

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

19th June 2017

Fire and Rescue Service Governance Proposals

Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Recommendation

The Police and Crime Commissioner recommends that Members:

- a. Note the progress that has now been made in the development of draft business case by the Police and Crime Commissioner;
- b. Respond to the draft business case; and
- c. Note that Members will continue to have the opportunity to input into the development of a final Business case during the formal consultation period.

Background

1. This paper brings forward for formal consideration by Members the draft initial local business case prepared by the Police and Crime Commissioner for the joint governance of Police and Fire & Rescue services in Hereford and Worcester and Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.
2. The Policing and Crime Act introduces measures that will place a duty on emergency services to collaborate and also enable Police and Crime Commissioners to take on responsibilities for the fire and rescue services in their area where the local case is made to do so.
3. The two Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) have agreed to invite the Police and Crime Commissioner to attend and speak at meetings of the Authorities.

The Draft Business Case

4. The document presented today reflects the involvement of the Chairs of the FRAs and Chief Fire and Police Officers in its development, but remains the responsibility of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The document is still in draft, is an initial business case - not yet a full business case, and this is an opportunity for Members of the Panel to help shape the final document.
5. The draft Business Case identifies three key drivers for change:
 - a. Operational benefits which will keep the public safer;
 - b. More resilient services to our rural communities; and
 - c. Financial benefits through more economic and efficient provision of services.
6. The Local Business Case identifies that a step change in governance is needed to deliver benefits in all three areas. Collaboration alone will not deliver in full the potential benefits identified and evidence from studies in other countries found that control through a single governance structure was a key driver for achieving change.
7. The Policing and Crime Act provides for three new governance options if there is a local business case made for change. The option where the Police and Crime Commissioner

has a seat and voting rights on the Authority is not considered as that is already being explored by the two FRAs. The option where there is a single employer for police and fire under the Police and Crime Commissioner is considered but not proposed. The draft Business Case supports the third alternative where the Fire Authority is replaced by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Key Issues For The Panel

8. The draft Business Case has not yet had input from Service staff or Representative Bodies. Consultation, both internal and public, on the draft Business Case could only commence after purdah, and was launched on the publication of the papers for this meeting.
9. A communications and engagement plan that allows Service staff to hear first regarding any announcements or proposed changes has been developed and implemented.
10. The draft Business Case includes estimates of the value of efficiency gains and savings from future collaboration. The generation of elements of these savings within the activities of the fire and rescue service will have the potential to allow for future increases in expenditure on prevention activities or to help meet future funding pressures.
11. If the Business Case proposals are implemented, the Police and Crime Commissioner would become the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC). The role of the Police and Crime Panel will change. Its responsibilities would increase to include scrutiny of:
 - a. the Fire and Rescue Plan as well as the Police and Crime Plan;
 - b. the Annual Fire and Rescue Statement as well as the Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report;
 - c. the appointment of the Fire and Rescue chief finance officers;
 - d. the conduct of the Police and Crime Commissioner in his capacity as an FRA;
 - e. the setting of the FRA precepts, in the same manner as the Police and Crime Commissioner's precept
12. The Panel will have the power to require attendance and information in relation to the PFCC's work as an FRA as well as that relating to policing and crime.

Risk Management Implications

13. Key risks to the achievement of the changes are set out in the draft Business Case.

Financial Implications

14. The cost of preparing the local business case have been met by grant from the Home Office Police Reform and Transformation Fund. The support for the preparation of the draft initial Local Business Case has been achieved utilising internal resources.

Legal Implications

15. The decision to formulate a business case and apply to the Secretary of State for consent is not a decision for the Panel but the opinions of the Members may be taken into account and may be relevant during the period of public consultation.

16. The business case is subject to public consultation and may give rise to amendments to the final business case.

Equality Implications

17. No specific equality impact assessment of the proposals contained in the draft Business Case has been carried out. It is not anticipated that the proposals will impact differently on a specific group.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 –Police and Crime Commissioner Commitments regarding Fire and Rescue

Appendix 2 – Draft Business Case

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

Andy Champness, Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executive