



# **HEREFORD & WORCESTER Fire Authority**

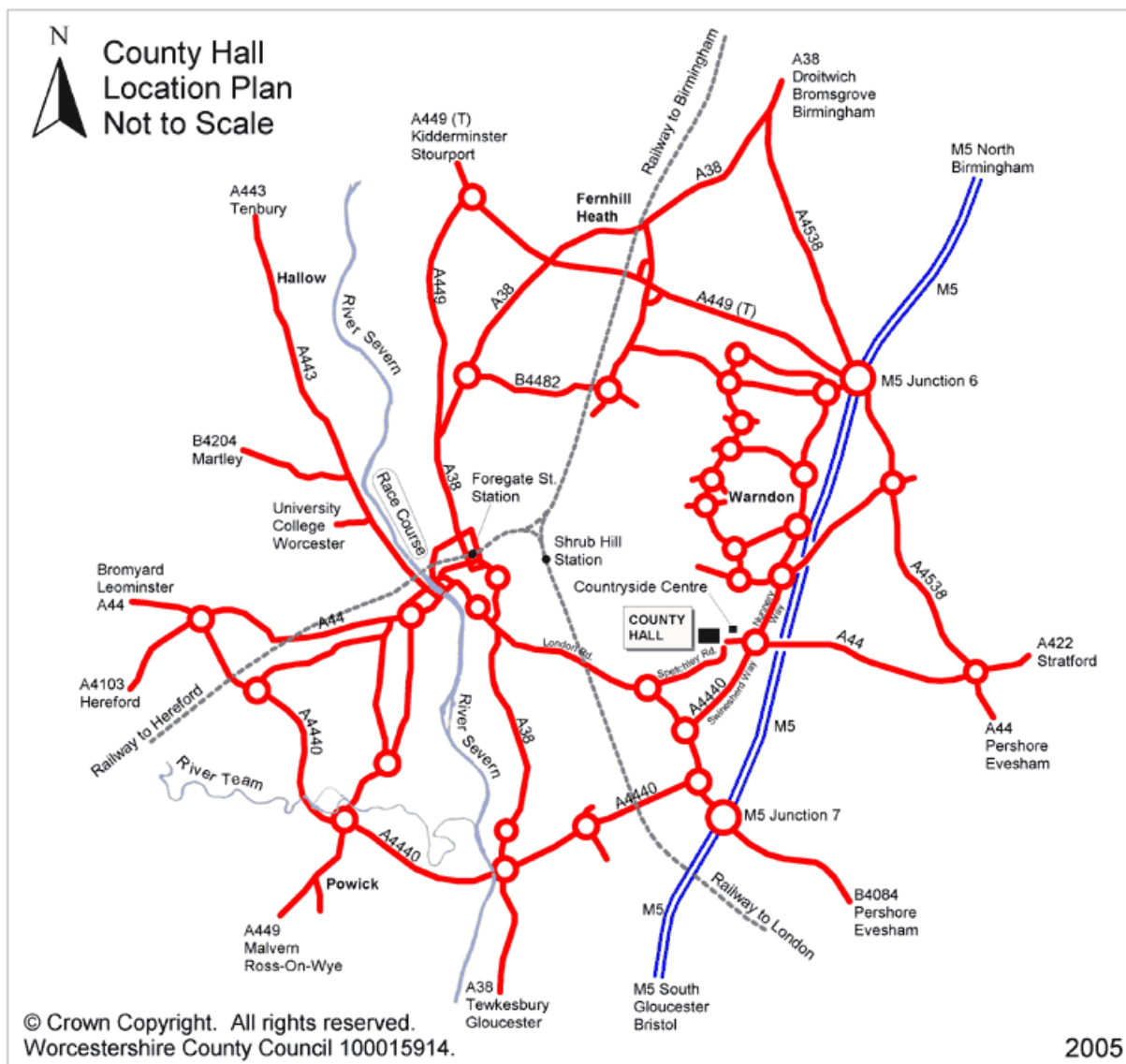
**Full Authority**

## **AGENDA**

**Monday, 04 September 2017**

**11:00**

**Council Chamber  
County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester, WR5 2NP**



### From the M5

From J7 of M5 follow A44 to Worcester (follow the brown and white tourist signs) at the roundabout turn right onto Swinesherd Way and continue to the end passing Wildwood Drive on the left and the Countryside Centre on the right.

From J6 of M5 follow A4538 to Evesham, (follow the brown and white tourist signs) turn right at 1st roundabout onto B4636 (to Worcester) then left at the next roundabout (Nunnery Way - A4440) and then right at the next roundabout onto Wildwood Drive.

### From Worcester City Centre

Take the London Road away from the centre signposted M5 motorway and Evesham.

Travelling eastwards along London Road, passing through a set of traffic lights at the bottom of the first large hill, climb to the top of the next hill. Approach the large roundabout and take the first left (almost straight ahead if you remain in the inside lane) into Spetchley Road.

Travel along Spetchley Road for approximately 1/3 of a mile. At the mini roundabout turn left into the County Hall Campus.

## **Fire Alarm**

- The fire alarm is tested every Tuesday at 13:45. Should the alarm sound at any other time you will need to leave the building via the nearest safe exit.)
- You will need to follow Officers to Assembly Point E (Northside) which is located outside the building.

## **Toilets**

- There are male and female toilets with baby change facilities in reception and a disabled toilet within the Register Office at the entrance adjacent to reception.

## **Parking**

- If you have parked in the visitor car park please collect a token from Reception upon leaving.
- Once the token has been inserted please wait for the traffic light to change to green before driving off. The barrier will lower only when the light is green.

## **Smoking Policy**

- Smoking is not permitted anywhere within the building. There is a smoking shelter located by the cascades which are situated between the upper and lower lakes.

## **OPTIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Cafe**

- There is a cafe located on the ground floor, a short distance from Reception which you are welcome to use. It sells a range of hot and cold foodstuffs as well as having a coffee bar.
- The Lakeview Cafe is open for business 08:00 to 15:00 Monday to Friday. The area is available for informal meetings unless specifically booked for an event although we ask that you only do so outside the busy lunchtime period when diners are given priority use.

### **Shop**

- There is a shop adjacent to the cafe and stocks a range of sandwiches, snacks, sweets and newspapers.
- The shop's opening hours are 08:00 to 14:00 Monday to Friday
- There is a snack/cold drink vending machine immediately outside the shop for use during and outside of the shop's hours of business. There is also a KLIX hot drinks machine.

### **Grounds/Site traffic**

- Please note that County Hall and its grounds are public therefore there may be any number of people walking around the site including those walking their dogs or travelling to the nearby schools.
- Due to this we have a site wide 10 mph speed limit

### **Public Transport**

- There are two bus stops within the grounds of County Hall, one adjacent to each of the site entrances. Both have timetables and as a guide there are generally four buses per hour into the city centre.

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION – YOUR RIGHTS.** The press and public have the right to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. You have:

- the right to attend all Authority and Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose “confidential information” or “exempt information”;
- the right to film, record or report electronically on any meeting to which the public are admitted provided you do not do so in a manner that is disruptive to the meeting. **If you are present at a meeting of the Authority you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed or recorded by anyone exercising their rights under this paragraph;**
- the right to inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting (available on our website: <http://www.hwfire.org.uk>);
- the right to inspect minutes of the Authority and Committees for up to six years following the meeting (available on our website: <http://www.hwfire.org.uk>); and
- the right to inspect background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting.

A reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports relating to items to be considered in public will be available at meetings of the Authority and Committees. If you have any queries regarding this agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of these rights of access to information please contact Committee & Members’ Services on 01905 368209 or by email at [committeeservices@hwfire.org.uk](mailto:committeeservices@hwfire.org.uk).

**WELCOME AND GUIDE TO TODAY’S MEETING.** These notes are written to assist you to follow the meeting. Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are democratically elected representatives and they will be advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals. The Fire and Rescue Authority comprises 25 Councillors and appoints committees to undertake various functions on behalf of the Authority. There are 19 Worcestershire County Councillors on the Authority and 6 Herefordshire Council Councillors.

**Agenda Papers** - Attached is the Agenda which is a summary of the issues to be discussed and the related reports by Officers.

**Chairman** - The Chairman, who is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting, sits at the head of the table.

**Officers** - Accompanying the Chairman is the Chief Fire Officer and other Officers of the Fire and Rescue Authority who will advise on legal and procedural matters and record the proceedings. These include the Clerk and the Treasurer to the Authority.

**The Business** - The Chairman will conduct the business of the meeting. The items listed on the agenda will be discussed.

**Decisions** - At the end of the discussion on each item the Chairman will put any amendments or motions to the meeting and then ask the Councillors to vote. The Officers do not have a vote.



# Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

## Full Authority

Monday, 04 September 2017, 11:00

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### Agenda

#### Councillors

Mr R J Phillips (Chairman), Mr P A Tuthill (Vice Chairman), Mr R C Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr A Amos, Mr B A Baker, Mr T D Baker-Price, Mr B Clayton, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr A Fry, Ms K S Guthrie, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Dr C A Hotham, Mr J L V Kenyon, Mr R I Matthews, Mr P Middlebrough, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Dr K Pollock, Mrs J Potter, Professor J W Raine, Mr C B Taylor, Mr R M Udall, Mr S D Williams

No.	Item	Pages
1	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> To receive any apologies for absence.	
2	<b>Declarations of Interest (if any)</b> This item allows the Chairman to invite any Councillor to declare an interest in any of the items on this Agenda.	
3	<b>Confirmation of Minutes</b> To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2017.	7 - 18
4	<b>Chairman's Announcements</b> To update Members on recent activities.	

## **5 Public Participation**

To allow a Member of the public to present a petition, ask a question or make a statement relating to any topic concerning the duties and powers of the Authority.

Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Head of Legal Services in writing or by email indicating both the nature and content of their proposed participation to be received no later than 2 clear working days before the meeting (in this case 30 August 2017). Further details about public participation are available on the website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone numbers/email listed below.

## **6 Analysis of West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner Initial Business Case**

**19 - 37**

To consider the analysis of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) initial business case and agree the next steps.



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Tuesday, 27 June 2017, 10:30

## Minutes

**Members Present:** Mr R C Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr B A Baker, Mr T D Baker-Price, Mr B Clayton, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr A Fry, Mr I D Hardiman, Dr C A Hotham, Mr R I Matthews, Mr P Middlebrough, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Mr R J Phillips, Mrs J Potter, Professor J W Raine, Mr C B Taylor, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall, Mr S D Williams

### Substitutes:

**Absent:** Councillor Mr Jim Kenyon

**Apologies for Absence:** Mr A Amos, Ms K S Guthrie, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Dr K Pollock

### 130 Election of Chairman

**Resolved that Mr R J Phillips be elected as Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year, to hold office until his successor becomes entitled to act.**

### 131 Election of Vice Chairman

**Resolved that Mr P A Tuthill be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year, to hold office until his successor becomes entitled to act.**

### 132 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman informed the Authority of the following events he had attended recently:

- PCC preliminary talks on 27 April.
- Young Firefighters Association passing out parade on 13 May.
- Memorial Service at the Arboretum on 14 May.

- PCC briefing on 1 June.
- Members' Induction on 12 June.
- Group Leaders' meeting on 13 June.
- Meeting with the Chairman of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

Members were also informed that the purchase of the land at Stourport Road, Kidderminster for the new Wyre Forest Hub had been completed on 21 June.

Finally, Members were advised that the forthcoming Audit and Standards Committee meeting scheduled for 5 July had been cancelled.

### **133 Public Participation**

Mr Andrew Davies, a retired firefighter of 31 years, 9 years of which were based at Malvern and a council tax payer in Malvern for 12 years requested to speak to the Authority to voice his opposition to the proposed changes to fire cover for the citizens of Malvern.

Mr Davies commented that he was unhappy that it had been stated the proposed changes would not affect emergency cover, when in his opinion they clearly would. Mr Davies argued that:

- fire cover provided by retained firefighters could not be guaranteed and would therefore reduce the emergency response;
- retained firefighters trained for less hours each week than their wholetime counterparts who worked 42 hours each week, thereby building up greater knowledge and better team working relationships;
- there would be a lack of water/rope rescue during the night and weekend as specialist teams would not be available; and
- the proposals would increase risk to local residents when combined with additional housing proposed under the South Worcestershire Development Plan.

The Chairman indicated that as the crewing arrangements were being discussed later on the agenda, Mr Davies' representations would be taken into consideration at that point.

### **134 Confirmation of Minutes**

**Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 15 February 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**



## 135 Appointment to Committees

A report was presented on the allocation of Committee seats to political groups and which sought to make appointments to those Committees.

**Resolved that:**

**i) the number of seats on each Committee and the allocation of those seats to political groups be as follows:**

<b><i>Group</i></b>	<b><i>Appointments Committee</i></b>	<b><i>Audit &amp; Standards Committee</i></b>	<b><i>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</i></b>
<b><i>Conservative</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>	<b><i>8</i></b>	<b><i>9</i></b>
<b><i>Labour</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>2</i></b>
<b><i>Independent</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>
<b><i>2017</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>
<b><i>Non Aligned</i></b>	<b><i>0</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>0</i></b>
<b><i>(Total)</i></b>	<b><i>7</i></b>	<b><i>12</i></b>	<b><i>13</i></b>

**ii) the following Members be appointed as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the following Committees:**

**a. Appointments Committee:**

**Chairman: Mr R J Phillips**

**Vice-Chairman: Mr P Tuthill**

**b. Audit and Standards Committee**

**Chairman: Mr M Hart**

**Vice-Chairman: Mr A Amos**

**c. Policy and Resources Committee**

**Chairman: Mr C B Taylor**

**Vice-Chairman: Mr R C Adams**

**iii) in accordance with the wishes of Group Leaders, membership of Committees be as set out in Appendix 1 of the minutes;**

**iv) non-aligned Member Cllr J L V Kenyon be appointed to the Audit and Standards Committee;**

- v) Ms P Agar and Mrs F M Oborski be appointed to the Organisational Development Group;
- vi) Mr B Clayton be appointed to the Health and Safety Committee; and
- vii) Mr T Baker-Price be appointed as the Chairman to the Young Firefighters' Association Executive Committee.

## **136 Appointments to Outside Bodies**

A report was presented to consider appointments to the Local Government Association and to the Place Partnership Ltd. Shareholder Group.

