

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING: 11 DECEMBER 2017

SUBJECT: IRMP RESPONSE REVIEW CONSULTATION SUMMARY

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK TO THE
AUTHORITY) THE STRATEGIC FINANCE OFFICER AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO
THE AUTHORITY**

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Authority with the findings of all internal consultation, relating to implementing the agreed action to crew all pumping appliances with four staff. The report presents further analysis of those concerns and presents recommendations for action.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Chief Fire Officer undertook extensive public consultation in relation to the IRMP response review in 2013. A summary of that consultation is included in section 3 below for the information of members. The agreed action was included in the proposals consulted on at that time.
- 2.2 Officers undertook further internal consultation in relation to the implementation of the action during November 2017 and presented a summary of these findings at the Fire Authority meeting on 6 November 2017. Members resolved that the contents of the report be noted, the decision be deferred until the Authority received information about the financial position of the Authority following the budget of 22 November and a more detailed analysis of the safety concerns raised by the FBU; and further reports be received as required.

**3 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS IRMP PUBLIC, STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER
CONSULTATION 2013/14**

- 3.1 Following Fire Authority approval, officers launched public consultation on 22 October 2013 with a closing date of 1 January 2014, a period of 10 weeks. The process was designed in accordance with Government guidance notes on the conduct of consultation by public bodies.

- 3.2 The process was planned around a consultation document and questionnaire, supported by a number of information sessions for staff, the public and partners, with the purpose of:
- Explaining the IRMP proposals in more detail, including the evidence forming the basis of the proposals.
 - Understanding and seeking to address any concerns people might have at the meetings.
 - Answering any questions people might have in order to inform their response.
 - Encouraging people to respond.
- 3.3 A consultation document, launched via an internal Chief Fire Officer's Bulletin and a press conference, published on dedicated sections of the website and intranet, immediately detailed the consultation process. This document was also available at all public meetings in hard copy, and available in alternative formats upon request.
- 3.4 The options consulted upon were as follows.
- Crew appliances at stations with one fire appliance with four staff;
 - Remove six main fire appliances across the service (a reduction from thirty to twenty-four);
 - Introduce two Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) for lower risk incidents;
 - Introduce two additional TRVs to be Dual Staffed at night and as required;
 - Remove two fire appliances' for up to twelve hours at night;
 - Reduce Aerial Ladder Platforms from three to two;
 - Invest in new firefighting technologies to enhance performance and firefighter safety.
- 3.5 In order to reach as many members of the communities within Tyne and Wear as possible, the IRMP consultation was promoted in a variety of ways including:
- Press conferences
 - Press releases
 - News article on website and intranet
 - Social Media posts (Facebook and Twitter)
 - Emails to partners and other stakeholders
 - Meetings with Council leaders and MPs
 - Member briefings where requested
 - Presentation to Local Strategic Partnerships
 - Posters distributed in a variety of public building (i.e. libraries, Council offices, and Leisure Centres) across each district promoting public consultation events
 - Leaflet drops to local shops, dentists, GP surgeries etc.

- Public meetings
- Thirteen staff briefings scheduled.

4 FINDINGS OF 2013/14 : INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Consultation feedback - Riding four at one pump stations;

- 4.1 The feedback regarding crewing one-pump stations with four staff on the appliance included:
- Concern regarding the increase of risk to public and firefighter safety** – Sixty-eight respondents were negative due to the increased risk to the public and firefighters with Fifty-six respondents opposing this proposal e.g. “Surely this is just dangerous for firefighters, how can four firefighters rescue trapped people and tackle the fire when the back-up is miles away?”
 - Positive regarding this proposal** – Twenty-eight respondents were positive regarding crewing one-pump stations riding with four staff on an appliance and wondered why this was not already in place e.g. “If others crew with four I cannot see a problem as long as they can still provide the same professional, skilled capabilities”.
 - Insufficient information** - Seven respondents stated they did not have sufficient information to make a decision and other comments received related to the firefighter’s capacity to do their job (particularly in erecting the 13.5m ladder) and the negative impact upon training.

5 RESPONSES TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY IRMP RESPONSE REPORT DATED – 6 NOVEMBER 2017

Response Report feedback - Riding four at one pump stations;

- 5.1 The table provided in Appendix A illustrates the staff and elected member feedback regarding crewing one-pump stations with four staff on the appliance, this included;
- One hundred and ninety four responses received from members of staff and stated concerns about this proposal based on increased risk to the public or firefighters see Appendix B;
 - Twelve emails were received via Authority Members from ten members of staff;
 - Six questions were raised by five members of staff via emails sent directly to elected members;

- d) Five questions were raised by one elected member to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Community Safety via email;
- e) One suggestion relating to the IRMP proposals from one member of staff was received via the designated IRMP email facility.

6 IRMP RESPONSE REVIEW 2017/20 RESPONSE: FIRE BRIGADES UNION

- 6.1 The Fire Brigades Union has provided a detailed response to the proposals; further clarification was requested on five questions, see Appendix D.
- 6.2 Three emails were also received by elected members from the FBU Brigade Secretary, stating concerns summarised below:
 - a) The FBU believe that if the Fire Authority accepted the recommendation to implement this action, it would place firefighters and the public at an intolerable risk;
 - b) Removal of one firefighter from each crew would present the incident commander with the dilemma of making a judgement call of whether to commit crews into the incident and, in the FBU's view, prompt action outside of the current breathing apparatus guidance (OGBA); or wait until the appropriate resources arrive on scene.
 - c) A Tynemouth Constituency Labour Party (CLP) Branch Motion on cuts within the Fire Service in Tyne and Wear was received by the FBU, see Appendix C.
 - d) A full detailed response on behalf of Members was provided by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer for Community Safety (Appendix E).

