

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No. 8

MEETING: 12 OCTOBER 2020

SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT OF OPERATIONAL RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE

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

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report seeks the Fire Authority's approval to commence a pilot ahead of a full review of the Services Integrated Risk Management Plan [IRMP]. The pilot would increase the Service Delivery establishment allowing for additional resilience in operational response. Specifically, this relates to either adding an additional pumping appliance to the response model or placing additional Firefighters at a number of our one pump fire stations.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Service is working to review the current IRMP 2017-2020 as it is required to do so and will bring the outcomes of this forward for Fire Authority members consideration during quarter 4 of 2020-2021.
- 2.2 On 20 January 2014, the Fire Authority approved the proposal to crew pumps at one pump stations with four staff with the Chief Fire Officer authorised to begin the process of planning the implementation over a three-year period.
- 2.3 At the 6 November 2017 Fire Authority meeting it was approved to implement the proposal and staff all pumping appliances with four staff.
- 2.4 During the same period, a number of pumping appliances have also been removed from the Operational Response model with the second appliance at West Denton fire station, (call sign A02) removed as of 7 October 2016.
- 2.5 In addition to the IRMP review, the coronavirus pandemic and its wide ranging implications has resulted in a review of operational response and resilience. As with other emergency services, the situation with coronavirus and the implications regarding staff availability are an ongoing concern.
- 2.6 These are and continue to be unprecedented times and the situation regarding the impact of coronavirus is extremely dynamic and often requires actions and decisions to enable the service to remain resilient in terms of providing a fire and rescue service to the community and playing a full part in the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum and civic society by supporting the public sector and other organisations.

3 CURRENT RESOURCES

- 3.1 The Fire Authority operates the fire and rescue service from seventeen community fire stations of which fourteen are wholetime, one on-call and two staffed using the Day Crewing Close Call (DCCC) duty system.
- 3.2 These stations are the base for twenty-four frontline appliances (pumps). Fourteen of these operate from seven two-pump stations; the remaining ten stations have one pump each. Appendix A shows the current disposition of all appliances and the associated station staffing.
- 3.3 Services on most stations are delivered through a four-watch duty system with ninety two operational staff on duty between the hours of 09:00 to 00:00 reducing to eighty six between the hours of 00:00 – 09:00. The total wholetime operational frontline establishment is currently:

Firefighters	344
Crew Managers	86
Watch Managers	60
Total	490

4 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 To increase our establishment by sixteen people to enable additional resilience in operational response across Tyne and Wear, the Fire Authority are invited to consider two options.
- Option 1 – Introduce an additional pumping appliance to be located at West Denton fire station (preferred Option of the CFO)
 - Option 2 – Crew four of our one pump stations with five rather than four staff.
- 4.2 Option 1 – Introduce an additional pumping appliance at West Denton fire station.
- 4.2.1 The staffing model on a one pump station is six staff per watch: one Watch Manager, one Crew Manager, four Firefighters. To increase this to enable a two pump station this would be an increase of one Crew Manager and three Firefighters per watch resulting in an additional four Crew Managers and twelve Firefighters for the station. This would require sixteen additional staff.
- 4.2.2 Using the data available and shown in Appendix B the Station identified which would have an appliance re-introduced would be West Denton. The total number of Incidents that West Denton respond to highlights that this Station is the busiest one pump station.
- 4.2.3 In addition to the total number of Incidents, the number of fires in West Denton over the three year period was higher than all other stations.

