

# Appendix K

## Partner Responses





**Broadland District Council**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Please find set out below my Council's formal response to the consultation proposal which was agreed at my Council's meeting last night.

**A Case for Change – Business Case for Changing the Governance of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service**

The Leader of the Council invited Members to consider the recommendation from Cabinet regarding the Council's response to the proposal by the Police and Crime Commissioner for the adoption of a new governance model for the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. A member of the opposition party stated that he was supportive of the views put forward by Cabinet and felt that there was a strong case for the retention of the current arrangements for governance of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. The Service currently operated with one of the lowest costs per head of population and was one of the highest performing and there was no case for changing the current arrangements. On being put to the vote, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED**

to submit a negative response to the proposal as it was considered that the funding assumptions in the Business Case were flawed and the appraisals of the options were inappropriate.

Regards

**Martin Thrower**

Head of Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer  
Broadland District Council

**Sent:** 31 August 2018 16:20  
**To:** Tell Lorne  
**Cc:** Cabinet Councillors; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Norwich City Council's response and comments on PPC's proposal for taking over governance of Norfolk's Fire and Rescue Service.  
**Attachments:** Comments from Norwich City Council on PCC's case for taking over governance of Norfolk's Fire and Rescue Service.docx

Dear Lorne,  
Please find attached Norwich City Council's response and comments on your proposed takeover of governance of Norfolk's Fire and Rescue Service.  
Your sincerely  
Kevin

**Cllr Dr Kevin Maguire**  
Labour Wensum Ward and Cabinet Member for Safe City Environment

## **Norfolk PCC business case for changing the governance of Norfolk fire service**

### **Comments from Norwich City council**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on your proposal for changes to the governance of Norfolk fire and rescue service.

Having reviewed the proposals and discussed these with my cabinet colleagues, I would like to confirm that the proposal for the PCC to take on the Governance of the Norfolk fire and rescue service is not supported by Norwich city council.

The reason for this is that:

- Joint working is already happening
- Continued collaboration can achieve many of the benefits proposed in the business case through the development of a strategic vision and plan for this work between Norfolk county council and the Norfolk PCC
- The work to combine governance would be a distraction at a time of public service transformation.

I have included some information below to illustrate these points using the proposed areas of benefit from the business case as headings.

### **Better collaboration between the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) and Norfolk Constabulary (NC), means more efficient services.**

Coming together under one model of governance, where the two organisations would remain independent, is not required to achieve collaboration. If there is a desire to collaborate, to share facilities or work jointly, then this can be made to happen through willingness and having a shared ambition.

The development of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) between Norfolk county council and the Norfolk Constabulary (and subsequently with other partners) is one example where facilities, roles and teams are jointly resourced.

### **There are significant financial as well as operational benefits that can be achieved through better collaboration under the new model.**

It is unclear why these benefits can be achieved any more effectively if both services are under the control of the PCC. With the constabulary having recently closed some county facilities to the public, it is unclear where these opportunities may arise.

The development of a joint community safety hub for police, fire service and other related county council functions at police HQ, Wymondham is a positive step. But this has occurred under the current arrangements.

The proposal for a community safety task force as described in the PCC's proposal appears equally positive and could be achieved under the current arrangements. Though there is a down side of the fire service losing the strategic link with other county council functions, such as public health, community safety and highways.

Some of the possible functions listed include district functions or roles e.g. licensing, volunteering and community engagement which might lead to duplication or lack of co-ordination. In addition, this type of function would have equal value on a locality basis, building on the collaborative joint district council/police operational partnership teams.

Similarly the joint agency prevention calendar is being discussed through the public protection forum (the collaborative meeting of the chairs of the county's main safeguarding and community safety boards) which would draw in a broader range of prevention campaigns and events.

Clearly there are opportunities with shared emergency control rooms which have been attempted with Suffolk, unfortunately unsuccessfully.

Reference also needs to be made to the One Public Estate programme, which involves all public agencies across Norfolk including the NHS and district councils. This aims to share buildings and assets across the whole public sector and would be duplicated at best or, missed from the broader public sector discussions and opportunities, under the PCC's proposals.

**Better collaboration takes determination and focus to achieve, and the new Governance Model will put collaboration between Norfolk Fire and Rescue and Norfolk Constabulary at the centre of a new Police, Fire and Crime Plan that incorporates the strategic aims of both services.**

Collaboration, as an ambition already exists between Norfolk county council, including the fire and rescue service specifically and the Norfolk constabulary.