7 OTHER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES RIDING FOUR ON ONE PUMP STATIONS

- 7.1 At the Fire Authority meeting on 6 November 2017, members enquired as to the position of other Fire and Rescue Authorities on this matter.
- 7.2 As a part of the IRMP 2017/20 response review, the review team were asked to consider and research all other FRS currently riding with four on one pump appliances, the findings are below;
 - a) **Fire Services Currently Riding Four on all pumps;**
 - Manchester FRS
 - Leicestershire FRS

- Kent FRS
- Cheshire FRS
- Warwickshire FRS
- Northamptonshire FRS

b) Services Currently Reviewing the Implementation of Riding Four on all pumps;

- Durham & Darlington FRS
- Cleveland Fire Brigade
- Isle of Wight FRS
- Merseyside FRS

7.3 A number of other Services are yet to respond, the above confirms that other FRS are riding with four on a risk based approach; a number of other Services are currently reviewing their ridership numbers through their IRMP process.

8 RESPONSE TO CONCERNS

8.1 This report details all internal responses to the Authority's Response Review report dated 6 November 2017, which seeks approval to implement the proposal to crew all pumping appliances with four staff. The number of staff responding to the report has been relatively low, with two-hundred and seven responses received from staff (24%). Of those that did respond, the majority have expressed concerns about the proposals as set out in 5.1 above.

8.2 A question and answer session was conducted on 23 November 2017 at Gateshead East Station (Station Victor). The session encouraged staff that had raised concerns to attend, and ask the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Community Safety further questions relating to this IRMP action. Fifteen members of staff attended the session, with twenty-one questions posed, details are provided in Appendix K. The broad position presented by those present, was that they principally reject the proposal, and they feel would worsen service provision, if implemented.

8.3 All formal detailed responses to concerns from staff are documented in Appendices F – J.

8.4 A detailed task analysis was completed regarding each affected station, with the objective of determining the impact on the first appliance in attendance. TWFRS has an average second pump attendance time of one minute fifty-six seconds, after the first pump arrival. This covers all level one incidents in 2016/17. The detailed task analysis shows all attendance times for the second pumps to the nine single pump station areas. Average attendance times for a second pump to level one incidents, requiring breathing apparatus; is two minutes and thirty seconds.

- 8.5 TWFRS has successfully introduced a number of changes to operational service delivery since 2006, including riding with four staff on most appliances. All of these changes involved a detailed examination of risk. Many of these changes have initially caused concerns, mitigated using a phased approach that facilitated the monitoring of the impact.
- 8.6 The selection of four initial stations is based on detailed risk, attendance time and incident analysis. The stations indicated are the most suitable to be assigned to the initial implementation. The phased approach also facilitates appropriate staff consultation in relation to the staff moves that may be necessary to implement each phase.
- 8.7 Despite unprecedented and disproportionate budget cuts, TWFRS are still one of the fastest responding FRSs in England.
- 8.8 On two-thousand and sixty-four occasions between January 2015 and October 2017, a single pump with a crew of four, has covered a station area due to a Category 02 appliance covering an alternative location between the hours of 0000-0900.
- 8.9 Since the introduction of Targeted Response Vehicles at Washington Station, S01 has been riding standalone with four personnel from 18:00 to 00:00 on eight hundred and ninety-seven occasions (Jan 2015 – Oct 2017). Washington Station also provides cover between 00:00-09:00 when Marley Park is on extended days (S02 covers). The result is that on approximately one third of the time, when S01 was available for fire cover, it was a standalone appliance staffed with four personnel.
- 8.10 Pre-determined attendances (PDA) are set using regular risk management and driven by the requirements of our standard operating procedures. The normal PDAs are built up using a minimum of 2, 3 or 4 pumps, responding to higher risk fires. This provides a minimum of 8, 12 and 16 firefighters respectively. Detailed task analysis has been undertaken in relation to this action and its proposed implementation. This analysis indicates that these PDAs provide a speed and weight of attack in excess of that contained in appropriate national operational guidance and recognised planning toolkits.
- 8.11 Every occasion a category 02 appliance leaves a two-pump station to attend an incident or to perform standby duties; it leaves behind a Category 01 appliance with four staff to stand-alone. No near miss or accident data supports the premise that this is dangerous.
- 8.12 From 2014, TWFRS adopted two thermal scanners per appliance. This new technology assists not only the incident commander, but also breathing apparatus teams.
- 8.13 Cobra Cold-cut technology was introduced to ensure we have the most up to date equipment and methods to ensure firefighter safety. Often used in conjunction with thermal scanning technology, it is available to be deployed following dynamic risk assessment that

must be undertaken at every incident. Early identification of the seat of fire and subsequent Cobra deployment may significantly reduce the risk to firefighters and greatly increase the potential survivability of casualties.

- 8.14 Following an assessment of risk and benefit, Operational Guidance for Breathing Apparatus (OGBA), would allow entry into a building within the safe parameters of this guidance, without a second pump present. This entry would be under 'rapid deployment', where there exists an opportunity to preserve life, or, take action that will prevent an incident deteriorating if the Incident Commander were to wait for additional resources.
- 8.15 Data analysed includes no near miss incident entries, with an underlying cause that relates to riding four staff.
- 8.16 In terms of community safety, the commitment of the Authority, officers and staff has resulted in reducing incidents, improving standards, and making our communities safer. These remain the priorities for TWFRS and this action can be implemented whilst maintaining our commitment to the safety of our communities and our firefighters.
- 8.17 The moral pressure to act on arrival is an issue for all emergency responders and always has been. Incident commanders are trained to use their experience, knowledge and judgement to balance rapid action against the benefit from undertaking such action - the firefighter maxim. Incident commanders and crews are expected to act in accordance with standard operating procedures. Any changes to such procedures are developed in consultation with staff and representative bodies. An unrealistic burden would not be placed upon incident commanders and the move to crew all appliances with four staff would not alter that approach.

9 PROPOSAL - CREW ONE PUMP STATIONS WITH FOUR STAFF ON THE APPLIANCE

- 9.1 The implementation of a crewing level of four across all pumping appliances is essential to balance the available resources against community and firefighter risk. It is considered that concerns and potential risks are mitigated by the approaches undertaken on behalf of the Authority as detailed in this report.
- 9.2 Implementation will begin on 1 January 2018 on four stations initially and on all pumps dependent upon overall staffing availability. Full implementation will take effect on 1 June 2018 subject to evaluation and reporting.

