



## PAPER B

Purpose: For Decision

# Committee report

Committee	<b>CABINET</b>
Date	<b>24 JANUARY 2019</b>
Title	<b>PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) TO INCLUDE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS OF HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON</b>
Report of	<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION</b>

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This paper considers the outcomes of the formal public consultation exercise on the proposed creation of a new fire authority for Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton and Hampshire. The consultation followed the acceptance of the business case to support the creation of the CFA produced jointly by the Isle of Wight Council and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.
2. There were very low levels of public engagement with the consultation exercise over its twelve-week period; consequently there is no statistically significant view for or against the proposed CFA.
3. The paper recommends that the Isle of Wight Council and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority should jointly approach the Secretary of State and seek their permission to introduce a CFA across the areas of Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton and Hampshire.

### BACKGROUND

4. On 14 June 2018, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) and the Isle of Wight Council (IWC), were both presented with a business case for the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority (CFA) that would serve the Local Authority areas of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. The business case and its content was agreed by both Authorities as part of decisions to proceed with public consultation. These are provided as appendices to this paper. Each authority further agreed to commission the Chief Fire Officer to undertake a formal 12-week public consultation exercise.

5. A 12-week public consultation exercise on the proposals has been undertaken utilising the Hampshire County Council (HCC) Insights Team, who act as an independent third-party organisation, providing relevant experience and expertise to support the process.
6. The consultation content has been independently assessed and awarded a certificate of Good Practice by the Consultation Institute. The Consultation Institute acts as a well-established not for profit best-practice institution, promoting high quality public and stakeholder consultation in all sectors.
7. The public consultation ran simultaneously on the Isle of Wight and in Hampshire (covering the county and two city areas) between the 6 August and 26 October 2018. Various mechanisms to gather views were delivered. These included; public focus groups in Ryde, Portsmouth, Southampton, Newport and Basingstoke, three locality-based meetings for Town and Parish Councils on the Isle of Wight and information packs were issued in Libraries and Council buildings. There was an online survey provided which was publicly accessible for people to provide their responses and views. The consultation was supported by active engagement with the media, local press advertisements and online campaigns utilising social media.
8. From an approximate population of 1,978,789, a total of 311 responses were received, 300 of which were from individuals. This provides a return of 0.015% of the population, evidencing a relatively low-level of interest or concern from the public. A majority (53%) of those that responded were in favour of the proposal with most support from across Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton along with key stakeholders from the Emergency Services Sector. Most of the responding staff from within HFRS and IWFRS (46 responses in total) also offered their approval (73% in support).
9. 41% of respondents were not in favour of the proposals. Three quarters of Isle of Wight responses (57 responses in total, 43 against) were against a Combined Fire Authority, the main reasons for this were highlighted as a perceived loss of local representation, accountability and a focus on the Island's needs.
10. As detailed within the Benefits and Risks section below, concerns raised by the respondents focused on three main areas:
  - the perceived loss of control,
  - adverse effects on frontline services and
  - the potential for a loss of local knowledge.
11. Early engagement to explore the processes required should it be agreed that a formal application be submitted to the Secretary of State has been established with the Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, was directly informed of the proposal and ongoing consultation with the public in a joint letter from HFRA and IWC. This collaborative approach by the Authorities has been welcomed by officials and if a decision is made to proceed with the CFA proposal will continue.