**RESOLVED that:**

i) the previous practice for representation and voting on the Local Government Association be continued as follows:

a. that the Authority's four representatives on the Local Government Association should be the Leaders of each of the current four political groups or their nominees;

b. that the 13 Service votes on the Local Government Association Assembly be allocated between its representatives on a politically proportionate basis as follows:

Conservative Group	9
Labour Group	2
Independent Group	1
2017 Group	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13;</b>

c. the corporate vote on the Local Government Association Assembly be exercised by the Chairman or his nominee;

ii) the place and vote on the Local Government Association Fire Commission be exercised by the Chairman of the Authority; and

iii) the Chairman be appointed as the Member representative on the Place Partnership Ltd. Shareholder Group.

## **137 Provisional Financial Results 2016/17**

A report was presented with the financial results for 2016/17. Members were

reminded that although this subject is normally a matter for the Policy and Resources Committee, the Committee did not meet between the end of the financial year and the date by which the Statement of Accounts had to be submitted.

With regard to the Revenue Budget, Members' attention was drawn to the increased underspend of £0.522m, the increased Funding Grants of £0.886m and how this variation had impacted on the use of earmarked reserves. Members were also advised of a typographical error in the report at paragraph 14, b), that the change variation for the delays in delivery of services as a result of staff retention and recruitments was actually -0.131m, rather than +£0.131m as stated.

Following a question from a Member it was confirmed that there was currently £1.2m in the extract of reserves detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.

Finally, Members were advised that the Authority's finances were well controlled and that, despite late one-off items, the resultant under spending was part of a planned response to known future budget constraints.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) the provisional financial results for 2016/17 be noted;**
- ii) £0.033m be transferred to an ICT Reserve;**
- iii) additional £0.791m be transferred to the existing £0.500m ESMCP Reserve previously approved by the Policy and Resources Committee;**
- iv) £1.063m being the balance of the underspend be transferred to the Budget Reduction Reserve; and**
- v) the re-alignment of reserves as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.**

## **138      Crewing Proposals**

The Authority had previously instructed officers to bring forward options to deliver crewing with 5 firefighters on wholetime appliances rather than 4 at no additional cost. Members were informed of the progress with the review of crewing systems that was currently being carried out following the mandate provided by the Authority.

It was reported that officers had carried out a series of visits to the potentially affected stations to present proposals and to engage with staff to discuss them, identify issues and alternative approaches. Consultation had

also been carried out with representative bodies.

Members were advised that out of the two responses received from the representative bodies during the initial consultation period, a number of issues were identified but no alternative solutions were provided for consideration. The issues raised by representative bodies were fully considered and responded to in writing by the Chief Fire Officer.

In response to the points raised under public participation, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that day crewed staff at Malvern worked 35 hours per week on station and that there were a range of retained firefighters who had specialist skills.

Members discussed at length the proposals and requested a full briefing prior to a further report to be considered at a future Authority meeting.

**RESOLVED that:**

**i) it be noted that**

**a) the crewing proposals presented to the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) on 27 March 2017 meet the aim of providing sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue and preventative services;**

**b) the crewing proposals presented to the JCC on 27 March 2017 meet the objective of providing a crew of 5 on wholetime appliances across the Service and other identified objectives;**

**c) an initial consultation over the crewing proposals ended on 1 May 2017 and that two responses were received;**

**d) discussions with Representative Bodies are underway regarding the proposed crewing systems; and**

**e) negotiations into contractual issues will commence as soon as discussions on the systems have concluded.**

**ii) officers continue with the review of crewing; and**

**iii) Members receive a full briefing on the crewing proposals prior to a further report with a view to implementation of any crewing changes.**

**139 2016-17 Performance Report: Quarter 1 – Quarter 4**

The annual performance for 2016-17 was presented to the Authority using

the set of Performance Indicators agreed by the Senior Management Board.

[Councillor Fry left the room at 11.34am and returned at 11.39am].

A Member queried the use of different water rescue equipment available at stations and it was agreed that a briefing would be arranged for the Member to provide further detail.

Members also queried the number of false alarms the Service attended and officers confirmed that the Service worked closely with the premise owners to avoid repeated call outs.

[Councillor Baker left the room at 11.58am and returned at 12.01pm].

At 12.04pm the Chairman agreed to hold a short break.

The meeting continued at 12.10pm.

**RESOLVED that the Authority notes the following headlines drawn from Appendix 1 relating to performance in Quarter 1 to Quarter 4, 2016-17:**

**i) A total of 6,749 incidents were attended in Q1 to Q4, an increase of 5.7% (290 incidents) over the same period in 2015-16, and 3.3% (223 incidents) higher than the average for the last five years.**

**ii) The majority of the increase in Q1 to Q4 is accounted for by a rise in the numbers of Special Service and False Alarm incidents, while the number of Fire incidents was down:**

**a. Special Services: there was an increase of 71 incidents over the twelve month period. This is predominantly accounted for by increases in the number of animal assistance incidents (46 incidents), and Other Special Services such as, lift rescues, spills and leaks (non-RTC), provision of advice and assisting other agencies (80 incidents).**

**b. False Alarms: there was an increase of 252 incidents over the twelve month period in all types of False Alarm incidents. This is mainly because of an increase in automatic activations of inbuilt fire alarms systems (197 incidents).**

**c. Fires: a decrease of 33 incidents for this period over the previous year is largely accounted for by a fall in the number of Secondary Fires (down by 23 incidents) with fewer outdoor fires in a wetter than usual late spring/early summer period.**

iii) The number of Fires, Special Service and False Alarm incidents has stayed relatively consistent over the last 5 years.

iv) Overall Staff Sickness levels are 6.08 days lost per head, which remains within tolerance levels set (see paragraph 3 below) for Q1 to Q4.

v) The Service attended 58.2% (384 incidents) of Building Fires within 10 minutes in Q1 to Q4 compared with 60.2% in the same period in 2015-16. The average time for the first fire appliance attendance at all building fires was ten minutes and thirty-six seconds.

vi) The overall availability of the first On-Call (Retained) fire appliance remains high at 91.8%; this has increased by 0.8% compared to the same period in 2015-16.

#### **140 Fire Authority Annual Report 2017-18**

The Fire Authority's Annual Report 2017-18 was presented for adoption and approval for publication.

Members agreed to the publication of the Report and requested a PDF file be sent to local libraries and to Members to enable the document to be shared with the public more easily.

**RESOLVED that the Authority adopts the draft Fire Authority Annual Report 2017-18 and approves it for publication, subject to any final minor changes as agreed by the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman.**

#### **141 Chief Fire Officer's Service Report**

The Chief Fire Officer presented recent key developments and activities, which included:

- Blackpole Trading Estate – ArrowXL Fire
- Service Exercise
- UKRO Challenge
- National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC)
- Saving More Lives
- PCC Business Case
- National Security – HWFRS Response
- Grenfell Tower Fire

Members were advised that the Service's Critical Incident Support Team had offered to assist the London firefighters following the Grenfell Tower Fire. The Chief Fire Officer had made contact with London Fire Brigade and their offer of help was acknowledged.

A Member thanked the Service for providing immediate reassurance to the residents in the high rise buildings in St John's, Worcester following the Grenfell Tower fire.

#### **142 PCC Business Case**

The Chairman agreed to consider this item earlier than had been published on the agenda to provide those Members who had to leave the meeting due to other commitments with an opportunity to be involved in the debate.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) presented an overview of his business case in relation to the future governance of local fire and rescue services.

