

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING: 20th JANUARY 2014

SUBJECT: IRMP REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONAL RESPONSE MODEL

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY, THE
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 findings of public, partner and staff consultation on the options set out for changes to our operational response, and to seek Member direction on the options which should be adopted.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) process is the vehicle we use to make significant changes to the shape of the service, ensuring that services are planned, designed and delivered in a way that balances efficiency and community risk. This is a national process required of us under the Fire and Rescue National Framework.
- 2.2 Our response to the Sir Ken Knight review, approved by the Authority in June 2013, shows how we have used the IRMP process for more than 10 years to change the service, strengthen prevention, reduce costs, reduce incidents and manage the risk in our communities.
- 2.3 Since 2010, our IRMP actions have been developed against a background of significant reductions in the budget available to the Authority, as a result of cuts in Government spending. These cuts were applied disproportionately to Metropolitan FRAs, and have resulted in a significant reduction in Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority's (TWFA's) spending power between 2010 and 2014.
- 2.4 These reductions are set to continue based on the latest Settlement Funding Assessment. As noted in the budget planning report on today's agenda, taking into account Government cuts and spending pressures, it is expected that TWFA will be required to make a further £8.833m of spending reductions over the next three years 2014/2015 (£3.085m, of which £0.632m will be met through previously approved IRMP actions), 2015/2016 (£3.067m) and 2016/2017 (£3.313m).
- 2.5 In February 2011, the Authority made a clear commitment to managing these reductions in a way which minimises impact on the frontline service as far as possible. As a result, the 2011-13 reviews focused on back office activities, management structure and a number of

specialist parts of the organisation. Reviews of the Operational Response model and our Diversionary activities were included in public consultation at this time, but it was made clear that these actions would only be taken if unavoidable.

- 2.6 In October 2012, the Authority agreed to add 5 new IRMP actions to the programme. Since it was now deemed unavoidable due to the extent of the reduction in funding, the Response and Diversionary reviews were included, and these reviews have been carried out during 2013.
- 2.7 In October 2013, Authority considered the findings of the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) review of Operational Response and gave approval to consult upon three proposed options for changes to our operational response.

The options were arrived at following a detailed, evidence based review, including assessing the impact of different options on community and firefighter risk. They seek to minimise the impact of reduced resources upon community and firefighter safety, in line with earlier IRMP reviews. This has been done by increasing targeting based upon evidence, and increasing flexibility. In order to do this, account is taken of the evidence that there is wide variation in incident levels:

- Between geographical locations within Tyne and Wear
- At different times of day
- In terms of the magnitude of the incidents, and the risk to life and property they pose

- 2.8 An extract from the October report is attached as Appendix A, and summarises some of the key evidence used in the review.
- 2.9 The options which have been consulted upon are as follows.

Option 1

- **Crew appliances at stations with 1 fire appliance with 4 staff**
- **Remove 6 main fire appliances across the service (a reduction from 30 to 24)**
- **Introduce 2 Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) for lower risk incidents 24/7**
- **Introduce 2 additional TRVs to be Dual Staffed at night and as required**
- **Remove 2 fire appliances for up to 12 hours at night**
- **Reduce Aerial Ladder Platforms from 3 to 2**
- **Invest in new firefighting technologies to enhance performance and firefighter safety**

Option 2

- **Implement Option 1 plus:**
- **Close 2 stations (Gosforth & Wallsend) and replace with one more centrally placed, based on risk and incident intelligence (Benton Area)**

Option 3

- **Implement Options 1 and 2 plus:**
- **Close Sunderland Central station**

2.10 It is clear that any reduction in frontline appliances will increase the average time of attendance. The strategy employed within the design of the proposals is to protect as far as possible the average time to life and significant property risk incidents (risk level 1 and 2) and allow a planned increase in the average attendance time to lower risk incidents (risk level 3 and 4).

3 CONSULTATION PROCESS

Methodology and Participation

- 3.1 After Fire Authority agreement, a consultation process was launched on 22nd October 2013 with a closing date of 1st 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, as set out in Appendix B.
- 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 proposals in more detail, including the evidence upon which the proposals were based
 - 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 The consultation document (Appendix C) was launched via an internal Chief Fire Officer's Bulletin and a press conference, and published on dedicated sections of the website and intranet immediately following the Fire Authority meeting on October 21st 2013. This document was also available at all public meetings in hard copy, and available in alternative formats upon request.

- 3.4 A qualitative survey was designed seeking detailed feedback regarding our current financial position, our approach to risk and in response to each of the options outlined in 2.9. The survey was published on the website for members of the public and on the intranet for staff members.
- 3.5 In order to reach as many members of the communities within Tyne and Wear as possible, the consultation was promoted in a variety of ways including:
- Press conferences
 - Press releases
 - News article on website / intranet
 - Social Media posts (Facebook and Twitter)
 - Emails to partners / 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 (ie. libraries, Council offices, and Leisure Centres) across each district promoting public consultation events
 - Leaflet drops to local shops, dentists, GP surgeries etc
 - Public meetings
 - Staff briefings
- 3.6 The public meetings were promoted through:
- adverts in the local newspapers,
 - issuing press releases to generate news stories across the local media
 - on TWFRS's social media sites (twitter and facebook)
 - on TWFRS's website
 - posters distributed in each of the districts to a range of premises, including libraries, community centres, GP surgeries, local shops
- 3.7 In addition, some local authorities helped promote the sessions in Customer Service Centres, their buildings, public events, in staff newsletters and newsletters for Ward Councillors.
- 3.8 10,354 people saw Facebook posts publicising the public meetings and encouraging participation in the process.
- 3.9 There has been limited discussion on TWFRS's own Facebook/Twitter feeds about the consultation. Any specific comments made have been fed into the consultation analysis, however discussion on social media has mainly taken place elsewhere, in groups set up by members of the public.

- 3.10 Further details of the consultation process can be found in Appendices D (Public Meeting slides), E (Media coverage), F (E-communications coverage) and G (publicity distribution). Further media coverage was given to the proposals and events via the communications activities of the FBU and local campaigning groups.

Public Meetings

- 3.11 It was decided to host formal public meetings to encourage feedback from all members of the public. Two were held within each district area, one in a central location (main town centre) and the other in a less central and more residential area but with good transport links; the location of these was also linked to areas where most changes are proposed. In order to maintain independence, a conscious decision was made to host these meetings in venues such as church halls, community centres and libraries rather than in Community Fire Stations.
- 3.12 Within each district one session was held during the day and the other in the evening providing alternative options for those working full time or with evening/childcare commitments.
- 3.13 The public meetings included a detailed presentation of the options and the evidence by a Principal Officer, to give an opportunity for questions to be asked about the proposals and the process. Everyone attending the event was encouraged to fully participate during the session, offered a copy of the consultation document and requested to complete the survey; hard copies and prepaid envelopes were supplied as required.
- 3.14 A number of questions were received during these sessions, most of which were of a factual nature. Where possible these were responded to immediately. Key themes were also captured and are included in the Findings section.
- 3.15 The following table details the locations of these events: a total of 155 people attended a session. Whilst specific briefings were held for staff and a survey made available on the intranet, many members of staff also attended the public meetings with family and friends. Numbers attending each session are shown in the table.

| District | Daytime Venue | Evening Venue |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Gateshead | Gateshead Leisure Centre (13) | Blaydon Youth and Community Centre (14) |
| Newcastle | Brunswick Methodist Church (8) | Kingston Park Community Centre (19) |
| North Tyneside | Whitley Bay Library (18) | Wallsend Town Hall (21) |
| South Tyneside | South Shields Central Library (0) | Jarrow Community Centre (6) |
| Sunderland | The Place Café (30) | Quayside Exchange (26) |

Staff meetings

- 3.16 Between 22nd October and 4th November all staff were invited to attend one of 13 briefings presented by the Chief Fire Officer. Staff received a presentation outlining the proposed options and the rationale for these was explained. Staff were encouraged to ask questions for clarification, provide comments on the options and formally respond to the consultation by completing the survey on the intranet.
- 3.17 A number of questions were received during these sessions, most of which were of a factual nature. These were responded to immediately by the Chief Fire Officer. Key themes were also captured and are included in the Findings section.

Stakeholders and partners

- 3.18 42 stakeholders and partners were contacted by letter or email about the proposals. Briefings were offered to the Leaders of each Council in Tyne and Wear, and presentations were made to Local Strategic Partnerships and/or Community Safety Partnerships depending upon local wishes. Member briefings were requested by, and provided to Newcastle and North Tyneside Councils; Fire Authority members provided briefings to the remaining Council members.
- 3.19 7 partners and stakeholders provided formal responses to the consultation. These responses are included in the analysis of feedback.

Survey Analysis

- 3.20 It was expected that the responses to both surveys (website and intranet) would generate a large quantity of qualitative data. One of the benefits of qualitative feedback is that it allows more in-depth commentary on the topic being researched/consulted upon, and provides a richer picture than simple numbers alone could provide, allowing opinions to be offered and suggestions to be made.
- 3.21 However, qualitative data collection poses a number of practical challenges; firstly the large quantity of data can make analysis resource intensive, and secondly this data can be difficult to analyse objectively, if an appropriate analysis methodology is not applied.
- 3.22 To ensure the analysis of the IRMP consultation feedback was carried out as objectively as possible, a standard qualitative analysis methodology was followed. This has allowed all comments to be grouped into broad themes, and a weighting given to the themes based on the number of respondents who made the same or a similar comment.

- 3.23 The approach captures all comments made by a respondent, sometimes covering more than one theme in a single response. For this reason the responses often total more than the number of respondents for a particular question, and the themes cannot be regarded as an exact science. They do however give an overview of the views expressed.

4 PUBLIC LED CAMPAIGNS

- 4.1 A number of public campaigns were established during the consultation period; those we are aware of include the Save Sunderland Fire station campaign group and the People's Assembly. These groups organised a number of activities including social media campaigns, protests, marches and stalls.
- 4.2 The 'Save Sunderland Fire Station' Facebook page attracted over 7,000 followers and has been extremely active in promoting the consultation events; linking to the consultation documents and encouraging people to fill in responses; and organising events and demonstrations to generate support to oppose the cuts.
- 4.3 The People's Assembly Facebook page has attracted over 4,800 followers. Discussions on this page are less local as it is a national group, but they have organised several events in the North East opposing cuts to TWFRS.

5 FINDINGS : PUBLIC AND STAFF CONSULTATION

Formal responses

- 5.1 This section details the main themes of the public and staff consultation feedback. As far as practicable, feedback from staff and members of the public has been kept separate; however there was nothing to stop staff completing the survey on the website since they are members of the public as well as being staff.
- 5.2 The dedicated web pages for the consultation were viewed on more than 3,000 occasions.
- 5.3 233 surveys were returned via the website/in hard copy (public), and 48 via the Intranet (staff). One collective response was also submitted by a watch.

5.4 Of those who responded:

| | Public (233 respondents) | Staff (48 respondents) |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Had read the consultation document | 168 (72%) | 41 (85%) |
| Had attended a public or staff meeting | 83 (36%) | 36 (75%) |

- 5.5 A small number of the respondents who were members of the public indicated that they were unable to provide an informed response as they did not fully understand the terminology used in the consultation documents.
- 5.6 The general themes in response to each of the survey questions are listed below the relevant question, and appear in order of weighting by the public.

