

Minutes of the Collaboration and Transformation Committee

18 July 2022

Conducted as a public meeting at Headquarters and digitally via Microsoft Teams

Present: Councillor Dehar (Chair), Councillor Hussain (Vice-Chair), Councillor Atwal, Councillor Barrie, Councillor Brackenridge, Councillor Hogarth.

Virtual: Councillor Iqbal, Councillor Miks, Prof Simon Brake, APCC Wasim Ali

Officers: Mike Griffiths, Phil Loach, Tom Embury, Kirsty Tuffin.

06/22 **To receive apologies for absence (if any)**

No apologies for absence were received.

The Chair of the Committee advised the Committee that Councillor Seamus Walsh had sadly passed away. All Members passed on their condolences and a minute silence was held.

07/22 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

08/23 **Minutes of the Collaboration and Transformation Committee held on 25 April 2022**

Resolved:

1. That the Minutes of the Collaboration and Transformation Committee held on 25 April 2022 were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

09/22 **Authority White Paper Consultation Response**

Tom Embury, Deputy Clerk to the Authority, presented the Authority White Paper Consultation Response Report that provided an overview of the Fire Reform White Paper and

draft response to the consultation on behalf of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA).

The Committee were advised that the Fire Reform White Paper had been published on 18 May 2022 and set out plans from the government to reform three key areas: people, professionalism and governance. Both political parties had met prior to discuss their response and the final draft had been drafted with consultation of the Chair of the Authority and the Local Government Association (LGA). The final draft response had been attached as appendix A. It was highlighted the impact of the ongoing change of Prime Minister would need to be monitored as this could impact the implementation of any changes.

The Chair of the Authority thanked all those involved in drafting the response. He advised that there had been little disagreement between the Conservative Group, the LGA's and the Labour Group's responses. The Police Crime Commissioner, Simon Foster, had also attended the Labour Group's meeting and had provided input into the response.

The Committee were advised that to take into account the Conservative Groups response, question 22 had been changed from 'Neither Agree/Disagree' to 'Disagree'. Councillor Hogarth agreed that there had been little difference with the LGA's response and Labour/Conservative Group responses and felt appendix A had taken into account the Conservatives response. There had been consensus in the room by members that there had been no need to change the current governance approach as it worked efficiently and effectively.

Prof Simon Brake expressed support for the response, as per appendix A of the report.

The Chair of the Authority advised the Committee that it had been suggested to make these changes mandatory however, the LGA had been pushing against this. All members agreed that any changes should not be mandatory and should be left to local determination.

Councillor Hogarth expressed sympathy for the Chief Fire Officer with regards to proposed governance change. He felt that the Chief ran the Service effectively and had done and was doing a great job. He felt that the CFO had thorough knowledge on what was needed to operate the Service effectively and efficiently and expressed concerns over the lack of knowledge and understanding with regard to fire services that a Mayor/PCC may have.

The Chair of the Authority advised that that officers were able to submit their own response, although acknowledged it could be tricky around their approach with the governance aspects of their response. He re-enforced that appendix A had then been the response of the WMFRA and not the Service/Officers.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed that the draft Fire Authority response to the Fire Reform White Paper Consultation, as per appendix A of the report, be approved.

The meeting finished at 10:47 hours.

Kirsty Tuffin Strategic Hub 0121 380 6906
