

No.

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MONDAY 13 APRIL 2015

1. **Staffing Options and Trials**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Authority notes that 2 different staffing models will be trialled from April 2015 to provide an evidence based approach which will enable decision making in 2016 to the proposed way forward.
- 1.2 THAT the Authority notes that engagement since October 2014 has been undertaken as set out in paragraph 3.12 below and will continue throughout the trial period.
- 1.3 THAT the Authority notes the approach to implementation of the trial staffing models.
- 1.4 THAT the Authority notes the forecasted savings associated with each of the staffing models proposed.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted for members to note the implementation of trial staffing models and to note the potential forecasted savings associated with each model. The potential location of stations to be part of the staffing model trials are detailed in Appendix 1.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 There is a need to change as a consequence of funding shortfall in Government grant. Over the Comprehensive Spending Review period (2011/12 to 2014/15) there were grant reductions of approximately £21 million (26%) with a further grant reduction of approximately £6 million (9%) in 2015/16. This reduction of funding has been met previously through the Building upon Success (BuS) Programme and an ongoing organisational wide efficiency drive.
- 3.2 However, the challenge to make efficiencies still remains with an estimated £14 million reduction in grant over the period 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- 3.3 Therefore, the Service whilst committed to making further back office savings needs to focus upon front line efficiencies in order to meet these reduction challenges.
- 3.4 The Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), known as the Community Safety Strategy (CSS) provides the risk based evidence and analysis. It tells us what resources are needed and where they are required.
- 3.5 Reducing risk to the Community through the delivery of prevention, protection and response services are the core deliverables within our Service Delivery Model. The underpinning principle of our model is that we will achieve an attendance standard of 5 minutes for our most serious emergencies where life and property is at risk.

3.6 This is because we know that arriving at serious emergencies within the 5 minute timeframe enhances the chance of survivability and reduces injuries and damage to property.

3.7 The current Service delivery model consists of:

- 38 Fire Stations
- 41 Pump Rescue Ladders
- 19 Brigade Response Vehicles
- 1322 Fire Fighters
- 58 Technical Rescue
- 61 Fire Safety
- Fire Control

3.8 The proposals laid out within this report will not have a detrimental effect on the Service Delivery Model and will only explore the number of Fire Fighters required to continue to provide the current standard and show financial savings associated with each staffing model.

3.9 The proposals will also complement our current staffing principles of:

- Service delivery
- Value For Money
- Fair and in line with Core Values.

3.10 The proposed trials will provide an evidence based approach, ensuring performance, trust and value for money are at the forefront of any decision making.

3.11 **Summary of Trials.**

- 3.11.1 We are planning to undertake trials of two Staffing models as part of the on going engagement phase of the implementation of a new staffing model. The models proposed are:
- Merging of Watches - This will involve combining watches at each location to provide a pool of individuals who will self manage their shifts. Each person will provide 150 shifts per year and Optimum Crewing Levels will be maintained at all times, resulting in no wasted shifts due to over crewing. Efficiency savings can be found in Section 6.
 - Re Calibration of Staff to Crew Ratio (S2CR) - This model will result in a reduction in S2CR at each location. It would retain the current Watch System and also the 2,2,4 shift pattern. Efficiency savings can be found with Section 6.
- 3.11.2 Both staffing models will require the use of additional shifts to maintain Optimum Crewing Levels. These additional shifts are required to cover the ridership factor which takes into account sickness or activities that are undertaken outside of a normal working shifts for example; training, special leave etc.
- 3.11.3 The number of additional shifts will vary between each staffing model but it is forecasted that each member of staff may be required on a voluntary basis to perform up to approximately 10 additional shifts per year. Local flexibility will be afforded to staff who undertake the additional shifts and early engagement has indicated that this arrangement will be popular amongst staff.
- 3.11.4 It is proposed that these voluntary additional shifts will be recompensed at a flat rate of pay and will not be pensionable. The savings made by utilising a flat rate of pay is key to being able to sustain not only the Service Delivery Model but to underpin the essential investment in other areas of the Service.

