

## Appendix to Item 8(a)

### Part I

#### Item: 18

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Executive Member: Roger Trigg

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 27 JULY 2017  
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (HOUSING AND COMMUNITY)

### CONSULTATION ON THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL TO COLLABORATE OFFICIALLY WITH HERTS FIRE & RESCUE

#### **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Hertfordshire is proposing to bring the governance of police and fire services within the same organisation.
- 1.2 A public consultation has been launched on this proposal and the consultation is running for eight weeks from the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017 until the 14th August 2017. The Council is not a statutory consultee – however the Council may respond if it chooses to do so.
- 1.3 A new law – the Policing and Crime Act of 2017 – has made this proposal possible. It has also made it a legal requirement for all of the emergency services – police, fire and ambulance to find ways of working more closely together.
- 1.4 Under this proposal, there would be a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner setting the strategy for both services and holding both chief officers to account, as happens with the police at the moment.

#### **2 Financial Implication(s)**

- 2.1 There are no direct, immediate financial implications on the Council.

#### **3 Legal Implications**

- 3.1 There are no direct, immediate legal implications on the Council. There is no statutory requirement for the Council to respond to this consultation.

#### **4 Recommendation(s)**

- 4.1 That SOSOC considers this proposal and makes a recommendation to Cabinet on whether the Council should respond to the consultation and if so, how the Council should respond.

#### **5 Explanation**

- 5.1 Currently, Hertfordshire County Council runs the fire service as well as Adult Care Services, Children's Services, Roads, Waste, Libraries, Schools and Transport. The money spent on fire accounts for around 4% of the County Council's budget. The decisions relating to fire are made by a panel of

Councillors called the Cabinet. They consider all aspects of the County Council's business, of which fire is part of that wider mix.

- 5.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire would like to bring the governance of police and fire services under the same roof.
- 5.3 The Commissioner has published an independent report which recommends this change.
- 5.4 The report says doing this could improve public safety and allow more opportunities for better joint working. This could include:
  - 5.4.1 Improved public safety through collaborative training and joint operational activity, enabling better coordination and the streamlining of decision-making across the emergency services. This will improve response to road traffic accidents and other major interagency incidents.
  - 5.4.2 A better use of resources, such as a co-located control room and innovation through shared police and fire estates.
  - 5.4.3 Flexibility to determine the most financially beneficial option for back office services and corporate support, for example, vehicle maintenance.
  - 5.4.4 Greater protection of the fire budget, meaning the taxes raised for fire are spent on fire, rather than being diverted to other services.
  - 5.4.5 Collaborative procurement between services, enabling savings by maximising the collective buying power where operational requirements allow.
  - 5.4.6 Increased accountability from the public, with a directly elected person accountable for their actions.
  - 5.4.7 A unique identity for both services. This is not a merger and both services would remain independent, with a Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer in charge of their own operational matters.
- 5.5 As part of the business case, a number of options were presented to the Commissioner. They were:
  - 5.5.1 To do nothing.
  - 5.5.2 The Representation Model, where the Commissioner would sit on the Hertfordshire County Council committee in charge of the fire service.
  - 5.5.3 The Governance Model, where the Commissioner would govern both services, but there would be a Chief Officer for each service.
  - 5.5.4 The Single Employer Model, where the Commissioner takes governance of both services, and appoints a single Chief Officer to be in charge of both the Police and Fire services.
- 5.6 Options 1 and 2 did not deliver the benefits in terms of efficiency and improved public safety which the Governance Model does.

- 5.7 Option 3 is the option which the business case suggests as the most beneficial to the public and to the emergency services.
- 5.8 Option 4, the Single Employer model, may have long-term benefits but it dilutes the independence of the fire 'brand' and would be difficult to implement.
- 5.9 The detailed financial arrangements will be subject to future agreement but the public will not pay any more as a result of the governance change.
- 5.10 The public consultation will run for eight weeks from the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017 until the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2017. Once responses have been considered, a decision will be made about whether to proceed.
- 5.11 Where SOSC Members wish to recommend to Cabinet that the Council responds to this consultation, the matter would need to be considered by Cabinet in advance of the 14 August 2017 deadline.
- 5.12 The final decision will be submitted to the Home Secretary for approval by the end of the year.

## **6 Policy Implication(s)**

- 6.1 There are no immediate policy implications for the Council with regards to this consultation. However there may be policy implications for the Council in the future, depending upon the outcome of the consultation and the final decision taken by the Home Secretary.

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Date 21 July 2017

### APPENDICES:

Appendix A - Fire Governance Consultation  
Appendix B – Open Letter to Residents of Hertfordshire  
Appendix C – Business Case Summary  
Appendix D – Local Business Case  
Appendix E – Press Release

Web Link <http://www.hertscommissioner.org/fire>