



**John Campion
Police and Crime Commissioner
West Mercia**



West Mercia Fire and Rescue Governance

June 2017

Foreword

I stood to become West Mercia’s Police and Crime Commissioner because I believed I could improve the service our communities get from their police force. It is for the same reason that I believe we need to pursue the opportunity to move to a joint Commissioner for Police and Fire; in the best future interests of our emergency services and communities.

Our police and fire and rescue services both provide a vital safety net to our communities, who need to know those services are there when they need them; whether that’s preventing emergencies, or handling them when they do occur. Both services help protect the most vulnerable people amongst us every day. Whilst their front line skills, training and equipment may differ, both services rely on hard-working officers who put themselves in harm’s way to keep us safe.

These officers in both services also need the right structures, cultures and support services behind them in order to do their work to the best of their abilities. There are clear areas of common interest, but while we have seen a degree of service collaboration up to now, these areas of overlap are almost entirely unexplored when it comes to service integration.

As Commissioner for both policing and fire I would be uniquely positioned to build on the existing good work of our Fire and Rescue Authorities, going beyond our current limitations to make that integration happen in the best interests of our communities.

Integration and collaboration does not mean ‘takeover’. I fully respect the unique skills and professionalism involved in the frontline services in each organisation and want to not only retain them, but develop the skills and capabilities in each service as much as possible, for the good of individual staff, the wider organisations and communities as well. Integration cannot and would not come at the expense of quality of service delivered, which I want to continue to improve.

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I stood to become West Mercia’s Police and Crime Commissioner because I believed I could improve the service our communities get from their police force.

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Each organisation has good foundations from which to build, but faces further challenges ahead in how it works. The need to maximise potential around effectiveness and efficiency in our emergency services has never been greater, but it can be achieved.

Beyond my tenure as PCC, this change in governance would bring benefits long into the future. For policing, the transition from Police Authorities to PCCs has meant more public accountability and engagement, more transparency, improved partnership working, things getting done faster, clearer holding to account processes and a strong community voice into our emergency service.

These benefits can all be realised around our fire and rescue services too, if we move forward from our good foundations, and embrace a new way of delivering the very best for our communities.

From improved HMIC reports to new technology - I am delivering on my promises as Police and Crime Commissioner. In this document I am putting forward the additional pledges I would expect the public to hold me to as a joint Commissioner for fire and rescue services, as part of a single clear, consistent and integrated plan.

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Now is the opportunity to take collaboration to the next level and deliver for our communities.

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John Champion

West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

A safer West Mercia

Communities expect their fire and rescue services to be there when they need them, with the right skills and equipment to respond quickly to unpredictable circumstances. For me this is a fundamental requirement which cannot be compromised. I will keep our communities safe by ensuring this is always the case and build on that foundation, by improving collaboration and focusing on preventing emergency incidents from happening in the first place.

As Commissioner for fire and rescue services I would:

- Protect, and where possible improve the level of service our communities receive
- Ensure the right response to incidents is available at the right time, including incidents where multiple agencies are required.
- Ensure the best possible use of public money
- Reduce emergency demand, with a focus on education and prevention
- Back our officers with the resources they need to do their jobs effectively and efficiently
- Ensure our services work more closely with partners to improve community resilience
- Hold Chief Officers to account to ensure an effective, efficient service for our communities



Visit to the new shared police and fire Operations Communications Centre, currently under construction at Hindlip

A reformed West Mercia

Our fire and rescue services are hard-working, professional organisations that deliver a good service to our communities. However, their full potential for effectiveness and efficiency is harder to achieve within current governance and operational models. Limited collaboration with each other and the police force has gone on up to now, but this must be strengthened, deepened and accelerated if all our services are to deliver the best results they are capable of.

I want to build on the good foundations set by our Fire and Rescue Authorities to deliver modern, innovative fire and rescue services that lead the way nationally; whether that is in terms of emergency responses, back-office support functions or value to the taxpayer. However well these areas are performing now, it is only through proper and meaningful integration with each other that we can fully unlock the potential benefits.

As Commissioner for fire and rescue services I would:

- Maximise the potential benefits of integration between our police and fire and rescue services to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and resilience of services
- Ensure services are financially sustainable over the short, medium and long term
- Establish a formal alliance between Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services, to retain local identities and services whilst realising the potential benefits of scale and service resilience
- Improve relevant sharing of data between police and fire and rescue services. This would improve everything from emergency responses through to future planning
- Ensure a collaborative approach to training between our police and fire and rescue services, integrating training wherever appropriate
- Integrate resources between police and fire and rescue services to provide better services in rural areas
- Ensure our front line officers are supported by a world class back-office function
- Ensure a geographic spread of skills and resources



A reassured West Mercia

It is vital that our communities not only are safe, but feel safe as well. This element of reassurance is as important in fire and rescue considerations, as it is for policing and crime.

Our emergency services have a crucial role to play in our communities, beyond responding when there's an emergency. They play a central role as a part of the communities they serve every day. I want to ensure that is the case where our fire and rescue services are concerned.

I want to build on their current education programmes to really involve and empower communities to play their pivotal roles in preventing emergencies in the first place; whether that is around road safety, water safety or simple fire precautions. Giving people the opportunities to learn, think and take positive action around these kind of issues can be hugely beneficial to our fire and rescue services, and can certainly help our communities rest a little easier at night.

I also want to provide reassurance as Commissioner, ensuring our communities can have faith in me, as well as the Chief Officers I would hold to account on their behalf. I would ensure proper transparency, giving communities and partners the opportunity to scrutinise my work.

I would build a visible presence, working with local authorities and other partners to engage with our communities and provide a strong voice on their behalf, making sure their priorities are understood and needs are being met.

As Commissioner for fire and rescue services I would:

- Maintain and build on effective education programmes to prevent emergencies and provide reassurance
- Provide a strong voice for our communities, to ensure their priorities are understood and acted upon
- Empower communities to take more action to stay safe and prevent emergencies
- Have a visible, accessible presence for both our communities and our fire services, ensuring public accountability and community reassurance
- Work with partners to ensure the best possible results
- Be open and transparent with my work and decisions, to allow proper scrutiny and ensure public confidence
- Invite our councils to nominate local fire representatives to work with me, to support and enhance my work as Commissioner



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