12. The previously agreed business case explored the risks and benefits of creating a new CFA by considering operational, corporate and financial factors. In deciding whether there should be a single fire and rescue authority The Secretary of State will make a scheme only if he considers it is in the interests of:
  - (a) efficiency, effectiveness and economy, or
  - (b) public safety.
13. In general, issues of operational efficiency, effectiveness and public safety are recognised as being part of the day to day operations of a fire and rescue service and are explained in the Benefits and Risks section below. The financial efficiency and economy aspects were detailed within the business case and below within the Financial Analysis section which considers the potential budgetary impacts to the IWC and HFRA (and therefore its Constituent Authorities) should it be concluded that a new CFA will be created.
14. The approved business case considered that the creation of a new CFA could lead to a more efficient and effective FRS providing improved levels of service to the public across the revised and larger combined geographical area. It was further specified that operational staff would continue to maintain their existing local relationships and maintain their understanding of the local context of the areas in which they work. The links with local communities and the partner agencies that work alongside the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), would be expected to remain an important part of the work of a new CFA.
15. No changes to the current frontline operations of the fire and rescue services were detailed within the business case as a direct consequence of the formation of a new CFA. Any future changes to improve service delivery to communities would be considered through a locally delivered Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). If a decision is made to put a proposal to the Secretary of State, the creation of a new IRMP for the new CFA would be required at a later date, subject to the Secretary of State's decision. As part of the current Delivering Differently in Partnership (DDiP) strategic agreement, the IRMPs of both services fall within the oversight of the Chief Fire Officer and his team. These are both due for review as of April 2020 in any event.
16. A new CFA would be one organisation with a single purpose. CFAs provide a focussed way of leading and delivering a Fire and Rescue Service. It would allow for greater resilience, removal of duplication, enhanced capacity and ensure a focus on continuous improvement and development. It is anticipated that a new CFA would be established through the basis of proportionality of its constituent authorities. Once formed, a CFA is the single public body that holds responsibility for the delivery of its statutory obligations across all of its geographical areas.
17. Recent analysis of the provision of fire and rescue services on the Isle of Wight through the Service Review, identified the continued relevance of the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and the impact of the Service in its achievement.

18. As one of the range of services provided by the Isle of Wight Council it continues to be subject to the same tight budgetary controls as applied across the whole organisation as the council strives to be a 'financially balanced and sustainable' organisation. This may have the effect of limiting the service's future capacity to undertake some of the extended functions that a larger, stand-alone fire and rescue service could provide, because of its additional capacity.
19. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has indicated that he is not currently minded to develop a business case for the transfer of the responsibility for fire and rescue services from the IWC and the HFRA to his office. He has been explicit in his expectation that pursuing a new CFA was in the public interest and that the current approach being taken by both Fire and Rescue Services was something he actively supported. He was also explicit in recognising the very strong arrangements for 'blue light collaboration' across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. If there was a decision not to pursue a new combination, this could be a trigger for the reconsideration of his position.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

20. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) has a focus on delivering the best possible services to our communities and making life safer for everyone. HFRS are committed to developing the Fire and Rescue Service placing efficiency, effectiveness and public safety at the heart of all decisions. With a shared senior leadership team which covers both HFRS and IWFRS, this commitment spans both organisations under the DDiP arrangements.
21. The creation of a new Combined Fire Authority (CFA) for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton supports the HFRA's strategic plan, detailed as its 'Safer and Stronger' priorities, and its vision to create safer communities.
22. Creation of a new CFA would continue to link with and strongly support the One Public Service (OPS) agenda, providing collaboration between essential public services within locality areas, to support and reduce risk within communities of the IW.
23. The OPS programme agenda ultimately leads to commencement of significant transformation of public services, so they are perceived by the user as a single, seamless, high performing OPS team, delivering best value to the Island that achieves greater integration and addresses the systematic challenges facing public services on the island.
24. The OPS programme is supported by the government One Public Estate agenda, which looks to further explore the ability to create Blue Light Hubs that enable fire, police and ambulance services to work more closely together and develop their ability to collaborate more effectively across the emergency services sector, thereby seeking to improve operations from shared accommodation.
25. The creation of the CFA will enhance the very strong arrangements for 'blue light collaboration' across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, as expected from the Policing and Crime Act 2017. This has introduced a high level of duty to

collaborate on all three emergency blue light services to improve efficiency and effectiveness of operations and supports the OPS agenda.

26. The CFA is one aspect that enables the greater collaboration, strategy and delivery against the OPS programme objectives; that will ultimately enable the ability to safeguard and continue to improve the lives of people within our community by providing better coordinated support through maximising the enhanced capacity of blue light services that the CFA will provide.
27. The IWC's Corporate Plan 2017 to 2020 has the following actions in the community safety and public protection portfolio, which directly link to the delivery of the agreed business case for the creation of a new combined fire authority:
  - Develop a business case considering the options for future governance of the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service building on the successful partnership with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.
  - Fully assess the options and opportunities presented by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, liaising with the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), through a memorandum of understanding.
  - Develop options to improve the overall effectiveness of the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, ensuring an effective, resilient and safe service for the Island at all times.
  - Work with strategic partners and key stakeholders to ensure the Island has effective and robust arrangements to ensure the safety of the community at all times.
28. Each Fire and Rescue Service has been subject to an Inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in July 2018. At the time of writing this paper, both services were awaiting the outcomes of the inspections.