There was a widespread view amongst Members that there was a lack of detail contained in the business case. The Chairman stated that he had received feedback from the four Constituent Authority Leaders and that they were supportive of the two fire authorities obtaining independent analysis of the business case.

**RESOLVED that Members note the Constituent Authority Leaders' concerns regarding the lack of detail in the PCC business case and that given the existing savings identified in the three organisations and the additional cuts proposed in the PCC business case, the Authority work with Shropshire Fire Authority on an independent assessment of the PCC proposal's impact on the delivery of fire, rescue and prevention services in the two service areas.**

#### **143 Audit and Standards Committee Terms of Reference**

A report was presented to consider the reallocation of areas of responsibility from Policy and Resources Committee to Audit and Standards Committee.

Members were advised that the proposed reallocation of areas of responsibility and amended Terms of Reference were designed to ensure a balanced workload across the committees enabling effective and efficient decision making.

**RESOLVED that:**

**i) the following areas of responsibility be reallocated to Audit and Standards Committee from Policy and Resources Committee:**

- Equality & Diversity;
- Health & Safety; and
- Employment Monitoring.

**ii) the amended Terms of Reference for Audit and Standards Committee, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved.**

**144 Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee**

The Chairman of the Committee reported the proceedings of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 22 March 2017.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 22 March 2017 be received and noted.**

**145 Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee**

A Member of the Committee reported the proceedings of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 12 April 2017.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 12 April 2017 be received and noted.**

The Meeting ended at: 13:30

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman



## Appendix 1 - Committee Memberships 2017/2018

<u>Policy and Resources Committee (13)</u>	<u>Conservatives (9)</u>	<u>Labour (2)</u>	<u>Independents (1)</u>	<u>2017 (1)</u>	
	Mr K Taylor (Chairman)	Mr R Udall	Dr C Hotham	Mrs F Oborski MBE	
	Mr R Adams (Vice-Chair)	Mr A Fry			
	Mr B Baker				
	Mr T Baker-Price				
	Mr B Clayton				
	Mrs E Eyre BEM				
	Mr R Phillips				
	Mrs J Potter				
	Mr P Tuthill				
<u>Audit &amp; Standards Committee (12)</u>	<u>Conservatives (8)</u>	<u>Labour (1)</u>	<u>Independents (1)</u>	<u>2017 (1)</u>	<u>Non-Aligned</u>
<i>Cannot include: Chair/Vice-chair of Authority; Outgoing Chair of Authority; Chair of Policy &amp; Resources; or Group Leaders</i>	Mr M Hart (Chairman)	Ms P Agar	Mr B Matthews	Prof. J Raine	Mr J Kenyon
	Mr A Amos (Vice-Chair)				
	Ms K Guthrie				
	Mr A Hardman				
	Mr I Hardiman				
	Mr P Middlebrough				
	Dr K Pollock				
	Mr S Williams				
<u>Appointments Committee (8)</u>	<u>Conservative (4)</u>	<u>Labour (1)</u>	<u>Independent(1)</u>	<u>2017 (1)</u>	
<i>Should normally include: Chair of Authority Chair of Policy &amp; Resources Chair of Audit &amp; Standards</i>	Mr R Phillips (Chairman)	Mr A Fry	Dr C Hotham	Mrs F Oborski MBE	
	Mr P Tuthill (Vice-Chair)				
	Mr M Hart				
	Mr K Taylor				

Member / Officer Working Group Representatives

**Organisational Development Group:**

Ms P Agar

Mrs F Oborski MBE

**Health & Safety Committee:**

Mr B Clayton

**Chairman of the Young Firefighters' Association Executive Committee**

Mr T Baker-Price

## **Report of the Fire Authority Chairman**

### **Analysis of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner Initial Business Case**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To consider the analysis of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) initial business case and agree the next steps.
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#### **Recommendations**

##### ***The Chairman recommends that:***

- i) the report be submitted to the Leaders of Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire County Council in order to support their decision making process in responding to the consultation on the initial business case;***
- ii) the report forms the basis of the Fire Authority's response to the consultation on the initial business case; and***
- iii) the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Authority enter into further discussions with Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority and the Police & Crime Commissioner to explore, and subject thereto Officers to bring back a further report on, implementation of the principles identified in the analysis report including:***
  - reviewing the size of the Fire Authority;***
  - implementation of the 'representation model' (PCC as a voting member of the Fire Authority); and***
  - creation of a joint board with Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority to oversee future collaboration.***

#### **Background**

2. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 enables PCCs to take on responsibility for the governance of fire and rescue services where a case can be made by the PCC to the Secretary of State. The Act requires that prior to such a case being made the PCC must consult with the constituent authorities of the fire authorities concerned, the public in the affected areas and the representative bodies of any affected organisations. Should a constituent authority not support the case made by a PCC then the Secretary of State will obtain an independent assessment prior to making any decision.

## **West Mercia PCC's Initial Business Case**

3. The West Mercia PCC recently commissioned research to develop an initial business case for taking on the role of governance of Shropshire & Wrekin and Hereford & Worcester fire and rescue services. Following a period of engagement with key stakeholders, the PCC released his initial business case for consultation on 12 July 2017. The consultation period runs for 12 weeks from 12 July 2017 to 11 September 2017.
4. The PCC presented his initial business case to this Authority on 27 June 2017 where Members noted the concerns of the leaders of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Councils (the constituent authorities) regarding the lack of detail in the business case. It was agreed by this Authority that given the existing savings identified by West Mercia Police and both fire authorities and the additional cuts proposed in the business case, that the Authority work with Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority on an independent assessment of the impact of the PCC's proposals on the delivery of fire, rescue and prevention services in the two service areas.
5. In July 2017, the leaders of the constituent authorities requested both fire authorities to commission an independent analysis of the PCC's initial business case in order to support their ability to respond to the PCC's consultation. Following a competitive selection process the fire authorities contracted a collaboration of Alendi and Ameo consulting groups to undertake an independent analysis of the PCC's initial business case, which attached at Appendix 1 for consideration.

## **Conclusion/Summary**

6. The West Mercia PCC recently published an initial business case regarding his proposals to take on the role of governance for Shropshire & Wrekin and Hereford & Worcester fire and rescue services. The fire authorities recently commissioned an independent analysis of the business case, which is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration.

## Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The PCC's initial case purports that £4m of savings can be achieved, however as there is not enough detail to establish whether this level of savings is feasible an independent analysis has been sought.
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	N/A
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	A comprehensive assessment of the risks associated with the PCC's initial business case is required.
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	The PCC has published a consultation document. The consultation period runs for 12 weeks from 12 July 2017 to 11 September 2017.
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	An EIA has not been completed as this report does not contain a policy proposal.

## Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Analysis of West Mercia PCC Initial Business Case

Background papers – Policing and Crime Act 2017

# ameo:



Consulting Ltd.

## **Analysis of West Mercia PCC Initial Business Case**

**Version – Final Draft 1.1**

**26<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

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John Bonney, [john.bonney@alendiconsulting.com](mailto:john.bonney@alendiconsulting.com)

The content of this report is based on information (interviews & documents) gathered in good faith from contacts within Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue, Shropshire Fire and Rescue and the Office of West Mercia PCC. Ameo /Alendi Consulting cannot guarantee the accuracy of this content and therefore accepts no liability whatsoever for actions taken that subsequently prove incorrect.

