

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 7

MEETING: 16 FEBURARY 2015

SUBJECT: DCLG/CFOA URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE REVIEW

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

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to inform Members of the outcome of the national review of UK Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability which was carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with the Chief Fire Officer's Association (CFOA).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will be aware that there are twenty USAR teams in the United Kingdom that provide resilience in the event of a major incident as detailed in the National Risk Assessment (NRA) and National Resilience Planning Assumptions (NRPA). TWFRS hosts one of these teams and receives funding from DCLG for doing so.
- 2.2 In November 2014 Members received a report (Min 36/2014) detailing an ongoing review of the UK USAR capability in the context of a revised assessment of the specific risk faced by the country, and an expectation that within a period of austerity, savings would need to be made across all government departments.
- 2.3 DCLG have previously informed the Strategic Resilience Board that they wish to maintain a capability sufficient to respond to the identified risks within the NRA and NRPA whilst delivering an estimated efficiency saving of £2m.
- 2.4 DCLG indicated that as the risk has reduced by a third it is reasonable to expect some reduction in the current USAR capability and still maintain the relevant levels of resilience.

- 2.5 The CFOA position in the discussions with DCLG is that the reduction in risk planning assumptions actually provides an opportunity to increase the number of responders available to each incident. DCLG's standpoint is that the reduction in the NPRA means that savings can be made whilst maintaining existing resilience.

3 REVIEW UPDATE

- 3.1 The review is now complete and DCLG have written to the Chief Fire Officer confirming that TWFA will receive a reduction of £102,560 in the section 31 grant. This equates to a reduction of 11.2% of the USAR grant. Officers are working locally and within CFOA to change how USAR is provided to minimise the impact of this reduction on Services.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Service will receive £102,560 less from April 2015 to provide a USAR response as part of the national resilience structure.

5 LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legislative implications of this report

6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

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

7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no health and safety implications of this report

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Authority is recommended to:
- a. Note the contents of this report.
 - b. Receive further reports as appropriate.
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