

Appendix B – Results from the Internal Consultation Process

Overall Responses

Which department do you work in?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Area Command - officers	5%	7
Area Command (stations) - RDS	20%	27
Area Command (stations) - WT	36%	49
Control	11%	15
Corporate support	4%	6
Development	1%	1
Executive officers	0%	0
Finance	1%	2
Fire Safety - business	4%	6
Fire Safety - community	2%	3
Health and safety	1%	1
Human resources	2%	3
ICT	1%	1
Operational planning department	3%	4
Performance information office	4%	6
Resources	1%	2
Training	2%	3
Workshops	1%	2
	<i>answered question</i>	138
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Proposal 1: The merge of our Fire Control Centre with at least one other organisation.

Proposal 1 - We have been told that, if this proposal went ahead, people would have most concerns about the following issues. Please tell us how you feel about them:						
Answer Options	No opinion	Not concerned at all	Slightly concerned	Quite concerned	Very concerned	Response Count
Loss of local knowledge and its impact on response times	1%	9%	13%	22%	55%	138
Too large an area for one call centre to handle	2%	13%	18%	30%	36%	138
Dependence on IT and what it might mean if it were to fail	1%	6%	10%	27%	57%	138
Impact on staff morale, health, well-being and family life	1%	1%	12%	26%	59%	138
<i>answered question</i>						138
<i>skipped question</i>						0

If the Fire Authority were able to meet these concerns, how supportive would you be about the proposal?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very supportive	12%	16
Quite supportive	25%	34
No opinion	13%	18
Quite unsupportive	28%	38
Very unsupportive	23%	32
<i>answered question</i>		138
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Do you think there are things in the proposal which could disproportionately affect particular individuals, groups or communities?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	45%	62
No	20%	27
No opinion	36%	49
If you selected 'Yes', use this space to tell us what they are and how serious they are		57
<i>answered question</i>		138
<i>skipped question</i>		0

If you selected 'Yes', use this space to tell us what they are and how serious they are

I feel the lack of local knowledge and knowledge of individual crews and stations could potentially have a significant impact on the service delivery to the community.

I feel that the negative impact on individuals working in control are quite clear to see.

There is a huge amount of uncertainty with regard to H&W's plans as they appear to have long term aspirations to have a joint control with the Police. Any joint fire service merger should only take place once contracted guarantees are given with regard to their commitment to the project.

I work Whole time / retained and I see the benefit Control staff give other than operational support, I feel some means of 24/7 support structure needs to be in place to maintain the professional service Shropshire fire and Rescue service provides. I understand a cost effective solution needs to be found but what currently works, works very well especially to RDS members of staff who at any moment have a uniformed member of staff to call 24/7.

Rural communities would feel vulnerable. They would need reassurance.

If the above concerns were dealt with effectively, the obvious disproportionate affect would be on those staff being made redundant

Loss of jobs in Control if centre moved away from Shrewsbury and maybe time will be lost if closest appliance not sent to incident because not enough knowledge of area.

Local knowledge major problems if you look at the ambulance service do not think they even know where Shropshire is so too big and too far away is no good.

Members of Control would lose their jobs or be expected to travel potentially unreasonable distances. It's good having control so close so if we have questions/issues we can speak to people face to face.

The above concerns will all have a detrimental effect on service delivery. Local knowledge although seems an area which could easily be dealt with by an intelligent mobilising system remote from a local control centre, always hinges on a consistently competent IT system and unfortunately this does always seem to be a weak link. Anecdotal evidence also suggests this with regards to other similar emergency service transitions.

current control staff would be affected by job loss, new work location, changes in role; their previous work experiences and knowledge could be lost and public could therefore lose valuable control operators.

Redundancies in fire control - front line firefighters under pressure to attend incidents with lack of local information been fed back

I feel that we could go down the same route as the ambulance service where as they take longer to get to incidents and then merge into one authority.

Staff - A merger would create an additional challenge within an already challenging role.

Members of the community who feel more comfortable / confident in contacting a control room whose staff are more local and have enhanced local knowledge

Obviously this will affect the control staff in a reduction of Jobs and possible long travel distances depending on the location of the chosen control.

When the IT fails it is local knowledge that usually helps to sort out issues with mobilising. this will be lost.

Using local staffing in our local communities.

Dilution of local knowledge could impact directly on those living in the hard to get to rural areas, increasing response, especially if the wrong vehicles are deployed (i.e. areas where a smaller response vehicle is more suited to the area, e.g. areas of Ironbridge). Also, lessons should be learned from the IT issues faced during an attempt to regionalise Control Centres.

If control was merged and relocated it would have a massive impact on those faced with the choice of moving or losing their job

Loss of a 24 hour Communications Centre

I feel it's important to recognise that Fire Control is not just a call centre, it's not just a case of transferring the calls to H&W and closing Shropshire Control. Control carry out many more functions than just incident mobilisation and management. The Control Room acts as a 24/7 communications centre. We are a 24 hour point of contact for the public, staff and press enquiries.

In addition to dealing with emergency calls we also monitor staffing levels of wholetime and retained fire crews.

We are the 24 hour point of contact for all the following:

- Retained Support Officers (informing them of deficiencies during their working hours)
- Any member of the service booking sick or fit
- Any on duty accident to any member of the service
- Any fire service vehicle accident
- Any station defects
- Any vehicle defects
- Any equipment defects
- If any crews require the Critical Incident De-brief team
- Out of hours hydrant defects
- If any crews require the Chaplain
- Access to Next of Kin details
- Fire Safety complaints
- Take information on non-attendance of training courses
- Members of the public reporting faulty smoke alarms
- Road closures

We also carry out the following duties:

- Rota amendments (wholetime, control and officers)
- Issue of spare vehicle keys (out of hours)
- Sending out any Ops Flash messages
- Dealing with Flood Warnings
- Setting up the Flood room when required
- Updating the press website (24 hrs a day)
- Assisting other departments with details of incidents (current and historic)
- Obtaining recordings of calls for officers and police.
- Record details of controlled burns
- Record details of alarm testing
- Assisting retained stations with their drill night tests

These are just some of the tasks carried out by Control.

With regard to incidents, after taking the call we gather lots of vital information to pass to the crews, this can be in regard to access points, risk information, directions, updates from further callers. If the incident is involving chemicals or toxic smoke plumes we would also provide them with details of FIREMET, this is a service provided by the Met Office, operators would log into their website and obtain details on weather conditions, wind speed and direction and which sectors around the incident would be affected by the plume, this enables us to inform the crews of a safe approach. It is control staff that also obtain a more detailed and longer range forecast from CHEMET. We also access CHEMDATA information which enables us to pass any details required by the crews regarding a particular chemical. This information could include first aid advice, firefighting actions advice, description of the chemical and what it's used for, hazards etc.

Below are some of the other incident related tasks that control carry out:

- Liaising with Police, Ambulance, CMPG, over the border brigades, Severn Trent, Electricity companies, Emergency Planning, Network Rail, Transco, Boarding up companies, Shropshire Council, Telford and Wrekin Council, Housing Associations, Environment Agency and Highways Agency.
- Remaining on the phone and passing fire survival advice to persons reported fires.
- Liaising with and mobilising FESS
- Updating officers during incidents.
- Actioning request for Fire Investigation
- Actioning requests for National Assets
- Actioning request for the DIM team
- Actioning request for the sniffer dog

At present if we have spate conditions or a large incident officers are able to come into control to gain up to the minute information. Previously during spate conditions they have also been able to offer support to the on duty watch. I understand this is a 'nice to have' and not 'need to have' but feel it is a bonus of keeping Control in Shropshire.

Local Knowledge

In today's world of advanced IT, local knowledge may not be deemed to be important and this may well be the case in Metropolitan Brigades where there are a lot more landmarks and reference points, however this isn't the case in rural areas.

I have witnessed on many occasions where local knowledge has aided operators to locate an incident, as well as directing crews, highlighting access issues and knowing of road closures and road works.

Ask any operator and they will be able to give an example of how a call from the Ambulance Service, now operated out of Brierley Hill has taken more time to pass than it should have due to them not knowing the area. Here are a few examples:

- I received a call from Amb stating RTC on A5 at Bishops Castle. I informed them that the A5 didn't go anywhere near Bishops Castle. She then proceeded to pass me a postcode. This took me to Bishops Castle where she talked me through the buildings ie. School, nursery etc that were near to where this RTC was. I mobilised Bishops Castle, nothing was found. This incident was actually on the A5 in Shrewsbury, the caller to the Ambulance had mentioned Bishops Castle purely because it was signposted off the A5, the Ambulance had come up with this postcode which was just the centre spot of Bishops Castle. Luckily this was an RTC Services only, had this been persons trapped, crews would have been delayed due to the time taken on the call, waiting 5 mins for the retained to turn in, further mins to arrive at the believed incident, then more minutes looking for the incident and further delay in control having the mobilise Shrewsbury and the time taken for them to reach the incident. This is was a significant delay from the original time of call.
- I tried to pass the Ambulance details of an RTC on the A5, Preston Island to Junc 7 of the M54 - the operator was unable to locate this on his computer and asked me for a postcode, I informed him this was a road network with no nearby properties and that there was no postcode.
- We received a call from Ambulance stating there was an incident on the A49 at Whitchurch, Shrewsbury. We asked if it was Whitchurch or Shrewsbury, she proceeded to tell us that Whitchurch was Shrewsbury. We informed her of the distance between the two towns and eventually narrowed it down but again this call took much longer that it should have.
- A few weeks ago our crews came across a male suffering chest pains at The Quarry in Shrewsbury, a passer-by had called an Ambulance 20 minutes previous. I was asked by our crew to check if it was on it's way. When I contacted them they struggled to find out where I was talking about because it was the Quarry (no postcode). Eventually an Ambulance crew arrived and told our crew they had been sent to the wrong address. I presume because the Quarry didn't match on their system.
- Last night I tried to pass the Ambulance an RTC on the A41 Prees Heath Roundabout, again they asked for a postcode.

Another reason local knowledge is useful is because the public tend to call premises and pubs etc by their old names. An example is in Shrewsbury, The Maltings, otherwise known as The Flax Mill, otherwise known as Albert Masters. Local names are also used, The Meadows, for the play area in Greenfields, the housing development on the old MEB site, Shrewsbury - most of our current operators would know where to mobilise to based on this information.

Control over future costs

Obviously an estimated cost would have been agreed however as in nearly all projects of this type budgets can often spiral out of control, would Shropshire be in a position to increase the amount of money they put into this merger if required? Once Shropshire Control has gone and a substantial amount of money has already been put in to making this work, how would Shropshire be able to cope if they were asked to increase the amount they paid, what if this increased year on year? Although on a larger scale the RCC plans were an example of this, more and more money had to be pumped in - then once scrapped a vast amount had been wasted. If Shropshire were to pump money into this merger and it didn't work, would they have the money to reinstate a Control Room in Shropshire? Below is a quote from Amyas Morse about the RCC:

"This is yet another example of a Government IT project taking on a life of its own, absorbing ever-increasing resources without reaching its objectives. The rationale and benefits of a regional approach were unclear and badly communicated to locally accountable fire and rescue services who remained unconvinced. Essential checks and balances in the early stages of the project were ineffective. It was approved on the basis of unrealistic estimates of costs and under-appreciation of the complexity of the IT involved and the project was hurriedly implemented and poorly managed. Its legacy is the chain of expensive regional control centres whose future is uncertain."

Amyas Morse, head of the National Audit Office, 1 July 2011

Cost of the merge - savings v risk

Although I understand the brigade needs to save money, I feel we should realistically ask how much money will actually be saved? And is this saving worth the additional risk involved, which there will inevitably be? Whether this is due to teething problems of the move, loss of local knowledge of the operators, IT problems

or number of staff on duty being able to cope in spate conditions etc.

An example of the risk involved has recently been highlighted by an article in the Manchester Evening News:

Glitches in a new regional 999 call centre are putting lives at risk, it is claimed.

A union boss and councillors have claimed it has resulted in fire crews closest to incidents being overlooked and engines from stations further away being sent.

In one incident this week, seven appliances from around Greater Manchester were sent to a scrapyard fire in Irlam but crews from the local station - less than half a mile away - were not sent.

The article goes on to say:

Peter Taylor, a local retired firefighter and Irlam resident, said: "In all my 30 years of service I have not seen such dangerous levels of incompetence. Residents have grave concerns about this issue and I hope that there is not a tragedy before this mess is sorted out."

My other concern is about how many operators we envisage losing across the two brigades, I believe currently H&W have 5 members per watch to maintain 4 on duty - this means there is currently a total of 7 staff on duty across both brigades. The three counties cover an area of 2,858 sqm with a total population of 1,224,000 (estimated 2011), how many operators (therefore savings) can we lose yet still keep a safe level of working.

I am also concerned that it may appear a reduced number of operators can work safely for a percentage of the time but what happens during large time consuming incidents or spate conditions, flooding in particular.

Flooding seems to be an increasing problem across the country. I remember being on duty one particular night 20/7/07 - Shropshire took hundreds of overspill calls from H&W as well as incidents in our own area.

That night we had four operators on duty, yet still we worked flat out answering one call after another after another, literally back to back, as soon as the line was free it lit up with another call - this carried on for hours. How will a reduced number of operators manage when this happens again?

A recent example is on the 25.7.14 - we had three operators on duty in Shropshire, we received a call to a shed fire (Inc 26768) - this incident led to multiple 999 calls, in a 10 minute period control took approx 30 emergency calls, the majority to this but also to another incident. If each call lasted approx 1 minute that means all three operators spent 10 minutes each on the emergency on emergency calls, as well as taking the calls to this incident there were another 2 incidents ongoing therefore operators would also be taking radio messages, moving icons to the correct location, text alerting retained crews, checking procedures as well as taking out of hours admin calls as it was past 16:00 on a Friday. I feel that reducing the number of operators across the two brigades would be a mistake.

I also feel that by merging Shropshire would lose some control over mobilising decisions. It maybe that joint decisions will be required to be made therefore Shropshire having to be flexible and compromise instead of having full control over decisions.