## 1. Introduction

In line with the Policing and Crime Act 2017 the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (WMPCC) commissioned research to develop a business case for merging the governance, strategic and operational management of Hereford and Worcester (HWFRS) and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) into his jurisdiction. This initial business case (IBC) was recently completed and submitted for public consultation on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 to run for twelve weeks with a closing date of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority (SWFRA) and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority (HWFRA) made initial press statements in response to the launch of the public consultation, in which they recognised the need for greater collaboration but were keen to highlight the effective collaborative ventures that were already in place and those that were planned. Both FRAs also pointed out that they were already well governed, well managed, and delivered an excellent service to their communities within budgetary constraints. The FRAs also questioned the IBC on its assertion that £4m of savings could be made without losing jobs or reducing the quality that both FRAs rely on to deliver their service to the public and staff.

The Chairs of the FRAs have been in discussion with the Leaders of their respective Constituent Authorities (CAs) to determine how the CAs need to be supported in order to develop a considered response to the PCC's consultation. NB: the statutory consultees are the CAs, the public, the staff and their representative bodies (RBs).

The decision of the CAs was that this role would be delegated to the scrutiny function of each council and to support this the Leaders of the four CAs requested the two FRAs prepare a report. To that end the two FRAs agreed to jointly commission an independent analysis of the PCC's IBC in order to scrutinise its feasibility and practical deliverability. Furthermore, it was felt important that the analysis should also appraise the IBC against alternative options; such as a revised FRA structure that would allow for PCC representation, create efficiencies within the governance arrangements and exploit the sharing of resources.

As well as a detailed review of the IBC produced by Beckford Consulting, the supporting material from the two FRS's was examined and a series of one to one interviews were conducted with the Chairs of the two FRA's, their respective Chief Fire Officers and heads of finance. In order to better understand the PCC's intended approach the authors also met with the West Mercia Police and Crime Chief Executive as the Police and Crime Commissioner was not available.

As such this report provides a financial and organisational analysis of the IBC, verification of details therein and an exploration of a number of potential options in response to the consultation for consideration by the two FRA's and their constituent authorities.

## **2. Overview and Assessment of Governance Options**

The IBC approaches the governance options somewhat differently from the guidance provided by the Association of Policing and Crime Chief Executives (APACE) in that it does not consider the Representation model and focuses only on the Governance and Single Employer options. We presume this is because the PCC currently sits on both FRA's as a participating but non-voting member and this could be described as a variant of the representation model.

The lack of examination of the representation model may be a missed opportunity as a number of authorities are exploring the representation approach and developing innovative solutions to build strong working alliances without organisational disruption. We would suggest this might be an avenue for further exploration and provide more detail later in the report.

The IBC concludes that the current trajectory of collaboration and potential savings achieved under this arrangement would be accelerated by the adoption of a governance model. It cites that the removal of barriers around strategic decision-making as the main reason for this improvement. We offer evidence below that suggests that delays in collaborative activities may not be the result of existing governance structures but rather other organisational factors.

It is worth noting that the IBC limits suggestions that significant improvements in operational service delivery would be achieved through a change of governance. This we believe is wise. Both police and fire are category 1 responders under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and have statutory obligations to cooperate in identifying, planning and responding to emergencies. Both FRSs are active participants in the Local Resilience Forum and work well with police and other category 1 responders. As such collaboration is both legally required and actively pursued within West Mercia. Additionally the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) has ensured closer collaboration between services through nationally prescribed training and protocols for incident management. The use of "Resilience Direct" a shared database of operational information for first responders in West Mercia demonstrates the progress made in developing a stronger collaborative ethos. Hence it is unlikely that any change in governance arrangements would affect the current level of operational coordination and delivery at incidents.



In recommending the governance model as the preferred option the IBC posits that it represents many of the advantages of a joint employer model without the challenges of resistance from the representative bodies or the complexity and risk of organisational integration. In theory this looks attractive but the reality may be more challenging.

Much is made of the advantages of keeping three separate organisations managed by a “command alliance” (Later referred to as “joint command” in 5.4.5). What this actually means in terms of day-to-day leadership is not clear. There is no explanation as to whether the Chief Officers would act collectively across the three entities or whether there would be defined areas of jurisdiction. No mention is made of the process of corporate decision-making and whether this would incorporate veto arrangements. Whilst these are detailed points they are fundamental in understanding how the approach would operate.

With a shared back office, a concerted effort to introduce lean systems and combined governance the sense that individual organisations with separate brands could be maintained indefinitely seems unlikely. What is being proposed is a fairly complex organisational form in which responsibilities and decision-making would need to be carefully defined if it is to work efficiently and transparently.

Paragraphs 5.4.9 and 6.7.5 suggest that further transformation from the proposed model is likely to occur in the near term. Indeed it is makes clear that a review of the senior command teams would be expected after April 2019 “to begin to release any redundant posts and deliver the transformation plan”.

Hence what might appear as an initial model seeking to maintain three distinct organisations with separate leadership teams moves to something quite different with the individual Police and Fire and Rescue Service identities becoming increasingly less distinct. How well this is appreciated in the consultation process is unclear.

A key leg of the IBC argument is the purported improvement in accountability provided by PCC governance. It is worth noting that this relies on the belief that accountability is principally about the visibility of the decision making by a directly elected politician. However democratic accountability also encompasses issues of independent scrutiny and public accessibility. Currently both FRA’s are comprised of elected members appointed to the Authority rather than directly elected as the PCC. However the scrutiny arrangements operated by PCC’s is more limited than the infrastructure in place for each FRA, both of which have dedicated scrutiny bodies. In contrast to Police and Crime Panels, whose purview and authority is

narrow, FRA's scrutiny/performance committees are charged with greater discretion and influence.

It is also worth noting that FRA's are comprised of local representatives who offer the public a route by which to raise issues and concerns. In contrast, the WMPCC would be expected to deal with not only fire issues across two large counties but also the challenges of governing West Mercia Police whilst remaining open to local public concerns. The suggestion that this would cause "...a little extra work..." for the PCC seems highly optimistic.

That said the issue of community accessibility is clearly recognised in the IBC as it raises the concept of an advisory panel to the PCC. It is not clear how these unelected advisors would be appointed nor the formal authority they would hold. Neither is it clear whether these would be paid positions which would have financial implications and raise questions around independence. Whatever the case the argument that PCC's bring greater accountability through this model is open to challenge.

### **3. Five Case Analysis**

The IBC adopts the Treasury's "five case" model in line with APACE guidance. For ease of cross-reference we have adopted the same structure (including a sixth section around implementation).

#### **i. Strategic**

This section lists three key strategic opportunities that are presented by the adoption of the governance model.