10 ALTERNATIVE OPTION TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL

- 10.1 At the Authority meeting on 6 November 2017, members asked for the exploration of any alternatives to the proposed implementation.
- 10.2 Having carefully considered the options available, and applying the same approach as used in the previous response review, the only alternative would be to initiate consultation on the removal from the fleet of two pumping appliances facilitating the corresponding reduction in the establishment figure, and ensuring the necessary reduction in revenue costs.
- 10.3 Detailed analysis of data and risk information has identified that consultation would need to be undertaken on the removal of the category 02 appliances at Station Juliet (Tynemouth Community Fire Station) and Station Quebec (Farrington Community Fire Station).
- 10.4 It must be noted that this is not the preferred option, and the recommended option remains to ride with four members of staff on all appliances, thus maintaining current appliance provision.
- 10.5 If this alternative option is agreed it is expected that consultation would begin immediately.

11 CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The implementation proposal submitted to Authority on 6 November 2017 was underpinned by detailed and evidence based analysis. The focus of that approach was a commitment to public and firefighter safety in the face of a reduction in the resources available to the Authority. The risk-based case for moving to a crew of four on all pumping appliances has been analysed and the detailed evidence supports the implementation of this action.
- 11.2 Having taken into account the additional feedback and comments from staff and representative bodies, the proposed implementation is considered safe.
- 11.3 Alternative proposals would involve consultation regarding the removal of further pumping appliances and associated staff from the establishment.

12 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 This report is directly connected with the Fire Authority's medium term financial strategy, since IRMP reviews are about balancing the available resources with the known, and foreseeable risks.

- 12.2 A number of potential revenue savings have been identified in the review and these are summarised below under the various options.
- 12.3 The review of this action has been set against the requirement to balance resource and risk set against a reducing financial envelope.
- 12.4 Potential savings have been identified and these are summarised in the table below:

Proposed action	In year Savings 2017/18	In year Savings 2018/19	Full Year Savings 2019/20 onwards	Establishment Reduction
Riding four on four stations (from January 2018)	£98,177	£392,708	£392,708	10
Riding four at all remaining one pump stations (from June 2018)	£0	£530,867	£637,042	17
Total Savings from Riding 4	£98,177	£923,575	£1,029,750	27
Saving from removing 2 pumps		£921,678*	£1,228,904	32

* Assumes an implementation date of June 2018 for comparison purposes

13 HR IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 If the Authority chooses to implement the proposal, it will lead to a reduction in the number of firefighters employed by the organisation. Changes to the establishment and associated transfers will be implemented using the Authority's approved procedures and in consultation with the representative bodies.

14 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 Risk implications have been considered in reviewing the proposal. The Chief Fire Officer will ensure that the risk to communities and firefighters is monitored to ensure that the impact of these proposals is minimised so far as reasonably practicable. This approach will not require a planned reduction in the number of pumping appliances available to the Authority. Reporting would be in line with the approach taken by the Authority under the IRMP.

15 RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Note the feedback from consultation on the action to crew all pumping appliances with four staff.
- 2) Note the responses to the concerns raised during the consultation.
- 3) Authorise the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Personnel Advisor to the Authority and the Strategic Finance Manager, to take all action necessary to implement the proposal in section 5 of this report;
- 4) Note the alternative set out in section 10.2, if recommendation 3 above is not supported;
- 5) Authorise the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Personnel Advisor to the Authority and the Strategic Finance Manager, to initiate consultation regarding the removal of further pumping appliances, and associated establishment, from the fleet, if recommendation 3 above is not supported;
- 6) Should the financial situation of the Authority sufficiently improve as a result of the Local Government Financial Settlement 2017, this report be brought back to the Authority for further discussion and consideration of alternative proposals in the light of the revised financial position;
- 7) Receive further reports as required.

APPENDIX A – Feedback responses

2017 Responses to IRMP Response Review - Riding with four at one pump stations	
Fire Authority Members	Members of Staff
<p>Concerns relating to the proposal;</p> <p>No concerns received.</p>	<p>Concerns relating to the proposal;</p> <p>194 responses were received from members of staff and stated concerns about this proposal based on increased risk to the public and / or firefighters.</p> <p>The above responses were drafted in a standard generic template and signed by FBU members.</p> <p>They consisted of;</p> <p>90 Signed templates 100 Illegible 1 Blank (no signature) 3 Duplicated signatures</p> <p>Key themes of the template include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejection of the proposal. • Concern for Firefighter safety. • Place the public of T&W at increased risk of harm or death not just the affected Stations located in Wallsend, Hebburn, Birtley and Sunderland. • Urge Councillors and fellow Authority Members to reject the dangerous proposal.

One unique paper based response was received from a member of staff, the response followed that of the generic template above with additional concerns;

- The fifth Firefighter as it currently stands allows for a dedicated Entry Control Officer to monitor the BA crews, and in exceptional circumstances under special procedures, can include helping with equipment, assisting FF crews with hose, positive pressure ventilation, pitching ladders, first aid and safety.
- I feel that this move to remove a fifth firefighter from a stand-alone appliance would put the safety of firefighters and the public at a significantly higher risk.
- Delayed second attendance, holding back crews in order to provide the required safe systems of work, or committing without sufficient resources.
- The balance of risk and the intolerable pressure to act.
- Holding back crews when lives can be saved but resources do not allow us to act.

12 additional emails were received via Authority Members from **10** members of staff which included the following themed concerns:

- The proposal is purely based on cost and not firefighter / public safety.
- The proposal will place a moral pressure on crews of CAT.01 appliances and force firefighters to act outside of procedures and training.
- The role of a fifth firefighter during incidents and the importance of this role.
- The role of an OIC and concerns over commanding incidents without a fifth firefighter.
- Expectations of a pragmatic approach to any decision making regarding cuts, which should not become a reality.
- Members of the Authority to consult with operational firefighters at station level regarding changes to operational response.

Comments relating to the proposal;

No comments received.

