

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

### 6. Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020

#### Purpose of report

1. To report the response to and findings from the public consultation regarding the Authority's draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), and to consider recommendations for the implementation of the Fire and Emergency Cover Review.
2. To consider the use of the Authority's General Reserves to protect front line services.
3. To approve the draft CRMP for publication.

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#### Recommendation

*In order to meet future budget requirements it is RECOMMENDED that:*

- (1) *following detailed consideration of the responses to the consultation on the draft Community Risk Management Plan, the Authority's updated financial position and having regard to additional discussions with Members, staff and representative bodies it is proposed that:-*
  - (a) *there be no change to the existing fire engines at Bewdley, Broadway, Whitchurch and Kingsland; and*
  - (b) *there be no change to the second fire engines at Kidderminster, Evesham, Leominster, Bromyard and Ross-on-Wye;*
  - (c) *Option 2 of the additional proposals (as illustrated in appendix 1 and 2 of this report) be approved, namely:*
    - (i) *the second whole-time fire engines at Hereford and Worcester fire stations be changed to the Day Duty crewing system (12 hours permanently crewed and 12 hours retained duty system crewed in each 24 hours), the Chief Fire Officer to determine the exact hours of crewing following consultation with relevant staff*
    - (ii) *there be no change to the second retained duty fire engine at Redditch*
    - (iii) *subject to (2) below the Service aim to have five firefighters on all first fire engines whenever possible but agrees that standard crewing for all fire engines be four firefighters*
    - (iv) *the second fire engines at Ledbury and Tenbury fire stations be removed from the Service's fleet of fire engines; and*

- (2) Up to £0.8m of reserves in total (£0.3m general reserves and £0.5m from the budget reduction earmarked reserve) be used to maintain five firefighters on all wholetime based first fire engines (except those at Hereford and Worcester) on as many occasions as possible for an initial period of two years (2015/16 and 2016/17) and that the position be reviewed thereafter.**
- (3) The Community Risk Management Plan be amended to reflect the above decisions and the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to publish the document with any further minor amendments as may be necessary;**
- (4) Changes to fire cover as agreed be implemented in a timescale and manner at the discretion of the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority;**
- (5) The arrangements for any reduction of the number of staff to be employed as a result of the above changes to fire cover, be considered by the Chief Fire Officer and a report be brought back to the Authority if necessary.**

## **Introduction and Background**

4. Members will be aware that the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020 has been reported to the Authority on three previous occasions. This report should be read in conjunction with these previously circulated reports: -
  - (a) FRA meeting 3 October 2013: 'Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020' – authorisation for public consultation
  - (b) FRA meeting 19 February 2014: 'Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020 – Consultation Responses' – seeking consideration of the responses and consideration of recommendations to implement the proposed changes to fire cover
  - (c) FRA meeting 9 June 2014: 'Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020' – seeking consideration of revised proposals in the light of an updated financial position and consideration of the use of General Reserves to protect front line fire engines
5. It is particularly important that Members consider and have regard to the consultation responses, as set out in the CRMP Consultation Report which accompanied the papers for the 19 February meeting.
6. Members will recall that the reports referred to in (b) and (c) above were deferred pending requests, firstly, that options to use General Reserves to protect front line fire engines should be investigated; and secondly, that other alternative ways of reducing fire cover should be investigated, including options for alternative duty systems proposed by Members. This was followed up at a Member seminar held on 29 July 2014, which discussed a number of alternative options based on proposals submitted by Members. Members have also had access to a significant amount of information generated by questions, this information also being made available to all staff and representative bodies.
7. Following the seminar, the alternatives suggested by Members were consolidated into a set of five options, each of which involve making changes to the crewing models and ridership levels at a number of fire stations in order to achieve the

savings required. These alternatives are presented as additional options later in this report for Members' consideration.

### **Fire Cover Proposals reported to the Authority**

8. Members will be aware from previous reports that there are still substantial budget gaps of £0.999m in 2015/16 rising to £2.137m in 2016/17 that can only be closed by examining funds used to provide front line services, all other prudent reductions away from the front line having already been exhausted or having been identified as part of closing future budget gaps. In the course of the previous reports to the Authority a number of proposals to make the necessary reductions in fire cover were put forward, as follows:
  - (a) The original CRMP proposals that went to consultation were to remove ten fire engines from the Service fleet. Those proposals are still considered to be a robust and a deliverable option. They were based on fully researched data and evidenced analysis that are still valid and stands scrutiny. It remains the case that that these proposals provide satisfactory and appropriate levels of fire cover across the two Counties **when compared to existing fire cover in other areas of the Service and the availability of resources**, and could be implemented in full if considered necessary.
  - (b) However, in view of the Authority's improved financial position over original forecasts and when taking into account the responses to the consultation process, the recommendation to FRA Members on 19 February 2014 was for a less drastic reduction in fire cover by removing only five fire engines.
  - (c) An alternative recommendation was reported to FRA Members on 9 June 2014, which identified three options as to how the Authority could utilise up to £485,000 from General Reserves to defer removing two, three or five affected fire engines for a limited number of years.

