

AMENDMENT TO NOTICE OF MOTION – 18 October 2013

This Authority is concerned by proposals currently under consultation regarding a merger of the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service with Warwickshire FRA. Such a combined Authority stretching from the Welsh Borders to Northamptonshire, may result in Herefordshire having even less influence than it does at present – an unwelcome democratic deficit.

This Authority whilst welcoming closer collaboration with any neighbouring Fire and Rescue Authority, would require assurance that any merger would not have a deleterious impact on the people we represent.

In addition, this Authority has concerns about a proposed reduction of staff or vehicles at the Hereford Fire Station for the following reasons: Hereford City is the only 24 hour station in the County; as a standalone station it is isolated from any other 24 hour support. Herefordshire covers an area larger than Worcestershire but relies on part time or retained fire fighters.

Worcester Fire Station, however, is supported by Kidderminster, Redditch, Bromsgrove whole time cover with additional back up from Droitwich, Evesham and Malvern.

Herefordshire is further disadvantaged by the current road infrastructure and lack of motorways. Any reduction in personnel could seriously affect the response times to the life threatening road traffic accidents and call outs to flooding incidents in this County: therefore this Authority whilst understanding the financial pressures facing all public bodies at this time would not support a reduction in staff, pumps or equipment at Hereford Fire Station without significant assurance of how service levels will be maintained in the county.

In order to inform the development of the response to this consultation which closes on 10 January, this Council resolves to request that the General Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider the impacts of the proposals to inform the response that Full Council will submit.