

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

16 APRIL 2012

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF DUAL STAFFING OF SPECIALS

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Authority notes the implementation of the dual staffing of special appliances with front line pump rescue ladders as part of the Building upon Success Programme.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to inform the Authority of the successful implementation of the dual staffing of hydraulic platforms and prime movers with front line pump rescue ladders and includes utilisation of remaining personnel to crew 'temporary Brigade Response Vehicles' whilst special appliances are committed to operational incidents. The full impact on the establishment was achieved in September 2011 from which point the savings have been realised.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Building upon Success Programme was initiated in May 2010. As part of this programme a review of operational response, crewing and mobilisation arrangements for special appliances was completed. The review excluded Technical Rescue and National Resilience assets but it has been acknowledged that National Resilience assets including Incident Response Units at Bickenhill, Walsall and Stourbridge and the High Volume Pumping Unit at Sheldon fire stations are already operating under dual staffing arrangements. Following the review the implementation of dual staffing was commissioned.

3.1.1 The term 'dual staffing' relates to the alternative crewing of pump rescue ladders with special appliances dependant on resource requirements.

3.1.2 The term 'pump rescue ladder' refers to a conventional fire engine that is staffed with either 5 or 4 personnel and forms

part of the initial attendance at an emergency incident.

- 3.1.3 The term 'Targeted Response Vehicle' (TRV) is used to describe the Service's existing TRV vehicles based at Hay Mills and Dudley fire stations only. These will be replaced by Brigade Response Vehicles.
- 3.1.4 The term 'Brigade Response Vehicle' (BRV) is used to describe a pump rescue ladder or new vehicle that operates within new protocols based upon crewing levels, skill sets, equipment stowage or range of incident types attended.
- 3.1.5 The term 'special appliances' relates to hydraulic platforms and prime movers that are utilised to transport roll on and roll off demountable units that contain an array of specialist equipment. This does not include the water tower located at Ward End fire station. A water tower is a fully crewed pump rescue ladder that has been adapted with an additional capability of extending booms similar to hydraulic platforms that can provide water via a monitor from height.
- 3.2 Prime movers and demountable units are sub divided into non-crew critical and crew critical. Non crew critical demountable units are delivered and collected from incidents and do not require the prime mover crew to operate the equipment. Crew critical demountable units require the prime mover crew to form part of a specialist trained crew who remain at an incident and operate the equipment contained on the demountable unit.
- 3.3 Special appliances are strategically located at eight stations across the Brigade area. These are in addition to frontline pump rescue ladders. Prior to dual staffing these were continually staffed with a crew of two personnel consisting of a Crew Commander and a Firefighter. This crewing arrangement required a total of ninety six personnel to staff all special appliances consisting of thirty two Crew Commanders and sixty four Firefighters.
- 3.4 The implementation of dual staffing arrangements was completed in two phases. Phase 1 went live on the 4th April 2011. This included the relocation of a number of non crew critical demountable units to Haymills fire station. The decision to move a number of non critical demountable units was based on Integrated Risk Management data with the objective of improving the availability of 'crew critical' demountable units. Phase 2 went live

on the 30th May 2011 where the hydraulic platform from Bournbrook fire station was relocated to Highgate fire station.

- 3.5 The service has trialled two Targeted Response Vehicles which were located at Dudley and Haymills fire stations and operated with a crew of three personnel responding to a range of minor incidents. These are predominantly secondary fires involving rubbish and grass. The use of the Targeted Response Vehicles has been evaluated and proved to be an effective means of responding to small scale incidents. This trial has now finished and the concept will form part of the introduction of Brigade Response Vehicles.
- 3.6 When a special appliance is mobilised two firefighters crewing a pump rescue ladder are required to crew the special appliance resulting in a temporary reduction of the crewing to three personnel on the pump rescue ladder.
- 3.7 To maximise the efficient use of resources and continue to provide the most effective response service to local communities, whenever a special appliance is mobilised resulting in a reduction in crewing of a pump rescue ladder the pump rescue ladder will assume the status of a temporary Brigade Response Vehicle pending the return of the personnel crewing the special appliance.
- 3.8 The temporary Brigade Response Vehicle is available to be mobilised to the range of incidents currently identified as suitable and appropriate for the existing Brigade Response Vehicle response that utilises existing safe systems of work with the additional benefit of having access to the full range of equipment carried on a pump rescue ladder.
- 3.9 To ensure a smooth transition of the dual staffing arrangements there has been a continual cycle of evaluation. This has included monitoring and reviewing feedback provided from stakeholders following incidents requiring the mobilisation of special appliances including temporary targeted response vehicles.

4. **REVIEW OUTCOMES**

- 4.1 Continual monitoring and review has resulted in two comprehensive formal evaluation reports in May and September 2011 where any issues arising from feedback have been resolved. The evaluation reports have been presented to the Corporate

Board. Continual evaluation of mobilising and resource usage has been handed over to the Integrated Risk Management Team.

- 4.2 The total number of mobilisations of appliances to incidents during the period 4th April 2011 to 19th January 2012 is shown below:-

Appliance	Number of Incident Mobilisations
Hydraulic Platform	110
Prime Mover	116
Temporary Targeted Response Vehicle	52

- 4.3 The average incident response times for Hydraulic Platforms and Prime Movers containing crew and non crew critical demountable units compared with the same period last year is contained within the table below:-

Special Appliance	Attendance Time	Attendance Time (Same Time Period Last Year)
Hydraulic Platform	00:20:16 minutes	00:17:25 minutes
Prime Mover	00:30:43 minutes	00:25:39 minutes

- 4.4 Both hydraulic platform and prime mover attendance times are longer than attendance times for the same period the previous year. It has been established from the incident logs that in the majority of cases, extended attendance times are attributable to longer travel distances between the home station of the special appliances and the incident.
- 4.5 Whilst attendance times of special appliances has increased slightly it should be noted that these appliances are mobilised to incidents to support the initial attendance of frontline pump rescue ladders with the provision of additional equipment that enhances that carried on pump rescue ladders.

5. **NEXT STEPS**

The implementation of the dual staffing of specialist appliances with pump rescue ladders has become part of normal business of the service and has provided the foundations for more efficient and effective use of resources that supports the reducing workforce and financial reductions in budget. Further work has been completed to develop the initial Targeted Response Vehicle concept with the introduction of three Brigade Response Vehicles into the fleet. These will initially be based at Dudley, Coventry and Tipton. This will involve the trialling and testing of new equipment, vehicles and expanding the range of incidents that a crew of three can attend. As and when this happens Members will be kept informed via the Policy Planning Forum. The term Targeted Response Vehicles has now been replaced with Brigade Response Vehicles.

6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is required and has been carried out. The initial Equality Impact Assessment did raise issues which required a full Equality Impact Assessment to be completed.

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The total salary savings arising from the implementation of dual staffing is £3.620M. A part year effect (£2.6M) was reflected as an expenditure reduction within the Authority's 2011/12 budget setting process with the balance (£1.020M) shown as part of the expenditure reduction in setting the Authority's 2012/2013 budget.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Dual Staffing of Specialist Appliances - Proposals
Monitoring & Review Evaluation Report 10th May 2011
Monitoring & Review Final Evaluation Report 1st September 2011
Budget reports February 2011 and 2012
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CHIEF FIRE OFFICER