

## **Report of Area Commander, Head of Operations**

### **Crewing Proposals**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To inform Members of the progress of the proposals to maintain a crew of 5 on wholetime based fire engines.

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#### **Recommendations**

*It is recommended that the following be noted:*

- i) The crewing proposals presented to the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) on 27 March 2017 meet the aim of providing sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue and preventative services.*
- ii) The crewing proposals presented to the JCC on 27 March 2017 meet the objective of providing a crew of 5 on wholetime appliances across the Service and other identified objectives.*
- iii) An initial consultation over the crewing proposals ended on 1 May 2017 and that two responses were received.*
- iv) Discussions with Representative Bodies are underway regarding the proposed crewing systems.*
- v) Negotiations into contractual issues will commence as soon as discussions on the systems have concluded.*

#### **Introduction and Background**

2. A paper was presented to Members at the FRA meeting on 15 February 2017 with the following recommendations being agreed:

*“That the following be noted:*

- The temporary period of enhanced standard crewing levels of 5 on all first fire engines whenever possible has now come to an end*
- The £0.8m provided for the 2 year period to support this initiative is now exhausted”*

An amendment was made to the third recommendation so that it read:

*“Work is underway to provide options for increased resilience at no extra cost with the objective of increasing resilience across the Service and providing crewing*

*models that can provide for a crew of 5 on the first wholetime appliance at Kidderminster, Redditch, Bromsgrove, Malvern, Evesham and Droitwich on as many occasions as possible at no additional cost to the service and with no change to service provision.”*

3. With regard to how the Service can deliver increased resilience and capacity by crewing with 5 on wholetime appliances in the future, the FRA requested that these options be brought forward as soon as possible.

## **Crewing Proposals**

4. From 1 April this year, crewing on wholetime appliances is 4. This, coupled with the recent mandate from the FRA gave an impetus for the Service to urgently review crewing systems to see how, within existing resources, we could increase resilience whilst ensuring we continue to meet our core purpose of providing our communities with:

*‘sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue and preventative services’*

5. Members will also be aware that the Home Office is mandating all Services to reform and modernise their practices across many areas of business, including how we recruit, employ and utilise our staff in order to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness at all times. Therefore this review of crewing arrangements comes as one part of a much wider suite of measures, which will affect all groups of employees, designed to ensure the organisation meets the expectations of Home Office in every way.
6. Whilst it is by no means the primary driver, efficient and effective crewing arrangements will also importantly contribute to the Service’s revised Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which seeks to ensure sound financial arrangements over the coming years, whilst at the same time continuing to function effectively with up to £1.6m less annual revenue funding by 2019/20.
7. With all this in mind the key objectives set for this crewing review were designed to deal with issues identified by the FRA, managers of the Service, staff and Representative Bodies and are detailed below:
  - Create capacity and resilience (crewing 5s) on wholetime appliances across the Service.
  - Provide additional support to RDS and the crewing of RDS appliances across the Service.
  - Introduce modern, flexible working conditions that are attractive for people to work and that could encourage diversity across the Service.
  - Retain existing fire cover (speed and weight of attack) wherever possible.
  - Review the number of operational managerial posts.

- Develop solutions to help resolve the issues with recruiting staff to the Day Crewing Duty System.
- Resolve the complications around the allowances for Droitwich/USAR personnel.
- Create savings of up to £300,000 pa to meet MTFP.

## **Current Situation**

8. In order to consult, discuss and negotiate these proposals with the Representative Bodies, HWFRS is following the procedure detailed in the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service, Sixth Edition 2004 (updated 2009), (known as the Grey Book) and within the Service Policy Instruction on the Joint Protocol for Industrial Relations.
9. On 27 March 2017, members of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) were invited to a meeting at which they were given a presentation on the proposals. That set of proposals meets all of the objectives above and importantly makes the delivery of our operational services sustainable for the future.
10. Following the JCC meeting on 27 March, officers have carried out a series of visits to the affected stations to present the proposals and to engage with staff to discuss them, identify issues and alternative approaches.
11. The initial consultation with the Representative Bodies was extended at the request of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and ended on 1 May 2017 and two responses were received by the Service from the FBU and the Fire Officer's Association (FOA). These responses identified a number of issues but did not identify any alternative proposals to meet the aim and objectives.
12. The issues raised in the consultation responses were fully considered, and responded to in writing by the CFO on 8 May 2017, and the two unions that responded (FBU & FOA) were invited to separate meetings to discuss their issues and to begin discussions on the crewing systems; a deadline for responses was agreed for 7 June 2017.
13. Since the crewing proposals were presented to the staff, officers have carried out visits to Evesham Town Council, Malvern Town Council, The Mayor of Hereford and the Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Council Chief Executives to engage with stakeholders and to explain the proposals.

## **Next Steps**

14. Once discussions regarding the crewing systems have concluded, the Service will enter negotiations on contractual issues ahead of further periods of consultation on the negotiated outcomes and identifying implementation dates for transitioning to the new systems.

## Conclusions

15. Following the FRA meeting on 15 February 2017 a set of proposals was presented to the Representative Bodies (RBs) on 27 March 2017.
16. An initial consultation period ended on 1 May 2017 and two responses were received from the RBs.
17. These responses did not provide any alternative solutions for consideration and raised a number of issues that were fully considered and responded to in writing by the CFO.
18. Discussions with the RBs began in May 2017 and once these have concluded, negotiations will start into contractual issues followed by a further period of consultation on the negotiated outcomes before transitioning to the new systems can begin.

## Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Impact on all staff and resource implications for HR team
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications)	Link to core purpose and to Medium Term Financial Plan
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores)	Maintaining the agreed crewing level does not add additional risk
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Consultation with Representative Bodies carried out. Engagement with stakeholders and staff ongoing
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	Yes.

## Contact Officer

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