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## SCC response to Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service “Safer Together” Consultation

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Cabinet Members: Cllr Christine Lawrence and Cllr David Hall

Division and Local Members: all

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1.** The purpose of this paper is to introduce Somerset County Council's proposed response to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) consultation on its proposed new service delivery operating model.
- 1.2.** The DSFRS consultation includes proposals for the closure of fire stations (Porlock), removal and relocation of fire engines (Bridgwater, Taunton, Yeovil, Martock) and changes to crewing arrangements (Chard, Frome, Wellington, Wells and Williton.)
- 1.3.** Issues and comments have been identified under the following headings: consultation document and methodology; prevention activity and opportunities; risk factors; deployment activity; partnership working.

### **2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations**

- 2.1.** Members are requested to consider and endorse the comments in the attached draft response to the consultation.
- 2.2.** Members are further requested to identify any additional considerations that might inform the consultation from the perspective of local communities.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1.** Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service has launched a public consultation to seek views on the proposed redesign of its services. The consultation includes seven options for change, including closure of fire stations, removal and relocation of fire engines and changes to crewing arrangements. According to the consultation document, reasons for the proposed changes include:
  - In the last 10 years, total fires have reduced by 33% across England.
  - 56 of D&SFRS fire station areas, (including Lundy) have fewer than 10 dwelling fires a year.

- Population, technology and habits have changed e.g. fewer chip pans and more smoke detectors.
- Need to match resources - crews, equipment and fleet - to specific risks in each community.
- Wish to increase capacity for important prevention and protection work activity within FRS annual budget.

**3.2.** The consultation closes on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September and the Fire Authority will make its final decision in November 2019.

**3.3.** The FRS consultation was inviting feedback by means of a questionnaire however the SCC response is in written format as there are several observations, comments and questions that could be not fitted into the questionnaire format.

#### **4. Consultations undertaken**

**4.1.** All Elected Members were given the opportunity to contribute to the response via a Members information sheet circulated in July. SCC services were asked to comment including: Public Health, Civil Contingences Unit, Highways and Corporate Health and Safety Unit.

**4.2.** One of the authors attended a DSFRS public drop-in event in Taunton during July.

#### **5. Implications**

**5.1.** There are no direct financial implications for SCC arising from this report. The consultation is focused on resource reductions from DSFRS only.

**5.2.** There are no direct risks for SCC including equalities and health and safety but DSFRS will need to be mindful of these implications when implementing services changes.

**5.3.** As a statutory partner, DSFRS will need to have regard to community safety implications in the planning and implementation of these proposed service changes.

#### **6. Background papers**

**6.1.** Appendix 1: Covering letter to Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.

Appendix 2: Observations, comments and questions from Somerset County Council in response to the consultation.

Appendix 3: Page from DSFRS consultation document identifying which Somerset fire stations would be affected by the options for change.