

Combined Fire Authority Consultation

Findings Report Part two – detailed overview

November 2018

A large graphic consisting of a dark blue circle with a white border, set against a grey background. The circle is partially enclosed by a red shape at the bottom. The text "HAVE YOUR SAY" is centered within the circle, with "HAVE YOUR" in orange and "SAY" in white.

**HAVE YOUR
SAY**



Contents – Part Two

NB: A top-line summary of key consultation findings can be viewed in Part One of this report.

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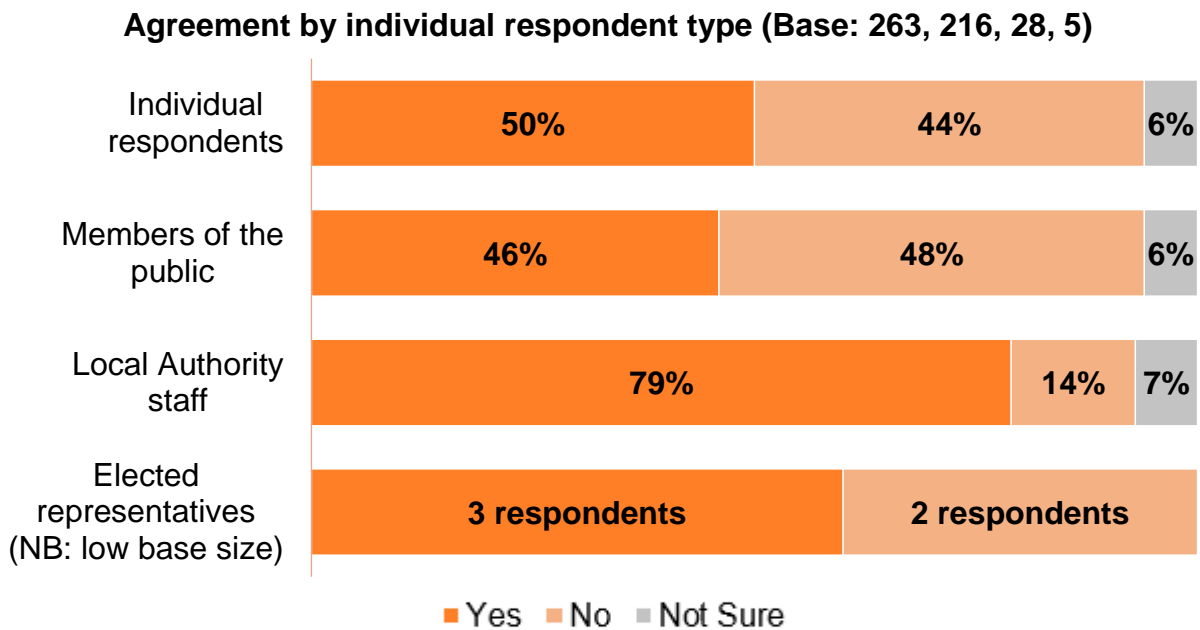
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Imagery has been used throughout the report to illustrate findings; all icons are made by Freepik, available from www.flaticon.com.

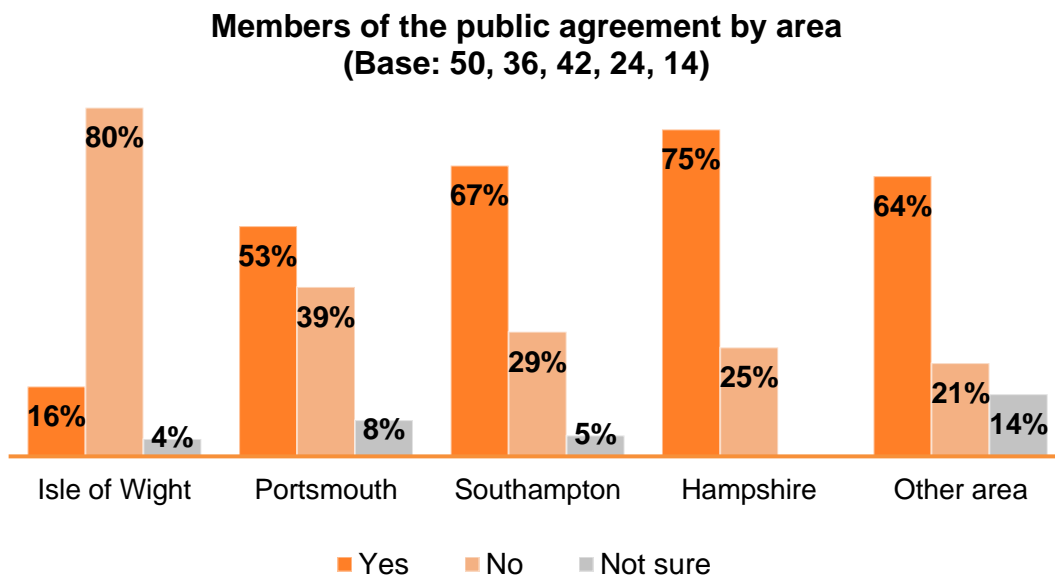
Views of individual respondents

The significant majority of individuals responding to the consultation Response Form were members of the public (218). Five elected representatives, and 28 people who worked within one of the four local authorities also shared their views via the consultation Response Form.

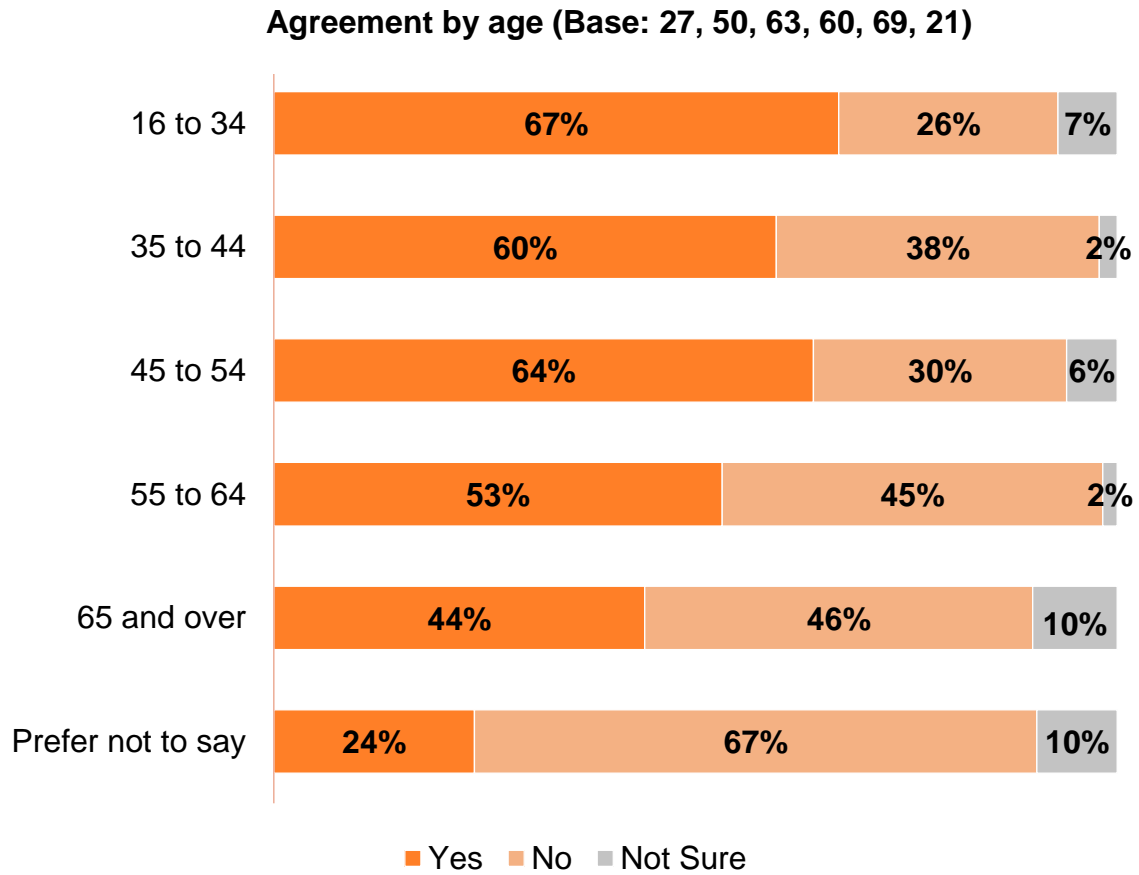
Half of these individual respondents were in favour of the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority. Opposition to the proposal was driven by members of the public, many of whom would prefer that two authorities remain separate.



Opposition to the proposal was particularly marked amongst residents of the Isle of Wight. The majority of responding members of the public from all other areas were in favour.



There was also notable variation in response by age. Up until the age of 54, respondents were more likely to agree that the two authorities should combine but agreement dropped off thereafter as respondents aged, suggesting that older generations are not as receptive to the proposed changes.



Reasons why individual respondents support the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

89 of the 125 individuals who agreed with the proposal gave reasons as to why they believe the option to create a Combined Fire Authority should be submitted to the Government.

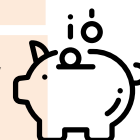
Those in favour of a Combined Fire Authority recognised the efficiencies that this could bring. 29 comments were received regarding the improved financial efficiency that the proposal could provide for both services. The majority of these comments were from residents on the mainland...

“

“The proposal makes good financial sense. No immediate direct impact of staffing numbers. It will align boundaries with Police. Partnership work will become simpler. IWFRS will struggle without assistance.”

“Just makes plain common sense, obtaining the economies of scale.”

“I think it makes sense pragmatically and financially.”



”

. . .however, those in favour on the Isle of Wight also recognised that the creation of a Combined Fire Authority would be a good step forward in order to secure financial efficiency.

“

“It is clear from the consultation document that there is a massive benefit to both fire services to combine, both operationally and financial, and as a consequence massive benefits to local residents who will be better protected.”

(In total 29 comments were received from residents who focused on financial efficiency)

”

Others made reference to the potential for an improved governance arrangement. They feel that a Combined Fire Authority would provide a simpler structure, making decisions quicker and easier.

“

“Better and more streamlined way of operating and gives the new Fire Authority more impact nationally.”

“If we have one authority making decisions it will be better than two or three making the same decisions that may take longer and as long as all of the said people are in agreement, we need this service and we need it to be efficient.”



”

Residents situated on the Isle of Wight also recognised that combining the Services could reduce bureaucracy and provide a more efficient structure.

“

“Too much bureaucracy, combined authority would reduce that.”

”

(In total 15 comments were received from residents who think governance will improve)

From a service perspective, respondents again commented on potential efficiencies - which they felt would lead to service improvements.



“The proposal strikes me as a more efficient and effective way of providing firefighting services.”

“It appears that an integrated structure would be more efficient and save precious resources.”



“It seems more efficient, as long as local services are not adversely affected.”



(In total 30 comments were received from residents who feel that efficiency will increase)

One quarter of the respondents who commented favourably believe that the service level provided by the Combined Fire Authority would improve on both sides of the water.



“It will clearly be more efficient which should improve standards with a potential for cost reduction.”

“It makes financial sense and will provide a better service to the public.”



“It means a better service for the Isle of Wight.”

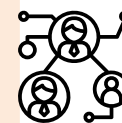
(In total 17 comments were received from residents who think the Service will improve)

In particular, respondents felt that combining the two authorities could help to drive operational efficiencies within the Services.



“Efficiency of operation and cost savings. The role of the fire authority is different from when the current arrangements were devised, and they need updating.”

“Joined up services makes sense financially as well as operationally by the looks of it.”



(In total 7 comments were received from residents who think resilience will improve)

One example of this that was mentioned by a number of respondents was the opportunity for pooling the resources of both Fire and Rescue Services.

“

“Centralising resources when everywhere has been hit so hard by the government cuts makes sense if it allows for the Service to function to the high standards required and already shown.”

“It will be a good idea to put this proposal forward as it means both authorities can pool together and use their expertise and resources to improve the current services.”



“I believe a combination of resources united together will result in a ‘better value’ service to the tax payer.”

”

Although most comments about sharing resources were submitted by respondents on the mainland, some on the Isle of Wight also recognised that pooling resources would benefit their service.

“

“For the Island it is an efficient way to run the FRS giving greater opportunity to up skill the staff and giving access to a wider range of resources not normally available.”



”

(In total 11 comments were received from residents who mentioned pooling resources)

Finally, seven respondents observed that the authorities combining and working collaboratively would help to make the Fire and Rescue Service – particularly on the Isle of Wight - more sustainable and help to ensure its long-term future.

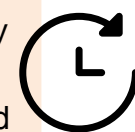
“

“This is the obvious next step to the current partnership arrangement. It is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the IWFRS which cannot look to IOW council to provide the required level of capital investment in the years ahead.”

“It’s the right thing to do to ensure the safety of IW Communities in the future, based against the IW Councils financial future.”

“To improve resilience and efficiency.”

“Having lived on the Isle of Wight for 16 years and then moved back to Southampton a year ago, I know how difficult it is for the IOW Council to provide all the necessary social and emergency services for the island. I think that combining the island fire service under a larger and perhaps more ‘professional’ authority can only be a good idea.”



”

(In total 7 comments were received from residents who think resilience will improve)


Reasons why individual respondents oppose the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

109 members of the public disagreed with the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority. Of these 78 shared the reasons why they disagreed.

The main area of concern was a belief that the quality of service would decrease as a result of the combination. Half of these comments came from residents on the Isle of Wight.

“Combining and joining up services to save money always results in a poorer service.”

“I am concerned that merging will reduce in a reduction to firefighting capabilities on the Island. The Service is already stretched to the limit.”




(In total 11 comments were received from all residents who mention a poorer service)

Despite assurances provided within the consultation documentation, concerns that lives could be put at risk proved a common worry for those who did not support the proposal. 90% of respondents who reported fears for public safety came from the Isle of Wight, with only one respondent on the mainland expressing similar concern.

“With an unreliable ferry service, you cannot guarantee support in the timescales expected. Please do not put lives at risk.”

“It will put lives at risk on the island.”




“By cutting the Service from what it is now, you are putting lives at risk, and you think this is OK, it should be left as is and given more money to cope.”

(In total 10 comments were received from residents who are worried about safety)

Often respondents from the Isle of Wight had the opinion that the body of water between the mainland and the Isle of Wight could prevent the combined authority working as planned. A particular example of this was the assumption that resources would be held on the mainland and require a ferry journey to the Isle of Wight in order to respond to an emergency.

“The island is a standalone area. It cannot be left to depend on resources that are a 60-minute ferry ride away.”

“Cannot rely on ferries to transport Hampshire appliances to the Island in an emergency, during late evening and early morning they only run every three hours. Totally unacceptable.”



(In total 7 comments were received from IOW residents who are concerned by logistics)

On the mainland, one respondent noted that that the proposed combined area would be too large, which could also cause logistical issues.