##### **Acceleration of collaborative working in front line services**

It is clear from the outset of the IBC that there is a somewhat narrow view of the work of FRS. The emergency response role and the focus on "community safety" are interpreted to align closely with the police role. At a high level, this may seem to be the case but more careful organisational examination reveals police and fire roles are considerably different. It is not without some significance that in no other Western country are police and fire jointly managed in this way. Much more prevalent is the combination of fire and emergency medical services. Police, quite rightly, focus on crime and law enforcement and so the overlap with fire service operations is limited. And whilst the Police including West Mercia have crime prevention as a significant function it remains a subsidiary activity. The fire service on the other hand is legally required not just to respond but prevent incidents as part of its integrated risk management plan (IRMP) and its natural partners in reducing vulnerabilities to fire are those that share similar risk drivers. These tend

to be local government, health and social care agencies rather than just police. An example of this is the current chairmanship the HWFRS CFO holds as part of the “Connecting Families” initiative. This multiagency approach seeks to work with complex families to address their social, health and welfare issues in a coordinated way. This does involve police but is also heavily influenced by the education, health and welfare priorities of the families.

Therefore, by moving under the governance of the PCC there may be a risk that “community safety” becomes more defined in terms of crime than fire related vulnerability. This may not be deliberate but given that fire, is less politically contentious, the focus is likely to be on the more vexed issues of crime related risk. Clearly this is conjecture but it is telling that nowhere in the IBC is it recognised that health and care agencies are key partners to HWFRS and SFRS which is an unfortunate omission.

The success of both fire and rescue services is typified by the declining rates of fires (in both services all fires have reduced by more than 40% in the last decade) much of which has been achieved by working with those that share the drivers of community risk. Understandably the public and political attention given to law and order may mean that a PCC focussed on three organisations rather than one will prioritise attention and resources to prevention in areas of crime and policing. It is worthy of note that within both FRS’s preventative activity is one of three strategic areas of work. In West Mercia police structure “Protecting Vulnerable People” is one of seven units within the protective services division, which is itself one of 5 divisions. Hence the relative organisational visibility of preventative activity is quite different. Therefore, it is recognised that in any ongoing collaboration there would be merit in the WMP exploiting the fire services expertise in reducing demand.

Our examination of both FRS’s on-going projects shows an extensive range of collaborative initiatives. The breadth and volume of these projects is impressive not just with police but also with other key public bodies. Work with local authorities and social care agencies in relation to the Safe and Well programme is making an increasing contribution to the wider health and wellbeing agenda. This is particularly noticeably in SFRS where the unitary authorities represent the key partners for the service’s preventative work. In Hereford and Worcester, the sharing of assets with West Mercia police is occurring at Bromsgrove, Hindlip, Hereford, with plans for co-locations at Wyre Forest, Peterchurch, Tenbury, Bromyard, and Worcester. These premises are being used by a variety of frontline and specialist staff all of which builds operational synergies between the organisations. A similar situation is found in Shropshire where the sites of Newport, Whitchurch, Bridgnorth and Telford have or plan to have shared occupation. The suggestion that this work would be accelerated and deepened by a transition to the PCC maybe

underestimating the work already in train and overestimating the capacity of all partners to take on more projects. Notably all this work has been achieved through the current separate but cooperative governing bodies. Indeed, both FRS's and the Police have a strategic commitment to actively pursue partnerships to achieve their mission.

In our research we found evidence to suggest that the pace of progress is less influenced by the commitment of the parties but by the sheer volume of projects currently being undertaken within West Mercia Police. The strategic alliance with Warwickshire police has a number of very significant projects including a major overhaul of information systems which consume considerable resources and attention. Add to this the projects to share the Police HQ at Hindlip with HWFRS, the establishment of a shared operational command centre and various site sharing opportunities means the police's ability to meet the fire partners' ambition is already stretched.

For the two fire services, what may represent a more fruitful and immediate approach to saving costs and driving performance is to increase fire-fire collaboration; something which has not progressed to the same degree as the fire services have been focusing on seeking and achieving substantial efficiencies internally. Here we consider there are opportunities to bring together training resources, fleet management, ICT support, mobilising control capacity and specialist resource deployment across the two FRS's. Experience shows that intra industry collaboration is often a more straightforward and speedy means of gaining efficiencies, capacity and resilience than tackling the added complexities of the divergent needs and protocols found across sectors. Here the recent establishment by both FRSs of dedicated posts to identify and exploit joint opportunities is an important step to progressing shared projects across the two FRS's.

### **Enabling Services**

Under the current governance arrangements, the different organisations have progressed a range of shared service initiatives. These have been with a variety of public partners depending on the financial and operational benefits that are available. By way of example SFRS receive some enabling services from Shropshire Unitary Authority – this organisation arguably has greater scale economies than WMP. It will therefore be important to do a clear like for like comparison between existing service costs and future service charges from any new shared arrangement.

We are not aware of any specific shared opportunities that the current governance has blocked. Moreover, as noted above, we are aware that consideration of

sharing some operational assets has been protracted due to decision making by PCCWM.

Reference is made to procurement economies, but there is no reference to where these are anticipated to be made. The majority of the external spend for a FRS is typically in operational assets and a number of national frameworks already exist which increase buying power of such equipment. Recent developments within the fire sector has seen all FRSs commit to national procurement frameworks for Training, Clothing, Vehicles, ICT, Professional Service and Equipment. The intention being that services benefit from national economies of scale rather than creating local procurement arrangements. As such whilst there are likely to be some common procurement categories between fire and police, the higher value categories will see greater synergies with other fire partners.

### **ICT exploitation**

Considerable reference is made in the IBC to the crucial role of ICT provision and how sharing information holds the key to increasing effectiveness and generating financial efficiencies. What is not specified is exactly how these would materialise across the three organisations only that they would emerge. We have no doubt there is an important contribution to be made by collaborative ICT investment and assimilation but as to the extent of the savings and operational improvements no judgement can be made because of the scant information. As to the suggestion in 6.2.6 that the seamless sharing of data across organisation boundaries” ...on its own is sufficient to necessitate new governance arrangements” seems overstated given the lack of detailed benefits analysis.

Whilst the benefit of data sharing between police and fire is well made and is already established with HWFRS, this should not be seen in isolation. As explained above key partners for fire are health and social care agencies and often it is their data which is most valuable in fire risk analysis. Noticeably for both Hereford and Worcester and Shropshire FRS NHS data forms an important component of their risk intelligence.

### **ii. Economic**

The economic case for transferring governance to the PCCWM is a central theme of the IBC. Given £250m of public money is involved we would have expected some significantly more robust analysis to be presented to inform appropriate decision making. The financial information offered to justify the benefits is very high-level and doesn't readily reconcile with existing budgets. As such we have not been able to recreate headline numbers to accurately validate them – where we have tried they appear overstated. For example, the governance costs appear to be overstated by over £300k (the two FRA budgets total £272k vs “combined

direct governance costs...amount to around £577k) – we could assume that Chief Officers have been included in this figure but they are operational and also included elsewhere risking double counting (see below). The headline figures are further complicated by referencing additional organisations in some areas and overstating the current costs.

As with all public services there is a cost of democracy and it is noted that the cost of the two FRAs is less than 20% of the cost of the PCCWM and his office – the current year budget for which is over £1.4m (excluding grants). We would anticipate that there are opportunities to streamline these structures, but given the different service remits we would anticipate that greater benefits would be available from FRA to FRA collaborations.

