

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>		
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY FOR HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON</b>		
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	<b>16 OCTOBER 2018</b>		
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLEAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Felicity Ridgway Service Lead: Policy, Partnerships and Strategic Planning</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 023 8083 3310
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<b>felicity.ridgway@southampton.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Director</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Emma Lewis Service Director: Intelligence, Insight and Communications</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 023 8091 7984
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<b>emma.lewis@southampton.gov.uk</b>	

<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	
N/A	
<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>	
<p>The Fire and Rescue Service in Southampton is currently delivered through the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority, which covers the local authority areas of Hampshire County Council, the district authorities of Hampshire, and the Unitary Authorities of Portsmouth and Southampton. Fire Services on the Isle of Wight are delivered through the Isle of Wight Council.</p>	
<p>Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority have launched a consultation on the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.</p>	
<p>The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 allows for the combination of two or more fire and rescue authorities by order of Parliament. The results of the consultation will be considered by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Isle of Wight Council, who will then make a formal decision about whether or not to apply to the Government to create a new Combined Fire Authority.</p>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	
	(i) To consider the Consultation Information Pack included in Appendix 1.
	(ii) To delegate power to the Interim Chief Executive of the Council, following consultation with the Leader of the Council to respond to the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority Consultation on the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

## REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority are consulting on the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. The consultation closes on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2018.
2. Southampton City Council represents the large city within the proposed Combined Authority area. It is important for Cabinet to carefully consider the impacts of the proposed Combined Fire Authority on the city and its residents, and inform the decision being taken by Hampshire Fire Authority through a consultation response.

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. Southampton City Council could decline to respond to the consultation. However, this would mean that the council would not have the opportunity to formally raise any questions or concerns or express the council's views.

## DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

4. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) is the governing body responsible for ensuring that HFRS performs efficiently, effectively and in the best interest of the public and community it serves. HFRA is a Combined Fire Authority governed by councillors from Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council. HFRA has ten members, eight from Hampshire County Council, one from Portsmouth City Council and one from Southampton City Council. The Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service is governed by Isle of Wight Council.
5. The proposal is to for HFRA and Isle of Wight Council to put a case to Government for the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority which would cover the local authority areas of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

### Context - Fire Safety in Southampton

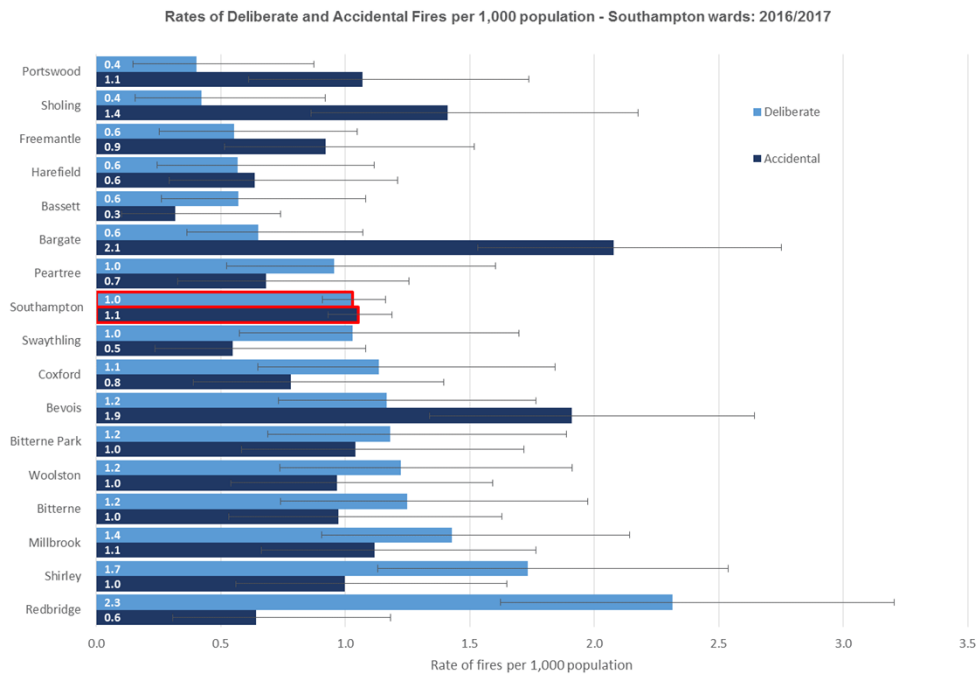
6. One of Southampton City Council's strategic outcomes is to be a city where people live safe, healthy, independent lives. As one of our key partners, the Fire Service plays a key role in achieving this, through emergency response services as well as the significant preventative work undertaken in communities and with vulnerable people.

7. The overall number of fires in Southampton reduced between 2014/15 and 2016/17, but we know that the number of fires can fluctuate between years, influenced by factors such as weather, with the number of fires reducing if there is a wet summer or a cold winter.

