

Cabinet Member for Public Protection

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service: savings proposals and risk reduction activities for 2013-14

Report by County Fire Officer – October 2012

**Ref: PP07
(12.13)**

Key Decision: Yes

**Electoral
Division(s):**

(or N/A)

Executive Summary

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) is required to identify £2.5m potential savings by 31st March 2013. WSFRS plans to achieve the savings and make efficiencies without closing fire stations or changing its current level of service provision to the public and other stakeholders.

A formal public consultation has been undertaken from 12 July to 21 September 2012. The key outcomes from the consultation are included in this report together with the final proposals for change.

Emergency Management is required to make a saving of £59,000 by 31st March 2013 which is separate to the £2.5m for WSFRS. Emergency Management is to be integrated into WSFRS during the next few months and the savings will be achieved as part of this process.

Recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member approves the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service proposals for budgetary savings, including those for Emergency Management, and its Action Plan for the financial year 2013-14 as detailed in paragraphs 2.2 and 4.1.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 11 February 2011 the County Council formally approved its approach to making budgetary savings for 2011/14. The Fire and Rescue Service was tasked with making savings of £2.5m which included collaboration with neighbouring fire authorities by 2013/14.
- 1.2 Potential savings of up to £2.5m need to be delivered from 31st March 2013 whilst continuing to ensure the provision of the best possible service to the public and other stakeholders and therefore WSFRS has developed a range of proposals for financial savings and efficiencies, set out in paragraph 2.2 below.
- 1.3 The Cabinet Member has approved the establishment of a single Fire Control and Mobilising Centre with East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) that would provide additional capacity and greater resilience and savings achieved as a result of the implementation of this project will contribute towards the overall savings target. The project is known as the Sussex Control Centre (SCC).

- 1.4 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) requires the Fire and Rescue service to consult the public and stakeholders on substantive changes within its area. A formal consultation was therefore undertaken that commenced on Thursday 12 July and closed on Friday 21 September 2012. During this period the public and other stakeholders had the opportunity to comment on both the proposed savings and efficiency measures as well as the Service's approach to reducing the risk of fire and other incidents throughout the county in the forthcoming financial year, 2013/14.

2.0 Cost saving proposals

- 2.1 These are the criteria against which the changes set out in paragraph 2.2 are proposed;

- No fire station closures in 2013-14
- No lowering of attendance standards
- Essential frontline services to public still being delivered
- £475k savings delivered from the SCC*
- No anticipated reduction in performance

* The SCC is due to commence in September 2013 and therefore the savings will be half year.

- 2.2 The following changes are recommended;

2.2.1 Senior and middle manager posts

Senior and middle manager posts to be reduced in-line with a new organisational structure. Revised working arrangements to ensure on-call support for Incident Command duties at operational incidents.

2.2.2 Specialist vehicle crewing

An alternate crewing model at Crawley and Worthing stations, similar to those used at other fire stations, maintaining 24-hr availability.

2.2.3 Vehicle fleet

A minimum 10% reduction in numbers of non-operational vehicle fleet and annual running costs.

2.2.4 Horley Fire Station

This fire station, whilst in West Sussex, is located on the border with Surrey and the majority of its emergency calls are to Horley town and the surrounding area which is in Surrey. While Horley is in the vicinity of Gatwick Airport the airport has its own fire service and additional support will be provided by fire engines at Crawley Fire Station when needed.

A review of the current crewing and governance arrangements has indicated that the fire engine and crew at Horley could become part of the crewing arrangements at Horsham fire station. It is therefore proposed that the Horley fire engine and crew should move to Horsham and used flexibly to support crewing arrangements in the Horley/Crawley area when needed. This would help the Service to increase resilience in the more rural areas of the Horsham district at other times.

WSFRS will continue to work with Surrey Fire & Rescue Service to provide an appropriate risk-based service to people living in the Horley area.

2.2.5 Fire Safety enforcement

Fire safety enforcement and fire investigation be reorganised to deliver a more efficient service using new technology that will increase both efficiency and flexibility that will streamline the inspection process.

2.2.6 Support roles and headquarters (HQ) functions

That the collection and use of intelligence and performance data to support management decisions in relation to the allocation of resources be centralised. Some of the support services currently provided within WSFRS to be provided by WSCC or delivered differently thus allowing efficiencies to be made.

