

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

17 SEPTEMBER 2018

1. **WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE AND WARWICKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE COLLABORATION UPDATE
REPORT**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Authority note the progress made with the Collaboration programme since the signing of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) in February 2018.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to provide Members with an update of the developments made in the first phase of the collaboration journey; exploring the benefits of joint working.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 On 9th February 2018 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Leader of Warwickshire County Council (WCC), Councillor Izzi Seccombe and Chair of the West Midlands Fire Authority, Councillor John Edwards as a firm statement of intent to pursue opportunities for greater collaboration.
- 3.2 This direction was pursued as it is believed that a number of positive opportunities exist for joint collaborative working as a means of achieving reform and enhanced service delivery. The commitment is also supportive of the duty placed on emergency services to explore opportunities for collaborative working as set out in the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

- 3.3 Though there is no specific statutory Duty for Fire – Fire collaboration, the Minister for Police and Fire, Nick Hurd MP, expressed his support for the direction in the House of Commons, stating that Government are ‘...keen to encourage the greatest levels of collaboration between our emergency services’.
- 3.4 A programme approach was developed for the collaboration commitment and representatives from the Senior leadership teams of both services met on 9th April to commence the programme.
- 3.5 This report shares with Members the MoU (Appendix 1) together with the emerging approach.

Approach

- 3.6 To manage the impact upon service delivery a rolling programme of reviews was established, with no more than three service areas being under review at any one time.
- 3.7 Each review will be delivered within a 60-day timeframe through a series of facilitated workshops, involving the relevant teams from each Fire Service. Workshops will be designed and tailored to build up robust and evidence-led options appraisals by completion of the final workshop.
- 3.8 All potential options were assessed against the following success criteria, which are based on the principles of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 and HMICFRS themes for Fire and Rescue:

Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How far does the proposal maintain or improve public safety for the communities served by the two FRSs?</i>• <i>Will the proposals impact on public safety of neighbouring FRS and communities?</i>
Service Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How far do the proposals enhance service resilience levels within both services to maintain/improve public safety?</i>
Service Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How far do the proposals enhance the ability of each FRS to keep people safe and secure from fire and other risks?</i>

Service Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How far do the proposals enhance the ability of each FRS to use its resources to manage risk, and secure an affordable way of providing its service, now and in the future?</i>
Service Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How far do the proposals improve the quality of service received by the public?</i>

3.9 All decisions taken will ensure alignment with statutory expectations and each FRSs strategic objectives.

Governance of the Programme

3.10 A Programme Board has been established to oversee the work. Membership includes WCC's Joint Managing Director, Monica Fogarty, Warwickshire FRS's Chief Fire Officer, Andy Hickmott and West Midlands Fire Service's Chief Fire Officer, Phil Loach.

3.11 A joint Programme Team has also been established to deliver the work programme. The team will coordinate input from a range of experts including finance, HR, legal, communication and performance.

3.12 At the end of each review the Programme Board will report progress to an Executive Group including the Leader of WCC, WCC Fire & Rescue Portfolio Holder, Cllr Andrew Crump, and the Chair of the WMFRA.

3.13 The first 60 day review commenced in May and was completed in July and appraised collaborative options for Fire control, Training and Social vulnerability.

3.14 In this time three workshops were held with teams from both FRSs: workshop 1 looked at understanding each service's present or 'as is' position, workshop 2 focussed on exploring and appraising potential options for collaboration, with the final workshop focussing on presenting an outline business case for the preferred option.

Outcomes of Review 1

3.15 Fire Control

- Collaboration in this service area is considered as a key enabler to other collaborative working and was identified as an area for early consideration as both services are currently transitioning to Vision 4 technology.
- Shared control solutions have the potential to enable a 'borderless' approach in service delivery, which could maximise the benefits for the communities of the West Midlands and Warwickshire.
- During the 60 day review, Options appraisals highlighted that a single function based at the WMFS Headquarters would potentially provide the most benefit for both FRSs and their respective communities.
- A full business case will now be developed over the next three months, with an indicative timeline of 12-24 months for implementation. Having delivered a successful joint Fire Control with Staffordshire FRS, the Service has the relevant experience and expertise to deliver a single function with Warwickshire FRS efficiently and effectively.
- The anticipated benefits for both services are expected to be considerable, though an initial investment and transition cost would be required.
- A dedicated communications strategy for Fire control has been developed to ensure all stakeholders are kept well informed, including representative bodies, staff and partners.
- Staffordshire FRS are fully informed of all developments as a key stakeholder in this direction.

3.16 Training

- The 60 day review focused on exploring collaborative options for training provision, based upon existing assets and sites.
- For WMFS this included the potential to share usage of Radford Rd Coventry site and for WFRS these options were considered in the context of the plans for a training centre at Southam. Should this be the preferred option, a

tender would be undertaken for the refurbishment of the fire house.