5.7 Q1. Do you have any comments on the financial position facing the Fire and Rescue Authority?

| Themes | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <p><i>Strong disagreement with the financial situation the Authority faces</i></p> <p>69 respondents made strong statements of disagreement about the financial situation faced by TWFRS. Many of these comments were linked with the fact that this is an emergency service.</p> | |
| <p><i>Suggestion that reserves should be used to offset the cuts</i></p> <p>50 respondents raised the issue of reserves and questioned why these could not be used to offset the cuts to protect frontline services.</p> | <p><i>Suggestion that reserves should be used to offset the cuts</i></p> <p>33 respondents questioned the level of reserves and asked why these could not be used to offset the cuts to protect frontline services.</p> |
| <p><i>Concern about the impact on safety</i></p> <p>39 respondents expressed concern that these cuts increase the risk to the community, and 4 expressed concern about firefighter safety.</p> | <p><i>Concern about the impact on safety</i></p> <p>6 respondents expressed concern regarding the impact of this on public safety whilst others (3) expressed concern about firefighter safety</p> |
| <p><i>Expression of anger and frustration towards the Government for the cuts being imposed upon the Authority</i></p> <p>40 respondents expressed anger with Government and a further 14 sympathised with the Fire Authority's situation.</p> | <p><i>Expression of anger and frustration towards the Government for the cuts being imposed upon the Authority</i></p> <p>9 respondents disagreed strongly with the financial situation, 2 expressed frustration towards the Government and 10 sympathised with the position the Authority finds itself in.</p> |
| <p><i>Other suggestions were made as alternatives to making the cuts</i></p> <p>e.g. raising council tax and lobbying Government (7), being more cost effective (5) and revisiting the Back Office reviews (3).</p> | <p><i>Other suggestions were made regarding alternative funding</i></p> <p>14 respondents made different suggestions for alternatives to making the cuts. These included raising council tax and lobbying Government</p> |
| <p><i>Belief that the Authority can make financial reductions</i></p> <p>7 respondents felt that the Authority can make financial reductions, and a further 7 commented that the service should reduce waste and operate more efficiently</p> | |

5.8 Q2. Would you be prepared to pay more Council Tax if this made is possible to retain the current level of Fire and Rescue service in Tyne and Wear?

5.9 This included a Yes/No question and a space for comments. In relation to the Yes/No question:

- 141 (73%) of the public and 37 (79%) of the staff respondents said they would be prepared to pay more Council Tax to retain the current service
- 53 (27%) of the public and 10 (21%) of the staff respondents said they would not be prepared to pay more.

| Comment Themes | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <i>Willing to pay more Council Tax</i> 70 respondents were willing to pay more. These comments were often linked with those about community safety. | <i>Willing to pay more Council Tax</i> 27 respondents were willing to pay more. Some added that this is providing the increase is allocated directly to the fire service. |
| <i>Concern regarding the impact on safety</i> 53 respondents expressed concern at the perceived increase of risk to public safety the financial situation presents. Others (5) expressed concern for firefighter safety | <i>Concern regarding the impact on safety cuts upon public safety</i> 9 respondents expressed concern regarding the impact of the cuts upon public safety, and 3 expressed concern for firefighter safety. |
| <i>Pay enough or were unable to pay more</i> 31 respondents felt they already paid enough council tax or were unable to pay more due to the economic climate. | <i>Pay enough or were unwilling to pay more</i> 3 respondents commented that they already felt they paid enough or were unable to pay more due to the economic climate |
| <i>Other suggestions were made regarding alternative funding</i> 15 respondents suggested looking at alternatives for funding. These included: seeking commercial solutions by charging for false alarms, improved financial management, increased funding from Government and use of reserves | <i>Other suggestions were made regarding alternative funding</i> 11 respondents made different suggestions for alternatives for funding including improved financial management, ensuring the cost effectiveness of the Service (2) and using reserves (9). |
| <i>Expression of anger and frustration towards the Government for the cuts being imposed upon the Authority</i> 2 respondents expressed their frustration towards the Government over the cuts | <i>Hold a referendum</i> 7 respondents suggested holding a referendum on Council Tax rises |
| <i>Cost effectiveness</i> 2 respondents questioned the cost effectiveness of the organisation | |

5.10 Q3. Do you have any comments on our approach to understanding risk, or on the conclusions we draw about risk in setting out our proposals?

| Comment Themes | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <p><i>Challenged the Authority's approach to understanding risk</i></p> <p>68 respondents challenged the risk model and approach used. Some of these felt that the emphasis was on money and not risk. A number of others challenged specific areas and these are drawn out below.</p> | <p><i>Challenged the Authority's approach to understanding risk</i></p> <p>33 respondents challenged the Authority's risk approach with a number believing it is about money and not risk, others that some risk information had not been considered, or that statistical evidence can be manipulated to fit any argument.</p> <p>10 respondents felt that the approach was not in keeping with our vision</p> |
| <p><i>Expression of concern that the proposed cuts will increase risk to the public and firefighters</i></p> <p>36 respondents expressed concern that the proposed cuts will increase the risk to the public and/or firefighters. 9 respondents felt that we should not cut any operational resources until all other areas have been reviewed</p> | <p><i>Concern about increased risk to the public and firefighters</i></p> <p>23 respondents expressed concern that the proposed cuts will increase risk to the public and firefighters.</p> |
| <p><i>Support for the approach</i></p> <p>23 respondents believed that the organisation is in the best position to assess the risks, or said that they believed the approach is fair</p> | <p><i>Support for the approach</i></p> <p>6 respondents believed that the risks had been assessed thoroughly/were accurately evidence based.</p> |
| <p><i>Concern about consultation process</i></p> <p>5 respondents felt the consultation process had not been adequate/accessible. One of these felt that information about life risk (FSEC) had been deliberately downplayed.</p> | <p><i>Concern about consultation process</i></p> <p>2 respondents felt the consultation process had not been adequate/accessible. One of these felt that information about life risk (FSEC) had been deliberately downplayed.</p> |
| <p><i>Use an independent body to compile risk analysis</i></p> <p>2 respondents felt the analysis should be compiled independently</p> | <p><i>Use data to challenge Government</i></p> <p>1 respondent felt the data supplied by Government on incidents, deprivation etc should be used to challenge them</p> |
| <p><i>Discrimination against particular areas</i></p> <p>2 respondents felt that the risk analysis was biased politically as it discriminates against a particular area (1 Sunderland, 1 Newcastle)</p> | <p><i>Use reserves</i></p> <p>1 respondent felt reserves should be used to offset cuts</p> |

5.11 A number of specific areas were identified by members of the public where the risk approach was felt to be subject to challenge. These are set out below:

- The risk model is based on retrospective evidence and cannot determine future events; risk factors that require the FRS to deploy are so random that statistics or calculations cannot identify the greater risk or the unexpected- eg one road is as dangerous as another if an accident happens there (13)
- The emphasis is on response time not weight of response, it should be on both/more on weight of response (6)
- Incidents can escalate into more serious incidents which makes it difficult to categorise them as low or high risk (5)
- Future demographic and spatial trends haven't been taken into account (ageing, population, poverty/prosperity, housing developments) (5)
- Statistics can be used to demonstrate anything (4)
- People are more likely to die in a fire at night- they have a better chance of self rescuing during the day when they are awake (4)
- As well as thinking about risk types, geographical coverage should be specific and targeted/examples of risks in particular areas (3)
- The risk of fatalities is shown to increase in all options though only marginally- this is not acceptable (3)
- Not enough data on fatalities- can we tell impact of options on these? (3)
- No mention is made of road accidents or other rescues (3)
- Some of the areas where cuts are proposed are not right- high risk areas (2)
- Modelling is reliant on quality of data fed in (1)
- Risk assessment should look at the size of a station area/reliance on neighbouring brigades rather than focusing on reducing appliances at quieter stations (1)
- People die in fires at home so cover should not be reduced to dormitory areas (1)
- TRVs cannot tackle life risk (1)
- Comparing response times to other FRAs is not helpful as could cause a race to the bottom, we should only consider our response (1)
- The graphs show an increase in response times for primary fires (1)
- We should be looking to cut response times not increase them (1)
- If Sunderland central station is surrounded by 3 others, could it not cover their work? (1)
- Risk modelling looks at best case not worst case scenarios eg more than 1 serious incident happening at once (1)
- Approach relies on members of public giving accurate information about fire (1)
- If the service saw fit to have a station in a particular area that must have been for a reason so it should not be removed based on money (1)
- New technology can increase challenges of firefighting as well as improving fire safety (1)

- Some 100 year events are happening with increasing frequency so that should be factored in (1)

5.12 Q4a. What are your views on introducing alternative appliances i.e. Targeted Response Vehicles to deal with our lower risk incidents?

| Themes | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <i>Against introducing TRVs</i> 65 respondents disagreed outright with proposals to introduce TRVs and several of these also expressed concerns about safety | <i>Against introducing TRVs</i> 33 respondents expressed strong disagreement with the proposal to introduce TRVs. |
| <i>Concern that TRVs increase risk to safety</i> 27 respondents expressed concern about TRVs in relation to firefighter safety, several expressing the view that they are not a substitute for a fully equipped and staffed appliance. 28 comments were made about potential impact on community safety, and 12 about moral pressure on the crews of TRVs to attend incidents beyond their capacity. | <i>Concerns about firefighter safety</i> 26 respondents were concerned regarding the impact of TRVs on firefighter safety, and 8 made comments about the moral pressure on crews. 3 respondents also expressed concern about the impact on public safety |
| <i>Agree with proposal for TRVs</i> 30 respondents supported proposals to introduce TRVs | <i>Agree with proposal for TRVs</i> 5 respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce TRVs |
| <i>Agreement with caveats</i> 20 respondents expressed agreement with the principle of TRVs for some jobs, but also concern that they should not replace full crews | <i>Agreement with caveats</i> 7 respondents agreed with the principle of TRVs but expressed the view that they should only attend small incidents eg rubbish fires, and not replace frontline appliances |
| <i>Comments and questions</i> 5 respondents asked questions regarding TRVs, and 8 made general comments | <i>Comments</i> 3 respondents made comments about TRVs |
| <i>Concern that TRVs had failed in other areas</i> 6 respondents raised concerns that these vehicles had been introduced in other locations and had failed. | <i>TRVs failed in other areas</i> 10 respondents raised concerns that these vehicles had been introduced in other locations and had failed |
| <i>Insufficient information</i> 7 respondents felt they did not have sufficient information to make an informed comment | <i>Insufficient information</i> 1 respondent felt they did not have sufficient information to make an informed comment |

