

AGENDA ITEM:

REPORT TO:	POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE
DATE:	13TH SEPTEMBER, 2006
REPORT NO.	CFO/174/06
REPORTING OFFICER:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
CONTACT OFFICER:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	
SUBJECT:	SECOND PUMPS CONSULTATION

Purpose of Report

1. To seek the approval of the Policy and Finance Committee to further the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) regarding
 - 1.1. Action point 2.15 - Examine service wide data on all small fire incidents to establish number of additional small fires units required;
 - 1.2. Action point 2.16 - Examine and introduce where appropriate alternative shift systems;
 - 1.3. Action point 2.17 - Following completion of research, implement systems providing the appropriate numbers of personnel and support pumps for different times of day according to demand.

Recommendation

2. That members adopt the following recommendations.
3. Approval is given to staff the second appliance at Bootle on a retained resilience system which means that the appliance will be staffed on a wholetime basis between 10am and 10pm. The pump will remain available on a retained basis during other times.
4. Approval is given to increase the number of Small Fires Units (SFU's) to up to 3 (including St Helens second pump), depending upon demand. The SFU's to be

located and operated dynamically across the service and on the basis of risk.

- 4.1 Approval is given to implement an improved Hazardous Material response capability through the development of skills and response at Bromborough Fire Station. Staffing of the system will be on a retained resilience system which means that the appliance will be staffed on a wholtime basis between 9am and 9pm. The pump will remain available on a retained basis during other times.
- 4.2 That Members note that the proposals will result in up to 2 additional appliances being provided for firefighting purposes in Merseyside as a whole, with an anticipated further improvement in attendance/performance standards. Appendix A – Process Evolution Report.
- 4.3 The Authority are asked to thank all those who took part in this extensive consultation process. A list of responses at Appendix B.

Background

5. This proposal is contained within the IRMP and specifically detailed in action points.
 - 5.1 Action point 2.15 - Examine service wide data on all small fire incidents to establish number of additional small fires units required;
 - 5.2 Action point 2.16 - Examine and introduce where appropriate alternative shift systems;
 - 5.3 Action point 2.17 - Following completion of research, implement systems providing the appropriate numbers of personnel and support pumps for different times of day according to demand.
6. In order to achieve its IRMP, in March of this year the Fire Authority commenced consultation about proposals to change the staffing of four second pumps. The proposals emerged from very extensive analysis of the operational workload of Merseyside, using the most advanced predictive data modelling techniques available.
7. The modelling showed that the Authority would be able to change the staffing of four of its second pumps, (City, Bootle, St Helens, and Birkenhead) with very little reduction in overall performance. Indeed by using additional small fires units at certain times of the day, the Authority would see an improved operational performance.
8. These proposals were discussed in Authority report CFO/69/06. The specific recommendations were.
 - 8.1 Use four pumps from two-pump stations as Retained Resilience. The start time would be between 10am and 12 noon and a finish time of

10pm. The stations identified as the most suitable were City Centre, Bootle/Netherton, St. Helens and Birkenhead.

8.2 Up to four SFU's to be deployed between the hours of 5pm – 11pm.

9. It was proposed to crew the SFU's through overtime and the resilience retained pumps through a separate pool of firefighters whose core working pattern comprises day shifts with retained firefighters covering the night period
10. The Fire Authority has undertaken a very extensive consultation process with regard to these proposals, including the circulation of 2 DVD's to every member of staff. As with every consultation process it has ever undertaken, the final proposals are different from the original proposals. The elected members were presented with an overview of the outcome of consultation at their seminar on Friday 8th September.
11. A copy of the documentation received as part of the consultation process is available for Elected Members consideration.
12. Consultation has been a very worthwhile exercise and a number of issues have been raised, which have led to changes from the original proposals. That is the nature of consultation.
13. It was an important requirement of the proposals to deliver a range of efficiency savings necessary to meet part of the Authority's financial plan, and the financial implications of the amended proposals are considered in this report. It is however emphasised that these proposals are but a small part of the efficiency savings necessary.

Elected members are aware that this issue is one of the four issues of dispute in the current FBU strike.

Liverpool City Second Pump

14. A number of responses to the consultation highlighted the extensive commercial risk in Liverpool City, and we have undertaken further analysis in this regard. A copy of this report is available for elected members consideration, however in summary elected members are asked to note that over 50% of all (2958) commercial fires in Merseyside, occur in the Liverpool district.
15. The busiest station in relation to this workload was the City fire station.
16. The Chief Fire Officer has also undertaken further analysis of dwelling fires which occurred in the area. This further analysis shows that new and innovative concepts need to be developed and implemented which can be used alongside Home Fire safety checks to reduce the number of dwelling fires, as it is evident from the analysis that home fire safety checks, in isolation, are not reducing risk in the same manner as they are elsewhere. This centres around the high number of HMO's associated with a large student population. A full copy of the report is available.