Loss of experience

There is currently a great deal of experience in Shropshire Fire Control. I have estimated that currently Control has over 200 years combined experience, I feel that IT cannot match years of hands on experience. Control staff know their fire crews and I believe this helps for a more efficient working relationship. Some of our control staff have experience as operational firefighters and at present a large percentage of control staff have 8 - 10 years' experience yet still 15 - 20 years to give to the service.

Concerns over IT

The success of this project seems to heavily rely on IT. Although there have been great advances in IT in recent years there are still problems and it can't replace operators experience and knowledge. The IT is not stable, we still encounter glitches in the system and system crashes.

On 24/7/14 the SEED system crashed completely and was down for half an hour. During this time we took a call to an RTC Persons Trapped, even without the technology we were able to mobilise the correct appliances to the correct location. Once it crashes we lose details of which appliances were on or off the run, the current location of appliances, details of any ongoing incident. As we concentrate on Shropshire we were able to remember a lot of these details, if we were covering a larger area with more resources this would have been a very difficult task.

Another concern over IT happened last block. Control took a call to a property fire in Frankwell, Shrewsbury, the system highlighted the area the caller was from, this centred on Hanwood, this would be a possible indicator of a hoax call. The caller was challenged as to whether he was really in Frankwell as our records showed Hanwood. Half expecting this to be a hoax call appliances were mobilised. This was the only call to this incident, my three concerns on relying on this technology are:

- it isn't giving an accurate location of the caller
- an attendance may not have been made if the mobilising officer had believed this to be a hoax
- there was a delay in mobilising as time was spent challenging the caller

New roads, new developments and new businesses are changing every day, if the system relies on

postcodes what happens if you are a new development, it can sometimes take quite a while for new developments or properties to appear on the mapping, for example The Redwoods Centre at Shelton, this building still isn't displayed on our mapping, I believe this has been open roughly 2 years. The new Asda in Telford, this has been open since early this year yet still doesn't appear on the mapping.

Conclusion

Shropshire Fire Control has some very experienced and very dedicated members of staff, I feel this merger would be a massive mistake, I feel the risk far outweighs the financial gain, I would even question if there would be a financial gain. I don't believe there would be any improvement on service, I think the saying "you don't appreciate what you've got until it's gone" may be fitting. Once it has gone and the experience has gone it would be very difficult to rebuild, not to mention very expensive. Thank you for taking the time to read my lengthy response.

The effect on the staff and families- Job losses or re-location
 Police radio protocol is different to Fire Service.
 The knowledge to correctly 'override' the intelligent mobilising option that doesn't always mobilise the best appliance.

Those with commitments to Shropshire who would not be able to relocate would suffer economically, socially, physically and mentally.

The loss of employment for Shropshire personnel and the effect it will have on the remaining staff

loss of local knowledge effecting times

All of these proposals will seriously impact on individuals, groups and communities alike. NO member of public will benefit from this proposal.

A) If you need a "Fire Engine" in an emergency - Individuals, Groups and the Community WILL be impacted by delayed attendance due to loss of local knowledge affecting response times - The time required to match on a location is increased and there is a serious risk of incorrect Appliances being mobilised if address is wrongly matched on.

B) During busy periods - there is a serious risk that there will not be enough Operators to take all of the calls if one Control is covering too large an area. Members of the public may find that it takes longer for their call to be answered, and subsequently this will also impact on attendance times.

C) If and when IT fails - The result of this, combined with the loss of local knowledge, WILL affect the waiting times for members of the public awaiting the assistance of The Fire Service. It will also make the role of a Fire Fighter (Control) more difficult if they are unfamiliar with the area that they are mobilising to. FF (Control) Operators need to be confident in mobilising to an area without depending upon IT, because IT is NEVER infallible!!!

D) If Fire Control is merged with a service out of county, this will result in longer travel times for majority off staff to attend work, which will impact on rest period between shifts by reducing the time actually spent resting at home, which could impact on staff morale, health, fitness, well-being and family life.

E) The Community as a whole will receive a reduced level of service if Shropshire Fire Control is moved out of county, or even worse...closed all together. This after the members of the public agreed to an increase in Council Tax in order "to maintain the level of service that they receive from Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service"!!!

F) Fire Control currently partake of a lot of admin work, additional to their incident involvement. Would another Control take up this work, or would they only answer 999 calls for Shropshire?...If it is the latter, the work is going to have to be done by other employees of SFRS - increasing their workload. Some of this work needs to be recorded and actioned immediately (Fire Fighting Crew shortages, Appliances off the run due to defects, etc) and at any time of day. Therefore, this work will have to be taken up by an individual or group that operates 24/7. The members of the public would be seriously impacted if an Appliance was mobilised to an incident when it should be off the run because it is faulty.

Shropshire has many varied accents, colloquialisms and local names for places no amount of IT could ever decipher. Lose the people and you lose the ability to intelligently mobilise and meet the needs of the people of Shropshire

Clearly the loss of jobs for current employees is the key concern here but in terms of money saving options I believe this is a particularly important area for consideration. The ICT and mobilising solution in SFRS since the introduction of modern technology has never been completely satisfactory and I believe that integration with other services will provide additional resilience provided that back up is equally resilient. The argument about local knowledge is pure fantasy.

Control staff travel time and working conditions

The jobs in control would be affected as well as the people of Shropshire as per the concerns stated above.

I believe with the current reserve savings we have this merger could be delayed until maybe a better solution may become available in the future.

People's jobs and livelihoods will be affected.
Personal contact and communication will be lost.
Too large an area for one control unit with a loss a local knowledge

Risks of a failure to the operational response will disproportionately the most vulnerable in society when they need us most.

The fact that any joint control room would almost certainly not operate in Shropshire would mean that if current staff wanted to continue they would have to a) apply for a position and then b) travel or relocate to be nearer. Having experienced the upheaval this brings I do feel that this will have an impact across the staff who work in Fire Control and their families. That said in the current economic climate we are in better ways of working and spending have to be found and this is one way. If comparisons on numbers of calls with Police and Fire were looked at Police call handlers are far busier and therefore any joint "merger" would instantly be more efficient. Whether it was more effective could only be truly judged after a period of time.

The communities that may lose their control rooms will be affected by a lack of local knowledge, as tax payers who are paying for the service I wonder how they would feel about paying increasing costs for a reduced service

Serious concerns for SFRS control staff and their families

Loss of local knowledge and its impact on response times:

I know this argument gets mentioned a lot, however the impact on response times really does need to be seriously considered. As you well know, increased response times put lives at risk. It is so important that the correct location is gained in order to mobilise crews, there is absolutely no room for error. If required, I could provide many examples of poor locations passed to us from Ambulance since they have been centralised. Sometimes, and this is no exaggeration, the correct location has been in excess of 10 miles in the opposite direction. I have fears that emergency calls being taken outside the county for Shropshire Fire would inevitably have similar issues. The problems do not lie when an incident is at an addressable location as the system data available makes it relatively simple to locate a specific property. The problems arise when it is an incident on a roadway, in a field, or on a river. These are not address points and require knowledge of the area in order to provide accurate location specifics to crews.

A recent example: on 13th July 2014, we received a call to a vehicle fire on a minor road in the Claverley area. The incident was in Shropshire and we pinpointed the exact location to enable mobilisation. Although the incident was in Shropshire, due to being near to the county border, the nearest fire appliance to attend was from Wombourne in Staffordshire. A call was made to West Midlands, who now take Staffordshire emergency calls, to request Wombourne's attendance - the call lasted in excess of 4 minutes, and the operator was unable to find the location of the incident. Specific location information was given - nearby villages, towns and road numbers, however the operator could not find the location. The operator advised they needed a postcode or a road name. Neither of these were available due to the location being on a minor country lane. During the call, once it became apparent that they were struggling to find the location to mobilise an appliance to, we decided it best to mobilise Bridgnorth appliance, which although was not the nearest appliance, was going to attend quicker than Wombourne due to the delay in West Midlands finding the location.

The location information being passed to the West Midlands operator was specific, it could not have been more accurate. The original caller reporting the van fire was vague with his location information, and due to knowledge of the area we were able to extract information from him to pinpoint his location. Had the original caller not come through to Shropshire control and had instead connected to the West Midlands operator I worry how an attendance would have been made. I appreciate this example is a fire with limited life risk, however high life risk incidents do occur at locations in the middle of nowhere, that cannot be pinpointed with a postcode or road name. It is these incidents that require swift location matches to enable a mobilisation. Had this owner of this vehicle been trapped inside for example, and had spoken with the West Midlands operator I very much doubt a swift match would have occurred and therefore the result would have been catastrophic.

Dependence on IT and what it might mean if it were to fail:

A merger of any sort is extremely reliant on a solid ICT infrastructure. This is something, which up until recently we did not have, certainly in terms of the Service's core purpose - mobilising fire appliances to incidents. More recently the mobilising system has become more reliable, however in recent years our ability to mobilise crews has been hit and miss, and quite often the reasons behind such failures have been

unknown to our IT colleagues. Things have definitely improved and are now at a manageable level, however it has taken a very long time to reach this stage; I can only imagine how long it would take to seamlessly implement a merger. And at what cost?

In the early days of our current mobilising system there were many occasions where the staff in Fire Control 'made it work'. We received emergency calls from members of the public, the mobilising system failed and we used our professionalism and expertise to make sure incidents were attended and there was little impact on the service provided. Although there was certainly an increase in attendance times, which fortunately did not result in any serious injury or deaths. At times we were in situations where the command and control system and/or the communication links to mobilise appliances completely collapsed - this was Shropshire, an area which we have been responsible for a very long time. My point being that the ICT infrastructure is/was one that we were familiar with and it was very difficult to succeed in introducing a new system without failures. To attempt a merge with a neighbouring county would be a huge task, and huge risk to the public. The failures we experienced locally would surely be multiplied when attempting a merger and again the public would be put at risk throughout the process. It's quite possible that any failures would not result in serious injury or death, but there is certainly a chance that they would. A risk, which in my opinion based on witnessing some of the catastrophic failures of recent years, is not worth taking. This may sound a little extreme, but in honesty at times it was frightening what Control staff had to do to ensure crews received an alert to attend an emergency.

Although the mobilising system is now working better and failures have been reduced, they do still occur. Unfortunately, failure of mobilisation equipment only gets identified when we attempt to dispatch crews to an incident and no alert takes place. We then implement fall-back procedures, which also sometimes do not work. All of this takes time, and delays response.

19/07/14 we had an occasion when Bishops Castle were required to attend a barn fire involving 12 tonnes of fertiliser. The primary alert system failed, the fall back system then also failed. We were unable to alert the crews so the next nearest pump was mobilised. This inevitably delayed response times. Fortunately, no one was injured as a result of this delay - on this occasion.

Additionally, on the same day as the above failure, we had a failure of the EISEC system. This is the technology used to pinpoint the location of a caller - if from a landline it provides the address or the caller. If from a mobile it provides a location that usually has an 80%+ accuracy level. At least this then gives us a general area to send crews if the mobile were to disconnect. On this occasion EISEC pinpointed the caller to a street in Hanwood. The caller was reporting a fire in Frankwell, Shrewsbury. I challenged the caller regarding his current location and he confirmed he was in Frankwell. Fortunately on this occasion I mobilised to what was in fact a fire in a restaurant in Frankwell. On a different occasion the caller may well have been challenged further, treated as a malicious caller and an attendance not made. The distance between Hanwood and Frankwell is approximately 4 miles - not accurate enough to attend an incident if the mobile caller had disconnect. Therefore the confidence in the EISEC service has been dramatically reduced. Particularly as it has only worked sporadically over the last 2 years.

Also, as I write (24/07/14 14:20) we have just recovered from a complete failure of the command and control mobilising system. All positions crashed at 13:32 and were back up and running at 13:58. During this time we received reports of a Road Traffic Collision with multiple people injured. Thankfully it was in a part of the county that we were familiar with meaning we could advise crews without the aid of the mobilising system. We instigated fall back procedures and response delays were minimal. Would this event have been dealt with as efficiently if the Control staff were in Worcester? I genuinely do not think it would.

The above technology problems are what I have been on duty for and experienced in the last 5 days. I have no doubt that further issues have been noted while I have been off duty. In fact, it was handed over to me this morning that we were to use fall back arrangements to alert Prees and Ludlow due to recent failures. My reason for highlighting these issues to you is to bring to your attention the various problems we experience with our ICT infrastructure. This is a local infrastructure that we are familiar with - I dread to think of the volume of issues we would encounter if the ICT was spread over a number of other counties. Plus, the risk that those failures would pose to the public.

There are, no doubt, advances in technology. However, to rely on these for mobilising appliances to emergencies is not reliable enough. Technology fails, and it fails quite often. It is the staff that operate the equipment that make things work, in my opinion.

Staffordshire calls are now taken by West Midlands. The North West Fire Control has also recently been formed. I feel that before Shropshire make a decision on the merger with a nearby service, we need to study these projects. Speak with control staff, firefighter, and officers - everyone, within those services to find out the true impact. Merging is an enormous step that is very difficult to reverse, therefore every avenue needs to be explored to make sure it is the right decision. To make sure that service delivery is not going to be affected and that the money saved is worth the risk.

Impact on staff morale, health, well-being and family life:

Staff morale has already been dramatically reduced. Our jobs are under threat and this is an awful feeling. Our role in the Service is a vital one, however for that to be questioned is not a very nice feeling at all. I work hard to ensure I work to the very best of my ability, and I know many of my colleagues do the same. I just hope this is recognised and the value of our work is acknowledged and Shropshire Fire Control is retained. I am fortunate that I am in good health. My sickness record is very good. However, I can recognise the pressure the threat of job losses has had on my health. I'm constantly questioning what the future holds... what would I do if I lost my job? Where would I find the money to support my family? I am level headed and accept that irrelevant of the outcome, all will be okay, however this doesn't stop these questions eating away inside.

My family are at a stage where we would like to consider buying a house, to create a family home - with the threat of me losing my job, we cannot realistically enter into a mortgage. My income is the sole source of money for me, my girlfriend and 2 sons. The uncertainty around my job is an everyday worry.

Control staff and the operational crews on the ground. More work for someone, for staffing and booking sick etc.

Lack of local knowledge is going to impact on all areas of the community as an operator who is remote and not from the county is not going to know local landmarks, local names.