One example included in the business case refers to the fire and rescue service role in social care, though looking at this example accurately, this is actually the identification of and providing support to our most vulnerable residents from undertaking fire safety checks which is not in its broadest sense social care.

The report suggests that this can be enhanced with the addition of advice on crime protection and prevention within the same visit. However, this is missing the opportunities of wider prevention activity which can be achieved through voluntary collaboration across the public sector. A joint approach if being fully and effectively implemented at a locality level would include support from district councils to enable independent living as well as budgeting etc.

It is uncertain if the lack of progress referred to in the report is actually due to the two organisations having, or not being able to find common ground. The report, whilst evidencing a governance solution, has identified some practical opportunities which with a shared ambition and delivery team, could be implemented.

**The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner will be able to hold both the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable to account for making sure that collaboration opportunities are fully explored under a common agenda.** The rationale provided in the report is that, the PCC taking over the role of the Fire and Rescue Authority from Norfolk County Council offers the opportunity to streamline decision making and accountability.

Having a single governance role has as at the centre of its theory, no need for decision making through committees and in theory is simpler and quicker. The current model through a county council committee provides the opportunity for wider democratic involvement through the role of elected members.

Having a single elected PCC, means that other mechanisms are required to provide the level of democratic accountability and engagement that exists within Norfolk county council to represent all communities in Norfolk. This might include direct consultation with communities and stakeholders which risks slowing this work down and additional expense.

**The PFCC will also have ultimate control over the assets of both organisations, in addition to being able to help shape strategic priorities. Therefore strategic decisions can be made faster, more cost effectively with only one governance process.**

The opportunities which arise from reviewing the use of assets across the whole of the public sector through the One Public Estate programme already exist.

Partitioning off the police and fire service estate and the risk of looking at these in isolation to the rest of the sector, misses a larger opportunity for rationalisation, cost saving and integration.

Again this is an example of a new governance model not being required and at risk of working against current whole system public sector arrangements.

**The new Governance Model will protect and enhance the distinct identity and traditions of NFRS. The reputation of Norfolk Fire and Rescue is a key asset for the community and under this proposal the profile of the service will be raised and financial independence secured.** This is achievable under the current governance arrangements. Norfolk fire and rescue service has a very distinct identity whilst part of the county council. There is a risk that due to its smaller size, that it is subservient to, or perceived to be part of the police service.

Equally, the financial independence cannot be guaranteed any more under the proposed model. It is believed that the chief fire officer already has delegated authority for NFRS operations and budgets.

It is also important to recognise that the status of the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer differs.

A report by the National Fire Chiefs Council<sup>1</sup> – Joint NFCC/NPCC position statement on leadership summarises this as follows:

*Police officers derive their powers by virtue of the fact that they hold the office of constable; these powers are not delegated to them but are inherent in the office. The chief constable has the power to direct and control the officers in their force.*

*The Chief Fire Officer generally does not have the same independence as the Chief Constable; they are an employee, not an office holder (except for London Fire Brigade). Both the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable have distinct operational accountabilities locally, regionally and nationally.*

The difference is that for a Chief Fire Officer, currently, operational independence is not legislated for.

Within fire and rescue service governance, the Fire Authority (Norfolk county council) is a body corporate and the Chief Fire Officer is an employee of the Fire Authority as is all fire service staff.

The two roles will currently be contractually very different, which would provide a significant lack of balance in accountability to the PCC for different elements of fire and police decisions. This poses a risk to effective decision making.

To enable consistency between the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable roles, to support the developing concept of the Chief Officer, there should be a level of protection in place for the operational independent decision making of the Chief Fire Officer. It is not clear from the PCC's proposals, if implemented how this would be done.

Finally, whilst the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 makes specific reference that police staff should not undertake firefighting activities, it is not clear if a fire officer is allowed or not, to undertake policing activities such as those undertaken by PCSOs. If indeed this is proposed or required.

**Under the new Governance Model NFRS would gain full control over its budget which, for the first time, will be ring-fenced to fund FRS services only.**

It is understood that as part of the county council, the fire and rescue service already has autonomy, financial independence under delegated powers and operational empowerment, whilst also benefiting from being part of a larger organisation.

