

No current plans for governance changes for fire and rescue services in the Thames Valley

16 August 2017

Please see below for a statement from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley and from representatives of each of the fire and rescue services in the Thames Valley:

Statement from Anthony Stansfeld, Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley:

“At the beginning of this year the Policing and Crime Act received Royal Assent. As well as reforms in policing, the Act allowed for changes in the governance of fire and rescue services and enabled Police and Crime Commissioners, where a local case is made, to take on responsibility for them.

“Within the Thames Valley we are in the complex and unique position of having three fire and rescue services and over the last few months I have had regular discussions with fire and rescue authority representatives and local authority stakeholders to consider potential collaboration and governance change options and developing a possible joint way forward.

“Following a meeting last week between myself, the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and representatives from the fire and rescue authorities we have agreed that we will not be actively pursuing any governance changes in the foreseeable future.

“I recognise that the three Thames Valley fire and rescue services have already achieved a high level of operational collaboration, not only between themselves and other public sector partners but with Thames Valley Police as well. This collaboration can be seen in the many combined Police and Fire Service joint hubs that have been set up in several towns within the Thames Valley. We will, of course, continue to work closely together and seek to explore and develop more collaboration options between the police and fire services to deliver operational and financial benefits to the public.”

Berkshire

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Chairman, Cllr Colin Dudley, said: “We are proud of the excellent work we’ve done so far to collaborate with the other Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services, police, ambulance and other colleagues.

“In just the last few weeks and months, we’ve presented frontline crews with brand new fire engines, which we jointly procured and equipped with the other fire and rescue services, and

reopened Hungerford Community Fire Station following major refurbishment – transforming it into a state-of-the-art hub for firefighters as well as police and ambulance staff and the community.

“These are some of the very noticeable achievements we’ve made by working together to benefit the communities we serve. We will continue striving to identify and develop other opportunities that allow us to collaborate and better support the people of Royal Berkshire to lead safe and fulfilling lives.”

Buckinghamshire

Councillor Roger Reed, Chairman of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, said: “Collaborating with all of our partners in order to provide better safety services for the communities within the Thames Valley is at the top of our agenda. We will continue to engage fully in supporting and driving the provision of integrated services.”

Oxfordshire

Councillor Judith Heathcoat, deputy leader of Oxfordshire County Council said: “I welcome the opportunity to look for further collaboration opportunities going forward for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service and Thames Valley Police to serve the people of Oxfordshire and help them lead safe and fulfilling lives.”