- Beyond the 60 day review, Programme Board have also commissioned work to look at training demand and provision options across the full breadth of the two services.
- Exploration of these options is ongoing, but early indications is that there are considerable potential benefits.
- Progress will be reviewed by Lead Officer from both Services on 13th September.

3.17 Social Vulnerability

- Significant work has been undertaken as a result of the existing Prevention Partnership Agreement (PPA) signed by the two services in 2017. It is evident there is much potential to be realised in this area, however, critical work needs to be undertaken before any further joined up working can be explored. The work identified through the previous PPA will now be refocused to include and reflect the present MOU aspirations.
- A challenge to collaboration in this area is the difference in how risk and vulnerability is currently identified by both FRSs. This requires review and alignment.
- An outcome of the options appraisals was that the alignment of both services' risk identification methods is required to ensure that services are tailored to reach the most vulnerable in both communities.
- It was agreed by Programme Board that when new areas of work are identified within prevention, these are approached together.
- The above actions will support an additional work stream to further explore the potential of a single prevention function or service / delivery model across the two services.

Timescales and next steps

- 3.18 Key decisions for Fire Control are expected in December 2018 and for Training in October 2018, with Review 2 potentially commencing October 2018.
- 3.19 The outcomes from the first review will continue to progress alongside Review cycle 2.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1 In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is required and has been carried out. The initial Equality Impact Assessment did not raise issues which required a full Equality Impact Assessment to be completed.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Include positive legal implications referring to either legislation or the National Framework to support the legality of this report.

- 5.1 There will be legal implications for the Fire control option, these are currently being determined and will be brought back to the Authority.
- 5.2 This direction is in line with Government expectations for emergency services and meets the Policing and Crime Act 2017 Duty to collaborate as mentioned in the background section.
- 5.3 Fire & Rescue Services Act sections on mutual aid; section 13, section 16.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The costs for this collaboration work is currently being financed through existing budgets.
- 6.2 Financial implications for the implementation phase of each area are currently being determined and will be presented to the Authority once clear.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

The contact name for this report is DCFO Phil Hales 0121 380 6908.

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Warwickshire and West Midlands Fire & Rescue
Authorities Collaboration MOU



**Warwickshire and West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authorities
Collaboration 2018**

1. Warwickshire and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authorities believe that a number of positive opportunities exist for collaborative working as a means of achieving change and enhanced service delivery.
2. The Public Sector is in a period of pressure – both for efficiency and improved services within reducing resources. Within the West Midlands in particular, agencies have grasped this challenge positively, engaging with devolution, public sector reform and the opportunity to achieve system wide change and development. We believe that the development of Fire and Rescue Services must also benefit from this context of change, and collaboration is a means of doing so. The national policy regarding blue light services sets out a new and clear duty to collaborate and collaboration will move us closer in meeting this duty.
3. The community engagement agenda is an opportunity for Fire and Rescue Services. Within Warwickshire and the West Midlands we have progressive and ever increasing ambitions and expectations about our standards of service and our role within the Community. We recognise that the need to consider working differently within an ever reducing resource base means that working differently is a given, both operationally and politically.
4. Working differently will achieve many things. It must add value, and better protect, the communities we serve. Vulnerability and risk in the community is ever present and ever changing, as are the functions, resources, boundaries, and beliefs of the various public agencies which support them.
5. The geographic boundary between the Warwickshire and West Midlands Fire Services is unique in the UK Fire and Rescue Service. We share 129Km of boundary and the physical geography means it makes sense to look at reciprocal and collaborative opportunities. This is not new and in the past there have been previous considerations of options. Few tangible results have yet been achieved and this time we need to change that outcome. Full political support means that we now have a much better chance of success.



6. Both Fire and Rescue Authorities are fully open to the scope of considerations that these opportunities present. These considerations include all aspects of operational service delivery across Fire training; prevention; protection; and response as well as all aspects of operational and organisational support functions. In particular we are committed to exploring fully the opportunities for enhanced community welfare. We wish to exploit the potential for joining up with our colleagues in the NHS and Local Government; recognising the need to work together to support the social care, health and wellbeing of our communities.

7. Finally, it is a governing principle that any collaborative measures must improve on the Status Quo. Such measures must better serve our communities. Demonstrably so, whilst also enhancing efficiency and effectiveness.

Both Warwickshire County Council (Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service) and the West Midlands Fire Authority endorse this body of work and commit to the programme* of work which will get us there. We expect this programme to be complete by July 2018, and to make the necessary links and connections with wider change under way with both Fire and Rescue Services and the wider West Midlands public service reform agenda.

Signed: 9 February 2018

Handwritten signature of Cllr John Edwards.

Cllr John Edwards

Chair

West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority

Handwritten signature of Cllr Izzi Seccombe.

Cllr Izzi Seccombe

Leader

Warwickshire County Council

*The Collaboration Programme of Work is enclosed, setting out proposed areas of exploration and development.