

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

20 FEBRUARY 2017

1. OUTCOMES OF THE FUTURE GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

Report of the Future Governance Working Group and Independent Chair (Price Waterhouse Coopers)

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Authority notes the conclusions of the Future Governance Working Group (the working group).

THAT the Authority considers these conclusions in discussions and decisions around the future governance of West Midlands Fire Service (the Service) and presently in the consideration of the Route to Mayor Authority paper, 20 February 2017.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to inform members of the outcomes and conclusions of the working group. The report of the working group is set out in Appendix 1. This report also provides an understanding of the approach and considerations of the working group which is important to support members' understanding, as the Authority begins to consider the future governance of the Service.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Since 2010 the fire sector has undergone a significant period of challenge and change with the Comprehensive Spending Review currently extending to 2020, the Ken Knight and Adrian Thomas reviews and the fire sector moving from the Department of Communities and Local Government to the Home Office. These challenges have enabled significant transformation across the Service, which has impacted upon both our staff and communities in the delivery of more efficient, effective and innovative services.

- 3.2 The Policing and Crime Act 2017 (the Act) places a clear expectation on the blue light emergency services (Police, Ambulance and Fire) to collaborate further where efficiency and effectiveness can be achieved. The Act also enables the governance of a Fire Service to transfer from a Fire Authority to a Police and Crime Commissioner, or an elected Mayor where there is local agreement.
- 3.3 The Authority recognised amongst all this change the need for further reform and in June 2016 members approved the commissioning of a Future Governance Working Group (the working group). This provided a signal of intent to review the governance arrangements of West Midlands Fire Service.
- 3.4 The purpose of the working group was to consider how the future governance of the Service can support the delivery of services to local communities, with increased scrutiny, transparency and accountability of decisions; in a value for money way.
- 3.5 The working group consisted of a number of key stakeholders from across the public sector and over a course of 6 meetings spanning from July 2016 to January 2017 sought to understand:
- The strategic direction of the Service.
 - The context and direction of public service priorities across the West Midlands.
 - The intent of the pending Policing and Crime legislation in developing collaborations across the blue light emergency services as well as changes in the way Fire and Rescue Services are governed in the future.
 - What collaboration currently looks like for the service locally and blue light emergency services nationally.
 - What the possibilities are for collaboration across West Midlands public services for the future, and
 - how each of the agreed governance options could enable delivery of more collaborative services to the communities of the West Midlands.
- 3.6 The outcome of the working group was to provide an evidence based options appraisal for the future governance of WMFS,

providing the best approach to governance, which supports the delivery of services across the West Midlands.

- 3.7 The full report of the working group and its conclusions are set out in Appendix 1.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The matters contained in this report do not relate to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The working group was not a decision making group and is not a legal requirement as part of the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework for England and there are no legal implications as a result of its conclusions.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Given the strategic significance covered by the Future Governance Working Group Terms of Reference, the appointment of an independent Chair was considered essential to provide an appropriate level of challenge and scrutiny to the work undertaken by the Working Group and the validity of the subsequent outcomes. The external cost of providing this was approximately £25k, which has been funded from within the Authority's overall 2016/2017 budget.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Future Governance Working Group Terms of Reference
The Policing and Crime Act 2017
The Future Governance of West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
Report, 27 June 2016

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