The reliance on technology is ok as long as it works correctly and the right information is on the computers. How the information is accessed is another problem and its OK saying that the Technology will do the job it won't without the correct information being in the database

There will be an impact on staff as many are the main salary going into a family which will mean they have less to spend which although only minor it will have an impact on their buying power.

The elderly (known high areas of retirement population) i.e church stretton, remote rural address location,

All control staff including retained control staff. Double the area halve the staff means poor cover, could mean staff covering from Whitchurch to Ross on Wye or Shipston on Stour. big area. What would the set up costs be?

In a small rural brigade resources are limited and we do not have the options of availability of say a municipal brigade who could provide endless cover moves for the areas. It is therefore vital that local knowledge is maintained so that the strategically placed stations are utilised in the correct manner. Errors would be magnified in this scenario and rural towns and villages could be left dangerously exposed.

Depending on the outcome of the merger, we would either lose a valuable part of our service or overstretch it - both resulting in adverse effects to our service delivery. Our fire control operators have knowledge and experience that is invaluable to operational crews. From sharing local knowledge or information on how incidents are developing to undertaking a variety of additional duties our fire control operators make up an integral part of our service delivery system.. Recently I have attended incidents over the border into Staffordshire. On one occasion we were first in attendance at a property fire, the Staffordshire appliances were 2-3 minutes and 10+ minutes behind us. Thankfully the fire was out on arrival but I spoke with the OIC of the other appliances and they told me how since the Staffs fire control had merged with West Mids they were experiencing multiple problems from: -

lack of information on incident locations,
mobilisation of wrong appliances resulting in delays in attending or backing up other crews,
loss of understanding and communication with control staff,
wrong or limited information affecting attendance times.

These were just a couple of issues we spoke about, the change here seems to have impacted on all involved, from the individuals making the call to the operators taking the information and the crews delivering the service to the community. I feel that this would be the blueprint for how SFRS would be affected should this option go ahead. Once the valuable resource that our fire control is has gone, I fear it would be detrimental to the service.

impact on control operators that have to be re located and the impact financially and the impact on family life

They will negatively affect a lot of people in some way.

The IT structure as yet does not reliable enough to risk people's lives on it. The appliances regularly have MDT issues such as the GPS system not tracking the vehicle and the Main Scheme Radio also appears problematic, spuriously turning off.

Local knowledge is definitely an advantage over no local knowledge, especially when trying to locate incidents with no postcodes or address, such as time critical RTC's or field fires. I also do not agree that cutting back or getting rid of our own control room is a healthy way to go.

It is the more vulnerable in the community who most use our services. They are also the more challenging to gain valuable information from during call handling. Loss of local knowledge amongst the Control team could exacerbate this.

The effect on the communities we serve could be severe if a loss of local knowledge did happen. Relying totally on IT could result in complete failure resulting in fatal consequences to the public. Our IT is not bullet proof.

Fire Control Employees, Shropshire's Public.

The level of risk to life is increased.

Fire Control are the first point of contact with the Fire & Rescue Service for all emergency calls when people may be in distress or life threatening situations. The importance of local knowledge paired with specialist skills cannot be underestimated. Technology always requires people to either input data, operate and/or oversee its accuracy. With suitably competent staff who are able to, if necessary, revert back to pen and paper and still provide a robust Service to the people of Shropshire utilising local knowledge. It is imperative that this is retained in Shropshire. It only takes one set of circumstances to come together to mean that a life could be put at risk or impact on the loss of life.

As stated in the departments name Fire Control take Control, Co-ordinate the most appropriate resources to effectively deal with Fire and/or Rescue situations to protect the communities that we serve and save life.

This has been demonstrated on more than one occasion and publicised on the TV and Radio.

The merging of Fire Control with that of one or more other services would mean reduced staff, reduced local knowledge, reduced resilience, increased risk.

The National project of merging Fire Control's into Regional Control Centres (RCC's) was disbanded primarily because the technological solution was not achievable and to some degree that is the same now.

The Command & Control systems working in our respective Services do go wrong at times and when they do it is the staff that continue to follow our procedures and continue to provide the Service to the people of Shropshire and as necessary the people of Hereford & Worcester.

Cultural, together with managerial and leadership issues at all levels would be very prevalent and need to be overcome if merging Fire Control's. If this can be achieved for Fire Control that is a communications hub for the brigade, then what is stopping considering the options and logical step to have only one Chief Fire Officer, one Human Resources department, one Finance department, one Property Services department, one Brigade etc. As a born and bred Shropshire lad I do not wish my local services to be operated and administered from outside the County.

The idea of having fewer staff to manage larger areas (predominantly rural) would be impractical to work as well as manage. The minimum number of people specified by the Service in order to work effectively in Fire Control is 3 personnel. This is to allow individuals to take breaks, attend meetings and training sessions etc. whilst leaving a minimum of two personnel to take emergency calls, manage incidents and resources, provide incident support, answer administrative queries, carry out other work that would normally be done by other departments to name just a few. But whilst the 3rd person may not be physically in the room all of the time they are able to be recalled at any time immediately and respond to emergency calls to provide an effective service. The management of these functions have never been done from another site.

From a caring Authorities perspective by considering the option of merging Fire Control's we are posing the question 'How much a life'. Is this what the Fire Authority want?

When Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service decided to buy the same Command & Control System as Shropshire it was not with the intention to merge Fire Control's, reduce staffing or endanger lives and efficiency, but through collaboration to provide a resilient Service for all. This is how it should remain. We now also have the resilience and fallback to be able to assist Cleveland Fire & Rescue Service if the need arose.

Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service has been audited and confirmed that it is one of the best performing Brigades in the Country. It sets out it's Aims and Objectives within an annual Service Plan with the key purpose described as being to Save and Protect life, property and the environment from fire and other emergencies. It's core values are to Service the Community and to be accountable to the local community. I have seen no evidence or research to suggest or confirm that merging our Fire Control with another Service will provide savings whilst maintaining efficiencies and our status as one of the best performing Brigades.

It is implied in the wording of the proposal that this is possible due to technology. If this proposal does go through it would be worth considering whether the Service will have the right number of people, with the right skills and experience, to undertake the large amount of IT and data work necessary for this to be successful. Past projects of this nature have been badly hampered by a lack of people with the right technical skills, meaning that a large amount of day-to-day capacity is tied up post-go-live to keep critical systems functioning.

Shropshire is large county and to the west has many welsh village names, that even now people in the county people have difficulty in pronouncing. Also many of these country roads don't have road numbers. So all communities in that area would be affected.

Depending on the location of the merged control I feel that SFRS control staff could be made to look for other employment due to increased travel costs and times. This would be a loss to SFRS and as investment has been made in these staff by SFRS it would mean money has been wasted.

Fire Control staff. The only group in SFRS that are under the threat of redundancy.
As 2/3 of Fire Control staff are female it does not reflect well on the Service that is predominantly male dominated.
The claim is that SFRS needs to save money the public money, however, the public will not save any money as the proposed 300K saving will go into the capital reserve not into reducing what the public pay. With the increase in precept and the resulting reduction in how much SFRS need to save there is no requirement to lose our Fire Control, other savings have been identified that do not effect so radically any other group

Expecting parents to possibly have to change work location. This could make school drop offs pick ups difficult to organise

Loss Jobs
Added Travel
Disruptive to family life

This proposal may particularly effect those people who have family or other dependants. This could lead to an increase in absence and even resignations which would then impact on staffing levels.

WITH THE NATIONAL MERGING OF EMERGENCY SERVICES/AREAS THIS IS REDUCING NATIONAL "RESILIENCE" FOR CONTROL ROOMS IN THE EVENT OF MAJOR INCIDENTS/CALL HANDLING APART FROM THE EXPERIENCE SFRS CONTROL STAFF HAVE SEEN WITH THE LOCAL POLICE AND AMB CONTROLS WHO "CONVERT" ADDRESSES AND HAVE VERY LITTLE IDEA OF THE IMPACT THEIR CALL HANDLING DETAILS INACCURACY HAVE ON FRS OPS

We have had issues with the turnout information for some time, I feel this will only get worse if control moves further afield. This could cause serious delays in turnouts and attendance times

For instance when the ambulance service went to a regional control there was a delay in getting an ambulance to a patient witch may of led to his death. The delay was caused by the operator believing Craven Arms was a public house and not a town. I strongly believe similar incidents would happen throughout Shropshire if SFRS were not to have their own dedicated control room/staff.

Proposal 2: Changes to the current wholetime shift system

Would you be prepared to change the Day Crew Plus shift system?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	20%	26
No	41%	53
No opinion	40%	52
<i>answered question</i>		131
<i>skipped question</i>		7

Department from which people responded 'Yes' to the question above

Department	Number of 'Yes' responses
Area Command - officers	2
Area Command (stations) - RDS	8
Area Command (stations) - WT	5
Control	1
Fire Safety - business	2
Fire Safety - community	3
Human resources	1
Operational planning department	1
Performance information office	1
Training	1
Workshops	1
Total	26

Do you think there are things in the proposal which could disproportionately affect particular individuals, groups or communities?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	58%	76
No	13%	17
No opinion	29%	38
If you answered yes above, use this space to tell us what they are and how serious they are		70
<i>answered question</i>		131
<i>skipped question</i>		7

If you answered yes above, use this space to tell us what they are and how serious they are
Clearly the Day Crew Plus system is not family friendly. Whilst volunteers may be found to facilitate this change what will happen when these volunteers either reach retirement and/or their priorities in life change? Will this shift system then become compulsory? What has research of similar shift systems in similar sized authorities uncovered?
This system results in a massive per hour drop in pay and once we have gone down that road it will be very difficult to turn back. What about those who are unable to commit to such a change in work pattern.
NOT CONSISTENT WITH A GOOD FAMILY LIFE

The only negative I can pick out is the workload crew members may encounter during spate conditions.
Definitely not family friendly. May put off parents from wanting to work this shift pattern.
Even with sufficient volunteers initially, changes in personal circumstances could lead to an unpopular/unsuccessful shift system, with little scope for retracting the initial capital outlay on accommodation. Possible changes in working time directive, appear to make DCP a bit of a gamble for organisation and individuals. The Joint review of shift system seems good suggestion
Employees with children of school age would suffer
Potential impact on those personnel with dependents
affect people's home lives
disruption to family life
Family life will suffer due to long shifts and time away from family. Initial cost to set up is a million £ we were told sounds a lot of money when you only need to find 6 hundred thousand £ If our £10 million reserves are there for a rainy day I think it is raining now so let's spend some. Next question is not helpful as all important factors with no clear shift system work with either.
This proposal would cut the number of firefighters on a station by half and make those who are left work twice as long for much less pay. The terms and conditions move away from those nationally agreed by the Grey Book. The hours worked are outside the Working Time Directive and the actual pay rates once spread over the hours of work are outside National Pay Rates (minimum wage)
unqualified to make a balanced opinion
Although I fully appreciate the financial constraints which have been put upon us from central government and that alternative money saving options need to be addressed, I feel that the above mentioned proposal is a step backwards in working conditions and could have a negative impact on employees and consequently our service delivery.
Impact on family life and possibly slightly slower turn out time at night. My answer of yes is only because it is pensionable and I have only six years of service left and my children will all be teenagers or older.
This system would undermine the national rate of pay and working time for a Firefighter. This system would be akin to that used during the second world war, a time of national emergency. There can be no justification for returning to such working conditions.
Dependent upon the type of shift system how staff are selected and effect on personnel life style.
Depending on how people are recruited to do these shifts - if forced moves are on the cards then it has obvious serious implications.
The proposed shift system seems to have potential for staff being required to work overly long hours.
It could as we could possibly have to have less staff.
A significant disruption to staff and their families resulting from the change in shift patterns. As far as the public is concerned would the 'similar level of fire cover to that currently delivered' be a better or worse 'similar level'?
Whilst current consultation suggests that enough 'volunteers' would be available to convert to DCP, what happens when they leave/change their minds? What if there are not enough volunteers?
The organisation will need to address the ageing firefighter population. With no recruitment in WTime the ever increasing age dynamic could impact on those willing to work this system.
Work life balance, to do double the time near the fire station. certain don't always rest easily while on station, doing extra time near the station, could affect an individual - reaction etc.
Not at all family friendly
The system would be totally un-family friendly. There has been talk of families being able to join staff at stations etc. but this could not realistically work if families lived any distance away. Particularly if looking at an option that involves a number of consecutive days on duty. How would cover be provided for shortfalls/ sickness/ maternity leave/ modified duties etc. within this system? Even though there would be an additional pensionable pay. Various 'hypothetical' calculators have proved that many systems would mean a substantial worsening of hourly pay. Consideration on the health of staff especially as the European Working directive hours would be exceeded. Even though the emergency services are exempted, the directive figures have obviously been reached by amongst other things, studies on effects working hours on people.
Change in working times, rotas, hours, childcare for families and have already planned as far as a year ahead.
Family life would be affected and a greater level of work vs pay will be required