Comments relating to the proposal;

The **12** emails received via Authority Members from **10** members of staff also included the following comments:

- Please watch the video “ A Firefighters Dilemma”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NBiXjbdbxg>
- TWFRS has a proud moto of “creating the safest community”, I fail to understand how this proposal will carry on with that moto.
- Consider this proposal in the same way you would propose to remove yet another appliance from the fleet.
- No new technology will make a difference as we can’t use Cobra when persons are involved.
- TRVs will not aid anybody involved in a house fire, it may only free an appliance that may have been at a rubbish fire.
- Thermal scanners are nothing new, it’s a tool that greatly helps us once we get inside a fire more than anything else.
- Fire Officers will make higher risk decisions with fewer personnel.
- I believe that an IRMP should not be about balancing books and deficits but providing the residents of Tyne and Wear with a first rate, reliable and safe fire service able to respond quickly and safely when most people’s nightmares become reality.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response times of second appliance arrival.
<p>Suggestions relating to the proposal;</p> <p>No suggestions received.</p>	<p>Suggestions relating to the proposal;</p> <p>One suggestion relating to the IRMP proposals from 1 member of staff was received via the IRMP Inbox.</p> <p>Suggestions included;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce a 'Time off in Lieu' system 2. Remove inflexible staffing rule 3. Merge Stn A and Stn E into 2 pump station 4. Change shift times 5. Transfer of the ALP to a different station 6. Numerous appliance changes.

Questions relating to the proposal;

One Authority Member raised the following questions;

1. What alternatives had been put forward in the original papers, and why had they been rejected?
2. Is there any potential to lessen the impact on Service Delivery by restructuring Prevention and Education?
3. Can I be reassured as an Employer that my responsibilities for the Health and Safety of all of our Employees will not be jeopardised by any of these decisions?
4. My thinking in the third point is in terms of the preamble to Standard Operational Procedure's which refers to the Employers responsibility to ensure Employee safety, would these proposals adversely impact upon this?
5. In relation to continuation training, something very important in maintaining Core Skills and if memory serves me right an important aspect of the Safe Person Concept, can I be reassured that all existing staff will be able to train sufficiently to maintain their Skills, Knowledge and Expertise with Equipment to ensure the continued high standards of Safety for Crews and Service to the Public?

Questions relating to the proposal;

Six questions were raised by **5** members of staff via emails to Authority Members;

1. What has changed to present this again and what arrangements are in place to protect the members of the public or Firefighters, or how the officer in charge faced with the dilemma of whether to commit crews for firefighting or rescue, as they can't do both, or wait for back up?
2. I'm sure a lot of Firefighters would love the chance to talk to any of the FA Members about our conversation, could this be considered?
3. How has the risk in areas affected changed since the last IRMP? **(2)**
4. What reasons were there for having a 5th crew member? **(2)**
5. What are the legal implications of downgrading the H&S provisions for the crews affected?
6. How dangerous is this proposal and how unlawful is it due to H&S regulations and Breathing Apparatus guidance? **(2)**

APPENDIX B – FBU Members letter to elected Members

Dear Councillor

As a serving Firefighter within Tyne & Wear FRS I am writing to you to express my concern over the proposed alterations to the staffing of Firefighting appliances from 5 to 4 Firefighters on one pump stations.

I've been informed by the FBU that TWFRS will place the proposal before Members of the Fire Authority next week in the full Authority meeting. I would urge you as both an Authority member and a Councillor to reject this dangerous proposal as if accepted it will place Firefighters in Tyne and Wear at great risk to harm or death.

I firmly believe that if accepted it will also place all of the public in Tyne and Wear at increased risk of harm or death not just the affected Stations located in Wallsend, Hebburn, Birtley and Sunderland.

Once again I would urge you and fellow Authority Members to reject this dangerous proposal.

Kind regards

APPENDIX C – Constituency Labour Party (CLP) Motion received by TWFRS

Fire Service Cuts Resolution

Government funding cuts are stretching the fire and rescue service beyond the limit and putting lives at risk. This is due to more than 10,000 firefighter jobs that have been lost since 2010, along with 40 fire stations closing all over the UK and scores of fire engines being left off the run. During the last six years the fire and rescue service has lost almost a third of its central funding, with further cuts of another 20% signed off in Westminster this year.

The FBU says this could mean a service literally cut in half by 2020. Since 2010 Government cuts to Tyne and Wear Fire & Rescue Service (TWFRS) have seen the reduction of 131 firefighter posts, the removal from the fleet of six fire engines, the introduction of smaller ill equipped and staffed fire vans and flexible night time cover meaning that on a rotational basis Fire Engines will be stood down for a period of nine hours between 12 midnight and 9am.

Within North Tyneside we have witnessed the removal of one of the fire engines located at Wallsend Fire Station. This only leaves for the whole of North Tyneside three Fire Engines staffed by 13 Firefighters and on the flexible staffing nights down to two Engines staffed by 8 Firefighters.

We are extremely concerned that these frontline cuts are showing no signs of stopping – we have learned this week that the TWFRS still needs to find a further £1.8 million minimum savings. This is going to severely compromise our ability to respond effectively to emergencies which will have a detrimental effect on the people of North Tyneside.

We are calling on the Government to stop playing with peoples' lives in the name of austerity and provide guarantees about the future funding and protection of frontline firefighting and rescue provision both within the United Kingdom and Tyne & Wear.

APPENDIX D – FBU Brigade Secretary Letter received by TWFRS



THE PROFESSIONAL VOICE
OF YOUR FIREFIGHTERS

Fire Brigades Union **Tyne and Wear.**

Brigade Secretary Russ King; 07827300081
Brigade Chair Brian Harris 07827300064
FBU Office: 01914441510 / 01914441642

19th October 2017

Proposals under the Response Review

Dear Alan,

Thank you for your email on the IRMP 2017-20 and the inclusion of the riding of four on one pump stations.

As you say within the email we did formally write to the then CFO in 2016 and asked for the action point on the riding of four on all appliances within TWFRS to be withdrawn. The reason for that request was as valid then as it is today in terms of Firefighter and Public safety. We strongly believe this proposal will not only place our Members at a greater risk but that of the Public as well. It was accepted at that time by the Chief Fire Officer that our concerns were very relevant hence change in the IRMP.