The proposal to spend up to £100k per annum on collaborative community safety projects could be delivered under the current arrangements as it does not require a change in governance to do this.

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<sup>1</sup> National Fire Chiefs Council : Joint NFCC/NPCC position statement on leadership

Police forces via PCCs are under no less financial pressure than fire and rescue services or most other parts of the public sector. It is unclear how the PCC's view that protecting the budgetary provision for the NF&RS is more difficult under the governance of the county council.

### **Conclusions**

Collaboration as an approach is becoming the norm across the public sector generally and there is a growing evidence base of good practice examples of collaboration taking place across the country.

Whilst in a number of areas, PCCs are proceeding with plans to take on responsibility for fire and rescue service governance, no single model or approach is being progressed.

In some areas, Police and Fire Services are seeking further shared service arrangements, mergers and/or continuing further collaboration. One example is Gloucestershire, where it is reported that the review undertaken by the Gloucestershire PCC, found that the case for a governance change was finely balanced.

The findings found that *a governance change could deliver additional benefits but this needs to be balanced against the transition effort and risks of making a change.*

Specific points raised include:

- *Local political support for a change has not been forthcoming*
- *Impacts on the County Council need to be explored*
- *There are a number of financial / commercial risks around capital funding, PFI, pensions and negotiation of a precept*
- *Negotiations will be difficult and delay implementation; managing this change could be a distraction for the PCC as well as the OPCC team.*

These are points are very relevant in the Norfolk context but do not appear to be reflected sufficiently in the PCC's business case.

The conclusions from a review of the proposals are that they are not supported for the following reasons:

- Joint working is already happening
- Continued collaboration can achieve many of the benefits proposed by the PCC through the development of a strategic vision and plan for this work between Norfolk county council and the Norfolk PCC
- The work to combine governance would be a distraction at a time of public service transformation.

**Sent:** 05 September 2018 14:46

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED] Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk

**Subject:** PCC Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service Consultation - response from North Norfolk District Council

**Importance:** High

Dear [REDACTED]

#### Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service Consultation

North Norfolk District Council, at its meeting of Cabinet held on Monday, 3 September 2018, resolved:

***“ That Cabinet responds to the consultation advising that North Norfolk District Council does not support the proposals for change as the benefits of the proposal are not clearly demonstrated in terms of positive outcomes to local Council Tax payers .”***

The Council has completed the online “A Case for Change” survey quoting the above decision but with an additional comment that we would forward on a copy of the Council’s Cabinet report that was considered to which the above decision was made.

I would be grateful if you could therefore forward this on to the appropriate person to accompany our consultation response provided.

Kind regards

## CABINET 3<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018

### North Norfolk District Council response to consultation by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk on proposals for changing the governance of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service

Summary: The purpose of this report is to outline the position of the District Council with respect to proposals made by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk to assume responsibility for the future delivery of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service

Options considered:

- The business case presented by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk – “A Case for Change: A better way of working for a safer Norfolk”
- Seeing the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service being retained as a part of Norfolk County Council as outlined in the County Council document “Norfolk Fire and Rescue service – Keep in Safe Hands”.

Conclusions: **North Norfolk District Council does not believe that the proposals made by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk in respect of the future governance arrangements of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service are sufficiently strong to justify the proposed change.**

Recommendations: **That Cabinet responds to the consultation advising that North Norfolk District Council does not support the proposals for change as the benefits of the proposals are not clearly demonstrated in terms of positive outcomes to local Council Tax payers,**

Reasons for Recommendations: The proposals as currently drafted do not present any strong and reasoned case for change.

#### LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

*(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)*

None
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Cabinet Member(s) Cllr John Lee	Ward(s) affected All North Norfolk wards
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Contact Officer, telephone number and email:

Steve Blatch, Corporate Director and Head of Paid Service,  
01263 516232  
[steve.blatch@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:steve.blatch@north-norfolk.gov.uk)

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018, Lorne Green, the elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk published a consultation document outlining his vision for the future governance of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. The document entitled “A Case for Change: A better way of working for a safer Norfolk – Business Case for changing the governance of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service” was published and promoted as the basis for consultation with the public and a wide range of local stakeholders with comments invited to be made on the proposals by 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018.
- 1.2 Subsequently, Norfolk County Council published an initial response to the Police and Crime Commissioner’s business case, entitled “Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service – Keep in Safe Hands”; supported by a background document providing high level information about the current service arrangements in Norfolk as part of the County Council.
- 1.3 North Norfolk District Council is therefore invited, along with other stakeholders and members of the public to comment on the proposals made by the Police and Crime Commissioner by 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018. It is proposed that this report will form the basis of the District Council’s response to this consultation process.