<p>Unsure about the wording of the first question "would you be prepared to change the Day Crew plus System?" should that read "to" the day crew plus in which case NO. but is it already decided that there "will be" a day crew plus system and would we want to change it, then yes possibly if a more suitable alternative could be found or alternatively leave the 2-2-4 as this requires no further investment whereas day crew plus will mean significant cash outlay to secure all the relevant needs for the system to operate.</p>
<p>very serious on house building in Telford area</p>
<p>Depending on what shift system this is referring to, Fire Fighters could find their home life impacted</p>
<p>This will have an impact on family life for those involved</p>
<p>Only if there are too few volunteer staff, which I doubt</p>
<p>Major concerns regarding the day crew plus shift system. Modernising by introducing a shift system last seen in The Victorian era doesn't seem to add up. Conditions and resources on station would have to improve a lot.</p>
<p>Firefighters on this system would have no quality work-life balance. This balance is important for moral and thus effective working. If moral is low then many side affects would happen including increased sickness.</p> <p>THIS FORM did not let me fill out the same importance factor for each of the following questions. I would weight</p> <p>Family Friendliness 1 (high)</p> <p>Pay 5 (low)</p> <p>total hours worked 3</p> <p>Flexibility in working hours 5</p> <p>Flexibility in leave selection 2</p>
<p>This is not a family friendly solution but may suit some individuals.</p>
<p>The DCP is not family friendly, so those who go onto it will either be detrimentally affected or DCP will only attract a narrow section of the workforce</p>
<p>If the Service seeks volunteers for this system I believe they will receive many because of the increased rate of pay and pension rights. This will however create disparity between individuals working at a fire ground on different rates of pay albeit under different working conditions.</p>
<p>The crews and their families, however they would volunteers.</p>
<p>Greater chance of tired firefighters turning out to incidents after a much longer shift</p>
<p>older members</p>
<p>I do not understand the first question? we don't have a day crew plus shift system so how can we change it?</p> <p>This proposal will affect Firelighters and their families greatly if they sign up to this amount of time away from their normal lives. this amount of hours should not be a consideration.</p> <p>It would be far better to make the appliance day staffing only and covered with RDS staff from Tweedale at night?</p>
<p>The realistic possibility that individuals may have to work up to 96hours without seeing family or friends and in effect being confined to quarters. This would have a detrimental effect on peoples home lives, social life and I believe as a consequence would affect their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>In relation to the first question (above), I would be willing to look at and open minded about alternative shifts but until I knew how exactly a day crew plus shift would work, then I cannot commit to this option.</p>
<p>It will affect any one that works the shift! , I just can't see it working on so many levels.</p> <p>Managing the leave or just making sure FF's turn up at the correct time, will be the only job that the WM/CM will do.</p> <p>Apart from working on an oil rig (with a lot more pay) or being in the army (know what you are signing up to) I don't think there is a less family friendly shift available.</p> <p>The station that does the shift will end up completely isolated to the rest of the brigade.</p> <p>I wouldn't mind to bet that give it a few years and it will be costing the brigade more to run that the system we are already on.</p> <p>I can't believe that anyone would be prepared to work so many hours for such little extra pay. I firmly believe that if I am at work, stand down time or not, I am at work!</p>
<p>Staff would be expected to be away from their families for 4 days or 96 hour. It is not conducive to family friendly working which the Brigade is at pains to say it promotes</p>
<p>Not family friendly - for a brigade that is actively recruiting women firefighters - what about the childcare?</p>
<p>Staff and their families. Staff would be expected to be available for longer periods away from home and family. The increase in pay would not really be just reward for being away from home on standby. Being away from family is 'work' whether doing activity or not. It would effectively double time away from family. Whilst it has been suggested that it would be self-regulating it would need very careful policing and</p>

managing by Station Managers as the scope for stronger personalities getting the 'best' shifts and leave seems easy to manipulate. It would add a heavier workload to local managers, and with disputes that would occur, the senior managers would get pulled into it, possibly going all the way to ET if staff feel aggrieved enough. Added to the potential that it will fall foul of the WTD it is not a sharp idea. The importance table below is not a fair method of deciding.

Not family friendly
Recruitment for this type of shift pattern would be restrictive

The system will only work if you get enough volunteers that can work this system long term. A lot of people are happy to work it, due to the extra pay, if they are in the last few years of their career. What are the costs of setting up this system?

Those with families will have less time at home if working the DCP system. Although initially I can foresee sufficient volunteers to work DCP (it will be very appealing to those nearing retirement) , once those individuals retire will there be enough people willing to work this system? If not will people be forced to work it? If so this will have a massive impact on those individuals with families.

time spent with your family
you would spend a lot more time at work
in total your hourly pay would be less

I understand that in order to maintain the high standard of service that we are delivering with the number of staff at this time can only be done with a change to the current shift system. I do feel though that it is vitally important to adopt a system which takes into account the factors highlighted, to ensure staff who are on the system are able to operate with the high level of morale as we do at the moment, ensuring the high standard of service we deliver continues.

Family life and time - Very serious for home life and moral.

They will negatively affect a lot of people in some way.

My main concerns about Day Crew Plus (DCP) is that from a management and financial point of view it is a 'No Brainer'. It will work and it will save money. With this in mind I find it hard to understand why it would not be rolled out across all of the Whole time pumps. How can the service highlight financial constraints when this will save money.

However from a personal point of view with a further twenty years of service in front of me, if left with no option than to work a DCP system then I would leave the Fire service. My family comes in front of my career and I have no desire to spend half of my life at work. There are also concerns of working two different shift systems with colleagues. Differences will arise. If feel that if changes need to be made then it needs to be made across all of the whole time fire fighters and perhaps look at a 24 hour on 48 hour off system.

This is a shift system which would cause serious issues with family life and relationships!

The suggestions we have had so far appear to reduce the amount of time spent with family and reduce social time, which I can only see as having a negative effect on the moral, physical condition and mentality of fire fighters. Even if one was to agree to the extended hours of new shift patterns it would not take long before lack of sleep or normal life would affect ones job role.

Ask the community if they want their fire-fighters working 72-96 hours straight, I have and I've only had negative feedback.

As for the proposals I've heard, it would be extremely difficult for me personally, as I live in Manchester, this would have a significant effect on my personal life as it would for fellow fire fighter who don't live "just done the road".

As for the scale on the question below, some of us rank more than one thing as high priority, by not being able to select more than one option at the same priority you effectively choosing our hand for us. It is no longer a personal answer when we cannot choose for ourselves what is important and what isn't.

Families of those on the shift pattern. That depend on their spouses to help in caring for their children and in some cases elderly parents.

I think it is unfair to expect that staff would want to work those sort of hours, effectively 100% more working hours for hardly any more remuneration, and also a completely un family friendly working system. After learning that we have reserve funds that are not being utilised effectively withholding tax payers money, why are these changes to be made when you have a system in place that works

Staff work life balance and as an organisation maintaining staffing levels

I feel that a small fire service such as SFRS with relatively few Wholetime staff would struggle to run two different shift patterns ultimately cutting the amount saved in changing the system. Although capital investment would be needed initially. No figures are available for how quickly that would be recouped and then how long the system would need to be running before we are running at positive equity. also no

firm shift patterns are available and it would demand a lot of good will from the staff and their families to ensure that a DCP pump is available 24/7

if there were a lack of volunteer's to undertake the DCP System

As long as the posts were to be filled by volunteers then that would be my only concern reassured. I think it would be only fair offering a decent amount of remuneration to these individuals otherwise they could theoretically be working for the minimum wage something that was left behind in the 70s

Individuals and the families of individuals changing to the day plus crewing system.

This proposal may impact on people with families or other dependants which would need to be considered.

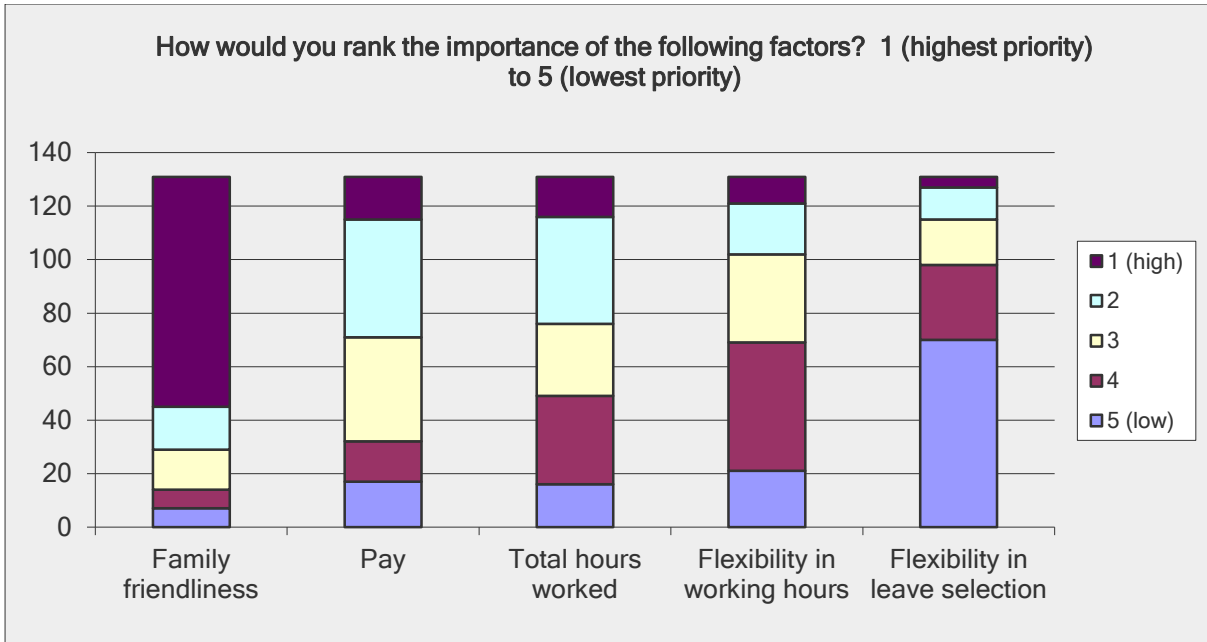
WE ARE GOING BACK TO THE OLDEN DAYS - PRE 1977 FIREMENS STRIKE WHEN CONDITIONS WERE IMPROVED AFTER A VERY LONG BATTLE WITH GOVERNMENT, WE DO NOT SEEM TO BE MOVING ON FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY OF CREWS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

single parents would be affected

My family life has worked well for many years on the 2-2-4 system. If forced to change to Day Crew this would affect my family life, as well as cost implications for things like child care or my partner not working as much??? If enough volunteers came forward for system then not a problem.

My obvious concerns would be the time spent away from my family and how it would impact them.

Until further details of the system and how this may affect the Brigade / employees is available to me, I cannot make an informed comment on this.



Proposal 3: Convert all Business Fire Safety grey book posts into green book posts

We have been told that, if this proposal went ahead, staff would have most concerns about the following issues. Do you have any suggestions about how we might overcome them?

<p>Concern 1: Loss of operational knowledge in the department and especially during inspections</p> <p>I feel that the loss of operational knowledge within the department could place the organisation at serious risk of potential liability from the inability to fully risk assess some situations experienced during audits.</p> <p>The application of fire safety is not always clear cut and more often than not the experience of the individual inspecting officer helps with both risk assessing and also in finding solutions to fire safety issues.</p> <p>This skill is brought into the department by operational staff and is often called upon in day to day audit activity. A lot of the most important fire safety assessments and decisions are made through staff exchanging ideas and experience.</p> <p>The important operational experience will be completely lost if all staff in the department are moved to green book staff (unless ex operational staff are employed on green book contracts).</p>
<p>Do inspections with operational personnel?</p>
<p>I agree, a number of staff carrying out inspections need to have some operational experience to pass on any concerns to operational crews, especially at 72d and possible 72d risk premises.</p>
<p>Numerous issues Inspecting Officers deal with have a large bearing on effective operational experience and knowledge. There are issues dealt with when attending SAGs: There's an assumption/expectation made by other agencies that the individual that sits on these panels are aware of Operational procedures and protocols and subsequently advice is often directed at the representative from the fire service. There are various issues highlighted at audit that only an operational officer can answer and especially pass on anecdotal/historical advice with regards to incidents, practices and outcomes of fire etc. The working knowledge and understanding of how watches work and the close links maintained with Stations and watches mean that the operational IOs have more confidence when corresponding with operational crews. Post Fire audits/inspections can be made with the knowledge of how a fire has developed, spread and maybe affected the building, means of escape or compartment etc.</p> <p>Able to assess what's Ops Dept. responsibility when dealing with various fire safety related concerns, complaints or referrals. Experience of what happens during a fire to buildings and people's reactions. This assists some decision making processes.</p> <p>The resilience offered by operational fire safety staff also needs to be taken into account. various CM and WM could (now that we're increasing the operational knowledge input and shadowing courses) be available for spate conditions etc.</p>
<p>Inspecting Officers could work more closely with operational personnel in order to share knowledge and experiences. By doing this hopefully both parties will benefit. Inspecting Officers could also attend incidents and/or the Training and Development Centre in order to receive input on fire behaviour etc.</p>
<p>Training days and secondments into Fire Safety, can assist here.</p>
<p>Maintain at least one or two supervisory grey book posts.</p>
<p>do not convert all posts</p>
<p>Green Book Employees are currently carrying out this role?!</p>
<p>Training can overcome most issues, for example in Building Regs green book members of staff have received training on access and facilities for the fire service and regularly comment on this already.</p>
<p>Training would have to focus on these areas.</p>
<p>This is not as detrimental as it first appears. I feel this is already being offset by the knowledge and experience the watch receive from carrying out short audits coupled with the relationship they have with fire safety.</p> <p>Since June 2007, in that time; only one grey book officer has left the department and returned to an operational watch and most have left the department on retirement. To suggest that there would be a potential loss of fire safety experience on the watch is slightly misguided.</p> <p>Each operational watch have a designated point of contact (POC) within fire safety. It is a regular occurrence for the watch to forward fire safety concerns to their designated POC, following such</p>

referrals, the point of contact (green or grey book) will discuss the matter with the operational staff thus helping the operational staff to develop a better understanding of fire safety and the legislation. The POC system was implemented by Scott Hurford and works very well. It helps to develop and maintain a professional relationship between the operational and non-operational staff.
unavoidable if staff have not been operational
In depth initial training, ensuring that fire safety green book staff attend and inspect multiple scene's of incidents as a matter of development, both during and post fire incidents of significance.
Retired FF's to fill the Green book posts?
Extra training
We currently have non-operational staff in inspection posts, who have built up knowledge and experience - could these posts be assessed against their operational colleagues to identify any differences?
The staff can do courses to overcome this as we have green book posts now
visits carried out with operational crew
Structured approach to communication between Ops and FS teams
have cross over days where ops staff spend a day with BFS etc and vice versa
Believe, from the green book staff I know in that department, that they are more than capable of carrying out the duties that are expected of a grey book member of staff. Including building regs, inspections as a grey book member of staff does. The green book staff currently have been in that department the longest now and therefore knowledge is high.
If training is done properly no concerns
Seems inevitable, I can't think of how green book staff could have operational knowledge on a par with grey book staff. There is also a potential loss of credibility with the public in this area.
Time allocated to 'shadowing' operational personnel/ integrating with operational personnel.
none
Continue with at least 1 member of the team being operational or have the staff shadowing the watch and/ or having Q&A sessions with the operational staff
Operational awareness days for the Green Book staff in the same way that control have shadowed the watches over recent months Also keeping an operational officer in charge of the Teams / Department
standardization of visits
I believe that this is a nonstarter as having experience in the department, it is rare to rely solely on operational knowledge. Guidance and experience in role are far more pertinent. There is no saying that the grey book staff in role are any more proficient than green book.
Second people onto the departments for a rota a few times a year as staffing permits.
Ride with the watches.
We need operational knowledge
employ Shropshire staff
This is an important element to any inspecting officer's skillset but we have very competent non-operational IOs currently doing a very good job. Increased joint visits with watches into the future will stimulate cross pollination of ideas and opinions between IO's and operational staff so this may mitigate this loss to some degree.
When doing fire safety visits, is an operational knowledge required? if so, why are the staff non-operational now?
No Opinion
All staff to have a basic operational knowledge
training
Have BFS staff work out of wholetime stations to provide on the spot knowledge and guidance.
The new staff will not have worked as FF operationally.
no comment
Use Firefighters.
impossible to achieve
If it changes to Green Book, this cannot be overcome.
Closer working between watches and BFS green book personnel. Give green book personnel the opportunity to spend the day with watches and ride the appliances in order to give them an appreciation and understanding of operational duties and incidents etc.
Inspections be carried out in conjunction with ops staff to bring this knowledge along, encouraging and allowing the sharing of information.
This could be an issue but I am sure that appropriate training and guidance could overcome this.