“

“As a wife of a serving firefighter I believe the logistics of covering such a large area would be difficult. Local area knowledge is paramount.”



”

(In total 1 comment was received from mainland residents who are concerned by logistics)

The other key fear for the Service itself was that jobs could be reduced - in turn having a negative impact on local levels of employment. Concerns were split equally between those on the mainland and those living on the Isle of Wight. Comments made by the Isle of Wight residents focused on protecting jobs on the Isle of Wight.

“

“Need to keep fire services local and protect local jobs in fire service.”

“To make sure services are run for the local community and the funds are 100% allocated locally. Keep specialist knowledge and jobs on the Island.”



”

Respondents on the mainland were more concerned about the potential loss of jobs that the combination of authorities could bring in general.

“

“Inevitable redundancies, as always happen after a merger. I don't believe that such upheaval will have the desired outcome.”

“Combining authorities would lead to redundancies and a reduction in operational services.”



”

(In total 7 comments were received from all residents who are concerned about redundancies)

The other key area of concern for respondents who opposed the creation of a Combined Fire Authority was that the revised governance arrangements would lead to the Isle of Wight losing autonomy. Ten respondents reflected the belief that the Isle of Wight would be ‘out voted’ by the mainland and that the new governance arrangement would not prove beneficial to residents on the Island. Residents on the Isle of Wight are concerned that their voice will not be heard, and the needs of the Isle of Wight will not be considered.

“

“I don’t believe that centralisation based on the mainland is in the interests of Island residents.”

“The Island will become very much the junior partner in any combined authority, due to the Mainland always being able to out vote the Island.”

“The Isle of Wight is different and should retain its own control over its services. If this costs a little more, so be it. In general, it is always the case is that if a small organisation is absorbed into a larger organisation, the smaller organisation always loses and with the geographical separation this will be magnified.”



(In total 10 comments were received from all residents who feel they would be out-voted)

”

A proposed increase in council tax for the Isle of Wight was another source of contention. The majority of those who commented about the council tax increase were opposed to paying more for the Service which they feel they would then lose to the mainland. This suggests that it is not necessarily the increase in cost that people ultimately have an issue with, but more the feeling of losing control.

“

“What is the point of increasing council tax by its current proposed £3.74 and giving it to Hampshire. Most residents would be more than happy to keep our IWFRS where it belongs.”

“I would rather my council tax went up to support the local service than fund difficulties elsewhere.”



(In total 9 comments were received from IOW residents who mention council tax)

”

Other Isle of Wight residents expressed dismay that they could be financially supporting areas outside of their own residence.

“Each location is specialised to their areas. I don't want my council tax money to support outside of my region.”

“Please explain how I, an Island resident, will have 'value for money' when I am being asked to pay more, thus subsidising Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton.”



(In total 2 comments were received from IOW residents about financing other areas)

However, this was a view that was also reflected by respondents from other areas. Most respondents who were unhappy with supporting other areas came from Hampshire. Residents were concerned about inheriting the perceived debts of the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.

“It will have a negative impact on Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service as it inherits the burden of debt and under investment that is the legacy of the council run IOW fire service.”

“This sounds decidedly like the taxpayers of Hampshire bailing out the IOW. If the two services were merging on an equal financial footing, then this proposal to save both money would make sense.”

“If IOW is already struggling financially, hence the need to reduce crew numbers, then Hampshire will be bailing them out.”



(In total 6 comments were received from mainland residents about financing other areas)

Reasons why individual respondents were uncertain about the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

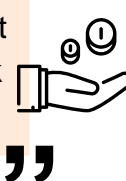
A small proportion of respondents (15 individuals) proved impartial to the proposal. The majority of these were from the mainland, although some respondents from the Isle of Wight were also in two minds.

Twelve of these respondents provided comments as to why they were of no strong opinion either way.

Some proved uncertain about the amount of financial savings that would be gained through the combination of the two services.

“I can't see that savings cited to IWC made any significant dent in the savings required by 2020/21.”

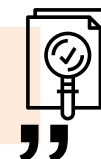
“Apart from saving money on central support costs and buying equipment etc I don't think there is going to be any other savings.”



Other respondents felt that needed more information to base their decision on, implying they would be able to make an informed decision if they had more evidence to reference.

“It would need to be proved to be more efficient and use resources more efficiently.”


“Don't have detail on how and why this will be safer.”



The final theme was a simple fear of the unknown and the fact that the future is not guaranteed, particularly in relation to rising council tax costs.

“Looks all very well but things never quite work out and I can see us on the Island paying more council tax, at the moment it looks like a small amount, but I am sure it will rise more and more.”

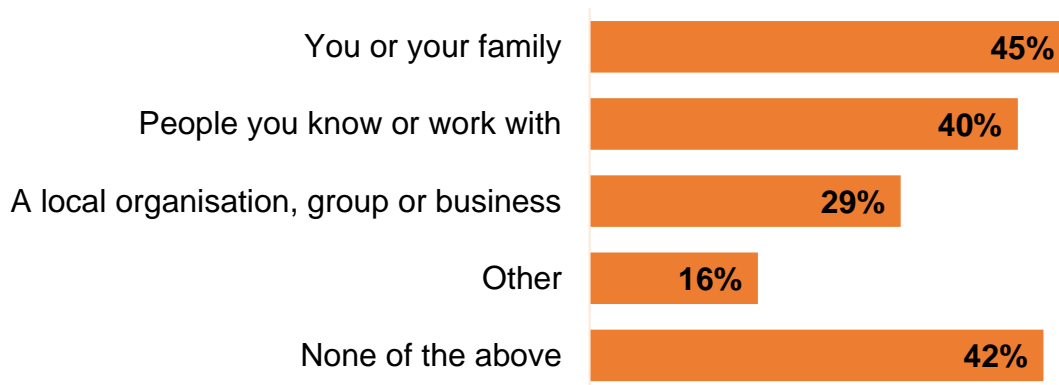
“Slight fear of the untried/unknown.”



Perceived impacts of the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority from individual respondents

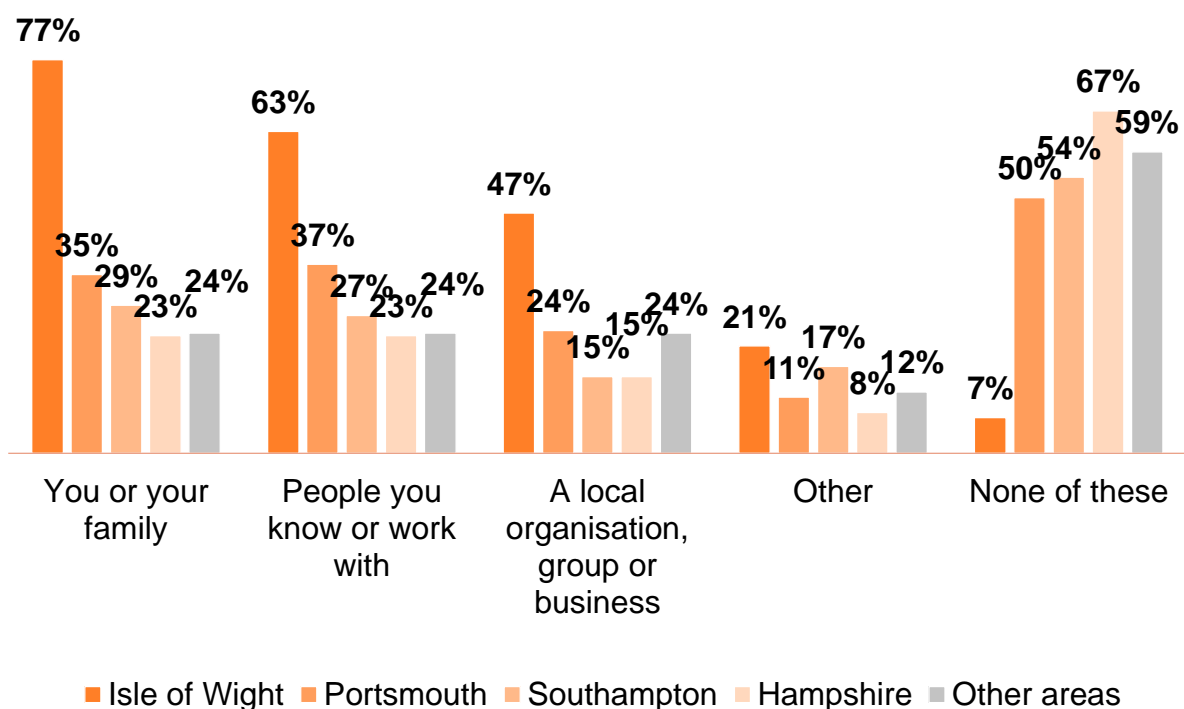
Three in five individual respondents felt that the creation of a Combined Fire Authority would have an impact on themselves, on a local group/business or on someone they know.

Who will be impacted (Base: 248, multi-choice)



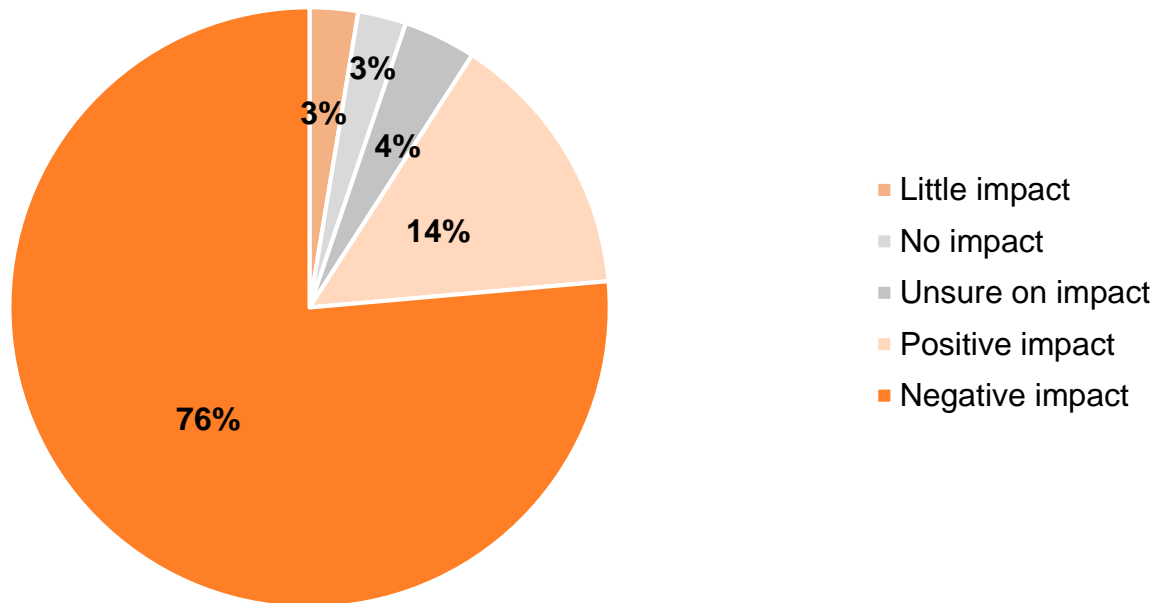
Respondents' assumptions about the impact of the proposed merger reflect their level of support for the proposals. The majority of respondents from Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth (generally supportive of the merger) presumed that there would be no impact, whilst almost all individuals responding from the Isle of Wight (generally opposed to the merger) presumed that there would be.

Who will be impacted by respondent area (Base: 87, 79, 55, 30, 89, multi-choice)



When asked to provide detail about the potential impacts, only half (76) did so. The majority of those who provided this additional insight resided on the Isle of Wight.

Quantification of verbatim comments from individual respondents (Base: 76)



Over three quarters of individuals made comments that suggest the proposal could have a negative impact. This may be because those who oppose the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority are more likely to give detail as to how it could impact on them.

One in ten respondents felt that the proposal would either have little or no impact on them or they were unsure on what, if any impact it would have.

Just over one in ten reported a positive impact.

Reasons why individuals felt the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority could have a positive impact

Of the 76 respondents who gave details about the potential impacts of combining the two authorities eleven made reference to the positive impact(s) that the creation of a Combined Fire Authority may have on them or someone they know.

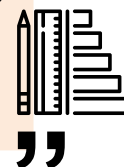
Nearly half of the eleven believe that the main impact will be on the organisations themselves e.g. governance arrangements could become simpler or the Services could become more efficient financially.

The majority of the comments regarding increased service efficiency came from residents on the mainland, however some respondents on the Isle of Wight also noted positive impacts.

“

“Improved governance and resource efficiency for the communities of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.”

“The people of the IOW, giving them a more efficient way of maintaining up to date equipment and procedures.”



(In total 5 comments were received regarding improved efficiencies)

Some respondents concluded that this would lead to the two services being more sustainable - compared to the current future outlook.

“

“Hopefully better for the firefighters involved, a more sustainable future. Also, better in the long run for Isle of Wight residents.”



(In total 2 comments were received regarding sustainability)

Four of the eleven individuals noted that these perceived improvements to frontline services would be of benefit to themselves and those around them.

“

“I think that a better combined Service would enhance and improve the Service delivery on the Isle of Wight, which is good for those who live and visit here.”

“Would improve the firefighting service on the Isle of Wight.”



(In total 4 comments were received about improved services)

Two individuals, one on each side of the water, believed specifically that they would be positively impacted by an increase in public safety due to the merger.

“

“I believe that increased financial resilience of the CFA will benefit friends and family that I know who work for the IWFRS and ensure an increased level of personal safety to me and my friends.”

“Improved control and coordination should make us all safer.”



”

(In total 2 comments were received regarding improved safety)

Other respondents felt that the proposal would lead to a better value for money service. This would result in public money being spent in a more efficient way – a positive impact for tax payers regardless of which side of the Solent they reside.

“

“I feel that this will have a positive impact upon the local authority and the spending of public money.”

“The key impact is that if the proposal goes ahead in a well-controlled manner, we will see a better, more cost-effective service.”



