

## NOTICE OF MEETING

<i>Meeting</i>	<b>Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority</b>	<i>Clerk to the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority</i> <b>John Coughlan CBE</b>
<i>Date and Time</i>	<b>Thursday, 24th January, 2019 10.30 am</b>	<i>The Castle, Winchester Hampshire SO23 8UJ</i>
<i>Place</i>	<b>Wellington Room - HCC</b>	
<i>Enquiries to</i>	<b><u><a href="mailto:members.services@hants.gov.uk">members.services@hants.gov.uk</a></u></b>	

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## Agenda

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
To enable Members to disclose to the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest they may have in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest is not already entered in the Authority's register of interests, and any other pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in any such matter that Members may wish to disclose.
- 3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** (Pages 5 - 10)  
To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 4 DEPUTATIONS**  
Pursuant to Standing Order 19, to receive any deputations to this meeting.
- 5 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive any announcements the Chairman may wish to make.

**6 MEMBER DEVELOPMENTS AND COMMENTS**

To receive any updates from Members of the Authority.

**7 PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) TO INCLUDE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS OF HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON (Pages 11 - 162)**

To consider a report from the Chief Fire Officer, which details the outcomes of the formal public consultation exercise on the proposed creation of a new fire authority for Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton and Hampshire.

**8 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items of business, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the reports.

**9 EXEMPT MINUTE FROM THE 5 DECEMBER FULL AUTHORITY MEETING (Pages 163 - 164)**

To approve the exempt Minute from the 5 December Full Authority meeting.

**ABOUT THIS AGENDA:**

This agenda is available on the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service website ([www.hantsfire.gov.uk](http://www.hantsfire.gov.uk)) and can be provided, on request, in alternative versions (such as large print, Braille or audio) and in alternative languages.

**ABOUT THIS MEETING**

The press and public are welcome to attend the public sessions of the meeting. If you have any particular requirements, for example if you require wheelchair access, please contact [members.services@hants.gov.uk](mailto:members.services@hants.gov.uk) for assistance.

# Agenda Item 3

AT A MEETING of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on Wednesday 5th December, 2018

Chairman:

\* Councillor Christopher Carter

\* Councillor Liz Fairhurst  
\* Councillor Roz Chadd  
Councillor Jason Fazackarley  
\* Councillor Jonathan Glen  
\* Councillor Geoffrey Hockley

\* Councillor Sharon Mintoff  
\* Councillor Roger Price  
Councillor David Simpson  
\* Councillor Rhydian Vaughan MBE

\*Present

## 132. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Simpson and Councillor Fazackarley.

## 133. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful of their duty to disclose at the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest they had in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest was not already entered in the Authority's register of interests, and their ability to disclose any other personal interests in any such matter that they might have wished to disclose.

## 134. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed. It was confirmed that the silent soldier had been funded.

## 135. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations received for the meeting.

## 136. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made several announcements, including that on attendance of the Emergency Services Carol Service, the Combined Fire Authority conference in Milton Keynes and the graduation ceremony for retained and fire control staff. The Chairman also updated the Authority on the Apollo Service Exercise, the closure of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) consultation and the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) National Conference on the 22 and 23 November and the Royal British Legion 'thank you' campaign.

Regarding the pay rise and broadening the role, Members were informed that the proposed interim 2% pay rise was agreed. Discussions remained ongoing between the NJC, Unions and FRSs and FRAs, around broadening the role.

The Authority would be updated on any developments resulting from ongoing discussions.

The Chairman congratulated Simon Forster for his secondment to National Resilience and all of those who contributed to the Celebrating Success event.

### 137. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENTS AND COMMENTS**

Cllr Price attended the Full Authority meeting instead of the pensions board meeting in London, where there were planned discussions on the increase in Pension payments, anticipated to be around 12%.

### 138. **ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE**

The Authority considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 7 in the Minute Book) regarding the Annual Statement of Assurance, which is required by the Fire and Rescue National Framework (2018) to provide assurance to local communities and government on financial, governance and operational matters.

The structure had been done to reflect the new areas of responsibility and the document reflected the Service's constant desire to improve, which was highlighted in summary on Page 31 of the document in the Appendix.

The document would be published on the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service website internally as well as on the public website, and communications would go out to confirm it was there. Officers were thanked for their hard work on getting the Statement up together.

RESOLVED:

The Annual Assurance Statement for 2017/18 was approved by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

### 139. **PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Authority received a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 8 in the Minute Book), which informed Members on outcomes and how the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) was doing in terms of general organisational performance progressing towards strategic goals.

Members were asked to consider seasonal extremes (snow in March, followed by a long, hot summer) this year and how these would affect trends. Sections 5-8 in the document focussed on benefits to the community. Fatalities were not measured in the same red/green formula, but benchmarking was done against other Fire Authorities. Pages 44-46 were highlighted in the Appendix, and it was confirmed that complexities around fatalities on page 46 were investigated with work being done alongside the Traffic partnership to see how the figures could be improved.

On Page 52 of the pack, it was highlighted that the reducing trend in convictions around the Arson Task Force appeared disappointing, but this fell under the responsibility of a different authority, so was out of the Fire and Rescue Service's control. It could be a result of one conviction covering multiple incidents done by the same person, but there was still a welcomed reduction in arson events.

The Authority requested a more in-depth report focussing on critical response times and the split between urban and rural times. It was not felt that slower response times were a result of capacity levels, but a lack of automatic detectors on rural buildings and properties often resulted in a delay. The Fire and Rescue Service had a good working relationship with both local authorities and highways to ensure that roads and traffic was not a cause of delays.

RESOLVED:

The Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority noted the performance detailed in Appendix A of the report, and welcomed a detailed report on Critical Response times, to come back to the April 2019 Full Authority meeting.

#### 140. **MOBILE DATA TERMINAL (MDT) REPLACEMENT**

The Authority considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 9 in the Minute Book) regarding the replacement of Mobile Data Terminals (MDT), which provide critical communications between Fire Control and appliances.

The current fleet had MDT's that were ten years old and in need of replacement, as the necessary software would become increasingly difficult to update and support. A collaborative approach across Dorset & Wiltshire and Devon & Somerset was effective for both use in emergencies as well as for crews recording work going forward.

Members were in full support of the replacement and agreed it was crucial for the Fire and Rescue Service to maintain high standards.

RESOLVED:

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority approved Option 3 in paragraph 40 of the report; to start procurement to supply and implement a change in Mobile Data Terminals across the HFRS operational fleet at a cost of £800,000.

#### 141. **FIRE CADETS (FUNDING)**

The Authority considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 10 in the Minute Book), which requested support and financial commitment to develop the Cadets offering in Hampshire.

It was confirmed that there was one existing unit in Ringwood, and it was the ambition to establish a further six units over the next few years, which would be spread across Hampshire. An initial upfront cost of around £50,000 was expected with an ongoing contribution of £20,000, but after three years it was anticipated that units would be self-funded through grants and sponsorship.

Members were in full support of the initiative and reassured that the costs proposed were accurate and that should local funding not be sourced after the three years, then proposals would return to the Authority before any future funds were allocated. It was enforced that local support was crucial in the success of a unit and enabling it to be sustained long term.

RESOLVED:

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority approved Option 1; to establish six additional cadet units and maintain seven units for our years, as detailed in paragraph 38 of the report.

#### 142. **2019/20 BUDGET UPDATE**

The Authority considered a report from the Treasurer (item 11 in the Minute Book), which provided Members with an update on the current financial position for the 2018/19 Revenue Budget and an update on the 2019/20 budget setting process.

At the previous Full Authority meeting, it was reported that there were potential costs involved regarding unfunded public-sector pension schemes, costing Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service around £3 million. Members were reassured that the Government had agreed that it will fund around 90% of the sum for 2019/20 and deal with it on an ongoing basis as part of the spending review planned for 2019. There would be a consultation around this time which HFRS could participate in. A further update was is anticipated after December 2019.

Members enquired as to the Networked Fire Services Partnership (NFSP) and it was confirmed that the original business case contained an option to extend the initial contract by four years, but it would require retendering for June 2025 onwards.

RESOLVED:

- a) It was agreed that Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay (RCCO) be reduced in order to balance the budget, after all other savings and adjustments had been taken into account, if necessary.
- b) The Authority noted the significant risk in respect of employers pension contributions beyond 2019/20.
- c) It was agreed that £1.2m of the 2018/19 underspend be transferred to the Transformation Reserve and used to fund the items highlighted in paragraph 15 of the report.
- d) It was agreed that delegated authority be given to the Chief Fire Officer to approve the use of all specific reserves up to £200,000.
- e) Approval was given for £303,000 from the Transformation Reserve for the NFSP system refresh and upgrades.

- f) Approval was given for £130,000 from the Transformation Reserve for the changes associated with moving to Windows 10 and that the ongoing costs of £25,000 are taken into account when the budget for 2019/20 is set in February 2019.
- g) Authority approved the approach for dealing with Information and Communications Technology (ICT) pressures as outlined in the report. The mid-year review of treasury management activities were approved.

#### 143. **SERVICE DELIVERY REDESIGN (UPDATE)**

The Authority received an update from the Chief Fire Officer (item 12 in the Minute book) on the Service Delivery Redesign (SDR) and were informed that the Risk Review recommendations detailed were on track to achieve £4.1 million target savings by the end of the financial year. The areas of savings were highlighted in paragraph 8 of the report.

Paragraph 23 to 28 in the report was emphasised as detailing the improvements sought going forward, which included new vehicles and digital radios. Whilst the small appliances that had been trialled were not found to be suitable, it was important that the fleet was kept as versatile as possible.

Despite the SDR programme ending, progress would continue to be monitored via the usual governance route.

It was confirmed that a further report would go to Full Authority on progress, once the internal programme had closed.

RESOLVED:

The progress of the Service Delivery Redesign (SDR) was noted by the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

#### 144. **RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM (ON CALL) UPDATE**

The Authority received a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 13 in the Minute book) with an update on the Retained Duty System (RDS).

The areas of focus for the project were highlighted as in paragraph 4 of the report and it was confirmed that Councillor David Simpson was the RDS Champion for the Authority. Independent guidance had been sought on what improvements could be made and the positive impacts on staff. Regular updates took place between Councillor Simpson and officers on visits and discussions he had had with retained staff, but discretion and privacy was always respected. Councillor Simpson was thanked for his work on the project and the Authority acknowledged a further update coming back through the performance report.

RESOLVED

Plans and progress with supporting the Retained Duty System were noted by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

**145. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items of business, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the reports.

**146. EXEMPT MINUTE FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

The exempt Minute from the September 2018 Full Authority meeting was approved.

**147. PRINCIPAL OFFICER LOCAL PAY AWARD**

The Authority considered an exempt report from the Director of Human Resources regarding the Principal Officer Local Pay Award...[SEE EXEMPT MINUTE].

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Chairman,



**HAMPSHIRE  
FIRE AND  
RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

Purpose: Approval

Date: **24<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

Title: **PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) TO INCLUDE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS OF HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON**

Report of Chief Fire Officer

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This paper considers the outcomes of the formal public consultation exercise on the proposed creation of a new fire authority for Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton and Hampshire. The consultation followed the acceptance of the business case to support the creation of the CFA produced jointly by the Isle of Wight Council and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority
2. There were very low levels of public engagement with the consultation exercise over its twelve-week period, consequently there is no statistically significant view for or against the proposed CFA.
3. The paper recommends that the Isle of Wight Council and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority should jointly approach the Secretary of State and seek their permission to introduce a CFA across the areas of Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton and Hampshire.

## BACKGROUND

4. On 14 June 2018, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) and the Isle of Wight Council (IWC), were both presented with a business case for the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority (CFA) that would serve the Local Authority areas of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. The business case and its content was agreed by both Authorities as part of decisions to proceed with public consultation. These are provided as Appendices with this paper. Each authority further agreed to commission the Chief Fire Officer to undertake a formal 12-week public consultation exercise.
5. A 12-week public consultation exercise on the proposals has been undertaken utilising the Hampshire County Council (HCC) Insights Team,

who act as an independent third-party organisation, providing relevant experience and expertise to support the process.

6. The consultation content has been independently assessed and awarded a certificate of Good Practice by the Consultation Institute. The Consultation Institute acts as a well-established not for profit best-practice institution, promoting high quality public and stakeholder consultation in all sectors.
7. The public consultation ran simultaneously on the Isle of Wight and in Hampshire (covering the county and two city areas) between the 6 August and 26 October 2018. Various mechanisms to gather views were delivered. These included; public focus groups in Ryde, Portsmouth, Southampton, Newport and Basingstoke, three locality-based meetings for Town and Parish Councils on the Isle of Wight and information packs were issued in Libraries and Council buildings. There was an online survey provided which was publicly accessible for people to provide their responses and views. The consultation was supported by active engagement with the media, local press advertisements and online campaigns utilising social media.
8. From an approximate population of 1,978,789, a total of 311 responses were received, 300 of which were from individuals. This provides a return of 0.015% of the population, evidencing a relatively low-level of interest or concern from the public. A majority (53%) of those that responded were in favour of the proposal with most support from across Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton along with key stakeholders from the Emergency Services Sector. Most of the responding staff from within HFRS and IWFRS (46 responses in total) also offered their approval (73% in support).
9. 41% of respondents were not in favour of the proposals. Three quarters of Isle of Wight responses (57 responses in total, 43 against) were against a Combined Fire Authority, the main reasons for this were highlighted as a perceived loss of local representation, accountability and a focus on the Island's needs.
10. As detailed within the Benefits and Risks section below, concerns raised by the respondents focused on three main areas:
  - the perceived loss of control,
  - adverse effects on frontline services and
  - the potential for a loss of local knowledge.
11. Early engagement to explore the processes required should it be agreed that a formal application be submitted to the Secretary of State has been established with the Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, was directly informed of the proposal and ongoing consultation with the public in a joint letter from HFRA and IWC. This collaborative

approach by the Authorities has been welcomed by officials and if a decision is made to proceed with the CFA proposal will continue.

12. The previously agreed business case explored the risks and benefits of creating a new CFA by considering operational, corporate and financial factors. In deciding whether there should be a single fire and rescue authority The Secretary of State will make a scheme only if he considers it is in the interests of:
  - (a) efficiency, effectiveness and economy, or
  - (b) public safety.
13. In general, issues of operational efficiency, effectiveness and public safety are recognised as being part of the day to day operations of a fire and rescue service and are explained in the Benefits and Risks section below. The financial efficiency and economy aspects were detailed within the business case and below within the Financial Analysis section which considers the potential budgetary impacts to the IWC and HFRA (and therefore its Constituent Authorities) should it be concluded that a new CFA will be created.
14. The approved business case considered that the creation of a new CFA could lead to a more efficient and effective FRS providing improved levels of service to the public across the revised and larger combined geographical area. It was further specified that operational staff would continue to maintain their existing local relationships and maintain their understanding of the local context of the areas in which they work. The links with local communities and the partner agencies that work alongside the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), would be expected to remain an important part of the work of a new CFA.
15. No changes to the current frontline operations of the fire and rescue services were detailed within the business case as a direct consequence of the formation of a new CFA. Any future changes to improve service delivery to communities would be considered through a locally delivered Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). If a decision is made to put a proposal to the Secretary of State, the creation of a new IRMP for the new CFA would be required at a later date, subject to the Secretary of State's decision. As part of the current Delivering Differently in Partnership (DDiP) strategic agreement, the IRMPs of both services fall within the oversight of the Chief Fire Officer and his team. These are both due for review as of April 2020 in any event.
16. A new CFA would be one organisation with a single purpose. CFAs provide a focussed way of leading and delivering a Fire and Rescue Service. It would allow for greater resilience, removal of duplication, enhanced capacity and ensure a focus on continuous improvement and development. It is anticipated that a new CFA would be established through the basis of

proportionality of its constituent authorities. Once formed, a CFA is the single public body that holds responsibility for the delivery of its statutory obligations across all of its geographical areas.

17. Recent analysis of the provision of fire and rescue services on the Isle of Wight through the Service Review, identified the continued relevance of the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and the impact of the Service in its achievement. As one of the range of services provided by the Isle of Wight Council it continues to be subject to the same tight budgetary controls as applied across the whole organisation as the council strives to be a 'financially balanced and sustainable' organisation. This may have the effect of limiting the service's future capacity to undertake some of the extended functions that a larger, stand-alone fire and rescue service could provide, because of its additional capacity.
18. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has indicated that he is not currently minded to develop a business case for the transfer of the responsibility for fire and rescue services from the IWC and the HFRA to his office. He has been explicit in his expectation that pursuing a new CFA was in the public interest and that the current approach being taken by both Fire and Rescue Services was something he actively supported. He was also explicit in recognising the very strong arrangements for 'blue light collaboration' across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. If there was a decision not to pursue a new combination, this could be a trigger for the reconsideration of his position.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

19. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) has a focus on delivering the best possible services to our communities and making life safer for everyone. HFRS are committed to developing the Fire and Rescue Service placing efficiency, effectiveness and public safety at the heart of all decisions. With a shared senior leadership team which covers both HFRS and IWFRS, this commitment spans both organisations under the DDiP arrangements.
20. The creation of a new Combined Fire Authority (CFA) for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton supports the HFRAs strategic plan, detailed as its 'Safer and Stronger' priorities, and its vision to create safer communities.
21. Creation of a new CFA would continue to link with and strongly support the One Public Service agenda, providing collaboration between essential services within locality areas, to support and reduce risk within communities of the Island.
22. The IWC's Corporate Plan 2017 to 2020 has the following actions in the community safety and public protection portfolio, which directly link to the

delivery of the agreed business case for the creation of a new combined fire authority:

- Develop a business case considering the options for future governance of the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service building on the successful partnership with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.
- Fully assess the options and opportunities presented by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, liaising with the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), through a memorandum of understanding.
- Develop options to improve the overall effectiveness of the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, ensuring an effective, resilient and safe service for the Island at all times.
- Work with strategic partners and key stakeholders to ensure the Island has effective and robust arrangements to ensure the safety of the community at all times.

23. Each Fire and Rescue Service has been subject to an Inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in July 2018. At the time of writing this report, both services were awaiting the outcomes of the inspections.

#### BENEFITS AND RISKS of a CFA

24. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) is legally responsible under current arrangements for the operational delivery of fire and rescue service functions covering Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. For the reasons outlined within this report, it is considered a new CFA covering Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton would improve the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of the constituent fire authorities whilst improving public safety for the residents and those who work in or visit these areas.

25. A new CFA would establish different governance arrangements that encompass a wider geographical area. Such an arrangement would provide a unified governance and leadership body, focussing on public safety.

26. There would be a single point for decision making with the ability of all constituent authorities to influence and make collective decisions on strategic planning matters. A new CFA would see an increased level of capacity and resilience available to all areas of its operational delivery, able to reduce duplication of work and support effective continuous improvement for the benefit of all the communities within the geographical areas of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

27. There would be new options for improved public safety through the joining-up of the activities of the community safety and business fire safety departments across both services, due to the capability gained by bringing two services together.
28. Being able to utilise firefighters, specialist capabilities and professional support staff, to deliver the full range of activities across a new CFA would help reduce the risk of fire and other emergencies.

If a new CFA is created, it would also help drive service improvements across all areas:

- IWFRS would benefit from the extensive support structures currently in place across HFRS.
  - Each Service would benefit from increased shared learning and the use of existing expertise.
  - HFRS would benefit from IWFRS experience in running an effective road safety programme and partnership working within the locality arrangements on the island.
  - A new CFA would enable the services to gather a single view of information and intelligence across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight areas to assist with risk identification and effective utilisation of resources.
  - Combination would mean that there are collective approaches, systems, processes and procedures, that would build upon all the great work already undertaken to support communities.
  - There would be an increased ability to respond flexibly and quickly to the needs of communities.
  - There would be opportunities available for staff to progress within a larger organisation and work across wider geographical areas.
29. The employment contracts of all existing employees of the two fire and rescue services who are employed at the date a combination order is made, would transfer to the new Combined Fire Authority. If it is agreed for the Combined Fire Authority proposal to go ahead, a new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) would influence the future shape of the services and resourcing requirements.
  30. Whilst there are several different options for council tax harmonisation, the preferred option as set out in the agreed business case, would require that the Isle of Wight council tax payer would pay an extra £3.74 per annum for a band D property which would be an increase of 0.24% on the current 2018/19 council tax (as detailed in the Financial Analysis section).
  31. As detailed in the consultation response findings, a perceived loss of control and accountability as well as concerns over effects on frontline services exists for those Isle of Wight residents that responded. These concerns could be addressed through further communication to raise public

awareness. The proposals for a CFA have democratic representation from all constituent authorities at its heart. The current operational leadership would be maintained.

32. The transition and subsequent implementation of a new CFA would incur one-off costs. These costs which are both expected and inevitable, would be managed within existing financial budgets, to be met by HFRA with contribution from IWC. The impact of such costs should be balanced against the benefits to economy, efficiency and public safety.
33. Significant work is still required to progress a submission and restrictions exist within the time available to do so. The current political climate and subsequent responsibilities for the Home Office, could present the opportunity for progress to be inhibited when making a formal submission for a CFA. To mitigate this, a dedicated, professional team to complete the transition and implementation work, will be created. This will provide the senior leadership team with confidence, enabling appropriate focus to remain on core-business functions across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.
34. It is understood that staff within both HFRS and IWFRS have been subject to significant change in recent years against a backdrop of budgetary constraints. As such, consideration and support will be given to this area to ensure there is effective internal communications and purposeful engagement and consultation with all staff.

#### FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

35. The Directors of Finance for both Authorities (the statutory section 151 Officers) have been directly involved in the financial evaluation set out in the Business Case, which was approved by both Authorities in the summer of last year.
36. In summary, the evaluation focussed on the following:
  - i) The financial implications of such a transfer of function on the funding and spending positions of the Isle of Wight Council as a whole and the new CFA. This covered revenue and capital spending, funding, assets, liabilities and reserves.
  - ii) The implications to council tax payers, specifically in relation to future levels of council tax paid by residents.
37. The key financial issues that were identified within the business case and included within the public consultation were:

- A potential increase in council tax of £3.74 for residents of the Isle of Wight as a result of the transfer of budgets and associated funding (known as council tax harmonisation).
  - Council tax harmonisation is determined by the Secretary of State, both in terms of the amount and the time in which the equalisation takes place
  - The IWC had the potential to reduce the cost of its overheads over the medium to long term
  - The transfer of property and vehicles would relieve the IWC of future maintenance and replacement liabilities and be passed to the new CFA; this amounts to just over £4m of liabilities that would need to be addressed within the first 5 years.
  - Savings in the cost of the new CFA could be made through the better deployment of resources, but it is assumed these would be used to address specific funding issues for the Isle of Wight (e.g. repair and maintenance of buildings).
38. The overall conclusion was that whilst a moderate financial case existed for a new CFA, there was a compelling case on operational grounds. The financial implications are not seen to be a limiting factor and given the other benefits in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and public safety the business case was approved.
39. The business case was based on figures for the 2018/19 budget. If the decision is taken to proceed, the figures will be updated for the final submission to the Government, which will also need to include any alternative options for council tax harmonisation.
40. The final determination for council tax harmonisation is a decision that is made by the Secretary of State, considering all the other financial factors in the submission and the impact on residents.
41. There will inevitably be transition costs associated with setting up a new CFA in respect of IT provision, HR, financial and banking arrangements and re-branding, together with the costs associated with the programme management for transition and implementation. Initial estimates have been worked upon to understand these costs will range from £600,000 to £800,000. This is a high-level estimate and there may be other issues that need to be addressed as we get deeper into the implementation plan if both authorities agree to pursue it. We would then give a more accurate estimate once we had done more detailed work on the implications. In line with the previous decision, it was agreed that HFRA would meet these set up costs and IWC would provide a contribution towards this.
42. Although implementation costs are incurred, they are one off and lead to the significant benefits that can be gained from the creation of a new CFA as set out in this report. The business case approved by both Authorities included the transfer of reserves and balances from the IWC to the new CFA

of nearly £700,000 which could be used to offset these costs. A bid for transitional funding will also be made to the Home Office although there is no guarantee that this will be successful.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

43. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (s2) provides that a combination order may be made to combine two existing fire and rescue authorities. A combination order may be made only if it appears to the Secretary of State that, in the interests of

- (a) economy, efficiency and effectiveness, or
- (b) public safety.

There should be a single fire and rescue authority for the combined area.

44. A new CFA would be established consisting of elected Councillors from Hampshire County Council, the Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council. A new Combination Order would have to be created for the new CFA. This would be drafted by Home Office lawyers in conjunction with HFRA and IWC legal representatives. At the point the order is made all existing employees of the IWFRS and HFRA would transfer into the new CFA.

45. The Policing and Crime Act (the Act) came into effect from 1 April 2017. The Act establishes legislation to enhance the democratic accountability of police forces and fire and rescue services, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the emergency services through collaboration and build public confidence in policing.

46. There are three main provisions within the Policing and Crime Act 2017 which affect Fire and Rescue Services:

- A duty to keep collaboration under review for Police, Fire and Emergency Ambulance Services.
- The enabling of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to be represented on their local Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) with voting rights, where the FRA agrees.
- The enabling of PCCs to take responsibility for the governance of fire and rescue services where a local case is made.

47. Part 1 of the Act specifically relates to fire and rescue services and makes several additions to the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The act, as amended, now provides powers to the Secretary of State to transfer the Fire and Rescue governance to a PCC upon the request of the PCC.

## GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

48. A new Combined 'Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority' would be made up of members from the councils of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. The CFA would make decisions on fire and rescue specific matters as required by statute and in line with the combination order that would be issued to enable a new CFA to be formed. The make-up of a new CFA based on a planning assumption of analysis of previous combination orders issued, is likely to be calculated (so far as practicable) based on proportionality.
49. Proportionality requires the number of members from each Constituent Authority being proportionate to the number of electors in that Constituent Authority's area, relative to the number of electors in the other Constituent Authorities' areas.
50. The previous Governance Review completed by the HFRA considered how to improve its efficiency. It identified core principles which have been used to help inform this analysis.
51. If a decision is made agreed to proceed, engagement would take place with the four proposed Constituent Authorities and other relevant stakeholders seeking a view on a preferred proposed governance model for a new CFA. The current consideration would suggest a CFA of 11 Members consisting of eight Members from Hampshire County Council and one Member each from the Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton County Council.
52. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) serves the Hampshire and Isle of Wight areas and is known as the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner. The option exists for Police and Crime Commissioners to make use of new powers within the Policing and Crime Act 2017, to apply to the Government to take over governing responsibility for Fire Services in their area.
53. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 granted powers to Police and Crime Commissioners to take on the responsibilities of Fire and Rescue Services, instead of having a Fire and Rescue Authority or Combined Fire Authorities. If a Police and Crime Commissioner chose to go down this route, and the Government agreed, they can become Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners. This is not an option that either the HFRA or IWC can take. This is an option that only a Police and Crime Commissioner can take in consultation with the public.
54. In a recent letter to both the HFRA and IWC, the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner said that over the coming months he would continue to look for the following things before considering this option:

- The successful coming together of the fire authorities.
  - The inspection regime within HMICFRS and the confirmation of ongoing excellent performance of our fire services.
  - The bringing together of further significant savings through the existing collaboration arrangements, which have delivered so well in the past.
55. The PCC is currently invited to participate as an invited guest in HFRA meetings and those parts of IWC meetings relevant to the Fire and Rescue Service. Under any new arrangement, it would be a matter for consideration for the new CFA how this arrangement might best continue. There are also existing invitations from both Authorities for the PCC to request a formal place on the Fire and Rescue Authority which would enable him to become a voting member; this would be a matter for a new CFA to consider.
56. Should it be agreed to proceed with a formal submission to the Secretary of State to form a new CFA, good practice would suggest that there would be value in implementing some interim shadow governance arrangements to support the progress of the work needed to prepare for a new CFA.
57. Under these circumstances, a 'Shadow Board' for the new Authority would be created. The constitution of the Board would need to be considered and agreed. It is expected that such a Board would be representative of the four constituent authorities that would be served by a new CFA and therefore mirror the proportionality arrangements considered above. This would, by definition, not have formal status as a decision-making body. However, it would importantly be able to provide guidance, direction and influence on the key decisions being made by both existing Authorities to help smooth the introduction of a new CFA. The Shadow Board would have the oversight of matters relevant to the implementation of the new CFA, not on the existing statutory duties of the two standing Fire and Rescue Authorities.
58. If a decision is made to proceed with the proposal, it is recommended that the Chief Fire Officer be delegated authority to produce the content of a formal submission to the Secretary of State, to create a CFA for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. This would be based on the business case which has already been agreed by Authorities. That submission would then be jointly agreed by the HFRA Chairman and IWC Cabinet member for Community safety and Public Protection before being passed to the Secretary of State for their consideration.

#### HMICFRS INSPECTION

59. Both HFRS and IWFRS have recently been inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services. At the point of submitting this paper, the reports were not publicly available.

## TERMS OF TRANSFER

60. Should the decision be to proceed with a new Combined Fire Authority, a new statutory instrument will be created to enable the transfer of staff, property and assets from Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service into the new CFA. Legal advice indicates this Public Service staff transfer to a new Combined Fire Authority is likely to be achieved under the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice (COSoP) and therefore, Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment (TUPE) like principles will be followed. Transferring employees will receive TUPE like protection of their Terms and Conditions of Service.
61. HFRA is a founding partner of a Shared Services Partnership along with Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Constabulary. This provides the following functions to HFRA; Human Resources (including Occupational Health), Payroll, Recruitment etc. It is anticipated that should the decision be to proceed with a new CFA, the services currently provided by the Partnership will transfer to the new CFA under current arrangements.

## ENGAGEMENT WITH STAFF TRADE UNIONS AND REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

62. Given the significance and importance of the proposal, there is an effective Joint Trade Union and Representative Body Forum established, including both local and regional representation, to ensure active and open engagement with those bodies that represent staff in both Services. Should the decision be to proceed with a formal application to the Secretary of State to create a new CFA, we will continue to engage with and meet Representative Bodies and Trade Unions on a regular basis.
63. To date, this approach has proved to be productive and has been welcomed by all parties. We will also ensure full and meaningful discussions are held with staff. If the decision is made to proceed with the proposal, then pending a final decision from the Secretary of State, staff from the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service will continue to be engaged and consulted with.
64. At the current time, we do not expect there to be detrimental impacts on staff as a direct result of the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority. Should future discussions identify impacts on staff, these would be explored and discussed with individuals. There will be the opportunity for staff to discuss the impacts of the proposal. Initial discussions around this are taking place as part of the Joint Trade Union and Representative Body Forum.

## GAP ANALYSIS

65. It is recognised that there are a number of differences between local terms and conditions and contractual policies for employees of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service. The Chief Fire Officer has commissioned an analysis of these differences to understand any implications should it be determined that a new CFA be established. It is envisaged that should the decision be to proceed with a new CFA, terms and conditions will be aligned in consultation with personnel.

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

66. Both Authorities are required to meet statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
67. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for both geographical areas. No significant impacts to any of the protected characteristics were identified.

## PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

68. As part of the previously agreed business case, an extensive building condition survey has been carried out for IWFRS stations to identify their current condition and highlight any maintenance issues. This survey helped to inform the accuracy of the finance section of the business case.
69. If a new CFA is established the IW Council and HFRA would be committed to transferring all fire specific property and assets, used in support of each Fire and Rescue Service to the new CFA, in their current state of repair.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

70. Both HFRS and IWFRS are highly regarded by their communities. The public in both Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have demonstrated a strong sense of ownership, pride and commitment to their Services and the staff who serve, evidenced through the recent consultation exercise. Should it be agreed to proceed with the proposal to form a new CFA, these aspects will need to be fully considered to ensure that the value provided to communities is maintained.
71. Both Fire and Rescue Services have a proud history of serving their communities. In recognising this, and following discussions with the Home

Office, it is anticipated that the existing identity, name and badge of each service will be maintained as part of any future combination.

