

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Joint Report of Acting Chief Executive and Deputy Chief
Executive (Place)

To
Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee
on
12th April 2017

Report prepared by: Robert Harris,
Principal Committee Officer

Consultation – Police and Fire & Rescue Collaboration Local Business Case

Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Councillor Lamb
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

This report presents a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) consultation document on the local business case for greater collaboration between Police and Fire & Rescue Services in Essex.

This report seeks the views/comments from members of the Committee on a proposed Council response which is to support the PCCs preferred option for greater collaboration through the Governance Model.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That based on the views expressed at the Members Briefing held on 28th March 2017 that the Council's response to the PCC consultation document should be to support the option for greater collaboration between the Police and Fire & Rescue Service in Essex through the "Governance Model."

3. Background

- 3.1 The Policing and Crime Act 2017 (the 'Act') received Royal Assent on the 31st January 2017. The Act introduces measures that place a duty on emergency services to collaborate and also enables the PCC to take on the responsibilities for the fire and rescue services in their area.
- 3.2 The Act sets out three governance options. These are:-
- Representation Model – the PCC would join the Essex Fire Authority as a member with full voting rights. This option has been assessed to have

limited benefits in that the PCC will be only one member of 26 members of the Fire Authority.

- Governance Model – The Fire Authority is replaced by the PCC who takes on the role of the Fire Authority. This option has been assessed to have significant benefits and to be deliverable at a local level.
- Single Employer Model – The PCC takes on the role of the Fire Authority and creates a single employer for both police and fire personnel under a single chief officer. Effectively the PCC becomes the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner. This option has been assessed to have significant benefits but would not be easy to deliver as it would require substantial change and carries substantial risks.

3.3 The PCC has launched a 12 week consultation with the public, local authorities, police and fire staff which closes on 10th May 2017. This assesses the three options as set out in paragraph 3.2 and on the basis of this assessment, the Essex PCCs preferred option is the Governance Model, whereby the Police and Crime Commissioner becomes the new Fire Authority. The consultation document sets out the local business case for the Governance Model. Details of the consultation and questionnaire are at **Appendix 1**.

3.4 The Local Business Case for the Governance Model identifies three key drivers for change in Essex:

- Operational benefits which will keep the public safer;
- Improved management for fire and rescue; and
- Financial benefits through more economic and efficient provision of services, with savings reinvested back into front line services and wider community safety and prevention activities.

3.5 On 28th March 2017 the PCC and the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer of the PCC, provided a detailed overview of the Local Business Case to a Members Briefing Session which was attended by 9 Councillors. At the briefing the PCC responded to a number of comments/questions, as follows:

- *Was the ambulance service included in the consultation?* The local business case focuses on police and fire only and did not include the ambulance service;
- *Will fire stations close?* None of Essex's Fire stations will close under these proposals. The PCC is committed to the Essex County Fire & Rescue Service Programme 2020 and has no plans to shut/close any fire stations and will look to make better and smarter use of buildings for both services.
- *Are other PCCs looking at this?* A number of PCCs are looking at the different options but Essex is the first to go out to consultation;
- *Will police officers and fire officers take on each other's duties/roles?* No their roles will remain unique – a fire officer will remain a fire officer and a police officer will remain a police officer;
- *What will happen to the proposed savings?* The aim is to reinvest savings into front line services.

Those Members who attended the briefing were minded to support the Local Business Case for the Governance Model.

3.6 Given the timescale a formal response to the consultation must be submitted by 10th May 2017. It is proposed that the Council's formal response (which is an Executive matter) is signed off under the SO46 procedure but support is sought from the Scrutiny Committee to the suggested response set out above.

3.7 This is a public consultation and therefore members can respond in their own right if they wish to do so.

4. Other Options

Not to respond to the consultation or to support one of the other governance options.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

To respond to this consultation within the required timescale.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

The proposed approach contributes to the Council's vision and corporate priorities for safer communities.

6.2 Financial Implications

One of the objectives of the proposed approach is to save money (see paragraph 3.4).

6.3 Legal Implications

See sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the report.

6.4 People Implications

None.

6.5 Property Implications

None.

6.6 Consultation

As described in the report.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

The Local Business Case states that the proposed governance changes will not affect any particular group or sector of the community differentially and will be tested through the public consultation.

6.8 Risk Assessment

None

6.9 Value for Money

See 6.3 above.

6.10 Community Safety Implications

The Local Business Case deals with these issues.

6.11 Environmental Impact

N/A

7. Background Papers

Local Business Case for Joint Governance of Police and Fire & Rescue Service in Essex which is available from www.essex.pcc.police.uk/LocalCaseForChange.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Details of the Consultation and the Questionnaire