5.13 Q4b. What are your views on introducing flexibility of cover by day and night, in areas where the risk allows this

| Themes | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <p><i>Challenged the risk model/interpretation of statistics</i></p> <p>63 respondents challenged the Authority's risk model supporting the proposal for flexibility. Some individuals suggested that statistically more/more severe fires occur at night; others that fires can occur at any time so the same level of cover should be maintained at all times; others that people are most vulnerable when asleep.</p> | <p><i>Challenged the risk model / interpretation of statistics</i></p> <p>33 respondents challenged the risk model / interpretation of statistics supporting the proposal for flexibility</p> |
| <p><i>Concern about safety</i></p> <p>50 respondents were concerned about the increased risk to public safety. A number of respondents are particularly concerned about changes during the night when people are asleep and most vulnerable. 5 respondents expressed concerns about firefighter safety, and 9 supported the continuation of current arrangements.</p> | <p><i>Concern about safety</i></p> <p>27 respondents were concerned regarding the increased risk to public safety, and 14 about the impact on firefighter safety.</p> |
| <p><i>Statements of disagreement</i></p> <p>25 respondents made statements of disagreement with the proposal</p> | <p><i>Statements of disagreement</i></p> <p>4 respondents made statements of disagreement with the proposal</p> |
| <p><i>In agreement with the proposal</i></p> <p>22 respondents expressed agreement with this proposal, with most of these responses being a simple one or two word answer. 4 further respondents felt that flexibility is acceptable.</p> | <p><i>In agreement with the proposal</i></p> <p>6 respondents were in favour of this approach,.</p> |
| <p><i>Support with reservations</i></p> <p>14 respondents were in favour of this flexibility with reservations eg suggesting it should be trialled before roll out and the option to revert back if too much of a risk.</p> | <p><i>Support with reservations but need details</i></p> <p>3 respondents expressed support with reservations and 2 stated that they would need more information on how this would work in detail</p> |
| <p><i>Comments</i></p> <p>2 general comments were made, and one respondent advocated using reserves</p> | |

5.14 Q4c. What are your views on reducing the number of pumping appliances by 6?

| Themes | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <p><i>Opposition to the reduction of pumps</i> 114 respondents opposed this proposal unequivocally, many making no detailed comment, others expressing concern about community risk</p> | <p><i>Opposition to the reduction of pumps based on risk to community and firefighter safety</i> 32 respondents expressed serious concern about reducing pumps. This was based on the view that the proposal will increase community and firefighter risk due to increased response times and impact on second and subsequent pumps.</p> |
| <p><i>Concern about increased risk</i> 64 respondents were concerned regarding the increased risk to members of the public and/or firefighters.</p> | <p><i>Questions about implementation</i> A number of the above responses also contained queries about implementation including whether PDAs would be amended and SOPs would be amended (reducing safety); will standbys be stopped; will appliances be parked on borders; will specials be relocated</p> |
| <p><i>Alternative suggestions</i> 15 respondents suggested different alternatives including more retained firefighters, relocating stations, altering station boundaries, keeping more pumps by not having TRVs, reducing managers, generating income from training and using reserves</p> | <p><i>Alternative suggestions</i> 3 respondent made an alternative suggestion about standing down the Birtley appliance at strategic times; 1 about using reserves and 1 about revising back office reviews</p> |
| <p><i>Support the reduction of pumps</i> 9 respondents were in favour of the proposal. A further 3 were in favour of the proposal if it does not increase risk, and 1 was generally in favour but felt that locations of pumps had been based on historical, not forward looking information.</p> | <p><i>Support the reduction of pumps</i> 5 respondents were in favour of this proposal. A further 3 were in favour to a degree- 1 thought reducing by 6 is over the top but better than TRVs/reduced night time cover; 1 felt reserves should be used to phase it in and 1 felt 6 pumps is too great a number</p> |
| <p><i>Questions</i> 4 respondents asked questions about removing pumps and 2 made comments</p> | |
| <p><i>Not enough information</i> 4 respondents felt they did not have enough information to comment, or commented that the FRS knows best what it needs</p> | |

5.15 Q4d. What are your views on crewing 1-pump stations with 4 staff on the appliance?

| Themes | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <p><i>Opposition to the proposal</i></p> <p>68 respondents were concerned about this proposal based on increased risk to the public and/or firefighters. Many of these were short responses, however a number of additional comments were made including the number of people it takes to erect a large ladder; doing this at the same time as losing 6 pumps being too much all at once; increased pressure on the remaining 4 staff; all pumps/all cat 1 pumps should ride with 5; negative impact upon training; concern for loss of jobs.</p> | <p><i>Opposition to the proposal</i></p> <p>28 respondents were opposed to the proposal, of whom 19 expressed concern about community and firefighter risk.</p> |
| <p><i>In support of the proposal</i></p> <p>28 respondents felt that this was an acceptable proposal, and 2 respondents said it “could” work.</p> | <p><i>In support of the proposal</i></p> <p>24 respondents were in favour of the proposal,</p> |
| <p><i>Questions</i></p> <p>8 respondents asked questions about this proposal</p> | <p><i>Comments</i></p> <p>1 respondent made a general comment on needing 2 appliances for a house fire</p> |
| <p><i>Insufficient information</i></p> <p>6 respondents stated they did not have sufficient information to make a decision</p> | |
| <p><i>Suggestions</i></p> <p>3 respondents made suggestions, including 2 suggesting Cat 1 appliances could be staffed with 5 and Cat 2 with 4; and one suggesting a less highly trained staff member as a driver.</p> | <p><i>Suggestions</i></p> <p>1 respondent suggested that Station Hotel’s pump should be staffed with 5 due to delay in second pump arriving</p> |

5.16 Q4e. What are your views on reducing Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPS) from 3 to 2?

| Themes | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| Concerns over delayed response times 49 respondents disagreed with the proposal due to concerns over delayed response times (some made particular reference to high rise incidents). Most concerns were related to increase risk to life (9), firefighter safety (6) and resilience (during ALP maintenance) including the demand from neighbouring brigades. | Disagreement with this proposal 4 respondents disagreed with the proposal |
| Agreement with the proposal 43 respondents agreed with the proposal | Agreement with this proposal 19 respondents agreed with the proposal to reduce ALPs from 3 to 2. |
| Concern regarding the increase of risk to safety 9 respondents were concerned regarding the increased risk to the public and a further 6 respondents raised concerns regarding firefighter safety | Concern related to the cost of the ALP garage 12 respondents raised concerns regarding the cost of the ALP garage at Gosforth Community Fire Station. |
| Concern regarding resilience 7 respondents expressed concern regarding resilience (during ALP maintenance) and a further 5 respondents raised concern about the demand from neighbouring brigades | Resilience during maintenance 3 respondents raised concerns regarding resilience during ALP maintenance if there were only 2. |
| Insufficient information Some (7) felt they did not have enough information to make an informed comment | Insufficient information 1 respondent felt they did not have enough information to make an informed comment |
| Concern related to the cost of the ALP garage 2 respondents raised concerns regarding the cost of the ALP garage at Gosforth Community Fire Station. | |

5.17 Q4f. What are your views on investing in new firefighting technologies to enhance performance and safety?

| Themes | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <i>Support for investing in new technology</i> 88 of respondents supported investing in new technology | <i>Support for investing in new technology</i> 29 respondents supported investing in new technology. |
| <i>Uncertainty about the technology available and concern that it should not replace firefighters</i> 76 respondents felt they were unsure about the technology and/or concerned that it should not be used to replace firefighters. A number of comments were received that the consultation materials contained very little detail of what technology might be adopted. | <i>Technology not a replacement for practical firefighting or training</i> However, 18 respondents commented that these technologies should not replace practical fire fighting or training |
| | <i>More detailed information required</i> 18 respondents were concerned whether these would be a beneficial replacement for current equipment/resources and required more detailed information. |
| <i>Question the use of money</i> 9 respondents made comments about investing in new technology when money is tight | <i>Question the use of money</i> 2 respondents did not believe investment should be made in technology at the current time as it would increase cost in the short term. |
| | <i>Against investment in technology</i> 3 respondents felt that the technology would increase life risk. |
| <i>Against investment in technology</i> 3 respondents did not believe investment should be made in technology at the current time. 3 further respondents felt that the technology would increase life risk. | <i>Questioned the effectiveness of the technology</i> One respondent felt that the technologies tested in the review were not new or effective |

5.18 Q5. What are your views about our proposed approach, which protects the response to higher risk incidents by allowing a slower response to some lower risk ones? Is it the right one in the circumstances?

| Themes | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <p><i>Disagreement with the approach</i></p> <p>74 respondents expressed concern about the approach, combining statements of strong opposition with concerns about community risk. Key concerns included the difficulty of demarcating levels of risk; a desire for a standard response to all incidents; and concern that small fires can spread and become larger.</p> | <p><i>Disagreement with the approach</i></p> <p>12 respondents expressed strong opposition to the proposal and 34 expressed concerns about its impact on community safety, most of these on the basis that high and low risks are still risks, and categorising them is very difficult; the potential for smaller incidents to escalate was also a concern.</p> <p>A number of respondents were concerned that the proposals do not in fact protect response to high risk incidents due to appliances being removed from some locations, with impact on response times.</p> |
| <p><i>Support (some with caveats)</i></p> <p>41 respondents supported the approach to varying extents. Of these, 11 expressed support with a caveat, and these included “as long as incidents aren’t left to become bigger” (2); not ideal but it reduces costs; ok if enough resources are available</p> | <p><i>Support for approach (some with caveats)</i></p> <p>8 respondents were supportive of the approach. 2 of these expressed caveats, one about the difficulty of determining risk and the other about TRVs going to smaller incidents eventually reducing the number of calls attended by fire appliances, resulting in longer term further reductions</p> |
| | <p><i>.Comments and questions</i></p> <p>One respondent commented that this is the same as the old A and B risk system and one asked a question about how many fatalities had resulted from lower risk incidents over the years</p> |

5.19 Q6. What is your view of the 3 options to change our response model?

| Themes | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <p><i>Opposition to this approach</i> 114 comments were received in opposition to the options; these ranged from short comments to concerns about risk and the fact that an emergency service should not be cut. A number of individuals commented that the options were derived from a need to cut cost, not from an assessment of risk</p> | <p><i>Opposition to this approach</i> 55 comments were received in opposition to the options, most of which were based on concern about community and firefighter risk. 4 of the comments suggested that the cuts to the budget could be made by spending reserves instead.</p> |
| <p><i>Support for approach</i> 18 respondents expressed support for the options, and 1 believed the option to be a necessary evil and has to be done in terms of pumps and stations, but expressed the view that TRVs and crewing with 4 at 1 pump stations will not work..</p> | <p><i>Support for approach</i> 5 respondents supported the options stating that they seemed sensible and were evidence based</p> |
| <p><i>Neutral/unsure</i> 13 respondents were unsure on their view of the options, answered “no comment” or expressed the view that money needs to be saved but it should only be done if risk is not increased.</p> | |
| <p><i>Comments and questions</i> 3 respondents commented on the use of jargon in this question (operational response model). Other questions included whether a national response model could be adopted; whether increasing poverty would make a difference to risk; what would happen if the FRA rejected all the options; whether there will be enough resource for a large incident; and whether the FRS will still send 3 appliances to house fires 7 respondents made comments, of which 2 were about using reserves and waiting for a change of government</p> | <p><i>Comments, questions and suggestions</i> 3 comments were received, one suggesting that Day Crewing Close Call and Retained should be included; one commenting that SOPs would have to be rewritten; and one that the gold standard will be replaced by what will do.</p> |