72. HFRA and IWC have previously reviewed and accepted the business case for a new combined fire authority, this was subject to consultation that has now concluded. Both Authorities are now required to make a formal decision, as to whether or not to submit a formal request to the Secretary of State to create a new CFA. The purpose of the public consultation exercise was to inform that decision. The full Public Consultation Report provides analysis completed by Hampshire County Council Insights Team, detailing all responses received during the process.
73. If a new CFA is not created, then HFRA will remain as it is and IWFRS will remain part of the Isle of Wight Council. Both fire and rescue services will therefore continue to exist separately and be governed by two separate bodies. This would precipitate a review of the current Delivering Differently in Partnership arrangements to see if they remain appropriate. A mid-term review is required and due under the current arrangements but is being put on hold pending the decisions of the two authorities about the CFA proposal. The partnership is due to end April 2020.
74. This review would be initiated if it was concluded that the option to create a new Combined Fire Authority was not to be progressed. A review of the partnership may alter the current arrangements. Details of the partnership review would be finalised if it is decided not to create a new CFA. This would be a matter for HFRA and IWC to agree as part of their normal management of services.

## OPTIONS

75. Option 1 - To note the outcomes of the consultation exercise that do not suggest significant public concern or a statistically significant view for or against proposed CFA; and
76. Option 2 - To agree to proceed with the submission of a proposal to the secretary of state for the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority covering the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton area on the basis of the previously published business case and delegate authority to prepare and submit the formal submission, to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority, the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer; or
77. Option 3 - To reject the proposal to create a new CFA and formally review the Delivering Differently in Partnership strategic agreement between the two fire authorities.

## EVALUATION

78. The issues raised by the public consultation process focussed on the perceived loss of control, adverse effects on frontline services and the potential for a loss of local knowledge.
79. If a decision is made to proceed then it is proposed that the Cabinet Member responsible for Community Safety and Public Protection, on the IW, will sit as a member of a new CFA. Fire and Rescue services will continue to be delivered, as they are today in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.
80. Local knowledge and the established community links, which are so effective in reducing community risk, will also continue to be provided by local teams and officers. Creation of a new CFA would continue to link with and strongly support the One Public Service agenda, providing collaboration between essential services within locality areas, to support and reduce risk within communities.
81. Another concern raised in the public consultation, is that combining the four constituent authorities to create a new CFA could lead to a reduction in frontline services for the Isle of Wight. This appears to be based on a perception that operations would be directed from the mainland by people who had limited local knowledge and did not understand the specific Island context. When discussed in more depth with the focus group participants (as detailed in the Full Consultation Report), many were surprised to hear that operations were already guided from Hampshire as part of the existing partnership agreement, where response plans, mobilisation, fleet and equipment, health and safety management and training support are already shared.
82. The agreed business case provides insight and critical information, enabling an informed decision to be made on the creation of a new CFA for the effective and efficient delivery of Fire and Rescue Services across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. The report on the public consultation exercise is contained at appendix A and provides an analysis of the responses received from the public, staff and stakeholders.
83. The Business Case also identified that a new CFA has the potential to offer enhanced operational resilience and capacity for the fire and rescue service within the areas it would serve. It would also provide employees the opportunity to fully benefit from shared operational learning and knowledge and would allow for the simplification of organisational processes. It could provide wider career opportunities and development for those who wished to take advantage of the opportunities available to staff within a larger organisation. Professional support areas and Shared Services would provide advice and services across the entire geographical area.

84. The strategic partnership that currently exists between the two services and their respective Authorities has resulted in the establishment of good working relationships, however sustainability and resilience would be assisted by the creation of a new CFA. These proposed arrangements could promote the continued success of the relationships between all four constituent authorities. Subsequent long-term possibilities exist for development, community reassurance and resilience across the whole geographical area.
85. Both existing authorities have their own individual strengths which if combined into a new CFA would allow for the consistent and continued improvement of services, building upon their positive reputation and profile, both locally and nationally. Services to communities across all of the geographical areas would be central to the combination and its continued development.
86. The current strategic partnership between the IWC and HFRA has been operating for three years and is delivering benefits to both authorities. However, such a partnership can have its limitations and can only take progression so far. A new CFA could provide the opportunity for increased organisational resilience, shared capacity and improved organisational learning and knowledge. A larger organisation could provide greater opportunities for staff.
87. Each fire and rescue service strive to make life safer by ensuring safer communities and delivering the best possible services. The creation of a new CFA and the bringing together of these two well performing organisations into a single combined authority would allow for the alignment of prevention and protection strategies and a greater consistency of safety messages to the public.
88. A new CFA with enhanced organisational and operational capacity would allow for improvement to the delivery of services to communities and businesses across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. The agreed business case concluded that the new CFA would enhance efficiency, effectiveness, economy and public safety for the four constituent authority areas.
89. There is no expectation that current operational delivery by firefighters would change with the formation of a new CFA. Strong local knowledge and understanding of the local context would be maintained, both in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The names and badges of both services would be maintained, reflecting their proud history of service. The stations from which people work on the Island are important assets and these are not expected to alter as part of a new combination, should it be approved.
90. This report recommends that the proposal be submitted as the authority considers it to be in the interests of economy, efficiency and

effectiveness and public safety of the four constituent authority areas for the reasons set out within this report and detailed within the business case.

#### RECOMMENDATION

91. Option 1 - To note the outcomes of the consultation exercise that do not suggest significant public concern or a statistically significant view for or against proposed CFA; and
92. Option 2 - To agree to proceed with the submission of a proposal to the secretary of state for the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority covering the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton area on the basis of the previously published business case and delegate authority to prepare and submit the formal submission, to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority, the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

#### APPENDICES ATTACHED

1. Appendix A: Combined Fire Authority Consultation – Findings Report (Part 1)
2. Appendix B: Combined Fire Authority Consultation – Findings Report (Part 2)
3. Appendix C: Previously Agreed Business case HFRA
4. Appendix D: Previously Agreed Business case IWC

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

HFRA Governance Review

<http://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/g3090/Public%20reports%20pack%2013th-Jun-2017%2011.00%20Hampshire%20Fire%20and%20Rescue%20Authority.pdf?T=10>

Contact Point: Neil Odin, Chief Fire Officer, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service/Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service

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# Combined Fire Authority Consultation

## Findings Report Part one – key findings summary

November 2018



**HAVE YOUR  
SAY**



## Contents – Part One

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**Further detail on the consultation findings can be viewed in Part Two of this report.**

*Imagery has been used throughout the report to illustrate findings; all icons are made by Freepik, available from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com).*

## Project overview

Having worked successfully in partnership for three years, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA), which is responsible for Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS), and Isle of Wight Council (IWC), which is responsible for the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS), agreed to consult on whether or not to submit a proposal to central Government for the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority, which would cover Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

Residents' and stakeholders' views were sought via an 'open' consultation, held from midday on Monday 6 August until midnight on Friday 26 October 2018.

Responses could be submitted through an online Response Form, by paper version or as 'unstructured' letters and emails. Consultation Information Packs were placed in libraries and council offices across the four areas and could be requested in a range of alternative formats by email or telephone.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) and Isle of Wight Council (IWC) aimed to ensure that everyone who wished to have a say on the proposal could do so. The consultation was promoted via a wide range of means (see Appendix), including regular internal updates and Union meetings for employees, regular news articles in online and traditional media, advertisements on Facebook, Twitter and in local newspapers, and face to face meetings with Town and Parish Councils.

In total, **311** people took the opportunity to respond via the consultation response form from an approximate population of 1,978,789 across the four areas. These respondents comprised **300** individuals and **11** organisations, groups or businesses. **46** individuals were employees of either Hampshire or Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Services.

**25** unstructured responses were also submitted in the form of letters and emails, comprising **seven** from members of the public, **one** from a councillor, **one** from a member of parliament and **11** from county, borough, city, town and parish councils. Five unstructured responses were received from within the emergency services, with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Hampshire Constabulary, the Fire Brigade Union, South Central Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS) and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service all represented within this group.

In addition to the written responses, five focus groups were conducted, in order to enable a more in-depth discussion with members of the public. These were held in September and October 2018 in Ryde, Portsmouth, Southampton, Newport and Basingstoke, with participants invited from across the local areas. In total, **44** people took part in the groups.

This report provides an overview of the main findings from all aspects of the consultation. Part One offers a summary of key findings, whilst Part Two provides additional detail.

## Executive summary of key findings

The consultation provides a clear mandate for putting a case to central Government for the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority which covers the local authority areas of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

**The majority (53%) of those who responded were in favour of the proposal, with strong support from across Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton, and from professionals across the emergency services sector.** Most of the **responding staff** from within the affected Fire and Rescue Services also offered their approval.

Respondents who agreed with the proposal felt it would help to streamline governance arrangements, leading to more efficient decision making, economies of scale and pooling of knowledge and resources that could both protect and improve frontline services.

Respondents also recognised that a Combined Fire Authority presented an opportunity to safeguard the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service against budget reductions, as well as providing investment to upgrade existing fire stations.

Most respondents felt that a Combined Fire Authority presented the best option for the Fire and Rescue Services, with **less than a third of respondents offering alternative options**, and almost half who did so simply preferring that the current arrangements be maintained.

However, should the proposal be submitted to central Government, **there remains a need to offer reassurance** to those respondents (41%) who were not in favour of the proposed merger – and in particular to residents of the Isle of Wight.

In contrast to the view from the mainland, three quarters of Island-based respondents and two thirds of Island-based town and parish councils raised concerns about combining the two Fire Authorities – with older residents in particular opposing the proposal.

Although sympathetic to the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service's position, those who disagreed with the proposal raised concerns about local impacts. These included a perceived loss of local representation, accountability and focus on the Island's needs, as well as paying more tax to support services in other areas.

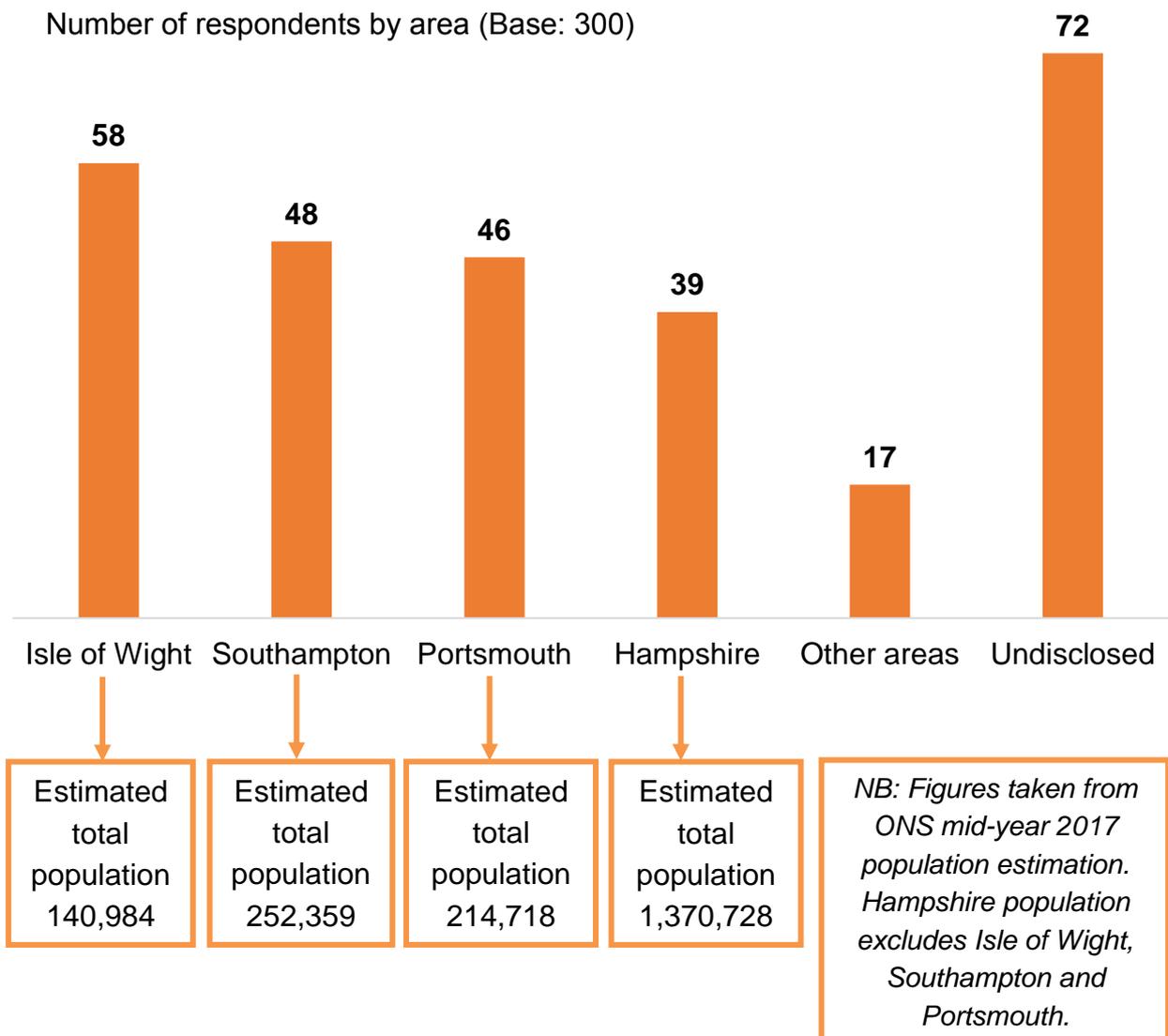
Despite reassurances to the contrary, it was also anticipated that combining Fire Authorities could lead to a reduction in frontline services for the Island. Respondents expressed fears for public safety - based on an assumption that the speed of response, number of stations, amount of personnel or level of equipment stationed on the Isle of Wight would decrease.

This was further based on a perception that operations would be directed from the mainland by people who had limited local knowledge and did not understand the specific Island context. When discussed in more depth with the focus group participants, many were surprised to hear that operations were already guided from Hampshire.

This suggests that **several key concerns underlying people’s lack of support for the proposal could be addressed through further education and awareness raising.**

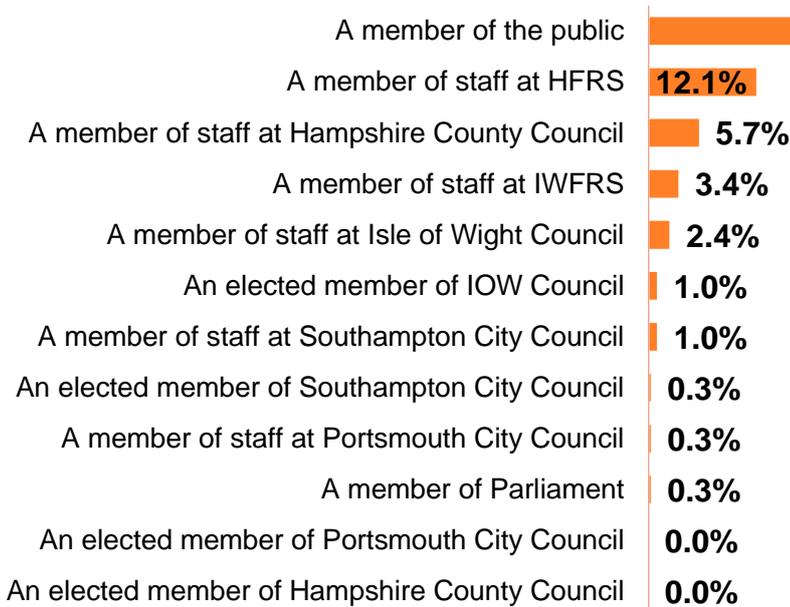
## Demographic profile of respondents

Responses to the consultation were received from across all four areas affected by the proposals and beyond.

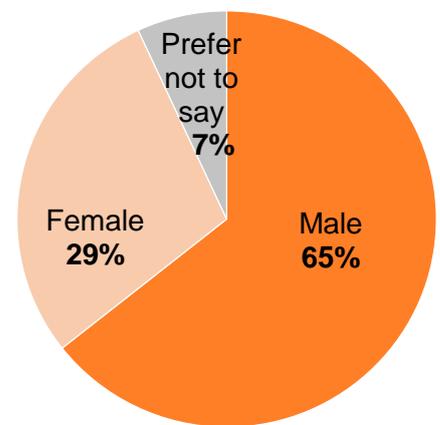


Nearly three quarters of all responses came from members of the public. Most respondents were aged between 35 and 74. There was an over representation of males compared to females. The majority identified as white and a large proportion did not wish to disclose their ethnicity. Nearly three quarters of respondents were not affected by a disability.

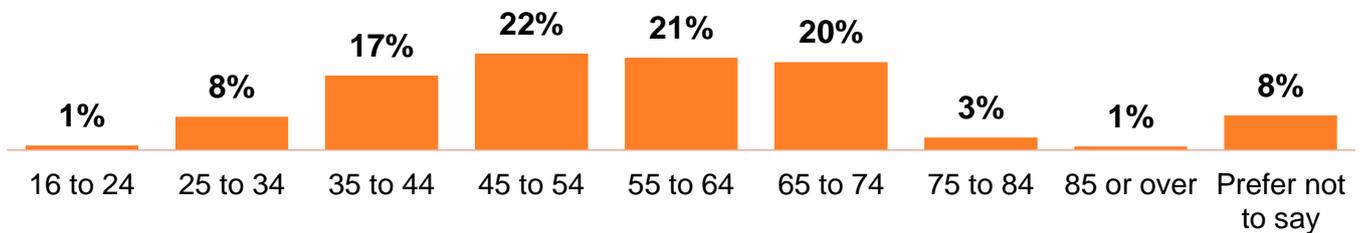
**Respondent type (Base: 297)**



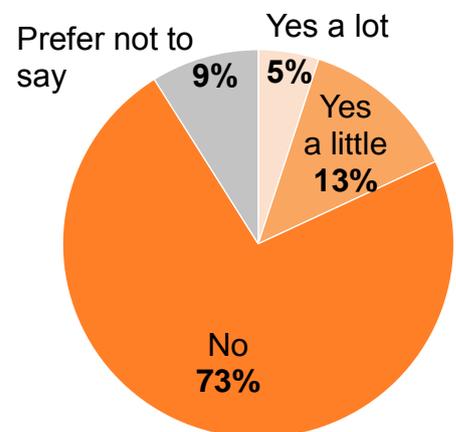
**Respondent gender (Base: 293)**



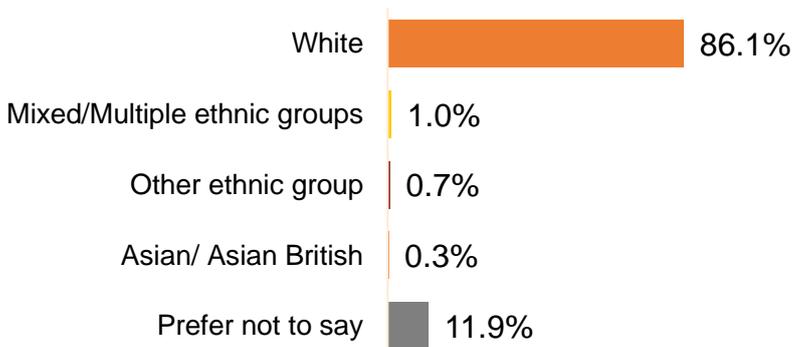
**Respondent age (Base: 293)**



**Long term illness or disability (Base: 292)**



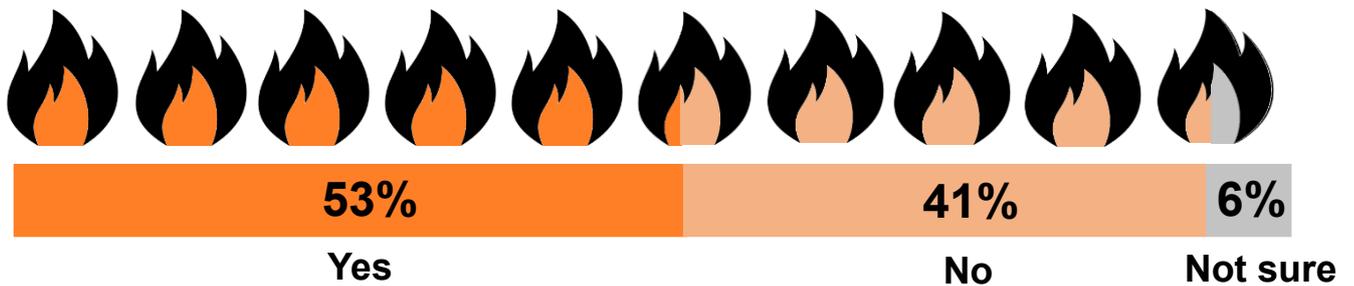
**Respondent ethnicity (Base: 294)**



## Key findings summary

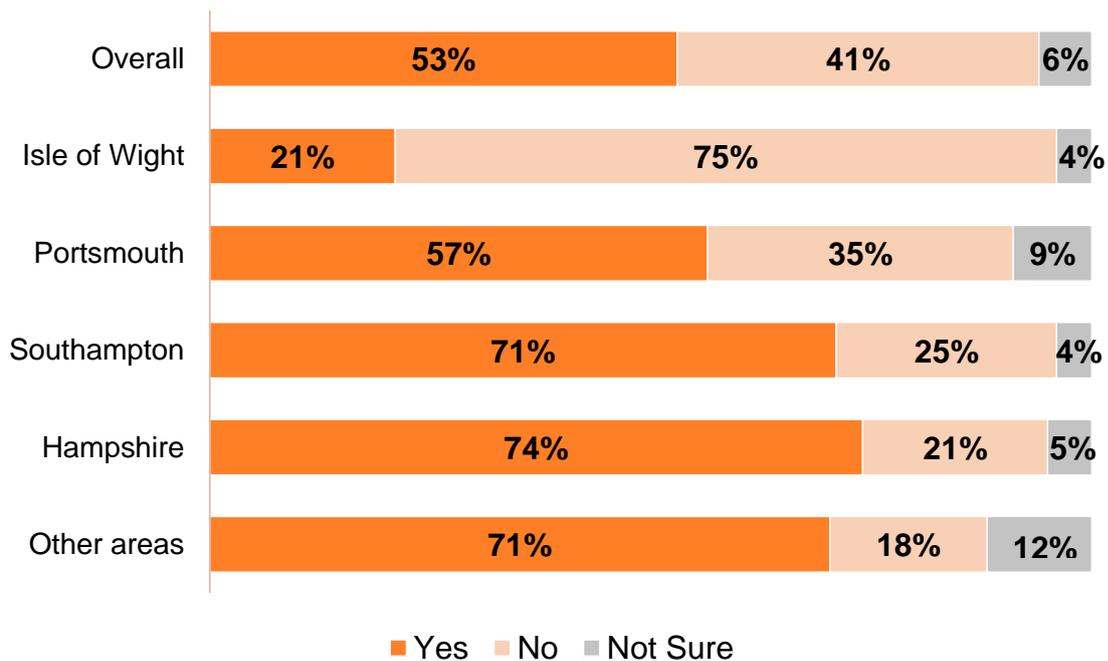
The majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority. 12% more respondents agreed than disagreed with the proposal. Only a small proportion of the responses received were impartial.

### Agreement with the proposal that a new Combined Fire Authority should be submitted to the Government (Base: 308)



Respondents who provided a mainland postcode (Portsmouth, Southampton, Hampshire and other areas) were more likely to agree with the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority than those who reside on the Isle of Wight.

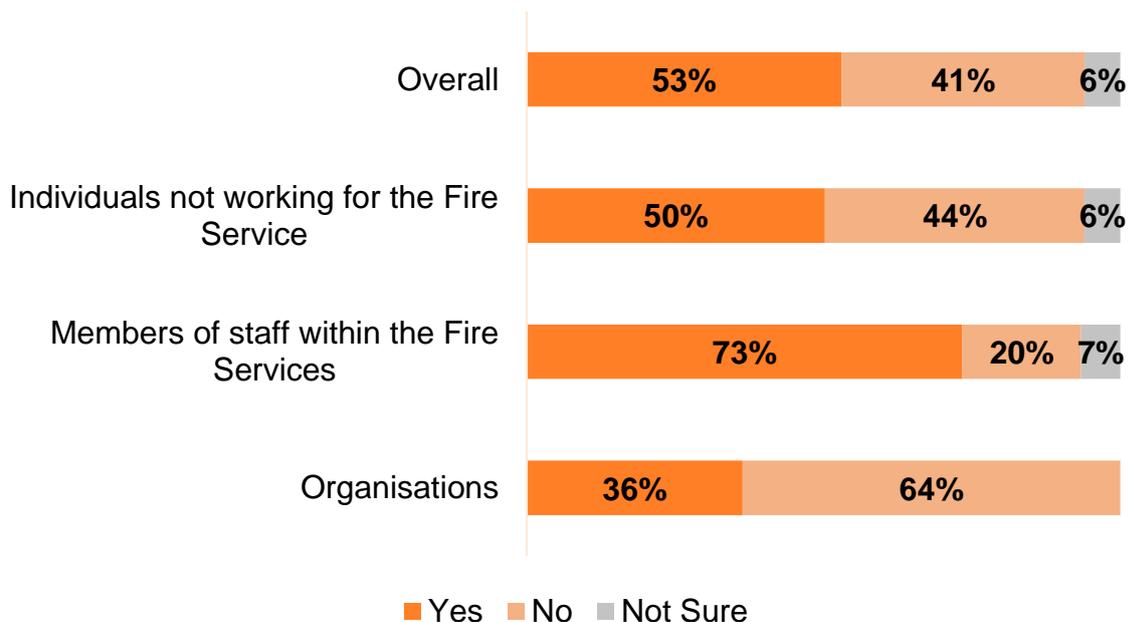
### Agreement with the proposal for a Combined Fire Authority by respondent residence (Base: 308, 57, 46, 48, 38, 17)



Support for the proposal was stronger amongst 'professional' respondents than members of the public.

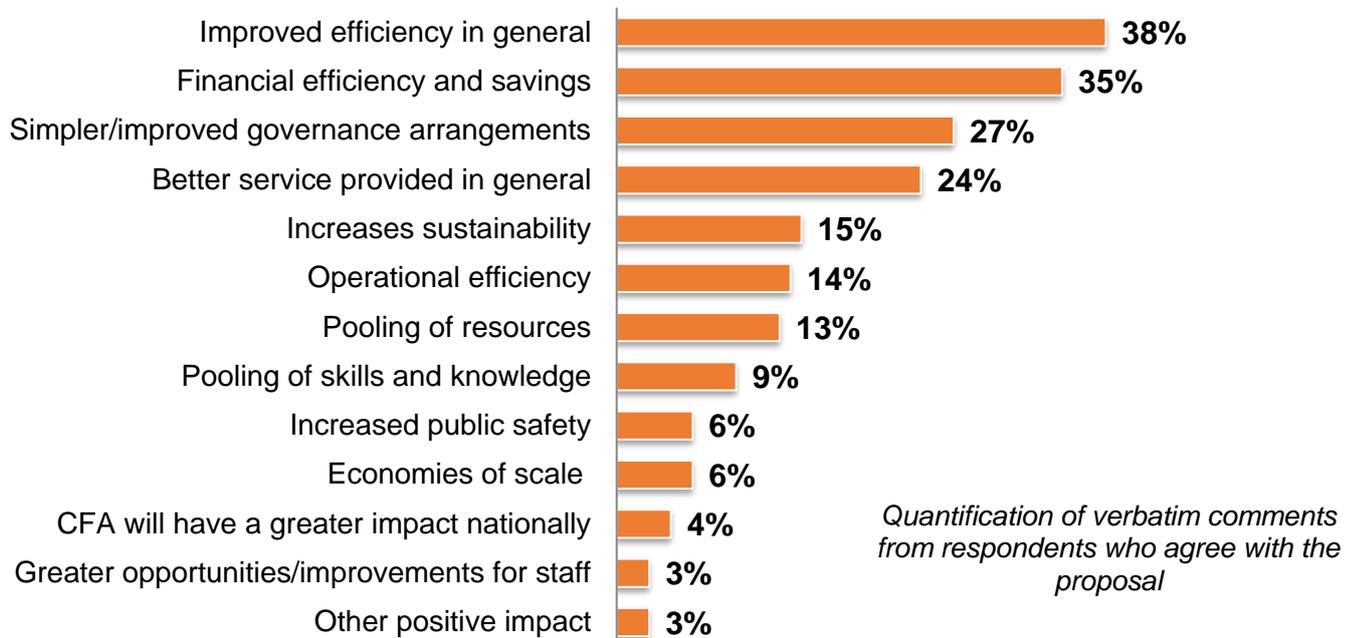
The majority of respondents who worked within the Fire and Rescue Services were in agreement with the proposal to combine and create a joint authority, suggesting a high likelihood of support from within the Service.

**Agreement by respondent type (Base: 308, 249, 45, 11)**



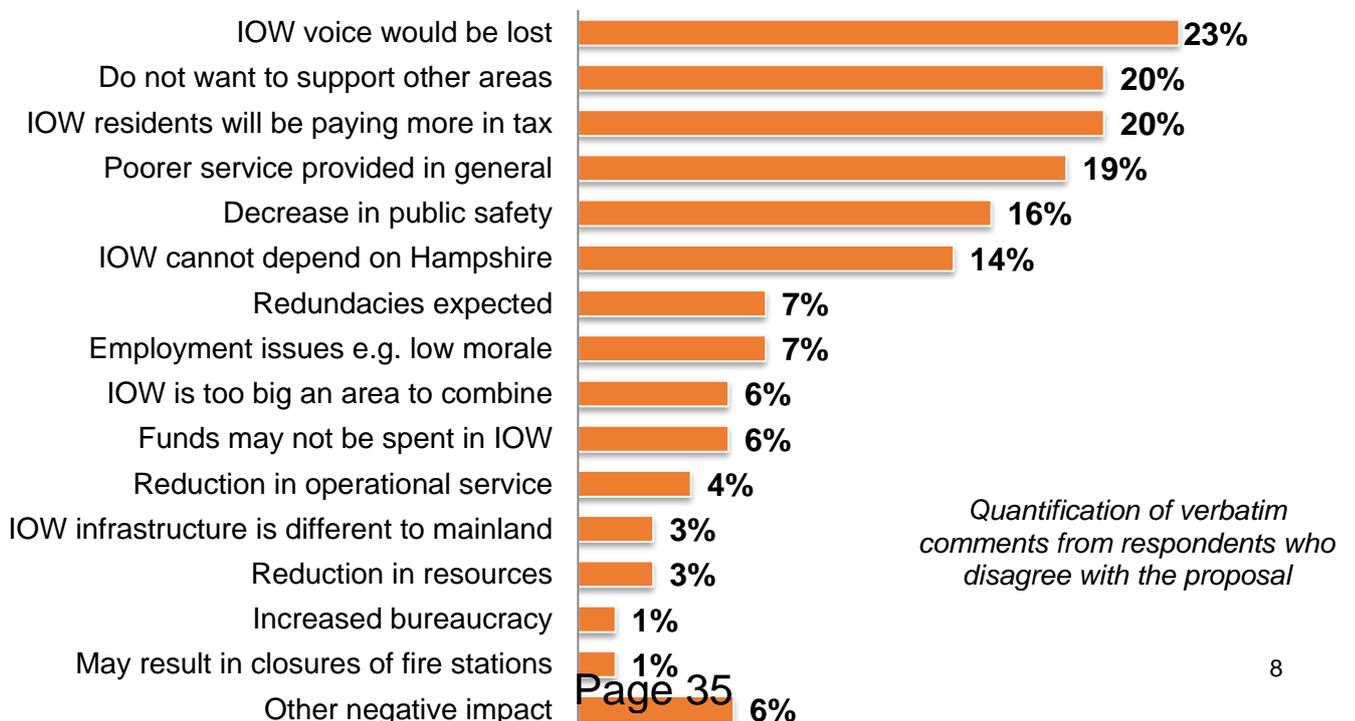
Respondents who agreed with the proposal hoped that it would result in improved efficiencies - with many mentioning financial efficiencies. In particular, they hoped that the combination will improve the current governance arrangements and lead to a better service.

