



Proposed merger between
East and West Sussex
Fire & Rescue Services

Public Consultation



Alternative formats and translation

Albanian	Me kërkesë, një përmbledhje e këtij dokumenti gjendet edhe në gjuhën shqipe
Arabic	تلخيص لهذه الوثيقة باللغة العربية عند الطلب
Bengali	এই ডকুমেন্টের সারাংশও অনুরোধে বাংলায় পাওয়া যায়।
Cantonese	本文件的摘要亦可應要求製作成中文(繁體字)版本。
Farsi	خلاصه شده این سند هم در صورت درخواست به فارسی موجود است.
Russian	Краткое содержание настоящего документа по отдельному запросу предоставляется также на русском языке.
Gujarati	આ કાનૂનકે અંગેના વિગતો અનુચિત રીતે ગુજરાતીમાં પણ મળી શકે છે.
Kurdish	گۆرتهیهکی تێمه بۆگهوه-سهروههها به پێی داواکارییه زمانیه گۆرتهیه بهمه بهگهوه
Portuguese	Encontra-se também disponível um sumário deste documento em Português, a pedido.
Polish	Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany w języku polskim.

 **0845 130 8855**

The following formats are available on request:

Large print (reformatted and increased to 18 point sans serif font)

CD ROM in plain text format to enable computer 'reader' systems to access and translate the information. Audio tape, audio CD and braille. Pictorial format suitable for people with learning difficulties ('easy read').

For translations of this document please contact the Media and Communications Officer.

Tel: 0845 130 8855

Fax: 01323 462003



East Sussex
Fire & Rescue Service
Chief Fire Officer
& Chief Executive
Des Prichard



East Sussex
Fire Authority Chairman
Councillor
John Livings

Thank you for your interest in East Sussex Fire Authority and its Fire & Rescue Service.

Proposed Merger to create a new Fire Authority covering East and West Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove

Over the years, we have striven to deliver high quality services to all our local communities, at a price council tax payers can afford to pay. These are the key priorities you have identified as being the most important from our annual consultation exercises. As such, we have kept council tax increases low and made efficiency savings to avoid cutting our services to local communities. However, most public services are facing more difficult budget decisions and we are no different, yet we remain committed to making the right decisions and prioritising our resources effectively after taking your views into account.

We believe that a larger Fire Authority covering East and West Sussex and our City would be better in terms of building a more resilient organisation to deliver much needed services as well as giving more scope to reduce management and overhead costs. We explain why in this consultation document.

Your views on such a crucial issue are extremely important to us, and this consultation provides you with the opportunity to give us your feedback before any decisions are taken on the way forward.

You can do this by completing the questionnaire on page 9, or you can contact us by phone, letter or email via the contact details on the back cover. Further details and supporting documents are available on our website – www.esfrs.org – or printed copies can be sent on request.

Background

In December 2010, West Sussex County Council and East Sussex Fire Authority jointly announced they would explore options for closer collaboration, up to and including a full merger of the two Fire & Rescue Services. The aim was to increase operational capacity and help preserve services to local communities. Since then, both Services have considered the benefits that collaboration could bring to residents, businesses and visitors across Sussex*.

Both East Sussex Fire Authority and West Sussex County Council have now considered the resulting business case, which examined the pros and cons of a number of options for closer collaboration, and both organisations believe it shows that a full merger is the best way to achieve these aims. This is subject to satisfactory future funding arrangements being settled with HM Government. We will also take account of the outcomes of our consultation process. The business case is available to view on our website. Copies are also available at local libraries.

So, before any final decision is made, both Services want to consult their residents, local partners, businesses and staff – because they are your fire & rescue services.

** All references to Sussex mean the combined areas of the City of Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex.*





Why are East Sussex Fire Authority and West Sussex County Council proposing to merge their fire & rescue services?

HM Government is reducing the grant it pays to fire & rescue services and as a result we have to make an estimated combined annual budget saving of £3.8m over the next three to four years.

The proposed merger is to protect fire & rescue services to local communities from the impact of grant reductions to local authorities and continue to provide the excellent fire & rescue services to people across Sussex.

Our key aims from a merger would be to achieve:

- Streamlined senior management and support costs, making services more cost effective.
- Improved overall operational performance, such as our ability to provide specialist operational resources across a wider area, while avoiding duplication of specialist teams.
- Improved civil protection and related operational resilience (e.g. flooding or terrorist incidents).
- A stronger community voice and leadership across Sussex.
- Providing services across a similar area to Sussex Police.

Both fire & rescue services agree that either staying as we are or just collaborating with each other more closely without merging and absorbing the grant reduction would result in cuts to operational firefighting resources, other community services, significant increases to your council tax or all of these. Merging the two Services would save money – especially in the long term – and is considered the most economical and the best way to maintain service levels.

Merging would be a good 'strategic fit' as both existing Services are similar in terms of geography, resources, fire stations, people and budgets. We share a border, have similar community profiles and respond to the same type of risks.

A Sussex Fire Authority would still be accountable to the people of Sussex, be locally managed and respond to local needs.