Beyond governance the IBC suggests significant savings through consolidation of enabling services – a figure of £4m is quoted. The figures suggest that creating the combined entity would see the removal of all enabling service headcount of the FRs (in excess of 100 posts) and further reductions in the shared police team. This appears extremely challenging and impossible to achieve in short to medium term without incurring substantial transition costs

Little evidence is again provided and on face value these figures appear optimistic. Whilst caveated in relation to committed cost reductions no allowance appears to have been made for this. It would be helpful to have a clear summary of the savings/benefits and where they will be derived. From the information provided in the IBC and FRS budget information we would be concerned that the term “enabling” has been misinterpreted. It would appear that “enabling services” include Chief Officers, frontline command support, training officers, control staff and other senior staff who provide operational cover. As an example, in Shropshire half of the enabling services staff are operational staff (63 posts) – so including these in the 25% reduction would result in a reduction in front line staffing.

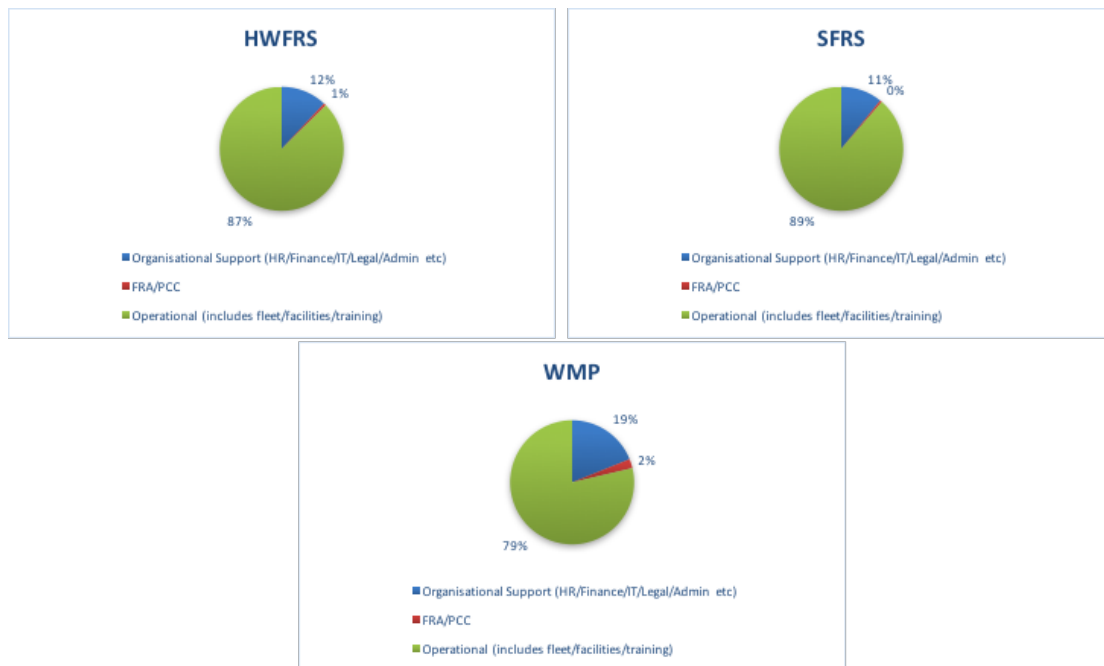


Figure 1 – Budget split by governance, organisational support and operational service delivery (including operational support)

Whilst the assertion that changing governance will deliver efficiency in enabling services is not evidenced, we do believe efficiency in this area can be delivered. When considering the enabling resources in the two FRSs there would appear to be some opportunities to deliver efficiency through fire-to-fire collaboration. We are aware that the two FRSs are already exploring such options in HR and ICT and we would encourage this to be extended across all support functions. The synergies will be much greater in a fire-to-fire scenario and could be delivered at lower cost.

The transition costs of the change are not clearly articulated and it is difficult to establish what they are given the lack of clarity over the model. Whilst the IBC recommends a change in governance, the main financial benefits suggested derive from headcount reductions in enabling services (including Chief Officers in 2019). Given the limited information presented on the end-state and timescales we would expect to see transition costs relating to: Redundancy, pension strain and/or relocation costs; these are likely to run to a seven-figure sum given staff numbers involved. We also anticipate, given the emphasis on the introduction of new systems to reduce costs that a considerable training burden would be created. Our experience elsewhere is that reskilling to use new/multiple software can be time consuming and expensive, no costings have been shown for this.

The reality of fire and emergency incidents means that FRS's, unlike many public services, are risk driven rather than demand led. This means that even in areas of infrequent incidents a level of cover is required to manage any risk that may arise. Delays lead to a greater severity of risk be that a growing fire or escalating Hazmat incident. Hence HWFRS and SFRS both set response target times and deploy their

resources to maximise a rapid response even in relatively low risk areas. The IBC 5.2.7 argues the success of fire and rescue services in reducing calls means maintaining cover is harder to justify. This assumes a demand led approach rather than the reality of FRS operations. Moreover, the success of the two services is a result of using the capacity within their current resources to sustain prevention activities and so drive down risk. Were these resources to be removed or reduced significantly then experience shows that frequency of incidents begins to climb.

### iii. Commercial

The IBC does not make any clear commercial case and relies strongly on efficiency opportunities – although they appear to be police efficiency rather than fire. Given both FRSs are continually striving for efficiency we would suggest Fire-to-Fire collaboration looks likely to be able to deliver greater returns. Based on the limited financial analysis we have been able to review it would appear that the commercial case is for percentage budget reductions as opposed to a change in governance.

We are unclear how the change can be argued to sustain local input when the current model of governance has 42 elected member representatives from across the region holding the Chief Fire Officers to account. The adoption of advisory support to the PCC is not explained either in financial or democratic terms.

### iv. Finance

The existing transformation plans that SFRS and HWFRS have in place are noted. Both organisations have a track record of delivering savings and have plans through to 2020. As a detailed implementation plan has not been provided within the IBC it has not been possible for these to be overlaid to understand the additionality and/or lost opportunities.

One area that is omitted from the IBC is consideration of tax receipts and precepting. Although in the proposed single governance model the two FRSs are to remain separate services it is assumed that their investment priorities will be aligned and this is likely to require a normalisation of revenue. Given that priorities have not been set it is not possible for us to comment on how this will fall, however normalisation could potentially increase the council tax precept for residents of Herefordshire and Worcestershire by 10%.

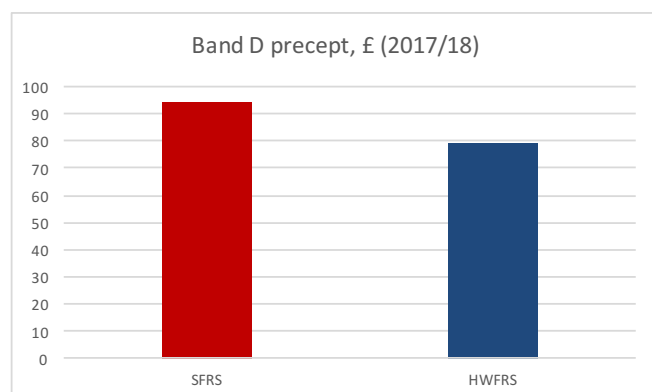


Figure 2 – Comparison of Band D fire precept for 2017/18



## v. Management

The IBC rightly points out that to deliver the joint governance model of a WMPC amounts to a major transformation project. The suggestion that to reduce strategic capacity early in the project would be unwise given the volume of work involved and the need for clear and visible leadership we believe is undeniable. The suggestion that the three chiefs need to demonstrate “a unity of energy and direction” is also well made. Given the issue of the capacity and attention being consumed by the WM/Warwickshire strategic alliance there is a danger that an additional transformational project may outstrip the project resources available. Whilst this may be mitigated by additional project and programme support the clear risk lies in the limited additional strategic capacity to achieve the programme whilst continuing to deliver vital public services.