2.2.7 Income generation

WSFRS to explore the opportunity for the Service to deliver commercial services and create income generation. This to include working with external companies to seek sponsorship opportunities in support of community safety initiatives that prevent fires and accidents.

2.2.8 Specialist search & rescue capability

WSFRS to maintain specialist search and rescue capability but use team members from the Technical Rescue Unit to support other operational activities and improve availability. This will not produce any cost saving but will improve overall Service performance.

2.2.9 Retained crewed fire engines at Crawley and Worthing

No change in current arrangements is proposed. The third fire engine at Crawley fire station crewed by part-time (retained*) firefighters to remain in place as the review concluded that the Horley fire engine and crew should move to Horsham fire station. Due to other changes in the Worthing and Adur District it has been decided that the third appliance at Worthing fire station will be kept.

* Retained firefighters are not based at the fire station. They are alerted by pager and respond to the fire station when needed and if available.

3.0 Risk Reduction Action Plan 2013/14

3.1 This will be the third year of a five-year strategy from 2010 to 2015. The strategy document is available the WSCC/FRS website. The Service's key aims and objectives for 2013/14 are:

- To meet our emergency response standards to critical fires;
- To ensure that our project to share command and mobilising facilities with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Authority is fully operational by autumn 2013;
- To ensure firefighter safety in key risk critical activities by ensuring all firefighters complete operational requalification training;
- To prevent fires by working with, vulnerable young people, through tailored Firebreak sessions;
- Helping vulnerable elderly people to live safely by carrying out 2250 high-risk Home Fire Safety Checks.

4.0 Consultation outcomes

4.1 The outcome from the consultation was shared with the Cabinet Member and also presented to the Environmental and Community Services Select Committee (ECSSC) at its meeting on 27 September.

4.2 Key points arising from the consultation and the comments from the ECSSC process include;

- significant levels of support for the savings proposals at Public Engagement Forums held in Worthing and Crawley (facilitated by Opinion Research Services (ORS));
- the online survey results showed a good level of support for each of the savings proposals;
- a positive response to the proposals at member seminars in Worthing and Crawley and at seven County Local Committee meetings;
- early and consistent engagement with staff and representative bodies on the proposals;
- a positive and well-managed approach from the outset following consideration of the proposals by the Task Force;

4.3 An executive summary report, produced by ORS, is currently available on the WSCC/FRS website. The full and final report will be posted on the website during w/c 22nd October. This report will provide a full explanation of the consultation process.

4.4 The implementation of the savings proposals set out in paragraph 2.2 above will affect a range of staff within the Service. Formal staff consultation commenced on 26th September.

5.0 Emergency Management savings

5.1 A separate review is currently being undertaken to integrate the Emergency Management Unit into the Fire and Rescue Service which will not be subject to public consultation. The review is in its early stages and it is anticipated that it will identify the required savings of £59,000 by 31st March 2013.

6.0 Resource Implications and Value for Money

6.1 The changes currently proposed and on which the public and stakeholder consultation were based total £1.741M with a further £0.258m found from FRD related non-salary efficiencies as set out in the table below;

SAVINGS FROM FRD2 SCHEMES	£
Senior/Middle Management posts	146,500
Specialist vehicle crewing	568,800
Fleet Review	110,470
Horley Fire Station Crewing	302,500
Fire Safety Enforcement	113,130
Support Services	179,500
Directorate Structure Review	308,500
Safer Communities	11,700
FRD2 related efficiencies*	283,900
Total	2,025,000

- * FRD2 non-salary related efficiencies include reductions in costs that are directly related to the reduction in staff numbers as an outcome from FRD2 and include training, Personal Protective Equipment and other firefighter related operational equipment. Other reductions include vehicle costs.

- 6.2 In addition it is estimated that the SCC will yield savings in the region of £475,000 per annum for each authority. Work is ongoing on how to balance the half-year budget shortfall as part of the overall County Council budget.
- 6.3 The savings, when achieved, will contribute to the County Council's overall target savings of £79m and will also reduce the cost per household of providing the fire and rescue service thus ensuring good value for money when compared with other similar fire and rescue services.