#### BENEFITS AND RISKS OF A CFA

29. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) is legally responsible under current arrangements for the operational delivery of fire and rescue service functions covering Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. For the reasons outlined within this report, it is considered a new CFA covering Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton would improve the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of the constituent fire authorities whilst improving public safety for the residents and those who work in or visit these areas.
30. A new CFA would establish different governance arrangements that encompass a wider geographical area. Such an arrangement would provide a unified governance and leadership body, focussing on public safety.
31. There would be a single point for decision making with the ability of all constituent authorities to influence and make collective decisions on strategic

planning matters. A new CFA would see an increased level of capacity and resilience available to all areas of its operational delivery, able to reduce duplication of work and support effective continuous improvement for the benefit of all the communities within the geographical areas of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

32. There would be new options for improved public safety through the joining-up of the activities of the community safety and business fire safety departments across both services, due to the capability gained by bringing two services together.
33. Being able to utilise firefighters, specialist capabilities and professional support staff, to deliver the full range of activities across a new CFA would help reduce the risk of fire and other emergencies.

If a new CFA is created, it would also help drive service improvements across all areas:

- IWFRS would benefit from the extensive support structures currently in place across HFRS.
  - Each Service would benefit from increased shared learning and the use of existing expertise.
  - HFRS would benefit from IWFRS experience in running an effective road safety programme and partnership working within the locality arrangements on the Island.
  - A new CFA would enable the services to gather a single view of information and intelligence across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight areas to assist with risk identification and effective utilisation of resources.
  - Combination would mean that there are collective approaches, systems, processes and procedures, that would build upon all the great work already undertaken to support communities.
  - There would be an increased ability to respond flexibly and quickly to the needs of communities.
  - It introduces a greater ability to collaborate with all three emergency blue-light services (Police, Fire and Ambulance) through the Police and Crime Act 2017 requirements, to improve efficiency and effectiveness of operations, whilst working towards the Blue-light hub aspirations under One Public Estate.
  - There would be opportunities available for staff to progress within a larger organisation and work across wider geographical areas.
34. The employment contracts of all existing employees of the two fire and rescue services who are employed at the date a combination order is made, would transfer to the new Combined Fire Authority. If it is agreed for the Combined Fire Authority proposal to go ahead, a new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) would influence the future shape of the services and resourcing requirements.
  35. Whilst there are several different options for council tax harmonisation, the preferred option as set out in the agreed business case, would require that the Isle of Wight council tax payer would pay an extra £3.74 per annum for a band

D property which would be an increase of 0.24% on the current 2018/19 council tax (as detailed in the Financial Analysis section).

36. As detailed in the consultation response findings, a perceived loss of control and accountability as well as concerns over effects on frontline services exists for those Isle of Wight residents that responded. These concerns could be addressed through further communication to raise public awareness. The proposals for a CFA have democratic representation from all constituent authorities at its heart. The current operational leadership would be maintained.
37. The transition and subsequent implementation of a new CFA would incur one-off costs. These costs which are both expected and inevitable, would be managed within existing financial budgets, to be met by HFRA with contribution from IWC. The impact of such costs should be balanced against the benefits to economy, efficiency and public safety.
38. Significant work is still required to progress a submission and restrictions exist within the time available to do so. The current political climate and subsequent responsibilities for the Home Office, could present the opportunity for progress to be inhibited when making a formal submission for a CFA. To mitigate this, a dedicated, professional team to complete the transition and implementation work, will be created. This will provide the senior leadership team with confidence, enabling appropriate focus to remain on core-business functions across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.
39. It is understood that staff within both HFRS and IWFRS have been subject to significant change in recent years against a backdrop of budgetary constraints. As such, consideration and support will be given to this area to ensure there is effective internal communications and purposeful engagement and consultation with all staff.

## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

40. The Directors of Finance for both Authorities (the statutory section 151 Officers) have been directly involved in the financial evaluation set out in the Business Case, which was approved by both Authorities in the summer of last year.
41. In summary, the evaluation focussed on the following:
  - i) The financial implications of such a transfer of function on the funding and spending positions of the Isle of Wight Council as a whole and the new CFA. This covered revenue and capital spending, funding, assets, liabilities and reserves.
  - ii) The implications to council tax payers, specifically in relation to future levels of council tax paid by residents.
42. The key financial issues that were identified within the business case and included within the public consultation were:

- A potential increase in council tax of £3.74 for residents of the Isle of Wight as a result of the transfer of budgets and associated funding (known as council tax harmonisation).
  - Council tax harmonisation is determined by the Secretary of State, both in terms of the amount and the time in which the equalisation takes place.
  - The IWC had the potential to reduce the cost of its overheads over the medium to long term.
  - The transfer of property and vehicles would relieve the IWC of future maintenance and replacement liabilities and be passed to the new CFA; this amounts to just over £4m of liabilities that would need to be addressed within the first 5 years.
  - Savings in the cost of the new CFA could be made through the better deployment of resources, but it is assumed these would be used to address specific funding issues for the Isle of Wight (e.g. repair and maintenance of buildings).
43. The overall conclusion was that whilst a moderate financial case existed for a new CFA, there was a compelling case on operational grounds. The financial implications are not seen to be a limiting factor and given the other benefits in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and public safety the business case was approved.
44. The business case was based on figures for the 2018/19 budget. If the decision is taken to proceed, the figures will be updated for the final submission to the Government, which will also need to include any alternative options for council tax harmonisation.
45. The final determination for council tax harmonisation is a decision that is made by the Secretary of State, considering all the other financial factors in the submission and the impact on residents.
46. There will inevitably be transition costs associated with setting up a new CFA in respect of IT provision, HR, financial and banking arrangements and re-branding, together with the costs associated with the programme management for transition and implementation. Initial estimates have been worked upon to understand these costs will range from £600,000 to £800,000. This is a high-level estimate and there may be other issues that need to be addressed as we get deeper into the implementation plan if both authorities agree to pursue it. We would then give a more accurate estimate once we had done more detailed work on the implications. In line with the previous decision, it was agreed that HFRA would meet these set up costs and IWC would provide a contribution towards this.
47. Although implementation costs are incurred, they are one off and lead to the significant benefits that can be gained from the creation of a new CFA as set out in this report. The business case approved by both Authorities included the transfer of reserves and balances from the IWC to the new CFA of nearly £700,000 which could be used to offset these costs. A bid for transitional funding will also be made to the Home Office although there is no guarantee that this will be successful.



## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

48. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (s2) provides that a combination order may be made to combine two existing fire and rescue authorities. A combination order may be made only if it appears to the Secretary of State that, in the interests of:
- (a) economy, efficiency and effectiveness, or
  - (b) public safety.

There should be a single fire and rescue authority for the combined area.

49. A new CFA would be established consisting of elected Councillors from Hampshire County Council, the Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council. A new Combination Order would have to be created for the new CFA. This would be drafted by Home Office lawyers in conjunction with HFRA and IWC legal representatives. At the point the order is made all existing employees of the IWFRS and HFRA would transfer into the new CFA.
50. The Policing and Crime Act (the Act) came into effect from 1 April 2017. The Act establishes legislation to enhance the democratic accountability of police forces and fire and rescue services, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the emergency services through collaboration and build public confidence in policing.
51. There are three main provisions within the Policing and Crime Act 2017 which affect Fire and Rescue Services:
- A duty to keep collaboration under review for 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.
52. Part 1 of the Act specifically relates to fire and rescue services and makes several additions to the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The act, as amended, now provides powers to the Secretary of State to transfer the Fire and Rescue governance to a PCC upon the request of the PCC.

## GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

53. A new Combined 'Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority' would be made up of members from the councils of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. The CFA would make decisions on fire and rescue specific matters as required by statute and in line with the combination order that would be issued to enable a new CFA to be formed. The make-up of a new CFA based on a planning assumption of analysis of previous combination orders issued, is likely to be calculated (so far as practicable) based on proportionality.