Will there be changes to my local fire station or other community services?

The merger proposals are not designed to reduce the number of fire stations or the level of operational capability. However, both Services are considering future options, including possible changes to their control centres now that HM Government has rejected earlier plans for Regional Mobilising and Control Centres.

A merger would help to safeguard fire & rescue community services, as the focus would be on savings in the management and support costs.

The proposed new Service would have one person acting as both Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, supported by a single management team.

Will merging affect my council tax bill?

There would be some transitional costs in merging the two Services but we plan to merge without significantly increasing the cost to you through your council tax. The cost for the new Sussex Fire Authority would be shown as a precept on your council tax bill, in the same way it is shown for Sussex Police.

It would be important to achieve equalisation of council tax, so that residents in West Sussex, East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove would eventually pay the same for their fire & rescue service. HM Government has indicated this equalisation could be achieved over a period of five years.

How will the new Fire & Rescue Service be governed?

Merging would mean the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority (CFA) across Sussex, with statutory responsibility for providing and deciding the future direction of fire & rescue services and this new organisation would decide on the future direction of fire & rescue services across Sussex. West Sussex County Council would then no longer have responsibility for fire & rescue within its area and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service would cease to exist as a separate entity.

Elected councillors from Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council would govern a Sussex Fire Authority. The name for the new Authority has not yet been determined. Sussex Fire Authority is a working title.

A Sussex Fire Authority would have proportionate representation from East Sussex, West Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove. For example, if the new Fire Authority has 24 members, it would have 12 representing East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove, and 12 representing West Sussex.

The Chief Fire Officer would also be the Chief Executive of the new Fire & Rescue Service, would report to the Sussex Fire Authority and would be accountable for all areas of performance, including operations and service delivery, budget and business planning.

East and West Sussex Fire & Rescue Services Fire Station Locations



The map shows the area that would be covered by a combined Fire & Rescue Service for East and West Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove. It shows the locations of fire stations and also the closest stations from neighbouring fire & rescue services.



Images of Sussex

- 1. The Seven Sisters
- 2. The Amex Stadium, Brighton
- 3. Cowdray, Midhurst
- 4. Bosham Quay
- 5. Royal Pavilion, Brighton
- 6. View across the Weald
- 7. Battle Abbey
- 8. St. Nicolas Church, Pevensey



When would the merger happen?

The public consultation runs from July 14th to October 6th and all responses will be considered before both East Sussex Fire Authority and West Sussex County Council make final decisions in December 2011. Both bodies will have to agree to a merger for a new authority to come into being.

If agreed, a merger would still be subject to consent from HM Government and, if approved, the likely date it would take effect would be on April 1st 2013.

What would happen if the merger does not go ahead?

Should the authorities decide not to pursue a merger then work will continue on closer collaboration to identify any further opportunities for financial savings and organisational efficiencies. These would be shown in our respective annual Service plans. Current forecasts show that the outcome may result in a reduction in operational posts, station closures or removal of appliances.

Have the authorities considered other options for making these savings rather than affecting Fire & Rescue Services?

East Sussex Fire Authority is a stand-alone organisation, which is required to make savings in line with reductions in its grant from HM Government.

West Sussex County Council is making substantial savings across a wide range of public services and most areas have to make very difficult budget cuts. Many of those savings plans for other public services are already being put into place. The current policy of both organisations is to look for savings in management and support costs and from closer working with partners before reductions to operational fire & rescue services.

We want to hear your views...

We would be grateful if you would fill in this questionnaire.

When completed, please detach this page, fold and stick as indicated and post to the FREEPOST address on the reverse.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
Do you agree that this document helps to explain the reasons for a merger?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you agree that the focus should be on reductions in management and administrative costs to deliver savings and improve operational resilience?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you agree with the proposed merger of Fire & Rescue Services across Sussex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you believe that there is anything about the proposed merger that needs further consideration before a decision is taken please include your comments below:

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Completion of this section is voluntary, but the information will help us ensure that all groups are included. You should only supply us with information about yourself that you are comfortable with sharing at this point. (Please cross the relevant boxes)

Where do you live?

East Sussex West Sussex The City of Brighton & Hove

Age 16 – 24 25 – 34 35 – 44 45 – 54
 55 – 65 66 or over Prefer not to say

Gender Male Female

To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong?

White
 English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British Irish
 Gypsy or Irish Traveller
 Any other White background

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
 African
 Caribbean
 Any other Black/African/Caribbean background

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic
 White and Black Caribbean
 White and Black African

White and Asian
 Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background

Asian / Asian British
 Indian
 Pakistani
 Bangladeshi
 Chinese
 Any other Asian background

Other Ethnic Group
 Arab
 Any other ethnic group

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long term limiting condition?

Yes No Prefer not to say

What is your religion/belief? (Please cross one only)

Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
 Jewish
 No religion/belief

Buddhist
 Muslim
 Hindu
 Any other religion/belief
 Prefer not to say

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East and West
Fire & Rescue Services
Public Consultation

Opinion Research Services
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NO
STAMP
REQUIRED





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