



**DFRS Inclusive Impact Assessment (IIA)**

*“The inclusive risk management tool”*

1. What is being assessed:

*Scenario 1 of the Public Consultation - Strengthening Our Fire & Rescue Service.*

Dorset Fire Authority to remain independent and increase collaboration with Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole.

Date Commenced:24/09/14

(2) What’s it about?Refer to Equality Duties:

This IIA looks at the diversity and equality impacts should Dorset Fire Authority and its fire and rescue service stay separate and independent as now, and increase collaboration with Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council, the Borough of Poole and other partners.

Within scenario 1 Dorset Fire Authority and the Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority would continue as separate organisations. We would be governed by their respective fire authority of elected councillors; we would have a Chief Fire Officer and a team of senior officers; and our own corporate teams (such as Human Resources, Finance, ICT and other functions). Being independent would not prevent us from co-operating on specific projects. Under this scenario, critical decisions, such as those on service reductions, would continue to be taken locally within Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.

Increased collaboration with Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council, the Borough of Poole and other partners would need to make substantial savings for Dorset Fire Authority by 2018. Financial projections indicate that savings would need to be in the region of £2.3 and £3.2 million each year on top of the savings already made. Initial work indicates savings in the region of £0.9million a year could be available from sharing teams and corporate costs, and further savings remain to be explored and quantified.

Legal agreements and contractscovering liabilities and risks would be required to achieve some of the savings.

Funding from central government grant for the Dorset Fire Authority is projected to continue to be reduced over the next 4 years and increases in the Fire Authority precept are likely to remain capped at 2% and may even be reduced further. These factors will mean that further savings of up to £2.3 million on top of the £0.9 million would still have to be made. This would require significant changes in working arrangements and reduction in front-line services, possibly resulting in longer response times.

(3) Who’s it aimed at?

This consultation is aimed at staff, community groups those with protected characteristics and stakeholders across Dorset including:

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

We also recognise that our decisions will impact stakeholders in Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority, Wiltshire FRS and Wiltshire Communities

(4) How will this proposal meet the equality duties?

Whichever scenario is chosen DFRS will seek to retain its focus on core values which place equality and diversity at the heart of ‘how we do business’. We will strive to eliminate unlawful discrimination and other unlawful conduct, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. However, the likely demographic, political and societal changes facing DFRS over the next five years, set out in the documents **Safer 2020,** and **Meeting our Equality Duties 2014** will present some fundamental challenges to Service provision.

The reduced financial envelope coupled with government policies such as localism, community budgeting and Public Service transformation may necessitate a reduction in the amount of community engagement that Dorset Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) is able to deliver, with a refocus on prioritising intervention activities that have to be undertaken with fewer staff.

For DFRS significant budget cuts will lead to an inevitable reduction in staff numbers including firefighters and people working in community engagement, partnership and prevention teams. In addition there will also be less staff working in all areas of service support. This may have a detrimental effect on the ability of DFRS to foster good relations in the community and react to their needs.

At the same time major service pressures on resources and the continued financial challenges are likely to impact on partner priorities and capacity for collaborative working.

(5)Who is using it? Refer to protected and vulnerable groups:

Protected groups and communities will be affected by this decision including:

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

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

The likely demographic, political and societal changes mean that vulnerable people in Dorset are at greater risk of exclusion, relative poverty and isolation over the next five years. These trends are set out in the documents **Safer 2020,** in **ONS Statistics, 2011 census data** and in the DFRS **Meeting our Equality Duties Report 2014.**

Areas of note include:

* Dorset has the greatest elderly population in England. Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole have much higher proportions of their population aged 65+ (26.7%), than either the South West (22.8%), or the whole of England (19.3%). From the 2011 census it’s clear that Dorset also has a significantly higher proportion of one person households aged 65+ than the national average.
* LGC analysis of figures released by the ONS in July 2014 indicate that government funding levels do not take account of the changing demographics for councils with the fastest growing elderly populations. Dorset has an ageing population, with costs of providing social care continuing to increase and age associated illnesses like dementia becoming more common.
* There has been a considerable increase in the housing stock in the past decade, particularly across the Dorset County Council area which will necessitate greater Fire Safety activity.
* Social care directors in Dorset have joined the LGA in warning of major service pressures and impending financial and legal challenges to care decisions.
* Obesity will rise and DFRS will be called to assist South West Ambulance and NHS with the transport and recovery of greater number of bariatric patients.
* Rising numbers of single occupancy households may increase the risk of fire
* Increases in Social deprivation will necessitate higher levels of community engagement on fire and road safety as people in more deprived areas are hardest to engage with and least likely to change patterns of behaviour.
* With the raising of the health and social care thresholds, more people will be in need of help through SAIL and safeguarding
* Dorset has a significant number of disabled people - 19.2% as opposed to the national average of 18.2%. Of these 19.2%, 37% are of working age.
* Increasingly socio-economic issues are impacting on all of our communities requiring refinement in the targeting of resources. Additionally, 65% of the population lives in urban areas and 35% in rural areas. Our challenge is to ensure we provide the appropriate level of service required to meet the needs of our communities.

Further information on groups with protected characteristics in Dorset is to be found in the 2011 census data and the Meeting our Equality Duties Report 2014.

Considerable work has been carried out by both Dorset and Wiltshire FRS’s examining 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 Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole.

2. Consultation leaflet for Wiltshire and Swindon

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 1 includes the following:

* Evidence on Page 19 of the Draft business case for consultation July 2014:
* Savings which will be achieved by implementing Option 1 will amount to approximately £0.9 million per year - this will leave further savings of up to £2.4 million further saving needed. This would necessitate significant changes in working arrangements and probable reductions in front line services, possibly resulting in longer response times for vulnerable and rural communities.
* Each Fire Authority and Service to stay independent and collaborate with their local authorities to make the most of savings made in corporate and support departments.
* DFRS already has partnership arrangements in place with local councils for areas such as prevention, Safer Homes for Dorset, Road Safety Schemes, data sharing and community engagement activities and will continue to do so.
* Some ‘back-office’ or corporate functions could be joined up, but as we have already reduced these areas significantly through our Resourcing and Reform Programme(RRP) over the past five years, many of our back office posts are now “single points of failure”, and the amount of savings from corporate staff and spending would be limited.
* Preliminary work suggests that savings of £930,000 for Dorset Fire could be achieved with this option, but significant cuts to front-line services would still be needed.
* The significant funding gaps faced by councils and the pressures on budgets such as Public Health, Adult and Childrens’ Services would also continue to be a concern and could further threaten long-term financial stability.

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

A public/staff/volunteer consultation exercise runs from 20 July to 20 October 2014.

Dorset Fire Authority and Wiltshire and Swindon 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.

Staff volunteers and the public have been invited to focus groups to discuss the impact of the three options.

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?”

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 which will remain as a “living document” for the duration of this work.

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

The specification from the Fire Authority to ORS required that the consultation will involve a wide representative element of the communities of 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 and volunteers in 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 representative sections 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.

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

Following the commencement of the IIA, it was felt that equality specific-feedback was needed during the progression of the focus groups and consultations. Equality and diversity professionals from both Services attended both public consultation events and staff and volunteer events in September and October and have given feedback on the effectiveness of the process to the project team.

*[Pause IIA if necessary to collect further data/information]*

(9) Adverse Impact Refer to Dimensions of Equality:

Adverse impact will be felt by a number of individuals and groups associated with particular protected characteristics due to the fact that Option 1 will not in itself achieve the required savings. In order to achieve the savings required there will need to be significant cuts to front-line Fire Fighters, corporate staff and possibly fire stations.

These cuts will result in a reduced capacity to carry out prevention work carried out by Whole-time and Retained Fire Fighters and Corporate Staff, which has contributed to a reduction in fires, fire deaths and road traffic collision over previous years.