When TWFRS initially moved to ride 4x4 on all two pump stations they did so on the rational that of the size and density of TWFRS in terms of Firefighters and appliance numbers and location would not have any detrimental effect on the health safety and welfare of Firefighters. This was due to attendance times of the second and third appliances at dwelling fires. However since then through subsequent IRMP implementations the Service has seen a massive reduction in resources in terms of Firefighter and appliances numbers.

This proposed change to the appliance staffing arrangements will place an intolerable predicament upon crews and Incident Commanders. The moral pressure to act for crews when in attendance will be unbearable. Incident Commanders will have to make a judgement call whether or not to commit crews prior to sufficient and appropriate resources becoming available thus making them act outside of OGBA.

We will need the following information from the Services risk assessment on this action point:

1. What was the rationale for selecting stations G, M, T & W and for the Service to provide any documentation on the selection of these stations based on risk?
2. What is the average attendance time for the second appliance in attendance when a one pump station is mobilised to a confirmed BA fire?
3. What is the Services position on the initial actions of the first Crew in attendance at a property fire?
4. In terms of the risk assessment which task analysis did the Service use BROS or CAST?
5. How is the Service going to comply with the HSEs field operation directive OC 334/5 which is current and has no exemptions for emergency services in terms of confined spaces? As you are aware the definition of a confined space is that firefighting in building/compartment fires, investigating smoke/vapours/odours in cellars, rescues from sewers, tanks silos well trenches etc. In all cases of employees working in confined spaces arrangements for the rescue of fire service personnel **ARE** required by the regulations.

Within your email you refer to the temporary revisions of Admin 3.8. As you will be aware we wrote to you on the 8th September 2017 stating to you that we as a Brigade Committee cannot support the amendment/revision of Admin 3.8.

We believe that any move to reduce appliance staffing numbers further will have an intolerable effect on the health safety and welfare of all Firefighters within TWFRS. We strongly reject these proposed staffing changes and would ask the Service to reconsider the proposal.

Yours sincerely



Russ King.
Brigade Secretary.
Tyne and Wear.
Fire Brigades Union.

APPENDIX E – TWFRS response to FBU Brigade Secretary

Dear Russ

IRMP Response Review

Thank you for your letter dated 19 October 2017 entitled 'Proposals under the Response Review'. Please find my response to the points you raised below. My comments are subject to the views of the Fire Authority that will consider the matter at the Full Authority meeting on 6 November 2017.

As referred to in your letter, the Fire Brigades' Union (FBU) made written submissions to the Fire Authority meeting on 12 December 2016, whereby they welcomed the Authority's commitment to the consultation process regarding future Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) and sought assurance that any agreed actions would be subject to staff and public consultation with an appropriate timeframe. These submissions included a request to remove the outstanding action of implementing a reduction in all appliance staffing to four staff from the IRMP 2013/17. The FBU believed '...that if this action point were to be enacted upon at this time it would have an intolerable effect on the health and safety of crews when dealing with incidents'.

The Chief Fire Officer responded by stating there was no evidence to suggest that implementing this approach would lead to an intolerable risk to staff as the majority of TWFRS appliances were crewed with four and recommended that the action point be included in the IRMP 2017/20 response review was approved.

I would highlight that the Authority has previously approved the action at the meeting on 20 January 2014 and only agreed to pause implementation at the 12 December 2016 meeting for further consideration in the IRMP 2017/20.

Therefore as a part of the current IRMP 2017/20 response review, the review team were asked to consider the outstanding action point. I have directed the review team to analyse the earlier findings and review the risk information relating to the implementation of this action point.

The Authority's investment in new firefighting technology has further supported this IRMP action, reducing firefighter risk and improving the chances of survival for those trapped by a fire in their premises. These incidents are the highest priority and the Authority targets resources at these incidents. The analysis of this data has indicated that the use of new firefighting technology is now an integral part of our firefighting tactics, has significantly improved the safe systems available to firefighters and has helped to reduce risk in the operational environment.

Data analysis also indicates that the position presented to and approved by the Authority, has not worsened by the implementation of other elements of that review as you suggested. The proposed speed and weight of attack continues to satisfy the requirements of National Operational Guidance

(NOG), local risk assessment, Critical Attendance Standard (CAST) and Brigade Response Options System (BROS).

Analysis of level one incident data for the last three years indicates incident rates have remained relatively low when compared to other incident risk types. For the majority of one-pump stations, attendances at risk level one incidents are amongst the lowest in the Authority's area. I note that in your letter you requested the average attendance time for the second appliance to support a one-pump station to a confirmed fire that BA was in use. Our data indicates that the average attendance of second pumps to all risk level one incidents is one minute and fifty-six seconds after the arrival of the first pump.

Officers have clarified that they have received no near miss incident entries, with an underlying cause relating to riding four staff.

The implementation of this action is essential to balance the available resources against community and firefighter risk. Implementation is proposed to begin in January 2018 on four stations and on all pumps dependent upon overall staffing availability. Full implementation will take effect in June 2018 subject to evaluation and reporting. The rationale behind implementation in two stages is to facilitate direct consultation with affected staff, ensuring any transfers are enacted in line with the Authority's agreed procedures.

With regard to the position on the initial actions of the first crew in attendance at a property fire, the instructions of the Service will not change because of this action. As you are aware, the dynamic requirements of the incident dictate the approach adopted whilst undertaking initial actions. I do not agree that our incident commanders are under additional pressure to act outside of local or national guidance and that the proposed implementation makes these decisions intolerable. Our incident management approach, clearly set out in standard operating procedures, the incident management handbook and supported by dedicated training, provides incident commanders and their crews with the tools required to resolve all incidents safely and effectively. If any of your members have concerns regarding any aspect of providing a safe system of work I would always urge them to raise these concerns through the appropriate health and safety reporting system.

Finally, I can assure you that the implementation will be monitored to ensure any impact of these proposals is minimised so far as reasonably practicable.