this should not be of concern, the standard for inspections are set and a green book inspector who is qualified will work to them
You cannot overcome a loss of operational knowledge in the department if there are no personnel with operational knowledge working there.
This is a major change as we know that if we need advice we will be getting the correct information from the people who know with the background to support it
I would hope the competency of any Fire Safety Inspector whether on Green or Grey Book conditions would fulfil the needs of the role. A non-operational person who is conscientious and uses common sense, in my experience, is of more value than an operational person does not.
Close liaison with crews, occasionally taking an operational member of staff along on the inspection. I think over time this will lessen.
Being able to go into BFS department on promotion or side way move, gives you greater knowledge for fire safety and therefore to the public we serve
Re-employ retired staff with Fire Service Knowledge on Green book Conditions
Operational awareness days for civilian staff
I feel that operational knowledge is vital in this department in some form
Don't convert from grey to green
local knowledge is key to rural areas
As long as there was the opportunity for Green Book staff to get advice and guidance from Grey Book staff (such as maintaining an operational Department Head) I do not think this proposal would have a very high impact. Green Book staff should have the relevant training given to them as required for their role.
THERE SEEMS TO BE A CULTURE OF LACK OF KNOWLEDGE/DISCIPLINE ALREADY IN CIVILIAN ROLES SO I WOULD NOT NOTICE ANY DIFFERENCES PARTICULARLY IN THIS RESPECT
Not relevant, operational knowledge covers a broad spectrum
Surely you would only employ people who have a good knowledge and background in this area. Maybe re-employing ex service personnel from BFS!!!
No real concerns that this would be an issue
I have no opinion
Training - Fire College?
Training
Do you require operational knowledge to work in this department?
Robust training
Maintain some staff on Grey book in the department

Concern 2: Reduced fire safety knowledge at incidents by Operational personnel

At present fire safety knowledge at incidents is enhanced by movement of operational personnel through the fire safety department and then back out onto stations.

This knowledge is very useful not only in the safe extinguishment of fires (understanding of compartmentation etc) but also in the identification of potential fire safety breaches whilst carrying out operational duties.

Both of these skills contribute to reducing risk both in the community by ensuring businesses are safer and also to firefighter safety on the incident ground.

I am not sure this is a factor. We should use the BFS team as a resource at operational incidents but I can't say I have ever seen this happen.

I think to have a well-balanced fire service you require officers with a varied background and that includes fire safety.

The ability for fire safety officers to carry the experiences and skills learnt within the department to operational incidents is also extremely beneficial. When dealing with complex buildings, engineered solutions such as smoke control, ventilation, fixed installations etc. Also, to have been a building regs officer within the FS Dept. benefits the individual with knowledge of; the design and layout of a building, the means of escape criteria, compartmentation and protection of escape routes, suitability of adequate control measures etc. again can be identified as inadequate/insufficient almost immediately.

Create an e-learning package for operational staff to work through based on the articles in the Fire Safety Order and MOCTET.

Having spent time working as an Inspecting Officer, I think that the greatest loss in this area would be to

L1 incident commanders. This could be addressed with the addition of a unit into the development programme for crew and watch managers.
As above
Maintain at least one or two supervisory grey book posts and perhaps have the flexibility for these individuals to respond to incidents to provide specific advice where required.
More focus on training operational staff
Operational personnel will still carry out short audits and risk visits so fire safety isn't disappearing. The knowledge required for use at incidents could realistically be gained by both approaches.
This shouldn't change as short audits would presumably still be conducted by watches.
see concern 1
Training needs?
Integrate fire safety into ops continual development. Training by Green book staff.
Extra training
regular fire safety input
Many operational personnel move into FS and remain there for a number of years and not all watches include a crew member who has worked in FS. I think therefore this is very low risk.
As above. Area Command to carry out BFS training to support audit role on watch
This could be a great loss to an individual on grey book conditions.
as above
I don't believe this to be a concern
as above but reversed
none
Operational staff should continue taking part in BFS
Fire safety training by associate trainers if it is thought that it is required. Also Level 2 officers have been trained in aspects of enforcement and knowledge of what to look for at premises. Fire safety Investigators the same as Fire Investigators.
Operational personnel carry out BFS duties already, knowledge should already be with operational personnel
Rarely has an influence on activity or resolution. Where incidents require fire safety or technical knowledge, on site and specialist advice should always be available to Incident commanders
Send people onto the departments for a rota a few times a year as staffing permits.
Upskill ff's FS knowledge
As above, increased joint visits may help to alleviate this issue.
No RRO knowledge within the RDS now. Not even a basic understanding of the RRO. Should be addressed by training for all watches and RDS stations.
No Opinion
none
training
Provide a greater degree of initial and on-going training for all operational staff or train a number of BFS specialists on each watch.
I am not sure that staff that have not been out to operational jobs will know what we are looking for when we are at an incident.
high concern
Provide more information to staff on incident ground to make calculated choices. Invest in IT to allow. long term loss of knowledge through movement/retirement would be difficult to reinstate
As above
Fire Safety courses to be run for personnel, perhaps only for crew and watch managers so they can then disseminate the training to their respective watches. Incorporate a Fire Safety element into development programmes.
A regular BFS training programme for crews carrying out inspections to improve/maintain knowledge levels.
We have resources in place to overcome this such as local knowledge, risk visits, MDT information watch training will overcome this issue
No comment
Yes I think this is a valid concern - the loss of specialise knowledge, awareness and personal development by Ops personnel would need to be mitigated against.
See above

This could lead to missing opportunities in business when crews attend, and not spotting vital clues that with knowledge could nip in bud straight away
As Above
Most Fire Safety is watch based passed on from experienced members. Also there is nothing stopping green book personnel educating operational crews
I don't think this is a problem and could be resolved by a duty fire safety officer on call
Maintain decent standards of J.O on watch to deliver good training on building construction etc
you need the right person at the right job
The importance of communication and knowledge sharing should be promoted, along with Green Book staff offering and training, advice and guidance to operational personnel if required.
AS ABOVE
telephone assistance would still be available
Don't believe this is an issue!!!
OPS personnel should be aware of the types of premises on their station ground and should plan accordingly. Every incident will create different tasks that need to be overcome.
no opinion
Training - Fire College?
Training
create an on line or PowerPoint package to cover the aspects of fire safety
No suggestions
Do not agree

Concern 3: Less integration between Green book staff and Operational personnel
I feel that the current interaction between green and grey book staff is a vital component in helping to make appropriate and safe decisions with regards to adaptability of provisions throughout fire safety audit work. Without sufficient interaction any operational knowledge will be completely lost. I feel that staff who are making decisions/judgements of such an important nature out in the community should not lose this ability. The present interaction and mix of green and grey book staff provides this opportunity to cross over the invaluable experience gained by operational staff. Fire safety judgement calls are often not clear cut decisions and the ability to determine potential hazards is an integral part of an individual inspecting officer's decision making process. If we lose the interaction I believe we will lose a vital part of this skill and sharing of information and could potentially place the organisation at risk.
Not sure what negative effect this has. The job we do is more important than the terms and conditions which separate us.
Only concern may be that the business fire safety department may feel like a separate entity.
We never would want to create a "them and us" relationship. ALL personnel within this department work in very close cooperation with each other understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each individual instead of what conditions of service each works to.
See Concern 1
Again, as above, but wouldn't compensate for the current format
Utilise green book staff to deliver periodic refresher training on the RR(FS)O to operational stations to encourage and promote interaction
Focus on good working relationships - encourage green book employees to train/education grey book employees with regard to Fire Safety/Inspections.
I still think we need to keep some grey book members of staff within fire safety to ensure the importance of the legislation and our role is known by all members of staff. However operational staff frequently visit the fire safety team for advice when carrying out short audits so integration would continue between both. I don't see this as an issue
see concern 1
see below
See concern 1&2
I don't understand the issue this relates to
There will always be links between Area Command and Prevention, and this will continue.
I don't think this is the case anyway.
more awareness days

See number 1 above.
And perhaps seen by grey book staff as green book staff taking their jobs and promotion options away.
It would always be good to have two perspectives
Again, inevitable, but regular interactive sessions would be a good way of sharing information
The answers to 1 and 2 would mean the integration would need to exist or even increase
none
Set up visits
See 1 above assigning green book staff to relevant watches for awareness training would keep a link and allow feedback both ways if required
Not much integration now
No concerns and this impact confuses me.
Ride with the watches
They may not be able to understand the circumstances if the don't have the experience of real fire awareness
This is not currently an issue for the teams and both Green and grey work excellently alongside each other. A stand out issue is the one of pay. Presently all the team members work to exactly the same standard and are all studying for the same qualification in line with the CFOA competency framework. We currently face the real prospect that Green Book staff who earn significantly less than grey book colleagues but do the same work can request a wage review or as is most likely look elsewhere for better paid posts. This then presents the issue of whether a pay review brings wages up and reduces any potential savings or whether we as a Service continue to recruit and train individuals only to see them leave for better paid jobs shortly after.
could be overcome by Fire safety staff working remote from HQ, working at the RDS stations 1-2 days per week
No Opinion
noe
integrated training
No opinion
We
no comment
secondment of staff on short term to maintain link
This will not be a big issue, as Green book and operational staff work along each other now.
See concern 1.
Suggestions for 1 & 2 could address this concern.
This is no different than a member of staff that works in other departments such as HR.
no concern
No comment
May actually help improve it. Green Book Fire Safety personnel would continue to support operational staff during 72d visits etc.
Green book staff and operational staff have different roles throughout the organisation, I can't see how this particular change would lead to less integration.
we find it difficult amongst ourselves at times to communicate and that when face to face and at least having integrations with green book, we wont become alienated due to being in different offices and floors.
As mentioned above
Coped before we can cope again
back to creating a them and us scenario
Again, the importance of communication and knowledge sharing should be promoted
NO OBVIOUS CHANGE ANTICIPATED
not relevant in my opinion, this interaction is currently in place with green book staff
No concerns as I feel all staff will continue to work together.
no opinion
There isn't a great deal of integration at the moment between different departments/operational staff/ admin staff etc. and what needs to get done, gets done.
It's not about integration it's about saving money. People will either get on or not
No suggestions
Do not agree with this

Concern 4: Reduced development/promotion opportunities for Grey book staff

In the same way that operational staff bring their operational experience into the department, they also take their fire safety training back out to the stations when they leave.

I personally don't feel that the important issue here is losing promotion opportunities but definitely is the ability to develop operational staff and subsequently their ability to pass their knowledge on when they return to operational duties.

What about the ability for development for green book staff?

If you speak to green book staff within the department you will find that their lack of promotion and movement up the pay scales is a big issue.

If any restructure of the department to green book staff was to involve a management structure then clearly the level of savings identified would have to be adjusted accordingly with a new pay structure.

With regards to the above point you may well be aware that we are about to lose one of our green book staff, with levels of pay and lack of any promotional opportunity cited as the main reasons for leaving.

We are currently one of the lowest paying Fire and Rescue Services with regards to green book staff.

Staff in similar size services undertaking the same responsibilities are on £6-9,000 a year more than their counterparts in Shropshire.

I believe HR are currently looking into a re grading review process for the current green book positions within the fire safety department? The outcome of any such review could potentially wipe away the majority of any savings initially identified.

I realise the point I am making relates to green book staff pay and not the question highlighted, however I feel the points above too important to leave out and there isn't a relevant dialogue box relating to these points to complete.

Also, for your information Humberside have already gone through a process of changing from grey book to green book staff within their fire safety department and I believe they are now looking at returning back to grey book staff again. I do not have full details as yet but I have enquired with them for further information, which I will pass on as soon as I receive anything.

There will be no BFS development path which would be a shame as it suits some people in the organisation. Shift more of the BFS responsibility onto watches and offer them training in that field.

As previously mentioned for future officers a temporary/full promotion into fire safety is a choice which enables staff to learn the importance of understanding fire regulations.

The inability to work within another specialist department would always have a negative effect of the opportunity to enhance one's skill levels. A dept. such as Fire Safety which is a specialist department would cease to be an area of expertise open to anyone other than non-operational staff, definitely a detrimental move.

See Concern 2

Development opportunities can be created, although obviously promotion opportunities (and diversity of opportunities), will be diminished.

Secondment opportunities?

In my experience there are plenty of opportunities for development/promotion within the service.

So what? Green book staff currently have no development or promotion opportunities within fire safety. Why should roles remain open for development of employees on one set of terms of conditions but stay closed for another.

This would be a concern as BFS is an important area in helping people to progress. If this would apply to Prevention GM posts also there would be a significant reduction in progression opportunities.

Reduced not removed, as opposed to no development for green book staff?

I understand the concern but don't understand why this would be seen as a blocker

have team leaders within green books post as this would also give them something to work too

This is a concern across all areas.

These opportunities would be lost. I like the idea of doing a time in the department as suggested on the notes. Feel that would give an appreciation of the role and department. It could give promotion opportunities for green book staff.