* Disability – reduced staff numbers will impact on the number of home safety checks and safeguarding referrals the Service is able to make to Social Service partners for vulnerable children and adults. Disability – a reduction in Home Fire Safety checks, SPARC, Cadets, programme, Fire Setters and increased response times will have an adverse effect on those with disabilities.
* All protected characteristics (especially Age/Disability) and those living in vulnerable premises (thatched properties or areas prone to flooding) - a reduction in Front-line and back office staff will result in an increase in response times to fires and incidents. This will put the vulnerable within our society at greater risk. We will have a reduced ability to respond to spate conditions, particularly those for which we have no statutory duty.
* Work with the Hospital discharge teams before patients are released back into the community, would need to be reprioritised.
* Reduced funding and cuts will also impact upon the Services ability to ensure that all Fire Service premises are compliant with the access requirements under the Equality Act 2010.
* Waiting times for Home safety checks would need to increase beyond 28 days.
* Race/ethnicity – DFRS staff will have fewer resources to support community projects such as work with the Polish, Gypsy Roma Traveller and BME communities to improve fire safety awareness. Community engagement activity will reduce having an adverse effect on the work the Service does in diverse communities and impacting upon our ability to fulfil our legal responsibilities under the Public Sector equality duty to foster good community relations.
* Age – reduced staff numbers will result in a reduction in the number of Home Fire Safety Checks the Service could provide and the involvement in programmes such as Dorset Age Safe and Warmer Winter. This will have an adverse effect of the over 65’s, families with children under 5 and people living alone.
* There will be a reduced capacity to run the Safe Drive, Stay Alive programme educating young people about road safety and the consequences of bad driving.
* There will be a reduced capacity to run SPARC, SPARC Plus and Whole Family SPARC courses for young people and families.
* There will be a reduced capacity to undertake our schools programme and Fire Cadets and Princes Trust programmes across the county.
* All protected characteristics (especially Age/Disability) and those living in vulnerable premises (thatched properties) – a reduction in Front-line and back office staff will result in an increase in response times to fires and incidents.(rural deprivation) This will put the vulnerable within our society at greater risk.
* DFRS staff currently works with the 21 Foodbanks in Dorset to support those in food poverty. This work would need to be curtailed affecting those most socially vulnerable
* Dorset Fire & Rescue Service Staff – with the need to reduce staff numbers there will possibly be enforced redundancies, increased workload for remaining staff and a lack of opportunity to progress within the organisation.

(10) What can be done to mitigate or change this impact?

Consideration should be given to the other Scenarios outlined in the Consultation Questionnaire to identify which options will eliminate the adverse impact identified above.

(11) Using the information above does the proposal:

1. Create a benefit for a particular Group?

**YES**

**NO**

(12) Are there any positive benefits? Please specify what the benefit is:

Dorset Fire & Rescue Service will maintain its identity.

Dorset Fire Authority will maintain full accountability for the Fire & Rescue service in Poole, Bournemouth and Dorset.

(13) Is there an Equality Risk Yes

Risk Register rating

*If adverse impacts have been identified or you require further information list the steps you will be taking below: What further needs to be done to mitigate negative impacts?*

(14) Further Action:

A full independent consultation is being carried out between 20 July 2014 and 20 October 2014. The result of the consultation will analysed and provided to both 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) above.

Await the results of the independent consultation which will run until 20 October 2014. Following this date review this impact assessment in the light of the responses to Question 4 in the questionnaire and the responses to the Equality & Diversity Questions 8 to 13.

Prior to the end of the consultation period to work with Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Police to explore possible savings through closer working relationships

(15) Does this proposal involve collecting or handling personal data?

**NO**

**YES**

*If the answer is “YES” please continue with this impact assessment and contact the Information Management team for advice on the need to carryout a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA).*

(16)If no change or mitigation is possible what is the justification for continuing with this proposal? {Free Text}

(17) What changes have been identified?

{Free Text}

(18) How will success be measured?

{Free Text}

(19) Review Date**:**

20th November 2014

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

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| Name of person leading the IIA:  **Jill Warburton Community Engagement Manager** **Dorset Fire & Rescue Service** | Date completed: 16October 2014 |
| Names of people/groups involved in consideration of the impact.  **Jane Staffiere Director of People Services Dorset Fire & Rescue Service**  **Rex Webb Equality and Diversity Advisor Wilts Fire and Rescue Service** |  |
| Name of Manager signing off IIA  **Mick Stead ACFO Dorset Fire & Rescue Service** | Signed & dated: 16 October 2014 |
| Final Check by the Community Engagement and Inclusion Manager | Date filed: |