

► APCC Fire & Rescue Support

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced greater opportunities for bluelight collaboration across police, fire and rescue and ambulance services through the new 'duty to collaborate'. It also presented new opportunities for PCCs to take on an increased role in local fire and rescue services in England.

This paper sets out the options and opportunities presented by the 2017 Act, and the support that the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) can offer its members in responding to these.

The fire governance opportunities available to PCCs include:

The Representation Model:

Whereby a PCC can join a Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) as a voting member, subject to FRA approval. This model allows PCCs to work with FRA members to further police fire collaboration via the statutory duty to collaborate.

Police Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) Models (Note: police and fire governance can also form part of the various devolution models):

The two PFCC models available to PCCs differ significantly to the representation model. Firstly, the FRA would be abolished and replaced by a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. The PFCC would take on the FRA's statutory duties including setting priorities, precept and the budget. Additionally, the Police and Crime Panel's remit is extended to include fire.

To progress these models PCCs must consult locally and submit a robust business case to the Home Secretary for approval. Business cases must set out how a change in governance is in the interests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, or public safety. The two models available are:

The Governance Model:

Under this model there would be a separate Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer (CFO). PFCCs will appoint CFO and have responsibility for employing all fire and rescue staff. Operational responsibilities remain with the CFO. Police and firefighter roles remain separate as do budgets.

Several areas have adopted this approach having successfully navigated the consultation and business case submission requirements with support from the APCC.

The Single Employer Model:

This model allows the PFCC to appoint a single head of service i.e. a Chief Officer - there would be no separate Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer. In practice, the Chief Officer may appoint a senior fire officer to lead fire operations and a deputy chief constable to lead police operations. The Chief Officer is accountable to the PFCC for both fire and policing.

Operational distinction between policing and fire-fighting is maintained and funding would remain distinct with PFCCs providing separate budgets to Chief Officers. This model provides flexibility with Chief Officers able to pool funds for collaborative projects i.e. sharing back office functions or joint estates, as long as any money spent is accounted for. This is currently an untested model.

APCC Support:

For PCCs interested in taking up the fire governance models, APCC support is available to provide advice and share learning garnered from early adopter areas. Additionally, we encourage PCCs to have a discussion with the Senior Policy Manager to ensure our support is targeted to your needs. APCC support includes:

- Access to an APCC repository of learning with useful key documents available to Commissioners via the APCC Knowledge Hub. The APCC has spent time gathering learning and responses to frequently asked questions to compliment APACE business case guidance.
- A range of opportunities for members to come together to debate and discuss national fire policy and engage with senior stakeholders. This includes effective representation to PCCs pursuing fire governance through strong links to the Home Office. This relationship is highly beneficial saving PCC time and resources.
- Access to a business case support network with regular meetings and a forum to troubleshoot barriers experienced during business case development and submission.

Further APCC support is available to PFCCs who successfully navigate the business case phase:

- An APCC, APACE network of PFCC staff working to develop products and resources to be shared on a 'do once and share basis'. This work is informed by PFCCs.
- Excellent working relationships with key fire and rescue stakeholders, including the National Fire Chiefs Council and HMICFRS. This engagement ensures PFCCs' views are understood and provides opportunity for Commissioners to demonstrate leadership.
- APCC Fire Horizon Scan and forward look at fire and rescue policy, practice and meetings.
- Dedicated fire policy and governance thematic events bringing PFCCs and their staff together to learn from one another and engage with stakeholders.
- Support with media and press enquiries.

Bluelight Collaboration & APCC Support

Irrespective of what governance scheme PCCs wish to pursue, the APCC also offers support on emergency service collaboration. The Senior Policy Manager is responsible for advising on the new duty to collaborate, which we expect will drive a step change in collaborative working between the police, fire and rescue, and emergency ambulance services.

To support PCCs, the APCC is developing a suite of tools aimed at furthering police, fire and health collaboration. Furthermore, the APCC is part of, and has access to, a network of national leads for emergency service collaboration. Most recently, the Association has brought police, fire and ambulance leads together for an Emergency services Collaboration Workshop to agree priorities for the year ahead. Additionally, the APCC's Portfolio Lead PCC Philip Seccombe sits on a national Emergency Services Collaboration Interoperability Board, chaired by the Fire and Policing Minister, and works closely with national leads to progress priorities and solutions to barriers encountered.

Those PCCs interested in exploring the opportunities above can contact:

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