**Key themes as to why respondents agreed with the proposal (Base: 117)**



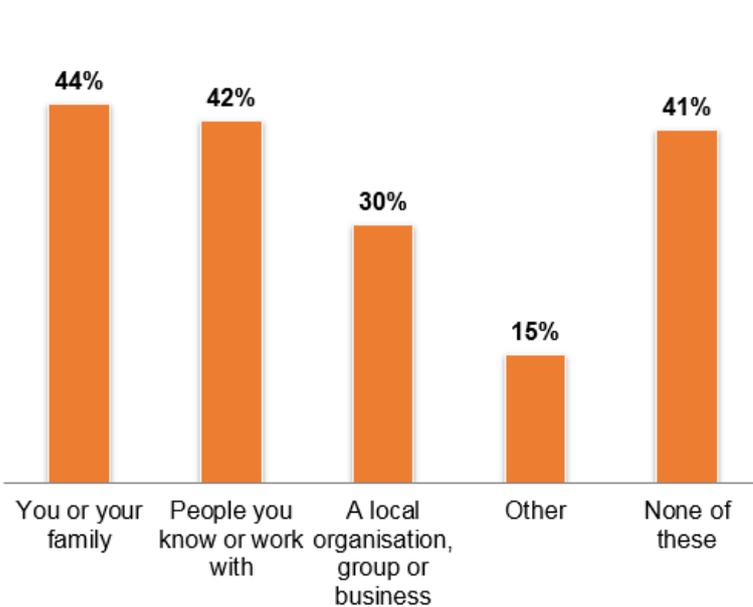
Those who disagreed with the proposal were concerned about the local impacts of the change – from the loss of local representation to the financial implications of supporting services in other areas. Some felt that a combination could lead to a poorer service as resource could be spread too thinly and important local knowledge could be lost.

**Key themes as to why respondents disagreed with the proposal (Base: 69)**

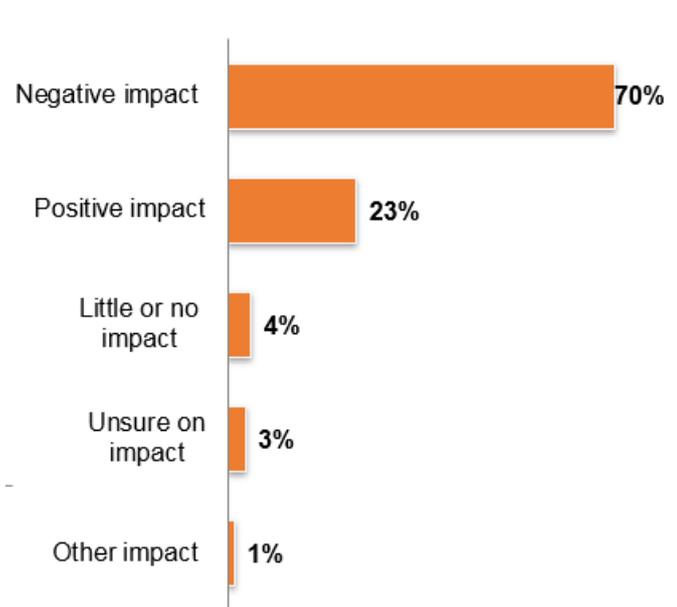


Six out of ten respondents felt that they would be impacted, should a new Combined Fire Authority be created. The majority of these believed that the proposal may have an adverse effect on themselves, their family or someone they know.

**Who could be impacted? (Base: 303)**

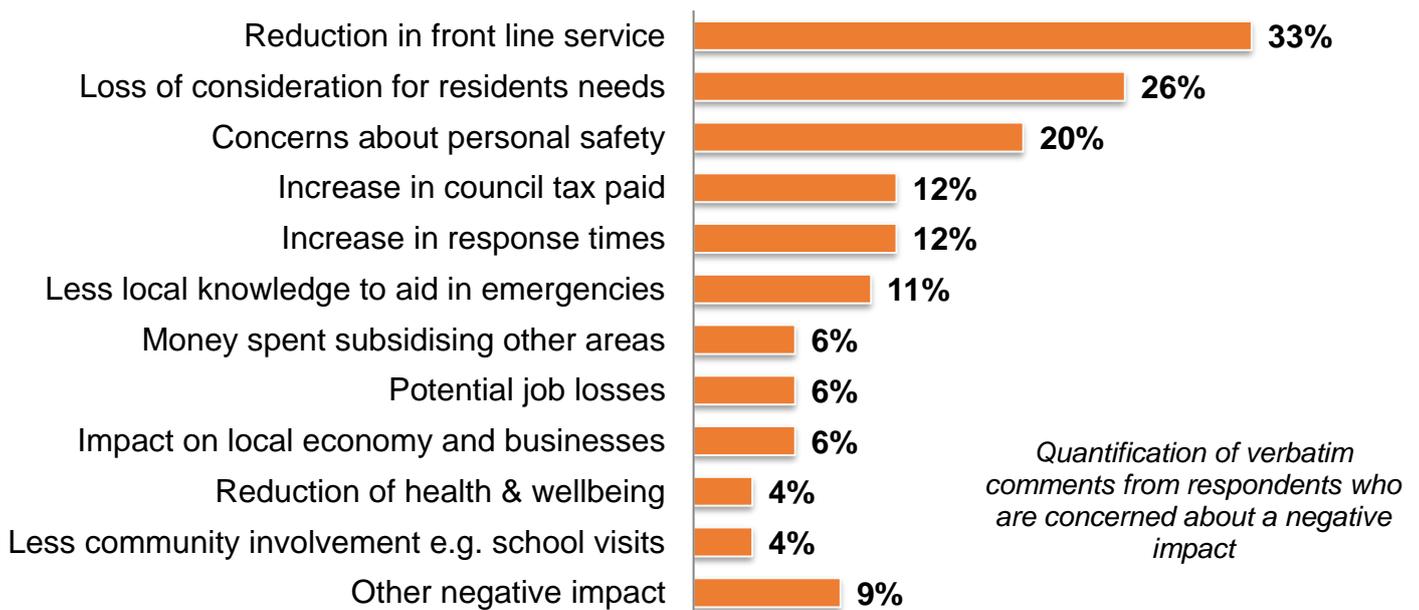


**What could the impact be? (Base: 94)**



Those who felt that the proposal would have a negative impact were primarily concerned about either an assumed reduction in frontline services (and the consequent impact on personal safety) or a loss of local autonomy / direction.

**Perceived negative impacts of combining the two authorities (Base: 66)**

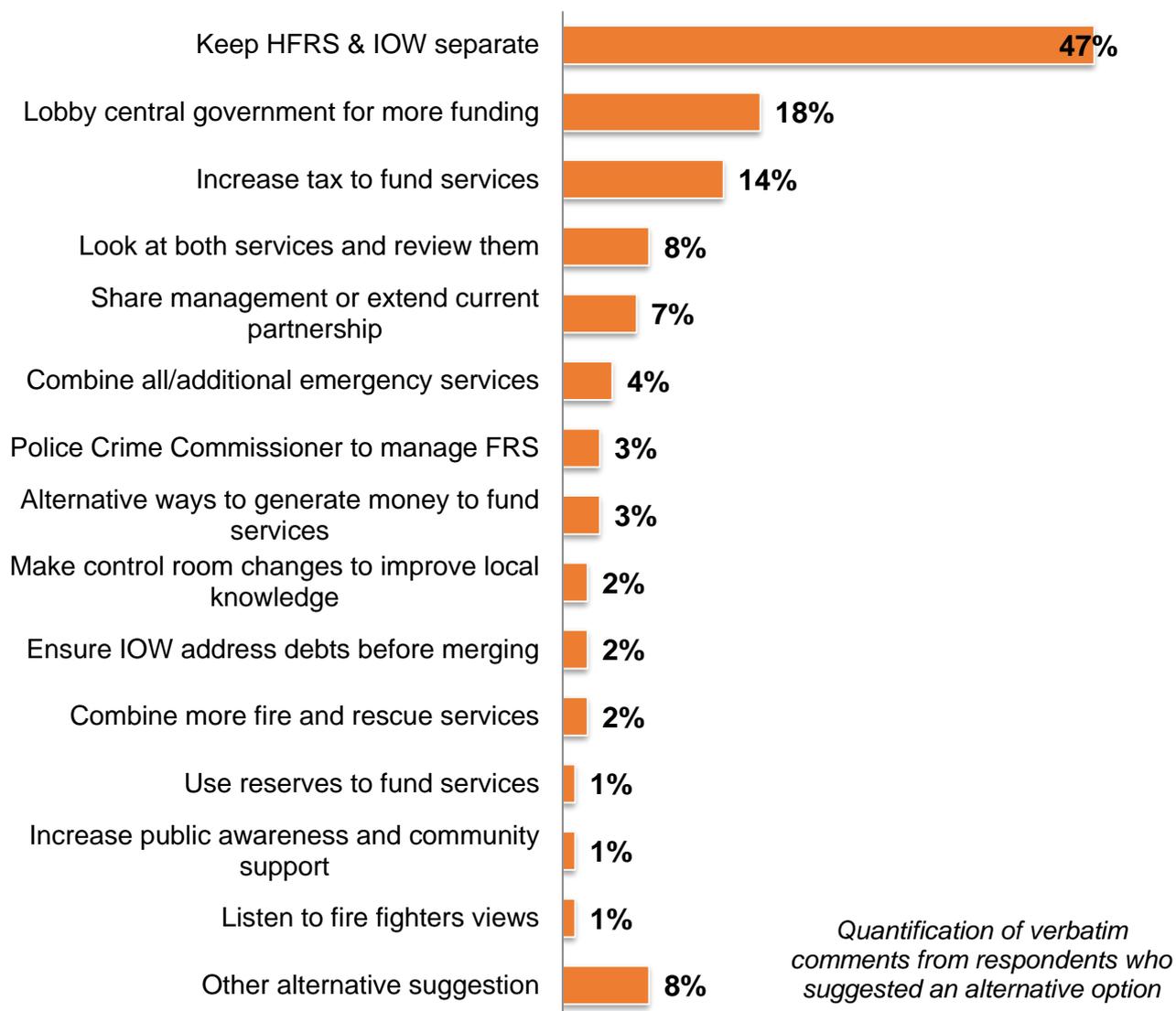


A small proportion of respondents (22) mentioned a positive impact arising from the proposal, suggesting it could improve governance and financial efficiencies and, as a result, benefit residents with an improved frontline service.

Less than a third of respondents (29%) put forward an alternative suggestion to the proposal.

Nearly half who did so would simply prefer that the two authorities remain separate.

**Alternative suggestions to the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority  
(Base: 91)**



Besides the option to maintain the status quo, respondents' alternatives primarily focussed on investigating alternative funding options - by lobbying central Government, raising council tax or income generation – or considering alternative organisational structures, such as an extension of the existing partnership arrangements or a combination across different emergency services instead of a combination across areas.

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# Combined Fire Authority Consultation

## Findings Report Part two – detailed overview

November 2018



## Contents – Part Two

**NB: A top-line summary of key consultation findings can be viewed in Part One of this report.**

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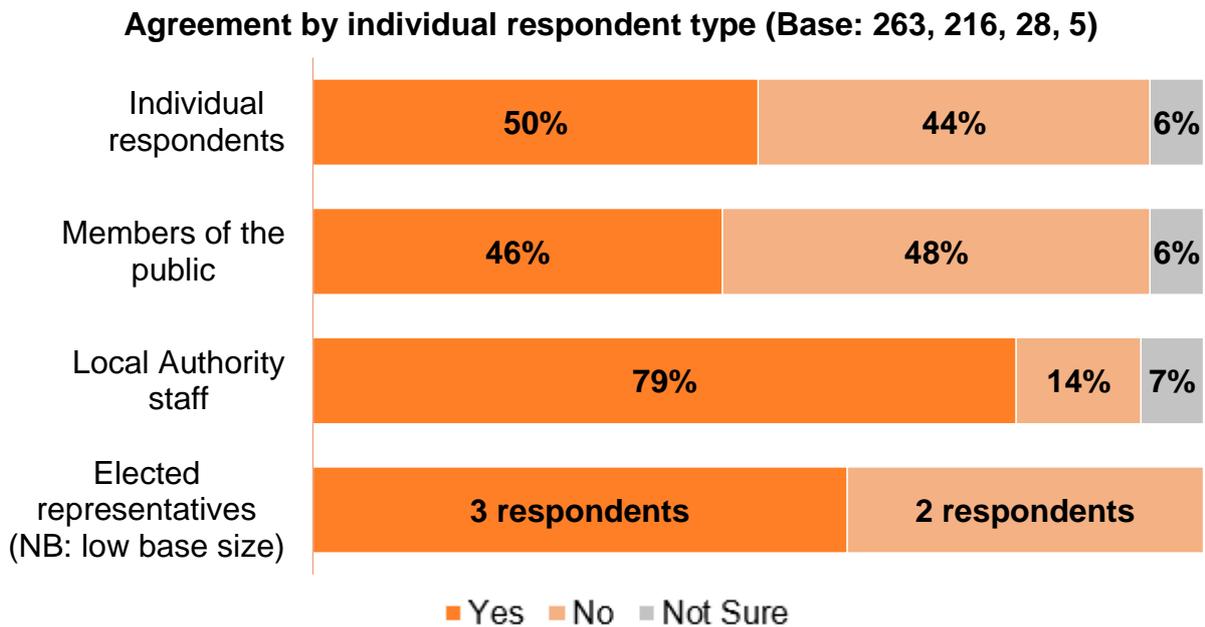
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*Imagery has been used throughout the report to illustrate findings; all icons are made by Freepik, available from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com).*

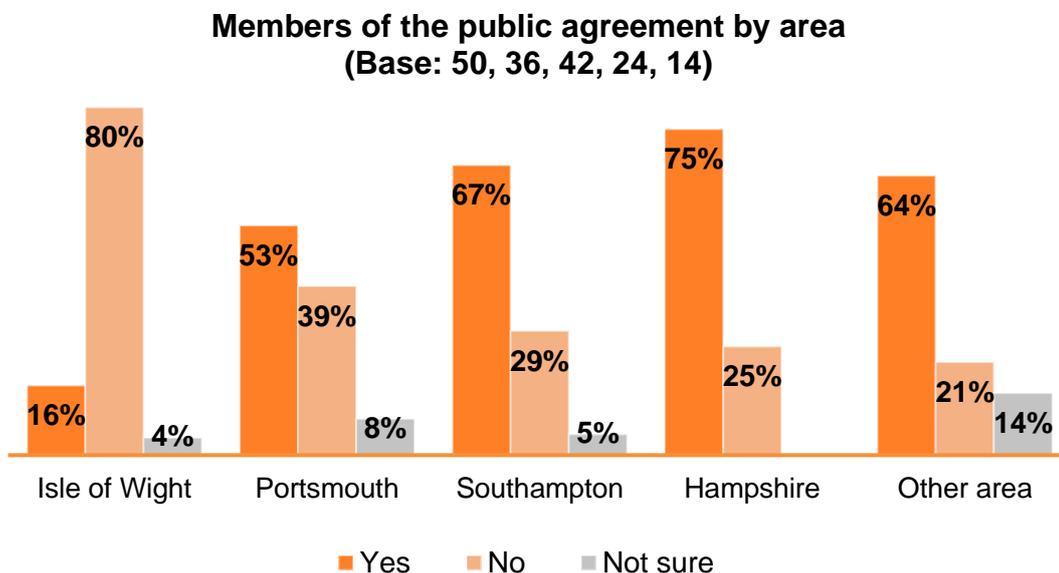
## Views of individual respondents

The significant majority of individuals responding to the consultation Response Form were members of the public (218). Five elected representatives, and 28 people who worked within one of the four local authorities also shared their views via the consultation Response Form.

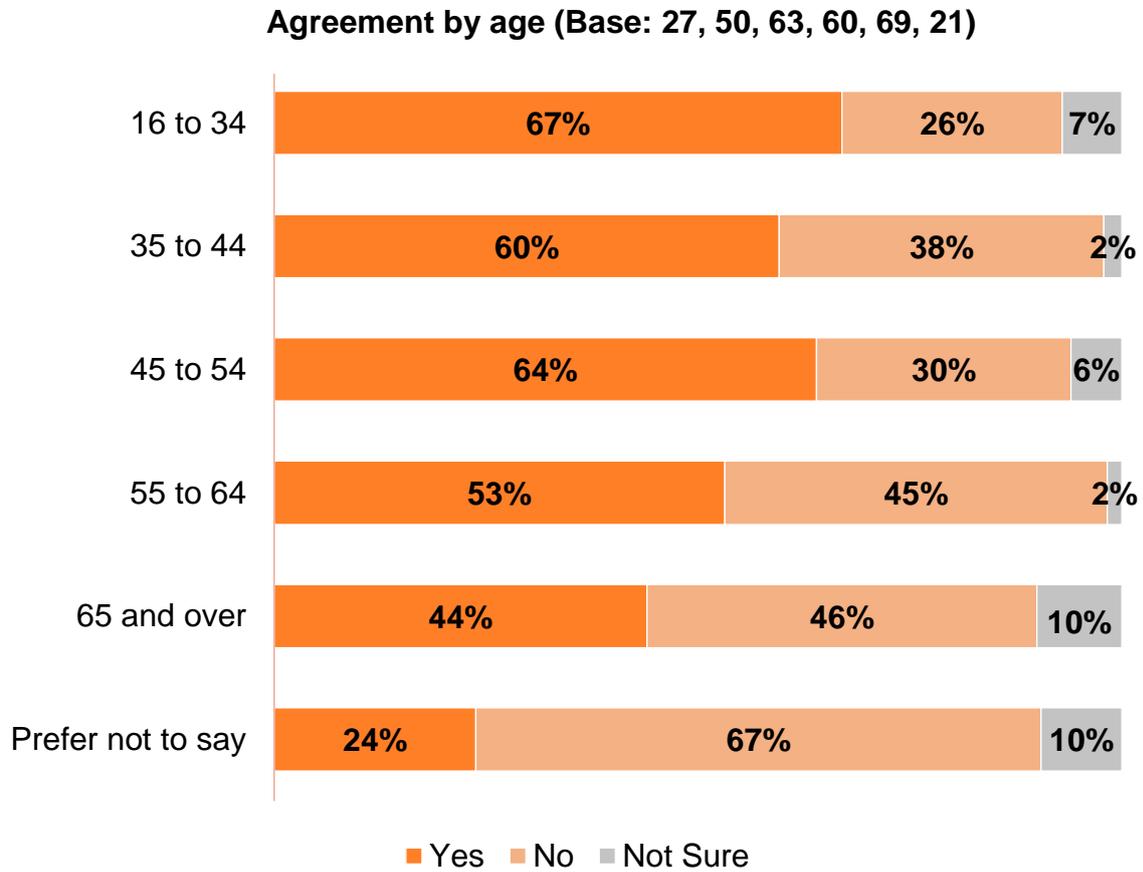
Half of these individual respondents were in favour of the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority. Opposition to the proposal was driven by members of the public, many of whom would prefer that two authorities remain separate.



Opposition to the proposal was particularly marked amongst residents of the Isle of Wight. The majority of responding members of the public from all other areas were in favour.



There was also notable variation in response by age. Up until the age of 54, respondents were more likely to agree that the two authorities should combine but agreement dropped off thereafter as respondents aged, suggesting that older generations are not as receptive to the proposed changes.



## Reasons why individual respondents support the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

89 of the 125 individuals who agreed with the proposal gave reasons as to why they believe the option to create a Combined Fire Authority should be submitted to the Government.

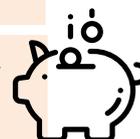
Those in favour of a Combined Fire Authority recognised the efficiencies that this could bring. 29 comments were received regarding the improved financial efficiency that the proposal could provide for both services. The majority of these comments were from residents on the mainland...

“

“The proposal makes good financial sense. No immediate direct impact of staffing numbers. It will align boundaries with Police. Partnership work will become simpler. IWFRS will struggle without assistance.”

“Just makes plain common sense, obtaining the economies of scale.”

“I think it makes sense pragmatically and financially.”



”

. . .however, those in favour on the Isle of Wight also recognised that the creation of a Combined Fire Authority would be a good step forward in order to secure financial efficiency.

“

“It is clear from the consultation document that there is a massive benefit to both fire services to combine, both operationally and financial, and as a consequence massive benefits to local residents who will be better protected.”

*(In total 29 comments were received from residents who focused on financial efficiency)*

”

Others made reference to the potential for an improved governance arrangement. They feel that a Combined Fire Authority would provide a simpler structure, making decisions quicker and easier.

“

“Better and more streamlined way of operating and gives the new Fire Authority more impact nationally.”

“If we have one authority making decisions it will be better than two or three making the same decisions that may take longer and as long as all of the said people are in agreement, we need this service and we need it to be efficient.”



”

Residents situated on the Isle of Wight also recognised that combining the Services could reduce bureaucracy and provide a more efficient structure.

“

“Too much bureaucracy, combined authority would reduce that.”

”

*(In total 15 comments were received from residents who think governance will improve)*

From a service perspective, respondents again commented on potential efficiencies - which they felt would lead to service improvements.



“The proposal strikes me as a more efficient and effective way of providing firefighting services.”

“It appears that an integrated structure would be more efficient and save precious resources.”



“It seems more efficient, as long as local services are not adversely affected.”



*(In total 30 comments were received from residents who feel that efficiency will increase)*

One quarter of the respondents who commented favourably believe that the service level provided by the Combined Fire Authority would improve on both sides of the water.



“It will clearly be more efficient which should improve standards with a potential for cost reduction.”

“It makes financial sense and will provide a better service to the public.”



“It means a better service for the Isle of Wight.”

*(In total 17 comments were received from residents who think the Service will improve)*

In particular, respondents felt that combining the two authorities could help to drive operational efficiencies within the Services.



“Efficiency of operation and cost savings. The role of the fire authority is different from when the current arrangements were devised, and they need updating.”

“Joined up services makes sense financially as well as operationally by the looks of it.”



*(In total 7 comments were received from residents who think resilience will improve)*

One example of this that was mentioned by a number of respondents was the opportunity for pooling the resources of both Fire and Rescue Services.

“

“Centralising resources when everywhere has been hit so hard by the government cuts makes sense if it allows for the Service to function to the high standards required and already shown.”

“It will be a good idea to put this proposal forward as it means both authorities can pool together and use their expertise and resources to improve the current services.”



“I believe a combination of resources united together will result in a ‘better value’ service to the tax payer.”

”

Although most comments about sharing resources were submitted by respondents on the mainland, some on the Isle of Wight also recognised that pooling resources would benefit their service.

“

“For the Island it is an efficient way to run the FRS giving greater opportunity to up skill the staff and giving access to a wider range of resources not normally available.”



”

*(In total 11 comments were received from residents who mentioned pooling resources)*

Finally, seven respondents observed that the authorities combining and working collaboratively would help to make the Fire and Rescue Service – particularly on the Isle of Wight - more sustainable and help to ensure its long-term future.

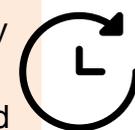
“

“This is the obvious next step to the current partnership arrangement. It is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the IWFRS which cannot look to IOW council to provide the required level of capital investment in the years ahead.”

“It’s the right thing to do to ensure the safety of IW Communities in the future, based against the IW Councils financial future.”

“To improve resilience and efficiency.”

“Having lived on the Isle of Wight for 16 years and then moved back to Southampton a year ago, I know how difficult it is for the IOW Council to provide all the necessary social and emergency services for the island. I think that combining the island fire service under a larger and perhaps more ‘professional’ authority can only be a good idea.”



”

*(In total 7 comments were received from residents who think resilience will improve)*

## Reasons why individual respondents oppose the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

109 members of the public disagreed with the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority. Of these 78 shared the reasons why they disagreed.

The main area of concern was a belief that the quality of service would decrease as a result of the combination. Half of these comments came from residents on the Isle of Wight.

“Combining and joining up services to save money always results in a poorer service.”

“I am concerned that merging will reduce in a reduction to firefighting capabilities on the Island. The Service is already stretched to the limit.”



*(In total 11 comments were received from all residents who mention a poorer service)*

Despite assurances provided within the consultation documentation, concerns that lives could be put at risk proved a common worry for those who did not support the proposal. 90% of respondents who reported fears for public safety came from the Isle of Wight, with only one respondent on the mainland expressing similar concern.

“With an unreliable ferry service, you cannot guarantee support in the timescales expected. Please do not put lives at risk.”

“It will put lives at risk on the island.”



“By cutting the Service from what it is now, you are putting lives at risk, and you think this is OK, it should be left as is and given more money to cope.”

*(In total 10 comments were received from residents who are worried about safety)*

Often respondents from the Isle of Wight had the opinion that the body of water between the mainland and the Isle of Wight could prevent the combined authority working as planned. A particular example of this was the assumption that resources would be held on the mainland and require a ferry journey to the Isle of Wight in order to respond to an emergency.

“The island is a standalone area. It cannot be left to depend on resources that are a 60-minute ferry ride away.”

“Cannot rely on ferries to transport Hampshire appliances to the Island in an emergency, during late evening and early morning they only run every three hours. Totally unacceptable.”



*(In total 7 comments were received from IOW residents who are concerned by logistics)*

On the mainland, one respondent noted that that the proposed combined area would be too large, which could also cause logistical issues.

“

“As a wife of a serving firefighter I believe the logistics of covering such a large area would be difficult. Local area knowledge is paramount.”



”

*(In total 1 comment was received from mainland residents who are concerned by logistics)*

The other key fear for the Service itself was that jobs could be reduced - in turn having a negative impact on local levels of employment. Concerns were split equally between those on the mainland and those living on the Isle of Wight. Comments made by the Isle of Wight residents focused on protecting jobs on the Isle of Wight.

“

“Need to keep fire services local and protect local jobs in fire service.”

“To make sure services are run for the local community and the funds are 100% allocated locally. Keep specialist knowledge and jobs on the Island.”



”

Respondents on the mainland were more concerned about the potential loss of jobs that the combination of authorities could bring in general.

“

“Inevitable redundancies, as always happen after a merger. I don't believe that such upheaval will have the desired outcome.”

“Combining authorities would lead to redundancies and a reduction in operational services.”



”

*(In total 7 comments were received from all residents who are concerned about redundancies)*

The other key area of concern for respondents who opposed the creation of a Combined Fire Authority was that the revised governance arrangements would lead to the Isle of Wight losing autonomy. Ten respondents reflected the belief that the Isle of Wight would be ‘out voted’ by the mainland and that the new governance arrangement would not prove beneficial to residents on the Island. Residents on the Isle of Wight are concerned that their voice will not be heard, and the needs of the Isle of Wight will not be considered.

“

“I don’t believe that centralisation based on the mainland is in the interests of Island residents.”

“The Island will become very much the junior partner in any combined authority, due to the Mainland always being able to out vote the Island.”

“The Isle of Wight is different and should retain its own control over its services. If this costs a little more, so be it. In general, it is always the case is that if a small organisation is absorbed into a larger organisation, the smaller organisation always loses and with the geographical separation this will be magnified.”



*(In total 10 comments were received from all residents who feel they would be out-voted)*

”

A proposed increase in council tax for the Isle of Wight was another source of contention. The majority of those who commented about the council tax increase were opposed to paying more for the Service which they feel they would then lose to the mainland. This suggests that it is not necessarily the increase in cost that people ultimately have an issue with, but more the feeling of losing control.

“

“What is the point of increasing council tax by its current proposed £3.74 and giving it to Hampshire. Most residents would be more than happy to keep our IWFRS where it belongs.”

“I would rather my council tax went up to support the local service than fund difficulties elsewhere.”



”

*(In total 9 comments were received from IOW residents who mention council tax)*

Other Isle of Wight residents expressed dismay that they could be financially supporting areas outside of their own residence.

“ “Each location is specialised to their areas. I don’t want my council tax money to support outside of my region.”

“Please explain how I, an Island resident, will have ‘value for money’ when I am being asked to pay more, thus subsidising Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton.”



”

*(In total 2 comments were received from IOW residents about financing other areas)*

However, this was a view that was also reflected by respondents from other areas. Most respondents who were unhappy with supporting other areas came from Hampshire. Residents were concerned about inheriting the perceived debts of the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.

“ “It will have a negative impact on Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service as it inherits the burden of debt and under investment that is the legacy of the council run IOW fire service.”

“This sounds decidedly like the taxpayers of Hampshire bailing out the IOW. If the two services were merging on an equal financial footing, then this proposal to save both money would make sense.”

“If IOW is already struggling financially, hence the need to reduce crew numbers, then Hampshire will be bailing them out.”



”

*(In total 6 comments were received from mainland residents about financing other areas)*

## Reasons why individual respondents were uncertain about the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

A small proportion of respondents (15 individuals) proved impartial to the proposal. The majority of these were from the mainland, although some respondents from the Isle of Wight were also in two minds.

Twelve of these respondents provided comments as to why they were of no strong opinion either way.

Some proved uncertain about the amount of financial savings that would be gained through the combination of the two services.

“ “I can't see that savings cited to IWC made any significant dent in the savings required by 2020/21.” “Apart from saving money on central support costs and buying equipment etc I don't think there is going to be any other savings.” ” ” 

Other respondents felt that needed more information to base their decision on, implying they would be able to make an informed decision if they had more evidence to reference.

“ “It would need to be proved to be more efficient and use resources more efficiently.” “Don't have detail on how and why this will be safer.” ” ” 

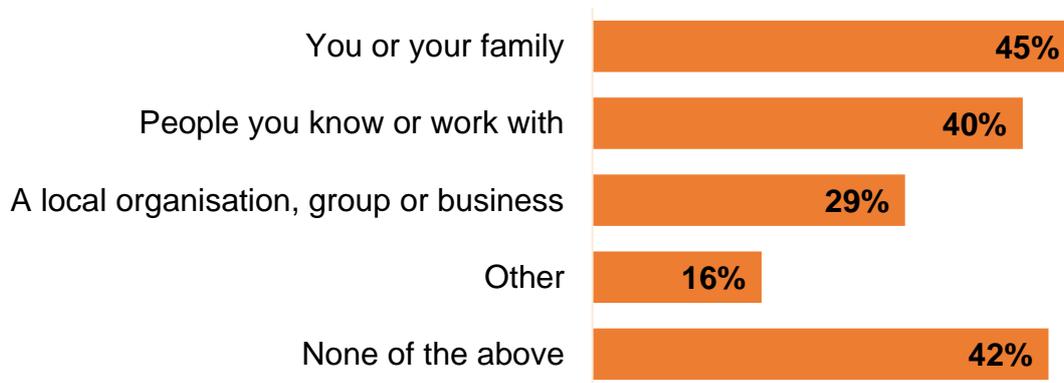
The final theme was a simple fear of the unknown and the fact that the future is not guaranteed, particularly in relation to rising council tax costs.

