Local Government Improvement and Development

# FRS Shared Services – political collaboration

Caroline Bosdet

Marcus Coulson

March 2011

www.local.gov.uk/improvement

# Purpose of the session

- To explore issues for members around collaborative working

- To identify skills needed to lead collaborative working

# Drivers for collaboration

- Ministers priorities
- **Budget cuts**
- **Protect the frontline**
- **Resilience**
- Increase capacity/expertise
- Reduce duplication
- Opportunities to migrate to new technology platforms
- Increase purchasing power

# Range of activity - FRS

- South East – (RIEP) common SOPs, pooled procurement resource leading to real savings e.g. PPE
- Merseyside (RIEP) collaborative procurement group – cash savings
- Durham and Darlington FRS (RIEP) – flood defence and water rescue
- South West (RIEP)- range of collaboration on training, equality
- Yorkshire and Humber (RIEP) – exploration of collaboration in back office services e.g. HR, payroll, legal, procurement, specialist common services
- Northumberland County Council - Rothbury Community Fire Station and Children's Centre
- Suffolk – combined police and fire stations – maximising FRS assets

# Range of activity - FRS

- Cambridgeshire FRS – discussing options for sharing services and assets with Fire, police and council
- Avon FRS - considering a raft of measures to reduce costs, including merging backroom functions with other fire brigades
- Dorset and Devon and Somerset FRSs looking at range of options for collaboration
- Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester – collaboration agreement
- Shared control – Surrey and Isle of Wight, Cambridgeshire & Suffolk
- Pairings discussing shared CFOs and amalgamation – not all in public domain

# Learning from councils

- 16 pairs of authorities that share a Chief Executive/ Management Team and many authorities are considering and/or preparing to introduce joint arrangements
- There is not a single model for shared services as local circumstances determine the scale and pace:

- councils contracted to provide back office and some frontline services to others
- developing a joint venture with the private sector can help to improve services and spread risk
- Social enterprises can be vehicles for delivering services for more than one authority.

# Our experience of the key issues

- It’s a leadership challenge not a technical one
- Politically driven - critical
- Cultural
- Strategic fit
- Relationships and trust
- Human factors
- Win/win
- Open communication to:– staff, partners, public and members
- Initial business case does not have to be detailed

# Success factors

- Governance
- Shared vision
- Clear objectives
- Openness to learning from others
- Management of change – staff morale, communication, industrial relations
- Focus on quality of service through the change process
- Realism on payback timescales

# Exercise 1

A). Who is your partner of choice, and why?

B). What are your priorities around collaborative working?

C). What are the barriers?

# Exercise 2

A). What skills do you need to be an effective collaborative leader?

B). Do you have a story of effective political collaboration?

# Sources of help

- Our Fire and Rescue Pages
- Place Based Productivity Communities of Practice
- South West Councils – Fire Programme
- Local Productivity Programme – LG Group
- South East Fire Improvement Partnership

# Contact information

**Caroline Bosdet**
Senior Improvement Manager
**Local Government Improvement & Development**

**Email**: caroline.bosdet@local.gov.uk
**Tel**: 07876 106183

**Marcus Coulson**
Improvement Manager
**Local Government Improvement & Development**

**Email**: marcus.coulson@local.gov.uk
**Tel**: 07766 252 853