

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 26 NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT ON: FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE REFORM – LOCAL SCRUTINY AND ENGAGEMENT

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 437-2012

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To recommend that Committee agree a process to allow consideration of the Dundee Local Fire and Rescue Plan and reports on the performance of the Fire and Rescue Service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members:

- a) note that a similar process of reform is underway in the Fire and Rescue Service as in the Police Service, and that similar arrangements require to be put in place for scrutiny and engagement involving local authorities and the new national Fire and Rescue Service
- b) agree that, in line with the pathfinder arrangements for scrutiny and engagement with the Police, the remit of the Policy and Resources Committee should be extended to include approval of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan and scrutiny of Fire and Rescue Service performance reports
- c) agree that Fire and Rescue reports between now and March 2013 be considered in line with the timetable for Police reports, as detailed in paragraph 4.4 of this report
- d) note that, as agreed in the report on the Police pathfinder, the Chief Executive will bring forward a report evaluating these pilot arrangements to inform a decision on the longer-term structures for scrutiny and engagement with both the Police and Fire and Rescue services

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act provides for the establishment of new Scottish Police and Fire and Rescue Services and includes a framework for local scrutiny and engagement arrangements involving local authorities and the new national services.

4.2 In the case of the Fire and Rescue Service, these scrutiny and engagement arrangements include:

- designation of a Local Senior Officer
- production of a Local Fire and Rescue Plan, to be approved by the Council

- creation of a strong formal relationship between the Council and the Fire and Rescue Service to provide opportunities for increased local democratic scrutiny

4.3 Members have previously agreed to pilot local scrutiny and engagement arrangements as part of a pathfinder project with the Police Service, which involve extending the remit of the Policy and Resources Committee to include responsibility for approving the Local Policing Plan and scrutinising Police performance. A timetable has been agreed for special meetings of the Policy and Resources Committee, with meetings scheduled for January and March 2013.

4.4 Although not formally part of the pathfinder project, the local Fire and Rescue Service are keen to begin the process of engagement with Dundee City Council and, in particular, to consult on and ultimately seek approval for the new Local Fire and Rescue Plan before the new national service is established in April. It is therefore recommended that:

- the remit of the Policy and Resources Committee should be extended to include approval of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan and scrutiny of Fire and Rescue Service performance reports
- the Fire and Rescue Service should be invited to submit reports to the special meetings of the Policy and Resources Committee scheduled for 21 January and 18 March 2013, including consultation on a draft Fire and Rescue Plan, performance reports based on current plans and formal submission of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for approval by the Council

4.5 As agreed in the report on the Police pathfinder, the Chief Executive will bring forward a report evaluating these arrangements (and reporting on the evaluation of pilot arrangements in other authorities) in order to inform a decision on the longer-term structures for scrutiny and engagement with both of the services.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

6. CONSULTATIONS

The Director of Corporate Services and the Head of Democratic and Legal Services along with the Area Manager from Tayside Fire and Rescue, have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Police Reform – Pathfinder Project for Local Scrutiny and Engagement Report 175-2012 to Policy and Resources Committee on 11 June 2012.

David K Dorward
Chief Executive

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19/11/2012