WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

COLLABORATION AND TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE

15 MAY 2023

1. **COLLABORATION AND TRANSFORMATION – DIGITAL, DATA AND INNOVATION**

   Report of the Chief Fire Officer

   RECOMMENDED

   THAT Members:

1.1 Note the ongoing commitment organisationally to digital transformation and collaboration.

1.2 Note our progress on Oracle Cloud Project, Legacy Systems Transformation & Operational Mobile Device Projects.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

2.1 To provide an update around the ongoing digital transformation introduced through the West Midlands Fire Service Digital, Data and Innovation Strategy.

2.2 To provide updates on our key transformation projects and how these give value to our communities and introduce early considerations for projects that will shape and support the fire service of the future.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 **Digital Inclusion in the West Midlands**

3.1.1 This is not a problem we can solve in isolation, and we continue working with our partners and charities as part of the West Midlands Coalition for Digital Inclusion.

Ref: AU/C&T/2023/May/20405237

3.1.2 West Midlands Fire Service continue to be part of initiatives such as 'Warm Spaces' and we have also considered how this can also result in increased digital inclusion.

3.1.3 We are continuing to work with partners that are part of the WMFS 5G testbed, Coventry Smart Cities and leading suppliers on using information from sensors and new ways of gathering information to reduce risks. Our innovation team are also working with universities on new ways of working and solving problems for our Fire Service and the sector.

3.2 **Digital Collaboration**

3.2.1 We continue to deliver digital services to South Wales, Staffordshire and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services. We continue to develop our approach to increase this number. These fire – fire collaborations provide economies of scale and reduce costs for all involved and maximise public sector funding.

3.2.2 We continue to use our influence with the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) and Home Office around data collection and there is significant progress being made nationally in this area.

3.3 **Operations Mobile Devices**

3.3.1 We have now rolled out rugged tablet devices to each of our stations. These will provide our crews with access to key information as well as helping them to spend more time out in the communities they serve rather than trapped behind a screen at station.

3.3.2 Our "Innovation" Stations will be trialling Incident Command Software to deliver better outcomes for our communities as well as ensuring our firefighters remain safe. As part of this trial, we are also including personal devices that can be used by crews to improve communication on the incident ground by providing key information about hazards. This will also give crews access to information in key policies anywhere.

3.3.3 Firefighters will also be able to get help when needed from more experienced colleagues as well as see and share complex scenarios.

Ref: AU/C&T/2023/May/20405237

3.3.4 The devices will mean that data gets collected quickly, will reduce duplication and streamline processes giving more capacity for other key activities.

3.3.5 They can be used for our protection and prevention activities and allow our teams to work more closely with partners that can assist the most vulnerable in our communities.

3.3.6 We are shortly about to release a full trial of this in the Coventry and Solihull Command area.

3.4 **Legacy Systems Transformation**

3.4.1 We have recently delivered the largest change in our Oracle system focused on Talent and Learning. This is a key area for the service and will enable much more detailed and clear reporting across this area.

3.4.2 As with any new, large delivery we are working through the challenges of the change for our crews and continue to provide remote and in person training.

3.4.3 The ongoing cyber landscape means that we need to move away from our other legacy systems specifically those that manage our Fleet, Assets and Time & Attendance.

3.4.4 We have awarded contracts for Time & Attendance and are working towards delivery by the end of the financial year. We expect the other remaining systems to be replaced within this timescale too.

3.4.5 We continue to invest in and improve trust through improved reporting and our teams being able to see all their information.

3.5 **Next Steps**

3.5.1 Our next key investment will be into our emergency response systems and 999 call handling. This will focus on providing flexible and more effective working for our crews and Fire Control teams and also open up new ways of working and lead to greater productivity and efficiency in our emergency response.

Ref: AU/C&T/2023/May/20405237

3.5.2 The digital, data and innovation strategy continues to be embedded into Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) proposals. This is enabling us to deliver solutions that reduce costs while delivering more for our communities.

4.   **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1   In preparing this report, an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been conducted.

4.2   Our progress in digital technology should be considered as having a positive effect on our neurodiverse staff. We continue to provide assistive technology for staff with needs around dyslexia for example and are expanding this to include literacy assistance into Oracle aligned to feedback from our teams.

4.3   We continue working with the neurodiversity and other groups to ensure that our digital systems are easily understood and effective for all. We also continue to deliver and develop training to ensure our teams are skilled in the use of the systems they use.

4.4   The use of digital technology continues to provide opportunities to engage people that do not have English as their first language. This continues to be a key feature of any area when we deliver services to the public.

5.   **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1   There are no direct legal implications.

6.   **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1   There are no direct financial implications.

7.   **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1   There has been a positive shift towards our environmental policy due to the digital investments and transformed ways of working. Staff are now able to work in a hybrid way so they can be as effective if they are in the office or working remotely.

Ref: AU/C&T/2023/May/20405237

7.2   Ongoing digital delivery, modernisation and targeted cloud investment continues to provide options for our estate and how we use it. Ongoing transformation and movement of key functions as well as collaboration is enhanced by digital technology.

BACKGROUND PAPERS
N/A

The contact for this report is Kash Singh, Head of Digital and Data, telephone number 07973 810 377.

Wayne Brown
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Ref: AU/C&T/2023/May/20405237