

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/22/25
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	12 DECEMBER 2022
SUBJECT OF REPORT	DIGITAL SERVICES: STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE – PROGRESS UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>that the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The paper advises the Authority on progress in developing a Target Operating Model and specifically on options for digital transformation which will be a key enabler to maximise technological advances within available resources.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	To be determined as part of the Outline Business Case discussions.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	To be determined as part of the Outline Business Case discussions.
APPENDICES	Nil.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (the Service) is not immune to the increased pressures on the public sector. There is uncertainty as to future Government Grant settlement and forecasted rates of inflation will create additional pressures. Therefore, it is prudent for the Service to review how it operates to ensure it is prepared for a funding gap on a scale not seen in recent years.

1.2. Following a commission by the Executive Board, the Service Leadership Team is developing a target operating model to ensure the Service is effective, efficient, and economically sustainable for the future. This work includes consideration of alternative service delivery vehicles (ASDV) for some elements of professional services. The digital services function is one of those areas being considered. At its core, the Service needs to ensure it has an operating model that:

- Is affordable both now and in the future;
- Provides the core services of Service Delivery effectively; and
- Keeps communities safe.

2. KEY OBJECTIVES AND FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

2.1. The key objective of the Strategic Outline Case is to determine the options for transformation of digital services provision for the Service. The options are being appraised against the following critical business factors:

Time to achieve the desired state - The Service is expecting a significant funding gap in its budget next year. It is imperative that any decisions to transform services are taken at the earliest opportunity to ensure good planning and benefits realisation can be achieved, therefore time of delivery is a key consideration in the decision-making process.

Quality of Service – The ability of digital services function to maintain quality products and services against organisational requirements is a key driver for success.

Efficiency and Economic – A future model must be both effective and efficient as the Service needs to have financial viability for the longer term.

2.2. The functions in scope for consideration are:

- Digital strategic leadership
- Data Management (architecture and exploitation)
- Information Governance
- Application development and management
- Infrastructure and hardware

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND CASE FOR CHANGE

- 3.1. In addition to the difficult national financial situation, the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) identifies the services that must be delivered to keep communities safe. The Service must ensure it is agile enough to respond to these changes.
- 3.2. The Authority has been advised that the Executive Board (the most senior team within the Service) has initiated work to determine a Target Operating Model for the future. This model is specifically focused how the Service will, through professional and technical services, maximise Service Delivery effort (prevention, protection, response and resilience) to best protect the public. Digital transformation will be a key enabler in this process to maximise technological advances within available resources.
- 3.3. It should be noted that this Target Operating Model does not include changes to the number of fire stations or fire engines - that is a matter for consideration within the Community Risk Management Plan process and is subject to public consultation as and when changes are proposed.
- 3.4. In determining the future Target Operating Model, the Service is acutely aware of the financial resources likely to be available and the need to focus time, effort and resource in areas of greatest need.
- 3.5. The Service also has a change and improvement agenda, informed by, amongst other things, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS). This change agenda will remain at the forefront of Service improvement objectives. As such, there may be significant changes that are presented, some of which will require Authority consideration.
- 3.6. A number of functions are being reviewed including the digital services function to ensure that the strategy, activity and delivery elements are within the financial affordability envelope and meet the requirements of the organisation.
- 3.7. Using the HM Treasury 5 Case Model, a Strategic Outline Case is being developed which considers a number of options: do nothing; internal transformation; partnership/shared service models and full outsourcing. The options will address some of the recent findings into the review of the Home Fire Safety Visits App, which has been subject to Member scrutiny through the Community Safety Committee.
- 3.8. A subsequent report will be provided in early 2023 which will inform, and be informed by, the future financial context that will become clearer at that stage.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1. From the options in the Strategic Outline Case, a shortlist of options will be worked up in detail to inform an Outline Business Case. This will be completed by 31 January 2023 and presented to the Authority as soon as is practicable.

LEE HOWELL
Chief Fire Officer