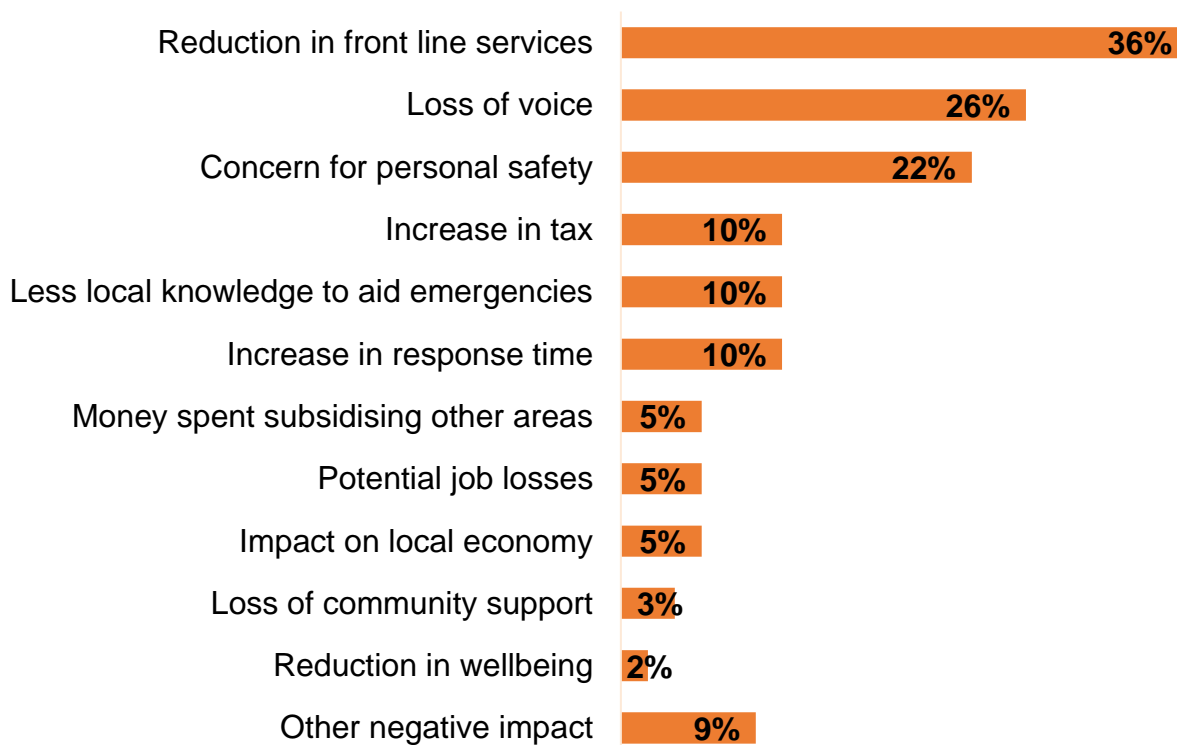
”

(In total 4 comments were received mentioning value for money)

Reasons why individuals felt that the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority could have a negative impact

58 respondents who gave details about the potential impacts of combining the two authorities perceived that combining the two fire authorities would have a negative impact.

Quantification of verbatim comments from individuals (Base: 58)



The majority were concerned about seeing frontline services cut or dramatically reduce in size. Both on the Isle of Wight and on the mainland, this proved the biggest concern from all individual respondents outside of the Service.



“Would result in cuts to services.”

“This will affect all who live on the island, cuts to front-line staff will increase risk to staff and members of the public, the retained system needs a total overhaul and a bespoke Island retained service needs setting up.”

“Unwise spending or poorly efficient spending will see a less front-line service to all of us.”

“I am concerned that there would be a reduction in the provision of the Fire Service on the Isle of Wight.”

“Smaller fire units on the island will mean diminished fire response!”



(In total 21 comments were received concerning a reduced service)



The next most common concern came from residents of the Isle of Wight who feared that the Combined Authority would lead to reduced representation, a loss of voice, and their needs would not be considered – in essence the combined authority could mean losing control of their local service.

“

“I would have no confidence in such a joint authority to properly consider the needs and unique requirements of IOW residents.”

“Services on the Island will deteriorate as the Mainland based control group focuses on the mainland issues and de-prioritises Island needs.”

“All the Island – we’d be worse off and have no control of a fundamental service on our island.”

“Again my perception/concern of the impact that the new body could have is that the Island could/would possibly get a second class service, due to it always being out voted by the Mainland.”



”

(In total 15 comments were received concerning loss of control)

A similar number of comments assumed that the impact of a combined authority could be an increased risk to personal safety and increased danger to life, again the majority of these fears came from residents on the Isle of Wight as opposed to the mainland.

“

“I am concerned that this reorganisation is proposed primarily to save money and that a lack of firefighters and appliances could ensure, putting Island residents, their homes, businesses and public buildings at risk.”

“It is highly likely to harmfully affect the ability of the Service which threatens the safety of everybody on the Island.”

“Our personal safety would be reduced by a thinner emergency service.”

“I think it will place everyone at greater risk.”



”

(In total 13 comments were received regarding concern for safety)

Some respondents gave specific examples of how they assumed that the proposed merger would increase risk. A key theme was that local knowledge would decrease, which could negatively impact on how efficiently emergency situations are handled.

“

“Having a central combined authority will reduce the local knowledge available for directing fire appliances, as has been found with a centralised police call centre where the mainland operators, through no fault of their own, have little knowledge of our local area.”

“Already we’ve seen situations where emergency services have been sent to the wrong location... Knighton for Niton because of lack of local knowledge.”



(In total 6 comments were received concerning less local knowledge)

Others felt that the proposed merger could have a negative impact due to increased response times – perceiving that a reduced service or lack of local knowledge will affect the speed in which the Service responds to emergencies.

“

“The speed and effectiveness of response to anybody experiencing a fire on the Isle of Wight.”

“Increased risk of delays when emergencies occur.”

“Delays to call outs in emergencies.”



(In total 6 comments were received regarding increased response times)

Five individuals provided ‘other’ reasons as to why they feel that the combination of authorities could have a negative impact. Many of them felt that this could be a step in the direction of transferring more services from the Isle of Wight to the mainland.

“

“It would lead to decision being made that favour the other areas at the expense of service in the Isle of Wight and would also pave the way for further such transfers of authority and administration over to the mainland, making it harder to defend local services at the current level.”

“I fear a CFA would over time lead to centralisation of resources and thus impact negatively on those people who live at distance from such resources.”



(In total 5 comments were received regarding ‘other’ negative impacts)

Respondents who live on the Isle of Wight also raised concerns about the impact of the increase in council tax that they would face if the proposal went ahead.

“

“Clearly any increase in council tax payments has an impact on the family budget.”

“Residents of IOW have to pay more for a service so that IOW council can make savings – which won’t be passed on to the residents.”



”

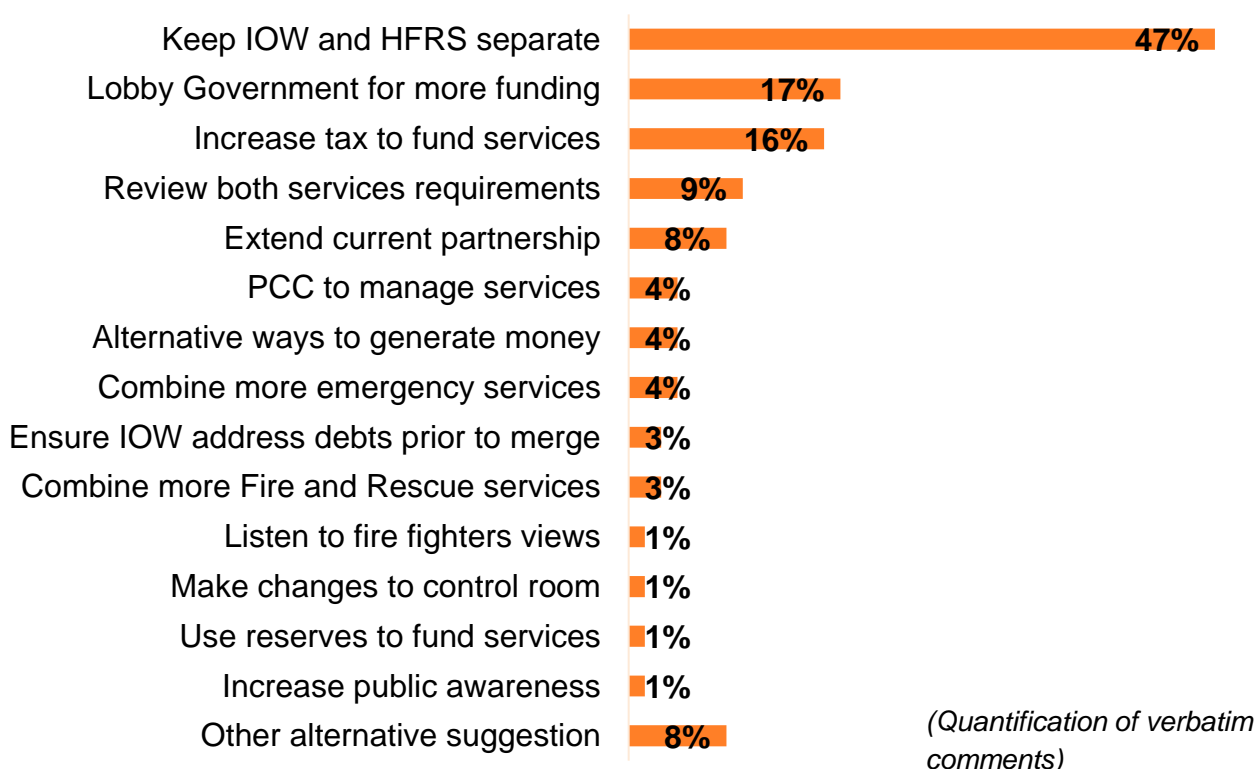
(In total 6 comments were received regarding the tax increase)

Alternative suggestions to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority made by individuals

76 individual respondents put forward an alternative suggestion to the creation of a Combined Fire Authority. The majority of these suggestions were made by residents on the Isle of Wight, as opposed to those who live on the mainland.

Nearly half of these individuals (36 respondents) suggested that the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Services should remain as they are, i.e. separate authorities.

Alternative suggestions made by individuals (Base: 76)



The main reasons given for this suggestion was that current partnership arrangements work well enough and therefore there is no requirement for changes to be made.



“If the present system is working well why change it? You say that a review would be ‘likely’ to alter the current arrangements. Before going ahead why not be more precise?”

“IOW Council must stand on their own two feet and not give the island services away. The existing arrangement with Hampshire Fire Service will be satisfactory for backup and common equipment purchase.”

“Status quo or heaven forbid, a properly financed and supported FRS both sides of the Solent.”

“IWFRS should stay as is. The ratepayers of Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton can decide for themselves what they need.”



(In total 36 comments were received suggesting the Services should remain separate)

Indeed, some would prefer that the two authorities remain separate and the current working partnership be adapted or amended to drive service efficiencies.

“

“The only alternative would be an extension of the current partnership.”

“Continue working in partnership but separate identities.”

“An alternative would be to extend the delivering different in partnership project which has been working very well over the last three years.”



”

(In total 6 comments were received about amending the current partnership)

Seven respondents also made reference to reviewing both Fire and Rescue Services separately and analysing their individual requirements to see if any local streamlining could be achieved.

“

“Perhaps looking at streamlining management roles locally before deciding to centralise the Service which would have an impact on

“No alternative but reviewing current local management/leadership of Island services is sensible, necessary and probably overdue.”



“Start with a blank piece of paper and design both services for the future without the millstone of history.”

”

(In total 7 comments were received regarding reviewing both services)

‘Other’ suggestions relating to governance (6 comments) made by respondents included; the Isle of Wight having its own fire authority separate from the Isle of Wight council; Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service taking over the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority and electing new councillors on the Isle of Wight.

Many respondents saw increased funding as the key to keeping the two authorities separate. Nearly two in ten suggested that before deciding whether to create a Combined Fire Authority every effort should be made to lobby central Government in order to receive adequate funding for both services, which respondents have evidenced they feel are essential.

“

“I don't have an alternative. Just more funding for the current service. It seems the fire brigade, police and NHS are all close to a disaster waiting to happen. No more cut backs.”

“National Government to release adequate funding to improve Emergency Services.”

“Fund the IWFRS properly. It takes longer for HFRS to get to IOW than them to get to Devon or Sussex.

Why not merge with those Fire Services instead? The IOW is a special case and needs additional funding from central government, or a fixed link!”



”

(In total 13 comments were received suggesting the Authorities should remain

A similar number made suggestions of increasing council tax to ensure the financial resilience of their fire services and to enable them to remain separate. Again, the majority of these comments were made by residents on the Isle of Wight.

“

“Increase council tax to fund the separate services properly.”

“The Isle of Wight should remain independent. If there is a need to increase taxation, then so be it.”

“If it is necessary to raise council tax then do that as the people of the Isle of Wight will be much safer knowing their fire service is controlled locally.”

“I would be happy to pay more council tax to get a better local service.”



”

(In total 12 comments were received suggesting a tax increase to fund the service)

A small number of respondents suggested less traditional options for funding the Service, such as fundraising, in order to maintain their current status.

“

“Raising money to pay for the Services. I would prefer a rise in taxes on luxury goods such as electrical goods, cigarettes, alcohol, gambling, foreign holidays, new vehicles, fatty foods etc.”

“I do not think that there should be a significant increase to Council Tax payers on the island as rates are quite high already and salaries are still below average. Maybe a Fire Service lottery could be run to raise money?”



”

(In total 3 comments were received about raising money other ways)

Finally, three respondents suggested that combining more than one of the emergency services in one area would provide a better solution to combining one service across a number of areas. They perceived that this would provide the same amount, if not additional, efficiencies to those created by the proposal.

“

“I wonder if more money could be saved by combining the call centres of all of the Isle of Wight Emergency Services in one building so that Ambulance, Fire, Police etc can better utilise resources and local knowledge and all can see exactly what is happening and where by use of a large interactive map identifying the whereabouts of each operation.”

“Combine the lot, police, ambulance and fire.”



(In total 3 comments were received about combining services)

Unstructured responses to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority from individuals

In addition to the views submitted via the Response Form, the consultation received **nine individual** responses via letter or email. Of these **seven** were from members of the public, **one** from a councillor and **one** from a member of parliament.

Support for the proposal came from three members of the public and one member of parliament. The public responses simply stated agreement with the proposal, whilst the MP's official response gave additional detail as to the perceived benefits of a combined authority. These were:

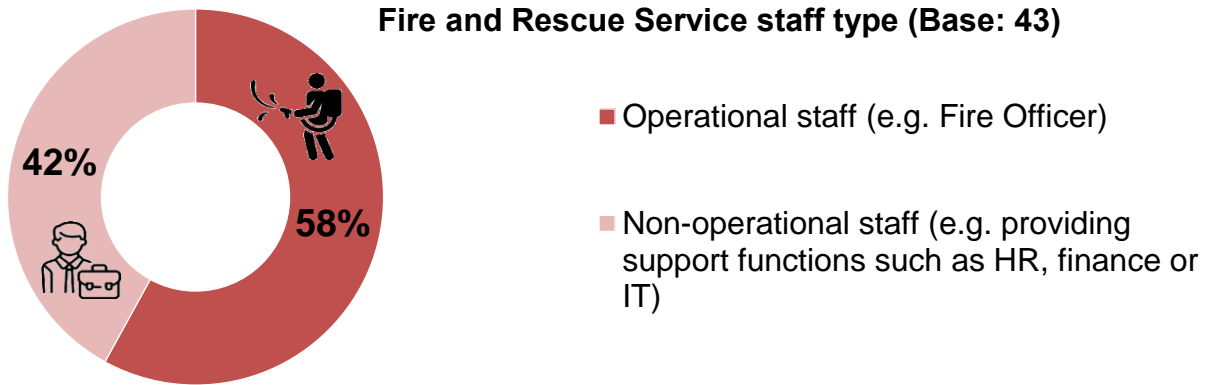
- that economies of scale and financial efficiency would improve as a result of a Combined Fire Authority (*1 comment*)
- that the combination would align the boundaries with Hampshire Constabulary and Police and Crime Commissioner's area to encourage further collaborative working (*1 comment*)

The remaining four members of the public and one councillor were opposed to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority. The most frequent themes raised in these responses were:

- general disagreement for the proposal of the Combined Fire Authority (*5 comments*)
- a belief that the combination will not be as efficient as proposed (*1 comment*)
- concerns about insufficient numbers of staff/resources as a result of Combined Fire Authority (*2 comments*)
- concerns regarding public safety if Combined Fire Authority proposal is implemented (*2 comments*)
- suggestions to combine all emergency services; ambulance, police and fire on the Isle of Wight to improve efficiency (*2 comments*)
- reminder that the Isle of Wight is an island and has different needs to Hampshire (*2 comments*)
- concern that Isle of Wight/Hampshire have to rely on the ferry when sharing resources (*1 comment*)
- concern about losing local knowledge if the Combined Fire Authority occurs (*1 comment*)
- perception that the Isle of Wight does not have as good infrastructure as the Mainland (*1 comment*)
- concerns about further service cuts for the Isle of Wight (*1 comment*)
- perception that the proposal is purely a scheme to save money (*1 comment*)

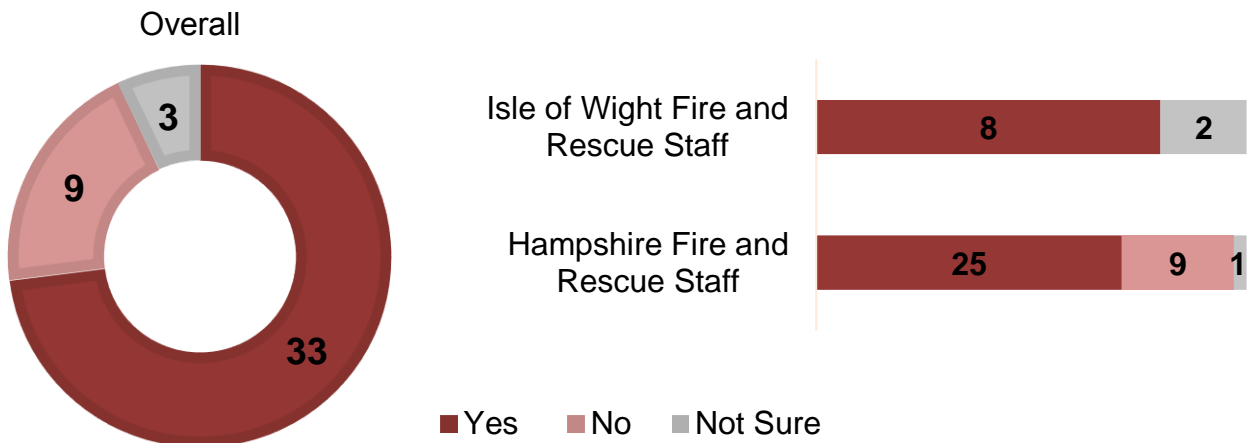
Views of Fire and Rescue Service staff

46 members of the Fire and Rescue Service responded to the consultation. Of these 10 were serving with the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and 36 were serving with the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, with the majority (58%) being operational staff.



As the sample of responses from within the Fire and Rescue Service is below 50, results are shown by count rather than percentage and may not be generalisable to the wider population of interest. The feedback does, however, help to illustrate some of the key themes.

Agreement within the Fire and Rescue Service (Base: 45, 10, 35)



The majority of the responding Fire and Rescue Service staff were in favour of the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority. This position was reflected by respondents from both Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.

Reasons why Fire and Rescue Service staff support the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

20 of the 33 Fire and Rescue staff who agreed with the proposal explained why they supported the creation of a Combined Fire Authority. The most common reason was the perception that services would be more sustainable, with a specialist Fire and Rescue governance focus.

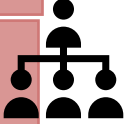
““

“The IWFRS and communities of the Island will benefit from the support structures in place as a Combined Fire Authority. A CFA is the right thing to do to protect the resilience of the IWFRS.”

“A Combined Fire Authority would provide a better service to the public.”

“More specialised governance.”

“I think the IOW Council’s financial pressures are not assisting the IWFRS to serve the community to the best of its potential.””



(In total 10 comments were received from staff regarding improved governance and services)

Many of the responding staff pointed to potential efficiencies - both in terms of financial economies of scale when procuring equipment, and operational efficiencies through pooling skills, knowledge and resources to greater effect and the benefit of both areas.

““



“Collaborative working and financial efficiency.”

“It will bring economies of scale, value for money and operational efficiencies.”

“Seems like a way of working more closely and sharing best practice.”

“Potential of money saving as only one governing body. As long as this money is put back into front line services not wasted.”

“Greater efficiency, increase in shared knowledge and procedures.””




(In total 8 comments were received from staff regarding financial efficiency and pooled resources)

In turn, staff felt that the proposal would have a positive impact on the sustainability and resilience of both services, in particular the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.

““

“It is the only way forward for IWFRS, due to lack of funding from government, the cuts put on the Service are not feasible going forward. . . a new CFA is the only way we can continue to deliver a FRS and expand into the wellbeing agenda.”

“It will provide better services to communities, create a more sustainable organisation, enable clarity of decision making in the interests of all in the area and provide sustainability for the longer term.””



(In total 4 comments were received from staff regarding improved sustainability)

Reasons why Fire and Rescue Service staff oppose the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

Four of the nine Fire and Rescue staff who disagreed with the proposal explained why they opposed the creation of a Combined Fire Authority.

Their main concern was that the mainland would inherit the Isle of Wight's debts - to the detriment of the residents in Hampshire.

“

“I don't see the benefits to Hampshire, clearly the IOW will benefit massively but I suspect at a cost to Hampshire FRS.”

“Management is already in place for its smooth running, however my concern is that some of the building on the IOW may need money spending on them, as a Hampshire tax payer any such issues should be resolved, so as not to be a burden on Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Tax payers.”



“It seems that HFRS are just bailing out IOWFRS, HFRS are picking up the shortfall that the IOW council can't provide.”

”

(In total 3 comments were received from staff who believe Hampshire will inherit debts)

Subsequently, some of the responding staff felt that additional funding should be sought for the individual services as opposed to implementing a Combined Fire Authority.

“

“There have been enough budget cuts to the fire services. It needs to stop, and the politicians need to be told this. Enough is enough!”

“This is not all about money! I believe the population would support a properly funded fire service in all 3 areas.”



”

(In total 2 comments were received from staff suggesting that funding should be found)

One respondent felt that the IOW and the mainland are too dissimilar, and the combination would not work due to differences in operation.

“

“The IOW is run completely different to the mainland. Hampshire can't even run their own county well let alone another.”



”

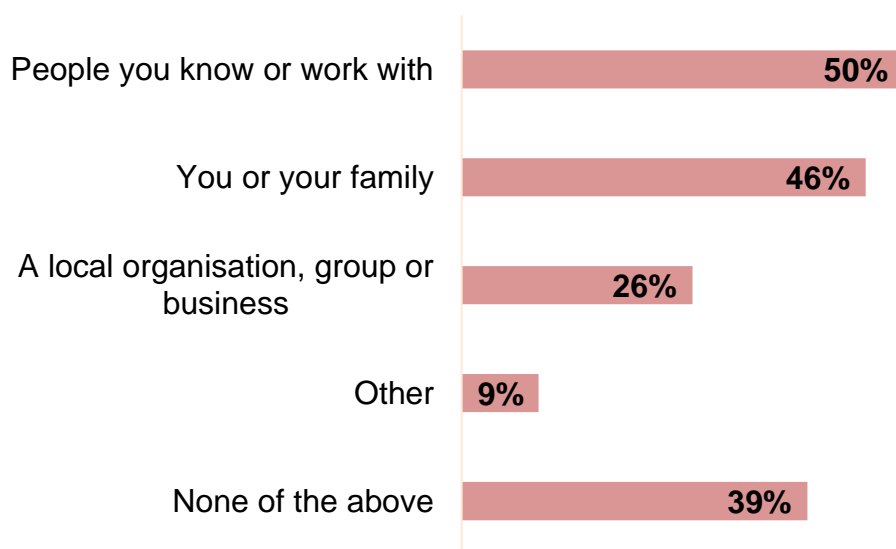
(In total we received 1 comment from staff relating to operational differences)

Perceived impacts of the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority from respondents within the Fire and Rescue Service

Half of the responding Fire and Rescue Service staff felt that people they know or work with may be impacted in some way should the two authorities combine, whilst just under half felt that there would be a direct impact on themselves or their family.

Nearly four out of ten staff who responded felt that no-one would be impacted by the proposed combination. This implies a feeling that the potential merger would not make a big difference to the way the Services currently operate.

Who will be impacted (Base: 46, multi-choice)



Of the 28 respondents who felt that there would be an impact, only 14 provided specific details of what they felt the potential impacts of creating a combined authority could be.

Eight comments referenced positive impacts that the proposal being implemented could have on them or someone they know.

Three respondents referred to the potential for service improvement arising from the change.

“

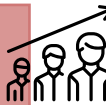
“Improved service for IOW residents and businesses.”



(In total 3 comments were received about improved services)


”

Two respondents noted that Fire and Rescue Service staff could benefit from improved opportunities. For example, the merger may increase chances of career development or change that the two services may not benefit from if they remain as they are.

“I am employed by one of the FRS so could change things I am, or others are responsible for and increase workplace stresses but equally improve chances of career development and promotion.” 

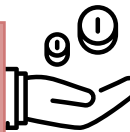
(In total 2 comments were received about potential opportunities for FRS staff)

An equal number of respondents focused on the positive impact that collaborative working could have on them, if the proposal to combine both authorities went ahead.

“Working within the Service I view this potential proposal as a positive and much needed option. The benefits of working together to deliver a service across the complete service will be of benefit to all, irrelevant of which side of the water you reside.” 

(In total 2 comments were received about collaborative working)

Ultimately, these respondents felt that combining the two Fire and Rescue Authorities could mean a more sustainable Fire and Rescue Service for all to benefit from - providing improved safety, greater service efficiency and better value for money for the taxpayer.

“A positive to ensure a safe and resilient Fire and Rescue Service for the future is provided for islanders.” 

“Yes, surely it would impact positively by providing a better service for us all at a lower cost.”

(In total 3 comments were received about increased resilience and value)

Five respondents detailed the negative impacts that they expected to arise from the proposal. There was no clear consensus of opinion - eight different themes arose from these five responses, with the perceived impacts including:

- Potential increase in workplace stress
- Diminished budgets
- Increase in council tax paid
- Loss of representation for the Isle of Wight
- Potential job losses
- Increase in response times
- A reduction in front line services

“

“I work for the IWFRS, so the impact will be direct; the wider impact has of course the potential to affect everyone who may use the Service in the future and with the IW presumably having just one member sitting on the authority (based on those of Portsmouth and Southampton in the current CFA) I don't believe we'll be sufficiently represented.”

“It will undoubtedly effect local business, organisations and communities that rely on us and that we're here to protect with fewer resources, fewer personnel and higher response times.”

“I'd be paying more council tax, so that money wouldn't be available for me and my family. I work with people who would be directly affected as would I.”



”

Alternative suggestions to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority made by Fire and Rescue Service staff


Only six of the 46 responding Fire and Rescue Service staff made an alternative suggestion to combining the two authorities.

Three of the six staff questioned why the two authorities could not remain separate entities and continue working in their current capacity – one to the extent of suggesting that the existing partnership arrangement is also ended.

“Continue as they are. Surely they are already making savings?”

“How different would it really be if we merged than if we didn’t and kept the existing leadership arrangement?”

“Return the IWFRS to its original structure outside of the partnership.”




(In total 3 comments were received suggesting the Authorities remain separate)

A further two staff suggested gaining additional funding for the Fire and Rescue Service from other means instead of combining authorities.

“If the IWC are able to gain additional funding for the Island and funds can be allocated to IWFRS then this is possible, however every department is under the strain of budget cuts and the amount needed to return to our previous structure and continued replacement of equipment and updating of our buildings it is unlikely to be a priority for the council.”


“Provide reasonable funding for the Service the public wants.”



(In total 2 comments were received suggesting increased funding for services)

The remaining respondent suggested combining all emergency services on the Isle of Wight to make the needed efficiencies, as opposed to combining the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service with that in Hampshire.

“I believe if combinations should occur this can be best achieved by combining authorities that deliver services on the Island; i.e. combination of the Fire and Rescue Service and ambulance service.”



(In total 1 comment was received suggesting combining more services)

Views of responding organisations

A total of 27 organisations submitted an official response to the consultation. 11 did so using the consultation Response Form, with a further 16 responding via letter or email.

Of these 27 organisations, 20 were councils, and seven represented the emergency services sector.

Local Authorities' response to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

Nine councils responded to the consultation using the consultation response form and 11 provided an unstructured response.

Nine councils opposed the proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority. All of these councils represented residents on the Isle of Wight.

Six councils supported the proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority. This group represented residents in Southampton, Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight.

Five responding councils did not state their position within their response – instead using the opportunity to seek reassurance on potential local impacts. Amongst these were representatives of residents of the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Basingstoke in Hampshire.

Local Authorities views on the proposal

Agree Chale Parish Council Hampshire County Council Havant Borough Council Northwood Parish Council Rushmoor Borough Council Southampton City Council
Disagree East Cowes Town Council Freshwater Parish Council Havenstreet & Ashley Parish Council Lake Parish Council Rookley Parish Council Ryde Town Council Shalfleet Parish Council Wroxall Parish Council Yarmouth Isle of Wight Town Council
Neutral Bembridge Parish Council Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Rowlands Castle Parish Council Shanklin Town Council St Helens Parish Council

Reasons why Local Authorities support the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

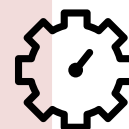
The main reason why councils approved of the proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority was because of the perceived efficiencies that this is expected to provide. Financial efficiency proved the most common driver, with councils acknowledging the potential economies of scale that the new authority could benefit from. Operational efficiencies were also front of mind.

“

“It is clear that creating a new Combined Fire Authority would build capacity, increase resilience and deliver further economies of scale.”

“The chief reasons for supporting the proposal were based on the arguments set out in the consultation in respect of efficiencies and greater capacity created for the authority by the prospect of a combined authority.”

“Southampton City Council recognises the opportunities for efficiencies and improvements in terms of finance and service operations.”



”

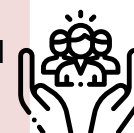
(In total 4 comments were received regarding increased efficiency)

Four councils who agreed with the proposal expressed their views that the combination will increase public safety in the area, which would be beneficial to residents of both the Isle of Wight and on the mainland.

“

“The County Council believes that the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority would not have any negative effects on the safety of Hampshire residents and is more likely to increase their safety due to greater operational efficiency.”

“The creation of a Combined Authority across the four local authority areas will 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.”



”

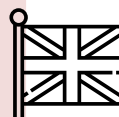
(In total 4 comments were received regarding increased public safety)

Three councils felt that creating a combined authority could have a positive national impact by providing more capacity to assist with larger scale or national incidents.

“

“Southampton City Council recognises the opportunities for efficiencies and improvements that could be achieved through a Combined Authority, including the pooling of resources to deliver improvements, the pooling of skills and knowledge, and a larger more flexible workforce which can flex to respond to demand locally and nationally.”

“With respect to the proposals, our view is that the creation of a Combined Fire Authority makes sense, we have noted the various reasons given for the proposed merger including simpler governance arrangement, financial efficiency, greater operational efficiency, effectiveness and public safety, greater pooling of resources of skills and knowledge and being able to respond more effectively to any national scale incidents.”



”

(In total 3 comments were received regarding the increased national impact)

Reasons why councils oppose the proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority

The majority of the opposing councils, all of which were based on the Isle of Wight, expressed dissatisfaction with 'losing control' of the Service. They felt that if the combined authority is situated on the mainland, its priorities would not be in the best interests of Isle of Wight residents.

“

“The main concern is loss of control for the Isle of Wight. Priorities for a combined authority would be likely to be off the Island. Financially small increase in costs to residents but the long-term costs seem unknown.”

“Loss of control due to being just one vote if the Island wanted to dispute any further decisions which the Island felt was not in its best interests.”



“Lack of representation from the Island at the new fire authority (1 of 10 seats).”

”

(In total 5 comments were received concerning loss of control)

This was particularly the case given the proposed increase in council tax for residents of the Isle of Wight. Although only a nominal amount, it was perceived that those on the Isle of Wight would pay more but not receive a higher standard of service.

“

“No financial gain for Island council taxpayers – in fact, amalgamation would result in increased annual costs of £3.74 per household.”

“Financially small increase in costs to residents but the long-term costs seem unknown.”



”

(In total 3 comments were received concerning the increase in tax)

Two councils also expressed concerns regarding public safety.

“

“East Cowes Town Council are opposed to this proposal. They believe that by combining these services it will provide significant risk to the safety of the public and industry in East Cowes which is a highly industrialised area.”

“Members recognised the need for a review and acknowledged that significant savings had been identified by IW Council in the 2018/19 budget, but the need to ensure the safety of local residents and communities should be a priority and further engagements would help inform the public and businesses.”



”

(In total 2 comments were received concerned with decreased safety)

Generally, the opposing councils agreed the current partnership arrangements were working well and therefore that a Combined Fire Authority would be an unnecessary change.

“

“The Council resolved to respond that it does not see the necessity for a Combined Fire Authority with Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton. The present arrangements, with the Isle of Wight Council exercising the powers of the Fire Authority are adequate for the Island’s needs and placing control of the local fire service in the hands of elected members from mainland councils will result in a gradual marginalisation of the Island’s influence and needs.”

“It was agreed that oversight and financing of the IW Fire Service appeared to work well under the current arrangements and no particular advantage was seen in having a CFA.”



”

(In total 3 comments were received concerned with the necessity)

Perceived impacts of the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority from responding Councils

Councils that completed the online Response Form were asked which groups they felt would be impacted by the proposal, should it progress. All felt that the proposed merger would have some impact.

Four councils focused on the positive impacts such as efficiency and improved safety, similar to the reasons provided for approving the proposal.

“

“We support these proposed impacts which a new Combined Fire Authority would bring.”



”

(In total 4 comments were received expecting positive impacts on efficiency)

However, most sought reassurance that the proposal to combine the two authorities would not impact the Service provided in their area. Even those who supported the proposals were keen to clarify potential longer-term service implications.

In total, six councils made a comment about the implications that the proposal could have on their local communities, for example concerns about local fire station closures.

“

“Shanklin fire station should be retained.”

“Can assurances be given that Bembridge fire station will continue to operate?”

“There appears to be implications for the number of stations (important to rural communities on an Island – highlighted by recent issues with car ferries) and associated to recruitment of retained and full-time crews.”



”

One Isle of Wight based council expressed concern regarding delays in firefighters arriving at a scene of emergency.

“

“Delays in reaching locations that may be unfamiliar to mainland call centres – already demonstrated by the emergency health call centre on the mainland.”



”

(In total 1 comment was received concerned with delays in response)

Another council raised concerns about the impact on its status as a Unitary Authority if the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority is implemented.

“

“Members were also mindful to ensure any future Joint Service, if it is agreed, needs to respect the Island’s status as a Unitary Authority (i.e. representation, veto, and voting rights), severance by water issues, and additional costs/capacity needs; and joint service interface (i.e. with other emergency services and voluntary sector).”



”

(In total 1 comment was received concerning the IOW losing its status)

Although the majority of the comments regarding fears about service impact came from those councils on the Isle of Wight, councils on the mainland also expressed their concerns with potential station closures and the potential impact on residents.

“

“Whilst accepting the concept of the proposed combined authority, this Parish Council is keen to emphasise the need to protect local stations, particularly those in smaller conurbations which may serve more rural areas.”

”

(In total 6 comments were received concerning fire station closures)

In Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth, councils expressed the need for reassurance that they would not be financially disadvantaged as a result of the merger.

“

“The County Council will therefore seek to gain assurance from Government that the property maintenance liability would not disadvantage Hampshire and that the transition arrangements are fair.”

“Southampton City Council would like to seek assurance from the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority that the combining of the authorities would not have a negative impact on services in Southampton, with funding previously allocated for Hampshire services being used to meet the financial challenges of replacing vehicles on the Isle of Wight.”

“We note that the consultation states there should be no financial impact to our residents in terms of the share they pay towards the Fire and Rescue Service, however, we would caution of the need to ensure that the financial challenges faced by Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service are effectively managed and not passed onto our residents either through increased cost or any impact on future investment in services across Hampshire.”



”

(In total 3 comments were received concerning financial liability)

Two councils on the mainland had concerns about future demand pressures due to predicted population and housing increases and sought reassurance that plans took local economic growth into consideration.

“

“Any plans must take account of population and dwelling growth. In Basingstoke and Deane there is a growing population (175,852 residents in 2018, forecast to reach 192,666 in 2024) and there are an increasing number of older residents.”

“Rowlands Castle, in line with many other towns and villages in the area, is experiencing a considerable increase in housing development which will need factoring into any future decisions regarding fire stations and the areas they cover.”



”

(In total 2 comments were received concerned with increased demand)

Alternative suggestions to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority made by Local Authorities

Alternative suggestions (Base: 6)

Six out of the 20 responding councils put forward alternatives to the proposed approach. Five of these councils would like to see the authorities remain separate. The majority of these comments were from councils based on the Isle of Wight.



“IWC must retain its county status and remain independent from Hampshire.”

“Remain as at present.”

“Present system should remain.”

“The IWC must retain its county status and remain independent from Hampshire. Existing arrangements appear to be operating satisfactorily, so changes seem unnecessary.”

“The alternative is to leave arrangements as they are subject to the review.”



(In total 5 comments were received regarding remaining separate)

The other alternative suggestion that an Isle of Wight based council made was to increase tax to raise funds to support the current services.



“The Town Council believe that the people of the island would be agreeable to pay more in council tax to preserve a local island service.”



(In total 1 comment was received regarding increasing council tax)

No other alternative suggestions were made by councils.

Emergency Services sector response to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

The remaining seven organisations that responded were all linked with the Emergency Services sector. In their professional capacity, these respondents have a clear working knowledge and experience of the fire and rescue service.

None of these organisations opposed the proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority, instead the overwhelming majority were in favour of the move suggesting that this proposal would be well supported by the wider sector. One organisation, the Fire Brigades Union, gave a neutral response which focussed on ensuring that firefighter welfare was front of mind should the proposed merger proceed.

Emergency Services sector views

Agree
Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
Hampshire Constabulary
National Fire Chiefs Council
Police and Crime Commissioner
South Central Ambulance Service
South East Coast Ambulance Service
Neutral
Fire Brigades Union

Reasons why responding Emergency Service sectors support the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

All respondents from the emergency service sector outlined why they agreed with the proposal to combine the two authorities, with some outlining specific positive impacts the merger could have.

Four organisations made reference to a more sustainable service being provided to the residents of both the Isle of Wight and Hampshire.

“

“The combination will also provide a greater resilience, especially for the Isle of Wight as part of a larger organisation.”

“I know that Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority already work very closely with Isle of Wight Council and realise the mutual benefits and resilience which that excellent working relationship creates.”



”

One of those four comments came from Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, who shared their own experience of merging authorities and the increased sustainability that can come from combining services.

“

“Through the reconfiguration of available resources, I believe that the services offered to the communities of Dorset and Wiltshire are now in a stronger more sustainable position.”



”

(In total 4 comments were received mentioning increased sustainability)

The emergency services also perceived that the combination of the two authorities would lead to an increase in safety for the residents on both sides of the water. This emanated from their own experiences of collaborative working.

“

“A new Combined Fire Authority would reflect the Hampshire policing area, and in turn provide further opportunities for a strong evidence base delivering on keeping our communities safer.”

“Within Hampshire Constabulary we also enjoy strong working relationships with officers and staff from both organisations, which collectively helps us to keep Hampshire and the Isle of Wight safer.”



”

(In total 4 comments were received mentioning increased safety)

Some organisations noted that the Service provided by a Combined Fire Authority would remain at a high standard or even increase in quality, which would be beneficial to all residents.

“

“Hampshire is nationally regarded, rightly, as a leader in emergency services collaboration. Through undertaking a more coordinated and shared use of resource and provision keeps a continued focus on frontline delivery.”

“Operating within a single fire authority will provide consistency and improve safety for all staff as well as increasing the resilience on the Island.”

“The amalgamation will also allow sharing of expertise, resources and resilience across the two services, which can only aid public safety.”



”

(In total 4 comments were received regarding service standards)

Another common theme related to increased financial and operational efficiencies arising from a Combined Authority.

“

“It will make better use of resources, provide greater efficiencies and safety, increased pooling of skills and knowledge, improve and simplify governance and enable greater contribution to national scale accidents.”

“In times of continuing financial constraint, ways to provide efficiencies beyond reducing services are vital and this will provide that.”

“From the view point of my own service, we have seen considerable benefits arising from our combination including around £4m of annual efficiency financial savings.”



”

(In total 3 comments were received mentioning increased efficiency)

NB: No alternative suggestions were made by the emergency services sector as no-one gave a negative response.

Impartial views on the proposal from the Fire Brigades Union

The Fire Brigades Union provided a detailed response expressing their neutral view on the proposal. This outlined both the advantages and disadvantages arising from the proposal.

“

“At this time FBU officials have no choice but to take a holding position on this proposal, neither supporting nor rejecting the proposed merger of Hampshire and Isle of Wight FRS.”



”

Key points raised

- The public and firefighters of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight need assurance that any combination will not negatively affect emergency cover e.g. no reduction in fire stations, appliances or uniformed based posts.
- Staff will require assurances that there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of the combination.
- The delivery of proper, safe and resilient crewing arrangements for fire cover must be a priority no matter the outcome of the consultation.
- FBU would like to ask that the crewing reduction proposal taking place on the Isle of Wight is withdrawn until the outcome of the consultation is known.
- Employees of the Services will continue to be employed under the same terms and conditions and that this will be protected e.g. pension arrangements.
- Harmonisations of current rates of pay between the two Fire and Rescue Services.
- If a merger is agreed the FBU expect employers and managers to engage properly with elected representatives at local level.

The Fire Brigades Union did not have any alternative suggestions to the merger, other than to increase the funding for the Fire and Rescue Services.

“

“Against this background, the view of the FBU and our members is clear: We demand investment, not cuts to the service going forward.”



”

The current lack of funding led them to reluctantly conclude that combining the two authorities may be the only option available to ensure that the Services were maintained.

“

“The constant drive for efficiency, which is more often than not a cuts agenda has led us to a position where the only sustainable option is to merge Hampshire and Isle of Wight FRA, particularly with the significant funding gap currently facing the Isle of Wight Council.”

”

Consultation Focus Groups

In addition to the consultation questionnaire, five focus groups were conducted with members of the public. These were held in September and October 2018 in Ryde, Portsmouth, Southampton, Newport and Basingstoke, with participants invited from across the local areas.

The core objective of the focus groups was to enable a more in-depth discussion with members of the public regarding the proposed merger of the two fire authorities in order to:

- understand how the public's existing perceptions about the Fire and Rescue Service may impact on their response to the proposals
- explore what participants feel would be the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed Combined Fire Authority, and why they have this view
- understand the perceived impact of creating a Combined Fire Authority
- identify any misconceptions about the proposals.

Each group lasted one and a half hours.

In total, 44 people took part in the focus groups. Amongst the participants, there was a 48%:52% male to female ratio, and an age range spanning 18-68 years. Participants represented a wide range of backgrounds and occupations, as illustrated below.

Occupations of focus group participants



Twelve of the participants had direct experience of calling out a Fire and Rescue Service, whilst eight had direct experience of the work that the Fire and Rescue Service undertook in the local community. The remaining participants had no direct experience but were aware of the Fire and Rescue Service and what it does.

Initial reactions to the proposal to create a Combined Fire Authority

The chart below illustrates the groups' initial reactions to the proposals and how these differed between geographical areas.

Participants from the Isle of Wight

Have a strong local identity and ownership of the Service.

"It's a bit of unique situation on the Island, we are completely cut off from everything."

"It's great that they promote fire safety in schools, as this is really valued."

Assume the proposal will lead to service reductions but can see some benefits.

"My concern is – it's always the front line that suffers."

"It would open the door to other cost saving measures."

Fear a loss of accountability and Island focus.

"I think we'll be a tiny voice in a large authority - the Island won't have much priority."

"An increase in taxation with a reduction in representation."

Overall, feel uncertain about the proposal and have concerns about the future.

"It sounds like a good idea, but we don't know what is going to happen down the line."

"We are being forced by a council that has already decided to cut services."

Feel the Isle of Wight cannot rely on the mainland - services need to be retained.

"You need people here with a knowledge of the Island. . . local knowledge is just vital."

"You need good coverage, with fire stations as getting around isn't always so quick."

Participants from Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton

Were not generally aware that the authorities were currently separate.

"I don't see it as Hampshire Fire and Rescue, I just see it as the fire service."

"I was completely surprised! Why are they being run as a separate entity?"

Do not expect any significant changes but can see some opportunities arising.

"If you still need a fire engine it would still come from the nearest location."

"If it increases efficiency and saves even a little money then it's got to be a good thing."

Can see how the Isle of Wight may have a different perspective to the mainland...

"Can't really see why you wouldn't do it, but then I don't live on the Isle of Wight."

"Am I going to have to wait 2 hours, so they can get the ferry over?"

. . .but overall, think that the proposal is a good idea. . .

"Seems like a no-brainer really."

"It seems silly that there are two. The money that is being spent on two could be combined to give a better service."

. . .as long as services do not change, and an engine turns up when needed.

"As long as the service doesn't change, and you still have a fire engine at the end of a 999."

"As long as it has no impact on frontline services"

Perceived advantages of combining the two authorities

When asked to consider the advantages of combining the two authorities, all groups recognised the potential to use the available resources to better effect by combining and pooling knowledge, standardising equipment and by having one specific service focus. It was acknowledged that the Isle of Wight Council would face increased financial pressure in funding the Service and updating stations in the coming years, and that the merger would help to relieve this burden.

Advantages recognised by all groups



Financial benefits:

Both in terms of helping the Isle of Wight Council balance its budget and helping the Fire and Rescue Service avoid further cuts.



Standardisation of equipment and services:

Both services would be using the same tools and applying the same standards for community and emergency work.



Sharing of knowledge and best practice:

This is already happening but the skills and knowledge base could be enhanced further by combining the two authorities.



Expert governance:

There is a perception that the Services would be governed by people who were fire and rescue experts.



Specific service focus:

A Combined Fire Authority would focus on public safety, whilst the Isle of Wight Council has a broader range of responsibilities.



Widen resource pool:

Both services would be able to benefit from the resources of the other, including equipment, funding and knowledge.



Station refurbishment:

It was acknowledged that stations on the Isle of Wight were likely to benefit from the investment through the merger.

Participants in Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth felt that moving to a Combined Fire Authority was a natural evolution of the current partnership arrangements. They noted that a Combined Authority may be able to operate more strategically in terms of using and purchasing equipment, and be more efficient in its decision making.

Advantages recognised by mainland groups



Reduced bureaucracy / faster decision making:

Potential for quicker decision making as no need for decisions to go through full council on the Island.



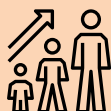
Equipment sharing:

It was recognised that each service had specialist equipment, from which the other could benefit.



Combined procurement:

It was noted that a larger authority would have increased purchasing power and could thereby achieve better value.



Minimal change required:

It was felt that combining the two authorities was simply a natural evolution of the current way of partnership working.

Perceived disadvantages of combining the two authorities

Both groups felt unclear about the future direction of the Fire and Rescue Services, should the merger go ahead. In particular, they raised concerns about whether combining the authorities would ultimately mean job losses or service cuts, and how the funding model would work for all areas.

All groups recognised that the Isle of Wight may feel that its services could become less of a priority as part of a larger authority.

Potential disadvantages put forward by both groups



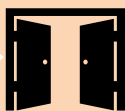
Job losses:

It was assumed that any merger would lead to job losses. Most imminently, there was scope for back office job cuts.



Streamlined / reduced personnel:

There was fear that the combination of authorities was a precursor to a wider service reduction – particularly on the Isle of Wight.



Future uncertainty:

Participants questioned what the Services would look like in five years time and whether a Combined Fire Authority would be seen as a bigger target for central Government reductions.



Reduced independence:

All groups recognised that the Isle of Wight may have concerns about responsibility for its services moving to the mainland.



Funding from the area not benefitting the area:

Concerns were raised about how the Services would be funded and how financial resources would be allocated.

The three groups held on the mainland also considered the size of the proposed Combined Fire Authority and whether it would be too large to function effectively – both in terms of geographic scope and the likely range of differing needs within the area.

Each group also raised the need for Hampshire Fire Authority to use their budget to upgrade dated stations on the Isle of Wight as a potential disadvantage - questioning how the money could benefit Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth if the authorities did not combine.

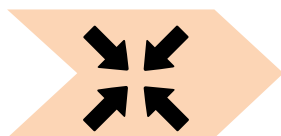
Finally, they queried the level of resource required to manage the change process, and whether that would mean diverting staff away from other duties over the transitional period.

Potential disadvantages put forward by groups from Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton



Increased costs:

Infrastructure and improvements would take some of the combined budget. Money from Hampshire supporting the Island.



Services spread too thinly:

Participants felt that the Combined Authority area may be too large. If services are reduced in future there may not be sufficient coverage for the whole area.



Decisions made not appropriate for all areas:

There was likely to be a range of differing needs across the combined area. Participants asked for clarity on whose needs would take priority and why.



Less community work during the change process:

The additional resource needed to manage the change could lead to reduced capacity for community safety work.

Participants on the Isle of Wight were concerned about both service and governance changes under a Combined Fire Authority. They sought reassurance that the change would not lead to the loss of any fire stations on the Isle of Wight, nor a reduction in the level of priority that was given to the needs of the Isle of Wight. They were also concerned about the proposed council tax rise – not so much the initial cost, but that there was no indication of how much it might continue to grow in future.

Given their concerns, they wanted to retain the ability of local people to hold the Fire Authority accountable. Although they recognised that the existing governance arrangements may not be perfect elected members could be challenged regarding their decisions. In contrast, they felt it was unclear how the Combined Fire Authority would be regulated.

Potential disadvantages put forward by groups on the Isle of Wight



Streamlining / reducing service – number of stations:

Insecurity of the fire stations – particularly on the Isle of Wight – Participants asked these would be compromised in order to make savings.



Loss of democratic accountability:

Participants were unclear as to how the Combined Fire Authority would be accountable to the taxpayer and the identity of the regulatory body



Reduced representation for the Isle of Wight:

Only one councillor on the authority instead of 12. The authority would have a wider focus than just the Isle of Wight.



No cap / limit to council tax rises:

The proposed council tax rise for the Isle of Wight is not capped. It's a small amount now but could rise steeply in future.



Top heavy structure:

Participants felt that the merger could lead to a top-heavy structure.



These things may not end well:

Combining the two authorities was seen as a defensive proposal. There was a wariness based on historic experience of previous mergers.

Points requiring clarification or reassurance

During the course of the group, participants sought further clarification on a number of salient points. These help to illustrate areas of particular concern where additional information may help people to understand the final decision arising from the consultation.

The main focus was the financial implications of combining the two authorities. In particular, participants wanted to understand how the combined 'funding pot' would be allocated across the four constituent areas.

"Ultimately the money for fire and rescue comes from the treasury to the council or the authority. Will the local authority lose the money that comes to IOW currently and under the proposal this will now go to Hampshire?"

"Is it budget neutral from the point of view of Hampshire Isle of Wight, so Hampshire and Isle of Wight are accountable as part of the merger - the savings would come from the synergies that you would get?"

"Talking about how Hampshire County Council and how they finance the department over five years? If the current IOWC set their budget year to year, what would happen if merger went ahead and the five-year budget – at what point would you go in? And what would happen at the end of those five years? Is there a risk that the IOWFS loses out?"

"When all the money goes into one big pot there is only finite amount of money – we need to spend money where the work is?"

"Would the funding from IOW and Hampshire be merged or is it just Hampshire's funding?"

"On the flip side, aren't the islanders thinking that the funds may now come over and tidy up the stations and improve the Services?"

Participants on the Isle of Wight were interested to understand why their council tax precept may increase. Some felt that paying more for services was acceptable, as long as there was full transparency over how the additional monies were being spent. Others were keen that any increase should directly benefit the Island and queried why council tax could not be put up in order to retain the current setup, rather than to contribute to a Combined Fire Authority.

"Is there a reason the council tax would go up on the Isle of Wight?"

"Is there a danger that the money saved by combining is lost in any re-branding of the Services?"

"We should pay more to fund our services if it is transparent where it is going as long as I know the Service we are receiving is the best it can be."

“Another risk is how HFRA structure works and if the budget is looked at as a whole area rather than localities – would Isle of Wight be looked over.”

“If we are actually subsidising and funding the mainland and we are getting a reduced service over here then no.”

Similarly, participants wanted further information on how the two services were resourced. In particular, respondents most often queried how current resources compared between Services in order to understand how Services might benefit / be disadvantaged under the proposed model.. More generally, they sought further reassurance that frontline services would not change, and that there would be no job losses as a result of the proposed merger.

“Who would you say has the most up to date equipment?”

“What’s the population of the IOW?”

“Does IOW have a chief fire officer?”

“Do we envisage any changes to frontline services because of these changes?”

“How do resources compare across the two areas?”

“Job losses are bound to happen – at least in the back office.”

“Are you planning to change your identity as a fire service?”

“So would IOW Training would still be done on IOW?”

“So at the moment if one Hampshire station is under manned can you support?”

“Is it going to require increased management costs? I’m just wondering if you have that authority over there already doing half the job any way – are there going to be two people doing similar jobs on the island?”

Not all participants were clear about how the new governance structure would work – often because they were not aware of the existing arrangements. These questions mostly related to the Isle of Wight and how the Island’s services would be governed, should the combination take place.

“How would the new governance structure work on the Isle of Wight?”

“IOW council have a single representative for fire service, do you think issues get looked over in the cabinet?”

“How many councillors on the Isle of Wight deal with the fire authority at the moment?”

“How did the Isle of Wight not end up as an authority on its own? What I mean is the Hampshire fire authority only look after its own fire service, and the IOW council just look after the fire service?”

“Why can't we make up our own Fire and Rescue authority [outside of the Council]?”

Across all groups, the participants were keen to understand the views of professionals – including a view from those who opposed the proposal. They queried as to whether any other fire authorities had already combined – and if so, what could be learnt from their experiences. Each group also asked for the views of existing fire and rescue staff within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, who were viewed as best placed to understand the implications of the proposals, and most likely to feel the effects.

“Have other fire authorities merged? Were they successful?”

“Have other counties done the same thing and joined together? Have they found it successful?”

“How does it work for the police?”

“Has this been done anywhere else?”

“What's the view on the ground from firefighters?”

“The fire service wants to go ahead with it – but why? Is it so that it can make it more efficient?”

“Wanted to check that the Service has engaged with operational staff?”

“I would have liked to have heard from a fire service union what the union position is of this – what the people on the ground think about this.”

“Is someone going to talk about the opposite point of view. This is what's going to happen – on why they think this is a bad proposal and why it should be rejected.”

Finally, participants sought reassurance that monitoring would be in place to ensure that the success or failure of the combination would be measured.

“You said the IOW service was rated poor, where do the ratings come from?”

“Are you hoping that issues will get addressed and recognised earlier?”

“How do you know at the end of the project if it has been successful or not?”

“How much do the IOW authorities think will be saved by doing this?”

“I would be concerned if we don't go with the proposal would it mean cuts anyway?”

One key message

At the close of each focus group, participants were individually asked which one key message they would like to feed back to the Fire Authorities regarding the proposals.

Participants from the Isle of Wight generally sought further public reassurance regarding the potential risks of the local service operating under a Combined Fire Authority. Whilst they recognised the immediate need for investment in new technology and buildings, they were also keen to understand the longer-term effects of the proposed merger – particularly with regards to staffing and resourcing on the Island.

It was felt that much could be learnt from experience, and therefore they would like to see more evidence from other authorities who had already undertaken a merger, and to understand the views of the Island's own firefighters towards the proposals.

They wanted guarantees for the Island and reassurance about who would be accountable for services on the Isle of Wight and how the quality of service delivery would be monitored to ensure that the merger was not having any negative effect. There was notable concern about the potential loss of funding and democratic representation for the Isle of Wight– the latter both in terms of the number of representatives on a Combined Fire Authority and that it would not in itself be an elected body.

“I think there are lots of questions and risks and if they can address those risks publicly it might be easier to make a clearer or more defined decision.”

“I would like to see the feedback from other counties that have merged and how this is going with them and understanding their mistakes – for and against both sides.”

“The main thing is the loss of accountability – if something goes wrong we can talk to the council about it – if something happens here, what accountability is there? Who do we, the people on the island go to?”

“If the rise of council tax gets spent on something with the IOW Council we have to know where it is spent. If this goes to another authority, we won't have the power to ask where it goes.”

“Basically, making sure that there are some guarantees for the island, we have to have some set in stone guarantees so we know what we are getting.”

Participants from groups held in Southampton, Portsmouth and Basingstoke also felt strongly that any merger should be subject to quality assurance and clear target monitoring to ensure that service delivery was not negatively impacted by the proposed merger. They wanted it to be clear that the focus was on governance, not service change.

There was some empathy towards the Islanders' views and a well received suggestion that the combined authority should take on a new identity for everyone – rather than the Isle of Wight becoming part of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority. However, participants did feel that the authorities would not be proposing to combine as the preferred option if there were not obvious benefits to doing so. In particular, they hoped that combining the two authorities would help to make processes more efficient and encourage best practice across the whole area.

“Think it is a good proposal as long as efficiency remains same or improves.”

“They are the experts they know what’s going on and if they think it’s the right thing to do we have to rely on their decision.”

“Need to be very clear what the success criteria is – how do you know if you’re on track for what you want to achieve?”

“Response times and correct equipment need to be maintained through time. Don’t use this as a way to reduce services via the back door.”

“Think it is a matter to reassure more so on the island that it is a way of increasing availability of resources and reducing money in certain areas but investing money in other areas – can imagine they are fearful about losing employment. Need to manage the change and expectations.”

“‘Protected’ mentality isn’t a good enough reason [not to do this] but we don’t want people feeling marginalised.”

Appendix One – Consultation approach

Open consultation

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) and Isle of Wight Council (IWC) carried out an open consultation, designed to give everyone who wished to have a say on the proposal an opportunity to do so. This type of consultation provides views that are indicative, but not representative, of wider opinion.

The consultation was widely promoted through a range of means.

Regular internal updates were issued to employees of both services through routine notices. Meetings with Unions were held on both the Isle of Wight and in Hampshire, one in each location and an additional two combined meetings.

News articles were published on the Hampshire Fire and Rescue website and Isle of Wight Council webpage and also featured in the local press. An advertisement was also placed in an Isle of Wight newspaper and articles were featured on 'OntheWight.com' a news website for residents of the Isle of Wight.

Both Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Isle of Wight Council endorsed the consultation using regular social media posts on Facebook and Twitter.

Three meetings were also held with Town and Parish Councils in various locations on the Isle of Wight during September. These provided an opportunity for Councillors to meet face to face with Fire Authority Members and Service Staff. In total there were seven attendees across these meetings.

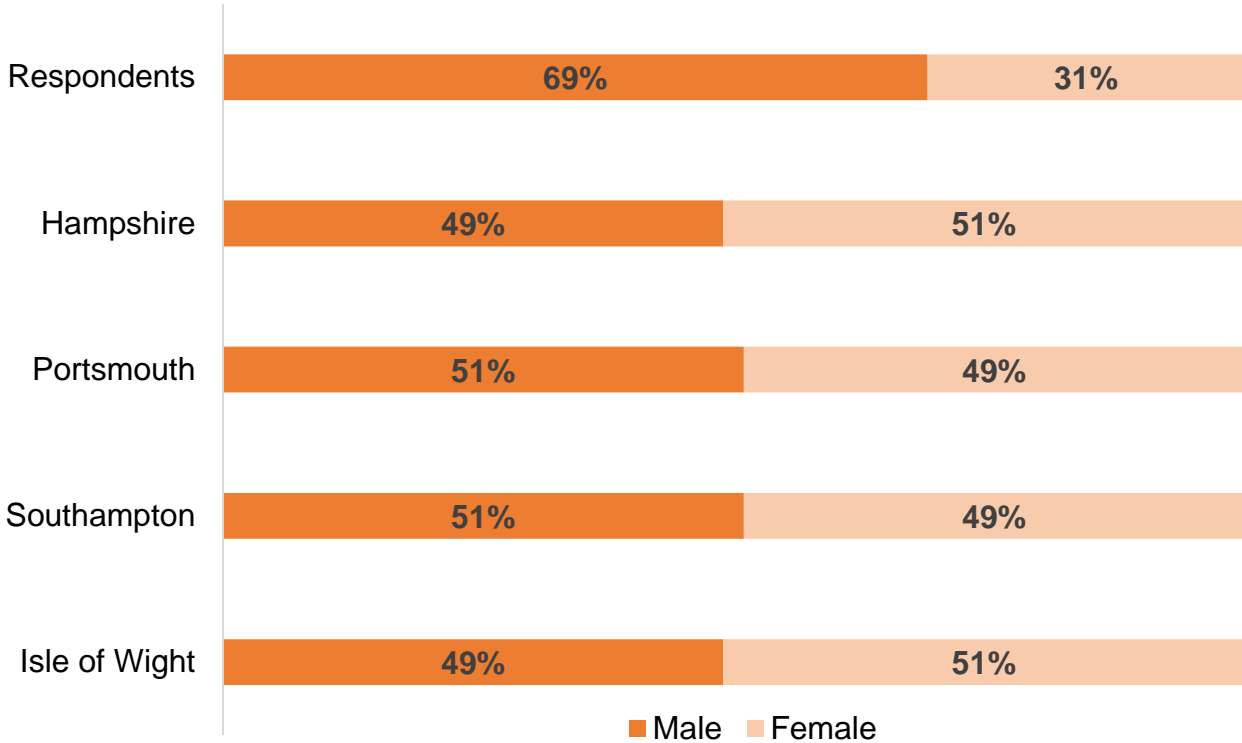
Consultation Information Packs were placed in libraries and council offices across the four areas and could be requested in a range of alternative formats by email or telephone. Responses could be submitted through an online Response Form, by paper version or as 'unstructured' letters and emails.

In total 380 people chose to respond to the consultation, with 311 taking part via the Response Form, 25 people submitting unstructured responses and 44 people participating in the focus groups. Representation was received from all four areas affected by the proposal and across a range of demographics. Responding stakeholders included Fire and Rescue staff, as well as representatives of local councils and the emergency services sector.

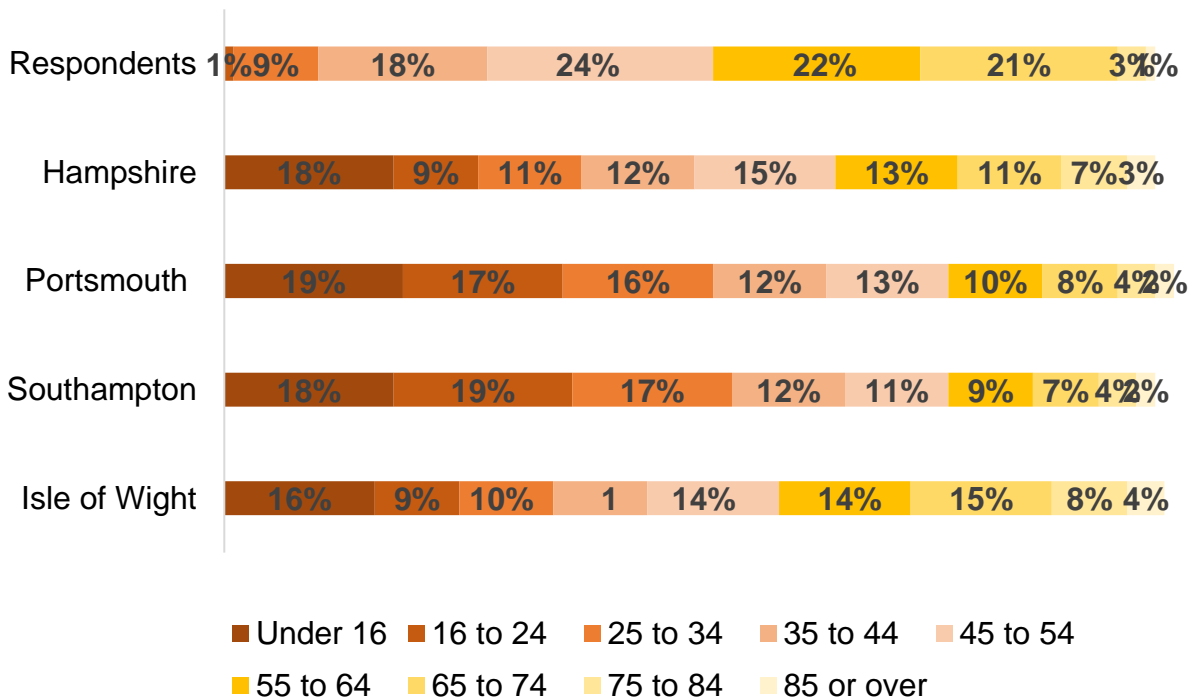
Respondent demographics compared to population of interest

The charts below illustrate how the age and gender of respondents compares to the wider population of interest across the affected areas. They indicate an over-representation of males and older respondents amongst the respondent base.

Gender by Area (Base: 273, 1370728, 214718, 252359, 140984)



Age by Area (Base: 271, 1370728, 214718, 252359, 140984)



Interpreting the data

The analysis only takes into account actual responses – where ‘no response’ was provided to a question, this was not included in the analysis. As such, the totals for each question may add up to less than the total number of respondents who replied to the consultation questionnaire.

Publication of data

All data is processed according to the General Data Protection Regulations as detailed below:

Data was collected for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest and for reasons of substantial public interest. The data provided will only be used to understand views on the proposed changes set out in this consultation. All individuals' responses will be kept confidential. Responses will be anonymised and summarised in a public consultation findings report to be published on HFRS' website. Responses from organisations may be published in full.

The information provided in the response form was collected and processed by Hampshire County Council under the instruction of the HFRS. Data will only be shared between Hampshire County Council, HFRS and Isle of Wight Council. Personal data will not be shared with any other third parties. All data will remain within the UK. Responses will be stored securely and retained for one year following the end of the consultation before being securely and permanently deleted or destroyed.

You can find out more about how the HFRS use your data and your information rights from Jessica Hodge, HFRS' Data Protection Officer, by email at: dp@hantsfire.gov.uk or phone 023 8062 6850 and on the HFRS' website: www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about-us/contact-us.

Please also see Hampshire County Council's Data Protection webpage: www.hants.gov.uk/privacy for further details about how the County Council uses and handles data. You can contact the County Council's Data Protection Officer at data.protection@hants.gov.uk. If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, you should raise your concern with us in the first instance or directly to the Information Commissioners Office at www.ico.org.uk/concerns.

Appendix Two – Consultation form



Consultation on the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton

Response Form

Introduction

Fire and Rescue Services are a key part of maintaining public safety. Our core business is in fighting fires. We are also there when there are other emergencies such as floods, road traffic incidents, or terrorist attacks. We help to prevent fire and loss of life through safety information and awareness campaigns.

There is increasing pressure on all Fire and Rescue Authorities to ensure that Fire and Rescue Services are efficient, effective, provide value for money, and are continually working to make communities as safe as possible. Reducing budgets have driven us to consider new ways to make savings, while maintaining public safety and improving services.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) which is responsible for running Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) and Isle of Wight Council (IWC), which is responsible for the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS), have been successfully working together in partnership for three years. We now believe that we are at a point where we need to look at further, more structural changes to the way Fire and Rescue Services are governed in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton so that we can continue to act effectively to keep the public safe.

We have both agreed to consult on whether or not to submit a proposal to Government for the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority, which would cover Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. This proposal offers an opportunity to improve efficiency, achieve better value for money, and maintain high quality public safety services.

This consultation, or decisions following it, would not affect the responsibilities of these services to respond quickly to 999 emergencies and to serve communities.

About this Response Form

Before completing this Response Form, we recommend that you read the accompanying Information Pack.

This Response Form will take around 10 minutes to complete, depending on how much you write.

The Information Pack and Response Form can also be requested in other formats, including alternative language, Braille, audio or large print by email to hfrsconsultation@hantsfire.gov.uk or by calling 023 8062 6815.

This consultation opens at midday on **6 August** and closes at midnight on **26 October 2018**

How to return your response to the consultation

Please return your completed response form in the pre-paid envelope provided. You do not need to add a stamp. If you do not have a pre-paid envelope, please send your response back to us by writing 'Freepost HAMPSHIRE' on the front of an envelope, and 'I&EU' on the back.

Privacy notice

The Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) are running this consultation on behalf of the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, Isle of Wight Council, and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority. Your data is being collected for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest and for reasons of substantial public interest. The data provided will only be used to understand views on the proposed changes set out in this consultation. All individuals' responses will be kept confidential. Responses will be anonymised and summarised in a public consultation findings report to be published on HFRS' website. Responses from organisations may be published in full.

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Section 1: The proposal

HFRA and IWC are considering whether to put a case to Government for the creation a new Combined Fire Authority which covers the local authority areas of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

If a proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority is made and accepted by the Government, the current Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton would be dissolved. A new Combined Fire Authority would be created covering Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

Why is this being proposed?

A new Combined Fire Authority would provide:

- Simpler governance arrangements
- Financial efficiency
- Greater operational efficiency, effectiveness and public safety
- Greater pooling of skills and knowledge
- Greater contribution towards national scale incidents

Impact on Council Tax

- Everyone within a single Combined Fire Authority area needs to pay the same for the services that are provided. Therefore, residents on the Isle of Wight living in a Band D property would initially need to pay £3.74 more per year for their Fire and Rescue Service if a new Combined Fire Authority was created, in order to equal the amount paid by all residents who would be served by the new Combined Fire Authority.

- Residents in Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton would therefore see no change to the Council Tax they pay for the Fire and Rescue Service due to the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority.

If a new Combined Fire Authority was agreed locally, and the Government gives permission for it to be created, it is the Government that would ultimately determine how much Council Tax should be charged, taking into consideration the financial position of both authorities.

Impact on staff

The employment contracts of all existing employees of the two Fire and Rescue Services would transfer to the new Combined Fire Authority. If it is agreed for the Combined Fire Authority to go ahead, the new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) would influence the future shape of the service and resourcing requirements. At the current time, we do not expect there to be impacts on staff as a direct result of the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority. Should future discussions identify impacts on staff, these would be explored and discussed with individuals.

Potential financial impact on Isle of Wight Council

The Isle of Wight Council has calculated that, due to reduced national Government funding, they need to save a total of £16.5million by 2021/22. Whilst the proposal primarily supports the continued provision of public safety services there are potential financial benefits. It is estimated that this proposal could save the Isle of Wight Council up to £200,000 over the medium to long term if central support costs (e.g. pensions, HR), were no longer provided by Isle of Wight Council for the Fire and Rescue Service. That would contribute to the overall financial plans to support public services on the Island. Due to its relatively small scale and in its current form, the Fire and Rescue Service may otherwise find it challenging to make any meaningful contributions to the £16.5million target.

Please refer to pages 9 to13 of the Information Pack for further details.

Q.1 Do you think that a proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton should be submitted to the Government?

(Please select one box only)

- Yes
 No
 Not Sure

Q.2 Please tell us why you think this is. (Please write in the box below. Please do not include any personal details in your response)

Section 2: Your alternative suggestions

If a new Combined Fire Authority is not created then HFRA will remain as it is and IWFRS will remain part of IWC. Both fire services will therefore continue to exist separately and be governed by two separate bodies. This would mean that there would be a review of the current Delivering Differently in Partnership arrangements to see if they remain appropriate. This review would be initiated if it was concluded that the option to create a new Combined Fire Authority was not to be progressed. A review of the partnership would be likely to alter the current arrangements. Details of the partnership review would be finalised if it is decided not to create a new Combined Fire Authority. This would be a matter for HFRA and IWC to agree as part of their normal management of services.

Potential impacts of reviewing the Partnership

If the proposed new Combined Fire Authority did not go ahead, then there could be a number of potential impacts:

- The financial pressures on the Isle of Wight Council's budget and on IWFRS would remain; money to continue to provide adequate fire services on the Island would still need to be found. The Isle of Wight Council would have various options to consider, and these may include: raising Council Tax, the use of reserves, changes to services, or raising income and/or charges. Should any of these proposals be explored, the Isle of Wight Council will lead a separate public consultation outlining any such changes and associated impacts.
- There would be a formal review of the partnership by the IWC and HFRA. HFRA and IWC could choose to alter, or choose not to renew the partnership agreement. This would mean that the HFRA would no longer receive income from the arrangement. This would mean that Isle of Wight Council would no longer benefit from shared leadership and other shared services; it would then need to consider how to best provide these services.

Please refer to pages 14 to 15 of the Information Pack for further details.

Q.3 If you have any alternative suggestions to the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority, please provide these in the box below. (Please do not include any personal details in your response)

Section 3: Potential impacts

We are keen to understand what impacts the proposed Combined Fire Authority might have if it went ahead. For more information about the potential impacts, please see our People (Equality) Impact Assessment available on our website: www.hantsfire.gov.uk/consultation

Q.4 Do you feel the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority would impact: (Please select all that apply)

- You or your family
- People you know or work with
- A local organisation, group or business
- Other
- None of the above

Q.5 Please tell us more about any potential impact using the box below. (Please do not include any personal details in your response)


If you would like to comment further on the consultation proposals, please continue on a separate sheet of paper, or email us at hfrsconsultation@hantsfire.gov.uk

Section 4: About you

Q.6 Are you responding on your own behalf or on behalf of an organisation, group or business? (Please tick one box only)

- I am providing a response on my own behalf.....Go to Q.11
- I am providing the official response of an organisation, group or businessGo to Q.7
-

Q.7 Please provide details about your organisation, group, or business:

 The name and details of your organisation, group or business may appear in the final report, and the information you provide may be subject to publication or release to other parties or to disclosure regimes such as the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your name:

Job position / role:

Name of organisation, group or business:

Address of organisation, group or business:

Q.8 Please tell us who the organisation, group, or business represents, if applicable, and how views of members were assembled. (Please write in the box below)

Q.9 Which area does your organisation, group or business operate in? (Please select all that apply)

- Basingstoke and Deane
- East Hampshire
- Eastleigh
- Fareham
- Gosport
- Hart
- Havant
- New Forest
- Rushmoor
- Test Valley
- Winchester
- Southampton
- Portsmouth
- Isle of Wight
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Q.10 Which of these best describes the primary function of your organisation, group or business? (Please select one box only)

- Trade union
- Local public sector organisation, e.g district or borough council, local health services, National Park, or prison
- Local public sector partnership, e.g. a Community Safety Partnership
- National public sector organisation, e.g Coastguard, or National Fire Chiefs Council
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Charity, voluntary or local community group
- Local business or group or business representatives
- School, college or place of education
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Section four: About you

If you are completing this response form on behalf of an organisation or group, please skip the questions in this section and proceed to the next section, 'End of Consultation' and complete question 17.

HFRS are committed to improving its services, eliminating unlawful discrimination, and promoting equality of opportunity for all people.

We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions so that we can analyse the results overall and by different groups or people.

This will help us to understand the impacts of the consultation proposals and how views differ across these groups. All of the questions in this section are optional.


Q.11 Who are you...

- A member of the public
- A member of staff at HFRS
- A member of staff at IWFRS
- A member of staff at Isle of Wight Council
- A member of staff at Southampton City Council
- A member of staff at Hampshire County Council
- A member of staff at Portsmouth City Council
- An elected Member of IOW Council
- An elected Member of Southampton City Council
- An elected Member of Hampshire County Council
- An elected Member of Portsmouth City Council
- A Member of Parliament

Q.12 If you are a member of staff working for HFRS, IWFRS, or one of the Councils listed above, are you: (Please tick one box only)

- Operational staff (e.g. Fire Officer)
- Non-operational staff (e.g. providing support functions such as HR, Finance or IT)

Q.13 Please provide your postcode. (Please write in the box below)

 Providing your full postcode is optional. If you do provide your full postcode, it is possible that in rural areas this might identify your property. By providing your full postcode you are consenting to Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Isle of Wight Council using this information to understand views on the proposals from different areas.

Section four: About you

Q.14 Are you? (Please select one box only)

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Q.15 What was your age on your last birthday? (Please select one box only)

- Under 16
- 16 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 to 84
- 85 or over
- Prefer not to say

Q.16 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? (Please select one box only)

- Yes a lot
- Yes a little
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q.17 What is your ethnic group?

- White
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups
- Asian / Asian British
- Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
- Other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

For 'White', please specify:

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Irish
- Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background

For 'any other White background' please describe:

For 'Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups', please specify:

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background

For 'any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background' please describe:

For 'Asian / Asian British', please specify:

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background

For 'any other ethnic group' please describe:

For 'Black / African / Caribbean / Black British', please specify:

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black / African / Caribbean background

For 'any other Black / African / Caribbean background' please describe:

For 'Other ethnic group', please specify:

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group

For 'any other ethnic group' please describe:

End of consultation

Q.17 Finally, to help us improve access to future consultations, please tell us where you first heard about this consultation: (Please select all that apply)

- Website
- Word of mouth
- Consultation flyer or poster
- Email
- Newspaper
- Staff briefing
- On social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Reported in the press (e.g. radio, newspaper)
- Other

For 'Other', please specify:

Please specify which website/s or newspaper/s:

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation.

This consultation will close at 11.59pm on 26 October 2018.

Feedback will help inform a decision about whether to propose a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton to the Government.

The findings from this consultation will be published and presented to the HFRS on 24 January 2019 and Isle of Wight Council on 24 January 2019.

How to return your response to the consultation

Please return your completed response form in the pre-paid envelope provided. You do not need to add a stamp. If you do not have a pre-paid envelope, please send your response back to us by writing 'Freeport HAMPSHIRE' on the front of an envelope, and 'I&EU' written on the back.

Appendix Three – Data Tables of Respondents

Consultation participant profile

The breakdown of respondents by category is shown below:

Are you responding on your own behalf or on behalf of an organisation, group or business?	Counts Analysis %
I am providing a response on my own behalf	300 96.5%
I am providing the official response of an organisation, group or business	11 3.5%
Who are you?	Counts Analysis %
A member of the public	218 73.4%
A member of staff at HFRS	36 12.1%
A member of staff at IWFRS	10 3.4%
A member of staff at Isle of Wight Council	7 2.4%
A member of staff at Southampton City Council	3 1.0%
A member of staff at Hampshire County Council	17 5.7%
A member of staff at Portsmouth City Council	1 0.3%
An elected Member of IOW Council	3 1.0%
An elected Member of Southampton City Council	1 0.3%
An elected Member of Hampshire County Council	-
An elected Member of Portsmouth City Council	-
A member of Parliament	1 0.3%
If you are a member of staff working for HFRS, IWFRS or one of the Councils listed are you:	Counts Analysis %
Operational staff (e.g. Fire Officer)	25 58.1%
Non-operational staff (e.g. providing support functions such as HR, Finance or IT)	18 41.9%

Are you?	Counts Analysis %
Male	189 64.5%
Female	84 28.7%
Prefer not to say	20 6.8%
Other	-
What was your age on your last birthday?	Counts Analysis %
Under 16	-
16 to 24	3 1.0%
25 to 34	24 8.2%
35 to 44	50 17.1%
45 to 54	64 21.8%
55 to 64	60 20.5%
65 to 74	58 19.8%
75 to 84	9 3.1%
85 or over	3 1.0%
Prefer not to say	22 7.5%
Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?	Counts Analysis %
Yes a lot	16 5.5%
Yes a little	38 13.0%
No	213 72.9%
Prefer not to say	25 8.6%

What is your ethnic group?	Counts Analysis %
White	253 86.1%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	3 1.0%
Asian / Asian British	1 0.3%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	-
Other ethnic group	2 0.7%
Prefer not to say	35 11.9%
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	245 83.3%
Irish	1 0.3%
Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller	-
Any other White background	6 2.0%
White and Black Caribbean	-
White and Black African	-
White and Asian	-
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	3 1.0%
Indian	-
Pakistani	1 0.3%
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
Any other Asian background	-
African	-
Caribbean	-
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	-
Arab	-
Any other ethnic group	2 0.7%

Please tell us where you first heard about this consultation?	Counts Analysis %
Website	45 14.8%
Word of mouth	43 14.1%
Consultation flyer or poster	19 6.2%
Email	76 24.9%
Newspaper	21 6.9%
Staff briefing	31 10.2%
On social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	65 21.3%
Reported in the press (e.g. radio, tv)	20 6.6%
Other	23 7.5%

Appendix Four – Data Tables of Questions

Q.1 - Do you think that a proposal to create a new Combined Fire Authority for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton should be submitted to the Government?

	Counts Analysis %
Yes	163 52.9%
No	127 41.2%
Not Sure	18 5.8%

Q.2 - Please tell us why you think this is (coded)

223 respondents provided comments applicable to the question. The question was open to everyone to evidence why they agreed, disagreed or were impartial about the proposal.

Code	Count	%
Other (macro)	8	4%
Not much change felt/ already in place (macro)	2	1%
Undecided/ depends (macro)	6	3%
Require more information to reach decision (macro)	4	2%
Savings to IOW Council are not significant enough (macro)	3	1%
Positive Impact of Combining (macro)	117	52%
Positive Impact of Combining: Improved efficiency (general)	45	20%
Positive Impact of Combining: Economies of scale to benefit from	7	3%
Positive Impact of Combining: Simpler/improved governance arrangements	31	14%
Positive Impact of Combining: Financial efficiency/savings/security	41	18%
Positive Impact of Combining: Operational efficiency	16	7%
Positive Impact of Combining: Pooling of skills/knowledge	11	5%
Positive Impact of Combining: Pooling of resources	15	7%
Positive Impact of Combining: Increased public safety	7	3%
Positive Impact of Combining: Better service provided (general)	28	13%
Positive Impact of Combining: Greater opportunities/improvements for staff	3	1%
Positive Impact of Combining: CFA will have a greater impact nationally	5	2%
Positive Impact of Combining: Increases sustainability	17	8%
Positive Impact of Combining: Other positive impact	3	1%
Negative Impact of Combining (macro)	69	31%
Negative Impact of Combining: Redundancies/job losses	5	2%
Negative Impact of Combining: Employment issues e.g. pensions	5	2%
Negative Impact of Combining: Reduction in operational service	3	1%
Negative Impact of Combining: Reduction in resources	2	1%

Negative Impact of Combining: Poorer service provided (general)	13	6%
Negative Impact of Combining: Decrease in public safety/ put lives at risk	11	5%
Negative Impact of Combining: Funds wouldn't/may not be spent in IOW	4	2%
Negative Impact of Combining: IOW is too big an area to cover/combine	4	2%
Negative Impact of Combining: IOW needs their own resources/ cannot depend on Hampshire	10	4%
Negative Impact of Combining: IOW would be lost in a big authority/have no say	16	7%
Negative Impact of Combining: IOW residents will be paying more in tax	14	6%
Negative Impact of Combining: Do not want to pay money to support another area	14	6%
Negative Impact of Combining: May result in closures of fire stations	1	0%
Negative Impact of Combining: IOW infrastructure/roads are completely different to mainland	2	1%
Negative Impact of Combining: Increased bureaucracy	1	0%
Negative Impact of Combining: Other negative impact	4	2%
Positive Impact of remaining separate (macro)	32	14%
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Decisions/control needs to stay on IOW	10	4%
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Need to keep services local	8	4%
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Needs of each area will be served better	10	4%
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Jobs should be protected	2	1%
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Local knowledge is important	12	5%
Positive Impact of remaining separate: Maintain local political accountability	1	0%
Operational efficiencies can be achieved another way (macro)	2	1%

Q.3 – If you have any alternative suggestions to the proposed creation of a new Combined Fire Authority, please provide these (coded)

122 respondents provided an applicable comment to the question. This question was open to everyone, whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposal, however the majority that did comment did not have an alternative suggestion to that proposed in the consultation.

Code	Count	%
No alternative suggestion (macro)	31	25%
Other (macro)	0	0%
Alternative suggestion made (macro)	91	75%
Alternative suggestion : Combine all/more emergency services	4	3%
Alternative suggestion : Combine more FRS services	2	2%
Alternative suggestion : Listen to fire fighters needs/views	1	1%
Alternative suggestion : Ensure IOW address debts/finances before merging	2	2%
Alternative suggestion : Increase public awareness/community support	1	1%
Alternative suggestion : Keep HFRS & IOW separate/ leave as is	43	35%
Alternative suggestion : Share management/ extend current partnership	6	5%

Alternative suggestion : Increase tax to fund services	13	11%
Alternative suggestion : Look at both services and review them/requirements	7	6%
Alternative suggestion : Alternative ways to generate money to fund services	3	2%
Alternative suggestion : Use reserves to fund services	1	1%
Alternative suggestion : Lobby central government/increase FRS funding	16	13%
Alternative suggestion : Make control room changes to improve local knowledge	2	2%
Alternative suggestion : Police Crime Commissioner to manage FRS	3	2%
Alternative suggestion : Other alternative suggestion	7	6%

Q.4 Do you feel the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority would impact:

Counts Break %	Isle of Wight	Portsmouth	Southampton	Hampshire	Other areas
You or your family	44 77.2%	16 34.8%	14 29.2%	9 23.1%	4 23.5%
People you know or work with	36 63.2%	17 37.0%	13 27.1%	9 23.1%	4 23.5%
A local organisation, group or business	27 47.4%	11 23.9%	7 14.6%	6 15.4%	4 23.5%
Other	12 21.1%	5 10.9%	8 16.7%	3 7.7%	2 11.8%
None of the above	4 7.0%	23 50.0%	26 54.2%	26 66.7%	10 58.8%

Q.5 Please tell us more about any potential impact (coded)

94 respondents provided a comment applicable to the question. This question was open to everyone who completed the consultation.

Code	Count	%
Little impact (macro)	2	2%
No impact (macro)	2	2%
Unsure/depends (macro)	3	3%
Other Impact (macro)	1	1%
Positive Impact (macro)	22	23%
Positive Impact: Better value /spending of public money	7	7%
Positive Impact: Benefit from services working together	4	4%
Positive Impact: Improved public safety	3	3%
Positive Impact: More sustainable service	4	4%
Positive Impact: Improvement of frontline services	8	9%
Positive Impact: Improved governance/financial efficiencies	8	9%
Positive Impact: Improve opportunities for FRS employees	5	5%

Positive Impact: Other positive impact	1	1%
Negative Impact (macro)	66	70%
Negative Impact: Reduced/ Decrease in front line service	22	23%
Negative Impact: Increase in response times	8	9%
Negative Impact: Impact on local economy/businesses	4	4%
Negative Impact: Potential job losses	4	4%
Negative Impact: Personal safety concern/risk of life	13	14%
Negative Impact: Loss of community support	2	2%
Negative Impact: Less local knowledge in emergencies	7	7%
Negative Impact: Loss of voice/consideration for residents	17	18%
Negative Impact: Increase in tax paid	8	9%
Negative Impact: Money spent subsidising other areas	4	4%
Negative Impact: Increase stress/reduce wellbeing	2	2%
Negative Impact: Other negative impact	6	6%

Organisation participant profile

Which of these best describes the primary function of your organisation, group or business?	Counts Analysis %
Trade union	-
Local public sector organisation, e.g. district or borough council, local health services, National Park, or prison	10 90.9%
Local public sector partnership, e.g. a Community Safety Partnership	-
National public sector organisation, e.g. Coastguard, or National Fire Chief's Council	1 9.1%
Police and Crime Commissioner	-
Charity, voluntary or local community group	-
Local business or group or business representatives	-
School, college or place of education	-
Other	-
Which area does your organisations, group or business operate in?	Counts Analysis %
Basingstoke and Deane	-
East Hampshire	-
Eastleigh	-
Fareham	-
Gosport	-

Hart	-
Havant	-
New Forest	-
Rushmoor	1 10.0%
Test Valley	-
Winchester	-
Southampton	-
Portsmouth	-
Isle of Wight	8 80.0%
Other	1 10.0%