5.20 Q7. Should we consider the options which involve closing fire stations?

| Themes | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <p><i>Opposition to closure of fire stations</i></p> <p>119 respondents opposed the closure of fire stations; 19 respondents expressed concern regarding increased risk and safety the closing of stations may present, 10 commented about the negative impact on response times and 7 commented that it should be a last resort. 5 respondents raised concern regarding the cost effectiveness of closing stations</p> | <p><i>Opposition to closure of fire stations</i></p> <p>29 respondents opposed the closure of fire stations and felt that it not in the best interest of the community, with comments made about risk and safety. 4 respondents were concerned with the cost effectiveness of closing stations, 2 with the impact on response times, and 1 felt this should only be considered as a last resort. Specific comments were made about the impact when Whitley Bay was closed, and the impact of closing Sunderland Central, Gosforth and Wallsend.</p> <p>A number of respondents queried the choice of stations in the options given that they are not the least busy.</p> |
| <p><i>Closing fire stations should be considered</i></p> <p>36 respondents agreed that closing fire stations should be considered.</p> | <p><i>Closing the fire stations should be considered</i></p> <p>10 respondents agreed closing the fire stations should be considered; 1 felt this should only be considered as a last resort.</p> |
| <p><i>Comments and questions</i></p> <p>10 comments and questions were received, including a suggestion about amalgamating station areas; desire for building by North Tyneside; consider reducing fire stations only if overall cover is enhanced not reduced (2); why is Sunderland Central being saved as a last resort when other city centre stations have closed in the past; only if stations not busy/lower risk areas (2).</p> | <p><i>Comments and questions</i></p> <p>8 comments and questions were received including consider everything; refurbish what we already have; a station may close but how we respond should not; you would assume you would look at the quietest stations first; close November before any of option 1; could the 2 stations be changed to DCCC instead?.</p> |
| <p><i>Insufficient information</i></p> <p>1 respondent felt they did not have enough information to make an informed comment</p> | |

5.21 Q8. Do you feel that any of the options are more acceptable than the others, and if so why/why not?

| Themes | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <p><i>No options acceptable</i> 67 respondents stated that none of the options are acceptable.</p> | <p><i>No options acceptable</i> 14 respondents stated that none of the options are acceptable</p> |
| <p><i>No comment made about any option being preferred</i> 64 responses indicated no preference for option 1, 2 or 3, but did express views about elements of the options being more acceptable than others (although there was not a clear view of which elements were most acceptable as views differed). Those elements felt to be most acceptable by a small number of respondents were flexible cover (2 of whom one thought it should be reduced by day); TRVs (6); stations (9 including looking at quieter stations and closing stations to build “super stations”); ALPs (5); Retained (2); appliance reduction (1); shift patterns (1).</p> | <p><i>No comment made about any option being preferred</i> 28 responses indicated no preference for option 1, 2 or 3 and either made comments about using reserves, or other general comments</p> |
| <p><i>Other suggestions</i> In addition to these direct responses, others made alternative suggestions, the most frequent of these (23) being to spend reserves to offset some or all of the cuts; increase council tax and lobby Government</p> | <p><i>Other suggestions for alternative approaches</i> A small number of alternative suggestions was made. 12 respondents suggested that reserves be spent to tide the service over. 2 suggested revisiting back office reviews and one that management should be pruned. One respondent suggested charging for AFAs.</p> |
| <p><i>Some preference</i> A small number of respondents did respond directly with a preferred option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 respondents preferred option 3 • 5 preferred option 2 • 3 expressed a preference for option 1. <p>One respondent felt that closing quieter stations was preferable to those suggested in options 2 and 3.</p> | <p><i>Some preference</i> A small number of respondents expressed a preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 respondents preferred option 3 • 1 preferred option 2 |

5.22 Q9. Are there any other comments you would like to make, or ideas you would like to suggest?

There were a number of varied responses to this question but the most common comments in this section were as follows:

| Themes | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Public | Staff |
| <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concern regarding the life risk the proposals present (27) • criticism regarding the timescale and promotion of the consultation process (20) • frustration towards the Government/Government should rethink cuts /challenge Government (16) • challenge regarding the way in which the proposed station closures have been selected (7) • supportive comments regarding the Service and what it does (6) • statements of opposition to proposals (4) • do not close stations (3) | <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concern regarding the life risk the proposals present (21) • concern about station closures including specific ones (15) • there should be an independent review of decisions (11) • criticism regarding the timescale and promotion of the consultation process (10) of which 1 also felt the consultation should be done/analysed by an independent body • statements of opposition to proposals (4) • concern about modelling (3) including one asking if modelling had been verified by a third party |
| <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review back office and management jobs / salaries (24) • Use reserves to offset cuts (23) • Seek further funding / raise council tax (13) • Generate income/share services (6) <p>A number of single suggestions was also made including extend retained staffing; trial the vehicles; use volunteers; close Safetyworks; have more day Crewing Close Call stations; sell land</p> | <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use reserves to offset cuts (14) • review back office and management jobs / salaries (5) • Generate income (4) • Seek further funding / raise council tax (3) • Scale back Prevention (3 inc 2 mentions of Safetyworks) • Increase Retained (2) <p>A number of single suggestions was made including: less stations but all 2 pump; share services; sell service delivery HQ but keep the station; expand Day Crewing Close call; revisit Marley Park re finance</p> |

Questions and comments from public and staff meetings

Public Meetings

5.23 Participants in the public meetings were encouraged to complete full consultation responses. However a number of questions were received at the meetings (many of which were addressed during the discussion), as well as a number of comments. The key themes are summarised below under each district.

5.24 **Gateshead**

Gateshead Leisure Centre and Blaydon Youth and Community Centre:

- Concerns regarding the validity of the statistics and the information provided
- The increase in risk to the public and firefighters
- Concern regarding increased response times
- Sympathy regarding the financial challenge the cuts have presented
- Concern regarding capacity of cross border arrangements
- Criticism regarding the consultation process
- Concern regarding the new Control technologies and procedures

5.25 **Newcastle**

Kingston Park community centre and Brunswick Methodist Church:

- The increase in risk to the public and firefighters
- Criticism regarding the consultation process
- Concern regarding reduced firefighter capacity / resources and equipment
- Resistance to the closure of Gosforth Community Fire Station

5.26 **Sunderland**

Quayside Exchange and The Place:

- The increase in risk to the public
- The risk modelling was challenged
- Concern regarding increased risk due to increased response times (particularly to the city centre)
- Strong opposition to closing Sunderland Central Station
- Frustration directed at the Government for imposing such cuts
- Criticism of the consultation process

- Suggestions included establishing an illegal budget, seeking alternative funding and raising council tax

5.27 **North Tyneside**

Wallsend Town Hall and Whitley Bay Library:

- Concern regarding increased risk due to increased response times
- Concern regarding resource allocation and lack of fire cover in North Tyneside
- Objections to reduction in the number of pumps
- The increase in risk to the public and firefighters –North Tyneside risk remains high albeit risk is no longer industrial but residential (ie sleeping)
- Concern regarding the impact on maintaining firefighter training
- Concerns regarding the validity of the statistics and the information provided
- Concern regarding the limited capacity of TRVs and their crews
- Criticism regarding the consultation process
- Suggestions included using reserves before cutting resources, challenging Government regarding the cuts and introducing alternative staffing arrangements rather than closing stations

5.28 **South Tyneside**

Jarrow Community Centre:

Discussion focussed around clarification to questions raised. The key themes of these questions are as follows:

- Timescales for the implementation of changes
- Concern that these changes will increase risk to life
- Concern regarding response to local COMAH sites
- Concern regarding response to high rise incidents
- Staffing of alternative vehicles
- Concern regarding reduced capacity for prevention work
- Alternative ways to protect frontline services

Other public feedback

- 5.29 In addition to the survey results, feedback was also received from members of the public via email (4), letter (1), phone call (1) website (1) and our social media platforms; Facebook (1) and Twitter (2). These were not full survey responses but were counted as part of the survey analysis.

Staff meetings

5.30 Participants in the staff meetings with the Chief Fire Officer were encouraged to complete full consultation responses. However a number of questions were received and addressed at the meetings, as well as a number of comments. The key themes are summarised below.

- Risk modelling, speed of response and weight of attack
- Firefighter safety
- Response times (major incidents)
- Queries about Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs)
- Standbys
- Future deployment of Special Appliances
- Staffing arrangements
- Stations
- Management
- Impact on training
- Funding position
- Communication and lobbying

Other staff feedback

5.31 Two emails were received from members of staff/retired staff. To ensure anonymity and aid analysis, the contents of these emails was included in the survey results and analysed with this data set.

6 RESPONSES: FIRE BRIGADES UNION

6.1 The Fire Brigades Union has provided a detailed response to the proposals, and formally opposes all options based on potential impact on firefighter and community safety, whilst regretting the financial position which has been imposed upon the Fire Authority. It is not considered appropriate to attempt to summarise these concerns, which are available in full in Appendix H. However, the Introduction is included below.

Introduction to FBU response.

The primary concerns of the Fire Brigades Union when responding to a service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is the protection of the public, FBU members, residents and visitors alike, the protection of their homes, businesses, environment and infrastructure.

FBU members within Tyne and Wear constantly strive to ensure their community is safe, to do so in a safe and appropriate manner they need to be provided with adequate and appropriate resources and expect the Fire Authority to provide them with such.

The FBU continues to recognise and support the benefits that can be gained from a well designed and truly integrated risk management plan, however it has been the formal position of the FBU since the inception of the IRMP process that a genuine risk management plan cannot take place against a background of year on year central Government imposed funding restrictions.

For that reason the FBU do not believe that the proposed IRMP is a genuine risk based document as the proposals are driven purely by financial consideration and not upon a pure assessment of risk, indeed the briefings given to employees, public and locally elected representatives during staff and public consultation have on occasion clearly indicated that the service will be slower in responding to incidents, which in our view significantly increases the risk to public and firefighter alike.

The proposed loss of 131 operational firefighters and 6 fire appliances would be catastrophic and the FBU believe the consequences for firefighters and the public will be extremely dangerous and question the rationale used for these proposed cuts, the FBU fully accept that the service is under previously unknown financial pressure due to the extremely hostile stance taken by the Coalition Government against the public sector in general and the Fire Service specifically, however we view these proposals with alarm and a degree of astonishment that such proposals would be considered at a time when the Fire Authority are sitting on an exceptional level of balances and reserves.

The FBU are extremely concerned that the information provided to staff and public during the consultation process is so lacking in clarity or detail that FBU members and the public will find it difficult to have a clear understanding of the possible implications to the service or for employees to their existing working arrangements.

After careful consideration our conclusion is that TWFRS continue to utilise the IRMP process as a budget reduction tool rather than a legitimate or genuine attempt to assess the risk contained within Tyne and Wear, in essence this is a Business plan and not a risk based document.

As a consequence the Fire Brigades Union cannot agree with the proposals contained within TWFRS IRMP 2013-17 and formally object to these proposals.

