



MEETING DATE: May 20, 2025

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
FROM: Ron Reymer, CAO
REPORT NO.: CAO-13-2025
SUBJECT: Fire Services Advisory Committee – Dissolution of Fire Area Boards

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. CAO-13-2025 be received;

AND THAT Council endorse Resolution No.01 of the Fire Services Advisory Committee (FSAC) dated April 9th, 2025 calling for the dissolution of the governance of the two fire area boards and the establishment of Terms of Reference regarding a transition group.

PURPOSE:

To request Council to endorse the resolution of the Fire Services Advisory Committee (FSAC) to dissolve both the Lucan Biddulph Fire Area Board and the Biddulph-Blanshard Fire Area Board effective January 1st, 2026.

BACKGROUND:

The Fire Services Advisory Committee met on April 9, 2025 and discussion regarding dissolution of both the Lucan Biddulph and Biddulph Blanshard fire area boards took place.

The following motion was ratified by the FSAC committee:

Resolution No. 01

Moved by Cathy Burghardt-Jesson

Seconded by Robert Wilhelm

THAT the Lucan Biddulph Fire Services Advisory Committee (FSAC) endorses the dissolution of the governance of the two fire boards;

AND THAT a recommendation to Council for consideration be given regarding dissolution of the two fire boards;

AND THAT senior administrative leaders create a Terms of Reference regarding a transition group.

Recommendation No. 4a of The Township of Lucan Biddulph Fire Services Master Plan, below, recommended the combining of both fire area boards into one department.

Reference: Section 3.1 Department Overview, Page 28

Recommendation #4a: Initiate the integration of the Lucan Biddulph Fire Service into a single unified service.

(Suggested completion: (1 – 60 months)

Rationale: Should the decision be to undertake the integration of the LBFS, the recommended approach would be to commence discussions with the fire chiefs and firefighters at the operational level to establish the core services and the recommend service delivery policy. Explore opportunities for joint training and fire prevention programs and engage in consultations around a single cohesive service. Administrative, financial, and governance changes can be initiated when the operational integration has been completed. In our opinion, the preferred option is full integration undertaken by incremental steps with comprehensive consultation, communication, and engagement over a 1–5-year timeline. The outcome would be streamlined administrative, financial, and governance processes and the transformation of the Lucan Biddulph Fire Service into a cohesive team that fully supports working together to improve service delivery and public safety.

It should be noted that senior administration has reached out to the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office for assistance with this process however there will have to be some legal consultation on moving forward with steps to dissolve both fire area boards.

DISCUSSION:

Council's endorsement of the recommendation is step one in the process towards dissolution of both fire area boards.

It is our understanding that Perth South Council will be considering a motion at their meeting scheduled for Tuesday May 20th, 2025 to proceed in this manner as well.

If endorsed by both Councils, senior staff will proceed with drafting "Terms of Reference" for a transition group with a January 1st, 2026 goal for implementation.

IMPACT TO BUDGET:

No impact to budget at this time however there will be legal costs at some point in the near future.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This recommendation speaks to Strategic Direction One: Service Enhancement and Strategic Direction Two: Growth Management. It also aligns with the stated core values of accountability, transparency, and integrity.

COMMUNITY SAFETY & WELLBEING PLAN (CSWB):

This topic is not specifically dealt with in the Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Township of Lucan Biddulph Fire Services Master Plan
2. Draft minutes of the April 9th, 2025 FSAC meeting

Respectfully submitted by:

Ron Reymmer

Ron Reymmer
CAO/Clerk