“ “Looks all very well but things never quite work out and I can see us on the Island paying more council tax, at the moment it looks like a small amount, but I am sure it will rise more and more.” “Slight fear of the untried/ unknown.” ” ” 

## Perceived impacts of the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority from individual respondents

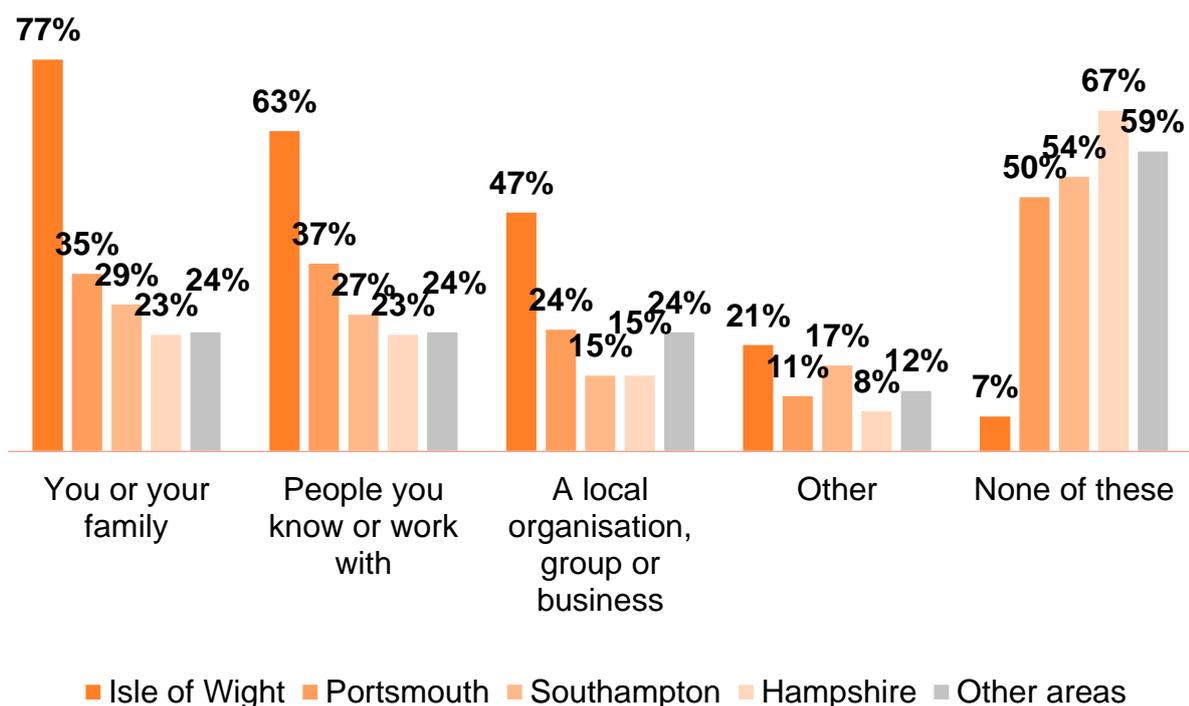
Three in five individual respondents felt that the creation of a Combined Fire Authority would have an impact on themselves, on a local group/business or on someone they know.

### Who will be impacted (Base: 248, multi-choice)



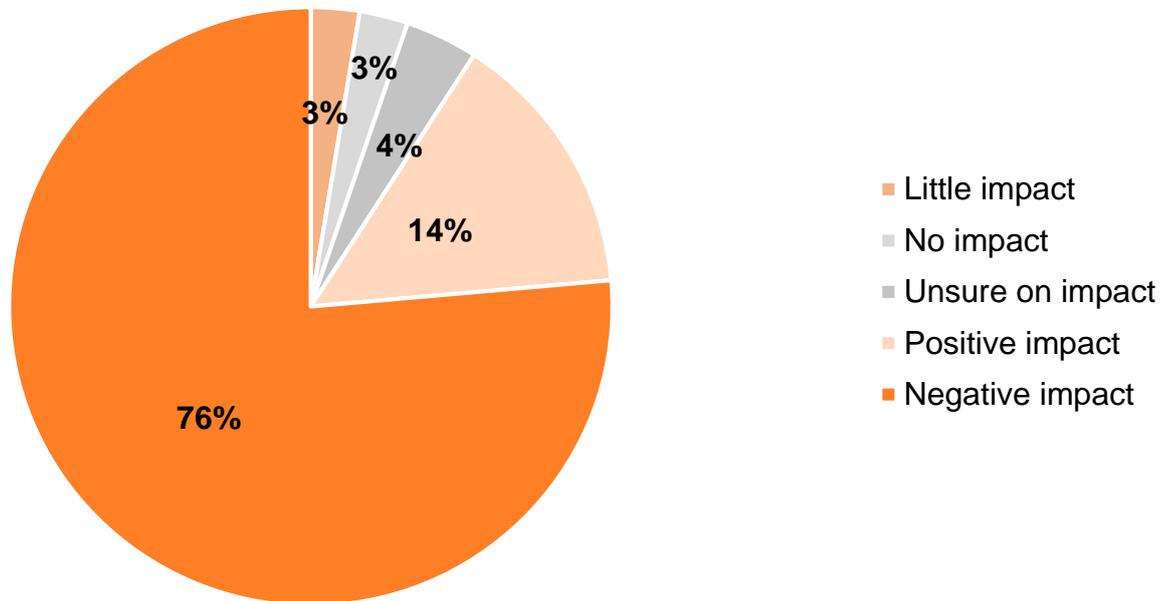
Respondents' assumptions about the impact of the proposed merger reflect their level of support for the proposals. The majority of respondents from Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth (generally supportive of the merger) presumed that there would be no impact, whilst almost all individuals responding from the Isle of Wight (generally opposed to the merger) presumed that there would be.

### Who will be impacted by respondent area (Base: 87, 79, 55, 30, 89, multi-choice)



When asked to provide detail about the potential impacts, only half (76) did so. The majority of those who provided this additional insight resided on the Isle of Wight.

**Quantification of verbatim comments from individual respondents (Base: 76)**



Over three quarters of individuals made comments that suggest the proposal could have a negative impact. This may be because those who oppose the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority are more likely to give detail as to how it could impact on them.

One in ten respondents felt that the proposal would either have little or no impact on them or they were unsure on what, if any impact it would have.

Just over one in ten reported a positive impact.

## Reasons why individuals felt the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority could have a positive impact

Of the 76 respondents who gave details about the potential impacts of combining the two authorities eleven made reference to the positive impact(s) that the creation of a Combined Fire Authority may have on them or someone they know.

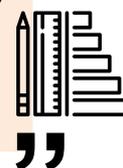
Nearly half of the eleven believe that the main impact will be on the organisations themselves e.g. governance arrangements could become simpler or the Services could become more efficient financially.

The majority of the comments regarding increased service efficiency came from residents on the mainland, however some respondents on the Isle of Wight also noted positive impacts.

“

“Improved governance and resource efficiency for the communities of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.”

“The people of the IOW, giving them a more efficient way of maintaining up to date equipment and procedures.”



*(In total 5 comments were received regarding improved efficiencies)*

Some respondents concluded that this would lead to the two services being more sustainable - compared to the current future outlook.

“

“Hopefully better for the firefighters involved, a more sustainable future. Also, better in the long run for Isle of Wight residents.”



*(In total 2 comments were received regarding sustainability)*

Four of the eleven individuals noted that these perceived improvements to frontline services would be of benefit to themselves and those around them.

“

“I think that a better combined Service would enhance and improve the Service delivery on the Isle of Wight, which is good for those who live and visit here.”

“Would improve the firefighting service on the Isle of Wight.”



*(In total 4 comments were received about improved services)*

Two individuals, one on each side of the water, believed specifically that they would be positively impacted by an increase in public safety due to the merger.

“

“I believe that increased financial resilience of the CFA will benefit friends and family that I know who work for the IWFRS and ensure an increased level of personal safety to me and my friends.”

“Improved control and coordination should make us all safer.”



”

*(In total 2 comments were received regarding improved safety)*

Other respondents felt that the proposal would lead to a better value for money service. This would result in public money being spent in a more efficient way – a positive impact for tax payers regardless of which side of the Solent they reside.

“

“I feel that this will have a positive impact upon the local authority and the spending of public money.”

“The key impact is that if the proposal goes ahead in a well-controlled manner, we will see a better, more cost-effective service.”



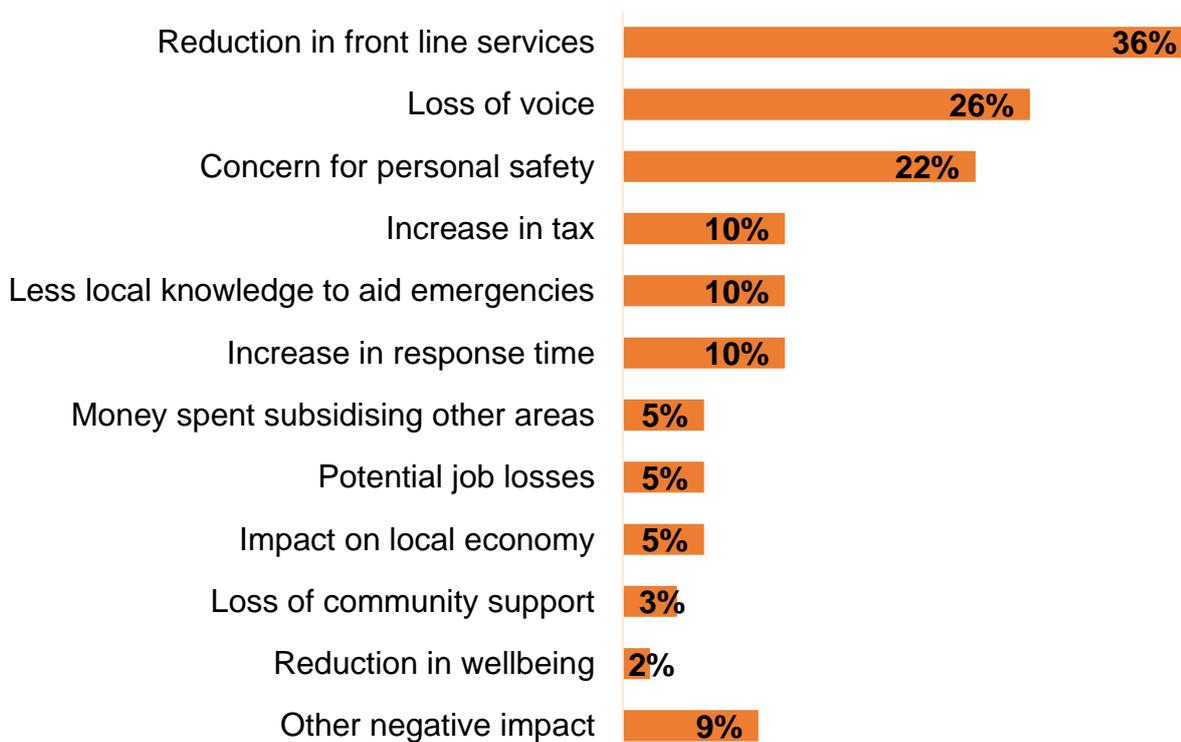
”

*(In total 4 comments were received mentioning value for money)*

## Reasons why individuals felt that the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority could have a negative impact

58 respondents who gave details about the potential impacts of combining the two authorities perceived that combining the two fire authorities would have a negative impact.

### Quantification of verbatim comments from individuals (Base: 58)



The majority were concerned about seeing frontline services cut or dramatically reduce in size. Both on the Isle of Wight and on the mainland, this proved the biggest concern from all individual respondents outside of the Service.



“Would result in cuts to services.”

“This will affect all who live on the island, cuts to front-line staff will increase risk to staff and members of the public, the retained system needs a total overhaul and a bespoke Island retained service needs setting up.”

“Unwise spending or poorly efficient spending will see a less front-line service to all of us.”

“I am concerned that there would be a reduction in the provision of the Fire Service on the Isle of Wight.”

“Smaller fire units on the island will mean diminished fire response!”



*(In total 21 comments were received concerning a reduced service)*

The next most common concern came from residents of the Isle of Wight who feared that the Combined Authority would lead to reduced representation, a loss of voice, and their needs would not be considered – in essence the combined authority could mean losing control of their local service.

“

“I would have no confidence in such a joint authority to properly consider the needs and unique requirements of IOW residents.”

“Services on the Island will deteriorate as the Mainland based control group focuses on the mainland issues and de-prioritises Island needs.”

“All the Island – we’d be worse off and have no control of a fundamental service on our island.”

“Again my perception/concern of the impact that the new body could have is that the Island could/would possibly get a second class service, due to it always being out voted by the Mainland.”



”

*(In total 15 comments were received concerning loss of control)*

A similar number of comments assumed that the impact of a combined authority could be an increased risk to personal safety and increased danger to life, again the majority of these fears came from residents on the Isle of Wight as opposed to the mainland.

“

“I am concerned that this reorganisation is proposed primarily to save money and that a lack of firefighters and appliances could ensure, putting Island residents, their homes, businesses and public buildings at risk.”

“It is highly likely to harmfully affect the ability of the Service which threatens the safety of everybody on the Island.”

“Our personal safety would be reduced by a thinner emergency service.”

“I think it will place everyone at greater risk.”



”

*(In total 13 comments were received regarding concern for safety)*

Some respondents gave specific examples of how they assumed that the proposed merger would increase risk. A key theme was that local knowledge would decrease, which could negatively impact on how efficiently emergency situations are handled.

“

“Having a central combined authority will reduce the local knowledge available for directing fire appliances, as has been found with a centralised police call centre where the mainland operators, through no fault of their own, have little knowledge of our local area.”

“Already we’ve seen situations where emergency services have been sent to the wrong location... Knighton for Niton because of lack of local knowledge.”



*(In total 6 comments were received concerning less local knowledge)*

Others felt that the proposed merger could have a negative impact due to increased response times – perceiving that a reduced service or lack of local knowledge will affect the speed in which the Service responds to emergencies.

“

“The speed and effectiveness of response to anybody experiencing a fire on the Isle of Wight.”

“Increased risk of delays when emergencies occur.”

“Delays to call outs in emergencies.”



*(In total 6 comments were received regarding increased response times)*

Five individuals provided ‘other’ reasons as to why they feel that the combination of authorities could have a negative impact. Many of them felt that this could be a step in the direction of transferring more services from the Isle of Wight to the mainland.

“

“It would lead to decision being made that favour the other areas at the expense of service in the Isle of Wight and would also pave the way for further such transfers of authority and administration over to the mainland, making it harder to defend local services at the current level.”

“I fear a CFA would over time lead to centralisation of resources and thus impact negatively on those people who live at distance from such resources.”



*(In total 5 comments were received regarding ‘other’ negative impacts)*

Respondents who live on the Isle of Wight also raised concerns about the impact of the increase in council tax that they would face if the proposal went ahead.

“

“Clearly any increase in council tax payments has an impact on the family budget.”

“Residents of IOW have to pay more for a service so that IOW council can make savings – which won’t be passed on to the residents.”



”

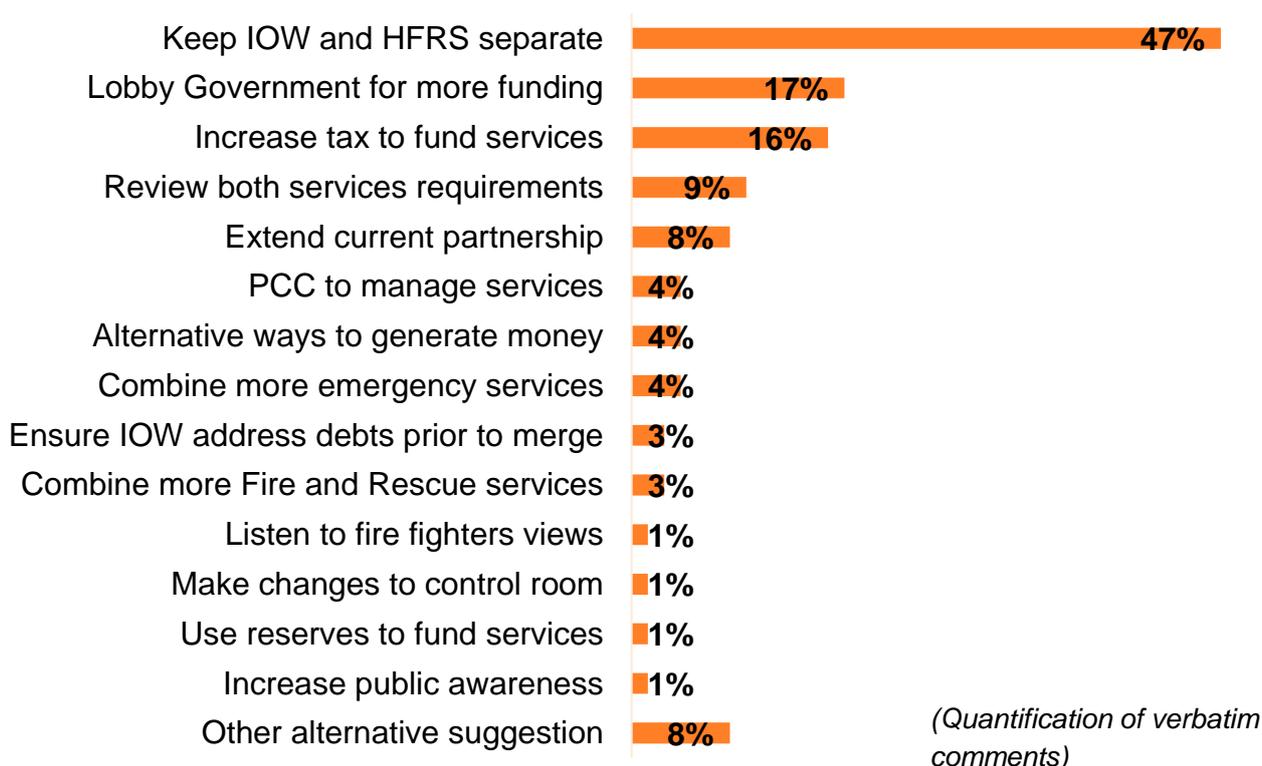
*(In total 6 comments were received regarding the tax increase)*

## Alternative suggestions to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority made by individuals

76 individual respondents put forward an alternative suggestion to the creation of a Combined Fire Authority. The majority of these suggestions were made by residents on the Isle of Wight, as opposed to those who live on the mainland.

Nearly half of these individuals (36 respondents) suggested that the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Services should remain as they are, i.e. separate authorities.

### Alternative suggestions made by individuals (Base: 76)



The main reasons given for this suggestion was that current partnership arrangements work well enough and therefore there is no requirement for changes to be made.



“If the present system is working well why change it? You say that a review would be ‘likely’ to alter the current arrangements. Before going ahead why not be more precise?”

“IOW Council must stand on their own two feet and not give the island services away. The existing arrangement with Hampshire Fire Service will be satisfactory for backup and common equipment purchase.”

“Status quo or heaven forbid, a properly financed and supported FRS both sides of the Solent.”

“IWFRS should stay as is. The ratepayers of Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton can decide for themselves what they need.”



*(In total 36 comments were received suggesting the Services should remain separate)*

Indeed, some would prefer that the two authorities remain separate and the current working partnership be adapted or amended to drive service efficiencies.

“

“The only alternative would be an extension of the current partnership.”

“Continue working in partnership but separate identities.”

“An alternative would be to extend the delivering different in partnership project which has been working very well over the last three years.”



”

*(In total 6 comments were received about amending the current partnership)*

Seven respondents also made reference to reviewing both Fire and Rescue Services separately and analysing their individual requirements to see if any local streamlining could be achieved.

“

“Perhaps looking at streamlining management roles locally before deciding to centralise the Service which would have an impact on

“No alternative but reviewing current local management/leadership of Island services is sensible, necessary and probably overdue.”



“Start with a blank piece of paper and design both services for the future without the millstone of history.”

”

*(In total 7 comments were received regarding reviewing both services)*

‘Other’ suggestions relating to governance (6 comments) made by respondents included; the Isle of Wight having its own fire authority separate from the Isle of Wight council; Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service taking over the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority and electing new councillors on the Isle of Wight.

Many respondents saw increased funding as the key to keeping the two authorities separate. Nearly two in ten suggested that before deciding whether to create a Combined Fire Authority every effort should be made to lobby central Government in order to receive adequate funding for both services, which respondents have evidenced they feel are essential.

“

“I don’t have an alternative. Just more funding for the current service. It seems the fire brigade, police and NHS are all close to a disaster waiting to happen. No more cut backs.”

“National Government to release adequate funding to improve Emergency Services.”

“Fund the IWFRS properly. It takes longer for HFRS to get to IOW than them to get to Devon or Sussex.

Why not merge with those Fire Services instead? The IOW is a special case and needs additional funding from central government, or a fixed link!”



”

*(In total 13 comments were received suggesting the Authorities should remain*

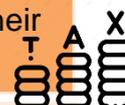
A similar number made suggestions of increasing council tax to ensure the financial resilience of their fire services and to enable them to remain separate. Again, the majority of these comments were made by residents on the Isle of Wight.

“

“Increase council tax to fund the separate services properly.”

“The Isle of Wight should remain independent. If there is a need to increase taxation, then so be it.”

“If it is necessary to raise council tax then do that as the people of the Isle of Wight will be much safer knowing their fire service is controlled locally.”



“I would be happy to pay more council tax to get a better local service.”

”

*(In total 12 comments were received suggesting a tax increase to fund the service)*

A small number of respondents suggested less traditional options for funding the Service, such as fundraising, in order to maintain their current status.

“

“Raising money to pay for the Services. I would prefer a rise in taxes on luxury goods such as electrical goods, cigarettes, alcohol, gambling, foreign holidays, new vehicles, fatty foods etc.”

“I do not think that there should be a significant increase to Council Tax payers on the island as rates are quite high already and salaries are still below average. Maybe a Fire Service lottery could be run to raise money?”



”

*(In total 3 comments were received about raising money other ways)*

Finally, three respondents suggested that combining more than one of the emergency services in one area would provide a better solution to combining one service across a number of areas. They perceived that this would provide the same amount, if not additional, efficiencies to those created by the proposal.

“

“I wonder if more money could be saved by combining the call centres of all of the Isle of Wight Emergency Services in one building so that Ambulance, Fire, Police etc can better utilise resources and local knowledge and all can see exactly what is happening and where by use of a large interactive map identifying the whereabouts of each operation.”

“Combine the lot, police, ambulance and fire.”



*(In total 3 comments were received about combining services)*

## Unstructured responses to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority from individuals

In addition to the views submitted via the Response Form, the consultation received **nine individual** responses via letter or email. Of these **seven** were from members of the public, **one** from a councillor and **one** from a member of parliament.

Support for the proposal came from three members of the public and one member of parliament. The public responses simply stated agreement with the proposal, whilst the MP's official response gave additional detail as to the perceived benefits of a combined authority. These were:

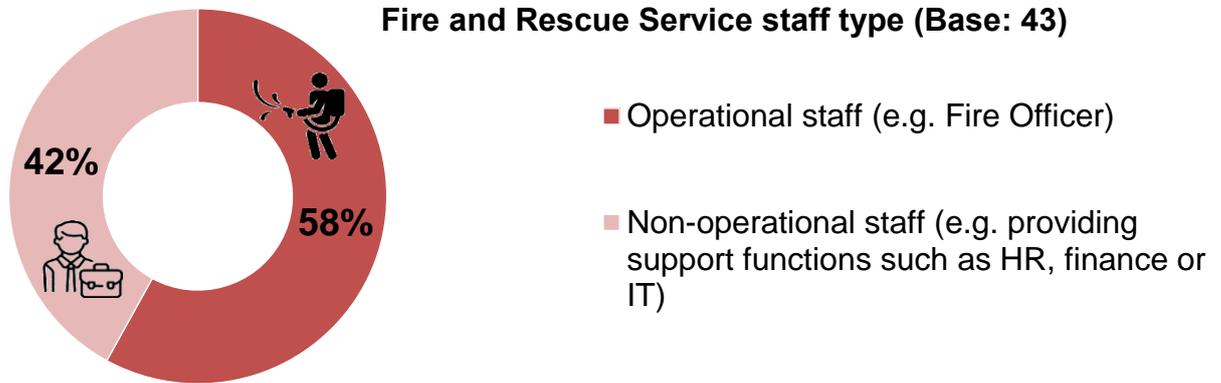
- that economies of scale and financial efficiency would improve as a result of a Combined Fire Authority (*1 comment*)
- that the combination would align the boundaries with Hampshire Constabulary and Police and Crime Commissioner's area to encourage further collaborative working (*1 comment*)

The remaining four members of the public and one councillor were opposed to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority. The most frequent themes raised in these responses were:

- general disagreement for the proposal of the Combined Fire Authority (*5 comments*)
- a belief that the combination will not be as efficient as proposed (*1 comment*)
- concerns about insufficient numbers of staff/resources as a result of Combined Fire Authority (*2 comments*)
- concerns regarding public safety if Combined Fire Authority proposal is implemented (*2 comments*)
- suggestions to combine all emergency services; ambulance, police and fire on the Isle of Wight to improve efficiency (*2 comments*)
- reminder that the Isle of Wight is an island and has different needs to Hampshire (*2 comments*)
- concern that Isle of Wight/Hampshire have to rely on the ferry when sharing resources (*1 comment*)
- concern about losing local knowledge if the Combined Fire Authority occurs (*1 comment*)
- perception that the Isle of Wight does not have as good infrastructure as the Mainland (*1 comment*)
- concerns about further service cuts for the Isle of Wight (*1 comment*)
- perception that the proposal is purely a scheme to save money (*1 comment*)

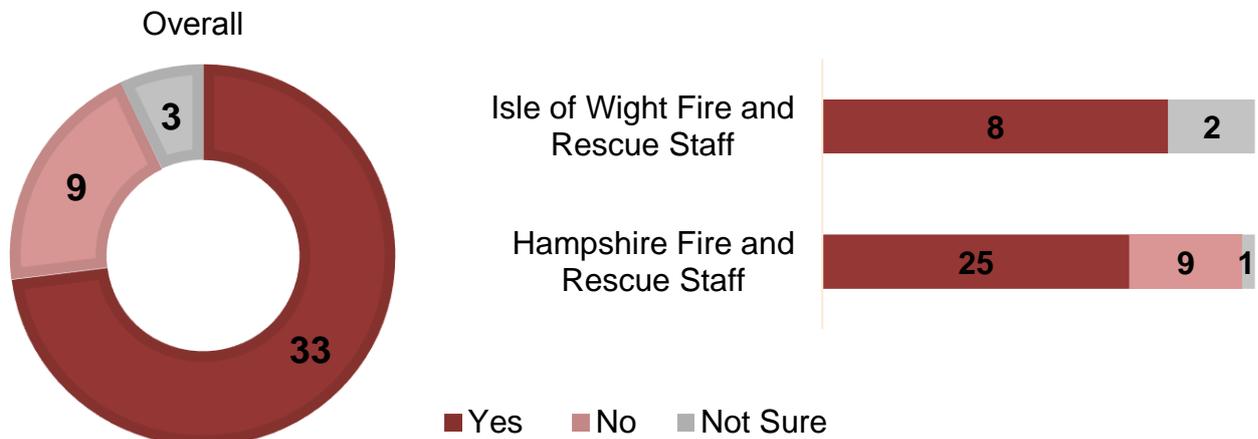
## Views of Fire and Rescue Service staff

46 members of the Fire and Rescue Service responded to the consultation. Of these 10 were serving with the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and 36 were serving with the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, with the majority (58%) being operational staff.



As the sample of responses from within the Fire and Rescue Service is below 50, results are shown by count rather than percentage and may not be generalisable to the wider population of interest. The feedback does, however, help to illustrate some of the key themes.

### Agreement within the Fire and Rescue Service (Base: 45, 10, 35)



The majority of the responding Fire and Rescue Service staff were in favour of the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority. This position was reflected by respondents from both Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.

## Reasons why Fire and Rescue Service staff support the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

20 of the 33 Fire and Rescue staff who agreed with the proposal explained why they supported the creation of a Combined Fire Authority. The most common reason was the perception that services would be more sustainable, with a specialist Fire and Rescue governance focus.

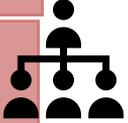
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“The IWFRS and communities of the Island will benefit from the support structures in place as a Combined Fire Authority. A CFA is the right thing to do to protect the resilience of the IWFRS.”

“A Combined Fire Authority would provide a better service to the public.”

“More specialised governance.”

“I think the IOW Council’s financial pressures are not assisting the IWFRS to serve the community to the best of its potential.” ”



*(In total 10 comments were received from staff regarding improved governance and services)*

Many of the responding staff pointed to potential efficiencies - both in terms of financial economies of scale when procuring equipment, and operational efficiencies through pooling skills, knowledge and resources to greater effect and the benefit of both areas.

“ “

“Collaborative working and financial efficiency.”

“It will bring economies of scale, value for money and operational efficiencies.”

“Seems like a way of working more closely and sharing best practice.”

“Potential of money saving as only one governing body. As long as this money is put back into front line services not wasted.”

“Greater efficiency, increase in shared knowledge and procedures.” ”



*(In total 8 comments were received from staff regarding financial efficiency and pooled resources)*

In turn, staff felt that the proposal would have a positive impact on the sustainability and resilience of both services, in particular the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.

“ “

“It is the only way forward for IWFRS, due to lack of funding from government, the cuts put on the Service are not feasible going forward. . . a new CFA is the only way we can continue to deliver a FRS and expand into the wellbeing agenda.”

“It will provide better services to communities, create a more sustainable organisation, enable clarity of decision making in the interests of all in the area and provide sustainability for the longer term.” ”



*(In total 4 comments were received from staff regarding improved sustainability)*

## Reasons why Fire and Rescue Service staff oppose the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

Four of the nine Fire and Rescue staff who disagreed with the proposal explained why they opposed the creation of a Combined Fire Authority.

Their main concern was that the mainland would inherit the Isle of Wight's debts - to the detriment of the residents in Hampshire.

“

“I don't see the benefits to Hampshire, clearly the IOW will benefit massively but I suspect at a cost to Hampshire FRS.”

“Management is already in place for its smooth running, however my concern is that some of the building on the IOW may need money spending on them, as a Hampshire tax payer any such issues should be resolved, so as not to be a burden on Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Tax payers.”



“It seems that HFRS are just bailing out IOWFRS, HFRS are picking up the shortfall that the IOW council can't provide.”

”

*(In total 3 comments were received from staff who believe Hampshire will inherit debts)*

Subsequently, some of the responding staff felt that additional funding should be sought for the individual services as opposed to implementing a Combined Fire Authority.

“

“There have been enough budget cuts to the fire services. It needs to stop, and the politicians need to be told this. Enough is enough!”

“This is not all about money! I believe the population would support a properly funded fire service in all 3 areas.”



”

*(In total 2 comments were received from staff suggesting that funding should be found)*

One respondent felt that the IOW and the mainland are too dissimilar, and the combination would not work due to differences in operation.

“

“The IOW is run completely different to the mainland. Hampshire can't even run their own county well let alone another.”



”

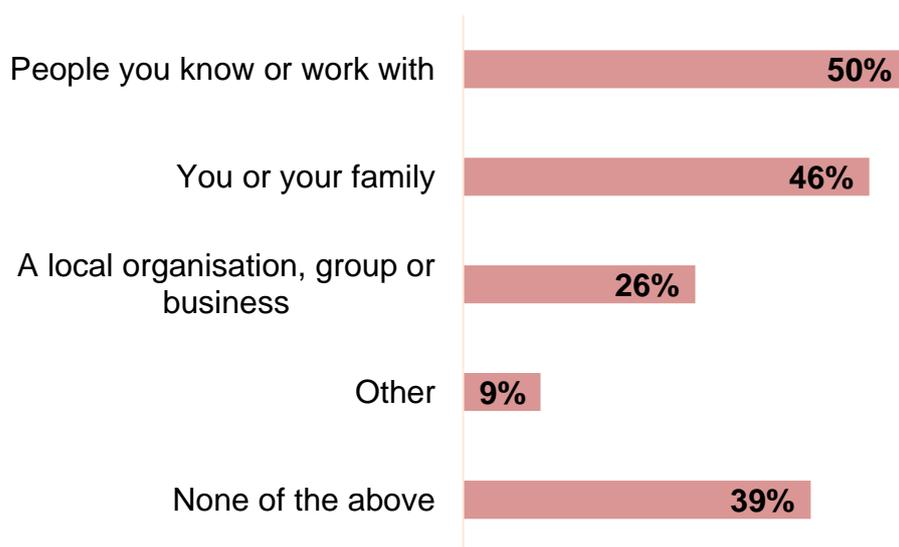
*(In total we received 1 comment from staff relating to operational differences)*

## Perceived impacts of the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority from respondents within the Fire and Rescue Service

Half of the responding Fire and Rescue Service staff felt that people they know or work with may be impacted in some way should the two authorities combine, whilst just under half felt that there would be a direct impact on themselves or their family.