### **Additional Options for Reducing Fire Cover**

9. As indicated at paragraph 6 (above), following the Member seminar held on 29<sup>th</sup> July, additional options identified by Members were consolidated into a single set of five options. Each option involves making changes to the crewing models and ridership levels at a number of fire stations in order to achieve the required savings. All five options provide enhanced fire cover at Worcester and Hereford over that which was originally proposed, although when considering the data analysis and comparison against fire cover across other areas of the Service, they are enhancements that are not necessarily required. It is however, recognised that any additional fire cover would enhance resilience within the overall system of fire cover in the Service.
10. For ease of reference, the five options, along with the original CRMP proposal, have been consolidated into a single table which is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. Alongside the table is a list of pros and cons for each option and this is attached at Appendix 2.

11. Members should refer to the Appendices when considering the following discussion of these options.

## **Discussion of Additional Options**

12. The analysis of these additional options suggests that each would achieve similar savings to the original CRMP proposal, but all five options have caveats which must be considered, including a reduction of firefighters in other areas to provide crewing for the second fire engines at Hereford and Worcester.
13. In theory, any of the five additional options are feasible, though as the list of pros and cons in Appendix 2 shows, it is clear that Option 2 offers a greater pragmatic and realistic basis for implementation than others. It is also the case that day duty fire engines are the foundation for a day crewing plus system and therefore if Option 2 is selected it does not remove the potential for day crewing plus in the future, should finance improve and volunteers come forward.
14. All five options include the removal of an on call fire engine from Ledbury and Tenbury fire stations, as in the original CRMP proposal.
15. Subject to the discussion in paragraph 17 below, all five options are based on having four firefighters on fire engines rather than five (as is currently the case for all fire engines, with the exception of the second fire engines at Hereford and Worcester, which are currently crewed by four firefighters). In essence, all wholetime based duty systems across the Service would lose firefighters so that there could be additional provision (over and above the CRMP proposals) at Hereford and Worcester fire stations.
16. Having four firefighters on a fire engine is considered safe: it occurred on 1,303 occasions in 2013-14 (15% of all mobilisations), and approximately 900 of these occasions were on the first fire engine. The safety of firefighters is very much dependent on their equipment (including Personal Protective Equipment), their training and procedures and, very importantly, the command and control exercised by their leaders at an incident. Having four on a fire engine may, on occasions, mean it takes slightly longer to carry out a task, or series of tasks, but it does not make tasks any less safe than having five on a fire engine. The Service would still do all it can to achieve five firefighters on fire engines but should any of the five options be selected (subject to paragraph 17 below), standard crewing would be considered to be four.
17. As shown in the table in Appendix 1, all five options would require the reduction of a small number of firefighters at all wholetime based duty system fire stations in order to achieve the required savings identified in the CRMP. However, it is suggested that the Authority consider using £0.8m of reserves, as per the principle of the previous FRA resolution, to maintain current crewing of five on Redditch, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Evesham and Malvern first fire engines, which would allow the Authority two years' 'breathing space' to assess whether the financial predictions are playing out as expected. Pay rises, inflation, grant allocation and the amount of income from precept are all examples of where fluctuations could occur. Should the financial predictions not change favourably, standard crewing of four would then need to be applied at these stations, or additional funds identified to support five firefighters on these first fire engines. All

RDS crewed appliances would continue to have crews of four, five or six dependent on RDS availability at any given time.

18. Should this proposal be agreed the Chief Fire Officer would use his operational discretion and flexibility to establish the best manner in which to achieve five on a first fire engine on the maximum possible number of occasions. Relevant trade unions would be consulted in establishing the most effective manner of achieving this aim. The Fire Brigades Union has already been consulted on the content of this report.

## Conclusion

19. There is still a substantial budget gap of £2.137m by 2016/17 that can only be addressed from within front line services, having already exhausted all other prudent reductions away from the front line. Members have a number of options before them to consider how best to achieve future balanced budgets, including the use of some reserves and this report indicates a recommended way forward that addresses the budget gaps whilst maintaining as much fire cover as possible.

## Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The savings identified within the recommendation will close the budget gap identified in the MTFP to 2016/17. The proposed use of reserves would leave £1.5m remaining in general reserves, which the Treasurer considers to be satisfactory.
<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).	The CRMP will be the Authority's overall strategic plan for delivering its core purpose, priorities and policies up to 2020, and will guide all Service functions.
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	The CRMP sets out the Authority's overall approach to risk management.
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	The extensive consultation on the draft CRMP was reported to the Authority on 19 February 2014.
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	The Equalities Impact Assessment was included in the CRMP report to the Authority on 19 February 2014.

## **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1: CRMP Proposals - Alternative Options

Appendix 2: CRMP Proposals – Alternative Options Pros and Cons

## **Background Information**

Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020

Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020 – Consultation Responses

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