

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 6TH DECEMBER 2023
REPORT OF: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
AUTHOR: LEE SHEARS

SUBJECT: COLLABORATION STRATEGY

Purpose of the Report

1. To present Members with a Collaboration Strategy for approval.

Recommended: That Members:

- [1] Approve the Collaboration Strategy.

Background

2. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 contains a statutory duty to consider collaboration with other emergency services where two or more of the emergency services consider it would be in the interests of their efficiency or effectiveness to collaborate. A service is not required to collaborate if the service is of the view that the proposed collaboration would have an adverse effect on public safety or have an adverse effect on its efficiency or effectiveness.
3. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 contains guidance to fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions. In paragraphs 2.12 to 2.17, the Framework refers to the statutory duty to consider collaboration and explains that the duty is deliberately broad to allow for local discretion in how it is implemented and recognises that local emergency services are best place to determine how to collaborate for the benefit of their communities.
4. The Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report published in 2018 stated that the Service needed to improve the way it monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration. An Action Plan was prepared following the feedback within the HMICFRS inspection report which made reference to developing a Collaboration Strategy.
5. The Fire Authority approved the initial Collaboration Strategy, at its meeting on 12th February 2020. It was agreed that the document would be reviewed by the Fire Authority every two years.

Information

6. The draft Collaboration Strategy contained in Appendix 1 to this report was reviewed by officers, taking into consideration best practice from other fire and rescue services. It contains minor amendments to reflect the current position of collaboration activity within the Service.

Financial Implications

7. There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, improved monitoring and review could drive financial benefits.

Legal Implications

8. As described in paragraphs 2 and 3 of this report, the Authority has a statutory duty under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 to consider collaboration and it is also a requirement of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018. Beyond this legal obligation there are no other legal implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity

9. There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

10. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Report to Cheshire Fire Authority submitted on 12th February 2020.