Nearly four out of ten staff who responded felt that no-one would be impacted by the proposed combination. This implies a feeling that the potential merger would not make a big difference to the way the Services currently operate.

### Who will be impacted (Base: 46, multi-choice)



Of the 28 respondents who felt that there would be an impact, only 14 provided specific details of what they felt the potential impacts of creating a combined authority could be.

Eight comments referenced positive impacts that the proposal being implemented could have on them or someone they know.

Three respondents referred to the potential for service improvement arising from the change.

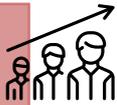
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“Improved service for IOW residents and businesses.”



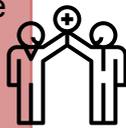
*(In total 3 comments were received about improved services)*”

Two respondents noted that Fire and Rescue Service staff could benefit from improved opportunities. For example, the merger may increase chances of career development or change that the two services may not benefit from if they remain as they are.

“I am employed by one of the FRS so could change things I am, or others are responsible for and increase workplace stresses but equally improve chances of career development and promotion.” 

*(In total 2 comments were received about potential opportunities for FRS staff)*

An equal number of respondents focused on the positive impact that collaborative working could have on them, if the proposal to combine both authorities went ahead.

“Working within the Service I view this potential proposal as a positive and much needed option. The benefits of working together to deliver a service across the complete service will be of benefit to all, irrelevant of which side of the water you reside.” 

*(In total 2 comments were received about collaborative working)*

Ultimately, these respondents felt that combining the two Fire and Rescue Authorities could mean a more sustainable Fire and Rescue Service for all to benefit from - providing improved safety, greater service efficiency and better value for money for the taxpayer.

“A positive to ensure a safe and resilient Fire and Rescue Service for the future is provided for islanders.” 

“Yes, surely it would impact positively by providing a better service for us all at a lower cost.”

*(In total 3 comments were received about increased resilience and value)*

Five respondents detailed the negative impacts that they expected to arise from the proposal. There was no clear consensus of opinion - eight different themes arose from these five responses, with the perceived impacts including:

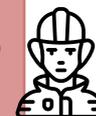
- Potential increase in workplace stress
- Diminished budgets
- Increase in council tax paid
- Loss of representation for the Isle of Wight
- Potential job losses
- Increase in response times
- A reduction in front line services

“

“I work for the IWFRS, so the impact will be direct; the wider impact has of course the potential to affect everyone who may use the Service in the future and with the IW presumably having just one member sitting on the authority (based on those of Portsmouth and Southampton in the current CFA) I don't believe we'll be sufficiently represented.”

“It will undoubtedly effect local business, organisations and communities that rely on us and that we're here to protect with fewer resources, fewer personnel and higher response times.”

“I'd be paying more council tax, so that money wouldn't be available for me and my family. I work with people who would be directly affected as would I.”



”

## Alternative suggestions to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority made by Fire and Rescue Service staff

Only six of the 46 responding Fire and Rescue Service staff made an alternative suggestion to combining the two authorities.

Three of the six staff questioned why the two authorities could not remain separate entities and continue working in their current capacity – one to the extent of suggesting that the existing partnership arrangement is also ended.

“Continue as they are. Surely they are already making savings?”

“How different would it really be if we merged than if we didn’t and kept the existing leadership arrangement?”

“Return the IWFRS to its original structure outside of the partnership.”



*(In total 3 comments were received suggesting the Authorities remain separate)*

A further two staff suggested gaining additional funding for the Fire and Rescue Service from other means instead of combining authorities.

“If the IWC are able to gain additional funding for the Island and funds can be allocated to IWFRS then this is possible, however every department is under the strain of budget cuts and the amount needed to return to our previous structure and continued replacement of equipment and updating of our buildings it is unlikely to be a priority for the council.”

“Provide reasonable funding for the Service the public wants.”



*(In total 2 comments were received suggesting increased funding for services)*

The remaining respondent suggested combining all emergency services on the Isle of Wight to make the needed efficiencies, as opposed to combining the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service with that in Hampshire.

“I believe if combinations should occur this can be best achieved by combining authorities that deliver services on the Island; i.e. combination of the Fire and Rescue Service and ambulance service.”



*(In total 1 comment was received suggesting combining more services)*

## Views of responding organisations

A total of 27 organisations submitted an official response to the consultation. 11 did so using the consultation Response Form, with a further 16 responding via letter or email.

Of these 27 organisations, 20 were councils, and seven represented the emergency services sector.

### Local Authorities' response to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

Nine councils responded to the consultation using the consultation response form and 11 provided an unstructured response.

Nine councils opposed the proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority. All of these councils represented residents on the Isle of Wight.

Six councils supported the proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority. This group represented residents in Southampton, Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight.

Five responding councils did not state their position within their response – instead using the opportunity to seek reassurance on potential local impacts. Amongst these were representatives of residents of the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Basingstoke in Hampshire.

### Local Authorities views on the proposal

<b>Agree</b> Chale Parish Council Hampshire County Council Havant Borough Council Northwood Parish Council Rushmoor Borough Council Southampton City Council
<b>Disagree</b> East Cowes Town Council Freshwater Parish Council Havenstreet & Ashley Parish Council Lake Parish Council Rookley Parish Council Ryde Town Council Shalfleet Parish Council Wroxall Parish Council Yarmouth Isle of Wight Town Council
<b>Neutral</b> Bembridge Parish Council Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Rowlands Castle Parish Council Shanklin Town Council St Helens Parish Council

## Reasons why Local Authorities support the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

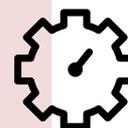
The main reason why councils approved of the proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority was because of the perceived efficiencies that this is expected to provide. Financial efficiency proved the most common driver, with councils acknowledging the potential economies of scale that the new authority could benefit from. Operational efficiencies were also front of mind.

“

“It is clear that creating a new Combined Fire Authority would build capacity, increase resilience and deliver further economies of scale.”

“The chief reasons for supporting the proposal were based on the arguments set out in the consultation in respect of efficiencies and greater capacity created for the authority by the prospect of a combined authority.”

“Southampton City Council recognises the opportunities for efficiencies and improvements in terms of finance and service operations.”



”

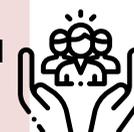
*(In total 4 comments were received regarding increased efficiency)*

Four councils who agreed with the proposal expressed their views that the combination will increase public safety in the area, which would be beneficial to residents of both the Isle of Wight and on the mainland.

“

“The County Council believes that the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority would not have any negative effects on the safety of Hampshire residents and is more likely to increase their safety due to greater operational efficiency.”

“The creation of a Combined Authority across the four local authority areas will also support the alignment of safety campaigns and greater consistency of safety messages to the public, and as well as improvements to the delivery of services.”



”

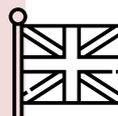
*(In total 4 comments were received regarding increased public safety)*

Three councils felt that creating a combined authority could have a positive national impact by providing more capacity to assist with larger scale or national incidents.

“

“Southampton City Council recognises the opportunities for efficiencies and improvements that could be achieved through a Combined Authority, including the pooling of resources to deliver improvements, the pooling of skills and knowledge, and a larger more flexible workforce which can flex to respond to demand locally and nationally.”

“With respect to the proposals, our view is that the creation of a Combined Fire Authority makes sense, we have noted the various reasons given for the proposed merger including simpler governance arrangement, financial efficiency, greater operational efficiency, effectiveness and public safety, greater pooling of resources of skills and knowledge and being able to respond more effectively to any national scale incidents.”



”

*(In total 3 comments were received regarding the increased national impact)*

## Reasons why councils oppose the proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority

The majority of the opposing councils, all of which were based on the Isle of Wight, expressed dissatisfaction with 'losing control' of the Service. They felt that if the combined authority is situated on the mainland, its priorities would not be in the best interests of Isle of Wight residents.

“

“The main concern is loss of control for the Isle of Wight. Priorities for a combined authority would be likely to be off the Island. Financially small increase in costs to residents but the long-term costs seem unknown.”

“Loss of control due to being just one vote if the Island wanted to dispute any further decisions which the Island felt was not in its best interests.”



“Lack of representation from the Island at the new fire authority (1 of 10 seats).”

”

*(In total 5 comments were received concerning loss of control)*

This was particularly the case given the proposed increase in council tax for residents of the Isle of Wight. Although only a nominal amount, it was perceived that those on the Isle of Wight would pay more but not receive a higher standard of service.

“

“No financial gain for Island council taxpayers – in fact, amalgamation would result in increased annual costs of £3.74 per household.”

“Financially small increase in costs to residents but the long-term costs seem unknown.”



”

*(In total 3 comments were received concerning the increase in tax)*

Two councils also expressed concerns regarding public safety.

“

“East Cowes Town Council are opposed to this proposal. They believe that by combining these services it will provide significant risk to the safety of the public and industry in East Cowes which is a highly industrialised area.”

“Members recognised the need for a review and acknowledged that significant savings had been identified by IW Council in the 2018/19 budget, but the need to ensure the safety of local residents and communities should be a priority and further engagements would help inform the public and businesses.”



”

*(In total 2 comments were received concerned with decreased safety)*

Generally, the opposing councils agreed the current partnership arrangements were working well and therefore that a Combined Fire Authority would be an unnecessary change.

“

“The Council resolved to respond that it does not see the necessity for a Combined Fire Authority with Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton. The present arrangements, with the Isle of Wight Council exercising the powers of the Fire Authority are adequate for the Island’s needs and placing control of the local fire service in the hands of elected members from mainland councils will result in a gradual marginalisation of the Island’s influence and needs.”

“It was agreed that oversight and financing of the IW Fire Service appeared to work well under the current arrangements and no particular advantage was seen in having a CFA.”



”

*(In total 3 comments were received concerned with the necessity)*

## Perceived impacts of the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority from responding Councils

Councils that completed the online Response Form were asked which groups they felt would be impacted by the proposal, should it progress. All felt that the proposed merger would have some impact.

Four councils focused on the positive impacts such as efficiency and improved safety, similar to the reasons provided for approving the proposal.

“

“We support these proposed impacts which a new Combined Fire Authority would bring.”



”

*(In total 4 comments were received expecting positive impacts on efficiency)*

However, most sought reassurance that the proposal to combine the two authorities would not impact the Service provided in their area. Even those who supported the proposals were keen to clarify potential longer-term service implications.

In total, six councils made a comment about the implications that the proposal could have on their local communities, for example concerns about local fire station closures.

“

“Shanklin fire station should be retained.”

“Can assurances be given that Bembridge fire station will continue to operate?”

“There appears to be implications for the number of stations (important to rural communities on an Island – highlighted by recent issues with car ferries) and associated to recruitment of retained and full-time crews.”



”

One Isle of Wight based council expressed concern regarding delays in firefighters arriving at a scene of emergency.

“

“Delays in reaching locations that may be unfamiliar to mainland call centres – already demonstrated by the emergency health call centre on the mainland.”



”

*(In total 1 comment was received concerned with delays in response)*

Another council raised concerns about the impact on its status as a Unitary Authority if the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority is implemented.

“

“Members were also mindful to ensure any future Joint Service, if it is agreed, needs to respect the Island’s status as a Unitary Authority (i.e. representation, veto, and voting rights), severance by water issues, and additional costs/capacity needs; and joint service interface (i.e. with other emergency services and voluntary sector).”



”

*(In total 1 comment was received concerning the IOW losing its status)*

Although the majority of the comments regarding fears about service impact came from those councils on the Isle of Wight, councils on the mainland also expressed their concerns with potential station closures and the potential impact on residents.

“

“Whilst accepting the concept of the proposed combined authority, this Parish Council is keen to emphasise the need to protect local stations, particularly those in smaller conurbations which may serve more rural areas.”

”

*(In total 6 comments were received concerning fire station closures)*

In Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth, councils expressed the need for reassurance that they would not be financially disadvantaged as a result of the merger.

“

“The County Council will therefore seek to gain assurance from Government that the property maintenance liability would not disadvantage Hampshire and that the transition arrangements are fair.”

“Southampton City Council would like to seek assurance from the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority that the combining of the authorities would not have a negative impact on services in Southampton, with funding previously allocated for Hampshire services being used to meet the financial challenges of replacing vehicles on the Isle of Wight.”

“We note that the consultation states there should be no financial impact to our residents in terms of the share they pay towards the Fire and Rescue Service, however, we would caution of the need to ensure that the financial challenges faced by Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service are effectively managed and not passed onto our residents either through increased cost or any impact on future investment in services across Hampshire.”



”

*(In total 3 comments were received concerning financial liability)*

Two councils on the mainland had concerns about future demand pressures due to predicted population and housing increases and sought reassurance that plans took local economic growth into consideration.

“

“Any plans must take account of population and dwelling growth. In Basingstoke and Deane there is a growing population (175,852 residents in 2018, forecast to reach 192,666 in 2024) and there are an increasing number of older residents.”

“Rowlands Castle, in line with many other towns and villages in the area, is experiencing a considerable increase in housing development which will need factoring into any future decisions regarding fire stations and the areas they cover.”



”

*(In total 2 comments were received concerned with increased demand)*

## Alternative suggestions to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority made by Local Authorities

### Alternative suggestions (Base: 6)

Six out of the 20 responding councils put forward alternatives to the proposed approach. Five of these councils would like to see the authorities remain separate. The majority of these comments were from councils based on the Isle of Wight.

“

“IWC must retain its county status and remain independent from Hampshire.”

“Remain as at present.”

“Present system should remain.”

“The IWC must retain its county status and remain independent from Hampshire. Existing arrangements appear to be operating satisfactorily, so changes seem unnecessary.”

“The alternative is to leave arrangements as they are subject to the review.”



*(In total 5 comments were received regarding remaining separate)*

The other alternative suggestion that an Isle of Wight based council made was to increase tax to raise funds to support the current services.

“

“The Town Council believe that the people of the island would be agreeable to pay more in council tax to preserve a local island service.”



*(In total 1 comment was received regarding increasing council tax)*

No other alternative suggestions were made by councils.

## Emergency Services sector response to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

The remaining seven organisations that responded were all linked with the Emergency Services sector. In their professional capacity, these respondents have a clear working knowledge and experience of the fire and rescue service.

None of these organisations opposed the proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority, instead the overwhelming majority were in favour of the move suggesting that this proposal would be well supported by the wider sector. One organisation, the Fire Brigades Union, gave a neutral response which focussed on ensuring that firefighter welfare was front of mind should the proposed merger proceed.

### Emergency Services sector views

<b>Agree</b> Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Hampshire Constabulary National Fire Chiefs Council Police and Crime Commissioner South Central Ambulance Service South East Coast Ambulance Service
<b>Neutral</b> Fire Brigades Union

## Reasons why responding Emergency Service sectors support the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

All respondents from the emergency service sector outlined why they agreed with the proposal to combine the two authorities, with some outlining specific positive impacts the merger could have.

Four organisations made reference to a more sustainable service being provided to the residents of both the Isle of Wight and Hampshire.

“

“The combination will also provide a greater resilience, especially for the Isle of Wight as part of a larger organisation.”

“I know that Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority already work very closely with Isle of Wight Council and realise the mutual benefits and resilience which that excellent working relationship creates.”



”

One of those four comments came from Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, who shared their own experience of merging authorities and the increased sustainability that can come from combining services.

“

“Through the reconfiguration of available resources, I believe that the services offered to the communities of Dorset and Wiltshire are now in a stronger more sustainable position.”



”

*(In total 4 comments were received mentioning increased sustainability)*

The emergency services also perceived that the combination of the two authorities would lead to an increase in safety for the residents on both sides of the water. This emanated from their own experiences of collaborative working.

“

“A new Combined Fire Authority would reflect the Hampshire policing area, and in turn provide further opportunities for a strong evidence base delivering on keeping our communities safer.”

“Within Hampshire Constabulary we also enjoy strong working relationships with officers and staff from both organisations, which collectively helps us to keep Hampshire and the Isle of Wight safer.”



”

*(In total 4 comments were received mentioning increased safety)*

Some organisations noted that the Service provided by a Combined Fire Authority would remain at a high standard or even increase in quality, which would be beneficial to all residents.

“

“Hampshire is nationally regarded, rightly, as a leader in emergency services collaboration. Through undertaking a more coordinated and shared use of resource and provision keeps a continued focus on frontline delivery.”

“Operating within a single fire authority will provide consistency and improve safety for all staff as well as increasing the resilience on the Island.”

“The amalgamation will also allow sharing of expertise, resources and resilience across the two services, which can only aid public safety.”



”

*(In total 4 comments were received regarding service standards)*

Another common theme related to increased financial and operational efficiencies arising from a Combined Authority.

“

“It will make better use of resources, provide greater efficiencies and safety, increased pooling of skills and knowledge, improve and simplify governance and enable greater contribution to national scale accidents.”

“In times of continuing financial constraint, ways to provide efficiencies beyond reducing services are vital and this will provide that.”

“From the view point of my own service, we have seen considerable benefits arising from our combination including around £4m of annual efficiency financial savings.”



”

*(In total 3 comments were received mentioning increased efficiency)*

*NB: No alternative suggestions were made by the emergency services sector as no-one gave a negative response.*

## Impartial views on the proposal from the Fire Brigades Union

The Fire Brigades Union provided a detailed response expressing their neutral view on the proposal. This outlined both the advantages and disadvantages arising from the proposal.

“

“At this time FBU officials have no choice but to take a holding position on this proposal, neither supporting nor rejecting the proposed merger of Hampshire and Isle of Wight FRS.”



”

### Key points raised

- The public and firefighters of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight need assurance that any combination will not negatively affect emergency cover e.g. no reduction in fire stations, appliances or uniformed based posts.
- Staff will require assurances that there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of the combination.
- The delivery of proper, safe and resilient crewing arrangements for fire cover must be a priority no matter the outcome of the consultation.
- FBU would like to ask that the crewing reduction proposal taking place on the Isle of Wight is withdrawn until the outcome of the consultation is known.
- Employees of the Services will continue to be employed under the same terms and conditions and that this will be protected e.g. pension arrangements.
- Harmonisations of current rates of pay between the two Fire and Rescue Services.
- If a merger is agreed the FBU expect employers and managers to engage properly with elected representatives at local level.

The Fire Brigades Union did not have any alternative suggestions to the merger, other than to increase the funding for the Fire and Rescue Services.

“

“Against this background, the view of the FBU and our members is clear: We demand investment, not cuts to the service going forward.”



”

The current lack of funding led them to reluctantly conclude that combining the two authorities may be the only option available to ensure that the Services were maintained.

“

“The constant drive for efficiency, which is more often than not a cuts agenda has led us to a position where the only sustainable option is to merge Hampshire and Isle of Wight FRA, particularly with the significant funding gap currently facing the Isle of Wight Council.”

”



# Initial reactions to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

The chart below illustrates the groups' initial reactions to the proposals and how these differed between geographical areas.

## Participants from the Isle of Wight

Have a strong local identity and ownership of the Service.

*"It's a bit of unique situation on the Island, we are completely cut off from everything."*

*"It's great that they promote fire safety in schools, as this is really valued."*

Assume the proposal will lead to service reductions but can see some benefits.

*"My concern is – it's always the front line that suffers."*

*"It would open the door to other cost saving measures."*

Fear a loss of accountability and Island focus.

*"I think we'll be a tiny voice in a large authority - the Island won't have much priority."*

*"An increase in taxation with a reduction in representation."*

Overall, feel uncertain about the proposal and have concerns about the future.

*"It sounds like a good idea, but we don't know what is going to happen down the line."*

*"We are being forced by a council that has already decided to cut services."*

Feel the Isle of Wight cannot rely on the mainland - services need to be retained.

*"You need people here with a knowledge of the Island. . . local knowledge is just vital."*

*"You need good coverage, with fire stations as getting around isn't always so quick."*

## Participants from Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton

Were not generally aware that the authorities were currently separate.

*"I don't see it as Hampshire Fire and Rescue, I just see it as the fire service."*

*"I was completely surprised! Why are they being run as a separate entity?"*

Do not expect any significant changes but can see some opportunities arising.

*"If you still need a fire engine it would still come from the nearest location."*

*"If it increases efficiency and saves even a little money then it's got to be a good thing."*

Can see how the Isle of Wight may have a different perspective to the mainland...

*"Can't really see why you wouldn't do it, but then I don't live on the Isle of Wight."*

*"Am I going to have to wait 2 hours, so they can get the ferry over?"*

. . .but overall, think that the proposal is a good idea. . .

*"Seems like a no-brainer really."*

*"It seems silly that there are two. The money that is being spent on two could be combined to give a better service."*

. . .as long as services do not change, and an engine turns up when needed.

*"As long as the service doesn't change, and you still have a fire engine at the end of a 999."*

*"As long as it has no impact on frontline services"*

## Perceived advantages of combining the two authorities

When asked to consider the advantages of combining the two authorities, all groups recognised the potential to use the available resources to better effect by combining and pooling knowledge, standardising equipment and by having one specific service focus. It was acknowledged that the Isle of Wight Council would face increased financial pressure in funding the Service and updating stations in the coming years, and that the merger would help to relieve this burden.

### Advantages recognised by all groups



#### **Financial benefits:**

Both in terms of helping the Isle of Wight Council balance its budget and helping the Fire and Rescue Service avoid further cuts.



#### **Standardisation of equipment and services:**

Both services would be using the same tools and applying the same standards for community and emergency work.



#### **Sharing of knowledge and best practice:**

This is already happening but the skills and knowledge base could be enhanced further by combining the two authorities.



#### **Expert governance:**

There is a perception that the Services would be governed by people who were fire and rescue experts.



#### **Specific service focus:**

A Combined Fire Authority would focus on public safety, whilst the Isle of Wight Council has a broader range of responsibilities.



#### **Widen resource pool:**

Both services would be able to benefit from the resources of the other, including equipment, funding and knowledge.



#### **Station refurbishment:**

It was acknowledged that stations on the Isle of Wight were likely to benefit from the investment through the merger.

Participants in Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth felt that moving to a Combined Fire Authority was a natural evolution of the current partnership arrangements. They noted that a Combined Authority may be able to operate more strategically in terms of using and purchasing equipment, and be more efficient in its decision making.

### Advantages recognised by mainland groups



#### **Reduced bureaucracy / faster decision making:**

Potential for quicker decision making as no need for decisions to go through full council on the Island.



#### **Equipment sharing:**

It was recognised that each service had specialist equipment, from which the other could benefit.



#### **Combined procurement:**

It was noted that a larger authority would have increased purchasing power and could thereby achieve better value.



#### **Minimal change required:**

It was felt that combining the two authorities was simply a natural evolution of the current way of partnership working.

## Perceived disadvantages of combining the two authorities

Both groups felt unclear about the future direction of the Fire and Rescue Services, should the merger go ahead. In particular, they raised concerns about whether combining the authorities would ultimately mean job losses or service cuts, and how the funding model would work for all areas.

All groups recognised that the Isle of Wight may feel that its services could become less of a priority as part of a larger authority.

### Potential disadvantages put forward by both groups



#### **Job losses:**

It was assumed that any merger would lead to job losses. Most imminently, there was scope for back office job cuts.



#### **Streamlined / reduced personnel:**

There was fear that the combination of authorities was a precursor to a wider service reduction – particularly on the Isle of Wight.



#### **Future uncertainty:**

Participants questioned what the Services would look like in five years time and whether a Combined Fire Authority would be seen as a bigger target for central Government reductions.



#### **Reduced independence:**

All groups recognised that the Isle of Wight may have concerns about responsibility for its services moving to the mainland.



#### **Funding from the area not benefitting the area:**

Concerns were raised about how the Services would be funded and how financial resources would be allocated.

The three groups held on the mainland also considered the size of the proposed Combined Fire Authority and whether it would be too large to function effectively – both in terms of geographic scope and the likely range of differing needs within the area.

Each group also raised the need for Hampshire Fire Authority to use their budget to upgrade dated stations on the Isle of Wight as a potential disadvantage - questioning how the money could benefit Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth if the authorities did not combine.

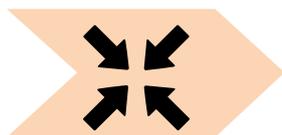
Finally, they queried the level of resource required to manage the change process, and whether that would mean diverting staff away from other duties over the transitional period.

### **Potential disadvantages put forward by groups from Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton**



#### **Increased costs:**

Infrastructure and improvements would take some of the combined budget. Money from Hampshire supporting the Island.



#### **Services spread too thinly:**

Participants felt that the Combined Authority area may be too large. If services are reduced in future there may not be sufficient coverage for the whole area.



#### **Decisions made not appropriate for all areas:**

There was likely to be a range of differing needs across the combined area. Participants asked for clarity on whose needs would take priority and why.



#### **Less community work during the change process:**

The additional resource needed to manage the change could lead to reduced capacity for community safety work.

Participants on the Isle of Wight were concerned about both service and governance changes under a Combined Fire Authority. They sought reassurance that the change would not lead to the loss of any fire stations on the Isle of Wight, nor a reduction in the level of priority that was given to the needs of the Isle of Wight. They were also concerned about the proposed council tax rise – not so much the initial cost, but that there was no indication of how much it might continue to grow in future.

Given their concerns, they wanted to retain the ability of local people to hold the Fire Authority accountable. Although they recognised that the existing governance arrangements may not be perfect elected members could be challenged regarding their decisions. In contrast, they felt it was unclear how the Combined Fire Authority would be regulated.

### Potential disadvantages put forward by groups on the Isle of Wight



#### **Streamlining / reducing service – number of stations:**

Insecurity of the fire stations – particularly on the Isle of Wight – Participants asked these would be compromised in order to make savings.



#### **Loss of democratic accountability:**

Participants were unclear as to how the Combined Fire Authority would be accountable to the taxpayer and the identity of the regulatory body



#### **Reduced representation for the Isle of Wight:**

Only one councillor on the authority instead of 12. The authority would have a wider focus than just the Isle of Wight.



#### **No cap / limit to council tax rises:**

The proposed council tax rise for the Isle of Wight is not capped. It's a small amount now but could rise steeply in future.



#### **Top heavy structure:**

Participants felt that the merger could lead to a top-heavy structure.



#### **These things may not end well:**

Combining the two authorities was seen as a defensive proposal. There was a wariness based on historic experience of previous mergers.

## Points requiring clarification or reassurance

During the course of the group, participants sought further clarification on a number of salient points. These help to illustrate areas of particular concern where additional information may help people to understand the final decision arising from the consultation.

The main focus was the financial implications of combining the two authorities. In particular, participants wanted to understand how the combined 'funding pot' would be allocated across the four constituent areas.

"Ultimately the money for fire and rescue comes from the treasury to the council or the authority. Will the local authority lose the money that comes to IOW currently and under the proposal this will now go to Hampshire?"

"Is it budget neutral from the point of view of Hampshire Isle of Wight, so Hampshire and Isle of Wight are accountable as part of the merger - the savings would come from the synergies that you would get?"

"Talking about how Hampshire County Council and how they finance the department over five years? If the current IOWC set their budget year to year, what would happen if merger went ahead and the five-year budget – at what point would you go in? And what would happen at the end of those five years? Is there a risk that the IOWFS loses out?"

"When all the money goes into one big pot there is only finite amount of money – we need to spend money where the work is?"

"Would the funding from IOW and Hampshire be merged or is it just Hampshire's funding?"

"On the flip side, aren't the islanders thinking that the funds may now come over and tidy up the stations and improve the Services?"

Participants on the Isle of Wight were interested to understand why their council tax precept may increase. Some felt that paying more for services was acceptable, as long as there was full transparency over how the additional monies were being spent. Others were keen that any increase should directly benefit the Island and queried why council tax could not be put up in order to retain the current setup, rather than to contribute to a Combined Fire Authority.

"Is there a reason the council tax would go up on the Isle of Wight?"

"Is there a danger that the money saved by combining is lost in any re-branding of the Services?"

"We should pay more to fund our services if it is transparent where it is going as long as I know the Service we are receiving is the best it can be."

“Another risk is how HFRA structure works and if the budget is looked at as a whole area rather than localities – would Isle of Wight be looked over.”

“If we are actually subsidising and funding the mainland and we are getting a reduced service over here then no.”

Similarly, participants wanted further information on how the two services were resourced. In particular, respondents most often queried how current resources compared between Services in order to understand how Services might benefit / be disadvantaged under the proposed model.. More generally, they sought further reassurance that frontline services would not change, and that there would be no job losses as a result of the proposed merger.

“Who would you say has the most up to date equipment?”

“What’s the population of the IOW?”

“Does IOW have a chief fire officer?”

“Do we envisage any changes to frontline services because of these changes?”

“How do resources compare across the two areas?”

“Job losses are bound to happen – at least in the back office.”

“Are you planning to change your identity as a fire service?”

“So would IOW Training would still be done on IOW?”

“So at the moment if one Hampshire station is under manned can you support?”

“Is it going to require increased management costs? I’m just wondering if you have that authority over there already doing half the job any way – are there going to be two people doing similar jobs on the island?”

Not all participants were clear about how the new governance structure would work – often because they were not aware of the existing arrangements. These questions mostly related to the Isle of Wight and how the Island’s services would be governed, should the combination take place.

“How would the new governance structure work on the Isle of Wight?”

“IOW council have a single representative for fire service, do you think issues get looked over in the cabinet?”

“How many councillors on the Isle of Wight deal with the fire authority at the moment?”

“How did the Isle of Wight not end up as an authority on its own? What I mean is the Hampshire fire authority only look after its own fire service, and the IOW council just look after the fire service?”

“Why can't we make up our own Fire and Rescue authority [outside of the Council]?”

Across all groups, the participants were keen to understand the views of professionals – including a view from those who opposed the proposal. They queried as to whether any other fire authorities had already combined – and if so, what could be learnt from their experiences. Each group also asked for the views of existing fire and rescue staff within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, who were viewed as best placed to understand the implications of the proposals, and most likely to feel the effects.

“Have other fire authorities merged? Were they successful?”

“Have other counties done the same thing and joined together? Have they found it successful?”

“How does it work for the police?”

“Has this been done anywhere else?”

“What's the view on the ground from firefighters?”

“The fire service wants to go ahead with it – but why? Is it so that it can make it more efficient?”

“Wanted to check that the Service has engaged with operational staff?”

“I would have liked to have heard from a fire service union what the union position is of this – what the people on the ground think about this.”

“Is someone going to talk about the opposite point of view. This is what's going to happen – on why they think this is a bad proposal and why it should be rejected.”

Finally, participants sought reassurance that monitoring would be in place to ensure that the success or failure of the combination would be measured.

"You said the IOW service was rated poor, where do the ratings come from?"

"Are you hoping that issues will get addressed and recognised earlier?"

"How do you know at the end of the project if it has been successful or not?"

"How much do the IOW authorities think will be saved by doing this?"

"I would be concerned if we don't go with the proposal would it mean cuts anyway?"

## One key message

At the close of each focus group, participants were individually asked which one key message they would like to feed back to the Fire Authorities regarding the proposals.

Participants from the Isle of Wight generally sought further public reassurance regarding the potential risks of the local service operating under a Combined Fire Authority. Whilst they recognised the immediate need for investment in new technology and buildings, they were also keen to understand the longer-term effects of the proposed merger – particularly with regards to staffing and resourcing on the Island.

It was felt that much could be learnt from experience, and therefore they would like to see more evidence from other authorities who had already undertaken a merger, and to understand the views of the Island's own firefighters towards the proposals.