7 RESPONSES: OTHER STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

7.1 A number of other formal responses were received from stakeholders and these are attached as. Appendix J.

- 7.2 **Gateshead Council** recognises and regrets the financial position which is common to other partner agencies tackling crime and community safety. The Council is pleased to note the risk based approach and use of intelligence in the review (although it feels that local intelligence gathering through neighbourhood tasking could have added value); and is reassured by the evidence that the TWFRS currently operates the quickest response time in the country.
- 7.3 The main concern expressed by the Council is that the response time for two appliances has not been included in the statistical modelling, and feels that this could have resulted in different options being arrived at. It suggests that this should be done and if necessary, further consultation carried out. An example is given of a second pump arriving in Blaydon more slowly should it be coming from West Denton or Gateshead rather than Swalwell.
- 7.4 The Council response notes that some Councillors have expressed concern about the ability of TWFRS to provide adequate cover to the West of the Borough, particularly if an appliance is removed from Swalwell. This concern is clearly expressed in the two individual responses received from **Gateshead Councillors** Lynne Caffrey (Chopwell and Rowlands Gill) and Sonya Hawkins (Whickham North and Swalwell), which express in detail concerns about particular risks in the area including the Metro Centre, transport links and the Team Valley, and the rural areas to the west of Gateshead.
- 7.5 **Newcastle Council** passed a motion on 5th December, to write to the Secretary of State expressing concerns about the scale and impact of the proposed cuts. The motion indicates that the Government proposed cuts to the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service are unfair and put residents' lives at risk; prevention programs undertaken by the Fire and Rescue Service teams have made a massive impact for local people; and when risk factors have been taken into account, the proposed cuts to services will reduce the speed of response when residents call for help.
- 7.6 The **Safe Newcastle Partnership** recognises and regrets the financial challenges and references the motion to be put to the Council.
- 7.7 The partnership notes that TWFRS has carried out a comprehensive analysis of impact and agrees that priority must focus on higher risk fires although this may impact on response times to lower risk incidents. It recognises that any option will have an impact on response times and safety in communities, and that although a reduced service is inevitable to achieve the budget reductions, it is concerned that reduced services across partner agencies may have an additional impact on fire service demand.
- 7.8 Newcastle Councillor David Faulkner (**Fawdon Ward**) in a letter to the CFO expresses concern about proposals to close Gosforth fire station, and the risks to response times in Gosforth, Fawdon and Kenton. He knows that the FRA must do all it can to find economies

especially as incidents have fallen, but calls for a focus on reducing management and back office costs, and considering a merger with Northumberland. He feels that the additional savings from closing Gosforth and Wallsend are fairly modest in comparison with option 1.

- 7.9 Catherine McKinnell MP (**Newcastle North**) expresses concerns about the scale of cuts and loss of firefighter posts, which will put people's lives at risk. She is concerned about the potential closure of Gosforth fire station and its replacement with a facility in the Benton area, linked to the congestion levels around the Haddrick's Mill/South Gosforth roundabouts and the fact that improvements in this area have been put on hold due to cuts in regional transport funding. Cover for Newcastle Airport is also a concern.
- 7.10 Alan Campbell MP (**Tynemouth**) expresses concern about the length of the consultation period, and the accessibility of consultation materials in terms of language and length. He expresses understanding of the difficult position the Authority has been placed in linked to the scale and structure of cuts, but also concern that these changes will increase public risk; he also expresses concerns about firefighters putting themselves at risk if insufficient appliances are available at a particular incident.
- 7.11 He is supportive of the continuation of Tynemouth station, but believes the potential closure of Wallsend and Gosforth could impact on his constituency due to fewer stations and appliances; he has also been advised that the Gosforth station is important to Newcastle Airport retaining its Category 9 status, and asks if this is the case.
- 7.12 Alan Campbell also emphasises the Prevention work, and Rescue work that the service does, and suggests that the changes proposed emphasise the fire aspect without giving due attention to other important tasks. Finally, he expresses the view that the scale and timing of the cuts could be mitigated through using reserves.

8 SUMMARY AND RESPONSE TO CONCERNS

- 8.1 This report has been largely about the responses to the Authority's consultation on options for service changes to balance risk and available resources. The number of people responding to the consultation has been relatively low, with 48 responses received from staff and 233 from members of the public. However, of those who did respond, the majority have expressed concern about the proposals.
- 8.2 This is to be expected given that the Fire and Rescue Service is part of the "safety net" that keeps individuals and communities safe from harm. Tyne and Wear's service is the fastest in the country, has reduced incidents overall and has achieved the best reductions in accidental dwelling fires in recent years, maintaining this despite unprecedented and disproportionate budget cuts. The community, which does face a higher level of risk than many other parts of the country, has rightly come to expect a very high standard of service.

- 8.3 Although the consultation documents and briefing sessions address many of these concerns, some of the key concerns from staff and public are summarised and addressed by the Chief Fire Officer in this section.

Commitment to community and firefighter safety

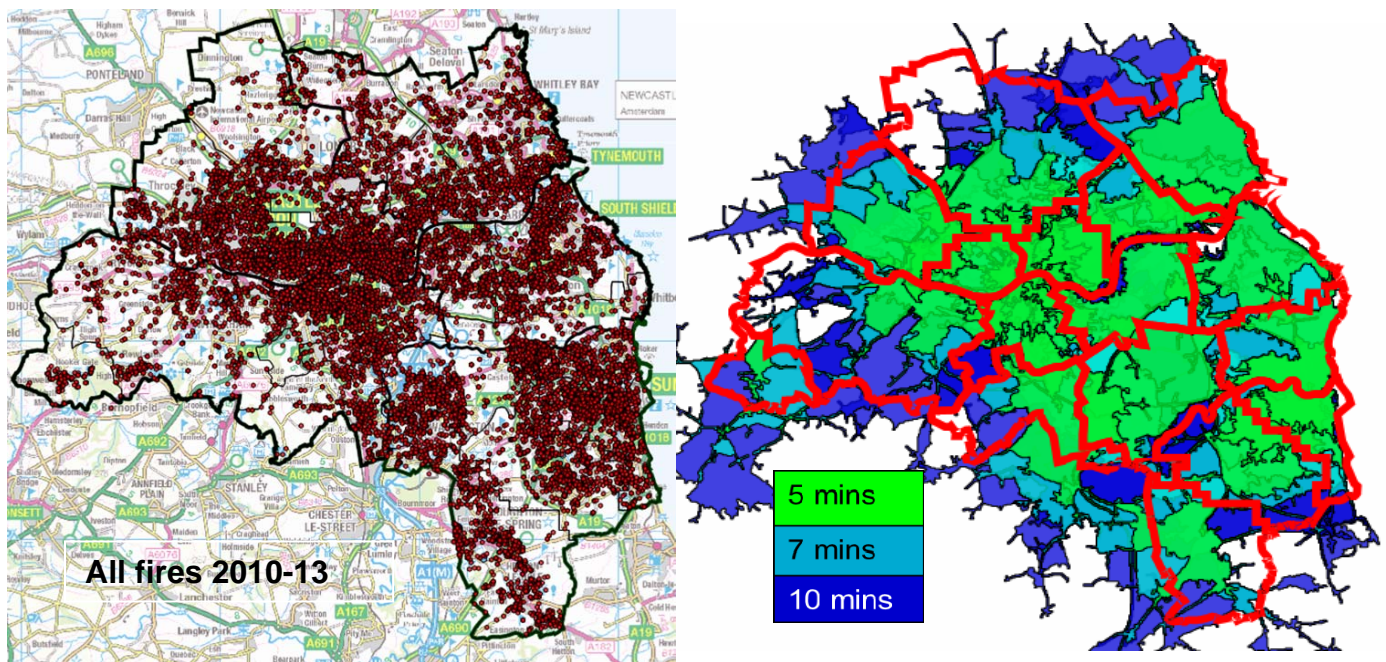
- 8.4 A number of the comments on our approach to risk indicate that the proposals show disregard for public and firefighter safety. In reviewing the operational response, the Chief Fire Officer has sought to develop options for changing our response in ways which will have the least impact on the service the public has come to expect, although the consultation documents make clear that response times will be affected.
- 8.5 Detailed workload modelling was done on multiple scenarios with the objective of determining the best mix of options which would reduce our costs whilst having the least impact on the management of risk.
- 8.6 TWFRS has successfully introduced a number of changes to our approach to operations over the years, including riding with 4 staff on most appliances; closing/moving/replacing stations; and introducing Day Crewing: Close Call and Swap a Shift to increase staffing flexibility. All of these changes involved detailed examination of risk. Many of these changes have initially caused concern but they have all been implemented cautiously, over a period of time, with monitoring of impact.
- 8.7 During this period TWFRS has maintained response times so that they are now the fastest in the country; firefighter safety has been maintained and accidents and injuries to firefighters and other staff have reduced as noted by ROSPA in our annual assessments for Gold awards; and work with representative bodies and the workforce have been key to the success of this service for many years (as noted by Investors in people when awarding the Authority its Gold award, and by fire service peers through Operational Assessment and the awarding of Excellent status in the equality and diversity peer review in 2013).
- 8.8 In terms of community safety, the commitment of the Authority, management and staff has resulted in reducing incidents, reducing fatalities, improving standards, and making the community a safer place to be. In 2012 TWFRS recorded zero accidental fire deaths for the first time ever and is also the first metropolitan FRS to achieve this. It is the view of the CFO that this will continue to be the priority of this service, and that it will be possible to implement the options put forward whilst still maintaining our commitment to the safety of the community and firefighters