7.0 Risk Management Implications

- 7.1 There is a risk that the full savings of £2.5m required by WSCC may not be realised. The SCC is dependent on partnership arrangements with ESFA and risks related to the project including the increasing capital cost, pension transfer costs and the integration of mobilising and I.T systems are being reviewed. A revised business case will be submitted to the Cabinet Member in mid-November. In the event that the project does not deliver the savings required WSFRS will mitigate the risk by identifying further savings.
- 7.2 A risk of any consultation process is that the target audiences will either not be made aware of the consultation and its importance, nor understand the detail within the consultation documents. As far as possible, appropriate measures to facilitate awareness and understanding have been taken by using a range of methods to engage the public and other stakeholders.
- 7.3 There is a risk that, in due course, opponents of the proposals may seek a judicial review following the decision. A proportionate approach to the consultation has been taken to mitigate this risk including the appointment of ORS to facilitate Public Engagement Forums and produce an independent report based on all of the feedback received.

8.0 Customer Focus Appraisal

- 8.1 A Customer Focus Appraisal is attached as Appendix 1. Update following the consultation.

9.0 Crime and Disorder Act Implications

- 9.1 There are no implications for the County Council's duty to avoid or to reduce crime or antisocial behaviour associated with this decision.

10.0 Human Rights Act Implications

- 10.1 The obligation to promote and to avoid interference with the human rights of any individual or group is not affected by this decision.

Max Hood
County Fire Officer

Appendix 1: Customer Focus Appraisal

Background Papers - None

Contact: Bill Minton 52416

Customer Focus Appraisal 2012

Title of proposal	Public consultation on savings proposals and risk reduction activities 2013/14		
Date for implementation	April 2013		
Team or Service	Fire and Rescue Service		
Directorate	Fire and Rescue Service		
CFA completed by (contact details)	Name:	Bill Minton, Business Planning Manager	Email bill.minton@westsussex.gov.
	Tel:	01243 752416	

1. What are the main aims and planned outcomes of your proposal?

The main aim of the Fire Resdesign (FRD 2) proposal is to identify budget reductions of up to £2.5m by end of March 2013 as required by WSCC to contribute to its overall savings target of £79m and in doing so create efficiencies in the provision of fire and rescue services.

The planned outcome of the proposal is to maintain a high quality of service to the public and other stakeholders within the following key principles;

- No fire station closures in 2013-14;
- No lowering of attendance standards;
- Essential frontline services including essential prevention work to the public still being delivered;
- No anticipated reduction in overall performance.

2. What information have you used to understand and analyse the impact of the proposal on customers?

The Fire & Rescue Service uses the County Profile and detailed risk analysis of all areas of West Sussex to identify key areas for resource allocation. As an emergency service all residents, businesses and visitors are potential customers to the Service. In order to meet national and local requirements a proportionate approach to the consultation is being taken, at minimum cost, in order to encourage engagement from the target audiences: West Sussex residents, council taxpayers, strategic partners and other stakeholders, Members, representative bodies, staff and media. The consultation is due to commence on 12th July and close on 21st September during which time the following groups will be consulted;

Local Communities

Public

Local community groups

Town & Parish councils

Local Businesses /Business Associations

Voluntary organisations

Minority ethnic bodies

Disability groups

Faith groups

Media

Representative Bodies

Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

Retained Firefighters Union (RFU)

Fire Officer's Association (FOA)

Unison

Staff

Senior officers and middle managers

Wholetime firefighters

Retained firefighters

Control staff

Support staff

Political influences/ Key Stakeholders

MPs

Fire Minister and DCLG

East Sussex Fire Authority Members

West Sussex County Council Members

Constituent Authorities of East Sussex County Council and the City of Brighton & Hove

Other District and Borough Councils across East and West Sussex

Partner agencies

Neighbouring Fire & Rescue Services

Sussex Resilience Forum organisations

Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)

Sussex Police

South East Coast Ambulance Service

Other local authorities

Community Safety Partnerships

3. Are there any customers who are negatively affected by the proposal? If so, explain which customers and how they are negatively affected.

It is anticipated that customers will not be negatively affected. Those groups that will suffer a negative people impact are likely to be within senior and junior management posts as well as those in support functions which are identified as the main areas to be rationalised. Wherever possible this will be achieved through natural turnover of staff and redeployment opportunities. The FRS will also seek voluntary redundancies to mitigate the need for compulsory redundancies. However, in turn, fewer staffing numbers make wider representation across the equality strand potentially more difficult to achieve.