## 2. Current Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service arrangements

- 2.1 The Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is currently a service provided by Norfolk County Council, with the service governance arrangements and budget being delivered through and accountable to the 84 elected members of the County Council. At an operational level the service is led by a Chief Fire Officer who has delegated responsibilities for service operations and budgets.
- 2.2 The Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service performs well under current governance and management arrangements, providing fire and rescue emergency response and wider community safety services across Norfolk. The service is considered to be efficient, effective and economically viable, providing a good level of service response across the County for one of the lowest budgets for a fire service in the country. These standards have been achieved at the same time as an ongoing service modernisation programme, including investment in new fire engines and protective equipment and uniforms for fire service personnel, strong partnership and collaborative working arrangements with the police, other emergency services and local communities and joint procurement arrangements with other fire and rescue services to ensure value for money.
- 2.3 The current Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service employs 288 full-time staff and 520 retained personnel, operating from 42 fire stations across Norfolk and shares its HQ facilities with Norfolk Constabulary at Wymondham. Six Norfolk fire stations are staffed 24/7 with full-time firefighters; two are crewed during the day and 33 fire stations (including the 8 fire stations in North Norfolk) are operated by retained firefighters. On an average day Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service will respond to 20 emergency incidents of which 24% are road traffic collisions, 20% are false automated fire alarms and 17% are fires.

Other incidents include surface water, river and coastal flooding; hazardous material spillages, collapsed buildings; industrial accidents and explosions and responses to terrorist threats; often as part of a multi-agency response. The service also operates a nationally funded Urban Search and Rescue Team as part of national resilience and mutual aid arrangements. In addition to emergency response incidents, the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service also fulfil a wider community safety brief across the County providing home safety advice and checks, fitting of smoke alarms for vulnerable people and households and running a programme of youth safety initiatives.

- 2.4 In North Norfolk, the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service has fire stations operated by retained firefighter staff at Wells-next-the-Sea, Fakenham, Holt, Sheringham, Cromer, Mundesley, North Walsham and Stalham. The fire station at Sheringham is shared with the police and other emergency services and similar proposals for a “shared” blue light facility are being developed at Holt. Small areas of the District on the district boundaries are served by retained stations at Great Massingham, Reepham, Aylsham, Wroxham and Martham.

### **3. Proposals made by the Police and Crime Commissioner**

- 3.1 Taking reference from a new legal duty for the three main emergency services to collaborate more extensively, as enacted by Parliament in January 2017 by the Policing and Crime Act 2017; the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk wished to explore whether more effective and efficient delivery of police and fire and rescue services might be achieved in Norfolk through bringing the services under a single governance structure. He therefore commissioned independent advice, through Grant Thornton UK LLP, about whether this might be possible and was advised that through bringing the services together under a single governance arrangement efficiencies and services improvements would be realised through reduced duplication and bureaucracy, faster decision-making and stronger collaboration through joint-working. The Police and Crime Commissioner therefore commissioned more detailed analysis of the opportunities through the preparation of a Full Business Case, which forms the basis of the current consultation process.
- 3.2 In presenting the Full Business Case for consultation the Police and Crime Commissioner has stated that he does not see the proposal as being a political decision, rather a decision about getting the best for Norfolk people. He has also made clear that the proposals do not involve a merging of the two services: each would retain its own identity, staffing and finances / budgets, and savings from one service area would not be used to fund budget pressures in the other. The Police and Crime Commissioner has therefore stated that he wants to hear the views of a wide selection of partners and stakeholders on the consultation before coming to a view as to whether he would wish to out a proposal for change to the Home Secretary.
- 3.3 The proposal to adopt a new governance model for the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service which would see the service move out of the control of Norfolk County Council and under the responsibilities of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk, as presented in the consultation document proposes annual savings from the new arrangement being in the order of £10 million over the next ten years (equivalent to £1million per

## CABINET 3<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018

annum). It is proposed that these savings would be re-invested “in the service, people, training and development, as well as offering financial resilience for the future and covering any costs of transition.

