

RECORD OF DECISION

TITLE: Submission of a Full Business Case considering the governance of Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services

Ref: PCC/D/2017/11

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced measures which places a statutory obligation on emergency services to collaborate. It also enables Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to take on responsibilities for fire and rescue services in their area. The process for this as set out in legislation has been followed and it is recommended that the full business case is submitted for consideration by the Secretary of State.

PROPOSAL

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 enables Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to take on responsibilities for fire and rescue services in their area. The statutory process for this requires the submission of a full business case to the Secretary of State for their approval, following consultation with various bodies and the public of the area concerned on a draft business case. That process has been followed and a full business case has been prepared.

The full business case sets out clear reasons for the proposal that the PCC should assume the governance of the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) and the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) as enabled by the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

The full business case takes into account the many comments, objections and support received during the formal consultation process. It proposes that the separate identities of the three services will be retained. A joint governance approach will facilitate enhanced collaboration between police and fire services and deliver better outcomes for the public. It will support the operational sustainability of both services in a largely rural area against a background of reduced public funding; and at the same time produce efficiency savings that other governance models are highly unlikely to be able to deliver.

The change in governance will enable four principal gains:

1. Sustainable and highly collaborative front-line Fire and Policing Services providing more resilient public safety services, enabled through shared supporting and enabling services;

2. Savings from sharing support services may be diverted to increase the numbers engaged in prevention activity providing a direct contribution to improved public safety;
3. Sustainable reduction in costs achieved through collaboration and shared facilities;
4. Direct democratic accountability of the proposed PFCC to the electors of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire with lower cost of delivery of governance.

These gains will be delivered across six streams of activity:

1. Joint governance delivering direct democratic accountability and efficiency savings;
2. Integration of fire command structures maintaining command resilience while delivering efficiency savings;
3. Integration of Shropshire Fire Command Centre with the Operations Communications Centre shared by Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police at Hindlip;
4. Alignment of Fire ICT and outsourced services with Police equivalents;
5. Increased inter-service collaboration particularly through premises sharing;
6. Consolidation and integration of all supporting and enabling services across all three organisations (and in conjunction with Warwickshire Police through the Police Alliance).

Delivery of full benefits will be achieved from 2021 onwards with some investment required in the intervening years.

Joint governance will serve to increase public safety through accelerated collaboration and efficient resource utilisation. It will enhance community resilience while limiting the risk of organisational cultural barriers and change resistance. Joint governance will increase effectiveness by removing local barriers to significantly greater levels of collaboration and reducing risk of resistance from inappropriate self-interest. It offers the greatest potential for significant efficiency gains with low implementation costs.

The full business case should therefore be submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration

**APPROVAL OF
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner**

I hereby approve the above proposal.

Signed



FINANCIAL COMMENTS

There are no financial considerations arising out of this recommendation. The financial considerations of the proposed changes in governance are set out in the full business case itself.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

By section 6 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 a Police and Crime Commissioner may become the fire and rescue authority for the area through a process set out in schedule 1 of that Act.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the West Mercia Commissioner's website. Any facts and advice that should not be made automatically available on request are not included in Part 1 but instead in a separate Part 2 report. There is no Part 2 report.

OFFICER APPROVAL**Chief Executive Officer**

Signature *A. G. Chapman* Date ...13th October 2017.....

