

## **WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**30 SEPTEMBER 2019**

### **1. STREAMING OF FIRE AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

Report of the Clerk.

RECOMMENDED

THAT members note the information in this report regarding the future streaming of Fire Authority meetings.

### **2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To explore to options which will enable the future streaming of all Fire Authority meetings, both internally to staff and externally

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Authority has a legal duty to provide a record of public council meetings, fulfilling this through the publishing of papers prior to an Authority meeting, as per statutory requirements. This includes the publishing of meeting minutes.
- 3.2 To further enable transparency in decision making all Authority meetings are open to the attendance of members of the public, members of staff (where appropriate) and press, except for the hearing of reports which have been classified as private (pink) papers.
- 3.3 To support increased engagement and understanding of fire service activity, the streaming of Authority meetings could provide new opportunities for Service staff and West Midlands residents, enabling them to view meetings and (virtually) hear the decision-making process.
- 3.4 This will provide both staff and community residents with the ability to understand the background, discussion and challenges to decisions made at Authority meetings as these

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decisions are taken.

- 3.5 Currently the Authority does not stream meetings internally or externally. There are two options to consider in being able to explore this approach for the future.

**Option 1: Live streaming internally and externally.**

- 3.6 The Authority has the ability to live stream meetings internally using Surface Hubs across fire service locations and this approach is in the process of being tested.
- 3.7 Live streaming externally would require further investment to support the procurement of equipment and the ongoing cost of the software required to enable this approach.
- 3.8 This can provide real time viewing of Authority meetings in progress. The potential value of this investment will need to be assessed and a further report provided to members outlining the costs, versus value to be delivered.
- 3.9 External live streaming is a new concept and if this option were to be implemented it would require testing and a review of current processes in place to prepare for and conduct Authority meetings.

**Option 2: Live streaming internally and publishing the video and audio record externally.**

- 3.10 The Authority currently has the ability to provide this option but it should be recognised that this would not provide live streaming of meetings externally.
- 3.11 Either option would require testing and assessment prior to implementation and a review of current processes in place to support Authority meetings, to understand the impact and changes required for both preparation and conduct of meetings.
- 3.6 It is proposed that these options are reviewed further by officers with a further report to be provided to the Authority in due course providing an overview of costs versus anticipated value to be delivered.

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**

This report supports the delivery of the role of elected members on the Fire Authority as set out in the Fire Authority Constitution.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial options are to be reported as part of a wider assessment of costs, value to be delivered and process change required.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Non applicable

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