- 3.4 Under the proposed model the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk would become the Norfolk Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner taking over the governance responsibilities for the fire and rescue service from Norfolk County Council. The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner would then delegate strategic, finance and operational management responsibilities to the Chief Fire Officer, in a similar way to the current delegation of policing issues to the Chief Constable.
- 3.5 The Police and Crime Act 2017 outlines four potential models for the future governance of and collaboration between the police and fire and rescue services at a local level, these bring:-
- **Option 1 – Enhanced Voluntary Collaboration** – Fire and Rescue Authority remains as part of the County Council with continued efforts to drive additional benefits through voluntary collaboration.
  - **Option 2 – PCC Representation Model** – Fire and Rescue Authority remains as part of the County Council, but with the Police and Crime Commissioner becoming a member of the Authority as embodied by the County Council’s Community Services Committee, with voting rights where the Fire and Rescue Authority agrees.
  - **Option 3 – PCC Governance Model** – Fire and Rescue Authority moves out of control of the County Council and operates as a separate entity under the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner with equal status as Norfolk Constabulary.
  - **Option 4 – Single Employer Model** – Fire and Rescue Authority moves out of control of the County Council and operates as a separate operational unit within Norfolk Constabulary under the Chief Constable.

The consultation proposal being promoted by the Police and Crime Commissioner in Norfolk is Option 3 above – the PCC Governance Model.

#### 4. What might the proposals mean for North Norfolk?

- 4.1 The majority of savings and efficiencies which will be realised through the Option 3 proposals will be seen at a corporate governance level through reducing the bureaucracy associated with two separate governance structures, and back-office functions (Estates, HR, IT, Finance and Procurement); with no savings proposed through being realised through changes to front-line service delivery.
- 4.2 At the local level, over time, it would be envisaged that there would be increased co-location of services onto joint sites (police and fire stations) possibly with other blue light services such as ambulance and where appropriate, HM Coastguard; such as exists at Sheringham.
- 4.3 Provisional considerations outlined within the consultation document suggests that a fire service presence will be retained in all current locations across the County, but that there might be some move to newly shared premises in some locations; with some current fire stations being “changed” to operate

“small response vehicles” rather than traditional fire engines so as to given greater flexibility in deployment across the County.

- 4.4 Provisional changes as they might impact on North Norfolk suggest that new small response vehicles might be deployed from Sheringham (and Massingham and Reepham); whilst the fire and police might operate from shared sites at Aylsham and Hoveton / Wroxham. The proposals also suggest that the Norfolk Fire and Rescue training facilities at Scottow Enterprise Park will be retained.

### **5. Norfolk County Council’s response to the consultation proposals**

- 5.1 In response to the consultation document launched by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Norfolk County Council has published an initial response proposing the retention of the Fire and Rescue Service within the County Council.
- 5.2 This document emphasises that Norfolk has a high-performing fire and rescue service under current governance arrangements and is already one of the lowest costs services in the country on a cost per head of population basis. The service has a strong track record of collaboration with the police and other partners and the service has been protected from the wider budget pressures being faced by the County Council and investment continues to be made in new fire engines, protective uniforms and specialist equipment.
- 5.3 The County Council document states that there is no clear case presented for change, with the Police and Crime Commissioner’s consultation document lacking detail in respect of a number of the assumptions made, particularly given that efficiencies of £10million are already planned and will be delivered without any change of governance arrangements, and without the identified transition costs of £1million. Further, the consultation document does not make any assessment of the residual financial and staff costs which would be borne by the County Council if the transfer of the Fire and Rescue Service to the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner was to proceed.

### **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 North Norfolk District Council recognises that across public service delivery severe financial pressures exist and is supportive of opportunities being taken to consider and explore alternative ways of working which would see the continued delivery of high quality services to the people of Norfolk. The District Council is therefore grateful for the opportunity to comment on proposals for alternative governance arrangements for the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service as outlined by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk consultation.
- 6.2 However, based on the case presented, North Norfolk District Council is not persuaded that the proposals present a convincing and compelling case for change; with the anticipated scale of savings and efficiencies considered to be modest over a ten-year period given existing efficiencies identified by the County Council and lack of clarity over the cost of transition and lack of detail around the costs which would remain with the County Council following any transfer of the Fire and Rescue Service to the Office of the Police, (Fire) and Crime Commissioner.

