

Report of Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Resource Review Update

Purpose of report

1. To update the Authority on the implementation measures taken in support of the Resource Review.
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Recommendation

It is recommended Members note progress to date regarding measures taken to implement the outcome of the Resource Review, in particular:

- i) Removal of the proposed fire engines (listed below);***
- ii) The wholetime watch position at Hereford, Worcester and Wyre Forest;***
- iii) Operational use of the new 4x4 vehicles;***
- iv) The updated capital financing costs; and***
- v) Implementation of the new model for daytime support crewing at Leominster and Bromyard.***

Introduction

2. On 26 June 2024 the Fire Authority authorised the removal of the following On-Call staffed fire engines along with several additional measures and changes, alongside the reinvestment programme created because of the Resource Review recommendations:
 - The third (On-Call) fire engine at Redditch.
 - The fourth (On-Call) fire engine at Wyre Forest.
 - The third (On-Call) fire engine at Worcester.
 - The second (On-Call) fire engine at Droitwich.
 - The second (On-Call) fire engine at Bromyard.
 - The third (On-Call) fire engine at Hereford.
 - The second (On-Call) fire engine at Leominster.
3. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer delivered an interim update to the Authority on 16 October 2024. This paper provides an additional update on progress to date on the outcomes of the Review.
4. The On-Call unit at Droitwich Fire Station was the only On-Call unit to be fully disestablished, with all the other On-Call units being reduced in terms of staffing in relation to a reduction in the number of On-Call fire engines; as of the date of this paper, Droitwich On-Call has now been fully disestablished from the Service. The fire engine has been returned to the Operational Logistics Department, along with the other fire engines listed above and will be disposed of within the Fleet Strategy

in the normal manner. Eight members of the unit at Droitwich elected to take voluntary redundancy at a total cost of £33,244.63, as they already hold full time Fire Service employment, mostly with HWFRS in other roles. The remaining seven members of staff elected to be redeployed into other (wholetime) firefighting roles within the Service. Throughout the entire process staff and Unions were fully consulted and there were no compulsory redundancies.

5. All the whole-time watches at five fire stations (Hereford, Worcester, Bromsgrove, Wyre Forest and Redditch) operate what is known as the 2,2,4 shift duty pattern which involves 2 x 9-hour days followed by 2 x 15-hour night shifts and four subsequent days off on a rolling eight-day pattern. Prior to the Resource Review all five stations operated this duty system with a watch size of five Firefighters (including Watch and Crew Commanders) to normally provide a crew size on duty of four Firefighters on each fire engine on any given shift. Four is the minimum number of staff required to mobilise a fire engine in HWFRS.
6. As a result of the Resource Review and the reinvestment programme, Hereford, Worcester and Wyre Forest Fire Stations will now have a complement of 6 Firefighters per watch by the end of December 2024 giving, on many occasions, five Firefighters on duty, not four. This will enable these staff to respond with five Firefighters on many more occasions where they would have previously been responding with four, and will provide resilience to other fire stations if they are short of crewing, or for essential training etc.
7. The operational deployment of the newly introduced four wheel drive crew carriers at all the locations affected by the Resource Review (except Droitwich) have also seen an increase in usage since the last update to the Authority in October 2024. These additional utility vehicles have been mobilised on 26 occasions and provided support at a variety of operational incidents; for example, barn fires, water rescues incidents, missing persons, factory fires, etc. This has enabled some of the available On-Call Firefighters not able to crew the first fire engine at the stations listed above to contribute to our operational response, where they otherwise may not have been mobilised or able to attend these incidents.
8. The reinvestment created by the Resource Review is now starting to be realised in several areas, and is allowing the transition of resource across the Service to take place. The loss of 22 posts of the proposed 45 On-Call posts has now been realised, creating a reinvestment figure of circa £172,000 per annum in staff wages. Additionally, the removal of the seven fire engines, and the introduction of the compact fire engine at Malvern, has created a reinvestment figure of circa £180,00 of revenue per annum against the reduced capital costs. It should be noted that the initial prediction to remove 45 On-Call posts has been revised to 40 due to the retention of the On-Call unit at Malvern; however, with some monies realised from other budgets the Resource Review is still on track and within the financial parameters established.
9. The On-Call support and reallocation of a contingent of whole-time staff dedicated to support the fire stations at Bromyard and Leominster will now take place in 2025, along with the realignment of whole-time non-fire station-based Watch Commander daytime working hours in support of On-Call availability across the Service area.

10. A further update will be brought forward to the Authority meeting in June 2025 with a more detailed assessment regarding the Resilience Register (wholetime overtime costs) savings that are predicted against the increased resilience and investment in the wholetime workforce.
11. The Service has now established a data gathering and monitoring process which will substantively come into force in early 2025 to provide accurate data on the improvements and management of the investment and staffing from the Resource Review. This data will also include details of the improvements in crewing and attendance at operational incidents.

Conclusion/Summary

12. The decision taken by the Authority on 26 June 2024, set out in the Resource Review, is now being delivered by departments and managers across HWFRS. The changes set out are now supported by the improvement in crewing levels on wholetime watches and improved response arrangements using 4x4 vehicles. A headline figure of around £350,000 per annum has been realised and has been redirected as proposed. Additional funding has also been found within other existing budgets to support the ‘priming’ of the resources needed to deliver the reinvestment programme.
13. The full reallocation of resources should be completed in 2025 and should be fully embedded by the end of 2025. Early indications are the outcomes of the Resource Review are having a positive effect on crewing levels at wholetime locations and the Service should see an upturn in On-Call availability in the near future.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<p>The full realisation of the savings proposed within the Resource Review are now being realised. There will need to be a readjustment due to the 2-year extension of the Malvern appliance; consequently, the full 45 posts proposed will now be revised to 40.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)</p>	<p>Links to the CRMP, Response Strategy and Core Code of Ethics</p>
<p>Productivity & Efficiency (Identify how proposal improves productivity or efficiency)</p>	<p>Delivers a more efficient model by reallocating resources to reduce Resilience Register costs. It will also deliver additional efficiency in support of Prevention activities once established.</p> <p>Increases the overall efficiency of the on-call model by better use of wholetime resources and skills to support the Response Strategy (Availability).</p>

<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<p>All mobilising and deployment of assets have been assessed. The deployment of the newly introduced 4x4 is aligned to the National Incident types. Additionally, the internal guidance mandates normal road speed attendance.</p>
<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<p>Full public consultation was carried out to support the decision to remove the appliances and unit at Droitwich. Full formal consultation has been undertaken with staff and Representative Bodies regarding the redundancy process.</p>
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<p>Yes, see previous FRA paper.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>DPIA is in place and being adhered to by the Human Resources Department.</p>