From what we can see it appears that the case is heavily underpinned by transformation of existing structures within PCCWM and WMP releasing capacity to support the FRSs. If significant scope for transformation exists currently then why these opportunities have not already progressed is unclear. As an example enabling services at WMP appear to cost 19p in the pound, whereas for the two FRSs this figure is around 11p. The cost of corporate services at WMP appear significantly higher than both the FRSs even when normalised to account for different organisational scale (see below chart normalised by headcount which is typically a key cost driver for enabling services). If we just focus on the costs of governance the IBC makes several references to reducing cost by suggesting that redesign of the PCCWM support structures can deliver £110k at the same time as increasing their functions. We would be interested to understand what has prevented the PCCWM progressing these efficiencies before now.

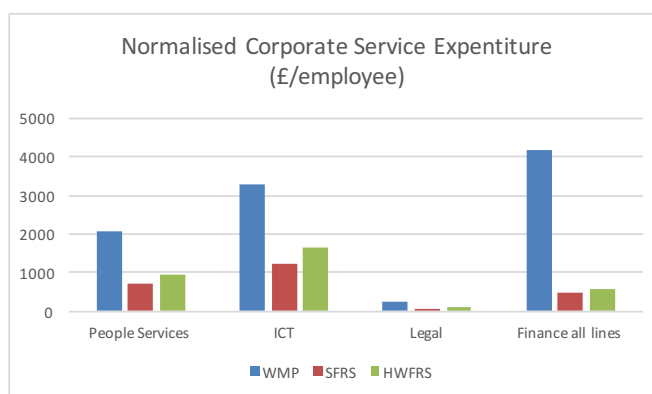


Figure 3 – Comparison of main components of corporate service expenditure for WMP, SFRS and HWFRS

## vi. Implementation

In the governance section of the IBC it is suggested that one of the drawbacks of pursuing the single employer model is the likelihood of resistance from representative bodies. Recent formal resolutions from the Fire Brigades Union make it clear that the union will resist any change in the governance of Fire and Rescue Services. Therefore, the suggestion of avoiding employee relations issues through

a governance rather than a joint employer model seems unlikely. Additionally, the stated future ambition to review Chief Officers in 2019 leaves the door very clearly open to a merger of the forces and further potential industrial relations issues. This would have significant repercussions for any transition timetable.

We would expect a more robust assessment of the options as part of any subsequent stage. It is our understanding that a Full Business Case will be completed in four (4) weeks after the consultation closes in order to submit it to the Home Office in October. This seems an impossible timescale to complete the required engagement with professionals to develop the options and undertake a comprehensive assessment of the risks.

#### **4. Opportunities and Options Going Forward**

As the IBC makes clear the proposals for change infer no criticism of the current governance arrangements or performance of the organisations. Indeed the report catalogues a whole range of collaborative initiatives established between the two FRSs and West Mercia Police. The contention that this collaboration would be accelerated and deepened by the new governance arrangements is questioned in our analysis. We consider that the transition costs and the impact on local accountability would be more significant than stated. Moreover the savings anticipated through a reduction in governance costs and back office rationalisation risk being overstated and are likely to be diminished by the increased costs of the OPCC and the considerable resource required to effect transition.

As such the four CAs and the FRAs should consider requesting a copy of the financial analysis that underpins the £4.25m saving that the IBC identifies. This will ensure that they are able to make an objective assessment of the benefits and disbenefits of change for those they represent.

Notwithstanding this the aims of the IBC to rationalise enabling services and achieve better use of front line assets through collaboration have real merit. There is no doubt that these represent an important means of ensuring future financial stability and service improvement. However we suggest that in moving forward the police should be one of a number of significant partners for the two fire and rescue services.

There is increasing evidence that FRS's and their constituent authorities are developing new models of collaboration and partnership to meet financial and service challenges. Strategic alliances not unlike that established between West Mercia and Warwickshire police have begun to emerge in the fire sector. These

exploit the synergies between FRS's and capitalise on their shared mission and delivery models. Furthermore, a single fire voice in a region would be more credible and influential amongst other public-sector partners. We consider this is a model to be explored across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Authorities.

Reducing the size of each FRA (currently across the two authorities there are 42 elected members) and creating a combined alliance board to drive greater collaboration between the two services is likely to realise financial benefits quickly and rationalise governance costs. There are gains in terms of economies of scale whilst ensuring continued local accountability, visibility and scrutiny. Creating a shared integrated risk management plan across West Mercia develops a more strategic view of risk in the area and creates greater resilience because of a larger resource base to meet local demand. Such an arrangement also creates a fire entity coterminous with West Mercia Police and more aligned with other regional bodies such as the ambulance trust and Environment Agency.

As we document there are also a variety of areas where the two services could gain efficiencies by working more closely. The recent appointment by both services of collaboration officers needs to be capitalised upon and potentially taken further by considering a number of shared posts.

We would suggest that appropriate representation from the PCCWM and WMP are invited to join any alliance board established by the two FRAs. This will help to maintain the momentum of the current collaborative work across the two fire and rescue services and WM police. As the IBC makes clear any transformational change requires determined political and professional leadership. Whilst this option is more straightforward than the Joint Governance model proposed it still requires sustained commitment from elected members and heads of service. Substantial change will reap rewards but only through hard work and political will. We consider that an initial three-year plan needs to be formulated and agreed by the board with the aim of achieving clear collaboration targets by 2020.

## **5. Conclusions**

As both the IBC and APACE guidance makes clear a transfer in governance of a Fire and Rescue Service is a significant and far reaching decision. The nature of emergency service work also means that maintaining the delivery of service during any transition and sustaining it thereafter is a matter of huge importance. In light of this the use of an initial business case, which by its very nature is limited in detail, in a public consultation is surprising. Our examination of the report has highlighted the need for greater clarity particularly around the financial

assumptions being made. Given the financial and economic case is a significant leg of the argument for change we consider the accounting assumptions as a minimum need to be disclosed. It is our understanding that a Full Business Case will be completed in four (4) weeks after the consultation closes which seems an unrealistic timeframe to consider the outcomes of the consultation and re-engage where necessary in order produce a robust and accurate appraisal of the options, benefits and importantly risks.

As we make clear we have been unable to reconcile the declared savings with the options proposed without significant headcount reductions. Moreover any transition of this scale has transition costs none of which have been stated in this business case. As such it has not been possible to ascertain the net savings or analyse the viability of the investment needed for change. Without proper analysis we consider there is an unquantified risk in such a change. In making alternative proposals we have examined the opportunities for financial savings whilst capitalising on the limited risk associated with closer fire-fire collaboration. Experience shows that where political and professional resources are focussed on a common goal considerable progress can be made in exploiting opportunities without compromising democratic accountability.

## Glossary

APACE – Association of Policing and Crime Chief Executives

CA – Constituent Authority

FRA – Fire and Rescue Authority

FRS – Fire and Rescue Service

HWFRS – Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

IBC – Initial Business Case

PCCWM – West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

RB – Representative bodies

SFRS – Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

WMP – West Mercia Police