- 6.3 For these reasons, and in the absence of any significant public support for the proposals, North Norfolk District Council believes that through existing partnership arrangements such as the Norfolk Resilience Forum and One Public Estate Partnership, as well as more local partnership arrangements, partners and key stakeholders, including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, should make a renewed commitment to collaborative working under current governance structures. This would allow a focus on positive outcomes for the public without the distraction of major re-organisation which, based on the consultation proposals, would appear to deliver modest financial savings or return in the next ten years.

### **7. Implications and Risks**

- 7.1 Not applicable in the context of the District Council submitting a consultation response to third party proposals.

### **8. Financial Implications and Risks**

- 8.1 Not applicable in the context of the District Council submitting a consultation response to third party proposals.

### **9. Sustainability**

- 9.1 Not applicable in the context of the District Council submitting a consultation response to third party proposals.

### **10. Equality and Diversity**

- 10.1 Not applicable in the context of the District Council submitting a consultation response to third party proposals.

### **11. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations**

- 11.1 Not applicable in the context of the District Council submitting a consultation response to third party proposals.



## HEACHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Jubilee Clinic, Pound Lane,

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Norfolk,

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RECEIVED

28 AUG 2018

OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME  
COMMISSIONER FOR NORFOLK

Mr Lorne Green,  
Police and Crime Commissioner,  
Fire Consultation,  
OPCCN,  
Building 8,  
Jubilee House,  
Falconers Chase,  
Wymondham,  
Norfolk,  
NR18 OWW.

24<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Dear Mr Green.

It is with the full support of Heacham Parish Council that I write in objection to the proposal that as Police and Crime Commissioner your role does not take on the governance of Norfolk Fire and Rescue.

Heacham Fire Station was saved from closure recently, with the overwhelming support and actions of residents. The proposal that our fully operational fire appliance could be replaced by a 4x4 vehicle, is nothing more than ludicrous, even dangerous.

Given that Heacham is a growing residential village with large numbers of visitors expanding our population considerably during the summer months, we must have the assurance of a fast and effective emergency response not only in the case of fire but also to RTCs

Heacham Parish Council therefore seeks your assurance that should your role be expanded, Heacham Fire Station will not be downgraded to a level where it will become ineffective with lives and property put at serious risk.

Yours sincerely

Mr Terry Clay.

Chairman Heacham Parish Council.

**CONSULTATION****Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service****5-09-2018**

We are most concerned with the proposal and the lack of supporting detail as to transfer of the management and administration of the 'Fire and Rescue Service' to be under the Police and Crime Commissioner.

**The proposal lacks detail**

1. There is no detail on the map as to specifically where the 17 stations are to be relocated/co located and the 8 appliances that are to be retired and no Risk Assessment. The Public should be given this information before asking them to be involved in a consultation
2. The reduction of Fire appliances will almost inevitably lead to a reduction of Fire Fighters, voluntary or otherwise. Mentioned but no numbers stated. There can also be no savings by the Police Officers doing Firefighters jobs or vice versa.

**The existing Service**

1. Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service is already one of the most the well run and efficient in the Country with an area of 2,074 square miles to cover and a population of approximately 895,000 and increasing.
2. It already cooperates with adjacent Services such as supporting Mildenhall {USAF} in joint training, other Counties and is involved with regional and major incidents. It also encompasses many other Community help programs and is one of the few Fire Services to have a support team to respond to the increasing terrorist threat, should it occur.
3. It continues to be one of the lowest cost Fire and Rescue authorities in England
4. £30.91 per head of population {English average £34} In fact for 2016/17 there was a slight under spend of 0.36% showing a continued small saving on the year as on the previous year. From that it would appear they already have the right mix to give a good and cost effective and safe Service despite the uncertainty of climate change, increased housing and the difficult and testing road conditions generating more traffic accidents. This year Norfolk experienced during the heat wave 452 open air blazes compared with 366 in the whole of 2017. In 2016 Palm Paper had a major fire that required fire appliances from Lincolnshire Cambridge and Norwich. 12 Appliances and some 100 Fire Fighters. The reduction of 8 Appliances would, therefore, seem to be inappropriate.

