



**HAMPSHIRE
FIRE AND
RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Purpose: To note

Date 13 JUNE 2017

Title **Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project**

Report of Chief Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides information relating to a collaborative approach to consider governance arrangements of the Fire and Rescue Authority in Hampshire. This is enabled by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been signed between Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA), the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority (IWFRA) and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to facilitate a Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project between the parties. The MOU has been signed by the Chief Officer.
2. The report seeks HFRA support for the approach and the investment of officer time to help guide the Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project.

BACKGROUND

3. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 (the Act) received Royal Assent in January 2017 and placed on the statute books from 1 April 2017. Amongst other aspects, the aims of the Act were to enhance democratic accountability for Police and Fire and Rescue Services across the Country, improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Emergency Services through collaboration and improve public confidence in Policing.
4. There are three main provisions within the Act that directly affect Fire and Rescue Services:
 - A new duty to consider collaboration where it's in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness. This is placed upon 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.
5. HFRS Officers are already working with our blue light partners to build on a number of collaboration initiatives under the Blue Light Collaboration

Programme being led by Assistant Chief Officer, Stew Adamson. The Blue Light Collaboration Programme will ensure greater collective thinking and resources to best tackle the challenges we all face and will facilitate a better understanding of the risk, threat and harm posed in our communities. This programme of work is predominantly focusing on the operational aspects of all three blue light services and identifying where collaboration will benefit the communities we serve. The financial commitment to this work was presented in the Finance update paper (section 7) presented at the full HFRA meeting in December 2016. The Blue Light Collaboration Programme does not include looking at future governance options for the fire and rescue service. Any work started to investigate future governance options will be carried out separate to the Blue Light Collaboration Programme through the options appraisal project.

6. On 20 March 2017, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Hampshire, Michael Lane, organised a meeting to discuss the new provisions within the Act relating to the governance of fire and rescue services. The meeting was attended by the PCC, the Chairman of the HFRA, the Leader of the Isle of Wight Council, the Chief Officer of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, the Chief Executive of the OPCC and the Chief Executive of the Isle of Wight Council. The purpose of the meeting was to request that all parties work together to explore fire governance options and that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be drawn up to facilitate an officer led Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

7. An MOU has been signed by Officers of all three parties; Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority, the Isle of Wight Council (IWC) and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
8. The Chief Officer signed this MOU on behalf of HFRA, following consultation with the Chairman of HFRA.
9. The Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project will be led by the OPCC in collaboration with HFRA and IWFRA.
10. It is the intention to establish a Project Board consisting of the PCC, the Chairman of the HFRA and the IWFRA portfolio holder on the IWC, supported by their Chief Officers, to monitor the progress of the Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project.
11. The project team aims to complete the options appraisal (in line with the MOU) for October 2017 and present a report to the Project Board (if established). A final report will return to HFRA.

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER PIECES OF WORK

12. The Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project links to the 'Investigation into the extension of the current Combined Fire Authority (CFA) to include the

IWFRS'. In January 2018, the HFRA and the IWC will make a decision regarding the current CFA and the possible inclusion of the IWFRS.

SUPPORTING OUR SERVICE PLAN AND PRIORITIES

13. The Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project supports Blue Light Collaboration within Hampshire and demonstrates that the HFRA are supportive of the provisions within the Policing and Crime Act 2017.
14. This piece of work also supports our Working with Partners priority which aims to ensure our partnerships are delivering services across the County that deliver the best outcomes for the public.

CONSULTATION

15. There is no statutory duty to consult on carrying out a Fire Governance Options Appraisal.
16. Should the PCC decide to proceed to a full business case to change the governance arrangements of HFRA, a statutory consultation process will apply. HFRS Officers will provide input to this process as instructed by the HFRA.
17. As mentioned in paragraph 4, the Blue Light Collaboration Programme does not include looking at future governance options for the fire and rescue service. Work to investigate future governance options will be carried out separate to the pre-existing Blue Light Collaboration Programme. The two pieces of work are very different and are therefore planned to remain separate.

COLLABORATION

18. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 places a duty on emergency services to consider collaboration where it is in the interest of effectiveness and efficiency. The Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project supports that duty to collaborate.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

19. The Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project will be led and carried out by the OPCC. The ACO Blue Light Collaboration, Stew Adamson will be the lead officer and link into the OPCC for this piece of work as may be required to meet HFRA requirements.
20. There are no financial resource implications for HFRA in carrying out the Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

21. The OPCC will seek legal advice, as required, while they are carrying out the Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project. HFRA may seek its own legal advice.

PEOPLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

22. A people impact assessment is not required at this stage.

OPTIONS

23. Option one: Support the approach and the Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project being led by the OPCC.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 legislates that emergency services are to consider collaborative activities where they demonstrate that there will be an improvement in efficiency and effectiveness. There are powers within the Act that enable changes to future governance arrangements to occur. One way to ensure the HFRA are actively engaged with the provisions within the Act is to support the approach and the Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project. It also demonstrates that the HFRA is embracing collaboration at a political level, seeking the best outcomes possible for the public and our communities, pursuing value for money and will signify a commitment to working collaboratively with the PCC. It will also provide the ability for Members to influence and contribute to the development of options linked to the differing potential governance models.

24. Option two: Do not support the approach and Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project being led by the OPCC.

If this option is chosen it could be seen that the HFRA is not actively engaging with the PCC to seek better outcomes for the public and communities. By not supporting the approach and the Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project the HFRA will reduce its ability to contribute to the work and provide direct input. The HFRA will not have the same opportunity to explore future governance options and will be isolated from discussions and decisions that are within the remit of the Project. The Blue Light Collaboration Programme will continue to be progressed by officers as previously directed by the HFRA. HFRS will also continue to work with blue light partners on operational matters.

RISK ANALYSIS

25. There is a risk that if the HFRA does not support the approach and the Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project that it could be argued that it is not properly considering its duty within the Policing and Crime Act 2017. A further risk of not supporting the approach and the Governance Options Appraisal Project is that the HFRA will not be able to contribute to exploring options for future governance and therefore won't be involved in any decisions made.

26. A fundamental part of the Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project is a risk analysis. This will be carried out by the OPCC as part of their work.

CONCLUSION

27. The HFRA supporting the Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project demonstrates a commitment to working with the PCC. By working with the OPCC to explore future governance options the Authority will be able to ensure the best outcome for the public and the communities we represent.

RECOMMENDATION

28. That the approach and the Fire Governance Options Appraisal Project be endorsed by the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority as explained in option one.

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