17. In addition the Authority are also asked to consider the uncertainty around future workload of the station arising for a range of issues, including the very extensive changes arising from the 2008 Capital of Culture year and the potential for a very changing risk (including relocation of Low Hill fire station).
18. Notwithstanding these responses, the second pump at Liverpool City is a very low use appliance, and the changes we propose are an important part of the financial plan.
19. After due consideration of the response to the consultation, it is recommended that the Authority confine change at Liverpool City to implementing the proposals highlighted 3 years ago in IRMP1, for a combined appliance that will fulfill the role of the Rescue Pump and the Aerial appliance (what is called a combined pump platform - CPP).
20. This decision was made a number of months ago by the Authority, when it approved the Fire Authority aerial appliance strategy.
21. This would mean that the community and the City continue to have all of the existing response capability of 2 pumps and an Aerial, but it would be provided through new advanced technology. The wider Merseyside community would continue to have the availability of 4 Aerial appliances. These changes would mean that we would still release the necessary efficiencies by not needing additional and separate staff for a separate Aerial appliance. The compliment of appliances for City would be 1 CPP (a combined rescue pump and aerial appliance) and 1 support pump, both would be fully staffed.
22. The Authority has already resolved to implement this strategy, and we are currently procuring the appliance (although there is a 12 month projected delivery date).
23. With the Authority approval the Chief Fire Officer will monitor changes to the City workload and risk profile over the next 3 years, and consider this matter again in 2009.

Birkenhead Second Pump

24. During our consultation process, particularly during discussion with firefighters, our attention was drawn to a number of operational concerns (especially the risk from the Tranmere Oil terminal, and high fire activity. The area of Birkenhead also contains some of the poorest areas in the country, and fire undoubtedly has a socio-economic link.
25. These concerns formed the basis of our request to the FBU for exemption of Birkenhead from industrial action by the FBU.
26. The initial analysis to commence the process of consultation recognized that the Bromborough second pump is the quietest second pump in Merseyside, and has little impact on our performance.

27. As part of the work underway in developing an improved response to terrorist and other threats, the prospect of creating a dedicated Hazardous Materials response, given the increasing complexity of this aspect of our workload was proposed. A copy of the report is available for elected members. The working pattern proposed is consistent with the profile of hazardous material incidents.
28. It is therefore proposed that the Authority withdraw the suggested changes for Birkenhead second pump, and implement a combined Hazardous materials/Support pump response unit to replace the second pump at Bromborough. This would be supported by enhanced and specialised training facilities for Hazardous materials incident, and Bromborough would become a hazardous materials centre of excellence.
29. The staffing system for this new and innovative unit would be the retained resilience system, and firefighters who acquire these new skills would receive additional responsibility payments. This would involve a 12-hour day duty system (9am to 9 pm) on a four days on four days off rota basis, and a 12-hour retained duty system on a four days on four days off basis with an obligation to attend at the fire station within 15 minutes of a call.
29. Only staff who volunteer to go on the system, or new entrants recruited into the Service would go on to Bromborough. The system would be entirely voluntary.
30. This approach would deal with the concerns about the risk profile of Birkenhead, it would improve our response capability and the skill level of every firefighter in an increasingly complex area of work, and it would release the efficiencies necessary for our financial plan. These proposals will be reviewed in 2009.

Bootle

31. The Authority have approved the second pump being redeployed for training. There is very little impact on our performance. In simple terms, for a very significant part of the time this pump is simply not required. The only way the Chief Fire Officer could recommend the return of the pump, would be on a retained resilience duty system.

St Helens

32. The Chief fire Officer proposes that the Authority review the situation at St Helens in 12 months time, and in the meantime use the second pump on a more frequent and dynamic basis, at certain times of the day, as a small fires unit, across different areas of the St Helens and Knowsley district, and the work routine would reflect that change.

SFU's

33. The proposal would limit the need for additional Small Fires Unit (SFU), and it is proposed that we operate with the current 2 SFUs and using the St Helens second pump as an SFU.
34. The proposals above, which have emerged through consultation, will enhance our extremely high response standards, and achieve the efficiency savings necessary to meet our budget.

Equality and Diversity Implications

35. These proposals will provide additional opportunities to work a very attractive family friendly shift system.
36. There will be opportunities for members of the community to work as retained firefighters at one of the resilience stations.

Financial Implications

37. The financial implications have been previously reported and included in the budget and financial plan, and will form a significant part of the dynamic savings target.

37.1 Revenue Impacts – Staff Savings

	Savings £'000
Bootle & Netherton	(278)
Bromborough Hazmat	(278)
Combined Aerial/Rescue	(271)
St Helens	-
Cost of an SFU	<u>100</u>
	<u>(727)</u>

All figures are full year impacts. More details in Appendix C. There are likely to be some minor savings in maintenance and running costs for the combined vehicle compared to two vehicles.

37.2 Capital Costs

The costs of a Combined Aerial Appliance and the second Small Fires Unit are already built into the 5 year capital programme.

	£'000
Combined Appliance	470
Small Fire Unit	68

The cost of a Combined Appliance compares to:

	£'000
The cost of an ordinary appliance	165
Aerial	<u>380</u>
	<u>545</u>

The revenue cost of borrowing for the new appliances is already built into the medium term financial plan and is estimated at:

	£'000
Combined Appliance	47
Small Fires Unit	7

Under the prudential borrowing code Members should consider the marginal impact of these investment decisions on Council Tax. A 54K increase in borrowing costs equates to 0.22% on Council Tax or equivalent to 12 p on Band 'D' Council Tax.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

IRMP Year 3 2006/07

Fire Service Framework Document 2006/08

Authority Reports CFO/236/05, CFO/107/05, CFO/205/05, CFO/199/05.

FBU Submission Resilience Resource.

FBU Submission IRMP 3

CFO/69/06 Formation of Resilience resource.

Process Evolution report.

Report. Analysis Dwelling Fire City Fire Station.

Report . Analysis of Commercial Fires City Fire Station.