We should always try to keep development opportunities for firefighters we are after all a frs

No idea how to address this one!

This is my personal greatest concern, particularly given the present climate and possible changes to retirement age and capability issues. The answer from the Government has been that 'alternative roles' could be found for personnel that may not meet the fitness requirements in later years. These opportunities for alternative roles will no longer be there. I have no suggestions if this was to go ahead.

none
Ensure opportunities are in place or advise staff of the situation before they take on the role
This is correct but there is always an issue with grey book staff being training having money invested and then moving on. at least if the department was all green book there will be continuity in staffing and skill levels and less staff turnover. Also it remains a good opportunity for people on modified duties to work in and that will help with ops fire safety knowledge.
Where are the development opportunities currently for Green book staff?
True. No solution.
This would affect the opportunity for operational staff to develop there Fire safety skills
The knowledge that working within the BFS arena brings has always traditionally been essential for officers wishing to rise through the levels in the Service. This experience has involved taking extensive qualifications and spending time as a IO. Whilst this is doubtless a great asset to officers it is not essential to have that level of knowledge to operate successfully as a manager. Yes reducing the supervisory posts within the teams will reduce the overall establishment of supervisory posts and subsequently reduce the opportunities available. That said without any career progression for green book staff it may be more difficult to recruit and maintain them. Perhaps there is a need to have supervisory positions within the teams?
No Opinion
none
other opportunities from new business side under AM Timmis
No opinion
I think that we need every grey book non-operational post we can hang onto, as there are going to be an lot of FF's needing a post when that can't pass their fitness test in a few years !
no comment
Is promotion so important? There are many Ff that would happily work in BFS and CFS. Higher management position does not mean that there is an increase in knowledge. Ff could go into fire safety for ARA payments and still learn the job.
reduced position equal reduced opportunities
As in concern 1
Keep some posts Grey book in order to at least keep some development/promotion opportunities.
No suggestions at this time.
At least they have a job.
the withdrawal of grey book will obviously impact on promotion ,but the long term financial savings make it a more sustainable choice for the brigade
No comment
Yes, development/promotional opportunities will reduce across the Service with a reduction in Wholetime staff and a lack of recruitment. This will be the removal of a key avenue of development but will improve development opportunities for Green Book staff.
Conversely you could say increased development/promotion opportunities for Green book staff.
that just takes another opportunity away from personnel to develop themselves and gives less incentive to want to be promoted
Unfortunate by product of reducing uniform numbers.
Unfortunately in the current climate there are reduced development opportunities for all staff within the Service, not only Grey Book staff. Should this proposal be able to save the Service money without having to make redundancies, this would benefit all.
NO CHANGE ANTICIPATED
Staff have been reluctant to take posts when offered on the 9 day fortnight.
No real concerns. Individuals will have to make different choices if they wish to be promoted.
no opinion
As suggested in the IRMP, allow grey book staff to experience spells in different departments to get a rounded view of the entire service.
Again it's about cost cutting, promotion can only be offered if the position is there. Don't just create jobs to allow for promotion opportunities
No suggestions
This would be an issue having just ran a promotion board. I feel this would have a large impact on morale. Promotion prospects are limited and would been more limited should this happen. I also feel it was the wrong move to bring HW personnel into the department without offering the jobs to SFRS personnel first.

Do you think there are things in the proposal which could disproportionately affect particular individuals, groups or communities?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	26%	32
No	25%	31
No opinion	49%	60
If you answered yes above, use this space to tell us what they are and how serious they are		32
<i>answered question</i>		123
<i>skipped question</i>		15

If you answered yes above, use this space to tell us what they are and how serious they are

<p>I don't feel that the proposal in its current format will be advantageous to either green or grey book staff.</p> <p>Greater responsibility will need to be passed onto green book staff when grey book posts have been replaced i.e. serving of prohibitions, management decisions currently undertaken by WM's etc.</p> <p>Increased risk to the community due to a decrease in operational knowledge base when applying fire safety solutions.</p>
<p>Various communities, authorities and industry would miss out on the opportunity to have first-hand knowledge and understanding of how operation firefighters and relevant SIPs and SOPs would/could affect them, their businesses or their agency.</p>
<p>Estimated savings maybe reduced, if Green book staff jobs' are re-evaluated. Other brigades (eg Humberside) have noted high turnover of Green book staff. Vital exposure, for Grey book staff, gained by collaborating with other depts, agencies, businesses, stakeholders etc is lost. Added benefits of department stability, operational resilience present in BFS, exchange of operational and BFS knowledge to Fire Safety and Watches respectively, additional career progression opportunities, reduced integration of Green and Grey book staff and possible reduced estimated savings make the benefits of proposal outweighed by the losses. All of which can affect individuals, the department, watches and the organisation, to greater or lesser, extents.</p>
<p>Speaking from my own personal experience I believe that grey book personnel will be at a disadvantage if the opportunity to be promoted or to make a sideways move into BFS is lost. I specifically refer to the fact that prior to transferring into BFS in SFRS whilst working as an operational Crew Manager in my former Brigade I had never been given any in depth input into significant issues which are vital to the successful resolution of operational incidents, e.g. building construction, evacuation strategies for large and complex premises</p>
<p>It would clearly disproportionately affect operational officers who would like the chance to work in BFS, and potentially discriminate against those personnel as they would not be offered the same chances as they currently are.</p>
<p>Operational knowledge I feel should be a prerequisite and adds an invaluable source of experience, resulting in enhanced knowledge for this department. Any transition would have to be carefully and continuously monitored.</p>
<p>A non-operational department was an opportunity to further utilise the experience of previously operational staff who could be on modified duties due to ill health, injury or pregnancy for example; this also gave some integration between grey and green book staff.</p>
<p>All of the above concerns affect Grey Book staff. Probably the best way to overcome the concerns is not to go ahead with a penny pinching proposal.</p>
<p>Staff - A perceived potential reduction of opportunities to work in different departments.</p>
<p>loss of operational knowledge and experience</p>
<p>Further training may be required to ensure all staff have the expertise for all groups in our community as I currently believe they have specialised areas i.e. vulnerable people.</p>
<p>Grey book staff knowledge at incidents.</p>
<p>As in 4 above</p>

There would be less jobs for grey book staff
All the above
Operational knowledge is very important especially in this organisation
Less opportunity to undertake a different shift pattern and different work
Some existing members of staff may feel they wish to remain in this sphere for the next couple of years and may be under pressure to return to a job/shift system they have previously done/worked. Some members of staff may feel as part of their progression a route has been closed to them and they won't ever develop the knowledge of BFS to support their overall career pathway. The issue of pay disparity for the same work undertaken and the knock on effect of staff recruitment and retention is a major concern.
Any one that would like to gain further knowledge about fire prevention and the legal aspect of enforcement. Most of the operation staff that might want to go for promotion, there will be a lot less opportunity. All the communities in Shropshire, as I don't believe that they will be getting as good a service as they are at the moment.
Both grey book and green book staff.
It is vital that the balance is maintained between support staff and operational. Skill levels must be maintained in all sectors but the very least operationally so that we remain effective at the core levels of saving lives and property as an emergency service. It would create a dangerous situation for frontline fire-fighters and indeed the people who we serve, this will affect everyone negatively if the balance is not maintained.
How can you guarantee retention of staff once trained, if they are Green Book? Grey Book staff will move within the organisation.
The 4 concerns above do address most issues with this proposal, the impact would be to all within the service and the community we serve. At first I think the impact would be small, however over time this may grow and as the integration between Green book staff and Ops personnel widens the impact would slowly increase. Such things as loss of communication and clarity on issues, no definitive answer on issues, less liaison could create a 'them and us' culture with regard to responsibilities.
They will negatively affect a lot of people in some way.
I feel that it is important to keep as many Grey Book posts open as possible. In the near future Fire fighters will be working until 60. At least with some non-operational Grey Book Posts there as options for the aging work force to be relocated.
Yes as it will affect the people in the positions at the moment and we will lose those Grey Book conditions and that means less jobs for them.
Operational staff would no longer be able to detach to this department.
Morale of uniformed staff and opportunities or individuals to develop within the fire service
you talk about seconding staff from other brigades but you already have trained staff with our OWN brigade why can't these be utilised better ie rds
Promotion for Grey book staff - fewer posts.
If the proposals meant job losses for any individual or reduction in pay/allowances.
No opportunity to move away from watches to gain experience within this department. Fire-fighters should have the opportunity to work in other departments as/when these arise. It could lower morale if they stay on a watch for 30 years with no chance to gain experience elsewhere.

Proposal 4: Utilise Retained Duty Staff to cover short term Wholetime vacancies

The detailed impact assessment shows that the following issues would be of greatest concern to staff, if this proposal was to be implemented. Do you have any suggestions about how we might overcome them?

Concern 1: The impact on RDS station staffing, which can be limited anyway, whilst covering WT
Recruitment campaign would be needed to provide extra personnel to cover both the wholetime deficiencies as well as the RDS coverage
The introduction of an availability system and then where there is surplus bring RDS in from whichever station has the most like a normal stand-in.
Yes, if it is used there will be some impact on RDS stations, how much will depend on quantity of staff required.
Unworkable as one person can't be available in two places at once.
The only way I can envisage this working, would be to have a pool of RDS staff on a rota system, from which staff can be requested.
Possible forward planning using a rota system
Wholetime should take priority
Continue to drive to improve establishment levels across all RDS stations to lessen impact. As far as reasonably practicable forecast ahead and give as much notice as possible to the RDS station to assess any impact on their own crewing levels.
no
rds struggle to keep trucks on the run now so if they were to ride at WT stations even less staff for their own stations causing problems
A robust availability schedule
great idea
no known solution
Keep wholetime establishment at the correct level so that this proposal is not necessary
Could it be specified that an individual could only cover WT shifts if their retained station appliance was available without them?
This has been tried at Shrewsbury already, I don't think this was the case. As you know it would have to be where staffing allows on RDS stations too.
Whole time fire-fighters in a bank system also. to cover shortfalls on watch or RDS stations
It's important to be mindful that it isn't just the impact on RDS station staffing that will be affected, it may also impact on availability for training.
strict guidelines
This would be a big concern for me, I am aware that staffing can be low already and the volunteers for the system from the RDS may come from those from a station already struggling.
increased levels of RDS
The possible option of recruiting additional staff on station to cater for these eventualities would in many cases not be possible, and would counteract some of the savings. it would put more pressure on Retained staff left on station and the businesses they work for. (less personnel means the same people will need to attend more of the call outs). Some may welcome this change, some may not.
none
Do not use RDS staff
Use RDS stations with plenty of personnel, which there are quite a few
Many stations are already struggling for staff hence the need for RSO's to cover deficits, you can't rob Peter to pay Paul!
Resilience register which one of my team is currently looking at should ensure that only personnel who are available without compromising base station staffing levels will be the first option. This may cause concern in terms of the amount of money that could be earned by individuals on Stations where staffing is not deficient but managed properly, (with a bespoke availability system and not an unproven concept) would help to ensure that a fair rota system is employed. Concentrating on greater RDS

recruitment with additional courses and focus changing to reflect the importance of RDS within the service would create greater capacity for such initiatives
No, that would only impact the stations that do have short falls, there are a lot of stations that could afford to send some staff some of the time especially night time and weekends
strict control on which staff can apply ie a risk assessment to be carried out by WM and AGC responsible prior to allowing application to proceed.
A full integrated RDS availability system would allow Fire Control / area command to see where they may be scope to call RDS from stations allowing staff to go would be up to local managers to manage, RDS pumps would be priority for the RDS managers.
No Opinion
Fire fighter should only be allowed to cover whole time stations when availability on their own Retained station allows them to go.
none
A robust availability system which would allow decisions to be made on which stations could afford to release staff on any particular day
only use retained stations with enough capacity
this can be managed locally and should not affect RDS staffing
No opinion
Keeping appliances on the run at outlying stations.
This will have a high impact on the stations as some can barely keep an appliances on the runs as it is no opinion
produce a similar system to structured overtime and have a designated means of managing-provide extra post
increase RDS staffing levels back to previous numbers-1 above current as minimum
If this merely keeps WT on the run at the expense of retained stations then this cannot be allowed
I do not have any suggestions for this as all the concerns listed cannot be overcome easily. And the saving made by using RDS staff will be totally outweighed by the extra training costs and these individuals maintaining their competences in the new skills. Who would organise this if fire control is merged with W&H?
N/A
This would have to be managed locally, there is RDS staff that are unemployed and I am sure they would be grateful of the extra pay, I do however have concerns as to how RDS staff would be treated by our wholetime colleagues.
no effect ,the retained can not accept the shift cover if it means taking the appliance they primary staff of the run
This would be allocated at the start of a week, overstaffing on an RDS station can be passed on weekly and this information used when selecting covering staff. This information can be forwarded to control for effective distribution of shifts. No affect on RDS staffing.
This is a major concern as they do not have the skill levels for the special appliances and especially at Wellington with the staffing of the RT
This could put more pressure on individuals left behind to cover the RDS station
Only stations with a good level of staffing could participate.
No concern as its highly unlikely we will be using enough RDS staff to have an affect.
depends some retained trucks are allowed super numery, as long as covered by nearby other retained stations. Resentment from other retained staff if they weren't chosen to cover deficiencies
Not realistic to utilise retained to cover WT deficiencies.
no
LGA survey shows public satisfaction with fire and rescue response times has fallen to 80%. Odd time to consider removing resources from the retained
they would only cover wholetime if it wasn't detrimental to their own station surely
Many RDS stations cannot provide crews already at certain times of the day, this will; exacerbate the issue.
RDS Station establishments could be looked at and staffing increased in order to ensure there were enough staff on Station to help cover the WT shortages and also to ensure that the RDS appliance stays on the run.
DO NOT AGREE
Use RSO's instead of Retained staff?

choose staff from non-deficient stations
We were recently looking at closing 4 retained stations, so would the impact be that great!!! Depends where the Bank of R/T staff come from??? If all from one station then problem. Maybe limit the amount of Banks people from anyone station at any one time!! A rota!!
I feel other options should be considered before relying on cover from RDS staff.
only use personal from stations where the station availability would not be affected if they are to cover a whole time shift
only use stations with high numbers of personnel
This would be a big concern but I'm sure that if it were run correctly this would be taken into account before allowing RDS to cover wholetime vacancies
This would be discussed with their AGC the same as if an RDS person changed their full time job.