Modelling risk

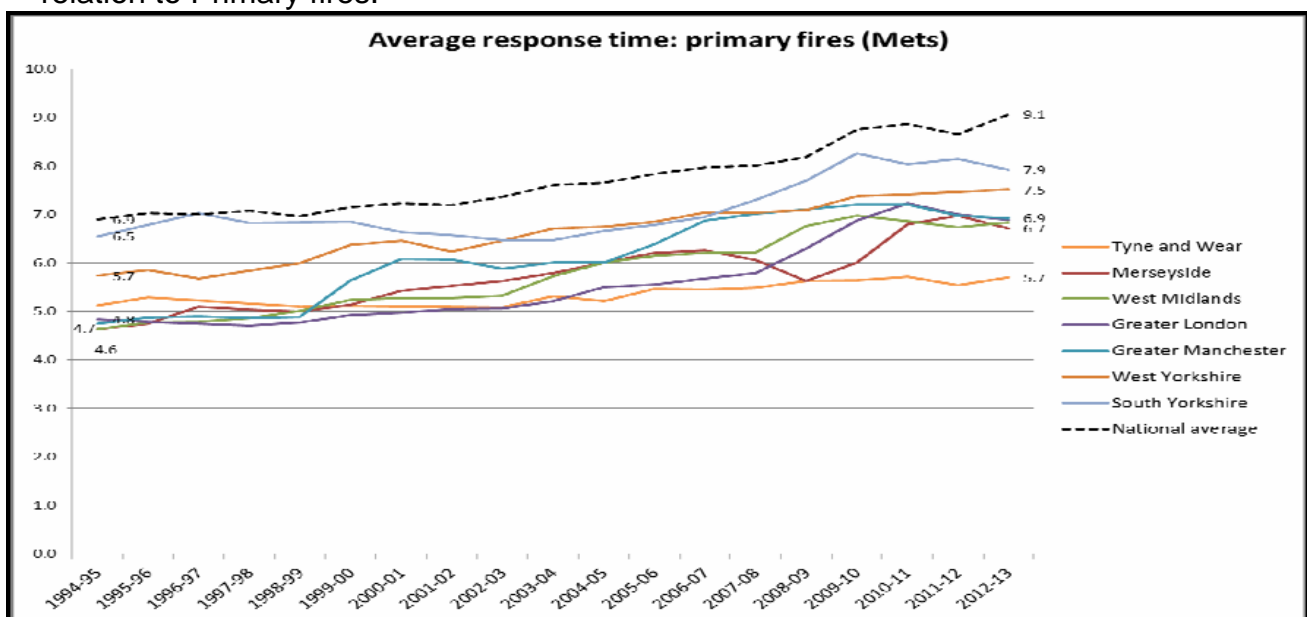
- 8.9 A number of responses have expressed concern about using data to model risk and impact, or about using retrospective incident data to model risk when we are looking forward into the future. The review informing this report did use incident data, because incidents are an indicator of unmitigated risk and assist in determining where available resources should be deployed.
- 8.10 The incident data used was for ten year (to gain a trend picture) and three year periods, with the impact modelling done using three year data (2010-13), despite the fact that incidents have continued to reduce during the three year period. This means that options were developed on assumptions of higher incident levels than are currently occurring.
- 8.11 The review also used the Government's Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) modelling tool as part of assessing the impact of different options. This tool uses retrospective incident data, alongside risk and geographical information, to predict future outcomes.
- 8.12 Finally the Authority has noted on a number of occasions (for example in its response to the Sir Ken Knight review and in the consultation document) that incidents and community risk are not the same thing, and that community risk is inherent in the community through its demographic and economic profile (the higher level of risk in Metropolitan areas has also featured heavily in our lobbying against disproportionate cuts to our budget).
- 8.13 In testing the impact of different options for deploying available resources, the review therefore took account of wider social trends and projections in Tyne and Wear including analysing the existing risks within the TWFRS area and how this may change in the future (e.g. through population, development and environmental change). This approach has been used for many years within TWFRS to ensure that appliances and stations are located to best respond to the risks within the whole TWFRS area.

Response times

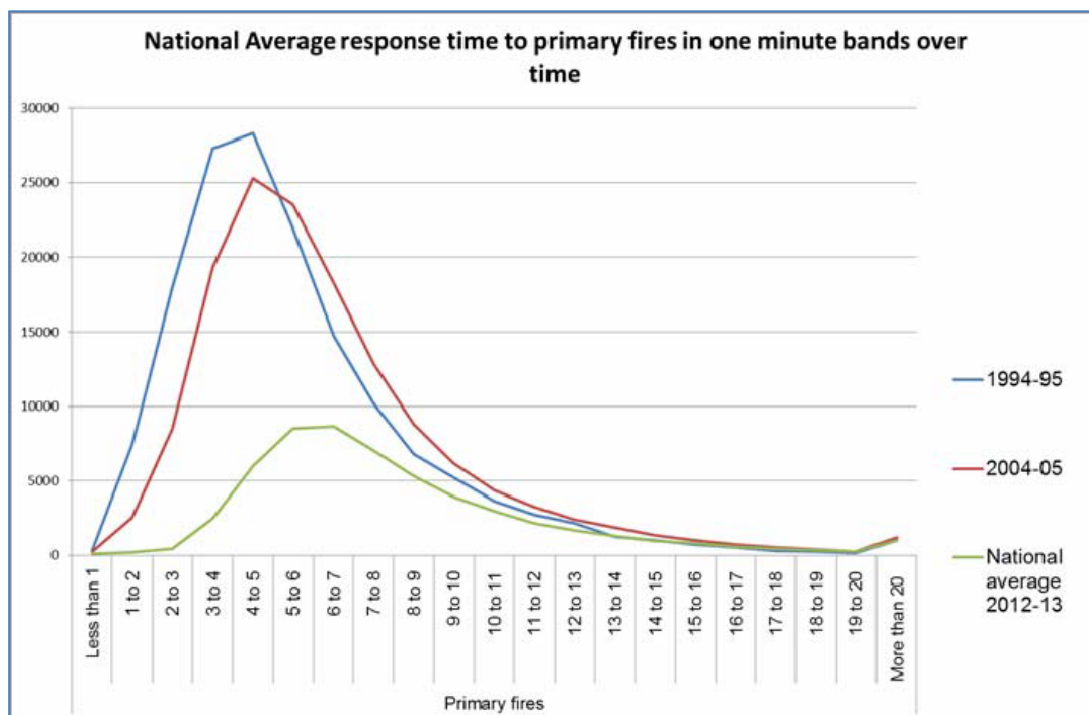
- 8.14 A FRS's speed of response is determined by the number of appliances available, their location within the area, and the geographical makeup/transport links in the area. The Tyne and Wear area has tight geography, good transport links and a densely packed population with relatively high level of fire risk, although this is unevenly spread across the area. The maps below are taken from the consultation materials and show fire incident levels over the last 3 years, and the current response times to different areas.



- 8.15 With the second smallest number of appliances of any Metropolitan FRS, TWFRS has been able to maintain its average response times over the last 15 years, as shown below in relation to Primary fires.



- 8.16 At 5.7 minutes (5 minutes 42 seconds), TWFRS' average response to primary fires is the fastest in the country; Metropolitan FRSs tend to have faster responses as their populations are less dispersed; however they also have higher levels of risk and incident numbers. Clearly this is an average and the actual response time to a specific incident will depend upon its proximity to a fire station.
- 8.17 The Authority agreed in 2004 (when the IRMP process was first introduced) to broadly maintain response times to building fires, since 2004 response time has increased within the Tyne and Wear area by 8% to building and dwelling fires, with response to Primary fires increasing by 10%. This demonstrates excellent performance when compared to other Metropolitan FRSs, for example South Yorkshire FRS have seen increases of 23% in their response time to dwelling fires and the Metropolitan average increase of 14% to dwellings is also significantly higher than TWFRS over the same period
- 8.18 These can also be compared to the national picture as shown in the 2012-13 Response Times statistics. The examples below show the average response times to primary fires at the national level, as they have changed over a period of time.



- 8.19 The chart clearly shows the decline in the number of primary fires nationally since 1994 and 2012/13, it also shows the changes in the number of incidents attended by response times. In 1994 peak performance can be seen at 4 to 5 minutes of response, this is also the case for 2004-05, however the most recent data for 2012-13 shows the peak was between 6 to 7

minutes, a shift of at least 2 minutes in the average peak performance, clear evidence that on average English FRS response is slower now when compared to 2004.

- 8.20 Speed of response is often linked to levels of fire fatalities, the FBU response to the consultation argues that the details within 'ENTEC' reports 1996 & 1999 'National Risk Assessment of Dwellings' and 'Response Time Fatality Relationship for Dwelling Fires' indicates significant increase in fire fatalities due to a slower speed of response. This is somewhat misleading, the reports referenced use a higher (worse) fatality rate than in the more up to date FSEC toolkit. The reports use data from 1996 whereas FSEC is updated regularly by DCLG (most recently in 2013).
- 8.21 The fatality rate presently within FSEC is lower than stated within the ENTEC reports to take account of recent reductions in fire related fatalities, thus FSEC will produce a lower fatality prediction than ENTEC. Though FSEC is an effective modelling tool, the prediction rates for fatalities within Tyne and Wear have been unrealistically high for many years.
- 8.22 Below is a selection of the data provided by FSEC modelling for the options within the consultation.

| Vehicle Deployment Strategy | Dwelling Fatalities | Other Buildings Fatalities | PROJECTED Total Fatalities | Total 'Difference' Per year |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Status Quo model | 7.093198 | 1.425737 | 8.518935 | |
| Proposal One | 7.281908 | 1.623716 | 8.905624 | 0.38 |
| Proposal One and Two | 7.226658 | 1.660189 | 8.886847 | 0.36 |
| Proposal One and Three | 7.325219 | 1.751642 | 9.076861 | 0.55 |

- 8.23 This is a projected model; the actual fire death number within TWFRS is below the 8.51 the model indicates for the status quo, an ENTEC model would predict a much higher number than presented in FSEC.
- 8.24 It is well accepted that community safety is not simply about speed of response. Speed can and does save lives; weight of attack and effective Prevention and Protection strategies are also key. The chart above in 8.18 shows that average speed of response to dwelling fires within England has slowed by more than 2 minutes since 2004, yet over the same time fatalities from dwelling fires have reduced by 40%.

Weight of attack- second appliances and additional resources

- 8.25 A number of responses, including that of the FBU, are concerned that weight of attack (how many resources are deployed to an incident within a given time) has not been adequately considered, and that the focus on speed is too great. This is a particular concern at 1 pump stations, and has informed concerns about the option to crew pumps at 1 pump stations with 4 instead of 5 staff.

- 8.26 The review considered data (2012/13) about the one pump stations in Tyne and Wear. This indicates that second pump attendances for the one pump stations take an average of 1 min 17 seconds longer than that of a 2 pump stations. It is also acknowledged that to manage risk, a balance of speed of response and weight of attack is required.
- 8.27 Standby cover is also a regular feature of how the service works day to day across all station areas. In the three years 2010 to 2013, 6,204 standbys (2,806 hours) were undertaken in the areas of 1 pump stations, where they were covered with an appliance staffed with 4 firefighters. During this time there were no reports of near misses or concerns as a result of available staff or resources, supporting a safe system of work can operate on one pump stations with a crew of 4.
- 8.28 When considering the number of appliances required in future, the review also considered data on the average number of incidents attended per appliance over a number of years (incident workload). In 2007/08, the average number of incidents per appliance was 832; in 2012/13 this had dropped to 507. Reducing the overall number of appliances by 6 (discounting the TRV), the average number of incidents attended per appliance (based upon 2012/13 data) would be 642 which remains significantly less workload than in 2007/08.
- 8.29 Moral pressure to act on arrival is an issue for emergency responders and always has been. Incident commanders use their experience and training to balance rapid action with risk assessment and the availability of resources. It is the expectation that Commanders and crews will continue to act in accordance with standard operating procedures and that any changes to these will be developed in conjunction with staff and representative bodies as required. The Service would not place an unrealistic burden upon the Incident Commanders and the CFO believes the options within the consultation would not change that.

Risk levels at night

- 8.30 A number of respondents were concerned about reducing cover at some stations at night as it is believed that the risk is greater for fire deaths and injuries.
- 8.31 The options propose that different numbers of appliances would be provided by day and by night, at locations across the Service area based upon risk and activity. In essence, some fire appliances would be “stood down” for a period of up to 12 hours at night, removing the need for crews to be available to staff them. As with Day Crewing Close Call, this would only be done in areas where the known level of night time incidents is low enough to do it safely.
- 8.32 It is well established that the peak time for all incidents is the early evening. Higher risk incidents have less peaks and troughs but still follow this pattern. The review showed that

69% of incidents occur between 11:00 and 23:00 hrs. The hours between 01:00 and 06:00hrs are those when incidents are least likely to happen.

