

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

GOVERNANCE OF FIRE AND RESCUE IN SURREY

28 June 2018

INTRODUCTION

This paper provides an update on the PCC's project to consider the future governance of the Fire and Rescue service in Surrey. At present, Surrey County Council discharges the role of Fire & Rescue Authority for the county. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 allows this function to move to Police & Crime Commissioners where a local case is made.

BACKGROUND

In April 2017 legislation was passed that allowed Police and Crime Commissioners to take on the governance of Fire and Rescue services in their area, if a local business case could be made. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey (OPCC) commissioned KPMG to carry out an options analysis for Surrey which concluded in November 2017. The options analysis did not reveal a compelling case to pursue a change in governance and the PCC concluded therefore, that he would not take the next step to draw up a business case for change. Part of the reason for this was to allow collaboration between the three fire services (Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex) to develop. The PCC committed to reviewing this decision after six months.

The PCC recently met with colleagues from Surrey County Council to review progress around Fire collaboration. It is clear that the foundations for better collaborative working have been laid and some progress is evident, for example, the restructuring of the Emergency Services Collaboration Board to focus on fire, the proposed appointment of a Joint Fleet Manager and improvements in Occupational Health provision. However, in other areas – such as joint control centres, mobilisation and shared operating procedures – progress has been slower. The PCC recognises that collaboration takes time and that individuals have been working hard to drive change. But overall, in order to provide a firm future for the Fire and Rescue Service in Surrey, the PCC believes more could be done.

If 3 Fire collaboration cannot be progressed under current arrangements, the PCC has not discounted the possibility of developing a business case for a change of governance. However, the next few months are a critical time for Surrey Fire and Rescue, with Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) undertaking their first inspection of the service and Surrey County Council reviewing their savings plans.

The PCC therefore intends to review progress again in the autumn. This allows time for the HMICFRS inspection report, for the new officer leadership structure at Surrey County Council to settle in and for 3 Fire collaboration to develop further.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel notes this report.

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