Concern 2: Increased training costs to bring RDS bank staff up to WT skill levels
Increased costs plus the increased training time needed which would have implications with RDS staff's main employment
Not just monetary cost but time cost away from their work and home.
Could be offset by not paying O/T
One option to address this would be to have specialist skills at RDS stations throughout the county, from which staff can be called upon. The issue with this would be the difficulty already experienced by RDS staff in maintaining competence in the role with the limited number of training hours
Integrate it into retained drill nights
Utilise wholetime retained staff
Utilise time spent on WT stations covering deficiencies to carry out additional training as required, subject to attending incidents etc.
do same training now
You would need to invest to ensure competence standards I don't think there is any way around increased training costs but this would only benefit the service.
This should be done anyway.
cost we would incur anyway by having to train new WT staff
no solution
Keep wholetime establishment at the correct level so that this proposal is not necessary
Funds are available to initially train RDS to WT skill levels, effective use of funds if more skills are learned by retained - may reduce training requirement at retained station?
I don't think this is the case as RDS work alongside WT at incidents anyway. Each individual has different skills so some RDS may have higher skills on certain areas anyway.
on watch instructors / Local Training Instructors carrying out training on shift
The cost of the training will depend entirely on how the skills gap will be addressed and whether or not the resources are available firstly to identify the skills gap which could well be different for each individual dependent upon their current levels of experience/station activity and secondly their availability to undertake whatever their personal training plan is. The only other way is to provide a one course fits all.
Trained to basic level to support WT function and crews. Not srt alp etc
Spending money is a concern but if this would offset that, I think that would be ok. It could also be good to invest in the RDS to increase their knowledge at incidents with their RDS station
Part of the literature on this option stated that the number of times this would be required would potentially be minimal. If this is the case, then the cost of training the personnel up to WT skill level would potentially be disproportional to the gains, and the ongoing training to keep up competencies would mean the RDS travelling to train with their whole time counterparts, or additional training courses. If I have misunderstood the literature, and the occasions would be sufficient to warrant the costs and time implications of training, this would have an impact on their cover at their own stations and potentially the businesses they work for.
only use wholetime RDS staff
Do not use RDS staff
Increase the watch audits for RDS, to ensure the standards are already there, as they should be.
Not only increased cost but maintaining those levels once achieved

This should not be a major concern as specialisms could be an unnecessary requirement in many deployments. Core module and bread and butter skills are maintained by all personnel and where specialism shortages exist, the register would identify those with ant additional skills.
Also they do not pass the same selection process and this might cause some ill feeling.
This was not an issue when the WT were out on strike
Use of the Associate Trainer budget to facilitate the additional training required
What is the skill gap?? Certain RDS stations now trained in PPV. the only skills missing are: BFS - could be done on watch Laying a guideline - could be done on watch (half day with Training Staff) FAST - could be done on watch Train existing RSO staff to cover these WT deficiencies, and have a bank of RDS to cover the RSO role when required, so bank RDS are covering then on the RDS stations.
No Opinion
Are you suggesting retained staff are not competent? A competent FF should be able to undertake WT role the incidents we attend are exactly the same!
none
The only additional training required would be in following guidelines, which most RDS personnel did until fairly recently
offset by reduction in wholetime staff
was not aware of a skills gap between a wholetime appliance and an RDS appliance
No opinion
I can't see that RDS staff will be able to staff Wellington station .Now the staffing is at 5 most of the time at Wellington, the skills required for the RT and in particular Animal rescue would be impossible to gain with just a bit if training. This apart from not giving the public a very good service could also be very dangerous for all at an incident.
We are in a process where we are supposed to be reducing costs, perhaps we should be utilising out wholetime more and not less by making sure we have sufficient wholetime staff
no opinion
training of RDS to be carried out at a local level - more money spent training and not on travel and subsistence realistic in what areas of cover is required - limited exposure to specialist appliance or provide resilience through specific stations/skill
The levels of difference can be managed by the OIC without putting crews at risk.
Some training could be carried out by WT staff, or associate trainers may help to reduce costs and the workload of training staff.
I thought we all had the same training?
not required for just staffing appliances ,the retained must be competent in the areas of firefighting anyway
Whilst there is an increase in training is this proportionate to recruiting? Many RDS staff have many years' experience and training behind them. Wouldn't see this as a major issue. Also, the increased training can be passed down to RDS station staff benefiting all retained staff and the Brigade as a whole.
This is unachievable as we spend years training up to a specialised level and this could not be achieved over night.
I would expect it would be difficult, if extra special training was undertaken, to keep up competences
Would this cost be offset by the money saved from employing Wholetime staff? In the short term there would need to be an investment but longer term it would avoid redundancies if these posts were not needed going forward. It would also help in their RDS roles, as they would benefit experience and knowledge wise from attending incidents whilst covering WT.
Would only be of concern if ALP, RT and boat operators were at a low level on the watch, otherwise would be no different to having someone in development, in fact, they would probably be better as some have over 10years experience. The gap is not as wide as some may imagine
I would suggest that it would be impractical to rely on RDS personnel being up-skilled to the levels of WT personnel as this means more time away from primary employment.
It will be a constant conveyer belt, individuals dropping out due to other employers commitments. You would need refresher courses for them.
RDS would struggle to maintain competencies by upskilling

no
Some RDS would need minor training and could be done on the watch. However others could cost a fortune!
I thought we were all trained to the same level already
If this proposal can save the Service money in the long run I think it would be a good idea to invest in the training now. Also, by having RDS staff brought up to a WT training level we could look at the possibility of migration for RDS staff into WT vacancies, reducing the cost of expensive WT recruitment campaigns.
STRONGLY AGREE
and maintenance of those skills, ie RT, Animal rescue, line safety, boat, SRT, first responder, guidelines, etc
This should be done on a voluntary basis by RDS staff, as they will be the ones reaping the benefits. They could organise days/nights where they come in and drill with W/T to get competencies up!!!!
As above
This would not be an issue some RDS staff are already whole time in other brigades. Also RDS and WT pass the same assessments!! Are RDS not competent????
wholtime already have different skill levels eg SRT RT trained.AR2/3. ALP IRU so shouldn't make difference.
It's not just the cost it's who do you train??? If I said yes I want to cover shortfalls in whole-time, you train me and Then I cannot give the cover you require? How many people would you need to train to allow for cover?? How do they maintain their competency?
Disagree. RDS are as well trained as WT in many situations. Small cost to train in specialist skills such as PPV but this would still be cost effective.

Concern 3: Impact on RDS primary employers
Increase in number of calls and availability could have a major impact on the RDS staff's main employment
Could be significant. Nightshift cover for 15 hours then they are expected at work by their employer the next day?
Down to the individual to arrange with their employer
Definitely a big issue. Primary employers may withdraw all permissions for individual to be an RDS officer.
Close liaison with individuals and their employers, giving clear impacts, in order to gain consent.
Difficult to assess impact. Ensure that as far as reasonably practicable cover is required on as few occasions as possible and good notice given.
you would only employ self employed
employers not happy as my old employer once said I don't mind you serving your community but I don't want you going off for long spells all over the county I have a business to run
PR and buy in from employees - creating higher profile/publicity advertising within the local communities and use the Primary employers to do this?
If the RDS staff offer the cover then their employees should be prepared for them to have to leave in those hours anyway.
possible, but down to the individual to manage
no known solution
Keep wholtime establishment at the correct level so that this proposal is not necessary
I think this might be difficult - can't think of a way around it
May appeal initially to self-employed retained firefighters
This could be a major factor. You would have to ask RDS to cover on their rota days off, as employers wouldn't be happy releasing staff to cover our shortfalls.
To only allow shift on days' time when they are not meant to be at primary employment and to have sufficient rest time before starting primary employment.
Those RDS employees who wish to participate may be prevented by their primary employers unless they take annual leave to address their training needs, which is then likely to impact on their families. A direct communication strategy needs to be followed to engage with primary employers.
consultation/permission

If this started to affect them adversely, I think employers would be unhappy. This effect could be loss of individuals for whole days rather than the possibly if a few hours, I think with the economy how it is, employers would not be overly happy releasing staff for larger periods.
as concern 2 above
none
Do not use RDS staff
Foe some RDS this is their main source of income, target these employees
For private companies with limited staff it is already difficult for them to release staff for fire calls never mind for longer periods to cover WT deficiencies. There is a danger of losing the goodwill currently in place from these employers
This would be something for individuals, the service and employers to discuss. However, many self-employed personnel would be available and greater liaison between SFRS and employers would help to ease concerns and perhaps demonstrate some benefits for employers. The down side to this is that clearly some individuals would lose out on some lucrative opportunities if not free to participate and this could create some discontent
There are a lot of self-employed personnel and also shift workers on the RDS
Engagement with employers is always an issue and we do that more and more through our business education seminars. a short time period could be allocated to the RDS GST team to explain any concerns to business members.
would only be able be attend if staff were on 'Rota days' from main employer - again local managers to manage with availability system
No Opinion
none
This is the responsibility of the RDS personnel to balance their main employment and SFRS
presumably this would be more beneficial to self-employed RDS staff
Not a FRS issue, many are self-employed, they would need to discuss with their own employer
No opinion
Unless the FF was self-employed, I can't see many employers allowing their staff to take a day's work at short notice.
Many employers are very tolerant of RDS staff leaving their place of work but think if it was to happen on a regular basis they might start asking does the person want to work for them or the FRS
high
due to the need for primary employers to reduce loss of staff this is difficult to achieve
This would have to be considered by the individuals and employers. The employers would have the final say as this could if pushed force employers to look the basic allowance that they already provide and push this beyond the limit.
N/A
This cover would have to be outside of primary employment.
this would be a local issue and only can be resolved by the persons concerned
Preference given to self-employed will overcome this and assist with concern 4.
If I was an employer I would not be agreeable to release staff for long period as this would affect their business.
It is difficult to get time away from the main employer anyway so this could be the main sticking point to get reliable personnel to cover at short notice.
This I think would be the biggest hurdle to overcome. How many primary employers would allow their staff to have time off to cover WT? If they had to take leave, this could affect their family life. If you compare this to the Reserve Forces, their employment is covered by law, however do retained firefighters have the same protection?
The release of On-Call staff from primary employment could be stopped and therefore impact on availability.
as an employer I wouldn't want staff away even more for business and skill shortage of employee
no
Retained could take unpaid leave from primary employer
wouldn't effect primary employers
By speaking to employers and keeping good lines of communication open with them, hopefully we should be able to gain their support.
NEGATIVE IMPACT ON MAIN EMPLOYERS NOT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

depends on employer
Employers only have to say NO!!! Their original commitment is to the Retained station not Wholetime. Surely if R/T wanted to be on Bank list it would be up to them to sort out day off from work if they wished to cover Wholetime shortage. It should not impose on their Fulltime employment.
This will obviously have an impact on employers who may choose to withdraw their release for calls on a permanent basis.
that would be a matter for the individual to arrange with their primary employer
You would have to select personnel whose employer agrees to them possibly being away from their full time job for longer hours. It would have to be agreed before the person was selected.
Personnel would only apply with permission from their employer

Concern 4: Finding a fair way to distribute shifts and the additional workload for people organising it
This could potentially be carried out by control (in their current format). However, this may not be a possibility if changes are made to the current control room staffing system
See point 1. The use of a detachment matrix and internal station rota for them seems logical, the same way the whole time arrange detachments.
Would be difficult to manage without accusations of a lack of fairness
Listening closely to views of those affected, recruiting their ideas. Brigade good at consulting front line staff
Absorb workload within GSTs? Look at options for distribution of shifts, e.g. 'first come first served', rolling rota
no
Major problem no fair system open to all.
An 'additional cover' rota would be a fair way of distributing shifts and should be split between HR and WM to help organise.
a key function of management is to be able to organise, as such, not an issue
no known solution
Keep wholetime establishment at the correct level so that this proposal is not necessary
May release some overtime budget - this could be used for organisation and implementation?
Do it the same as WT have RDS put their name on a rota.
Each individual has different circumstances. Some are shift workers and others have day jobs. A banked hour's system may be the fairest way.
coordinated by area command
Logistics could be very difficult and what would the priority be, keep your RDS appliance on the run or cover the WT.
If there are too many people 'in the pool' available to provide this solution, they would potentially not get the exposure to the roles to keep up competencies without additional expense of having to arrange specific additional courses/ training session relative to the role.
none
Do not use RDS staff
Voluntary scheme, on a trial basis.
SFRS should strive to develop quality ICT systems and a support structure advised by best practice advice from national colleagues to ensure a fair, balanced, workable and cost effective solution.
use the watch managers to control the workload and liaise with RDS watch managers to organise some kind of rota contact
I think a "bank" system would be fairest with employees who have been interviewed, selected after passing relevant criteria would then receive a call from the relevant AGC to see if they could cover shifts.
Local managers to manage fair distribution around station. But only certain stations may have capacity to allow people to cover anyway.
No Opinion
none
A simple list with the name on the top being contacted first, if they take the shift they move to the bottom. If they don't they stay at the top, until they take a shift. A good availability system would allow someone to get an overview of which stations had spare resources each day.
feed into the experience that other departments have of dealing with this issue

