

The three emergency services responsible for protecting the communities of Cheshire are developing a collaboration programme aimed at sharing resources and premises.

In line with national moves for greater blue light integration, the aim is to achieve real efficiencies, deliver

a more joined-up service to local communities and ensure recent improvements in public safety can continue in the future.

We want to make sure that our staff and key partners are kept informed of progress and this briefing sheet gives an update on progress and sets out the next steps.

*Police & Crime Commissioner
John Dwyer*

*Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority,
Cllr John Joyce*

*Chair of North West Ambulance
Service (NWS) Trust, Wyn Dignan*

Chief Constable Simon Byrne

Chief Fire Officer Paul Hancock

NWAS Chief Executive Bob Williams

Blue light talks get the green light

The leaders of the three emergency services have developed a draft Cheshire Blue Light Collaboration programme aimed at maximising the efficiency of the back office teams and systems which support the frontline emergency services.

At this stage most of the proposals for collaboration involve just the fire and rescue service and the police, with North West Ambulance Service involved where practical due to their wider regional responsibilities.

The Executive Board behind the programme has a vision of a single shared headquarters for police and fire based at the existing Cheshire Constabulary site in Winsford.

If the plans are approved, fire and rescue service staff transferring to the new joint headquarters would do so on their existing terms and conditions and would become police employees.

Proposals to bring together a range of transactional and professional services are being drawn up and final decisions will be made at meetings of the Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner and Constabulary Joint Management Board on 9th December.

Trade unions have been kept informed of progress and there will be specific consultation with those staff affected if the plans get the go ahead.

The Executive Board has stressed that there is no intention of a complete merger of emergency services in Cheshire - each organisation will be keeping their own identity and frontline emergency response services.



Cheshire backs consultation

Police and fire chiefs in Cheshire have responded positively to a new Government consultation on "Enabling closer working between the Emergency Services".

The six week consultation outlined proposals for a new duty on all three emergency services to actively consider collaboration opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness. It also highlighted options for local Police and Crime Commissioners to take on the duties and responsibilities of fire and Rescue Authorities if a local case was made.

Cheshire's Fire Authority and Police and Crime Commissioner have both responded to say that while they will continue to collaborate closely, they don't see a need to change the existing governance arrangements - *see back page for the joint covering letter to the PCC and Fire Authority's responses.*



Enabling closer working between the Emergency Services

Bluelight collaboration has a strong foundation in Cheshire and over recent years we have been looking at further ways in which we can work together to protect the communities of Cheshire and meet our shared commitment to improve the safety of our residents and businesses.

We welcome the proposed duty for emergency services to actively consider collaboration. We believe that we are already ahead of the game in Cheshire.

Building on collaboration, such as the shared Poynton Emergency Services Hub, a major programme of work is already underway under our leadership to develop closer joint working in a number of key areas.

Ambitious plans have been produced that, subject to formal approval by both organisations, join up a range of services and systems, such as human resources, finance, fleet and estate. Our aim is to maximise the efficiency of the back office teams and systems that support Cheshire Constabulary and Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service. There will also be a single headquarters site. These plans will not only enable us to meet future financial challenges, but also provide improved services to the public whilst maintaining the strong local identity that both emergency services enjoy and the public of Cheshire value.

We believe that greater collaboration can be achieved without the need for Police & Crime Commissioners to take control of the functions performed by Fire Authorities. The key is to build strong and effective working relationships between the two emergency services – we believe that we have this in place and that the work that we are developing will deliver a more joined-up service to our communities.

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Chief Constable
Cheshire Constabulary

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