Yours sincerely

Alan Robson
BA(Hons) MBA LL.M MIFireE
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

APPENDIX F – Generic response letter sent to FBU Members

Dear

IRMP Response Review

Thank you for your letter relating to the IRMP Response Review proposal to implement the agreed action to crew all pumping appliances with four staff, presented to the Fire Authority at the meeting held on 6 November 2017. As the lead officer for this aspect of the IRMP, members have asked me to reply to your concerns.

I acknowledge and appreciate your concerns over the implementation of alterations to the staffing of appliances, at one-pump stations. I can confirm this action is based on data provided that includes no near miss incident entries, with an underlying cause that relates to riding four staff during the period from January 2015 to date.

The implementation of this action is essential to balance the available resources against community and firefighter risk. I would highlight that the Fire Authority has previously approved this action on 20 January 2014 and only agreed to pause implementation at the 12 December 2016 meeting for further consideration in the IRMP 2017/20

Detailed analysis indicates that the position presented to, and previously approved by the Authority has not worsened by the implementation of other elements of the IRMP. The implementation of the action satisfies the requirements of operational guidance, local risk assessment, community risk profile, Critical Attendance Standard (CAST) and time / task analysis including Brigade Response Options System (BROS).

I can confirm the selection of four initial stations is based on detailed risk, attendance time and incident analysis that indicates these stations are the most suitable to be assigned to the initial implementation. I would also reiterate that the phased implementation strategy provides an opportunity to undertake full consultation with affected staff.

I hope that this response provides you with further clarification of the proposed implementation and as I have reiterated on several occasions; I firmly believe that this proposal is safe. If I had believed that any proposal in the IRMP would have placed firefighters at greater risk, then it would not have been included.

Can I thank you for taking the time to express your opinions in a considered and impassioned manner. If you have any further questions please forward them to the IRMP inbox at IRMP@twfire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX G – Detailed response 1.

Dear

IRMP Response Review

Thank you for your email dated 6 November 2017 addressed to the Chairman of the Fire Authority, Cllr Tom Wright in which you outline your views about the proposal to implement the previously agreed action to crew all appliances with four staff. As the lead officer for this aspect of the IRMP, Cllr Wright has asked me to reply to your concerns.

I am disappointed that you feel that I have intentionally set out to misrepresent the case supporting this action and for the avoidance of doubt, I set out below the position, as reported to the Fire Authority at the meeting that you attended.

I am aware that some staff have concerns with the agreed action, and its proposed implementation, and they believe there are health and safety implications associated with it. I will continue to ensure that these views are presented to the Fire Authority so that an informed decision can be made. I have outlined below the reasons why I consider the action continues to be valid and more importantly safe.

New Technology

The purpose of the Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV) as you correctly stated is to ensure that level three and level four incidents can be absorbed whilst maintaining the availability of pumping appliances primarily to attend life risk incidents. This provides an effective speed and weight of attack that supports the provision of safe systems of work at higher risk incidents.

From 2014, TWFRS adopted two thermal scanners per appliance. This new technology assists not only the incident commander but also breathing apparatus teams, replacing the ageing thermal image technology whilst enabling dynamic risk assessment.

In particular, the Thermal Scanner training package contains further information, namely:

“Thermal scanning of the exterior of a building whilst conducting a DRA including 360 assist the Incident commanders assessment of the scene and environment, providing them with even more information to assist in formulating a tactical plan.

Before crews enter the building, Thermal scanners assist in identifying location and extent of the fire, any other heat sources, or other potential hazards.”

(Slide 14, ‘New Technology’, Thermal Scanner Training Package)

“Thermal Scanners greatly enhance the ability of firefighters’ to localize heat sources and victims thereby indicating where the firefighting actions should be prioritized to achieve the best possible effect. They improve the control of the fire scene together with the information gathered from all readily available sources as a basis for creating the Intervention Plan.”

(Slide 5, Thermal Scanner Training Package)

To summarise this element, the presentation to the Fire Authority highlighted that Thermal scanning is new technology and replaced an effective but outdated system of working, where thermal imaging was used almost exclusively inside buildings.

Cobra Cold-cut technology was introduced to ensure we have the most up to date equipment and methods to ensure firefighter safety. Often used in conjunction with thermal scanning technology, it is available to be deployed following dynamic risk assessment that must be undertaken at every incident. Early identification of the seat of fire and subsequent Cobra deployment may significantly reduce the risk to firefighters and greatly increase the potential survivability of trapped casualties. The exact point that I raised with the Fire Authority in my presentation and in the written report they received.

In relation to Cobra guidance, I have provided information below that is available to all operational staff that states:

“If a casualty is believed to be located in a fire compartment, the Incident Commander must consider the risk to benefit of deploying Cobra, to include;

- *The hazard to fire-fighters entering the fire compartment without prior Cobra deployment.*
- *Likelihood of the Cobra jet coming into contact with the casualty.*
- *Time taken to deploy Cobra.*
- *Impact on the casualty by steam in the compartment.*

If Cobra is deployed in to a compartment where casualties are believed to be located, the following procedures and considerations should be adopted:

- *The Cobra jet must be directed away from the location of casualty, e.g. at shoulder height in an upward angle of entry.*
- *Limit the duration of Cobra deployment to reduce temperature within the compartment, stabilise fire development and create a window of opportunity for safer entry by BA team/s.*
- *The resources available, such as personnel and water.”*

(Cobra, BATC Handout January 2016 section 6.4)

Riding Four

As you correctly point out at midnight when a one-pump station is working extended days a category 02 appliance proceeds to that station and relieves the extended day crew; crewing the category 01 appliance along with the remaining night shift member of staff who is not working extended days.

As a point of clarification, this leaves the home station of the category 02 appliance with a category 01 appliance with four staff for a minimum of nine hours. In normal circumstances, a one-pump station would be crewed with five. This was the point I was trying to make in my verbal presentation and I appreciate that may not have been understood in that way.

You will be aware that our service operates with a crew of four on over sixty percent of our frontline pumps and that the vast majority of standbys and cover moves involve crews of four without any health and safety concerns being raised regarding the crewing level. Detailed analysis of accident data and staffing levels demonstrates that there is no correlation between injury rates to firefighters and crewing with four.

