

CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL	Agenda Item 7
14 MARCH 2018	Public Report

Report of the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner

Contact Officers – Dorothy Gregson

Contact Details – cambs-pcc@cambs.pnn.police.uk 0300 333 3456

FIRE AND RESCUE GOVERNANCE – UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The report is being presented to the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel (the “Panel”) to update it on the process undertaken by the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner (the “Commissioner”) regarding the future governance arrangements for the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (the “Fire Service”).

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 The Panel are also asked to refer to the detailed report entitled ‘Fire and Rescue Governance – Update’ they received at their 15th November 2017 Panel meeting which provided information regarding the background to the legislative process followed by the Commissioner i.e preparation of a Local Business Case, public consultation, and submission of the proposal to the Home Secretary. Therefore, this report just provides an update since November 2017 regarding the Commissioner’s proposal for fire governance. For ease of reference, the link to the November 2017 Panel report is provided in Section 6 below.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 Item 6 – To review and scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the Police and Crime Commissioner in connection with the discharge of the Commissioner’s functions.
- Item 8 – To support the effective exercise of the functions of the Commissioner.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Policing and Crime Act 2017 (as amended) introduced measures that place a statutory obligation on all emergency services to collaborate and enable Commissioners to take on responsibilities for fire and rescue services in their area.
- 4.2 The Secretary of State can only make an Order creating new governance arrangements where it appears to her that a Commissioner’s proposal would be in the interests of either: economy, efficiency and effectiveness, or public safety.

- 4.3 The Home Office are currently analysing feedback from their recent consultation to enable Commissioners to sit and vote on Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities, including Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The Commissioner's proposal to take on the governance of the Fire Service was submitted to the Home Office on 10th October 2017. Where the upper tier authorities do not agree with a proposal, as was the case in Cambridgeshire, the Home Office is required to obtain an independent assessment of the proposal. The Home Secretary will take into account the findings of the independent assessment when making the final decision whether or not to approve the Commissioner's proposal.
- 5.2 At the request of the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy undertook an independent assessment of the Cambridgeshire proposal in early December 2017, providing their assessment to the Home Office by the 20th December 2017.
- 5.3 If the Secretary of State decides that the proposal would be in the interests of either economy, efficiency and effectiveness or public safety, then she can make a legislative Order to take on the governance of the Fire Service (referred to as the 'PCC-style FRA').
- 5.4 To date, the Secretary of State is currently considering the proposal.

6. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/contents>

Policing and Crime Act 2017

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/3/pdfs/ukpga_20170003_en.pdf

Police and Crime Panel's recommendation to Police and Crime Commissioner

<http://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=543&MId=3925&Ver=4>

Police and Crime Commissioner's response to Police and Crime Panel recommendation

<http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/17-09-27-Police-and-Crime-Commissioners-response-to-Police-and-Crime-Panels-recommendation-on-fire-consultation.pdf>

Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Fire Governance proposal submission

<http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/fire-governance-consultation/>

'Fire and Rescue Governance – Update', Agenda Item 6.0, Police and Crime Panel, 15th November 2017

<http://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=543&MId=4045&Ver=4>

'Enabling Police and Crime Commissioner to sit and vote on Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities', Home Office consultation, November 2017

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/enabling-police-and-crime-commissioners-to-sit-and-vote-on-combined-fire-and-rescue-authorities>