables influence in its development ensuring outcomes can be achieved in the most effective way and all parties are co-ordinated in their approach.

Shared resources as a principle of collaboration can facilitate closer dialogue and better working relationships between the partner organisations, generating increased efficiencies in ways of working and service delivery.

For example, providing a dedicated resource to the development of the Regional Road Safety Strategy led through WMCA has enabled WMFS to be at the forefront of developing this strategy, leading with knowledge and expertise in addition to enabling the most effective delivery of our legislative role.

3.8 **Digital Transformation**

Digital transformation will be a key principle to enabling collaborative working, ensuring staff can be involved in the most effective way, delivering both internal (organisation) and external (community) value.

For example, digital solutions can ensure that crews can operate more effectively whilst away from station.

3.9 **Shared decision making and commitment**

Organisations within the collaboration should contribute to the decision-making, identifying how value will be delivered and shared equitably in light of investment. This enables a shared vision to be retained and the direction of the collaboration remains in line with this.

Shared decision-making includes the identification and agreement on how **risk** will be apportioned between the parties to achieve best value for all.

3.10 **Communication**

Communication should be regular and proactive, both formal and informal. This can be achieved through use of a shared language (e.g. using JESIP principles).

3.11 **Trust**

Trust is an essential enabler and requires early understanding of different starting points and perspectives of each partner. Each collaboration may have different levels of success/value for each service, setting individual expectations early is essential.

3.12 **Realistic timeline and delivery pathway**

An achievable, realistic and clear project plan incorporating key areas.

3.13 **Corporate Governance Architecture**

Clearly defined strategic functions outlined in an agreed governance infrastructure to ensure the complexity and potential challenge is managed effectively. This will vary between the Service and other partners and will be officer led.

A robust governance structure supported by a collaboration agreement will ensure sustainability of a project through its life cycle.

Within the governance arrangements, where possible independent scrutiny can be applied providing assurance.

3.14 **Organisation Identity**

Retaining the best features of each collaborative partner identity whilst working towards closer collaboration and shared resources is critical.

The effective use of communication platforms and early defined roles in the development of collaboration, linked to individual service objectives, will support service identity.

3.15 **Evaluation**

Evaluation should commence at the outset of a collaboration through the agreed approach and outcomes as set out above. Evaluation and learning should be captured throughout the life of a collaboration, enabling adjustments to be considered and providing the evidence base to determine its ongoing viability.

This approach aligns to the Policing and Crime Act 2019 and its emphasis to keep collaboration arrangements under consideration.

A clear expectation is alignment to the expectations of the sector as set out in legislation in engaging in collaborative partnerships to support the delivery of our statutory duties (Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004) as set out in the Duty to Collaborate and ESWG.

An agreement considering the relevant elements from the framework above provides an approach for managing this risk when developing a collaborative partnership.

In agreeing both the definition and framework set out in this paper Officers will, in line with the delegations set out in the Authority's constitution, develop and engage in structured collaborative relationships, which support the transformational delivery of services aligned to risk as set out in the IRMP and Strategic priorities as set out in the rolling 3 year strategy, Our Plan.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The detail in this report enables the Authority to ensure alignment to the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Authorities 2018 and the Duty to Collaborate as set out in the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications.

Ref. C&T/2019/Nov/22810192

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Policing and Crime Act 2017
Collaboration – Strategic Definition – 7th October 2019

The contact for this report is Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk and Strategic Enabler (Strategic Hub). Tel. No. 0121 380 6678

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