- 3.11.5 Following the trials, should this additional shift allowance form part of the options presented to Fire Authority, a negotiated change in contract will need to form part of the implementation for 2016. Despite the trials in 2015 being planned on a voluntary basis Management recognise the smooth implementation of both trials and final option will be achieved through ongoing engagement and early negotiation. As a consequence negotiation has already begun this using the recognised employee engagement framework.
- 3.11.6 The basis of the trials could result in a reduction of up to 30 posts across all of the potential trial locations. During the trials, these post holders will be proactively involved in projects and activities linked to the Plan in support of Prevention, Protection and Operational preparedness objectives, as determined by local managers.
- 3.12 **Stakeholder Engagement**
- 3.12.1 Earlier in the year, trial proposals were presented to Fire Authority members at the Policy Planning Forum on 2nd February 2015.
- 3.12.2 Engagement is a key factor to the success of these trials demonstrating openness and transparency whilst building trust and it is also important that the trials either maintain or improve on the Service Delivery model. To date the following engagements have been undertaken:
- A statement of current position and timeframes was presented at JCC on the 4th November 2014.
 - A Staffing Continuous Professional Development event to share information about the staffing proposals was held on the 3rd December 2014, for all Station and Group managers. A staffing presentation was made available to use as a communication tool for engagement with staff at stations at Representative Bodies.
 - Over 400 staff have been engaged with through a series of workshops.

- A Staffing ideas electronic forum has been utilised to act as a question and answer platform and also gather ideas from staff.
- There have been ongoing meetings with the representative bodies.
- Every potential trial station has been visited by the staffing team to provide support to compliment understanding and assist with the development of the trials. This will be continuous through the trial period.
- A series of communications visits by Principal Officers to potential locations identified for trial.
- Paper presented to JCC on 7th April 2015 which initiated the negotiations referenced above in 3.11.4.
- A series of negotiation meetings have immediately followed JCC on 7th April 2015 which have resulted in joint statements outlining positive progress and a commitment to continue negotiations as a priority.

3.13 **Analysis**

3.13.1 Evidence based analysis will be utilised to evaluate the trials and this will include the following data sets:

- Maintenance of Appliance availability
- Measure of Protection and Prevention activity utilising existing benchmarks and systems.
- Recorded number of times an Appliance is below Optimum Crewing Level
- Sickness absence of individuals
- Number of additional shifts required to provide Service Delivery at each location.
- Training statistics to measure impact upon Individual competencies.
- Workforce perspective will be measured through ongoing discussion and engagement.
- Financial analysis looking at costings for trial will be ongoing.
- Station self assessment

3.13.2 Analysis of the data sets outlined above will be achieved through close collaborative working between internal partners including:

- Station based staff and managers
- People Support Services
- Workforce planning
- Finance
- Occupational Health
- Ops Training
- IRM team
- Representative Bodies

3.14 **Recruitment**

The current Service Delivery Model requires 1322 riders. With this in mind we have currently agreed to secondments of approximately 18 staff from Hereford & Worcester which would allow us to maintain this position. We predict at some stage in the future, we may have to recruit due to the number of predicted leavers but this will need to be flexible through the trial period as these numbers are variable from month to month. To prevent a position where the organisation is overstaffed we will monitor this position periodically and make decisions based upon timely evidence.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and there are no significant negative impacts on any group with a protected characteristic. However, it is likely that the shift systems being trialled will provide additional flexibility to all members of staff especially those with child or carers responsibilities.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

On going internal stakeholder collaboration is taking place to ensure compliance with Grey Book conditions of service and working time directive.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The estimated full year savings, if each staffing model was fully adopted, would be:

- Merging of Watches- £3.8 million
- S2CR re-calibration- £3.4 million

6.2 The figures represent a total for each staffing model. A blended approach would provide a saving between the two figures.

6.2 The trial period would require a number of voluntary additional shifts at each trial location. The cost of this over a full 12 months would be approximately £600k if staffing trials were undertaken at all of the identified locations (average £60k per trial location). The estimated expenditure could be met from budget savings made by the Authority during 2014/15.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Appendix

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Appendix 1- Potential Trial Locations

- Aston Community Fire Station
- Highgate Community Fire Station
- Sutton Coldfield Community Fire Station
- Woodgate Valley Community Fire Station
- Bickenhill & Wednesbury Community Fire Station (Technical Rescue Unit)
- Coventry Community Fire Station
- Haden Cross Community Fire Station
- Tettenhall Fire Station
- Tipton Fire Station
- Wolverhampton Fire Station