54. Proportionality requires the number of members from each Constituent Authority being proportionate to the number of electors in that Constituent Authority's area, relative to the number of electors in the other Constituent Authorities' areas.
55. The previous Governance Review completed by the HFRA considered how to improve its efficiency. It identified core principles which have been used to help inform this analysis.
56. If a decision is made agreed to proceed, engagement would take place with the four proposed Constituent Authorities and other relevant stakeholders seeking a view on a preferred proposed governance model for a new CFA. The current consideration would suggest a CFA of 11 Members consisting of eight Members from Hampshire County Council and one Member each from the Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton County Council.
57. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) serves the Hampshire and Isle of Wight areas and is known as the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner. The option exists for Police and Crime Commissioners to make use of new powers within the Policing and Crime Act 2017, to apply to the Government to take over governing responsibility for Fire Services in their area.
58. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 granted powers to Police and Crime Commissioners to take on the responsibilities of Fire and Rescue Services, instead of having a Fire and Rescue Authority or Combined Fire Authorities. If a Police and Crime Commissioner chose to go down this route, and the Government agreed, they can become Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners. This is not an option that either the HFRA or IWC can take. This is an option that only a Police and Crime Commissioner can take in consultation with the public.
59. In a recent letter to both the HFRA and IWC, the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner said that over the coming months he would continue to look for the following things before considering this option:
  - The successful coming together of the fire authorities.
  - The inspection regime within HMICFRS and the confirmation of ongoing excellent performance of our fire services.
  - The bringing together of further significant savings through the existing collaboration arrangements, which have delivered so well in the past.
60. The PCC is currently invited to participate as an invited guest in HFRA meetings and those parts of IWC meetings relevant to the Fire and Rescue Service. Under any new arrangement, it would be a matter for consideration for the new CFA how this arrangement might best continue. There are also existing invitations from both Authorities for the PCC to request a formal place on the Fire and Rescue Authority which would enable him to become a voting member; this would be a matter for a new CFA to consider.

61. Should it be agreed to proceed with a formal submission to the Secretary of State to form a new CFA, good practice would suggest that there would be value in implementing some interim shadow governance arrangements to support the progress of the work needed to prepare for a new CFA.
62. Under these circumstances, a 'Shadow Board' for the new Authority would be created. The constitution of the Board would need to be considered and agreed. It is expected that such a Board would be representative of the four constituent authorities that would be served by a new CFA and therefore mirror the proportionality arrangements considered above. This would, by definition, not have formal status as a decision-making body. However, it would importantly be able to provide guidance, direction and influence on the key decisions being made by both existing Authorities to help smooth the introduction of a new CFA. The Shadow Board would have the oversight of matters relevant to the implementation of the new CFA, not on the existing statutory duties of the two standing Fire and Rescue Authorities.
63. If a decision is made to proceed with the proposal, it is recommended that the Chief Fire Officer be delegated authority to produce the content of a formal submission to the Secretary of State, to create a CFA for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. This would be based on the business case which has already been agreed by Authorities. That submission would then be jointly agreed by the HFRA Chairman and IWC Cabinet member for Community safety and Public Protection before being passed to the Secretary of State for their consideration.

#### HMICFRS INSPECTION

64. Both HFRS and IWFRS have recently been inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services. At the point of submitting this paper, the reports were not publicly available.

#### TERMS OF TRANSFER

65. Should the decision be to proceed with a new Combined Fire Authority, a new statutory instrument will be created to enable the transfer of staff, property and assets from Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service into the new CFA. Legal advice indicates this Public Service staff transfer to a new Combined Fire Authority is likely to be achieved under the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice (COSoP) and therefore, Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment (TUPE) like principles will be followed. Transferring employees will receive TUPE like protection of their Terms and Conditions of Service.
66. HFRA is a founding partner of a Shared Services Partnership along with Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Constabulary. This provides the following functions to HFRA; Human Resources (including Occupational Health, Payroll, and Recruitment etc. It is anticipated that should the decision be to proceed with a new CFA, the services currently provided by the Partnership will transfer to the new CFA under current arrangements.