- 4.2.4 West Denton fire station also dual staffs the Services Incident Command Unit which responds to incidents in excess of 5 pumps and provides additional command and control at incidents. Due to the number of staff required to crew the Incident Command Unit, this additional resilience is currently provided by the crew on the one pump at Gosforth fire station. Gosforth also dual staffs an Aerial Ladder Platform [ALP]. By increasing the number of appliances at West Denton this would provide the additional resilience not only for operational response but also for the Incident Command Unit with a knock on availability of the Aerial Ladder Platform at Gosforth fire station.
- 4.2.5 The additional 16 staff would be 4 Crew Managers and 12 Firefighters. The 4 Crew Managers would allow for greater resilience in relation to the number of Incident Commanders available for our operational response.
- 4.2.6 The additional appliance at West Denton fire station would provide greater resilience and direct response in relation to speed and weight of attack at Swalwell and Gosforth fire stations which are one pump stations.
- 4.3 Option 2 - Crew a selection of one pump stations with five rather than four staff.
- 4.3.1 The staffing model on a one pump station is six staff: One Watch Manager, one Crew Manager, four Firefighters. To increase this to enable a crew of five rather than four this would be an increase of one firefighter per watch, four Firefighters per station, and a total of sixteen additional staff. This would enable four one pump stations to be crewed with five staff.
- 4.3.2 On 6 November 2017 the Fire Authority approved to crew all pumping appliances with four staff.
- 4.3.3 The Service has previously produced a Brigade Response Options Strategy model to prove the concept that staffing all appliances with four is safe and nothing in this paper or option alters that position. Safety of our staff will remain a top priority. The introduction of one extra member of staff on an appliance would not increase our speed and weight of attack in response to number of appliances available but would allow for some additional resilience and tasks to be performed in the initial stage of an incident.
- 4.3.4 Currently, due to the coronavirus pandemic and the additional steps introduced by the Service to maintain social distancing as much as practicably possible whilst travelling to incidents, a crew of four is the maximum number that could travel in a pump. At this time, introducing a five person crew would reduce the social distancing measures implemented on pumps and most likely compromise the current temporary arrangements in place to ensure social distancing on appliances can be maintained.
- 4.3.5 As the current IRMP is refreshed and updated the issue of riding with a crew of five on a number of one pump stations will be fully considered. It is presented to the Fire Authority members in this paper as an option for consideration although it is the professional view of the Chief Fire Officer that at this time whilst the coronavirus is prevalent in society, it is not implemented at this time.

- 4.3.6 However, when the current challenges presented by the coronavirus do begin to reduce, it is likely that the matter of riding with a crew of five on some one pump fire stations would become a matter the Service would seek to revisit.

4.4 Preferred Option

- 4.4.1 Taking all the data and information available into account as well as the current and ongoing challenges of coronavirus, the preferred option of the Chief Fire Officer at this time is to support option 1, to add an additional pumping appliance at West Denton fire station and increase staffing by 4 Crew Managers and 12 Firefighters.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 Community risk and related incident demand have been fully considered in reviewing our response to incidents. Incident outcomes in relation to response can only improve by having additional resources available in appliances and operational staff. The risks associated with the proposals are considered acceptable.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The cost associated with Option 1 would be £761,126 for the 12 month period. Assuming an implementation date of 1 November 2020, £314,989 would fall into 2020/21 financial year and £446,137 into 2021/22.
- 6.2 The cost associated with Option 2 would be £740,278 for the 12 month period. Assuming an implementation date of 1 November 2020, £306,360 would fall into 2020/21 financial year and £433,918 into 2021/22.
- 6.3 These costs include an estimated 2% provision for the grey book pay award which will be due from 1 July 2021.
- 6.4 The 2020/21 cost will be met from the Strategic Contingency provision in the 2020/21 revenue budget, and the 2021/22 impact will be considered during the budget setting process for the 2021/22 revenue budget.

7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

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

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no adverse health and safety implications in respect of this report.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members are recommended to:

- a) Endorse the contents of this report.
- b) Consider the options and associated proposals and endorse option 1, to introduce a second appliance at West Denton fire station and the associated crewing.
- c) Approve a period of implementation to allow a period of monitoring.
- d) Receive future reports as required.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

Appendix A: Current disposition of appliances and associated staffing

Appendix B: Operational activity at each Station, 2017/18 – 2019/20

Appendix B: Operational activity at each Station, 2017/18 – 2019/20

Fire Station	1 pump stations	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	Grand Total
Byker (F)		1717	1922	1711	5350
Newcastle Central (C)		1882	1772	1607	5261
Gateshead (V)		1564	1579	1345	4488
Sunderland Central (N)		1285	1435	1547	4267
South Shields (K)		1245	1278	1298	3821
West Denton (A)	1	1351	1277	1114	3742
Gosforth (E)	1	1159	1115	1098	3372
Marley Park (M)	1	1028	1020	1054	3102
Tynemouth (J)		996	961	886	2843
Farringdon (Q)		832	848	863	2543
Washington (S)	1	745	787	740	2272
Hebburn (T)	1	800	799	653	2252
Swalwell (Y)	1	679	686	651	2016
Wallsend (G)	1	557	761	670	1988
Rainton Bridge (H)	1	622	540	706	1868
Birtley (W)	1	377	434	353	1164
Chopwell (Z)	1	60	65	59	184
Grand Total		16899	17279	16355	50533

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and Rescue Authority**
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