

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Draft Consultation Content and Questions**

#### **Introduction**

West Midlands Fire Service is England's second-largest fire and rescue service.

We've served our communities for more than fifty years, yet our operating model has stayed broadly the same for more than a decade.

We refer to how we organise our resources as our Service Delivery Model (SDM), and aim to get to more serious incidents in five minutes as we know this increases someone's chances of survival.

But our fire stations and other sites are ageing and need major investment. And the risks faced by our communities are changing – from climate change and flooding, through to people living longer and some becoming more vulnerable. Our current model isn't built for this complexity.

Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) (LINK) explains how we will use our resources to reduce foreseeable fire and rescue-related risk. We're currently updating our plan for 2027.

It's an opportunity to reimagine how we deliver our services - to improve how and where we offer them – so we can reinvest in the things that matter most: fire stations, our people, training, and community safety.

We want to be open about the issues we face, and we need you to let us know what you think about our direction of travel.

It's time to have your say, so please spare just a few minutes to answer the questions below.

We'll consider your views and then develop detailed options for public consultation later in 2026.

Thank you.

## **Planning assumptions**

We've developed a set of planning assumptions to guide how we design our future Service Delivery Model. This is so we have enough resources to deal with everyday demand and be able to respond to large or multiple incidents when they occur.

***\*\*DROP DOWN SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION TO SUPPORT PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS QUESTION\*\****

### **Planning Assumption Methodology**

#### Step 1: Understanding historical demand

We analysed a decade of incident data (2015 – 2025) to understand how our resources have been used over time. This included:

- everyday demand (business as usual)
- the severity and frequency of large-scale incidents
- occurrences of multiple simultaneous incidents
- our historical maximum resource usage.

This meant we could identify the maximum level of resources we've historically needed at any one time to manage significant or complex incidents.

#### Step 2: Building in additional capacity

We know that, in reality, not all resources are available all the time. Fire engines could be unavailable, for example, for repairs or due to staffing shortages. We must also maintain cover for ongoing day-to-day incidents, while managing more significant ones. So our planning assumptions include additional resource capacity to:

- maintain business as usual cover during major/significant incidents
- provide relief and rotation for crews at prolonged incidents
- offset expected levels of unavailability.

This is to ensure our model is both realistic and resilient for managing operational demand.

#### Step 3: Considering future risk

The future risk landscape is evolving, so we've factored in how this might influence resource needs. This includes:

- the potential increase in frequency or severity of large-scale incidents
- the impact of climate change and new risk types
- operational factors, such as extended decontamination times or changes in incident complexity.

By considering such trends, we ensure our planning assumptions remain sustainable, flexible, and capable of adapting to the changing environment.

Q1: Do you agree that we should base our future plans on these types of assumptions, which include factors such as frequency and severity of incidents, resource availability, impact of climate change, and need for resilience during busy periods?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q2: We aim to get to serious incidents in five minutes. Should we keep this as a core principle of our Service Delivery Model?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

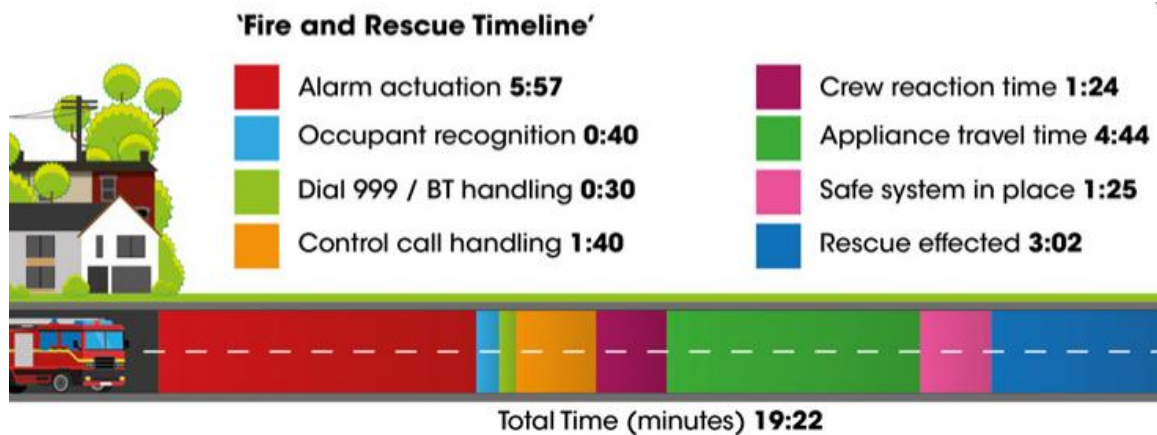
**\*\*DROP DOWN SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION TO SUPPORT 5-MIN QUESTION\*\***

**Survivability Case Study**

Research on survivability has highlighted the importance of responding to high-risk incidents in a timely manner. We have put this research alongside our own data to determine that a five-minute attendance time is critical to the likelihood of someone surviving a fire or any incident involving significant trauma. This has become the foundation of our Service Delivery Model which is centred around achieving a five-minute attendance standard for high-risk incidents.

The ‘Fire and Rescue Timeline’ below explains the different elements of an incident and, on average, the timeframe for each, from fire alarms actuating to dialling 999 and crews being mobilised and travelling to the incident. Within this timeframe, we know there are a number of critical stages where we can make a difference by reducing the average time taken for that particular activity.