**The costs THAT WOULD BE incurred**

The costing of the proposal would indicate that most of the saving would come from the sale of Assets, (properties), termination of leases and the cost of maintenance. The transference of the administration and set up costs would seem very high. The new department on going costs also appear to be more expensive than that of NCC.

The Public having been told of the savings envisaged over 10 years will then find a separate precept levied on the New Rates Assessment for the Fire and Rescue Service, which again is an unknown amount year on year. In conclusion we feel that the Norfolk Fire Service should remain under the administration of NCC at this time.

# Snettisham Parish Council

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Response to consultation over amalgamation of  
Fire & Rescue Service under the Office of PCC.

To OPCC via email

Dear Sir,

A majority of my Councillors have asked me to write protesting against the proposals for the OPCC to take control of the Fire and Rescue Service in Norfolk.

We have read with interest the NCC response to this proposal and would agree with their points; we do not always do so, but this document is clear and cogent. In particular, we note their comments about protecting the service by sharing funding across a much larger budget as NCC is able to, and the relatively smaller reduction in the Service's budget compared to other local authority cuts. This follows our concerns, and those of other parishes, when cuts were proposed two years ago.

Further we are well aware of the costs – always hidden – when a reorganisation takes place; in general, we oppose such changes unless there is a crystal-clear case, and one which is well-supported by all, or most, of those involved; neither applies here. The only support for this comes from the OPCC itself.

Co-operation between services is the way ahead – this does not require amalgamation, but recognition of how groups can work together most effectively, and when things are best done by separate organisations. It has been suggested by many that this will introduce, in the fulness of time, another layer of management, to co-ordinate things which are already being done without this additional cost.

Coming to local matters.

We have recently had two large fires on the Coastal Park, which were attended by many engines. We understand that the Heacham tender is likely to be lost, and this would have caused inevitable serious consequences. The replacement of this by a 4x4, as proposed, is simply unacceptable – a reduction in service was unacceptable two years ago, as acknowledged by NCC at that time, and nothing has changed for the better since then<sup>1</sup>.



# Snettisham Parish Council

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Additionally, should the tender go, the need for staff would, and this would clearly result in an inferior response.

We face increased levels of flooding, both coastal and from the drains, and the population of the area is increasing rapidly. We know from the preparation of our Neighbourhood Plan research that the provision of infrastructure to support this growth is always top of the list of local concerns. Mention has also been made of the higher proportion of elderly and infirm residents, some with dementia, and the consequent increased risks and issues. Nothing must be done which makes our facilities poorer; on the contrary, people actually expect, and deserve, an improvement.

Since this consultation has become more widely known publicly, we have received representations from a number of concerned residents demanding that we act to prevent this. Clearly, we also have to take those views into account.

In conclusion, Council wishes its strong opposition to this process to be included in the responses to the consultation, believing that it will not produce the benefits stated (marginal though they are in any case), has massive risks to us locally and county-wide, and is, quite simply, unnecessary.

We would urge the relevant authorities to reconsider, and withdraw the proposals.

With kind regards

By email

Simon Bower  
Parish Clerk  
9/8/2018

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<sup>i</sup> At the time of the last consultation "Re-imagining Norfolk" I wrote as follows:

"The closure of Heacham Fire Station is opposed by a large majority of the Parish. It is clear that the number of calls responded to has increased considerably over recent years. The stated proximity of other resources is not encouraging – Hunstanton currently has three large housing developments proposed or approved, and that will mean their average response time will increase; given there are no plans to improve the A149 this will be busier. In fact there will be increasing interruptions to traffic flow; even if only currently proposed development is permitted, there will be several additional junctions and considerably more traffic. As a major part of the fire service activities relates to RTAs, this is especially concerning.

Given our position, Snettisham has to be concerned at any restriction to flood preparedness. Any reductions to specialist water and flooding resources would be resisted by Council, especially given that local residents will already be providing the funding for flood protection..."



**Sent:** 03 September 2018 16:04

**To:** Tell Lorne

**Subject:** Views on PCC taking over Norfolk's Fire Service

Dear Mr Green,

West Winch Parish Council feel that if Norfolk's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) were to take over Norfolk's fire and rescue service this would have a detrimental impact on the service, as we will lose 17 fire stations and 8 full sized fire engines putting people at risk. We do not see how the two services which are so different in their purpose, can be under the same management. All of the councillors on West Winch Parish Council feel very strongly that this should not go ahead.

Regards