Additionally, on every occasion a standby appliance leaves a two-pump station it leaves behind a category 01 appliance with four staff to stand alone. Again, no near miss or accident data supports the premise that this is dangerous.

On the final point you raise regarding two-pump stations, I would like to point out that there could be no guarantee that two pumps will be available simultaneously. Pre-determined attendances (PDA) are set using regular risk management and driven by the requirements of our standard operating procedures. The normal PDAs are built up using a minimum of 2, 3 or 4 pumps responding to higher risk fires. This provides a minimum of 8, 12 and 16 firefighters respectively. Detailed task analysis has been undertaken in relation to this action and its proposed implementation. This analysis indicates that these PDAs provide a speed and weight of attack in excess of that contained in appropriate national guidance and recognised planning toolkits. I have shared this analysis with your FBU representatives if you wish to familiarise yourself with it.

I hope that this response provides you with further clarification of the proposed implementation and as I have reiterated on several occasions I firmly believe that this proposal is safe. If I had believed that any proposal in the IRMP would place firefighters at greater risk then it would not have been included.

Finally, can I thank you for taking the time to express your opinions in a considered and impassioned manner. If you have any further questions please forward them to the IRMP inbox at IRMP@twfire.gov.uk.

APPENDIX H - Detailed response 2.

Dear

IRMP Response Review

Thank you for your letter relating to the IRMP Response Review proposal to implement the agreed action to crew all pumping appliances with four staff, presented to the Fire Authority at the meeting held on 6 November 2017. As the lead officer for this aspect of the IRMP, members have asked me to reply to your concerns.

I acknowledge and appreciate your concerns over the implementation of alterations to the staffing of appliances, at one-pump stations. I can confirm this action is based on data provided that includes no near miss incident entries, with an underlying cause that relates to riding four staff during the period from January 2015 to date.

The implementation of this action is essential to balance the available resources against community and firefighter risk. I would highlight that the Fire Authority has previously approved this action on 20 January 2014 and only agreed to pause implementation at the 12 December 2016 meeting for further consideration in the IRMP 2017/20.

Detailed analysis indicates that the position presented to, and previously approved by, the Authority has not worsened by the implementation of other elements of the IRMP. The implementation of the action satisfies the requirements of operational guidance, local risk assessment, community risk profile, Critical Attendance Standard (CAST) and time / task analysis including Brigade Response Options System (BROS).

In your letter you state “in the absence of a fifth firefighter, you would be denied to enter a building fire to affect a rescue without a second pump”. As you will also be aware, following an assessment of risk and benefit, Operational Guidance for Breathing Apparatus (OGBA) would allow us to enter a building within the safe parameters of this guidance, without a second pump present. This entry would be under ‘rapid deployment’ - to save life with a crew of four.

We have some of the fastest second pump attendances in the country, with an average Service attendance of 1 minute 56 seconds to risk level one incidents, for the year 2016/17. Under a time / task analysis (BROS) provided to the FBU, the average attendance time for the second pump attendance to Station Yankee’s area, illustrates the average time of 2 minutes 36 seconds. This time relates to level one incidents requiring BA covering the period from October 8 2016 to October 7 2017.

I hope that this response provides you with further clarification of the proposed implementation and as I have reiterated on several occasions; I firmly believe that this proposal is safe. If I had believed that any proposal in the IRMP would have placed firefighters at greater risk, then it would not have been included.

Can I thank you for taking the time to express your opinions in a considered and impassioned manner. If you have any further questions please forward them to the IRMP inbox at IRMP@twfire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Alan Robson,
BA(Hons) MBA LL.M MIFireE,
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

APPENDIX I – Detailed response 3.

Dear

IRMP Response Review

Thank you for your email to elected Fire Authority member relating to the IRMP Response Review proposal to implement the agreed action to crew all pumping appliances with four staff. As the lead officer for this aspect of the IRMP, members have asked me to reply to your concerns.

I acknowledge and appreciate your concerns over the implementation of alterations to the staffing of appliances, at one-pump stations. I can confirm this action is based on data provided that includes no near miss incident entries, with an underlying cause that relates to riding four staff during the period from January 2015 to date.

The implementation of this action is essential to balance the available resources against community and firefighter risk. I would highlight that the Fire Authority has previously approved this action on 20 January 2014 and only agreed to pause implementation at the 12 December 2016 meeting for further consideration in the IRMP 2017/20.

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I can confirm the selection of four initial stations is based on detailed risk, attendance time and incident analysis that indicates these stations are the most suitable to be assigned to the initial implementation. I would also reiterate that the phased implementation strategy provides an opportunity to undertake full consultation with affected staff.

As you will be aware, we have some of the fastest second pump attendances in the country, with an average Service attendance of 1 minute 56 seconds, for the year 2016/17. This is for level one incident's using a time / task analysis (BROS) presented to the FBU. The average attendance time for the second pump attendance has been used to illustrate this within the Fire Authority report.

As you will also be aware, following an assessment of risk and benefit, Operational Guidance for Breathing Apparatus (OGBA), would allow us to enter a building within the safe parameters of this guidance, without a second pump present. This entry would be under 'rapid deployment' - to save life with a crew of four.

New Technology

From 2014, TWFRS adopted two thermal scanners per appliance. This new technology assists not only the incident commander but also breathing apparatus teams, replacing the ageing thermal image technology whilst enabling dynamic risk assessment.

Cobra Cold-cut technology was introduced to ensure we have the most up to date equipment and methods to ensure firefighter safety. Often used in conjunction with thermal scanning technology, it is available to be deployed following dynamic risk assessment that must be undertaken at every incident. Early identification of the seat of fire and subsequent Cobra deployment may significantly reduce the risk to firefighters and greatly increase the potential survivability of trapped casualties.

Riding Four

At midnight when a one-pump station is working extended days a category 02 appliance proceeds to that station and relieves the extended day crew; crewing the category 01 appliance along with the remaining night shift member of staff who are not working extended days.

This leaves the home station of the category 02 appliance with a category 01 appliance with four staff for a minimum of nine hours. In normal circumstances, a one-pump station would be crewed with five.