They wanted guarantees for the Island and reassurance about who would be accountable for services on the Isle of Wight and how the quality of service delivery would be monitored to ensure that the merger was not having any negative effect. There was notable concern about the potential loss of funding and democratic representation for the Isle of Wight– the latter both in terms of the number of representatives on a Combined Fire Authority and that it would not in itself be an elected body.

“I think there are lots of questions and risks and if they can address those risks publicly it might be easier to make a clearer or more defined decision.”

“I would like to see the feedback from other counties that have merged and how this is going with them and understanding their mistakes – for and against both sides.”

“The main thing is the loss of accountability – if something goes wrong we can talk to the council about it – if something happens here, what accountability is there? Who do we, the people on the island go to?”

“If the rise of council tax gets spent on something with the IOW Council we have to know where it is spent. If this goes to another authority, we won't have the power to ask where it goes.”

“Basically, making sure that there are some guarantees for the island, we have to have some set in stone guarantees so we know what we are getting.”

Participants from groups held in Southampton, Portsmouth and Basingstoke also felt strongly that any merger should be subject to quality assurance and clear target monitoring to ensure that service delivery was not negatively impacted by the proposed merger. They wanted it to be clear that the focus was on governance, not service change.

There was some empathy towards the Islanders' views and a well received suggestion that the combined authority should take on a new identity for everyone – rather than the Isle of Wight becoming part of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority. However, participants did feel that the authorities would not be proposing to combine as the preferred option if there were not obvious benefits to doing so. In particular, they hoped that combining the two authorities would help to make processes more efficient and encourage best practice across the whole area.

“Think it is a good proposal as long as efficiency remains same or improves.”

“They are the experts they know what’s going on and if they think it’s the right thing to do we have to rely on their decision.”

“Need to be very clear what the success criteria is – how do you know if you’re on track for what you want to achieve?”

“Response times and correct equipment need to be maintained through time. Don’t use this as a way to reduce services via the back door.”

“Think it is a matter to reassure more so on the island that it is a way of increasing availability of resources and reducing money in certain areas but investing money in other areas – can imagine they are fearful about losing employment. Need to manage the change and expectations.”

“‘Protected’ mentality isn’t a good enough reason [not to do this] but we don’t want people feeling marginalised.”

## Appendix One – Consultation approach

### Open consultation

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) and Isle of Wight Council (IWC) carried out an open consultation, designed to give everyone who wished to have a say on the proposal an opportunity to do so. This type of consultation provides views that are indicative, but not representative, of wider opinion.

The consultation was widely promoted through a range of means.

Regular internal updates were issued to employees of both services through routine notices. Meetings with Unions were held on both the Isle of Wight and in Hampshire, one in each location and an additional two combined meetings.

News articles were published on the Hampshire Fire and Rescue website and Isle of Wight Council webpage and also featured in the local press. An advertisement was also placed in an Isle of Wight newspaper and articles were featured on 'OntheWight.com' a news website for residents of the Isle of Wight.

Both Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Isle of Wight Council endorsed the consultation using regular social media posts on Facebook and Twitter.

Three meetings were also held with Town and Parish Councils in various locations on the Isle of Wight during September. These provided an opportunity for Councillors to meet face to face with Fire Authority Members and Service Staff. In total there were seven attendees across these meetings.

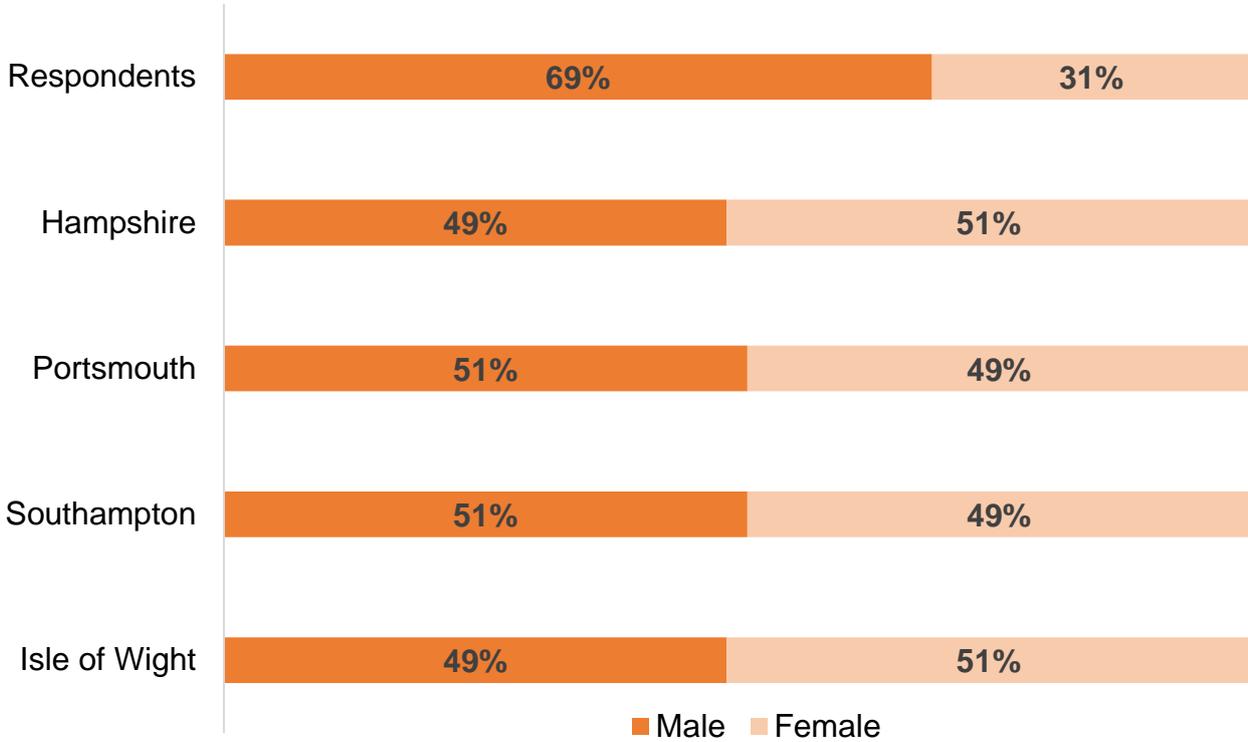
Consultation Information Packs were placed in libraries and council offices across the four areas and could be requested in a range of alternative formats by email or telephone. Responses could be submitted through an online Response Form, by paper version or as 'unstructured' letters and emails.

In total 380 people chose to respond to the consultation, with 311 taking part via the Response Form, 25 people submitting unstructured responses and 44 people participating in the focus groups. Representation was received from all four areas affected by the proposal and across a range of demographics. Responding stakeholders included Fire and Rescue staff, as well as representatives of local councils and the emergency services sector.

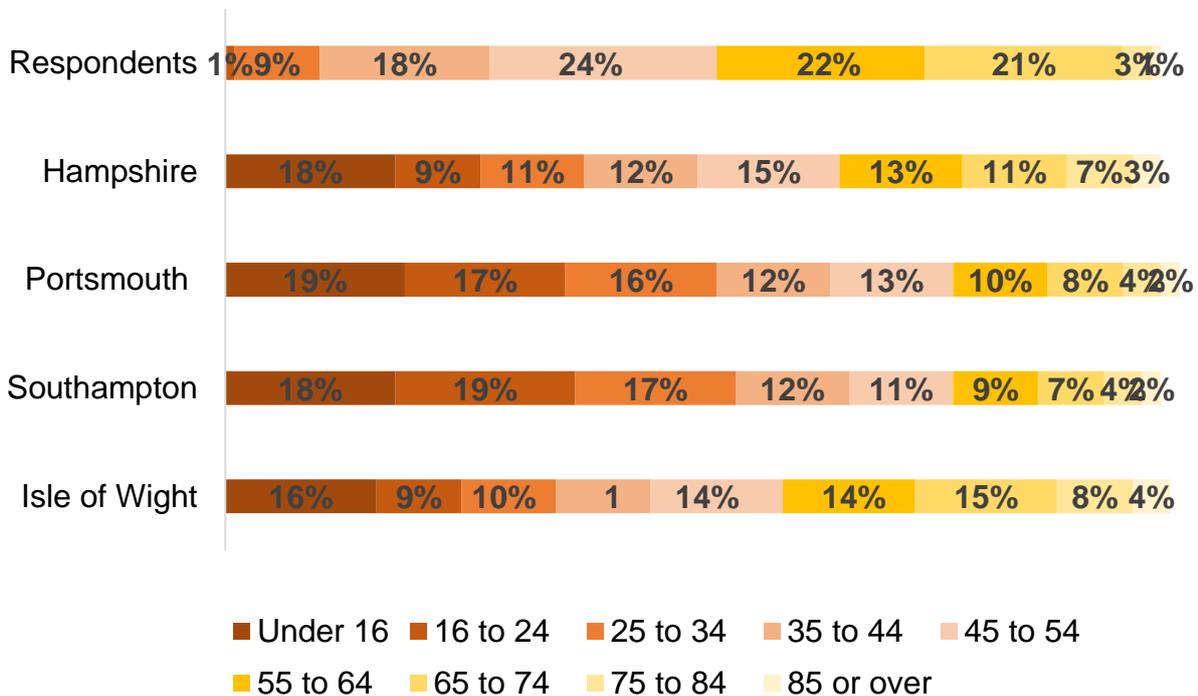
**Respondent demographics compared to population of interest**

The charts below illustrate how the age and gender of respondents compares to the wider population of interest across the affected areas. They indicate an over-representation of males and older respondents amongst the respondent base.

**Gender by Area (Base: 273, 1370728, 214718, 252359, 140984)**



**Age by Area (Base: 271, 1370728, 214718, 252359, 140984)**



## **Interpreting the data**

The analysis only takes into account actual responses – where ‘no response’ was provided to a question, this was not included in the analysis. As such, the totals for each question may add up to less than the total number of respondents who replied to the consultation questionnaire.

## **Publication of data**

All data is processed according to the General Data Protection Regulations as detailed below:

Data was collected for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest and for reasons of substantial public interest. The data provided will only be used to understand views on the proposed changes set out in this consultation. All individuals' responses will be kept confidential. Responses will be anonymised and summarised in a public consultation findings report to be published on HFRS' website. Responses from organisations may be published in full.

The information provided in the response form was collected and processed by Hampshire County Council under the instruction of the HFRS. Data will only be shared between Hampshire County Council, HFRS and Isle of Wight Council. Personal data will not be shared with any other third parties. All data will remain within the UK. Responses will be stored securely and retained for one year following the end of the consultation before being securely and permanently deleted or destroyed.

You can find out more about how the HFRS use your data and your information rights from Jessica Hodge, HFRS' Data Protection Officer, by email at: [dp@hantsfire.gov.uk](mailto:dp@hantsfire.gov.uk) or phone 023 8062 6850 and on the HFRS' website: [www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about-us/contact-us](http://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about-us/contact-us).

Please also see Hampshire County Council's Data Protection webpage: [www.hants.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.hants.gov.uk/privacy) for further details about how the County Council uses and handles data. You can contact the County Council's Data Protection Officer at [data.protection@hants.gov.uk](mailto:data.protection@hants.gov.uk). If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, you should raise your concern with us in the first instance or directly to the Information Commissioners Office at [www.ico.org.uk/concerns](http://www.ico.org.uk/concerns).

## Appendix Two – Consultation form



### **Consultation on the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton**

#### **Response Form**

##### **Introduction**

Fire and Rescue Services are a key part of maintaining public safety. Our core business is in fighting fires. We are also there when there are other emergencies such as floods, road traffic incidents, or terrorist attacks. We help to prevent fire and loss of life through safety information and awareness campaigns.

There is increasing pressure on all Fire and Rescue Authorities to ensure that Fire and Rescue Services are efficient, effective, provide value for money, and are continually working to make communities as safe as possible. Reducing budgets have driven us to consider new ways to make savings, while maintaining public safety and improving services.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) which is responsible for running Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) and Isle of Wight Council (IWC), which is responsible for the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS), have been successfully working together in partnership for three years. We now believe that we are at a point where we need to look at further, more structural changes to the way Fire and Rescue Services are governed in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton so that we can continue to act effectively to keep the public safe.

We have both agreed to consult on whether or not to submit a proposal to Government for the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority, which would cover Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. This proposal offers an opportunity to improve efficiency, achieve better value for money, and maintain high quality public safety services.

This consultation, or decisions following it, would not affect the responsibilities of these services to respond quickly to 999 emergencies and to serve communities.

## About this Response Form

Before completing this Response Form, we recommend that you read the accompanying Information Pack.

This Response Form will take around 10 minutes to complete, depending on how much you write.

The Information Pack and Response Form can also be requested in other formats, including alternative language, Braille, audio or large print by email to [hfrsconsultation@hantsfire.gov.uk](mailto:hfrsconsultation@hantsfire.gov.uk) or by calling 023 8062 6815.

This consultation opens at midday on **6 August** and closes at midnight on **26 October 2018**

### How to return your response to the consultation

Please return your completed response form in the pre-paid envelope provided. You do not need to add a stamp. If you do not have a pre-paid envelope, please send your response back to us by writing 'Freepost HAMPSHIRE' on the front of an envelope, and 'I&EU' on the back.

### Privacy notice

The Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) are running this consultation on behalf of the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, Isle of Wight Council, and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority. Your data is being collected for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest and for reasons of substantial public interest. The data provided will only be used to understand views on the proposed changes set out in this consultation. All individuals' responses will be kept confidential. Responses will be anonymised and summarised in a public consultation findings report to be published on HFRS' website. Responses from organisations may be published in full.

The information you provide in this response form is being collected and processed by Hampshire County Council under the instruction of the HFRS. Data will only be shared between Hampshire County Council, HFRS and Isle of Wight Council. Your personal data will not be shared with any other third parties. All data will remain within the UK. Responses will be stored securely and retained for one year following the end of the consultation before being securely and permanently deleted or destroyed.

You can find out more about how the HFRS use your data and your information rights from Jessica Hodge, HFRS' Data Protection Officer, by email at: [dp@hantsfire.gov.uk](mailto:dp@hantsfire.gov.uk) or phone 023 8062 6850 and on the HFRS' website: [www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about-us/contact-us](http://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about-us/contact-us). Please see Hampshire County Council's Data Protection webpage: [www.hants.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.hants.gov.uk/privacy) for further details about how the County Council uses and handles data. You can contact the County Council's Data Protection Officer at [data.protection@hants.gov.uk](mailto:data.protection@hants.gov.uk)

If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, you should raise your concern with us in the first instance or directly to the Information Commissioners Office at [www.ico.org.uk/concerns](http://www.ico.org.uk/concerns). Hampshire County Council's privacy notice can be found at [www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/privacy](http://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/privacy)

## Section 1: The proposal

HFRA and IWC are considering whether to put a case to Government for the creation a new Combined Fire Authority which covers the local authority areas of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

If a proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority is made and accepted by the Government, the current Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton would be dissolved. A new Combined Fire Authority would be created covering Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

### Why is this being proposed?

A new Combined Fire Authority would provide:

- Simpler governance arrangements
- Financial efficiency
- Greater operational efficiency, effectiveness and public safety
- Greater pooling of skills and knowledge
- Greater contribution towards national scale incidents

### Impact on Council Tax

- Everyone within a single Combined Fire Authority area needs to pay the same for the services that are provided. Therefore, residents on the Isle of Wight living in a Band D property would initially need to pay £3.74 more per year for their Fire and Rescue Service if a new Combined Fire Authority was created, in order to equal the amount paid by all residents who would be served by the new Combined Fire Authority.

- Residents in Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton would therefore see no change to the Council Tax they pay for the Fire and Rescue Service due to the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority.

If a new Combined Fire Authority was agreed locally, and the Government gives permission for it to be created, it is the Government that would ultimately determine how much Council Tax should be charged, taking into consideration the financial position of both authorities.

### Impact on staff

The employment contracts of all existing employees of the two Fire and Rescue Services would transfer to the new Combined Fire Authority. If it is agreed for the Combined Fire Authority to go ahead, the new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) would influence the future shape of the service and resourcing requirements. At the current time, we do not expect there to be impacts on staff as a direct result of the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority. Should future discussions identify impacts on staff, these would be explored and discussed with individuals.

**Potential financial impact on Isle of Wight Council**

The Isle of Wight Council has calculated that, due to reduced national Government funding, they need to save a total of £16.5million by 2021/22. Whilst the proposal primarily supports the continued provision of public safety services there are potential financial benefits. It is estimated that this proposal could save the Isle of Wight Council up to £200,000 over the medium to long term if central support costs (e.g. pensions, HR), were no longer provided by Isle of Wight Council for the Fire and Rescue Service. That would contribute to the overall financial plans to support public services on the Island. Due to its relatively small scale and in its current form, the Fire and Rescue Service may otherwise find it challenging to make any meaningful contributions to the £16.5million target.

Please refer to pages 9 to13 of the Information Pack for further details.

**Q.1 Do you think that a proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton should be submitted to the Government?**

(Please select one box only)

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

**Q.2 Please tell us why you think this is.** (Please write in the box below. Please do not include any personal details in your response)

## Section 2: Your alternative suggestions

If a new Combined Fire Authority is not created then HFRA will remain as it is and IWFRS will remain part of IWC. Both fire services will therefore continue to exist separately and be governed by two separate bodies. This would mean that there would be a review of the current Delivering Differently in Partnership arrangements to see if they remain appropriate. This review would be initiated if it was concluded that the option to create a new Combined Fire Authority was not to be progressed. A review of the partnership would be likely to alter the current arrangements. Details of the partnership review would be finalised if it is decided not to create a new Combined Fire Authority. This would be a matter for HFRA and IWC to agree as part of their normal management of services.

### Potential impacts of reviewing the Partnership

If the proposed new Combined Fire Authority did not go ahead, then there could be a number of potential impacts:

- The financial pressures on the Isle of Wight Council's budget and on IWFRS would remain; money to continue to provide adequate fire services on the Island would still need to be found. The Isle of Wight Council would have various options to consider, and these may include: raising Council Tax, the use of reserves, changes to services, or raising income and/or charges. Should any of these proposals be explored, the Isle of Wight Council will lead a separate public consultation outlining any such changes and associated impacts.
- There would be a formal review of the partnership by the IWC and HFRA. HFRA and IWC could choose to alter, or choose not to renew the partnership agreement. This would mean that the HFRA would no longer receive income from the arrangement. This would mean that Isle of Wight Council would no longer benefit from shared leadership and other shared services; it would then need to consider how to best provide these services.

Please refer to pages 14 to 15 of the Information Pack for further details.

**Q.3 If you have any alternative suggestions to the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority, please provide these in the box below. (Please do not include any personal details in your response)**

### Section 3: Potential impacts

We are keen to understand what impacts the proposed Combined Fire Authority might have if it went ahead. For more information about the potential impacts, please see our People (Equality) Impact Assessment available on our website: [www.hantsfire.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/consultation)

**Q.4 Do you feel the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority would impact:** (Please select all that apply)

- You or your family
- People you know or work with
- A local organisation, group or business
- Other
- None of the above

**Q.5 Please tell us more about any potential impact using the box below.** (Please do not include any personal details in your response)

**If you would like to comment further on the consultation proposals, please continue on a separate sheet of paper, or email us at [hfrsconsultation@hantsfire.gov.uk](mailto:hfrsconsultation@hantsfire.gov.uk)**

## Section 4: About you

**Q.6 Are you responding on your own behalf or on behalf of an organisation, group or business? (Please tick one box only)**

- I am providing a response on my own behalf.....Go to Q.11
- I am providing the official response of an organisation, group or business .....Go to Q.7
- 

**Q.7 Please provide details about your organisation, group, or business:**

 The name and details of your organisation, group or business may appear in the final report, and the information you provide may be subject to publication or release to other parties or to disclosure regimes such as the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your name:

Job position / role:

Name of organisation, group or business:

Address of organisation, group or business:

**Q.8 Please tell us who the organisation, group, or business represents, if applicable, and how views of members were assembled. (Please write in the box below)**

**Q.9 Which area does your organisation, group or business operate in? (Please select all that apply)**

- Basingstoke and Deane
- East Hampshire
- Eastleigh
- Fareham
- Gosport
- Hart
- Havant
- New Forest
- Rushmoor
- Test Valley
- Winchester
- Southampton
- Portsmouth
- Isle of Wight
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

**Q.10 Which of these best describes the primary function of your organisation, group or business? (Please select one box only)**

- Trade union
- Local public sector organisation, e.g district or borough council, local health services, National Park, or prison
- Local public sector partnership, e.g. a Community Safety Partnership
- National public sector organisation, e.g Coastguard, or National Fire Chiefs Council
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Charity, voluntary or local community group
- Local business or group or business representatives
- School, college or place of education
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

## Section four: About you

If you are completing this response form on behalf of an organisation or group, please skip the questions in this section and proceed to the next section, 'End of Consultation' and complete question 17.

HFRS are committed to improving its services, eliminating unlawful discrimination, and promoting equality of opportunity for all people.

We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions so that we can analyse the results overall and by different groups or people.

This will help us to understand the impacts of the consultation proposals and how views differ across these groups. All of the questions in this section are optional.

### Q.11 Who are you...

- A member of the public
- A member of staff at HFRS
- A member of staff at IWFRS
- A member of staff at Isle of Wight Council
- A member of staff at Southampton City Council
- A member of staff at Hampshire County Council
- A member of staff at Portsmouth City Council
- An elected Member of IOW Council
- An elected Member of Southampton City Council
- An elected Member of Hampshire County Council
- An elected Member of Portsmouth City Council
- A Member of Parliament

### Q.12 If you are a member of staff working for HFRS, IWFRS, or one of the Councils listed above, are you: (Please tick one box only)

- Operational staff (e.g. Fire Officer)
- Non-operational staff (e.g. providing support functions such as HR, Finance or IT)

### Q.13 Please provide your postcode. (Please write in the box below)

 Providing your full postcode is optional. If you do provide your full postcode, it is possible that in rural areas this might identify your property. By providing your full postcode you are consenting to Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Isle of Wight Council using this information to understand views on the proposals from different areas.

## Section four: About you

**Q.14 Are you?** (Please select one box only)

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

**Q.15 What was your age on your last birthday?** (Please select one box only)

- Under 16
- 16 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 to 84
- 85 or over
- Prefer not to say

**Q.16 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?** (Please select one box only)

- Yes a lot
- Yes a little
- No
- Prefer not to say

**Q.17 What is your ethnic group?**

- White
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups
- Asian / Asian British
- Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
- Other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

**For 'White', please specify:**

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Irish
- Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background

For 'any other White background' please describe:

**For 'Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups', please specify:**

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background

For 'any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background' please describe:

**For 'Asian / Asian British', please specify:**

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background

For 'any other ethnic group' please describe:

**For 'Black / African / Caribbean / Black British', please specify:**

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black / African / Caribbean background

For 'any other Black / African / Caribbean background' please describe:

**For 'Other ethnic group', please specify:**

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group

For 'any other ethnic group' please describe:

## End of consultation

**Q.17 Finally, to help us improve access to future consultations, please tell us where you first heard about this consultation: (Please select all that apply)**

- Website
- Word of mouth
- Consultation flyer or poster
- Email
- Newspaper
- Staff briefing
- On social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Reported in the press (e.g. radio, newspaper)
- Other

For 'Other', please specify:

Please specify which website/s or newspaper/s:

## Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation.

This consultation will close at 11.59pm on 26 October 2018.

Feedback will help inform a decision about whether to propose a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton to the Government.

The findings from this consultation will be published and presented to the HFRS on 24 January 2019 and Isle of Wight Council on 24 January 2019.

### How to return your response to the consultation

Please return your completed response form in the pre-paid envelope provided. You do not need to add a stamp. If you do not have a pre-paid envelope, please send your response back to us by writing 'Freeport HAMPSHIRE' on the front of an envelope, and 'I&EU' written on the back.

## Appendix Three – Data Tables of Respondents

### Consultation participant profile

The breakdown of respondents by category is shown below:

<b>Are you responding on your own behalf or on behalf of an organisation, group or business?</b>	<b>Counts Analysis %</b>
I am providing a response on my own behalf	300 96.5%
I am providing the official response of an organisation, group or business	11 3.5%
<b>Who are you?</b>	<b>Counts Analysis %</b>
A member of the public	218 73.4%
A member of staff at HFRS	36 12.1%
A member of staff at IWFRS	10 3.4%
A member of staff at Isle of Wight Council	7 2.4%
A member of staff at Southampton City Council	3 1.0%
A member of staff at Hampshire County Council	17 5.7%
A member of staff at Portsmouth City Council	1 0.3%
An elected Member of IOW Council	3 1.0%
An elected Member of Southampton City Council	1 0.3%
An elected Member of Hampshire County Council	-
An elected Member of Portsmouth City Council	-
A member of Parliament	1 0.3%
<b>If you are a member of staff working for HFRS, IWFRS or one of the Councils listed are you:</b>	<b>Counts Analysis %</b>
Operational staff (e.g. Fire Officer)	25 58.1%
Non-operational staff (e.g. providing support functions such as HR, Finance or IT)	18 41.9%

<b>Are you?</b>	<b>Counts Analysis %</b>
Male	189 64.5%
Female	84 28.7%
Prefer not to say	20 6.8%
Other	-
<b>What was your age on your last birthday?</b>	<b>Counts Analysis %</b>
Under 16	-
16 to 24	3 1.0%
25 to 34	24 8.2%
35 to 44	50 17.1%
45 to 54	64 21.8%
55 to 64	60 20.5%
65 to 74	58 19.8%
75 to 84	9 3.1%
85 or over	3 1.0%
Prefer not to say	22 7.5%
<b>Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?</b>	<b>Counts Analysis %</b>
Yes a lot	16 5.5%
Yes a little	38 13.0%
No	213 72.9%
Prefer not to say	25 8.6%

<b>What is your ethnic group?</b>	<b>Counts Analysis %</b>
White	253 86.1%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	3 1.0%
Asian / Asian British	1 0.3%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	-
Other ethnic group	2 0.7%
Prefer not to say	35 11.9%
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	245 83.3%
Irish	1 0.3%
Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller	-
Any other White background	6 2.0%
White and Black Caribbean	-
White and Black African	-
White and Asian	-
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	3 1.0%
Indian	-
Pakistani	1 0.3%
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
Any other Asian background	-
African	-
Caribbean	-
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	-
Arab	-
Any other ethnic group	2 0.7%

Please tell us where you first heard about this consultation?	Counts Analysis %
Website	45 14.8%
Word of mouth	43 14.1%
Consultation flyer or poster	19 6.2%
Email	76 24.9%
Newspaper	21 6.9%
Staff briefing	31 10.2%
On social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	65 21.3%
Reported in the press (e.g. radio, tv)	20 6.6%
Other	23 7.5%

## Appendix Four – Data Tables of Questions

Q.1 - Do you think that a proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton should be submitted to the Government?

	Counts Analysis %
Yes	163 52.9%
No	127 41.2%
Not Sure	18 5.8%

Q.2 - Please tell us why you think this is (coded)

223 respondents provided comments applicable to the question. The question was open to everyone to evidence why they agreed, disagreed or were impartial about the proposal.

Code	Count	%
<b>Other (macro)</b>	8	4%
<b>Not much change felt/ already in place (macro)</b>	2	1%
<b>Undecided/ depends (macro)</b>	6	3%
<b>Require more information to reach decision (macro)</b>	4	2%
<b>Savings to IOW Council are not significant enough (macro)</b>	3	1%
<b>Positive Impact of Combining (macro)</b>	117	52%
Positive Impact of Combining: Improved efficiency (general)	45	20%
Positive Impact of Combining: Economies of scale to benefit from	7	3%
Positive Impact of Combining: Simpler/improved governance arrangements	31	14%
Positive Impact of Combining: Financial efficiency/savings/security	41	18%
Positive Impact of Combining: Operational efficiency	16	7%
Positive Impact of Combining: Pooling of skills/knowledge	11	5%
Positive Impact of Combining: Pooling of resources	15	7%
Positive Impact of Combining: Increased public safety	7	3%
Positive Impact of Combining: Better service provided (general)	28	13%
Positive Impact of Combining: Greater opportunities/improvements for staff	3	1%
Positive Impact of Combining: CFA will have a greater impact nationally	5	2%
Positive Impact of Combining: Increases sustainability	17	8%
Positive Impact of Combining: Other positive impact	3	1%
<b>Negative Impact of Combining (macro)</b>	69	31%
Negative Impact of Combining: Redundancies/job losses	5	2%
Negative Impact of Combining: Employment issues e.g. pensions	5	2%
Negative Impact of Combining: Reduction in operational service	3	1%
Negative Impact of Combining: Reduction in resources	2	1%

Negative Impact of Combining: Poorer service provided (general)	13	6%
Negative Impact of Combining: Decrease in public safety/ put lives at risk	11	5%
Negative Impact of Combining: Funds wouldn't/may not be spent in IOW	4	2%
Negative Impact of Combining: IOW is too big an area to cover/combine	4	2%
Negative Impact of Combining: IOW needs their own resources/ cannot depend on Hampshire	10	4%
Negative Impact of Combining: IOW would be lost in a big authority/have no say	16	7%
Negative Impact of Combining: IOW residents will be paying more in tax	14	6%
Negative Impact of Combining: Do not want to pay money to support another area	14	6%
Negative Impact of Combining: May result in closures of fire stations	1	0%
Negative Impact of Combining: IOW infrastructure/roads are completely different to mainland	2	1%
Negative Impact of Combining: Increased bureaucracy	1	0%
Negative Impact of Combining: Other negative impact	4	2%
<b>Positive Impact of remaining separate (macro)</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>14%</b>
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Decisions/control needs to stay on IOW	10	4%
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Need to keep services local	8	4%
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Needs of each area will be served better	10	4%
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Jobs should be protected	2	1%
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Local knowledge is important	12	5%
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Maintain local political accountability	1	0%
<b>Operational efficiencies can be achieved another way (macro)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1%</b>

Q.3 – If you have any alternative suggestions to the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority, please provide these (coded)

*122 respondents provided an applicable comment to the question. This question was open to everyone, whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposal, however the majority that did comment did not have an alternative suggestion to that proposed in the consultation.*

Code	Count	%
<b>No alternative suggestion (macro)</b>	31	25%
<b>Other (macro)</b>	0	0%
<b>Alternative suggestion made (macro)</b>	91	75%
Alternative suggestion : Combine all/more emergency services	4	3%
Alternative suggestion : Combine more FRS services	2	2%
Alternative suggestion : Listen to fire fighters needs/views	1	1%
Alternative suggestion : Ensure IOW address debts/finances before merging	2	2%
Alternative suggestion : Increase public awareness/community support	1	1%
Alternative suggestion : Keep HFRS & IOW separate/ leave as is	43	35%
Alternative suggestion : Share management/ extend current partnership	6	5%

Alternative suggestion : Increase tax to fund services	13	11%
Alternative suggestion : Look at both services and review them/requirements	7	6%
Alternative suggestion : Alternative ways to generate money to fund services	3	2%
Alternative suggestion : Use reserves to fund services	1	1%
Alternative suggestion : Lobby central government/increase FRS funding	16	13%
Alternative suggestion : Make control room changes to improve local knowledge	2	2%
Alternative suggestion : Police Crime Commissioner to manage FRS	3	2%
Alternative suggestion : Other alternative suggestion	7	6%

Q.4 Do you feel the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority would impact:

Counts Break %	Isle of Wight	Portsmouth	Southampton	Hampshire	Other areas
You or your family	44 77.2%	16 34.8%	14 29.2%	9 23.1%	4 23.5%
People you know or work with	36 63.2%	17 37.0%	13 27.1%	9 23.1%	4 23.5%
A local organisation, group or business	27 47.4%	11 23.9%	7 14.6%	6 15.4%	4 23.5%
Other	12 21.1%	5 10.9%	8 16.7%	3 7.7%	2 11.8%
None of the above	4 7.0%	23 50.0%	26 54.2%	26 66.7%	10 58.8%

Q.5 Please tell us more about any potential impact (coded)

*94 respondents provided a comment applicable to the question. This question was open to everyone who completed the consultation.*

Code	Count	%
<b>Little impact (macro)</b>	2	2%
<b>No impact (macro)</b>	2	2%
<b>Unsure/depends (macro)</b>	3	3%
<b>Other Impact (macro)</b>	1	1%
<b>Positive Impact (macro)</b>	22	23%
Positive Impact: Better value /spending of public money	7	7%
Positive Impact: Benefit from services working together	4	4%
Positive Impact: Improved public safety	3	3%
Positive Impact: More sustainable service	4	4%
Positive Impact: Improvement of frontline services	8	9%
Positive Impact: Improved governance/financial efficiencies	8	9%
Positive Impact: Improve opportunities for FRS employees	5	5%

Positive Impact: Other positive impact	1	1%
<b>Negative Impact (macro)</b>	66	70%
Negative Impact: Reduced/ Decrease in front line service	22	23%
Negative Impact: Increase in response times	8	9%
Negative Impact: Impact on local economy/businesses	4	4%
Negative Impact: Potential job losses	4	4%
Negative Impact: Personal safety concern/risk of life	13	14%
Negative Impact: Loss of community support	2	2%
Negative Impact: Less local knowledge in emergencies	7	7%
Negative Impact: Loss of voice/consideration for residents	17	18%
Negative Impact: Increase in tax paid	8	9%
Negative Impact: Money spent subsidising other areas	4	4%
Negative Impact: Increase stress/reduce wellbeing	2	2%
Negative Impact: Other negative impact	6	6%

### Organisation participant profile

Which of these best describes the primary function of your organisation, group or business?	Counts Analysis %
Trade union	-
Local public sector organisation, e.g. district or borough council, local health services, National Park, or prison	10 90.9%
Local public sector partnership, e.g. a Community Safety Partnership	-
National public sector organisation, e.g. Coastguard, or National Fire Chief's Council	1 9.1%
Police and Crime Commissioner	-
Charity, voluntary or local community group	-
Local business or group or business representatives	-
School, college or place of education	-
Other	-
Which area does your organisations, group or business operate in?	Counts Analysis %
Basingstoke and Deane	-
East Hampshire	-
Eastleigh	-
Fareham	-
Gosport	-

Hart	-
Havant	-
New Forest	-
Rushmoor	1 10.0%
Test Valley	-
Winchester	-
Southampton	-
Portsmouth	-
Isle of Wight	8 80.0%
Other	1 10.0%

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# PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY TO INCLUDE HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON AUTHORITIES

## **Appendix A: Consultation information and business case**

### **1 CONSULTATION INFORMATION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) are seeking views on the possible creation of a new Combined Fire Authority (CFA) to include the Authorities of Hampshire County Council (HCC), the Isle of Wight Council (IWC), Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council (SCC).