Southampton Fires			
Year	Deliberate Fires	Accidental Fires	Total Fires
2014/15	289	295	584
2015/16	249	297	546
2016/17	259	265	524

8. In Southampton, the number of accidental fires have reduced by 11% between 2015/16 and 2016/17, whilst the number of deliberate fires have increased by 4% over the same period. The number of accidental and deliberate fires are both lower than they were in 2014/15.

9. The wards with the highest rate of accidental fires in 2016/17 were Bargate and Bevois; the majority of these occurred in non-residential buildings and outdoors. The highest rate of deliberate fires occurred in Redbridge, with the majority of these occurring outdoors.



Sources: Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

10. A breakdown of accidental fires shows that the majority (40 incidents) occur in areas mainly made up of educated young people who are privately renting, suggesting that students and young city workers are most susceptible to an accidental dwelling fire. The next group most likely to be susceptible to these fires are urban renters of social housing facing an array of challenges (25 incidents) followed by elderly people reliant on support to meet financial or practical needs.

11. Southampton City Council recognises the important role that the Fire and Rescue Service plays in keeping our residents safe in relation to fire safety, as well as the wider work of the service in relation to road traffic accidents, medical co-responding work and home safety checks.

**The proposal**

12. The consultation information pack produced by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority to support the consultation is appended. This states that a new Combined Fire Authority would not affect the responsibilities of the Fire Service to respond to emergencies and service communities:

- “Residents would continue to see their service’s own fire engines and firefighters respond to incidents and carrying out community safety activities across their communities.”
- “Fire officers and support staff would maintain their existing local relationships and continue to have an understanding of the local context of the area in which they work.”
- “Current approved service improvement plans and work would continue.”

13. The information pack outlines the reasons for proposing a Combined Fire Authority:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simpler governance arrangements</li> <li>• Financial efficiency</li> <li>• Greater operational efficiency, effectiveness and public safety</li> <li>• Greater pooling for skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Greater contribution towards national scale incidents.</li> </ul>
	<b>Potential impacts</b>
14.	There are a number of positive opportunities for efficiencies and improvements that could be realised through the creation of a Combined Fire Authority. These include the pooling of resources to deliver improvements, the pooling of skills and knowledge, and a larger more flexible workforce which could flex to respond to demand locally and nationally. The creation of a Combined Authority across the four local authority areas would also support the alignment of safety campaigns and greater consistency of safety messages to the public, and as well as improvements to the delivery of services.
15.	In the consultation information pack, financial efficiencies are also highlighted as a key opportunity. However, the analysis focuses on addressing the financial challenges currently being faced by the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service which requires an investment of £2.4M for updates for fire and rescue vehicles. There is a risk that in combining the authorities, services in Southampton could be affected by the additional financial pressure from the Isle of Wight. In particular this is likely to impact future investment in vehicle and accommodation improvements in Southampton and Hampshire, which could be delayed or deprioritised in order to meet the financial pressures of necessary improvements on the Isle of Wight.
16.	The information pack also states that Southampton residents will not experience financial impacts through changes to the level of council tax, recognising that the Government would ultimately determine the Council Tax harmonisation. There is therefore a risk that Council Tax precepts in Southampton could be impacted by the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Capital/Revenue</u></b>	
17.	None
<b><u>Property/Other</u></b>	
18.	None
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u></b>	
19.	The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 added more functions to fire and rescue services, to ensure their role in supporting emergencies beyond firefighting was recognised in law. Part 1 of this Act allows for the combination of two or more fire and rescue authorities by order of Parliament.
18.	Southampton City Council is only a consultee not the decision maker in this matter. It is represented on HFRA by one Member. The Member for Southampton City Council will have a vote on the decision to put a case to the

	government on the creation of a new Combined Fire and Rescue Authority at a public meeting to be held after the consultation period.
20.	The results of the consultation will be presented to HFRA and Isle of Wight Council for consideration and will inform their decision.
<b><u>Other Legal Implications:</u></b>	
21.	None
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>	
22.	The HFRA proposal confirms that changes to the governance arrangements in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight will not affect the statutory duty of the services to respond to emergencies and that there would be little effect on the day-to-day operations of both services. However, any changes to the governance of the Fire and Rescue Authority would be monitored closely for service impacts via the Safe City Partnership and risk addressed through the council's Risk Management Framework as appropriate.
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS</b>	
23.	The ultimate decision on whether or not a Combined Fire and Rescue Authority is created may have an impact on the delivery of the Safe City Strategy 2017-2020 (Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy (S.5 and 6 Crime and Disorder Act 1998). However, the HFRA proposal confirms that changes to the governance arrangements in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight will not affect the statutory duty of the services to respond to emergencies and that there would be little effect on the day-to-day operations of both services.

<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
<b>Appendices</b>	
1.	Consultation on the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton: Information Pack.

#### **Documents In Members' Rooms**

1.	N/A
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	
<b>Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.</b>	<b>Not by SCC</b>
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	
<b>Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Other Background Documents</b>	
<b>Other Background documents available for inspection at:</b>	
<b>Title of Background Paper(s)</b>	<b>Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules /</b>

		<b>Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)</b>
1.	HFRA Consultation Pack	
2.		