- 8.33 The FBU's response examined incident data between 21:00 and 09:00 for the past 3 years showing 2,812 primary fires of which 1224 required BA, upon further examination the following is also identified

| 3 year data (2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13) | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Time of Day | % of ALL incidents attended | % of all Level 1 (higher risk) incidents attended | Total rescues from ALL incidents |
| 21:00-09:00 (night) | 34.8% | 37.1% | 864 |
| 09:00-21:00 | 65.2% | 62.9% | 1751 |

Standbys and availability for training

- 8.34 The training requirements of all firefighters will continue to be of paramount importance under any new operating model. The timing of training would need to be adjusted to take account of changes in firefighter numbers and appliances, with a likely knock on effect on pre-arranged standbys. The Authority's commitment to Health and Safety of all staff will be maintained.

National resilience and specialisms

- 8.35 The contribution TWFRS makes towards local and national resilience will not be adversely affected by the implementation of any of the options proposed.
- 8.36 Resilience assets are strategically placed at locations around the Service area, and this will continue as a matter of course. Our Operational and Resilience function constantly assesses the most operationally advantageous location for all Service assets.
- 8.37 TWFRS currently provides a significant number of non-fire related services, mostly under requirements placed on the Service by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. TWFRS also contributes to our community by providing a range of services which are not required by any statutory instrument. It is not envisaged that TWFRS will cease to provide any of these services as a result of the implementation of the review of response.
- 8.38 During staff meetings and through a number of responses, firefighters have asked questions about the specific locations of specialist assets and teams in the future. This is considered to be an issue for implementation and is dependent upon the future number and location of stations. Any changes to the location of these assets will be consulted upon with staff and representative bodies as has been the case in previous years.

Specific local areas

- 8.39 A number of respondents were concerned about the impact of the proposals on specific areas. Whilst the consultation was clear that TWFRS operates as a cross Tyne and Wear service with crossover between Council areas and resources deployed quickly wherever they are needed, some specific comments are made below.

Swalwell/West Gateshead

- 8.40 This area has a lower risk and incident rate which is reflected in the current location and deployment of resources. It is the case that there are currently some longer run times in the TWFRS area, as shown in the map in 8.14; this would continue to be the case although the responsiveness still compares favourably with rural areas in other parts of the region.

The Metro Centre and A1

- 8.41 The majority of incidents at the Metro Centre are false alarms; however should a significant incident occur at the centre it is well placed for speedy response from a number of surrounding stations
- 8.42 The A1 stretches through a number of station areas and can be reached quickly from a number of stations.

Gosforth and Wallsend areas

- 8.43 The map in 8.14 illustrates the spread of incidents in the area covered by Gosforth station and surrounding stations; areas to the north and west are generally low in incidents although the development of modern housing in the western part of Newcastle has been considered in testing the impact of options.
- 8.44 A proposed station in the Benton area would ensure that speed of response is maintained to the areas to either side. Some additional resilience is provided to the Longbenton and Benton Square areas, the A19 spine road and Coast road.

Newcastle Airport

- 8.45 Senior officers from Newcastle Airport were consulted about the methodology, conclusion and implications of the review of response. The officers from Newcastle Airport raised no concerns around the review when the context in which the review stands was explained. TWFRS contributes to the ongoing operation of Newcastle Airport by agreeing to provide an appropriate 'Pre-Determined Attendance' (PDA). This supports the airport's permitted level of traffic as determined by the Civil Aviation Authority. The PDA for Newcastle Airport will not change as a result of the review of response.

Use of TRVs

- 8.46 Targeted response vehicles have been adopted by many FRS, including other Metropolitan authorities such as West Midlands and South Yorkshire. These vehicles range from 4x4s to large vans. Although approaches vary, typically these vehicles are used for smaller incidents such as secondary fires, and for Anti-Social Behaviour reduction/diversionary work. TWFRS already has two vehicles of this kind but does not currently use them as part of operational response.
- 8.47 Practical challenge exercises as part of the review indicated that using alternative vehicles is feasible for some level 3 and 4 risk incidents (such as ASB fires etc), but not for more complex incidents (those tested were House Fire, RTC persons reported, and Fire-High Rise, all of which are risk category 1 and required larger numbers of staff to be dealt with safely and quickly).
- 8.48 The main benefit of TRVs is to provide a more flexible range of response options, so that fewer staff can be deployed to low risk incidents where this can be done safely. The data within the review confirmed that such lower risk incidents make up the majority of incidents attended. For example, small scale secondary fires equate to 32% of all incidents attended.
- 8.49 TRVs in TWFRS would be staffed with 2 highly trained firefighting staff who will respond to incidents where it is safe to do so, the safety record of TWFRS will not be compromised by their introduction or deployment.
- 8.50 The role of TRVs would be as part of the overall response strategy to ensure the 'traditional' highly equipped and appropriately staffed appliances are available to focus on life risk and spend less time attending low risk, higher volume incidents.
- 8.51 The fire service has for many years reinforced the risk of tying up a valuable resource at malicious calls stating 'when we are dealing with malicious calls we cannot be saving lives elsewhere'. We have challenged malicious calls and need to challenge further how we respond to lower risk incidents in exactly the same way, to ensure appliance availability is maximised for life risk incidents.
- 8.52 In considering this, over the past 3 year 75% of incidents were secondary fires or false alarms; although a TRV could not attend all of these, the possibilities are clear, thus freeing up main pumping appliances for life risk.

Changes to staffing

- 8.53 The review of response does not include any explicit changes to current staffing arrangements as these will be covered in the extant IRMP review of staffing. The decision of the FRA about how the Service's response will look in future will have an influence in the options presented in the review of staffing but will by no means be the only factor which shapes how the Service's resources are staffed. The review of staffing will look to build on

the existing flexibility that was introduced with the adoption of 'Swap a Shift' arrangements; ensuring sufficient operational resources are available to deal with calls for assistance to the Service.

- 8.54 Some respondents stated an assumption that the options provided would inevitably lead to a change in duty system, also reinforcing that such a change would have to be a matter for negotiation. This assumption is incorrect that it would be 'inevitable', TWFRS already have a very flexible approach to staffing (developed and implemented with support of staff and the FBU) which can deliver any of the options consulted upon, if in the future a change in duty system was required, staff and representative bodies would be consulted as a matter of course.

Closure of Stations

- 8.55 Several respondents were concerned about proposals to close fire stations, or specific fire stations. These options were developed through analysis of risk data, workload modelling and FSEC. This was done as part of a Tyne and Wear wide analysis to determine whether, and where, station reductions would assist in a changed delivery model which has the least impact on community risk.
- 8.56 Option 2- closure of Gosforth and Wallsend fire stations and replacement with a new station in the Benton area. Determination of which stations to close and where to site a new station has been determined through examination of workload modelling, FSEC and analysis of risk data and intelligence. The analysis considered station areas with some of the lowest numbers of incidents and has identified new locations to provide a more efficient Service Delivery model.
- 8.57 Option 3- Close Sunderland Central fire station and provide the service from the three surrounding stations. Whilst the station identified experiences one of the largest number of incidents within TWFRS, it is surrounded by 3 station areas which have the capacity (and are in the correct geographical location) to provide an efficient response to the community.
- 8.58 The above changes will increase the number of stations with 2 fire appliances and improve the location of stations according to risk and response (specifically weight of response/attack) within Tyne and Wear. Remodelling the strategic locations for stations now will provide the Authority with a medium to longterm strategic service delivery plan, which is more suitable to managing risk in future years.

Use of reserves

- 8.59 The Authority's reserves have featured quite heavily in the consultation responses and information about the reserves has been made freely available to participants in public meetings who raised questions about these. There has also been discussion at public and

staff meetings of the difference between revenue (repeated annual) spending on running the organisation including paying wages, and capital (one off, to secure physical assets) spending.

- 8.60 This is because the assumption was sometimes made that the Authority does not need to cut its revenue spending at all because it has money in reserve. Others felt that the Authority should be using some of its reserves to mitigate the impact of cuts.
- 8.61 Along with Councils, FRAs are not permitted to operate a deficit budget in any year or borrow to pay for revenue costs such as wages or service delivery operating costs. This means they must be prudent in their approach to spending and keep money in reserve to meet unexpected expenses or emergency costs. It is the case that TWFRA has both a prudent level of general balances (£3.872m as at April 2013) to offset funding uncertainties, and a number of earmarked reserves totalling £28.429m at April 2013 and which are projected to reduce to £25.894 by March 2014 due to planned spending (Appendix K gives more details).
- 8.62 These reserves have been earmarked to help promote cost effective service delivery - eg spend to save initiatives; help fund new equipment / facilities to save recurring revenue costs and/or spending revenue on repaying debt in the future; smooth the implementation of cuts; and pay for one off costs associated with downsizing.
- 8.63 Maintenance of reserves is part of the medium term financial management which is required of public bodies, and regularly audited. The Authority's most recent (October 2013) Annual Audit Letter states that:
- "The Authority is financially resilient. The Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out how the Authority proposes to deal with the difficult economic climate and the cuts in funding. The Authority has considered the impact of the retention of business rates and localisation of council tax support, and is monitoring these areas closely".*
- 8.64 If reserves were used to meet the projected gap at this stage for the period 2014/15 to 2016/17, then reserves of over £16.8m would be required over the next 3 years if no IRMP actions were carried out.
- 8.65 This would create a "cliff edge" that would need to be addressed in 2017/18 (over £8.8m). Not only would the organisation be exposed through minimal financial resilience and a depleted ability to call on reserves for invest to save initiatives and severance / redundancy costs; but in terms of revenue we would either be:
- living in hopes that "something would turn up" in the meantime (imprudent, and unlikely given the experience of recent years and the comments made about further cuts in future);

- or we would need to lose a lot of staff very quickly, as opposed to the measured and managed approach we are proposing to take, reducing staff over a three year period by natural wastage and able to monitor the impact of reductions on community risk.

- 8.66 If Council Tax was increased instead then it would require increases of 12.9% in 2014/15, 14.3% in 2015/16 and 13.5% in 2016/17. (the government guidelines for a council tax increase without the need for a referendum is only 2%). The cost of a referendum is estimated at £1.4m.
- 8.67 It would certainly be necessary to use more of the reserves to manage the phased implementation of any change, with the Early Retirement and Organisational Changes reserves created for this express purpose and already being spent.
- 8.68 It is estimated that the Authority will spend approximately £2,000,000 from these reserves in 2014-15 (with more in the following years) to bridge the funding shortfall as any IRMP proposals are implemented. This will involve some reshaping of reserves to reflect our current priorities (ie investing more from the reserves in change management by putting some other plans on hold, or accepting more risk).
- 8.69 However a scenario which involves being able to offset all cuts from reserves is unrealistic and is not sustainable in the medium term and would make it less likely that the Authority could maintain high quality services. Using reserves would also mean reducing the flexibility the Authority currently has in being able to manage its finances effectively whereby it is using reserves to cover one-off costs it faces from service reviews and organisational changes to make service delivery more efficient and effective. Having this flexibility is very important when resources are being squeezed as it allows a more measured and managed approach to dealing with the additional risks faced from both a period of prolonged funding reductions together with significant changes to grant funding mechanisms.