(example graphic below)



Q3: Please tell us if there are any other factors you think we should build into our planning assumptions.

[Free text box]

## **Future Risks**

Challenges such as climate change, an ageing population, economic pressures, new technology, and changes to our built environment could affect how we keep people safe. Emergencies may become more complex,

Q1: Do you agree we should take such factors into account when planning for the future?

- Strongly agree
- Agree more frequent, and place greater pressure on our resources.
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q2: Please tell us if there are any particular risks you think we should prioritise when developing our Service Delivery Model.

[Free text box]

***\*\*DROP DOWN SUPPLIMENTARY INFORMATION TO SUPPORT FUTURE RISK QUESTION\*\****

### **Future Risk**

This forecast explores the changes that may affect our communities over the next 20+ years and is informed by a wide range of national and local data sources. These include the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the National Risk Register, local authority population and housing data, climate and environmental forecasts, and health and socioeconomic datasets. By combining these insights with our own incident data and professional judgement, we can anticipate how community risk and vulnerability may evolve and ensure our planning remains grounded in credible, evidence-based intelligence. Our forecast includes:

- **Changing Climate** - We could see an increase frequency and severity of severe weather events, including heatwaves, drought,

flooding, wildfires and intense rainfall, driving up demand for our services and putting more pressure on our firefighters. These events will also disproportionately affect those with existing vulnerabilities.

- **Changing Society** - We are likely to see an ageing population, rising health inequalities, and growing social polarisation which will reshape community risk. We expect more incidents involving elderly or isolated individuals, and higher demand for targeted prevention work.
- **Economic Pressures** - reducing funding may restrict future investment for fire and rescue services, requiring us to prove value for money and make tough choices about how we invest.
- **New and Emerging Technology** - advancements present both opportunities and risks: new tool or approaches may make our work more efficient, but emerging risks or could mean we need to adapt our services, training and equipment.
- **Urban Growth and High-rise Developments** - All our local authority areas are seeing increased developments, including even taller buildings, this could mean incidents will become more complex, requiring new tactics, equipment, and training.
- **Disruptive Events** - globally we have seen an increase in disruptive events, such as such as pandemics, cyberattacks, to terrorism highlighting the need for effective planning so we can ensure we can maintain critical services even under extreme pressure.

Q2: Please tell us if there are any particular risks you think we should prioritise when developing our Service Delivery Model.

[Free text box]

### **A need to invest**

We are looking at how we can operate more efficiently. Any savings would be reinvested in our frontline – in ways that most benefit our firefighters, stations, and the communities we serve.

In no particular order, our staff have suggested the following as priorities for reinvestment:

- our fleet - fire engines and other frontline vehicles
- our buildings and essential maintenance
- tools and equipment
- staffing levels
- welfare facilities on fire stations, eg accessible toilets and showers
- better access to computers and technology at fire stations
- improved and more specialist training facilities
- occupational health provisions

Q1: Are there any other areas in which you think we should consider reinvesting?

[Free text box]

### **Our direction of travel.**

We want to be open and honest about the challenges we face and choices we may have to make. [*Final investment figures to be added here to give an awareness of the kind of investment required – awaiting from Estates*]. Our initial analysis has suggested potential options and considerations. These do not include redundancies.

**Fewer fire stations, similar cover:** We could operate from fewer sites while keeping the same number of fire engines. Our modelling shows that this would maintain a similar level of cover and protect our five minutes attendance standard. Fewer fire stations would reduce long-term investment needs, and generate income from selling sites with limited effect on emergency response.

**Align resources to demand:** We attend around 70 per cent fewer incidents overnight (10pm-10am), yet our shift patterns mean available resources only drop by around 15 per cent. Exploring different ways of working, eg more 12-hour shifts, rebalancing shifts to match 999 demand more closely could free vital funds to reinvest in our service delivery.

**Sudden demand:** Large fires, flooding and other wide-scale incidents can create surges in demand for our help. Climate change and other new risks mean these rarer events are becoming more common and severe. As part of any plans to change levels of cover, we will maintain our ability to handle surges while keeping up with day-to-day demand.

Interactive tool

Tell us what feels to you like a fair balance between savings, protecting emergency response, and reinvesting in our delivery of services.

***\*\*INTERACTIVE TOOL TO BE INSERTED HERE TO SUPPORT  
PROPORTINATE FIRE COVER QUESTION\*\****

The tool lets you adjust:

- Evening availability of fire crews (10pm-10am)
- Daytime availability (10am-10pm)
- Number of fire stations in operation

To see the impact on:

- Response times
- Potential savings
- Reinvestment into delivery of our services

Q1: What combination of changes do you think strikes a fair balance between savings, protecting emergency response, and reinvesting in our delivery of services?

Please submit your response by using the interactive tool.

### **Final thoughts**

So far we've talked about the challenges we face, the opportunities that reviewing our model presents, and where we might invest. Our analysis has taken us towards a direction of travel that would enable us to invest. We think we should look at fewer stations, and new shift patterns with resilience for sudden demand.

Q1: Do you agree that this direction of travel is the right approach to tackling the financial and estate challenges we face?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q3: Please tell us why you feel this way.

[Free Text]

Q4: Please share your own ideas or suggestions for how we could address the challenges we've outlined, while continuing to protect and support our communities.

[Free Text]