You will be aware that our service operates with a crew of four on over sixty percent of our frontline pumps. The vast majority of standbys involve crews of four without any health and safety concerns being raised regarding the crewing level. Detailed analysis of accident data and staffing levels demonstrates that there is no correlation between injury rates to firefighters and crewing with four.

Additionally, on every occasion a standby appliance leaves a two-pump station it leaves behind a category 01 appliance with four staff to stand alone. Again, no near miss or accident data supports the premise that this is dangerous.

Pre-determined attendances (PDA) are set using regular risk management and driven by the requirements of our standard operating procedures. The normal PDAs are built up using a minimum of 2, 3 or 4 pumps responding to higher risk fires. This provides a minimum of 8, 12 and 16 firefighters respectively. Detailed task analysis has been undertaken in relation to this action and its proposed implementation. This analysis indicates that these PDAs provide a speed and weight of attack in excess of that contained in appropriate national guidance and recognised planning toolkits.

I hope that this response provides you with further clarification of the proposed implementation and as I have reiterated on several occasions; I firmly believe that this proposal is safe. If I had

believed that any proposal in the IRMP would place firefighters at greater risk, then it would not have been included.

Can I thank you for taking the time to express your opinions in a considered and impassioned manner. If you have any further questions please forward them to the IRMP inbox at IRMP@twfire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Alan Robson
BA(Hons) MBA LLM MIFireE
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

APPENDIX J – Detailed response 4.

Dear

IRMP Response Review

Thank you for your email to elected Fire Authority member relating to the IRMP Response Review proposal to implement the agreed action to crew all pumping appliances with four staff. As the lead officer for this aspect of the IRMP, members have asked me to reply to your concerns.

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As you will be aware, we have some of the fastest second pump attendances in the country, with an average Service attendance of 1 minute 56 seconds, for the year 2016/17. This is for level one incident's using a time / task analysis (BROS) presented to the FBU. The average attendance time for the second pump attendance has been used to illustrate this within the Fire Authority report.

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New Technology

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Cobra Cold-cut technology was introduced to ensure we have the most up to date equipment and methods to ensure firefighter safety. Often used in conjunction with thermal scanning technology, it is available to be deployed following dynamic risk assessment that must be undertaken at every incident. Early identification of the seat of fire and subsequent Cobra deployment may significantly reduce the risk to firefighters and greatly increase the potential survivability of trapped casualties.

Riding Four

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This leaves the home station of the category 02 appliance with a category 01 appliance with four staff for a minimum of nine hours. In normal circumstances, a one-pump station would be crewed with five.

You will be aware that our service operates with a crew of four on over sixty percent of our frontline pumps. The vast majority of standbys involve crews of four without any health and safety concerns being raised regarding the crewing level. Detailed analysis of accident data and staffing levels demonstrates that there is no correlation between injury rates to firefighters and crewing with four.

Additionally, on every occasion a standby appliance leaves a two-pump station it leaves behind a category 01 appliance with four staff to stand alone. Again, no near miss or accident data supports the premise that this is dangerous.

Pre-determined attendances (PDA) are set using regular risk management and driven by the requirements of our standard operating procedures. The normal PDAs are built up using a minimum of 2, 3 or 4 pumps responding to higher risk fires. This provides a minimum of 8, 12 and 16 firefighters respectively. Detailed task analysis has been undertaken in relation to this action and its proposed implementation. This analysis indicates that these PDAs provide a speed and weight of attack in excess of that contained in appropriate national guidance and recognised planning toolkits.

I hope that this response provides you with further clarification of the proposed implementation and as I have reiterated on several occasions; I firmly believe that this proposal is safe. If I had believed that any proposal in the IRMP would place firefighters at greater risk, then it would not have been included.

Can I thank you for taking the time to express your opinions in a considered and impassioned manner. If you have any further questions please forward them to the IRMP inbox at IRMP@twfire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Alan Robson
BA(Hons) MBA LLM MIFireE
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

APPENDIX K – Question and Answer Session

IRMP Question & Answer Session - Riding Four

Gateshead East Station 11:00 – 13:00

Attendance – 15 members of staff including FBU Brigade Secretary.

Questions posed to Executive Leadership Team;

1. Budget statement – has anything changed?
2. Secured debate question to raise the TWFRS £10 million pension deficit – Nick Hurd MP to set up a meeting with Nick Brown MP to lift precept, local referendum £1 million cost (within parliament).
3. New technology, we have never evaluated the new technology? Was Cobra a good idea? i.e. costs etc. – We should publish feedback and encourage comments about technology?
4. Two pumps will be hard to get to an incident simultaneously?
5. Fundamentally this is making a one pump station a limited resource?
6. Response times 1m 56s not a one pump Station?
7. We can only provide a defensive response only, we can't use Cobra at the back of a terraced house, our hands are tied as limited use of Cobra?
8. RTC difficulties with riding four and waiting for 2nd pump, drivers having to work outside of roles etc. ?
9. Rapid deployment?
10. Full operational plan to drop to four will have a 7 minute delay, crew of 4 is rapid deployment every time?
11. Task analysis 6.5 minutes, Breathing Apparatus (BA) in every simulation in time / task analysis, this is totally unrealistic?
12. Cross threshold times are unrealistic?
13. It is perilous operating rapid deployment?

14. Opinion if accepted, will this enhance Firefighter safety do you believe Alan? Or make things worse?
15. Twenty Seven Firefighter posts, less will be on the fire ground, have we explored every option? Is this the last resort? We will fight to save the extra twenty seven posts!
16. What are the other alternatives?
17. Members of the public want a fire engine on their doorsteps, can we consider stopping the Community Safety departments to complete Community Safety activities on the front line?
18. Are FA members aware of this decision and do they have an understanding of riding four and implications to service?
19. £1 million spent on agency staff? Why? Inconsistent costs across the Service, too many Watch Manager B's and Station Managers in Community Safety!
20. What is the cost of Twitter accounts / social media? Can we not squeeze more from other departments?
21. Due to Grenfell will we incur any further costs to the Service?