## ENGAGEMENT WITH STAFF TRADE UNIONS AND REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

67. Given the significance and importance of the proposal, there is an effective Joint Trade Union and Representative Body Forum established, including both local and regional representation, to ensure active and open engagement with those bodies that represent staff in both Services. Should the decision be to proceed with a formal application to the Secretary of State to create a new CFA, we will continue to engage with and meet Representative Bodies and Trade Unions on a regular basis.
68. To date, this approach has proved to be productive and has been welcomed by all parties. We will also ensure full and meaningful discussions are held with staff. If the decision is made to proceed with the proposal, then pending a final decision from the Secretary of State, staff from the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service will continue to be engaged and consulted with.
69. At the current time, we do not expect there to be detrimental impacts on staff as a direct result of the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority. Should future discussions identify impacts on staff, these would be explored and discussed with individuals. There will be the opportunity for staff to discuss the impacts of the proposal. Initial discussions around this are taking place as part of the Joint Trade Union and Representative Body Forum.

## GAP ANALYSIS

70. It is recognised that there are a number of differences between local terms and conditions and contractual policies for employees of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service. The Chief Fire Officer has commissioned an analysis of these differences to understand any implications should it be determined that a new CFA be established. It is envisaged that should the decision be to proceed with a new CFA, terms and conditions will be aligned in consultation with personnel.

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

71. Both Authorities are required to meet statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
72. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for both geographical areas. No significant impacts to any of the protected characteristics were identified. The Equality Impact Assessment can be found as Appendix E.

## PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

73. As part of the previously agreed business case, an extensive building condition survey has been carried out for IWFRS stations to identify their current condition and highlight any maintenance issues. This survey helped to inform the accuracy of the finance section of the business case.
74. If a new CFA is established the IW Council and HFRA would be committed to transferring all fire specific property and assets, used in support of each Fire and Rescue Service to the new CFA, in their current state of repair.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

75. Both HFRS and IWFRS are highly regarded by their communities. The public in both Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have demonstrated a strong sense of ownership, pride and commitment to their Services and the staff who serve, evidenced through the recent consultation exercise. Should it be agreed to proceed with the proposal to form a new CFA, these aspects will need to be fully considered to ensure that the value provided to communities is maintained.
76. Both Fire and Rescue Services have a proud history of serving their communities. In recognising this, and following discussions with the Home Office, it is anticipated that the existing identity, name and badge of each service will be maintained as part of any future combination.
77. HFRA and IWC have previously reviewed and accepted the business case for a new combined fire authority, this was subject to consultation that has now concluded. Both Authorities are now required to make a formal decision, as to whether or not to submit a formal request to the Secretary of State to create a new CFA. The purpose of the public consultation exercise was to inform that decision. The full Public Consultation Report provides analysis completed by Hampshire County Council Insights Team, detailing all responses received during the process.
78. If a new CFA is not created, then HFRA will remain as it is and IWFRS will remain part of the Isle of Wight Council. Both fire and rescue services will therefore continue to exist separately and be governed by two separate bodies. This would precipitate a review of the current Delivering Differently in Partnership arrangements to see if they remain appropriate. A mid-term review is required and due under the current arrangements but is being put on hold pending the decisions of the two authorities about the CFA proposal. The partnership is due to end April 2020.
79. This review would be initiated if it was concluded that the option to create a new Combined Fire Authority was not to be progressed. A review of the partnership may alter the current arrangements. Details of the partnership review would be finalised if it is decided not to create a new CFA. This would be a matter for HFRA and IWC to agree as part of their normal management of services.

## OPTIONS

- 80.
1. To note the outcomes of the consultation exercise that do not suggest significant public concern or objection to the creation of the proposed CFA.
  2. To proceed with the submission of a proposal to the secretary of state for the creation of a new combined fire authority covering the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton area on the basis of the previously published business case and delegate authority to prepare and submit the formal submission, to the Chief Fire Officer and the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Community Safety and Public Protection.
  3. To reject the proposal to create a CFA and formally review the Delivering Differently in Partnership strategic agreement between the two fire authorities.

