

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE: 13 NOVEMBER 2019
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
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SUBJECT: DRAFT COLLABORATION STRATEGY

Purpose of the Report

1. To secure feedback from Members about an initial draft Collaboration Strategy.

Recommended: That:

- [1] Members provide feedback about the initial draft Collaboration Strategy.

Background

2. Cheshire Fire Authority and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service have pursued a range of collaborations with a variety of parties.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. The Framework confirms that the duty does not preclude wider collaboration with other local partners, such as local authorities and health bodies and states that fire and rescue authorities must collaborate with other fire and rescue authorities to deliver interoperability (between fire and rescue authorities) and interoperability (with other responders such as other emergency services and Local Resilience Forums) in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP).

6. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) determined that the Service was 'Good' when considering the question, 'How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?' In the section of the Inspection Report concerned with efficiency, the HMICFRS commented upon the Service's involvement in collaboration. Extracts from the Inspection Report that are relevant are contained in Appendix 1 to this report.
7. Since the HMICFRS Inspection Report was published an Action Plan has been prepared and this was agreed by Performance and Overview Committee in July 2019 and is monitored by that Committee. An extract from the Action Plan that is concerned with the Area for Improvement 'The service should ensure there is effective monitoring, review and evaluation of the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration' is contained in Appendix 2 to this report. It makes reference to developing a Collaboration Strategy.

Information

8. Given the significant amount of collaborative activity that exists there was an expectation that it would be a relatively simple task to find best practice and supporting documentation concerned with collaboration that could form the basis of a Collaboration Strategy. Unfortunately, this has not proved to be the case with a broad range of approaches and styles. The Service already had a Partnership Toolkit, which had been developed and adopted by the Prevention Department. It was clear that this document contained important elements relevant to a Collaboration Strategy. An extract from the Prevention Partnership Policy is contained in Appendix 3 to this report. Two further documents from the Partnership Toolkit, concerned with Partnership Initiatives and Partnership Reviews are contained in Appendix 4 to this report.
9. The draft Collaboration Strategy contained in Appendix 5 attempts to draw together a range of issues that are relevant to collaborative activity. This will be supplemented with a Collaboration Register, a copy of which is contained in Appendix 6. This will draw together key information and assist in monitoring, review etc.
10. Whilst officers acknowledge that the draft Collaboration Strategy requires further work they are keen to establish whether Members are comfortable that it presents a good basis upon which to base a final version for approval by the Fire Authority.

Financial Implications

11. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

12. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity

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

Environmental Implications

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS: