

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

10 OCTOBER 2011

1. COLLABORATION WITH STOKE ON TRENT AND STAFFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Report of the Clerk and Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the terms of reference for a joint fire control project board between this Authority and the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority be approved;
- 1.2 THAT the Committee appoint four members of the Authority to sit on the Project Board;
- 1.3 THAT in accordance with its delegated powers from the Authority, the Committee oversees progress on this joint initiative and receives regular progress reports from the Project Board.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report asks for approval to proposed terms of reference for a joint member project board between this Authority and the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority to explore collaborative work for delivering fire control services in the future.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Authority at its meeting on 19th September 2011 endorsed the principle of working towards a joint arrangement for delivering fire control services between the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority and this Authority; authorised the development of proposals for this joint arrangement by a Project Board comprising members of both authorities to develop the overall strategy, supported by an officer project team to identify, plan and implement the optimum solution. The Authority delegated power to this Committee to approve the governance arrangements for the Project

Board and Project Team; to appoint members of this Authority to sit on the Project Board; to oversee progress and receive regular reports from the Project Board; and to make recommendations to the Authority as necessary on the implementation of joint arrangements for delivering fire control services.

- 3.2 The Committee will recall that the national FireControl project was terminated by the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) on 20th December 2010. The Government's preferred approach to achieving improved resilience and efficiency is now through encouraging increased collaboration in a locally-determined way and funding of £81million will be made available to England's Fire and Rescue Authorities to help them develop their own solutions for improving resilience and efficiency, that is, up to £1.8m per authority.
- 3.3 Discussions have taken place at officer level and between the Chairs of this Authority and the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority with regard to collaborative solutions following the termination of the national Firecontrol project, and it is believed that there is an opportunity to deliver improved resilience, enhanced technology and efficiencies through a shared service approach.
- 3.4 Further discussions are taking place between the authorities with regard to terms of reference for the proposed project board to take this work forward. Suggested terms of reference will be circulated as soon as they are available.
- 3.5 The terms of reference provide for the appointment of four members of the Authority to sit on the Project Board. It is usual where the number of members appointed to an outside body is three or more for proportionality to apply to those appointments. Attendance at meetings of the Project Board will be an approved duty for the purpose of payment of travel and subsistence allowance under the approved Members' Allowances Scheme.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this particular report as it concerns the setting up of governance arrangements and a bidding process. Any expenditures and plans that have implications requiring an Equality Impact Assessment will need to be incorporated in any future reports for consideration as part of the ongoing project.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Fire and Rescue Authorities are empowered by Section 7(2)(c) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to make arrangements to deal with calls for help and for summoning personnel. The Fire Services Minister in July 2010 emphasised the need for fire authorities to work collaboratively to deliver efficiency, effectiveness and an enhanced resilience capability.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 CLG has recently announced funding arrangements to support locally delivered solutions for fire and rescue control services. Each service is able to submit a bid for up to £1.8m. There are clear criteria as to how funding will be allocated based on resilience and efficiency outcomes and evidence of collaboration between Services. By working with another fire authority a potential sum of £3.6 m becomes available to develop solutions that are truly integrated for intelligence-led mobilising, collation of data and evidence, resource management and ensuring response outcomes are factored into preventative and protective services.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

NEERAJ SHARMA
CLERK

VIJ RANDENIYA
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER