



**Dorset
Fire & Rescue
Service**



**Wiltshire
Fire & Rescue
Service**

Working together to make our communities safer

Inclusive Impact Assessment

“An Inclusive business planning tool”

What is being assessed?

Scenario 3 of the Consultation - Strengthening Our Fire & Rescue Service. Wiltshire Fire Authority and Dorset Fire Authority to merge to create a single Combined Fire Authority whilst also collaborating with all of our local authorities, our police forces, South West Ambulance Trust and local public services

Date Commenced: 24/09/2014

(1) What is it about? Refer to the Equality Duties:

[Click to view the equality duty](#)

Wiltshire Fire Authority and Dorset Fire Authority to merge to create a single (combined) committee of elected councillors whilst also collaborating with all of our local authorities, our police forces, South West Ambulance Trust and local public services.

Should the two fire authorities merge to create a single fire authority and fire and rescue service? In Wiltshire and Dorset this will also mean increased collaboration with local partners including Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council, Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole.

Within scenario 3 Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority and Dorset Fire Authority would merge into a single organisation, governed by a single (combined) Fire Authority made up of a committee of elected councillors, with a single Chief Fire Officer and an integrated team of officers and support staff. The firefighters providing emergency cover and corporate staff from Human Resources, Finance, ICT and other functions would be combined in a single organisation.

A merger of two fire authorities would be a change to the existing organisation and governance structures in Wiltshire, Swindon and Dorset. A new Combined Authority could comprise 28 elected members who would have a number of councillors based upon the respective population size. This could mean the number of councillors on this new Authority would be:

Wiltshire (9), Swindon (4), Bournemouth (4), Dorset (8) and Poole (3).

A merger would not mean the loss of local identities for firefighters and important symbols of identity (such as badges) could remain, and we would maintain a clear local connection with the communities we serve.

Who is this aimed at? Refer to equality and vulnerable groups:

[Click to view groups.](#)

Although not for any particular protected characteristic those with protected characteristics will be included in those listed below.

- Communities and families across Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset
- Communities and families across Swindon and Wiltshire
- Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service Staff
- Dorset Fire & Rescue Service Staff
- Dorset Fire & Rescue Service Volunteers
- Dorset Fire Authority Members
- Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority Members
- Wiltshire County Council
- Swindon Borough Council
- Bournemouth Borough Council
- Poole Borough Council
- Dorset County Council
- Dorset Community and Voluntary Associations
- Dorset Business Communities
- Community and Voluntary Associations in Dorset and Wiltshire
- Business Communities in Wiltshire and Dorset

How will this proposal/procedure/decision meet the equality duty?

A merger of the two fire authorities will result in the newly formed Combined Fire Authority continuing and re-emphasising its commitment to meeting its General Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good community relations, and to its Specific Equality Duties under the 2010 Equality Act.

A Combined Fire Authority will be better enabled to embark upon a journey to progress the new organisation to the final 'Excellent' level of the Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRSEF). Dorset FRS achieved the 'Excellent' level in November 2012, one of only two local authorities in the South West to do so. Wiltshire FRS has not undertaken a Peer Challenge but has made significant progress towards the Achieving level of the FRSEF. A new combined organisation would be able to focus resources on completing a gap analysis against the FRSEF and involve partners and the community in improving service users' involvement and engagement to better meet the diverse needs of our communities. The LGA have indicated that any new organisation would be able to retain the "Excellence" standard for a period of 3 years, without re-inspection whilst this programme of work is carried out.

Dorset Fire and Rescue Service has been a Stonewall Equality Champion since 2009, and Wiltshire FRS has also made good progress in this area. A new combined organisation would be able to work more effectively with LGB groups both within and outside the organisation to deliver targeted services and support.

Both organisations have been working on projects around poverty and deprivation such as those on Rough Sleepers (Wiltshire and Dorset), Gypsy Roma Travellers

(Dorset and Wiltshire), and Food banks (Dorset). There would be considerable resource and cost savings in synergies and joint working in these areas.

A merger of the Authorities will ensure that the best practice in both Fire & Rescue Services can be combined and refreshed to ensure that the new Authority will be continuing to display the strengths at the 'Excellent' level of the Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework.

Further information can be found in the **Meeting Our Equality Duties 2014 Report** for Dorset FRS and the **Equality Information Report 2014** for Wilts FRS.

What are the barriers to meeting the potential of this proposal?

If the following were to occur there will be potential barriers to achieving the full potential of the proposal in Scenario 3:

- Lack of information for people to make a reasoned judgement.
- The result of the public consultation indicating that majority of public opinion is against a merger.
- Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority and Dorset Fire Authority not agreeing that merger is the way forward.
- Timescales not met/Parliamentary timescales being missed/Pressures of general Election planning delays implementation of the agreed option with resulting loss in planned savings.
- Government Ministers refusing to grant a Combination Order.
- If an agreement is reached to combine and Wiltshire FRS and Dorset FRS's continue to keep their existing badges and emblems this may hamper the transition to a new combined FRS culture and business operation.

(2) Who is using it? Refer to equality and vulnerable groups:

[Click to view groups](#)

Although not for any particular protected characteristic those with protected characteristics will be included in those listed below.

Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority

Dorset Fire Authority

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service

Dorset FRS

Wiltshire FRS staff

Dorset FRS staff

Wiltshire, Swindon, Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole communities

Business community of Wiltshire, Swindon, Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole

What data/evidence do you have about who is or could be affected?

The population in the Dorset and Wiltshire sub-region is expected to grow by 107,986 (7.6%) between 2011 and 2020. Growth in real terms will be uneven across the area and centred on urban areas, with greater increases in Swindon, Bournemouth and Poole compared to Wiltshire and Dorset.

- The highest percentage growth is likely to be seen in Swindon, Christchurch, Poole and Bournemouth.
- The proportion of younger people is likely to remain notably higher in Bournemouth due to its appeal as a university destination.
- Taken together, both Bournemouth and Swindon may retain their younger demographic profile than other parts of the sub-region, particularly Wiltshire Council and Dorset County Council which are notably older in demography.
- Life expectancy in the sub-region is likely to increase. Areas of the sub-region such as Christchurch and East Dorset already enjoy some of the longest life expectancy across the country.
- The South West has the highest concentration of military personnel in the country. Plans to rationalise the military estate and introduce a 'Rapid Reaction Force' concept will see more personnel enter the area, particularly army personnel around the Salisbury Plain and Bulford, where the 20th Armoured Infantry Brigade will be based upon their return from Germany.
- Patterns of international migration into the sub-region are linked to wider economic trends, therefore improvement in the economic outlook is likely to increase the appeal of the area to migrant workers.
- Increased levels of migration from Eastern European countries will require consideration of how engagement activities are delivered and will also require public services to be aware of cultural norms and practices that could possibly give rise to an increased risk.
- An ageing population will lead to many areas having an older demographic profile, however it should be noted that there are already local areas with a higher than average proportion of older people.
- Services will need to tailor safety messages according to local demographic factors.
- An increase in the local military footprint will lead to increased demand for local public services and housing. However there will be more opportunities to make use of the skills of armed forces personnel and the military in areas such as joint training. Also, as existing service personnel retire there may be a bigger pool of potential recruits to call upon for on-call firefighting.
- The boosting of the Army Reserve will provide both threats and opportunities; threats as it may be seen as an alternative to those who may be interested in becoming an on-call firefighter but there are also opportunities to be presented as it may allow organisations such as fire and rescue services to recruit individuals with specialist skills.

The population of Wiltshire & Swindon according to the 2011 census is 684,028. The "Safer 2020" document details the trends in population and other areas which will impact upon Wiltshire & Swindon between now and 2020. It is estimated that the population will increase to 738,865 by 2020.

The population of Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole according to the 2011 census is 745,338. The "Safer 2020" document details the trends in population and other areas which will impact upon Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole between now and 2020. It is estimated that the population will increase to 798,486 by 2020.

The population of Wiltshire, Swindon, Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole includes people from all sections of protected characteristics; the proportion of these is evidenced in the 2011 Census.

Considerable work has been carried out by both Wiltshire and Dorset Fire and Rescue Services examining the effects of a range of options for the future of both services. This has resulted in a number of documents being produced, some of the following have been published on the Dorset FRS website and some have not yet been released. These documents include:

1. Consultation leaflet for Wiltshire & Swindon
2. Consultation leaflet for Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole.
3. Safer 2020
4. Vision statement
5. Compliance register.
6. A new combined authority for Dorset and Wiltshire - business case for consultation.

These documents contain detailed evidence of the effect of each of the options outlined in the consultation document.

The evidence of the effect of Scenario 3 includes the following:

Evidence on Page 20 of the Draft business case for consultation July 2014:

Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority and Dorset Fire Authority to merge to create a single Combined Fire Authority, whilst also collaborating with all of our local authorities, our police forces, South West Ambulance Trust and other local public services.

We could make the most of opportunities from a fire-to-fire combination and do so relatively quickly to make sure that we gain financial savings sooner. In doing this, we would want to explore all opportunities for closer working and integration of some functions within local authorities, the police and other public services. This would open up areas for further savings and improved economies of scale. It would also mean that we could continue to share our properties and corporate staff. Work carried out so far has identified savings in the region of £4 million. It could also allow further savings of £1.5 million to be achieved by using more resilient and efficient crewing arrangements.

There would be opportunities to reduce the number of senior management positions and there are strong relations already between officers at all levels to make this work. By combining our corporate and technical support teams we would be able to

improve overall capacity and organisational strength. By working with our local authorities we would be able to enjoy benefits of working with a larger partner and so strengthen our approaches in areas of support and delivery.

We would be better able to support Wiltshire Councils community campuses and other initiatives elsewhere in Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole, Wiltshire and Swindon where public services are provided in a joined-up way and really focus on the needs and wants of local people. By working more closely together we would be able to share our buildings, expertise and information to deliver better services in a more efficient way. This would mean that local people have more straightforward and immediate access to local services, information and advice to help keep them safe and improve their well-being.

Wiltshire and Swindon CFA		Dorset Fire Authority		New combine fire authority		Safe	Strong	Sustainable
Savings	Remaining Deficit range	Savings	Remaining Deficit range	Savings	Remaining Deficit range			
				£5.5 million	£0 – £1.6 million			



- = Likely to meet all the aims of the vision
- = Likely to meet some of the aims of the vision
- = Will not meet most of the aims of the vision

The Vision referred to here is that included in the business case for combinations and makes reference to creating a Fire & Rescue Service which is “SAFE; STRONG and SUSTAINABLE”.

SAFE:

- Understand the make-up and needs of the communities we serve
- Reduce risk to our communities through an innovative and integrated risk management plan
- Maximise the operational potential of our response resources to reduce impacts on communities and maintain firefighter safety.

STRONG:

- Play a leading role in improving community safety, resilience and well-being across Dorset and Wiltshire.

- Ensure we have appropriately resourced teams with the capacity, capability and agility to meet a wide range of community needs
- Strengthen our commercial and business relationships

SUSTAINABLE:

- Use of combined financial resources to achieve on-going efficiencies to provide initial savings of £2m pa by 2017.
- Use innovative ways of working to improve our resilience and deliver efficient, reactive services that meet the current and emerging challenges we and our communities face.
- Build on our existing partnerships and seek new relationships that maximise efficiencies and strengthen service delivery and inter-operability.

How can you involve communities/customers/staff/volunteers in developing the proposal?

A public/staff consultation exercise will run from 20 July to 20 October 2014.

Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority and Dorset Fire Authority have employed Opinion Research Services (ORS), an independent social research organisation, to consult widely on their behalf about some key questions about the future direction of the Fire Authority.

The following specific equality question has been added to the consultation questionnaire:

“All public bodies have a duty to consider the impact of their decisions on people with ‘protected characteristics’ under the Equality Act 2010 (covering age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation) and the Human Rights Act.

Would any of the scenarios in Question 1 have particular positive or negative impacts for any of the people with “protected characteristics?”

From an HR (staff) perspective, certain types/groups of staff may be indirectly affected in any of the options, depending on the criteria used for selection for redundancy for example - e.g. those who are older may opt to go due to pensions availability etc, leaving the younger worker to pick up the work. We must ensure that redundancy selection criteria does not discriminate - e.g. sickness not counted if it relates to a disability, etc

Responses to this question will be validated by the response to questions 8 to 13 on the consultation form requesting equality information about respondents.

Responses to this question will be used to complete this Inclusive Impact Assessment.

Who or what is missing? Do you need to fill gaps in your data?

With the involvement of ORS the consultation will involve a representative element of the communities in Wiltshire and Dorset. All members of the community will have the opportunity to take part on-line or via hard copy consultation forms. All staff of Wiltshire & Dorset FRS have been encouraged to take part in the consultation and there have been staff briefings in both service areas.

ORS have also organised a number of residents, business and voluntary sector focus groups where a representative section of the community have been invited to attend and take part. These have taken place across the Dorset and Wiltshire areas.

The consultation questionnaire includes equality and diversity questions numbered 8 to 13. These will identify those with protected characteristics who have taken part in the consultation. These responses will assist in identifying any people or groups who have been excluded from the consultation or who are under-represented.

{Pause IIA if necessary to collect further data/information.}

(3) Impact

Refer to dimensions of equality:

[Click to view dimensions.](#)

Refer to equality and vulnerable groups:

[Click to view groups](#)

Refer to Human Rights Act 1998 Articles:

[Click to view articles.](#)

Using the information in parts (1) and (2), does the proposal:

(a) Create a benefit for a particular Group?

Yes **No**

Please specify what the benefit its.

The obvious benefit of Scenario 3 to the communities within Wiltshire, Dorset, Swindon, Bournemouth and Poole will be the maintenance of front line services. As previously mentioned the initial savings will be in the region of £4 million, which means that front line services will be maintained at the current level upon combination.

Age:

By restructuring and being more efficient the combined Fire & Rescue Service would aim to increase the number of home safety checks in vulnerable homes across Dorset and Wiltshire from 15,000 to 28,000 (within five years). This will have a direct benefit to those who are over 65, families with children under 5 and those living alone.

At the present time both Services run some form of Safe Drive, Stay Alive programme to educate young people about road safety and the consequences of bad driving. Combination will ensure that this work can continue and best practice in both organisations will be combined to provide a more efficient and effective service.

With the maintenance of front line services and closer working with partner organisations/agencies the Salamander programme in Wiltshire and the SPARC programmes in Dorset will be maintained and developed. This will create a benefit for young people between the ages of 13 and 18 years, as well families and the wider community.

With government support, it is proposed to extend to Wiltshire and Swindon the idea of the nationally acclaimed safety centres operating in Bournemouth and Weymouth. Currently 20,000 young people in Dorset visit the two centres each year from across the area. In Wiltshire and Swindon Wiltshire FRS take part in the Junior Good Citizen programme with other partners each year engaging approx. 3,000 young people annually. However there is currently no purpose built safety centre in the area.

In the Dorset safety centres young people can learn in a safe and controlled environment and become aware of potential everyday dangers and reduce the chance of accidents happening. Communities in Wiltshire and Swindon would then have a significant resource that is not currently available to them at the moment. This will help us deliver wider agendas that our partners such as the police and health service have. This will directly benefit all children and families across the Wiltshire and Dorset areas.

Sexual Orientation:

Upon combination the new Fire & Rescue Service would also aim to extend Dorset FRS network of community volunteers across the whole of the Wiltshire and Dorset areas. Figures from the Q1 DFRS Staff and Volunteer Update Report show that more Volunteers are "gay" than staff, with the latest figures showing only 38 % Staff declaring their sexual orientation, and 0.4% declaring as LGBT; as opposed to 82.8% Volunteers declaring their sexual orientation and 3.5% declaring as LGBT. The new organisation can use the diversity of volunteers to challenge prejudice and discrimination both inside and outside of the Service and broaden our reach with Advocacy to some of the most 'hard to hear' community groups.

Race/Ethnicity:

The extended FRS network of community volunteers across the whole of the Wiltshire and Dorset areas would also encourage people from all ethnic backgrounds to participate in community volunteering opportunities. Volunteers would be locality

based and provide a station-based focus to community engagement. This would have a direct benefit of promoting good community relations and ensuring the new Fire & Rescue Service fulfils its public sector duty responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Disability:

The proposed increase in Home Fire Safety checks and the development of the Salamander programme (Downs Syndrome) will ensure that the new Combined Fire & Rescue Service has increased interaction with those with a disability.

All Protected Characteristics (especially Age/Disability) and those living in vulnerable premises (thatched properties):

On combination, having maintained front line staff there should be no change in response times to emergencies. Although this is not a benefit at this time those mentioned above will benefit as the service will not be reduced. Once established the new Combined Fire & Rescue Service can review and explore its working practices in order to achieve an efficient, effective and sustainable service to the public.

How can you maximise the benefit for other groups and the wider community?

If a decision is made to adopt scenario 3 to merge Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority and Dorset Fire Authority considerable work will take place to develop relevant policies and working practices across the new Combined Fire Authority and Combined Fire & Rescue Service. In order to maximise the benefits listed above to the wider community it will be essential to integrate the Inclusive Impact Assessment (IIA) process into the planning and policy development process.

By ensuring that all policies and decisions undertake Inclusive Impact Assessments at the beginning of the development process any positive or negative impacts can be identified at an early stage. The IIA will also act as an audit trail for the decision or policy.

Those who will be responsible for the decision and policy making process in the new Combined Fire & Rescue Service should undergo training in the use of the IIA process.

(b) Create and adverse impact which may affect some groups or individuals?

Yes No

Please specify what the adverse impact is and which groups or individuals are involved.

Although there would appear to be no identified negative effects of a combination of Wiltshire and Dorset Fire Authorities on people with a particular protected characteristic, the following affected groups may contain people with protected characteristics.

Senior managers within both Wiltshire and Dorset FRS (possibly Station Managers and above) - combination will lead to a reduction in the number of Senior Managers being required in the new organisation.

Corporate and Technical Staff within Wiltshire and Dorset FRS – combination will lead to a need to combine and streamline corporate and technical support staff across the new organisation. This may involve a reduction in the number of these staff or a transfer of staff if services are out sourced.

With a reduced management structure staff in the new Combined Fire & Rescue Service will have less opportunity for promotion and progression.

In the consultation document under scenario 3 it states “A merger would not mean the loss of local identities for firefighters and important symbols of identity (such as badges) would remain” – if following combination the original Wiltshire and Dorset badges and symbols were to remain this would have an adverse effect on the staff of both Wiltshire and Dorset FRS by creating a divide and hindering the development of a single culture.

Who have you consulted with?

A full independent consultation is being carried out between 20 July 2014 and 20 October 2014. The result of the consultation will be analysed and provided to both Wiltshire & Dorset Fire Authorities for further consideration.

From an equality and diversity perspective response to Question 4 in the consultation questionnaire will assist in testing the assumption made in Section 3(a)(b) above.

What were the outcomes?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

If further consultation needs to be carried out, who do you need to consult with?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

**(c) Does this proposal involve collecting/handling personal data?
Refer to the Information Commissioners Office guidance:**

[Click here to view the guidance.](#)

Yes **No**

If the answer is “YES” please continue with this impact assessment and also contact the Service Information Manager for further advice on the need to carry-out a Privacy Impact Assessment.

If a positive benefit or negative impact has been identified what actions will you be taking next?

(4) Consider next steps:

What else needs to be done to develop the benefits for other groups or the wider community?

Results of the public consultation to be fed into this IIA, in particular the responses and result of answers to Question 4 of the consultation “Equality impact?” These should be detailed in answers to the following questions in this IIA.

Consideration to be given to involving people from other vulnerable groups and the wider community in some of the activities mentioned.

Recruitment of volunteers and staff from all sections of the community to ensure a more diverse balance within the workforce (including. volunteers).

What else needs to be done to change or mitigate an adverse impact?

When looking at reducing staff numbers the use of the following options, with the involvement of Wiltshire and Dorset FRS staff, will reduce the negative impact on those staff:

- Leaving staff vacancies unfilled in the lead-up to combination
- Retirement
- Voluntary redundancy
- Relocation
- TUPE
- Enforced redundancy

Lack of promotion and progression: the new Combined Fire Authority to review performance management systems and career development of staff. To explore ideas of linear career development and other options to motivate staff.

With reference the identity of a combined Fire & Rescue Service introduction of a new name and symbols (such as badges) would remove the possible adverse impact identified above and assist in the development of a new culture.

If no change or mitigation is possible what is the justification for continuing with this proposal?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

What is the result of the further action above?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

What changes have been made to the proposal?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

What will you do now and what will be included in future planning?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

How will success be measured?

(Consider both the success of achieving the equality objectives and the objectives of the proposal.)

If a decision is made to adopt scenario 3, to merge Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority and Dorset Fire Authority, success will be measured in a number of ways:

- Smooth transition to a new Combined Fire Authority.
- Maintenance of front line services and staff.
- Development of new policies and procedures.
- Development of a single culture for the new combined Fire & Rescue Service.
- Reduction of staff numbers (senior management) by involving all staff and particularly those affected in the process.
- Maintaining response times.
- Closer collaboration with partner agencies and organisations across Wiltshire, Swindon, Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole.
- Increase in the number of HFSC undertaken annually.
- Establishment of safety centres in Wiltshire and Swindon area.

With reference equality objectives:

- Community engagement continued and increased to all sections of the community.
- Increased diversity within recruitment for all staff and volunteers.
- Inclusive Impact Assessment process being fully adopted by the new Combined Fire & Rescue Service and integrated into the policy and decision making process (at the beginning).

Review Date: 20/10/2014

Other information/instruction regarding the review:

This IIA to be reviewed and updated following the results of the public consultation exercise. To be finalised once a decision is made in November 2014.

For the Record: IIA must be carried out by at least two people

<p>Name of persons leading the IIA:</p> <p>Rex Webb, Equality & Diversity Advisor Wiltshire FRS</p> <p>Jill Warburton, Community Engagement and Inclusion Manager, Dorset FRS</p>	<p>Date completed: 16/10/2014</p>
<p>Names of people/groups involved in consideration of the impact.</p> <p>Mark Gaskarth, Area Manager Wiltshire FRS, Mick Stead ACFO Dorset Fire & Rescue Service</p> <p>Jane Staffiere Director of People Services Dorset Fire and Rescue Service,</p>	
<p>Name of Manager signing off IIA</p> <p>Mick Stead ACFO Dorset Fire & Rescue Service</p>	<p>Signed & dated: 16 October 2014</p> 
<p>Final Check by the:</p> <p>Community Engagement and Inclusion Manager, Dorset Or Equality & Diversity Advisor, Wiltshire</p> <p>Click here to enter text.</p>	<p>Date filed:</p> <p>Click here to enter a date.</p>