## EVALUATION

81. The issues raised by the public consultation process focussed on the perceived loss of control, adverse effects on frontline services and the potential for a loss of local knowledge.
82. If a decision is made to proceed then it is proposed that the Cabinet Member responsible for Community Safety and Public Protection, on the IW, will sit as a member of a new CFA. Fire and Rescue services will continue to be delivered, as they are today in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.
83. Local knowledge and the established community links, which are so effective in reducing community risk, will also continue to be provided by local teams and officers. Creation of a new CFA would continue to link with and strongly support the One Public Service agenda, providing collaboration between essential services within locality areas, to support and reduce risk within communities.
84. Another concern raised in the public consultation, is that combining the four constituent authorities to create a new CFA could lead to a reduction in frontline services for the Isle of Wight. This appears to be based on a perception that operations would be directed from the mainland by people who had limited local knowledge and did not understand the specific Island context. When discussed in more depth with the focus group participants (as detailed in the Full Consultation Report), many were surprised to hear that operations were already guided from Hampshire as part of the existing partnership agreement, where response plans, mobilisation, fleet and equipment, health and safety management and training support are already shared.

85. The agreed business case provides insight and critical information, enabling an informed decision to be made on the creation of a new CFA for the effective and efficient delivery of Fire and Rescue Services across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. The report on the public consultation exercise is contained at appendix A and provides an analysis of the responses received from the public, staff and stakeholders.
86. The Business Case also identified that a new CFA has the potential to offer enhanced operational resilience and capacity for the fire and rescue service within the areas it would serve. It would also provide employees the opportunity to fully benefit from shared operational learning and knowledge and would allow for the simplification of organisational processes. It could provide wider career opportunities and development for those who wished to take advantage of the opportunities available to staff within a larger organisation. Professional support areas and Shared Services would provide advice and services across the entire geographical area.
87. The strategic partnership that currently exists between the two services and their respective Authorities has resulted in the establishment of good working relationships, however sustainability and resilience would be assisted by the creation of a new CFA. These proposed arrangements could promote the continued success of the relationships between all four constituent authorities. Subsequent long-term possibilities exist for development, community reassurance and resilience across the whole geographical area.
88. Both existing authorities have their own individual strengths which if combined into a new CFA would allow for the consistent and continued improvement of services, building upon their positive reputation and profile, both locally and nationally. Services to communities across all of the geographical areas would be central to the combination and its continued development.
89. The current strategic partnership between the IWC and HFRA has been operating for three years and is delivering benefits to both authorities. However, such a partnership can have its limitations and can only take progression so far. A new CFA could provide the opportunity for increased organisational resilience, shared capacity and improved organisational learning and knowledge. A larger organisation could provide greater opportunities for staff.
90. Each fire and rescue service strive to make life safer by ensuring safer communities and delivering the best possible services. The creation of a new CFA and the bringing together of these two well performing organisations into a single combined authority would allow for the alignment of prevention and protection strategies and a greater consistency of safety messages to the public.
91. A new CFA with enhanced organisational and operational capacity would allow for improvement to the delivery of services to communities and businesses across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. The agreed business case concluded that the new CFA would enhance efficiency, effectiveness, economy and public safety for the four constituent authority areas.

92. There is no expectation that current operational delivery by firefighters would change with the formation of a new CFA. Strong local knowledge and understanding of the local context would be maintained, both in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The names and badges of both Services would be maintained, reflecting their proud history of service. The stations from which people work on the Island are important assets and these are not expected to alter as part of a new combination, should it be approved.
93. This report recommends that the proposal be submitted as the authority considers it to be in the interests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and public safety of the four constituent authority areas for the reasons set out within this report and detailed within the business case.

#### RECOMMENDATION

94. That Isle of Wight Council:

1. Note the outcomes of the consultation exercise that do not suggest significant public concern or objection to the creation of the proposed CFA
2. Agree to proceed with the submission of a proposal to the Secretary of State for the creation of a new combined fire authority covering the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton area on the basis of the previously published business case and delegate authority to prepare and submit the formal submission, to the Chief Fire Officer and the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Community Safety and Public Protection.

95. APPENDICES ATTACHED

1. [Appendix A:](#) Combined Fire Authority Consultation – Findings Report (Part 1)
2. [Appendix B:](#) Combined Fire Authority Consultation – Findings Report (Part 2)
3. [Appendix C:](#) Previously Agreed Business Case - HFRA
4. [Appendix D:](#) Previously Agreed Business Case – IWC
5. [Appendix E:](#) Equality Impact Assessment

96. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[HFRA Governance Review](#)

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