

Impact Assessment

Option 3 – Merge of the Fire Control function with Hereford and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service

The following tables show the areas of concern that members of the public and our staff thought that Fire Authority Members should consider when making their decision on this proposal.

Issues of concern to the public
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of local knowledge which could lead to increased response times• Too large and rural an area to cover• Other services have tried it and had issues• Increased risk level• Cannot rely on technology• Loss of jobs and its impact on the economy• Reduced resilience during busy periods• Bigger is not always better. Lose local flexible approach• A reduction in the number of staff would impact on their ability to carry out training and other duties, plus cover breaks etc.• Money being put before lives• Impact on work/life balance of staff• Lose the close working relationship between control operators and officers• Reduced staff could lead to reduced quality of service• Expensive to set up
Issues of concern to our staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of local knowledge could impact on response times and, therefore, increase risk to the public and firefighters• Reduced resilience, especially when technology fails• Impact on remaining staff in terms of morale, health, well-being and family life• Technical issues already exist with MoU project and would be increased• Loss of jobs/redundancies• Need evidence of other mergers working• Impacts on the other functions/tasks that Control do• Different procedures within each FRS• Difficulties involved in management of 2 sites by 1 supervisor• Lose ability to make local changes quickly• Increased airwave costs for both FRS's• Ability for stations to visit Control for training will be lost

Whilst it is not possible to provide quantifiable evidence against all of the issues highlighted above, the following page provides the information on those matters, where such evidence is available.

Projected savings

It is not possible to predict accurately the potential reduction in costs likely to arise from any option, involving the merger of the Fire Control function with another Service. It will depend on the nature and detail of any specific merger, which would be explored as part of any proposal for change. The Service estimates, however, that staffing costs could potentially be reduced by up to approximately 50%. If such savings were achieved, this would equate to approximately £300k per annum on the Service's current annual revenue budget.

Assessment of additional costs likely to be incurred due to other duties carried out within Fire Control

Many non-fire call related administrative tasks and functions are also undertaken by Shropshire's Fire Control. In the event that the Control function were to move elsewhere, detailed analysis would need to be undertaken, as part of any such project, in order to quantify accurately the additional cost and resources required to accommodate these tasks elsewhere in the Service.

Total incident count trend over 10 years

Station/Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% change in 3 year averages*	
Total annual count of incidents	6669	5607	4750	6088	5608	4818	4765	4673	4813	3758	22.2	% reduction

*This figure represents the change in the average of the first three years (2003-05) and final three years (2010-12) of the 10 year period shown in this table. It has been presented in this way to try and overcome some of the variability that exists in the number of incidents fire and rescue services respond to each year.

It should be noted that a simple count of the number of the incidents, which the Service attends each year, is not a true reflection of Fire Control workloads, as each incident type involves different actions by Fire Control operators, e.g. varying number of fire engines, specialist appliances and officers, as well as contacting other agencies etc.

Fire Control are also an integral part of the Service's procedures to reduce false alarms, through effective call challenge. The number of incidents not attended, due to this policy are not included in the above table.

The table presented above is, therefore, an over-simplification of the change in demand in relation to the Fire Control function.

How large would the new Service area be?

Service areas	Total area (km2)
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin (current)	3,487
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Herefordshire and Worcestershire (West Mercia area)	7,408
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire (Tri-service area)	9,383

IT/Technical systems

It is not possible to quantify the reliability of any technical solution into the future. This would be dependent on many factors, including the type of system used etc.