This consultation document is for the purposes of HFRA's consideration of the proposal. IWC are running a similar consultation process as part of their consideration of the proposal

The consultation documents will be available online and in paper form (upon request).

Consultation will run for 12 weeks. The results of the consultation will be carefully analysed and put into a report which will be presented to the HFRA, along with all other relevant information, in order to enable a decision to be made about whether to propose a scheme to the Secretary of State for the creation of a new CFA. This decision will be made towards the end of the year. A similar process and decision will be made by IWC, following consultation with their key stakeholders.

Consultation is taking place with the following key stakeholders (this list is not exhaustive):

- the public
- the Constituent Authorities of Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council
- Bordering Fire and Rescue Authorities and Services
- The Police and Crime Commissioner
- Bordering Constabularies
- Local emergency services
- The National Fire Chiefs Council
- Hampshire MP's
- Home Office
- National Police Chiefs Council
- Local Government Association (LGA)
- Trade unions and professional representative bodies
- Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE)

Section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that a CFA may only be created by the Secretary of State if it is in the interests of economy, efficiency, effectiveness or public safety. The information contained within this document pays due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness and public safety and explains

# PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY TO INCLUDE HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON AUTHORITIES

how the proposed creation of a new CFA could meet the requirements of section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. We are therefore seeking views from stakeholders on these areas.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority is a Best Value Authority, under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999, and is committed to securing continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having due regard to economy, effectiveness and efficiency. HFRA is consulting with key stakeholders regarding the proposed creation of a new CFA to ensure it continues to meet the requirements of a Best Value Authority.

## **1.2 Background**

Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) are governed by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (“the 2004 Act”). An aim of a Fire and Rescue Authority is to promote fire safety in its area. All FRAs must ensure they provide services to their communities in relation to fire-fighting, road traffic incidents and other emergencies. FRAs are also increasingly broadening their role into Health and Wellbeing functions.

An FRA must provide the services set out in the 2004 Act and in doing so, delegates the day to day operations to a Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) made up of officers and support staff. The FRA holds FRS to account for delivery of an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The IRMP is based around the risks and demands the Service faces and outlines how it will deploy resources to ensure safer communities. Through delivery of the IRMP, both HFRS and IWFRS provide a Community Safety, Community Response and Community Resilience service to the communities they serve.

HFRA and IWC entered into a Strategic Partnership in April 2015. This partnership, named “Delivering Differently in Partnership” (DDiP), enabled the operational alignment of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) and the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) and has been successfully operating for three years. The partnership has enabled the two services to establish a close working relationship. The main focus of the partnership was shared Strategic leadership and incident command, aligned service policy, a Fleet Management and Health and Safety provision and training and development support. The Chief Fire Officer of HFRS is also the Chief Fire Officer for the IWFRS. HFRS have also recently taken over call handling on the Isle of Wight. The call control room in Hampshire now receives the 999 calls from the Isle of Wight and despatches emergency response on the Island as appropriate.

Since April 2015, DDiP has delivered benefits to both services, the staff and the communities we serve, including successfully achieving financial efficiencies, operational benefits and increased and shared knowledge and learning. It has also had the effect of bringing the services closer together. The current partnership has enabled the two services to align on an operational level but does have some constraints financially, and also with regards to governance and decision making. The partnership has enabled the IWFRS to continue to operate financially,

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something which has become more difficult in the current financial climate. Three years into the partnership it is timely to build upon the success of DDiP and now consider proposals for optimal governance arrangements for both Authorities.

Investigations into possible creation of a new CFA began in February 2017. In March 2018, HFRA and IWC agreed an outline business case exploring the risks and opportunities of creating a new CFA consisting of Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

This consultation document describes the current governance arrangements of HFRA, HFRS, the IWC and the IWFRS, explains why we are consulting on a proposed change in governance and what a new CFA might look like. No decisions around creating a new CFA have yet been made and we are now seeking views from key stakeholders to inform a decision about whether to proceed with a proposal to the Secretary of State.

## **1.3 Governance**

Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) are governed in a variety of ways including: a Combined Fire Authority (CFA), an upper tier Local Authority, a Metropolitan Council, a Police and Fire Crime Commissioner (PFCC) or an Elected Mayor.

A Combined Fire Authority (CFA) is created by the Secretary of State using powers granted in section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. A statutory instrument known as a Combination Order is created. This constitutes the CFA as a public body and provides some detail about how the CFA should operate. A CFA covers more than one local authority area. The upper tier Local Authorities in the CFA area are known as Constituent Authorities. The Constituent Authorities appoint a fixed number of elected Councillors to the CFA. The Councillors on a CFA are known as Members.

A Local Authority led Fire and Rescue Service is integrated into the Local Authority. The Local Authority is responsible for delivering Fire and Rescue services to the area it covers in the same way it delivers other services. The Local Authority's Constitution will set out how fire and rescue functions are discharged and what responsibilities lie with elected Councillors.

A Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Service (with the exception of London and Manchester) is similar to a CFA. Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Services consist of Metropolitan Councils from different local areas, who come together and appoint Councillors to form a Fire and Rescue Authority, in a similar way to the CFA model.

Both Manchester and London operate a Fire and Rescue Service with a single Mayor to govern the whole area.

In January 2017, the Policing and Crime Act 2017 granted powers to Police and Crime Commissioners to be able to take on the responsibilities of Fire and Rescue Services instead of having a Fire and Rescue Authority. If a Police and Crime

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Commissioner opts to go down this route, and the Secretary of State agrees it is in the interests of effectiveness, efficiency, economy or public safety, they become known as a Police and Fire Crime Commissioner (PFCC). There are currently a number of Police and Crime Commissioners in England that have opted to take on the responsibilities of the Fire and Rescue Service.

### 1.3.1 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA)

HFRA is a CFA comprised of the constituent authorities of Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council. HFRA was created by the Hampshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1996 (known as the Combination Order) and which has remained in force under section 4 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The number of Members of the HFRA is currently 10. There are eight Members from Hampshire County Council, one from Portsmouth City Council and one from Southampton City Council. As a Member of the body governing the FRS, a Fire Authority Member's priority is to ensure the Service is protecting life and property in the event of fires, rescuing and protecting people in the event of road traffic collisions and rescuing and protecting people in the event of other emergencies across the whole CFA area. They make decisions regarding the operations of the Fire and Rescue Service as a whole including approving the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

### 1.3.2 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS)

HFRS is accountable to HFRA. HFRS delivers the day to day operational fire and rescue service as directed by HFRA. The Service is responsible for carrying out the objectives within the IRMP. Resources are deployed throughout the CFA area according to risk and demand to ensure safe communities. The Service is made up of operational staff who respond to incidents, protect life and property, undertake prevention work and deal with fire safety.

### 1.3.3 The Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority (IWFRA)

The IWFRA is part of the Isle of Wight Council (IWC). The IWC is an upper tier Council made up of 39 areas known as wards. An upper tier Council is the top tier of local government for an area, providing a large number of public services to the community. For the Isle of Wight, the Council provides services for the whole Isle of Wight area. The Isle of Wight Council has 40 elected Councillors. The IWFRA is made up of Cabinet Members on the IWC who make decisions regarding the fire and rescue service. A single Councillor is responsible for bringing to Cabinet, decisions around the Fire and Rescue Service. The decisions are considered amongst other Council business. Cabinet within the IWC agree the IRMP.

### 1.3.4 The Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS)

The IWFRS is a department of the IWC and is part of the Community Safety and Public Protection portfolio. The Fire and Rescue Service budget is part of the larger budget of the whole County Council. Operational staff cover the whole of the Island

## PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY TO INCLUDE HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON AUTHORITIES

to provide response to incidents, protection and prevention work and Fire Safety; ensuring the delivery of the IRMP. Currently, the strategic management of the Fire and Rescue Service is provided by HFRS under the DDiP agreement with operational staff on the Island remaining IWC employee's.

### 1.3.5 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

The PCC in Hampshire represents, and covers a boundary area, comprising of the Hampshire County Council, the Portsmouth City Council and the Southampton City Council areas and the Isle of Wight. This is the same boundary area that Hampshire Constabulary cover. With the HFRS and IWFRS as two separate Services, the boundaries are not coterminous with the PCC or Hampshire Constabulary. The PCC has been invited by both the HFRA and the IWC to become a voting Member of each of the FRAs. The HFRA combination order was amended in 2017 to reflect this and facilitate the change. The PCC declined the invite to become a voting member and instead, regularly attends HFRA meetings as a non-voting participant and actively comments on the debate. The PCC has indicated that at the moment, he is not minded to use the Policing and Crime Act 2017 and change the governance of the Fire and Rescue Services of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight but will continue to engage and support the fire Authorities. He has also said that he will continue to look for the successful coming together of the Fire Authorities.

### 1.3.6 A new Combined Fire Authority (CFA)

HFRA and IWC are considering making a proposal to the Secretary of State to create a new, single CFA covering the existing HFRA area and the Isle of Wight.

In order for a new CFA to be created, the proposal needs to be put forward to the Secretary of State for consideration. It is the decision of the Secretary of State whether a new CFA is created or not. Should the Secretary of State agree to create a new CFA, this would be done under Section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The proposed new CFA would consist of the Authorities of Hampshire County Council, the Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council. It is anticipated that the new CFA would be made up of elected Members from each Constituent Authority. The total number of Members is likely to be determined by the new CFA. The number of Members from each Constituent Authority should, so far as is practicable, be proportionate to the number of electors in each Constituent Authority area compared to each other.

HFRA has recently carried out a Governance Review, for the purpose of ensuring it is operating in the most efficient and effective way and is aligned to the Fire Reform agenda. The Governance Review resulted in a reduction of the number of Members of HFRA from 25 to the current number of 10 (as of June 2017). This reduction in size has seen many positive benefits such as cost savings and more efficient and effective decision making. It is important that a new CFA recognises the importance of the principles of [Fire Reform](#) and continues to operate in the most efficient and effective way. Any decision about the size and number of Members of a new CFA must reflect these principles. Using 2017 electoral data from the Constituent

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Authorities, calculations show that a new CFA could consist of 11 Members representing the four councils, with the PCC as an invited guest. In keeping with HFRA's Governance Review, HFRA's preferred option would be for a new CFA to be initially created with 11 Members. However, the total number of members would then be a decision for the CFA from time to time, according to the proportionality principles explained above.

If a proposal is put forward to create a new CFA, then the current Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority Combination Order would be revoked and the staff and assets of HFRA would be transferred to the new CFA. Similarly, the staff and assets of IWFRS would be transferred from the IWC to the new CFA. The two Fire and Rescue Services would combine under the governance of a new, single Fire Authority to serve the communities of all the constituent authorities, across the whole CFA area.

# PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY TO INCLUDE HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON AUTHORITIES

## 2 THE BUSINESS CASE

In order to assess the relative merits and risks of the options, the business case is made up of two main parts consisting of:

1. Operational Analysis
2. Financial Analysis

The business case has been constructed in this way to allow the relevant Authorities to consider the options in a way that meets the requirements in the Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) Section 2, which requires the Secretary of State to make any decision about the governance of Fire and Rescue functions on basis of:

1. Efficiency and effectiveness
2. Economy
3. Public safety

Efficiency and effectiveness and public safety have been captured under the operational analysis. Economy has been captured under the financial analysis.

The financial analysis within the business case has taken due regard of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) document 'The Development of Guiding Principles on how to Fund the Transfer of a Fire and Rescue Service from a County Council to a PCC' January 2018, as well as the CIPFA independent reviews of PCC governance business cases. Although this proposal is not to transfer to the HFRA to a PCC model, the CIPFA document provided a useful reference.

The table below provides a direct comparison of the main statistical information for both Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

<b>Key comparators for Hampshire FRS and Isle of Wight FRS</b>			
	<b>Hampshire (including Portsmouth and Southampton)</b>	<b>Isle of Wight</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Socio-economic</b>			
Population	1,829,500	139,800	1,969,300
Area (in hectares)	376,921	38,016	414,937
Number of domestic properties	754,084	69,583	823,667

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Number of non-domestic properties	51,479	6,631	58,110
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**2.1 Operational analysis**

In considering the efficiency, effectiveness and public safety of a new CFA we have focused on the benefits and risks from an operational and organisational perspective and explored:

- Resilience
- Capacity
- Duplication
- Continuous improvement
- Reducing the risk from fire and other emergencies

The new CFA would need to undertake a review of risk across the whole geography of the new CFA area through an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The operations of the new CFA will adjust to meet the risks and demands of the new CFA area. Fire and Rescue Authorities have a duty to have regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework required by s.21 Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and to produce an IRMP that identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community.

A larger CFA provides for more resources to be able to grow and improve the fire and rescue service provision across both localities. The financial choices faced by an upper tier local authority could present a future challenge to the IOWFRS and although efficiencies have been made to most services on the Island more maybe required. A new CFA including the IWFRS would ensure a fire specific focus on the Isle of Wight by a new organisation whose sole purpose is fire and rescue services. Its financial separation would also give the ability to plan well ahead and ensure the public are receiving the best fire and rescue service.

Operational	Key comparators for Hampshire and Isle of Wight FRS		
	Hampshire	Isle of Wight	Total
No of fire stations	51	10	61
On-call fire stations	38	8	46
Number of appliances	78	13	91
Number of calls to control	30,433	1969	32,402
No of incidents attended	20,299	1349	21,648

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2.1. 1  <u>Resilience</u>	17/18 within county			
	Total fires	3,891	306	4,197
	Total accidental dwelling fires	796	75	871
	Number of FSO inspections carried out	457	107	564
	Number of wholetime firefighters	679	76	755
	Number of on-call firefighters	496.5	86	582.5
	Number of corporate staff, non-uniformed service delivery and	256	19	275
	Fire Control	31.5	0	31.5

The current arrangements in Hampshire mean that there are 1462 employees of the fire service to provide prevention, protection, response and resilience activities to the community. In comparison the Isle of Wight has 181 employees. By combining and creating a new CFA, this would provide for increased resilience operationally across the whole of the new CFA area and would build upon the benefits already realised under the current Strategic Partnership. Under a new CFA it would be possible to plan for teams to operate between the mainland and Island for specific events as well as to provide contingency in case of low staff numbers. The same approach can be taken for vehicles and equipment across the two areas. The IWFRS has 13 equipped front-line appliances, HFRS has 78. There would be challenges geographically however this shouldn't be a barrier to becoming one organisation and enhancing resilience for operational employees.

A CFA with more resources is of great benefit during national scale incidents where whole communities become concerned or involved. During the Grenfell Tower incident, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service were able to deploy resources across the County from areas of low risk to areas of greater risk in the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton. This supported the City Councils in inspecting the 272 high rise buildings and provided reassurance to the communities that live in them.

A new CFA would also provide for increased resilience for the organisation by creating a more stable platform for the delivery of services to the public. Continuing as two separate organisations, both would maintain their own independence, however as one larger organisation, there would be much more resilience to ensure safer communities. As one organisation there is a single point of governance which will ensure clarity of decision making and a more resilient organisation.

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The table below illustrates the comparison between HFRS and IWFRS in relation to Command Officers and Protection activity. It shows what increased resilience a new CFA could have if the two organisations resources are joined together.

<b>Key comparators for Hampshire FRS and Isle of Wight FRS</b>			
	<b>Hampshire</b>	<b>Isle of Wight</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of level 1 command officers	488	57	546
Number of level 2 command officers	48	9	57
Number of level 3 command officers	9	0	9
Number of level 4 command officers	9	0	9
Protection			
Fire Safety Audits	457	107	564
Enforcements	0	2	2
Prohibitions	25	0	25
Action Plans Issued	176	4	200
Alleged Fire Risks	466	7	473
High Rise Inspections	272	6	278
Joint Inspections of High Rise with Local Authority	29	0	29
Prosecutions	7 pending	0	7
Building Control	828	71	899
Other Fire Safety activities, e.g. licensing	647	25	672

### 2.1.2 Capacity

As well as describing the organisational resilience elements it is vital to consider the overall delivery capacity of the current arrangements and the potential of a new combined service.

The table below shows the number of staff HFRS and IWFRS have in their respective community safety and protection functions.

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Team	HFRS	IWFRS	Total
Community Safety	44	5	49
Protection	23	3.5	26.5

A new CFA would provide enhanced and increased capacity operationally and organisationally. It would create the opportunity to work flexibly across a larger geographical area focusing resources upon the needs and risks of the communities. As a combined workforce, these numbers provide for a more resilient Service that is better able to adapt the changing needs and risks of the whole geographical area. A change in the governance model could create a short-term effect on some staff workloads during the transition period, however this would be managed and monitored closely to ensure there are no distractions from the important job we have of creating safer communities.

### 2.1.3 Duplication

While the existing partnership arrangements provide for more sharing between the two services, they still remain two separate organisations and therefore there is duplication of policies, strategies, response standards, performance indicators and other agreements. Currently HR, legal and employment practices cannot be shared as there are two different employers of FRS teams in the two Authorities. This means that legal challenges, trade union negotiations, grievance and pay procedures are made more difficult for the shared leadership team as they need to operate across two sets of rules. The same is also true for organisational personal support and standards, including discipline where there is a real need for consistency to give our teams the peace of mind to know they are protected and supported in their roles.

The creation of a new CFA and the alignment of such policies, would remove this duplication and create clarity for both staff and the public. It would ensure there is one team providing emergency response and delivering consistent safety messages. It would also remove duplication of work as there are currently two teams delivering all aspects of the Fire and Rescue Service. Aligning the two organisations may take some time however operating as one organisation and the increased consistency this brings is of great benefit to both staff and the public.

### 2.1.4 Continuous Improvement

The creation of a new CFA would allow for increased shared operational knowledge and learning. Both organisations have a breadth of expertise and coming together as one organisation will further enhance the sharing of knowledge, increase operational learning and ensure continuous improvement. A larger organisation lends itself to better career progression opportunities. The bringing together of the strengths of both organisations, will allow for a mixture of skills and knowledge to be shared benefiting the whole organisation and the public. Staff will have the opportunity to work across different geographical areas allowing for exposure to, and a better awareness of, varying social demographics enabling a better understanding of risk.

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With the increased use of flexible working for support staff, the opportunity to work closer to home and reduce the amount of commuting will increase. A larger organisation will also lend itself to providing increased development opportunities for staff. There will be cultural differences between the two organisations. This brings strength as the differences between the two organisations are valued and brought together as one.

A new CFA would mean that there would be one team with the responsibility of data gathering, data sharing and intelligence. An enhanced data provision and the combining of the data sets would provide a richer picture of the risks faced across the whole geographical area and lead to a better understanding of how to mitigate the risks and create safer communities.

### 2.1.5 Reducing the risk from fire and other emergencies

There are currently two separate corporate plans for each of the two services. The creation of a new CFA would allow for the alignment of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and other policies and strategies that are currently delivered individually. Alignment would ensure the public are receiving clear consistent safety messages and ensure safer communities through a dedicated Communications Team. It will allow for aligned preventative and protection messages to assist with ensuring safer outcomes for the public. A larger more resilient organisation would be better equipped to deal with emergencies when they happen, and be better equipped to carry out preventative and protection work in a clear consistent manner for the communities.

Fire and Rescue Services primary concern is public safety. The creation of a new CFA must ensure the continued focus on public safety. The points below consider how public safety could be improved under the creation of a new CFA.

Under the Strategic Partnership, the Strategic Management of the IWFRS is provided to the Isle of Wight by HFRS, under the policy direction of the IWC. Although an efficient way to manage the IWFRS, a significant amount of Hampshire Officer's time is spent on the IOW in relation to strategic leadership and contribution to the IWC. Clearer more effective and streamlined governance and decision making could be achieved by the creation of a single Fire and Rescue Authority. Decision making under the current arrangements can be lengthy and take up a lot of time. This is time which could be better spent on making decisions around safety, prevention and protection. The current governance arrangements mean that the IWC consider decisions around the Fire and Rescue Service amongst other priorities, the IWC have multiple purposes and priorities. The creation of a new CFA and a single purpose organisation making decisions about one strategic area, will allow for more cohesive decision making around the safety of the public. It will also ensure all focus on the Island is fire related.

The creation of a new larger CFA lends itself to being better equipped to deal with national resilience issues and events. Often, issues and events of national resilience

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can become a huge drain on the resources of a Fire and Rescue Service, the recent Grenfell Tower fire saw this on a large scale and required HFRS to deploy resources to areas of need on a large scale. During Grenfell there were significant priorities HFRS had to work on and do so quickly to help ensure public safety. Operating as one Fire and Rescue Authority creates more resilience when it comes to dealing with events such as these. HFRS have been operating a successful volunteer scheme for many years now. The number of HFRS volunteers in 2017 was 100. In the IWFRS, in 2017, there was one volunteer. The creation of a new CFA and the pooling of resources gives a greater opportunity for communities and business to benefit from the activities currently offered by individual Services, such as the volunteer scheme. They will also benefit from the use of cutting edge equipment and state of the art delivery of services.

There are many benefits to working in collaboration with other blue light partners and the introduction of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 places emphasis on ensuring consideration is given to collaboration at all times. The creation of a new CFA would provide greater capacity to deliver collaborative work and to enter into partnerships that will be of benefit to the communities in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

The IWFRS work with partners to deliver a road safety prevention activity across the Island. This has enabled the delivery of an extensive range of road safety activities that is not replicated by HFRS. In 2017/18 the IWFRS delivered the following:

<b>Course</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Head On	650 students
Biker Down	100 participants
Driver Awareness Training	1350 drivers
Bikeability	290 children
National Citizen's	11 sessions to 30 people
Child pedestrian training	42 schools

The creation of a new CFA would provide greater operational resilience and in turn, improved interoperability, the ability for the Service to work with other Emergency Services across different boundaries. This will provide enhanced public safety due to the capacity to share resources more efficiently and effectively when it is required. A new CFA would create one single organisation for other partners to work with as opposed to two separate ones. This reduces duplication of workload for partners creating a single unified purpose.

### 2.1.6 Status quo – maintain existing arrangements

The alternative option to creating a new CFA from an operational perspective would be to maintain the existing governance arrangements and remain as two separate fire and rescue services. There are no identified public safety benefits if the two Services choose to maintain existing arrangements. If the current governance arrangements were maintained, the public in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight

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would remain safe. There are no benefits that have been identified should the governance arrangements remain as they currently are, compared with creating a new CFA. The risk of this option is that each authority will not make the improvements from an operational perspective as described in this business case. If the Services did remain separate the IWC would retain democratic control of the fire and rescue service and the HFRA would remain unchanged. A review of the partnership under the DDiP arrangements would need to be carried out to ensure the Services can operate in the most efficient and effective way. It is unknown what the outcomes might be from a review of the partnership and whether the savings to IWFRS and IWC and income to HFRA and more efficient and effective ways of working would be maintained. Currently the partnership has delivered £470K savings for IWFRS and provided increased capacity and resilience to the training department and leadership team. HFRA receives an income for the recovery of costs in the region of £230,000 per annum.

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## 2.3 Financial analysis

Whilst there is only a limited financial case for pursuing a new CFA, this is not one of the key drivers for the business case and therefore this section needs to be considered in the wider context of the other benefits that a new CFA would bring.

The process for creating a new CFA from a financial point of view is quite complex but what this section seeks to explain is the financial impact that it would have both on HFRA and on council tax payers in Hampshire.

In simple terms as the Fire and Rescue Service on the IOW is part of the overall IWC, we must identify all of the financial aspects that relate to that service and then consider what the impact is of transferring these into a new CFA. For the purposes of this consultation we have based the financial information on the 2018/19 budget as this is the most recent information that we have available.

The key element of this process is to identify the direct revenue costs (day to day costs such as salaries and fuel) of providing the FRS on the Island, but we must also consider other issues such as:

- Central costs (e.g. finance and legal support) that are incurred in providing direct support to the FRS
- Grants and other income
- Assets and liabilities linked to the service such as buildings and vehicles
- Debt financing costs
- Reserves

The other important factor is to understand the impact on council tax. For residents on the Isle of Wight, they would see the council tax that they pay for IWC services reduce but a new amount (called a precept) would be charged by the new CFA for FRS's (in the same way that the Police and Crime Commissioner does at the moment).

For Hampshire residents, there may be an impact on council tax depending on the value of costs and income that transfer from the IOW and the new CFA must decide how it will 'harmonise' council tax for residents both on the Isle of Wight and in Hampshire if it is created.

The following sections in this consultation document cover these issues in more detail.

### 2.3.1 Revenue Costs

As part of the financial process a figure must be calculated that represents the total 'notional' cost of the IWCFRS. The total direct net cost of providing a Fire and Rescue Service on the Isle of Wight is budgeted to be £6.135m in 2018/19 including the proposals for savings that have been put forward as part of the service review.

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In addition to these costs an exercise has been undertaken to identify other direct costs that are attributable to the IWCFRS and to work out an appropriate proportion of other central budgets that should be taken into account. This has provided further costs as follows:

Item	£'000	Comments
Direct support costs	270	Based on forecast time spent supporting the FRS
Repairs and maintenance	26	Proportion of central budget
Debt financing costs	725	Proportion of central budget

The overall aim of the financial process is to leave the IWC in no better or worse position than it would have been if the service remained within the Council. On that basis, the following approach has been proposed in respect of the costs in the above table.

**Direct support costs** – These represent proportions of individual staff time spent supporting the FRS. If financial resources were transferred it is unlikely that the staff associated with those budgets could also be transferred to the new CFA since the work for IWCFRS represents only part of an individual's role. It is therefore proposed that this is excluded from the notional budget. Whilst it is anticipated that there will be some additional support costs for the new CFA these are considered to be marginal and would expect to be met from the additional council tax income highlighted below.

**Repairs and Maintenance** – Since this represents a proportion of an existing central budget and is relatively small, it is again proposed that the resources remain with IWC.

**Debt Financing Costs** – These costs are more substantial but have still been calculated on the basis of a relevant proportion of a central budget. Loans were taken out to fund capital expenditure in the past and this represents the cost of repaying those loans plus interest. It is not possible to easily identify which FRS assets were funded through borrowing and therefore a proportion of the budget has been used.

If this cost transferred to the new CFA, it would mean that council tax income equivalent to the full value would also need to transfer with it. The impact on the IWC is therefore neutral irrespective of whether the debt costs transfer or not. On that basis it is proposed to leave the debt costs and council tax income with the IWC since this also removes potential administrative complications with transferring debt between organisations.

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**Based on the assumptions detailed above this therefore means that the current revenue cost of the IWCFRS for the purposes of any potential transfer are £6.135m**

### 2.3.2 Grants

The IWC also receive grants and other income to help offset the costs of services provided on the island. In order to calculate the 'notional' net cost of the IWCFRS, a proportion of these grants and other income needs to be attributed to the IWCFRS.

An explanation of the different income sources and how these have been treated is outlined below:

**Revenue Support Grant** – The Government provides grant to local authorities to help meet the cost of services in the form of Revenue Support Grant (RSG). Normally RSG is provided as a general grant and not allocated to specific services, but in the case of Fire a separate Fire RSG is identified by the Government.

For 2018/19 Fire Revenue Support Grant for the IWC was assessed as **£992,000** and this amount can therefore be taken into account as part of these calculations.

**Retained Business Rates** – Local Authorities can now retain a proportion of Business Rate income collected in the year. Again this is a general grant that can be used to fund all services and therefore only a proportion of this can be attributed to the IWCFRS.

The Government publishes baseline assessments for business rates that distinguish between Fire Services and Other Services. The figure for retained business rates for IWCFRS in 2018/19 is **£1.065m**.

**Business Rate Top Up Grant** – Some local authorities also receive a top up grant from the Government as the income they now receive through business rates retention is less than the total level of grants they previously received.

For IWC the Top Up grant is £12.652m, but again the Government provides a breakdown of this figure between Fire Services and Other Services. The figure for Top Up grant for IECFRS in 2018/19 is **£714,000**.

### 2.3.3 Potential Further Savings

The Service Review proposals are expected to be implemented this financial year and take the level of operational capacity down to the minimum level that can be achieved under the current DDiP arrangements.

This means that there is limited opportunity for the IWC to make further savings from the IWCFRS and similarly there are no significant opportunities for HFRA to increase the income they currently receive under the DDiP arrangements.

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In overall terms, the potential removal of the FRS from the IWC would have the impact that the IWC will need to find a relatively higher proportion of savings from a smaller service cost base due to the higher reduction in general RSG compared to Fire RSG.

Whilst this has a slight negative impact on the overall financial position of the IWC, if the FRS remained within the IWC it would have a very limited ability to contribute to any further savings programmes since most of the costs are driven by staff, buildings and vehicles. On that basis the IWC is in no worse a position than it otherwise would have been.

A separate commitment has also been made to continue to use capacity that exists within the IWCFRS to improve and generate efficiencies in other IWC and Isle of Wight public services. Whilst this will not make direct savings within the FRS itself, it may help other services to reduce their expenditure through collaboration and close working with the FRS.

In addition, although the scope is much smaller, it may still be possible to make savings in other running costs within the IWCFRS and current plans to replace Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the current year will lead to a saving in annual revenue costs of around £80,000 from 2019/20 onwards.

Since the IWC are funding the £340,000 required to replace the PPE this year, it seems reasonable that the future saving should also be taken into account as part of the calculation of the notional FRS budget.