4. Are there any customers who are positively affected by this proposal? If so, explain which customers and how they are positively affected.

The proposals aim to rationalise senior management and support functions in order to protect direct services to local communities and help reduce costs to local council taxpayers so that most customer groups benefit from these proposals.

5. How does your proposal help to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

This proposal protects frontline services and therefore does not discriminate against any customer group. In terms of fire prevention the Service will continue to work with other agencies to identify vulnerable people, for example the elderly and disabled in order to deliver messages on fire prevention directly and in some cases provide the necessary equipment, e.g. smoke alarms.

Future consultation processes with customers will focus on those with protected characteristics in particular by using the County Council's database of minority organisations to increase their awareness of FRS activities.

The FRS has been undertaking equality and diversity training for staff throughout the organisation for several years with the aim of increasing awareness of equalities legislation and changing behaviours and raising awareness of the issues faced by the customers who are affected. The Service has policies in place to help to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

6. How does your proposal help to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?

The 10 week consultation process from 12th July to 21st September explained how the FRS intends to reduce its budget whilst protecting and preserving essential services to the public. It will not specifically help to advance equality of opportunity as the proposal when implemented will mean a smaller organisation and this may restrict opportunities between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not in terms of employment opportunities and equality in the workplace.

7. How does your proposal help to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?

The proposal does not focus specifically on good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. However, the consultation sought to engage all sectors of the community prior to final proposals and decisions made by the County Council.

8. What have you learnt from the analysis of the likely effects of the proposal on customers? What changes were made to the proposal as a result?

The key themes arising from the responses during the consultation from stakeholders and the public are set out below;

- significant levels of support for the proposals at Public Engagement Forums held in Worthing and Crawley (facilitated by Opinion Research Services (ORS));
- the online survey results showed a good level of support for each of the proposals;
- a positive response to the proposals at member seminars in Worthing and Crawley and at seven County Local Committee meetings;
- early and consistent engagement with staff and representative bodies on the proposals;

The following changes were made to the proposals as a result of feedback from the consultation;

Horley fire engine crewing arrangements

During the consultation period staff at Horley Fire Station put forward a suggestion to locate the Horley fire engine at Horsham Fire Station (instead of Crawley) as set out in the original review proposal. A detailed analysis of the Horsham option including risk-mapping and profiling were presented to the Fire Redesign Board and it was agreed that this option would help the Service to increase resilience in the more rural areas of the Horsham district at other times. The fire engine would also be used flexibly to support crewing arrangements in the Horley / Crawley area when needed. The current level of fire cover for the Crawley area would be unaffected by this change.

Retained crewed fire engines at Crawley and Worthing

No change in current arrangements is proposed. The third fire engine at Crawley fire station crewed by part-time (retained*) firefighters to remain in place as the review concluded that the Horley fire engine and crew should move to Horsham. Due to other changes in the Worthing and Adur District it has been decided that the third appliance at Worthing fire station

will be kept.

* Retained firefighters are not based at the fire station. They are alerted by pager and respond to the fire station when needed and if available.

9. If you did not make any changes to the proposal following the analysis please explain why not.

N/A

10. How will the proposal's implementation be monitored and evaluated to make sure it continues to meet the equality duty owed to customers?

Through appropriate training all FRS staff are aware of the equality duty owed to customers and staff which is fully reflected in FRS policies and practices and therefore pervasive throughout all activities. The FRS will also continue to monitor the needs of our customers the 'After the Fire' and other surveys as well as through the annual consultation process on its proposals to reduce fire risk within the community.

11. Who will be responsible for the monitoring and review?

The FRS equality board, chaired by the County Fire Officer, will be responsible for ensuring that monitoring is carried out on a quarterly basis.

To be signed by an Executive Director, Director or Head of Service to confirm that they have read and approved the content of the CFA and the Action Plan.

Name

Date

Your position

Telephone

Email

CFA ACTION PLAN					
	In Business Plan (Y/N)	Details of the action	Who will the action be reported to and how?	Person responsible	By when?
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

Please add more lines to the Action Plan if necessary