

# CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF:** GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE  
**DATE:** 16 NOVEMBER 2022  
**REPORT OF:** DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE  
**AUTHOR:** ANDREW LEADBETTER

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**SUBJECT:** REVIEW INTO THE WAY THAT SEATS ON  
CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY ARE ALLOCATED  
TO THE CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES

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## Purpose of Report

1. To allow Members to determine whether any further work should be carried out in relation to the way that seats on the Fire Authority are allocated to the constituent authorities.

## Recommended: That Members

- [1] Determine whether any further work is necessary in relation to the way that seats on the Fire Authority are allocated to the constituent authorities.

## Background

2. A review into the way that seats on the Fire Authority were allocated to the constituent authorities (the Review) was carried out over 2020 and 2021. The Fire Authority decided, at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021, that:
  - [1] the appointments for 2021-22 continue to be allocated in the same way that they have since local government reorganisation; and
  - [2] the review be considered further once the White Paper has been published and considered.
3. A report concerned with the Review, dated 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021 (together with appendices) which was considered by this Committee has been supplied to members of this Committee separately. These items also appear on the Service's website.
4. The White Paper was eventually published on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and responses were made to the Government by the closing date, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

## Information

5. Seats on the Fire Authority were allocated for 2022-23 in the usual way as the White Paper had not been published.
6. The section of the White Paper concerned with Governance has been attached to this report as Appendix 1. The response from the Chief Fire Officer, dated 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022 has been attached to this report as Appendix 2.
7. Arguably the White Paper has been 'published and considered' (see minute above). However, as things stand, until the Government determines what it intends to do the position of the Fire Authority remains uncertain.
8. With the above in mind, officers intend to proceed with the allocation of seats on the Fire Authority in the usual way for 2023-24, unless the Government has clarified its position prior to the June meeting of the Fire Authority.
9. Whilst officers can see no mileage in considering changes to the existing arrangements for the allocation of seats to the constituent authorities, they felt that Members should be given the opportunity to debate the issue – hence the preparation of this report. Members are simply asked: do they wish officers to carry out any further work on the Review?

## Financial Implications

10. It is possible that there may be financial implications if governance arrangements are changed, but these can only be considered fully when there is clarity about the changes. Whatever happens the financial impact will be relatively small.

## Legal Implications

11. The Fire Authority's Combination Scheme describes the method for allocating seats on the Fire Authority. Paragraph 12 of the Scheme states:  
  
*Each constituent authority shall, so far as is practicable, appoint such number of representatives to be members of the Authority as is proportionate to the number of local government electors in its area in relation to the number of such electors in each of the other constituent authorities' areas.*
12. The Scheme is the same as the schemes of other combined authorities. The Scheme could only be changed through secondary legislation.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

13. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

## **Environmental Implications**

14. There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**