**This would have the effect of reducing the net service cost of the FRS to £6.055m**

### 2.3.4 Council Tax

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, it is necessary to calculate a 'notional' council tax for the IWCFRS, which would be removed from the IWC total council tax and replaced by a separate precept from the new CFA.

The notional council tax can be calculated as follows:

	<b>£'000</b>
Net Service Cost	6,055
Fire Revenue Support Grant	(992)
Retained Business Rates	(1,065)
Business Rates Top Up	(714)
<b>Net Amount to be met from Council Tax</b>	<b>3,284</b>
Divided by Tax Base for IWC	52,998
<b>Notional Council Tax</b>	<b>£62.00</b>

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If a new CFA were to be created then this is the amount that the IWC council tax bill would be reduced by and a new precept would then be charged by the new CFA.

The amount to be charged for council tax by the CFA in the future would need to take into account the impact on the residents of both the Isle of Wight and Hampshire, which is known as council tax harmonisation.

The council tax for HFRA in 2018/19 is £65.74 which is which is £3.74 higher than the notional amount shown above. For the purposes of this consultation it has been assumed that council tax would be harmonised at the current Hampshire rate.

In simple terms this would mean that Isle of Wight residents would pay £3.74 more per year for their Fire Service than they did under the previous arrangements and this would generate extra council tax income for the new CFA of just under £200,000 per annum that could be used to fund any additional support and other costs that may arise as a result of the transfer.

This would mean that at the point of transfer, Hampshire residents would not see any change to the council tax level they pay for Fire and Rescue Services. However, there are other implications on the budget for a new CFA that need to be taken into account, and these are discussed in more detail in the next sections.

### 2.3.5 Assets and Liabilities

When a transfer of functions between public bodies takes place, it is also usual practice for all relevant assets and liabilities to transfer at the same time. In the context of the IWCFRS this would include:

- Specific land and buildings associated with the provision of the IWCFRS (mainly dedicated fire stations)
- Vehicles and equipment used within the service
- Specific financial assets or liabilities associated with the service (provisions, capital receipts, reserves etc)
- A relevant proportion of general reserves held by IWC based on the IWCFRS budget as a proportion of the total budget (4.087%)

No debt would transfer for the reasons set out previously and it is assumed that contracts for services would be novated to a new CFA wherever this could be negotiated with the provider.

The assumption within this business case is that all physical assets would transfer to a new CFA unless separately agreed between the two organisations and that relevant financial assets and liabilities would also transfer at the point of the creation of a new CFA. This would give the following profile of transfers based on the

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estimated position at the end of 2018/19 (or as per the 2017/18 accounts in the case of the Net Book Values):

	£'000
Net Book Value of Property (existing Use Value based on a 5 year re-evaluation cycle)	10,327
Net Book Value of Vehicles and Equipment (historic cost less depreciation)	2,898
FRS Special Grants Reserve	106
4.087% of Repairs and Renewals Reserve	41
4.087% of Non-insurable risks reserve	81
4.087% of General Reserves	456

In overall terms, the transfer of these assets and liabilities has a broadly neutral impact on Hampshire at the point of transfer but does create substantial liabilities when considering the future maintenance and replacement programmes for buildings and vehicles in particular, which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

In balance sheet terms, it does however increase the net worth of the new CFA and provide greater options for the management of the built estate and vehicles across the new CFA.

### 2.3.6 Asset Maintenance and Replacement

One of the key issues for creating a new CFA would be the transfer of future liabilities relating to Property and Vehicles which are currently not funded within the existing Medium Term Financial Plan and are only partially offset by the transfer of reserves outlined above.

A review has been carried out to identify the essential areas for capital investment within the FRS on the Isle of Wight and these are outlined below:

**Property** – The current estate of fire stations is old and in a poor state of repair. A condition survey has been carried out which has identified a programme of essential maintenance that is required to the estate to keep it operationally effective and a safe place to work.

This would require capital funding in the order of **£3m** over the next 3 to 5 years with **£1.6m** of this needing to be addressed within the first 1 to 2 years. In addition, it is estimated that an additional annual revenue budget of over **£460,000** per annum would need to be created to properly maintain and service the fire station estate across the Isle of Wight.

One off capital funding to meet the required investment would need to be found and factored into the capital programme and perhaps more importantly an additional annual revenue budget would need to be created on an ongoing basis.

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This additional funding needs to be seen in the context that the new CFA would have wider and valuable asset base (an increase in the order of £13m) than previously and that these assets are available to help facilitate future changes to the Service as appropriate.

**Vehicles** – The current service review proposals for IWCFRS include changes to the vehicle types used by the service. In addition, there is a general requirement for vehicle replacement over the next 5 years.

These two things together require investment in vehicles of **£2.4m** over the next five years against which the IWC only has **£0.6m** put aside to help fund this expenditure.

Again, it would be for the new CFA to address this funding shortfall and new capital funding of **£1.8m** would be required to be found and added to the capital programme.

It may be possible to look at alternative arrangements for vehicle utilisation both on the Island and in Hampshire taking into account the wider fleet that would be available to the new CFA. This could bring the one-off liability down, but it unlikely to eradicate it altogether.

It is assumed that the other running costs of the vehicles is adequately covered in the equivalent revenue budgets that would transfer.

### 2.3.7 Capital Funding Options

In capital terms, a net requirement of nearly **£5m** has been identified over the next 5 years.

Hampshire has been successful in building up its Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay (RCCO) over the last few years to the extent that there is nearly £4m built into the budget on a recurring basis to help fund capital expenditure.

The current capital programme itself within HFRA is funded until 2020/21 and there remains some uncommitted resources in the Capital Payments Reserve. However, given the extent of the capital liabilities that the new CFA would be taking on, support in the form of implementation grant would be requested from the Home Office to enable the successful creation of the new CFA.

The vehicle replacement programme was recently updated to reflect the impact of the changes arising from the new operating model (Service Delivery Re-Design) and HFRA is currently developing its approach to managing the built estate so that it is fit for purpose going forward.

As a strategy therefore, it may be possible to look at greater vehicle utilisation across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to limit vehicle replacements and then fund any essential new vehicles from the Capital Payments Reserve and potential financial support provided by the Home Office.

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The one-off costs associated with the built estate could be factored into the current plans being developed in respect of HFRA's estate strategy, which relies on prudential borrowing to meet the cost of capital investment, albeit there would be some contribution towards this from income earning opportunities and utilising other capital funding (such as capital receipts from the sale of other assets) to meet the expenditure.

This would limit the immediate impact of the transfer of property liabilities and would mean that the overall approach to estate management could be developed jointly for Hampshire and Isle of Wight properties, supported in part by potential funding provided by the Home Office.

### 2.3.8 Revenue Funding Options

Perhaps of greater concern is the annual revenue liability in respect of property assets. An exercise was completed to look at the costs of adequately providing for repairs, term servicing, inspections etc. for the existing properties on the Island.

This was forecast to cost £520,000 per annum and a provision of only £60,000 per annum exists within the current IWCFRS budget that would transfer to the new CFA, leaving an annual gap of £460,000 that would need to be found as part of any future budget setting process.

Part of this cost could be met from the additional council tax income that would be generated at the point of transfer once other costs (such as support costs) had been taken into account. However, since the total amount is only £200,000 this would not cover the annual revenue liabilities identified in respect of property costs.

Whilst under the current DDiP arrangements, it is not anticipated that any further significant savings can be made, the move to a new CFA would open up other opportunities for making savings across the two Fire Services.

This is because having a single larger CFA covering Hampshire and the Isle of Wight means that structures and resource deployment can be changed to be more efficient and generate savings as a result. This option is not available under the current DDiP arrangements as it is not lawful to directly deploy Hampshire resources on the Island unless they are responding to an emergency incident.

This restriction does not apply for a single CFA and it has been estimated that between £300,000 and £400,000 of additional savings could be achieved following the creation of a new CFA.

This funding together with the additional council tax income could be used to meet the additional annual property costs and would ensure that the properties are fit for purpose and maintain operational effectiveness going forward.

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### 2.3.9 Costs of new CFA creation

The majority of this section has dealt with the financial implications and process for a potential transfer of the IWCFRS to a new CFA.

However, there are also potential one-off costs associated with the transfer itself in terms of preparation of a final business case to Government, the legal process for creation of the CFA and transfer of assets, liabilities and contractual arrangements.

Furthermore, there may be costs in respect of the practical arrangements for the transfer of staff to the new CFA, in areas such as information and communication technology, equipment etc.

At this stage, it has been agreed by the two authorities that all one-off costs will be met by Hampshire and these costs once known would need to be factored into the update of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

### 2.3.10 Status quo – maintain existing arrangements

The DDiP arrangements finish in March 2020. If there is no move to a new CFA, these arrangements will need to be re-considered by HFRA and IWC. There is risk to HFRA that the arrangements may not be renewed and the income received from the IWC for DDiP will not be maintained.

### **3 SUMMARY OF THE BUSINESS CASE**

This business case is based on a desire to create a more efficient and effective Fire and Rescue Service. There are challenging economic factors in transitioning to a new CFA, however improving public safety and ensuring delivery of an exceptional Fire and Rescue Service leading to safer communities across the whole area is the most important factor.

The creation of a new CFA would lead to a more efficient and effective Service and an improved level of safety to the public. The creation of consistent safety messages would provide greater re-assurance for the public. It is important to highlight that if a new CFA is created on a larger geographical area, operational staff will still maintain their existing local relationships and continue to have an understanding of the local context of the area they work in. There will be no changes to the operations of the FRS and the FRS will be maintained by the same people as it is currently. A new CFA will however have the responsibility of assessing the risks and demands of the new geographical area and deploying resources to best meet the risks and demands. This would result in the creation of a new IRMP in the future.

There are many benefits that the creation of a new CFA would bring organisationally, operationally and for the public. A new CFA, one organisation with a single purpose is a more accountable way of running a Fire Service. A single organisation with a single purpose is better able to provide efficient and effective scrutiny around decision making. A new CFA would allow for greater resilience, removal of duplication, enhanced capacity and ensure continuous improvement. There are some risks associated with the creation of a new CFA, however these are mainly short-term risks associated with the transition into a new governance model and the long-term benefits to the new CFA and public outweigh these short-term risks.

The alternative option is to maintain the existing arrangements and stay as two separate Services. Under this arrangement the two Services would remain separate and continue to be governed by the HFRA and the IWC. The IWC would maintain control of the fire and rescue service and the existing CFA that covers Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton would remain. Under this option, the current arrangements of the Strategic Partnership, DDiP, would run until the end of the agreement which is in March 2020. There is a risk that HFRA and IWC might not be able to come to an arrangement to extend the partnership beyond its current timeframes should a decision be made to keep the governance arrangements as they currently are.

The option not to change the governance of the fire and rescue services, although meaning that Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service's would remain separately governed, does mean that the Police and Crime Commissioner, through the Policing and Crime Act 2017 could create a business case to become the Fire and Rescue Authority and create one entity made up of Hampshire FRS Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service's. In a recent letter the Police and Crime Commissioner stated that over the coming months he will continue to look for:

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- The successful coming together of the fire authorities
- The new inspection regime within HMICFRS and the confirmation of ongoing excellent performance of our fire services
- The bringing together of further significant savings through the existing collaboration, which delivered so well in the past

Economically for the HFRA and Hampshire residents there would be no change to council tax levels as a result of the creation of a new CFA and there would be an additional council tax income for the new CFA of nearly £200,000 per annum. There would be a need for the new CFA to fund capital investment for vehicles and property in the region of £5m over the next 5 years which would create a larger higher valued asset portfolio. Home Office funding would be sought to support this spend. There would also be the need for the new CFA to fund additional annual property maintenance and servicing liabilities of £520,000 per annum. This aside, there is the potential for the new CFA to make additional savings around £300,000 to £400,000 per annum.

This business case looks at two options, firstly to create a new CFA and secondly to maintain the existing governance arrangements. The preferred option currently is the proposed creation of a new CFA. There is also an option not to do this and to maintain the status quo. However, views are being sought through this consultation in order to inform a future decision. Whilst, there are challenging financial factors in transitioning to a new CFA, improving public safety and ensuring delivery of an exceptional Fire and Rescue Service leading to safer communities across the whole area is the most important factor.

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# Committee report

Committee	<b>CABINET</b>
Date	<b>THURSDAY 14 JUNE 2018</b>
Title	<b>PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY TO INCLUDE HAMPSHIRE, SOUTHAMPTON, PORTSMOUTH AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT AUTHORITIES</b>
Report of	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Full Council agreed to accept an outline business case for the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority (CFA), consisting of the Authorities of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton, in March 2018.
2. This report sets out, for the Cabinet's consideration, a more comprehensive business case for a CFA, with a clear understanding of the day to day operational implications for the Islands Fire and Rescue Service. Members are asked to review and note this comprehensive business case as a basis for a detailed public consultation exercise on the proposals.
3. Any final decision on the establishment of a new CFA is a matter for the Secretary of State. This will require a final business case to be submitted to government, incorporating the public consultation exercise and with the support of the Full Council, based on a recommendation of the Cabinet

## BACKGROUND

4. On 21 February 2017, both the council's then Executive and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) agreed to an investigation into the extension of the current Combined Fire Authority (CFA) to include the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS.). Members of the council's Executive and the HFRA asked the Chief Fire Officer to develop a business case for further consideration and decision. On 21 and 22 March 2018 respectively, both Full Council and the HFRA received an initial business case which outlined the risks and benefits of creating a new CFA. Full Council requested more information, specifically around the operational impact of creating a new CFA. This report includes at appendix A, details of a full business case for Cabinet's consideration and provides an outline of the public consultation to follow Cabinet's approval.

5. One of the key drivers for considering the governance of the service was and remains the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The Policing and Crime Act 2017 places a duty on both constabularies and fire and rescue services to collaborate, it also allows a PCC to make a local case for the change in governance arrangements for a fire and rescue service. The PCC has recently indicated his intention not to pursue a business case for a change in governance.
6. A change in governance and the creation of a new CFA requires Secretary of State approval, as set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. If both the Council and the HFRA agree to proceed with public consultation, it is the intention to bring a further report which details the outcome of the consultation exercise, back to Full Council, with a Cabinet recommendation, and the HFRA in autumn 2018. This report will inform the decisions of both organisations before a final submission to the Secretary of State can be made.

#### THE ISLE OF WIGHT FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (IWFRS)

7. The IWFRS delivers the functions of a fire and rescue service to the community on the Isle of Wight. The IWFRS has been on a journey of improvement over several years which started in 2005 when the Audit Commission judged the IWFRS 'Poor' under Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). The following Direction of Travel for 2008 reported that the service was 'Improving Well'. The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) judgement given in 2009 stated the service 'Performs adequately overall', this was after the last data driven, evidence based review of the risks on the Isle of Wight.
8. In 2014, the IWFRS commissioned a Peer Review which highlighted many areas of nationally recognised notable practice, which demonstrates significant improvements since the CPA judgement in 2005. However, the Peer Review also stated that there were and would continue to be capacity and resilience issues.
9. Following the 2014 Peer Review, IWFRS approached Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) to form a strategic partnership arrangement. The Delivering Differently in Partnership (DDiP) programme was established on 1 April 2015, for a period of five years, to ensure the continued effective delivery of fire and rescue service on the Island, to maintain capacity and resilience and to provide efficiency savings to IWFRS.
10. DDiP has seen IWFRS and HFRS deliver work packages in partnership across a range of areas including strategic leadership, fire control and mobilising, health and safety, fleet and equipment maintenance and operational policies and procedures. To date, capacity and resilience have improved, and the savings to IWFRS have been £437k per annum.
11. Recent analysis of the provision of fire and rescue services on the Isle of Wight identified the continued relevance of the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and the impact of the service in its achievement. As one of the range of services provided by the Isle of Wight Council it continues to be

subject to the same tight budgetary controls as applied across the whole organisation as the council strives to be a 'financially balanced and sustainable' organisation. This may have the effect of limiting the service's capacity to undertake some of the extended functions of a larger, stand-alone fire and rescue service.

12. The contributing financial factors, along with the challenge of sustaining the capacity and resilience of the fire service, and with the powers granted to PCC's within the Policing and Crime Act 2017, means that investigating a change in the future governance of the IWFRS is the next logical step to ensuring communities on the Island receive an optimal fire and rescue service.
13. The business case at appendix A explores the risks and benefits of creating a new CFA by considering operational and financial risks and benefits of a combination. Within the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Secretary of State, when considering creating a new CFA, will make a decision based on the areas of;
  - (a) efficiency,
  - (b) effectiveness,
  - (c) economy
  - (d) public safety.
14. Issues of efficiency, effectiveness and public safety are all part of the day to day operations of a fire and rescue service and are explained in the 'operational analysis' section of appendix A. The economy aspects are explored within the 'financial analysis' section of appendix A which explains the impacts to the IWC as result of the creation of a new CFA.
15. The business case suggests that the creation of a new CFA could lead to a more efficient and effective FRS providing improved levels of service to the public across the combined geography. This is especially the case in the delivery of community safety and business fire safety courses and initiatives which would help to reduce risk and improve public safety
16. Across a larger geographical area, operational staff will still maintain their existing local relationships and continue to have an understanding of the local context of the area they work in. No changes to the current operations of the fire and rescue service are envisaged in the business case, they will still be driven by a locally delivered IRMP. The creation of a new IRMP for the new CFA are would be required at a later date.
17. A new CFA, one organisation with a single purpose is likely to be a more, focussed way of running a Fire Service. It would allow for greater resilience, removal of duplication, enhanced capacity and ensure continuous improvement and development. The downside for the Isle of Wight being that decisions will no longer be made locally on the Island but by the larger CFA, although there will be IOW representation on the CF.

## OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

18. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) is legally responsible for the operational delivery of fire and rescue service functions on the Isle of Wight. It is the view of the CFO that a new CFA would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the IWFRS. There would be no reduction in the day to day operational delivery of fire services on the Island. There would be a single point for decision making without loss of influence on strategic planning, an increased capacity and resilience, reduced duplication of work and effective continuous improvement. There would also be improved public safety through the joined-up activities of community safety and business fire safety because of the joint capability gained by both services.
19. Being able to utilise firefighters, and other staff, to deliver the range of activities that HFRS currently carry out across a new CFA would help reduce the risk of fire and other emergencies.

## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

20. The Director of Finance (the statutory section 151 Officer) has been directly involved in the Financial Evaluation set out in the Business Case at Appendix A and is content with the information contained therein. The evaluation focusses on the following:
  - i) The mechanism for the transfer of Fire Funding from the IOWC to the new Combined Fire Authority
  - ii) The financial implications of such a transfer of funding to the Isle of Wight Council as a whole
  - iii) The implications to the Isle of Wight Council Tax payers, specifically in relation to future levels of Council Tax paid by residents

### The Funding Transfer Mechanism

21. In aggregate the cost of the Fire Services, including all direct costs of service provision, support services, corporate overheads and debt financing costs, for 2018/19 is estimated to be £7.16m (comprising £6.14m of direct costs and £1.02m of other central costs). Naturally, any transfer of Fire Function should be accompanied by an equivalent amount of funding to match the current cost of provision.
22. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) have developed some guiding principles to both determine the cost of provision and then disaggregate an equivalent level of funding. In broad terms the methodology seeks to achieve the following:
  - An overarching requirement to transfer funding equivalent to the cost of current Fire Service provision, achieved by:

- Transfer all Fire Specific Funding streams to the new CFA (from both the Revenue Support Grant and Business Rate Retention system)
- The balancing sum of funding required to meet the cost to be met by a transfer of Council Tax (i.e. a reduction in the Council Tax to the IOWC and a new Council Tax precept payable to the new CFA)
- Where there is any difference between the current Council Tax of the existing HFRA and the amount calculated above, the difference to be harmonised over time
- In addition, the new CFA will be entitled to all Earmarked Reserves held for Fire Purposes as well as a proportionate share of the IOWC General Reserves and Useable Capital Receipts to the extent that they exist

23. The proposals set out in the Business Case, for the most part, follow the methodology developed by CIPFA. There are three areas of departure / difference from that methodology which are described below, however those departures will be marginally positive to Council over the longer term:

- i) The treatment of outstanding debt - Estimates at £725,000

Debt is a single corporate cost and not distinguishable by Service Area. An appropriate apportionment methodology has been used to estimate its value of £725,000 per annum. The CIPFA methodology suggests that this cost should be transferred to the new CFA with an equivalent funding transfer which inevitably affects the element of Council Tax transferred. To follow this methodology in this case would however lead to a large disparity between the Council Tax levels of HFRS and the notional amount calculated for IOW Fire Service and therefore a significant upward harmonisation (increase in Council Tax) for all current Hampshire residents, the proposals in the Business Case.

The approach adopted, has been to leave the debt costs with the IOWC and the associated level of Council Tax, ensuring that the IOWC is no worse off. In the longer-term, this arrangement will have a marginally positive affect on the Council's financial position

- ii) Direct Support Costs - £270,000

These costs relate to support services and corporate overheads which would likely remain with the IOWC whether the Fire Service remained or transferred to a new CFA. The CIPFA guidance would suggest that funding for all costs should be transferred whether they are transferable or not on the basis that they may be able to be reduced over time. A pragmatic approach has been adopted which leaves the funding for these costs with the IOWC since associated savings are not deliverable in the short term, this however, represents a saving opportunity for the IOWC in the medium to longer term.

- iii) A transfer of a proportionate share of the Collection Fund Balance - £135,000 (total IOWC balance)

Collection Fund balances arise as a consequence of differences between amounts budgeted for Council Tax and Business Rates versus those received. Any surpluses or deficits are rolled into subsequent years and factored into future Council Tax and Business Rate estimates. These balances are essentially of a one off nature and not embedded into the recurring funding of the Fire Service. The CIPFA guidance is silent on this point and the agreed approach has been to leave these balances intact with the IOWC. This will not have a detrimental financial impact on IOWC

### Financial Implications of Transfer

- 24. Whilst the transfer of funding of £6.055m (which includes a further £80,000 saving identified from 2019/20 as detailed in appendix A) to the new CFA reduces the Council's overall cost base from which to make potential future savings, it is not considered to be a significant issue given that following the savings already made by the Fire Service to date and following the service review it is unlikely that there is further scope for any additional meaningful level of savings to contribute towards the Council's overall savings requirement of £16.5m over the next 3 years
- 25. As previously mentioned, one of the main financial implications associated with the proposed is the transfer of liabilities relating to the maintenance and replacement of assets used by the Fire Service such as building and vehicles. It is estimated that some £2.3m of capital funding for property maintenance would be required over the next five years with £1.4m of this required in the first 1 to 2 years and a further significant annual revenue budget for non-capital maintenance and works would be required. In addition it is estimated that a further £1.8m over and above our current planned budget for the replacement of vehicles would need to be funded. These future costs will be avoided for the council if the new CFA is established. Future capital resources are very limited and therefore avoiding the need to allocate resources to the Fire Service will allow investment for other council services which will contribute towards the future financial sustainability of the council e.g. regeneration and other income generating projects.

### Council Tax Implications

- 26. The proposed methodology for the transfer of funding will result a need for council tax harmonisation in order to form a single new CFA (as described in Appendix A). This would require that the Isle of Wight Council tax payer would pay an extra £3.74 per annum for a band D property which would be an increase of 0.24% on the current 2018/19 council tax.

## Transition Costs

27. There are no anticipated additional costs to the council in creating a new CFA as currently any one-off costs associated with the transfer itself for the preparation of a final business case to Government, the legal process required and costs associated with the transfer of staff including equipment etc will be met by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.
28. In overall terms, the financial implications of the transfer of the Fire Service into the new CFA are will be positive for the following reasons:
  - i) In terms of the reduction in funding, the methodology has been undertaken in a way which is practical, fair and financially beneficial to the IOWC.
  - ii) In terms of the ability to make a contribution towards the Council's £16.5m savings requirement, it is unlikely that the Fire Service, with its relatively small scale and in its current form will be able to make any meaningful contributions, leaving the burden of savings to be made in all other Service areas (i.e. a disproportionate amount of savings being in other Service areas should the Fire Service remain within the IOWC).
  - iii) The transfer removes future obligations for capital expenditure on buildings, vehicles and equipment which would otherwise have to be funded from the same level of capital funding that would exist whether the Fire Service remained within the IOWC or the new CFA.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

29. Advice from the Home Office has clarified that a change in the governance model of the HFRA and the IWFRS, which sits within the council, would need a new combination scheme to be created. This is set out in section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
30. A new Combined Fire Authority (CFA) would be established consisting of elected Councillors from Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and the Isle of Wight Council. A new Combination Order would have to be created for the new CFA. This would be drafted by Home Office lawyers in conjunction with HFRA and IWC legal representatives. All existing employees of the IWFRS would transfer into the new CFA.
31. The detailed legal implications of the creation of a new CFA, including things such as the transfer of assets and contract management would be explored as part of the report presented to Cabinet later in the year.
32. The Policing and Crime Act (the Act) came into effect from 1 April 2017. The Act establishes 'legislation to enhance the democratic accountability of police forces and fire and rescue services, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the emergency services through collaboration and build public confidence in policing'.

There are 3 main provisions within the Policing and Crime Act 2017 which affect Fire and Rescue Services:

- A new duty to collaborate on Police, Fire and Emergency Ambulance Services.
- The enabling of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC's) to be represented on their local Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) with voting rights, where the FRA agrees.
- The enabling of PCC's to take responsibility for the governance of fire and rescue services where a local case is made.

Part 1 of the Act specifically relates to fire and rescue services and makes several additions to the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The act, as amended, now provides powers to the Secretary of State to transfer the Fire and Rescue governance to a PCC upon the request of the PCC.

33. The Isle of Wight Council is the fire authority. On 21 February 2017 the Executive committed to preparing a business case for full council's consideration that examined the potential for a new CFA with Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton fire authorities. The ultimate decision as to whether to request that the Secretary of State make a new CFA rests with Cabinet, as it is an executive function. However, before Cabinet consider their decision the matter will be reported to full council in order that the views all memebres council can be taken into account by the Cabinet.

### STRATEGIC CONTEXT

34. The council's Corporate Plan 2017 to 2020 has the following actions in the community safety and public protection portfolio, which directly link to the delivery of the initial business case for the creation of a new combined fire authority:
  - Develop a business case considering the options for future governance of the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service building on the successful partnership with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.
  - Fully assess the options and opportunities presented by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, liaising with the Hampshire police and crime commissioner, through a memorandum of understanding.
  - Develop options to improve the overall effectiveness of the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, ensuring an effective, resilient and safe service for the Island at all times.
  - Work with strategic partners and key stakeholders to ensure the Island has effective and robust arrangements to ensure the safety of the community at all times.

## CONSULTATION

35. A public consultation about the potential for a new CFA is only necessary if Members are minded to accept the business case in support of its consideration. If this is the case then a 12 week consultation exercise on the proposals is required, in order to inform the final detailed business case for the creation of a new CFA across Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight. This would be the form part of a submission to the Secretary of State.
36. Two separate consultation exercises will be required if members wish to proceed along these lines, one would be carried out in the current Hampshire Fire Authority Area, and the other on the Isle of Wight. A report back to the HFRA and the council would be expected later in the year.
37. The Home Office has been engaged in the process of developing the outline business case; it has welcomed the investigations into the proposed creation of a new CFA and is supportive of the direction of travel that both the HFRA and council have taken.
38. The Consultation Institute has undertaken a retrospective review of the business case and provided advice and guidance around best practice for consultation.
39. Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) formed a new CFA in 2016. HFRA Officers have taken advice from DWFRS Officers to get an understanding of how they approached the combining of the two Services.

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

40. The council as a public body is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
41. An equality impact assessment has been completed and shows no impact should the council choose the recommended options in this report. A further equality impact assessment will be carried out taking into account the outcome of the consultation, prior to delivery of a detailed business case in the future.

## PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

42. A building condition survey has been carried out for each fire station to identify its current condition and highlight any maintenance issues. This has helped to inform the finance section of the report.

43. If a new CFA is established the council would be committed to transferring all of its property assets used in support of the IWFRS to the new CFA, in their current state of repair.

## OPTIONS

44. The following options are available to the council:
  1. Accept the business case for the creation of a new combined fire authority covering the Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight area.
  2. Undertake a 12-week public consultation exercise on the Isle of Wight to inform the development of a decision paper for the Council setting out the risks and benefits of a new combined fire authority.
  3. Maintain the existing governance arrangements and not proceed with consultation on the creation of a new combined fire authority.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

45. The Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service is highly regarded by the Isle of Wight public who have demonstrated a strong sense of ownership and commitment to the service and its staff. Any final case to be put to the Secretary of State will need to address this key issue for the local community and ensure that the current levels of engagement and support for the service are not seen to be lost under any new governance arrangements.
46. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority has supported the development of the business case for a new combined fire authority but, like the council, it still needs to make a formal decision to develop a final business case informed by a wide ranging public consultation exercise.
47. The Police and Crime Commissioner has, for the present, indicated that he is not minded to develop a business case for the transfer of the responsibility for fire and rescue services from the council and the HFRA to his office. He has however indicated that how both parties approach the further investigation of a new CFA could be a 'trigger' for reconsideration of his position. There is therefore a risk that, if the council and HFRA do not undertake a public consultation exercise and the development of a final business case then the PCC may initiate his own programme of work that could ultimately lead to the governance of the both fire services transferring to the PCC.
48. The existing strategic partnership agreement between the council and HFRA is time limited and will need to be renegotiated within the next eighteen months. A public consultation exercise and development of a final business case for a new CFA could inform the renegotiation process should no agreement be reached on the implementation of a new CFA. It is difficult to identify at this stage what the impact of those negotiations might be for the council and HFRA.

49. Risk Management practices have been applied throughout the investigation of the creation of a new CFA. Appendix A sets out the operational risks associated with the any decision taken in respect of the potential new CFA. The matrix at appendix A would be developed further as part of a full business case.

## EVALUATION

50. The analysis at appendix A that has informed this report demonstrates that the creation of a new CFA could realise many benefits for the effective and efficient delivery of the fire service across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
51. A new CFA has the potential to offer enhanced operational resilience and capacity for the fire and rescue service. It would also provide employees the opportunity to fully benefit from shared operational learning and knowledge and would allow for the simplification of organisational processes.
52. The strategic partnership has resulted in the establishment of good relationships between the two authorities, however a more stable platform, to ensure the continued success of these relationships, would be assisted by the creation of a new CFA.
53. Both authorities have their own individual strengths which if combined into a new CFA would allow for the consistent and continued improvement of reputation and profile, locally and nationally.
54. The current strategic partnership between the council and HFRA has been successfully operating for three years and has delivered benefits to both authorities. A new CFA could provide the opportunity for increased and shared organisational resilience and capacity, organisational learning and knowledge. A larger organisation could provide greater learning and development opportunities for staff.
55. The council's vision is to make life safer by ensuring safer communities and delivering the best possible services. The creation of a new CFA and the bringing together of two organisations into a larger service would allow for the alignment of safety campaigns and greater consistency of safety messages to the public.
56. A new larger CFA with an enhanced organisational and operational capacity would allow for enhanced cutting-edge delivery of services to communities and businesses across the whole of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

## RECOMMENDATION

57. On the basis of the information contained in this report it is recommended that Cabinet adopt options 1 and 2:
1. Accept the business case for the creation of a new combined fire authority covering the Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight area.
  2. Undertake a 12-week public consultation exercise on the Isle of Wight to inform the development of a decision paper for the Council setting out the risks and benefits of a new combined fire authority.

## APPENDICES ATTACHED

58. [Appendix A: Business case](#)

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [February 2017 IWC Executive report on IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLICING AND CRIME ACT 2017](#)
- [March 2018 IWC Full Council report on INITIAL BUSINESS CASE INTO THE PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY TO INCLUDE HAMPSHIRE, SOUTHAMPTON, PORTSMOUTH AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT AUTHORITIES](#)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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