

# **SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD – COMMUNITIES AND PLACE**

**Meeting date: 30<sup>th</sup> November**

**From: Chief Fire Officer**

## **Future of Fire Service Governance**

### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 At the most recent meeting, Scrutiny received an update from the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) on the progress in moving governance responsibility from Cumbria County Council to the Police and Crime Commissioner. This report provides a further update.

### **2.0 Issues for Scrutiny**

2.1 Scrutiny are asked to consider the current position and seek clarity from the Chief Fire Officer on any issues of interest.

2.2 Scrutiny are asked to consider the future direction of travel and raise any issues that they think the Chief Fire Officer should consider.

### **3.0 Background**

3.1 Following consultation on Local Government Reform (LGR) within Cumbria, the decision of the Secretary of State was to establish two new unitary authorities in Cumbria, replacing the existing County and District Councils.

3.2 As a result of LGR, the PCC followed the process as set out in legislation to assume governance responsibility for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. In August 2022, the Home Secretary approved the business case.

3.3 Under the Governance model chosen, the PCC takes on legal and overarching responsibility for the provision of fire and rescue services in Cumbria. The service retains its operational independence, budget, Chief Fire Officer, and staff.

- 3.4 Under the Governance model the new Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) is responsible for
- putting in place arrangements to deliver an efficient and effective fire and rescue service
  - setting the fire and rescue objectives for their area through a fire and rescue plan
  - appointing the Chief Fire Officer, holding them to account for delivery of objectives, and if necessary, dismiss them
  - setting the service budget and determine the precept
- 3.5 As part of the programme of work the day one requirements have been identified. That is the requirements that must be in place for the Service at the point of transition. The programme is considering the requirements in all the key areas including:
- People Management
  - Finance
  - Fleet
  - Property
  - ICT
  - Partnerships
  - Information Governance, Data and Intelligence
  - Governance and Legal
  - Communications and Engagement
- 3.6 In order to help with the transition process, the LGR programme's strategic partner, KPMG has carried out an options appraisal of corporate services for CFRS. This has enabled work to begin on the design of a new corporate support structure under the new model.
- 3.7 Since the previous meeting, progress has been made in several areas of which Scrutiny should be aware, these are:
- Statutory process
  - Disaggregation and hosting of functions
  - Day One readiness

### **Statutory Process**

- 3.8 The Statutory Instruments which will formally transfer the responsibility of the Fire Service to the PCC have been drafted and will be laid before Parliament at the end of November. Work is also underway on the Transfer Scheme which will legally transfer assets, staff and other items to the PCC from 1 April 2023.

### **Disaggregation and hosting of functions**

- 3.9 There are ongoing discussions about the requirements around key functions and whether these can safely be disaggregated for Day One or whether there needs to be interim hosted arrangements to allow a managed transition.
- 3.10 Functions that will be hosted initially include Payroll, ICT and Records Management. These discussions will continue as it becomes clearer what staff will be transferring to Fire as part of the staff allocation process.

### **Day One readiness**

- 3.11 In line with the wider arrangements for managing the LGR programme Fire has a Day One delivery plan to ensure all the key activity required to ensure the Service is operating safely and legally on Day One is managed.
- 3.12 This is monitored through the LGR Day One Board which allows inter-dependencies with key areas such as Corporate and Enabling to be identified.
- 3.13 There is a significant amount of time and resource dedicated to enabling the transfer to the new governance model. The Service is confident from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, it will be operating in a safe and legal way.

**Mark Clement**  
**Fire Strategy and Reform Manager**  
14/11/2022

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### **Appendices**

No appendices

### **Previous Relevant Council or Executive Decisions** ***[including Local Committees]***

No previous relevant decisions

### **Background Papers**

No background papers

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