

**MEETING: 22 NOVEMBER 2010**

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**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE RETAINED FUNCTION AT GATESHEAD SOUTH  
FIRE STATION (STATION 13)**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,  
THE FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the findings of the review into the operational effectiveness of the retained appliance, T13P2, based at Gateshead South community fire station and to seek their approval, in principle, to the removal of the vehicle from the operational fleet, subject to the outcome of a further public consultation exercise.

**2 BACKGROUND**

2.1 As Members will recall, following an extensive public consultation exercise, approval was given by the Authority for a review to be undertaken into the operational effectiveness of the retained fire appliance at Gateshead South community fire station. This action formed part of the 2010/2011 Integrated Risk Management Annual Action Plan.

2.2 The specific purpose of the review was to examine whether there was sufficient evidence available to support the proposition that the retained fire appliance was not required as part of the Authority's operational fleet. This work has now been completed and the results of the review are set out below for the consideration of Members.

**3 OPERATIONAL INFORMATION**

3.1 Examination of the data held on the Authority's management information system has highlighted the fact that, over the last three years, the retained fire appliance, T13P2, only attended a total of 91 incidents. Furthermore the average attendance time of the retained appliance in respect of these incidents was 07:26 minutes. The chart below illustrates this:

<b>Fiscal year</b>	<b>Incidents attended</b>	<b>Average time to attendance</b>
2007/08	50	06:54
2008/09	16	08:41
2009/10	25	07:42
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>07:26</b>

- 3.2 It can be intimated from these figures that the retained fire appliance attendance at operational incidents over the three years in question has been very limited. This is mainly due to the fact that Gateshead South community fire station also has a full time fire appliance, which is the first response to incidents in the area.
- 3.3 Examination of the data has also revealed that, when the retained fire appliance is unavailable due to staffing shortfalls or mechanical defect, and a second fire engine is required to provide operational assistance in the Gateshead South area, the supporting wholetime appliance mobilised from a neighbouring station can attend more quickly than the retained fire engine.
- 3.4 The chart below shows that, in the past three years, supporting fire appliances from neighbouring stations have attended 663 incidents in the Gateshead South area with the average attendance time being 06:58 minutes.

<b>Fiscal year</b>	<b>Number of incidents</b>	<b>Average time to attendance*</b>
2007/08	343	06:52
2008/09	166	07:00
2009/10	154	07:08
<b>Total</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>06:58</b>

**Note:** If there were two or more visiting appliances, the time of the first appliance in attendance is the time utilised for statistics.

- 3.5 Compounding this issue is the fact that continual difficulties with recruiting sufficient numbers of retained staff has meant that T13P2 was only operationally available on 30.4% of the year, with fire cover being provided by wholetime neighbouring stations for the remainder of the time.
- 3.6 The Chief Fire Officer is of the opinion that the information set out above effectively demonstrates that the retained fire appliance based at Gateshead South community fire station is not a risk critical asset, given that any necessary operational support to the wholetime fire appliance based at Gateshead South community fire station is more effectively provided from neighbouring fire stations.
- 3.7 As a consequence, the Chief Fire Officer proposes that fire appliance T13P2 is removed from the operational fleet on the grounds of effectiveness and efficiency of the service.

#### **4 HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The HR Implications are considered in a separate report under part 2 of this Fire Authority Agenda.

## 5 LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that that a Fire and Rescue Authority must make provision within its area for extinguishing fires, protecting life and property and ensuring the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to meet all normal risk requirements.
- 5.2 Based on evidence outlined in section 3, it is evident that a faster response for a second appliance can be achieved when T13P2 is not available and when appliances from neighbouring stations are mobilised to incidents.

## 6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is estimated that any saving in CO2 emissions would be cancelled out by supporting appliances replacing T13P2, however potential environmental benefits are likely to be observed by reducing the operational fleet by one appliance

## 7 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the risk to the Authority has been minimised as far as practicable. The assessment has considered an appropriate balance between risk and control; the realisation of efficiencies; the most appropriate use of limited resources; and a comprehensive evaluation of the benefits. The risk to the Authority has been assessed as low utilising the standard risk matrix based on control measures being in place. The complete risk assessment is available on request from the Chief Fire Officer.

## 8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The overall cost of the Retained fire appliance, T13P2

- 8.1 **2010/11** (Budget allocation: 12 Personnel)

Staffing	£59,694
Vehicle (Estimated maintenance costs)	£12,050
	<b>£71,744</b>

## 9 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this specific report.

## 10 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Data shows that utilising supporting appliances to replace T13P2 will allow for a consistent and effective response to be provided, benefiting both firefighter safety and the service to the community.

## 11 RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Approve, in principle, the removal of the retained fire appliance T13P2 from the operational fleet, subject to the outcome of a further public consultation exercise.
  - b) Receive further reports as appropriate.
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## BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Review of Operational Effectiveness of T13P2