Consultation process

- 8.70 A number of respondents expressed concerns about the consultation process including length, accessibility and promotion. The Authority designed its consultation process based on Government principles which were updated in 2013, and Appendix B shows how each of these were met. The process included:
- consultation documents which sought to present the options, and the evidence for them, in as accessible a way as possible
 - face to face sessions with the public, staff and partners to explain the proposals and answer questions, acknowledging that the subject matter was complex and the decisions to be made significant
 - widespread promotional activity through a range of media

- 8.71 Records were kept of communication and consultation activities and although it is not possible to determine how many members of the public saw posters, leaflets, articles, Council newsletters or newspaper advertisements, we know that 10,354 people saw posts about the public meetings on Facebook; a further 1,313 saw general Facebook posts about the proposals and 3,116 people viewed the consultation pages online.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The review to determine the options put forward for consultation was detailed and evidence based, and carried out with a strong commitment to public and firefighter safety in the face of a reduction in the resources available to the Authority. A risk based approach has been taken in developing the options, which has involved looking at the levels of risk of different types of incidents (including the weight of response required) and at different times of day. This has involved making overt judgements about relative risk levels; however such judgements are part of how the service operates day to day.
- 9.2 Having taken into account the feedback from the consultation and considered it alongside the evidence based review, the following can be confirmed:

Alternative appliances and dynamic call handling by Control

- 9.3 TRVs staffed by 2 firefighters can be introduced within TWFRS to deal with some of the lower risk (level 3 and 4) incidents, the safety record of TWFRS will not be compromised by their introduction or deployment.
- 9.4 Practical challenge exercises as part of the review indicated that using alternative vehicles is feasible for some level 3 and 4 risk incidents, but not for more complex incidents (those tested were House Fire, RTC persons reported, and Fire-High Rise, all of which are risk category 1 and required larger numbers of staff to be dealt with safely and quickly). Prior to any implementation clear response rules would be in place for TRV to ensure they operate within safe systems of work.
- 9.5 The role of TRVs are a key part of the overall response strategy to ensure the 'traditional' highly equipped and appropriately staffed appliances are available to focus on life risk and spend less time attending low risk, higher volume incidents. (For example, small scale secondary fires make up 32% of incidents attended).
- 9.6 With regard to mobilising, the risk level of any incident would feature routinely in how our professional Control operators deploy appliances and staff, and this would be done dynamically (in response to incident intelligence) with flexibility added to pre-determined

attendances (PDAs) if appropriate. A wider range of deployment options would be available to Control to match the resource to the incident. This would make better use of the skills and experience of Control in determining response.

Flexibility of day and night time cover

- 9.7 The research has demonstrated that this is a viable option, not only is the risk different during periods of the night, the operational requirement is also significantly different. Therefore 2 fire appliances can be “stood down” for a period of up to 12 hours at night, removing the need for crews to be available to staff them.
- 9.8 As with Day Crewing Close Call, this would only be done where the known level of night time incidents is low enough to do it safely.

Crew one pump stations with 4 staff on the appliance

- 9.9 Under this option, the staffing of all appliances would be brought into line. Currently, the pumps at the four, one-pump stations are crewed with 5 staff, whereas all other pumps are crewed with 4. Although the risk was identified that this could lead to reduced capacity in the initial stages of a larger incident if the pump was the first to arrive, in practice (upon examination of existing one pump stations etc) this is mitigated by the overall speed of response in Tyne and Wear.
- 9.10 Over the last 3 years, the review found that a large number of standbys were completed by 4 person crews in these areas without any near misses or concerns being reported.
- 9.11 It is acknowledged that this proposal has met with significant concern from staff and the public particularly in relation to those areas where the speed of response, though still faster than most parts of the country, is slower than in other parts of Tyne and Wear.
- 9.12 It is also acknowledged that to manage risk, a balance of speed of response and weight of attack is required and one rule may not be appropriate for every single station area. Following consultation, the CFO therefore recommends that this proposal be revisited to examine further if any single stations would benefit from having a crew of 5, this would be risk based as it is still clear that not all station areas would require this due to their proximity to other stations (where sufficient response can be provided to maintain weight of attack).

Reduce the number of pumping appliances and/or fire stations, based on an analysis of risk

- 9.13 The reduction of appliances and stations is directly linked to speed of response and weight of attack, it is acknowledged that speed of response will be slower if the proposals are

approved, however as stated the proposals have been designed to minimise any impact upon Firefighter and Community safety.

- 9.14 Many of the respondents state that managing risk is not simply about speed, this is also fully supported by the IRMP review, a balance of speed and weight of attack is required supported by effective prevention and protection strategies. TWFRS have been very successful in managing risk for many years, and will use the same approach in ensuring risk is managed through the implementation of any proposals”.
- 9.15 The number of pumping appliances deployed by TWFRA can be reduced by 6 over time (from 30 to 24), based on a rigorous analysis of risk, incident patterns and attendance times, with firefighter numbers reduced accordingly. This would be linked to the option of adding additional smaller appliances to the fleet, so that the best mix of appliances and crews can be made available within the reduced financial resources available, to achieve the smallest impact on response times and appropriate response to risk.
- 9.16 In terms of station numbers and locations, determination of which stations to close and where to site a new station has been carried out through examination of workload modelling, FSEC and analysis of risk data and intelligence. The analysis considered station areas with some of the lowest numbers of incidents, and also station locations in relation to wider cover in Tyne and Wear. This has identified new locations to provide a more efficient Service Delivery model. Similar changes have been introduced in the past, including in the late 1990s when Tunstall and Grindon stations in Sunderland were closed and a new station opened at Farrington.
- 9.17 The closure of stations will increase the number of stations with 2 fire appliances and improve the location of stations according to risk and response (specifically weight of response/attack) within Tyne and Wear. Remodelling the strategic locations for stations now will provide the Authority with a medium to longterm strategic service delivery plan, which is more suitable to managing risk in future years.

Reduce Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs) from 3 to 2

- 9.18 Following on from the earlier IRMP review into the provision of ALP's, subsequent analysis of use has demonstrated that 2 ALPs are sufficient to meet the operational requirements of TWFRS. It is considered that one ALP can be removed from the fleet and this is in accordance with the views of the majority of firefighters who responded to the consultation.

Invest in new firefighting technologies to enhance performance and safety

- 9.19 A number of technological advances have been made recently, including high pressure fire suppression systems, which have been shown in other FRS to assist with effective

firefighting and improved firefighter safety, by allowing the sites of fires to be penetrated from the outside; and high pressure pumps which do not require a pump operator. These technologies were actively explored as part of the review, including practical testing at the Training Centre of a 2 person crew's ability to deal with fires. It was determined that this type of technology does add value and would support the implementation of the other options.

- 9.20 It is suggested that there should be investment in these technologies not with the intention of replacing firefighters with technology, but to provide the latest equipment that adds value to people's work and safety. It is the case that capital costs would be incurred through investment in this technology, and the capital programme would need to be adjusted accordingly".

10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As a result of government cuts it is expected that TWFA will be required to make a further £8.833m of spending reductions over the next three years 2014/2015 (£3.085m, of which £0.632m will be met through previously approved IRMP actions), 2015/2016 (£3.067m) and 2016/2017 (£3.313m). In meeting its statutory requirements to deliver a balanced budget the Authority recognises that reviews of response and other front line services are now unavoidable.
- 10.2 In considering the options the Authority must be mindful of its duties to set a balanced budget. The Finance Officer as Section 151 officer for the Fire Authority has a duty to report the failure to set, or keep to, a balanced budget and report on the robustness of the budget. and the level of reserves.
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 A number of potential revenue savings have been identified in the review and these are summarised below under the various options.
- 10.5 Options 2 and 3 would also incur a capital cost which would be dependent upon location and prevailing land values at the time of acquiring any new site. This would be offset by any receipts from the sale of existing sites.

| | Revenue Saving |
|----------|----------------|
| Option 1 | £5,109,689 |
| Option 2 | £5,279,689 |
| Option 3 | £5,449,689 |

- 10.6 It should be noted that these savings do not represent the full amount required to balance the budget over the next three years, but they do represent what the CFO believes to be the proportion of savings which can be made from the operational response during this period.
- 10.7 Whilst some use of balances is recommended to enable the implementation to be managed over time it is essential that the revised arrangements are implemented to enable a sustainable position to be maintained in the medium term.

11 HR IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 If the Authority chooses to implement any of these options, they will lead to a reduction in the number of firefighters employed by the organisation.
- 11.2 In order to implement these changes in line with the Authority's principle of reducing staffing without compulsory redundancies if this is possible, a three year implementation period is envisaged both to manage reductions, and ensure that the impact on risk can be monitored.
- 11.3 Should this result in proposals to change structures, roles or working practices, formal consultation would be carried out with affected staff prior to any implementation, using our normal HR processes.
- 11.4 It is considered that this review may provide opportunities for further reductions in Management and this would require a further review of the organisation's management structure building on the Management Review agreed by Authority in February 2011.
- 11.5 Further reports would be brought to Authority to take forward any process of implementation.

12 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Community risk has been fully considered in reviewing our operational response, and discussion of this formed a significant proportion of the review report discussed by Authority in October and appended to this report as Appendix A.
- 12.2 Any of these options means significant change for the service and a number of the key risks on the corporate risk register apply, in particular:
- 11/02 Risk that further budget cuts will mean that we have to make decisions that will affect the delivery of front line services from 2013/14.
 - 08/28 Failure to effectively and safely deploy and manage operational staff and resources at incidents leading to staff and public being exposed to unnecessary risks

- 11/01 Risk that we do not realise the savings proposed in our IRMP resulting in reduced financial resilience and potential impact on service delivery.

- 12.3 Clearly we have not been able to mitigate risk 11/02, since our budget has been cut to the extent where the frontline service is affected, despite the Authority's efforts to lobby for smaller and more proportionate reductions in our budget. This is an ongoing risk since it appears likely that Government will continue to cut public sector funding in the future.
- 12.4 It is noted that much of the concern expressed by staff and representative bodies in particular, is about the impact of these options on Risk 08/28. Mitigating this risk must be a key focus of any implementation process. If the Authority is minded to proceed with any of the options, further reports will be prepared on the timescales and process for implementation, which would need to be measured and gradual, with monitoring of impact as any phase of the change is implemented.
- 12.5 This is in line with the approach taken when the Authority introduced riding 4 and 4, where reports were brought to Authority monitoring the impact on risk and safety.
- 12.6 The risks associated with not realising savings (11/01), and the impact of this on a balanced budget, remain in place and have been referenced by the Section 151 officer in section 10.

13 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Note the feedback from consultation on the options for proposed changes to the Authority's operational response model
- 2) Note the responses to the key concerns raised
- 3) Decide whether any of these options should be adopted, and if so which
- 4) Based on the above, authorise the Chief Fire Officer to begin a process of planning implementation over a three year period
- 5) Receive further reports as required