This can be incorporated into the new availability system, a person providing cover can enter when they are available on the system (on a separate page) once utilised they are simply moved to the bottom of the list.
No opinion
It will be impossible to keep everybody happy, I guess it would be for to control to sort out, if they are still here!
There is no easy way of doing this as someone will complain that they are never getting called
high impact
See concern 1 - without control of staff not viable.
Again this would be managed and the appropriate skill levels applied to the shortfall.
Use the same system that is currently used for managing the wholetime overtime.
Potentially DSO's could manage a system similar to that on WT stations.
I am sure that this could be managed. I appreciate people have workloads but there are the RSO'S could cover some of the shifts and Firefighters could cover the RDS stations shortfalls on hourly rate pay.
Distribution of shifts should be based upon time served, current rank and their day work commitments. Also, preference should be given to RDS stations where staffing exceeds the 4 required for that day.
If it could be coordinated correctly.
RDS Control staff are only turned out if Wholetime Control personnel are not able/do not wish to do overtime. A more equitable way of distributing shift opportunities would significantly reduce costs and help develop and maintain RDS Control competency.
I would expect this to be very difficult & requiring a lot of phone calls
This could become an industry of its own!
With WT staff on overtime. No extra training required
no
Put them on a rota e.g Wholetime overtime rota
Rota systems could be put in place, Watch Managers should keep a record of the extra hours worked by their RDS staff so as to ensure everyone has the same opportunities.
NOT A GOOD ROUTE TO GO DOWN - WILL POSSIBLY CAUSE RIFTS BETWEEN STAFF
As concern 1/2
Rota or so many shifts each dependant on availability
rolling list if you can't go when asked hard luck
That's down to good admin. I'm sure there must be other brigades who run this system already and have a selection system in place.
Do not see this as a major issue

If you are a RDS member of staff, would you be interested in participating in such a scheme?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	12%	14
No	17%	20
Not applicable	71%	85
<i>answered question</i>		119
<i>skipped question</i>		19

Proposal 5: Reduce the support staff pay budget

<p>A lot of work is currently being progressed that will support improving efficiency in our current systems and processes. Do you have any suggestions about possible changes to current tasks, processes and/or systems that you think could further assist in improving efficiency in our support service functions? Is there anything we should stop doing, or start doing?</p>
<p>Yes, introduce an automated phone system where individual extensions and or staff names can direct people to the correct phone extension. Such systems are not overly expensive and could help reduce lost time that can be re directed to other essential works and/or reduce the number of staff required to answer/re direct phone calls received. Numerous other services use such automated phone systems.</p>
<p>Fire Safety officers carrying out various administrative duties appertaining to letters etc. Time could be saved by removing paperwork from the Training and Development Centre. Assessments of students could be recorded on a tablet at the time of observation and sent directly to the printer. Electronic copies of assessment forms could still be kept and the result would be less work for TDC Support Staff.</p>
<p>making staff accountable for their role making sure it has all been carried out efficiently</p>
<p>Look at more flexible ways of working for all support staff rather than 9 to 5 - 37 hours per week.</p>
<p>I am uncertain that changes to systems and processes will improve efficiency to the extent we can reduce the number of support staff needed. Systems and processes in this organisation seem to generate more work in administrating them not reducing work. Improvement is needed but not to reduce support staff, but to allow them to carry out all functions of their role.</p>
<p>A review of support system tasks would be a good investment, I think there are probably ways that we could save time and money which wouldn't occur to us without looking at individual processes.</p>
<p>I don't feel qualified to comment on this matter</p>
<p>Efficiency will not be improved by simply paying staff less.</p>
<p>The new 'Views' system seems to be capable of removing a lot of the paperwork etc if it is used to its full potential</p>
<p>Potentially sharing more systems/knowledge/skills with other public sector organisations. Narrow the scope of what we aim to achieve, in terms of support processes. Look at utilizing skills of RDS firefighters for support functions?</p>
<p>Despite the requirement to reduce budgets in the long term, we are heavily dependent on support staff with particular skills to design and implement systems to benefit the whole Service. We should invest in these resources now to ensure that these systems are implemented efficiently and effectively, and it is then that we should evaluate how the Service works and what resources are needed to run its systems into the future.</p>
<p>Allowing Admin staff working in a department to be managed by that department and not a central pool.</p>
<p>As you have said we currently have a number of projects in progress such as SharePoint and My View. Adopt a communication strategy specifically for this group of staff. If they are assured that changing the way they work and improving efficiency would not mean they will lose their incomes, but may just mean they would support other departments where natural wastage had occurred, they may well become proactive in identifying areas for greater efficiency.</p>
<p>Outsource where possible. Amalgamate functions with Shrops Council. West Mercia Police etc</p>
<p>In my statement, I am not insinuating constructive job losses, as I wouldn't like it to happen to anyone, whatever role they may be in. However, to maybe coincide with 'natural leavers' etc. I feel that some of the support staff roles could maybe be reduced/ run in partnership with already existing duplicated Council Departments. Also some tasks. Particularly on stations could be undertaken form within the Service instead of having to get contractors in to undertake the tasks, at often elevated costs.</p>
<p>Outsource E and D services. Encourage greater interdepartmental cohesion and recognition of priorities for service delivery</p>
<p>not sure</p>
<p>During the financial implications placed upon us we should priorities what is needed against what can be saved and look at reintroducing them at at later date when finances are better.</p>
<p>change wholetime shift patterns</p>

IDR / E-Frequency...Too much costly printing and book production, why do it twice? Make it electronic.
A fully working and integrated RDS availability system. Capable of being viewed from home by the OiC / JO's. Which alerts the individual and managers, when a deficiency is created. all linked into the mobilising system with Fire Control
As long as the efficiencies being introduced does not reduce support staff in lieu of increase IT support staff to administer these systems.
THESE ARE ROLES WE SHOULD BE SHARING WITH OTHER BRIGADES/ ORGANISATIONS NOT OUR CONTROL STAFF!!!
move from a paper based RDS pay claim (FB76) to an electronic solution
integrate MIS functions so one entry covers a number of functions as at present some information is entered a number of times
We need to modernise out IT systems, we are still playing catch up rather than looking forward.
I do not know enough about this subject to offer an informed opinion
Change the way we record our training, Just one method that does not require having a paper IDR and entering it onto the E Frequency record. I personally don't think that our practical training has got any better using the IDR system. It just seems to be an over complicated way of recording information.
Why are we looking at uniformed posts when a lot of the admin work i.e finance, HR, IT could be outsourced. The brigade is going down the road of merging Fire Control why not go that one step further and merge the whole brigade with H&W there would be huge saving in that. Only 1 CFO, ACOs, could be reduced, HR, IT and Finance departments could be merged to. All these moves would make saving for both brigades
There seems to be a top heavy management structure, with personnel being appointed to a senior post with no operational experience, how is this value for money? and resilient? Allocated lease vehicles not capable of response in certain types of weather and reliance on other brigade assets. The distribution of out of life appliances and equipment (which has been supplied using taxpayers money) to European projects - if we carry on at this rate, we will be needing donated equipment from other sources
look to outsource some departments
Stores equipment issues is a bone of contention. It seems that there is no rigid system to be followed with regard to ordering and issuing PPE, equipment or station wear. Orders are being duplicated, missed totally and in some circumstances not even sent but kit is still issued? A more stringent system needs to be put in place to elevate any discrepancies. If new equipment is required a line manager should be consulted and a decision made to whether or not replacement kit is issued. A personal record of kit should be kept to see the number of items issued over a 12 month period is in line with the personal allowance. Instead of replacement equipment just being ordered some form of investigation into if, where or why is it required, potentially promoting ownership for individuals? Station defects: - could some defects be remedied by staff on station as appose to getting contractors in at a cost to the service? Simple things like changing light bulbs, repairing minor defects such as doors not closing properly - again may install a sense of personal responsibility and pride which is missing at some stations.
You should put some of this workload on the RSO'S which you are paying wholetime wages. I am sure they are paid a lot more than Support staff.
merge E & D department with other councils E & D departments ,this is would reduce the number of separate E & D departments all promoting the same issues
Can some of this support work be offered to RDS staff? There are numerous RDS staff in the brigade with skillsets in all areas.
May be reduce the support staff and let the Whole time personnel do more of the retained training and also the development posts could be covered by Whole time personnel.
Ordering direct with the suppliers from station seems to be quicker & more reliable
A lot of progress has been made with IT systems and this should continue. Support should be concentrated on the RDS staff to ensure the successful introduction of all these systems.
The electronic clocking system (TNA) needs to be looked at, as staff are manually having to record their hours, which takes up considerable time. Managers also need to be able to make necessary changes for their staff, instead of relying on HR.

Duplicating paper work and forms. i.e use of tablets instead of paper then duplicating onto computers!
Distribution of posts between people and asking them to work part time hours
stop serving food on courses when I go to work I take my own why should I expect the service to feed me
I am aware of the changes that are taking place with the new HR system and SharePoint and believe this will prove a much more effective and efficient way of dealing with things going forward.
HR DEPT COULD CUT DOWN ON POSTAGE AND STAFF HOURS JUST BY CHECKING ROTAS FOR STAFF ON DUTY TO DELIVER LETTERS INTERNALLY AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR STAFF MEETINGS WHICH COULD BE ARRANGED WHEN PEOPLE ARE ACTUALLY ON DUTY !
Cut down on paperwork CFS/BFS. Simplify computer systems. Give greater control on CFRMIS to watches so they can change/alter information without having to send three emails each time???
I feel that a review of the actual 'productive work' that departments pay staff to do should take place as I feel that we use resources to attend meetings/enter into partnerships where there is no real monetary return for our labour.
I believe each person within admin support should have clear roles so when extra work becomes available it is distributed fairly.
Streamline / link up / improve paperwork trails (electronically)
A more up to date system for retained personnel to book on and off call. This would make a lot of retained personnel happy and would improve moral on station.
There seems to be a lot of duplication of tasks. One IT system which "talks" to all areas would be good
As above, more automation, improved IT systems that work effectively
Look at lean systems working for all tasks - this is labour intensive and time consuming but can result in large gains for both those working and the organisation.
INSTEAD OF HAVING TO WEAR T-SHIRTS AND SHIRTS WOULD IT NOT BE MORE COST EFFICIENT TO JUST HAVE POLO SHIRTS ESPECIALLY IN THE HOT WEATHER WHICH WE ARE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING
May be of limited significance, but I personally think the waste of energy in lights and heaters etc left on when not needed needs addressing.
Continue to invest in skills to implement systems, but also ensure that processes are constantly reviewed and updated
Working more closely with other departments where we can support/cross over with information will make us more efficient such as equality and diversity sharing ideas/support with fire safety.
Manager responsibilities should be clearly defined, conveyed and understood to avoid some individuals/teams picking up tasks that should sit with either another manager or team. Only then can systems and processes be measured for efficiency. I am personally aware of areas where there is confusion over who is responsible for what leading to misunderstandings and occasionally upset. Our support staff are an extremely important asset.
make use of retired staff
There are a lot of changes being introduced especially with reference to recording data. We must ensure that we don't adopt systems that will be difficult to support in years to come because to lack of support and knowledge in those systems, i.e. Ironspeed and Resourcelink are two examples of systems that not many people have knowledge on.
I do not know enough about this subject to offer an informed opinion
The computer systems on stations do work very well now. Being able to work from the appliance or incident ground ,for post fire etc would cut down on the time spent at station recording infomation. This could be done with an I pad , it could also be set up for collecting CFS data at the house. It could be available with all brigade forms at any time.
Too many staff in certain departments Cutting down on postage - simply by checking staff rotas
reduce the amount of paperwork requires for most tasks - increased IT infrastructure will assist
Before any changes are made or brought in they should be tested by a wider range of people, that way when they have feed back it will be a far better review and that way things that are implemented will not be unknown and not the best changes. eg new fire kit, equipment and procedures.
instead of sending out individual letters to rds personnel's homes have just one letter with sealed individual letters inside delivered to the stations saving an enormous cost over a year

I CANNOT SEE THE NEED FOR EXTRA OFFICERS ON PARTICULARLY THE GOLD COMMAND ROTA AND RECEIVING EXTRA PUBLIC MONEY IN SALARY WHEN VITAL FRONT LINE FIREFIGHTERS AND CONTROL STAFF ARE BEING MADE TO FEEL IN A VULNERABLE POSITION FOR WHAT FEELS LIKE A LONG TERM ALREADY - IT IS THE FRONT LINE WHICH SAVES LIVES AND PROPERTY NOT PEOPLE SITTING IN OFFICES

As above. Prioritise work activities and rethink the benefits gained to SFRS before committing to support every group/organisation. I know partnerships are important but I really can't see any real benefit to SFRS by attending a 'Stop Smoking' event in Telford that I was made aware that 2 staff from a department attended recently. There must be something more beneficial to do.

I think, considering how little the admin team are paid (quite a lot less than the local average) we work really hard and get a lot done. A lot of personnel are already part-time and I think there is very little budget left to squeeze out of this department.

Various departments could be integrated with each other for staff efficiencies .Example Training with development + Ops

Proposal 6: Maintenance contracts

- i. Reduce the current Hydrant Maintenance contract costs**
- ii. Reduce the current Fire Hose Testing costs**

Do you think the current Hydrant Maintenance contract is effective?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	29%	34
No	25%	30
No opinion	46%	54
Tell us about any problems you have experienced with it (if applicable)		34
	<i>answered question</i>	118
	<i>skipped question</i>	20

Tell us about any problems you have experienced with it (if applicable)
Problems are more to do with Severn Trent rather than the hydrant testers. My understanding is they offer a good service.
IF WE WERE TO MAINTAIN OUR OWN HYDRANTS WOULD IT NOT HELP WITH TOPOGRAPHY AND HYDRANT LOCATION KNOWLEDGE
Seems expensive and feedback from Firefighters who have served long enough to remember servicing hydrants, seems to be negative. Problems with many rural hydrants having obviously not been tested for lengthy periods.
Unable to comment constructively with the limited information available but I feel any outside contracts which could feasibly be brought back in house should be looked at as an option of saving money, utilising existing staff and possibly as a result improve service delivery.
I have experienced using hydrants that have usually been serviceable but also silted or overgrown or with jammed covers and have either rectified this with crew members or reported it as course but always valued the knowledge of hydrant locations, enhanced by MDT facility.
Hydrants not/not correctly identified, flow meters in the way, collapsed pits, covered pits
Crews are losing local knowledge and flow rates / pressures cannot be relied upon.
I feel we could do this task in house
It maybe works, but we do still come across defective hydrants which we have to report the same way we did when the testing was carried out 'in house'.
none
No problems, but I'm sure this could become in house
loss of local knowledge of water supplies and hydrant location
Could be done on station good topography
Why pay a contractor to undertake this task when you already pay WT staff who could carry it out whilst on duty???
Could this be done by wholetime?
The £20 000 saving is a lot and worthwhile. Would watch members be able to do any testing?
We must maintain a good knowledge of our water supplies and ensure our suppliers are supplying us as a minimum the legal requirement.
Operational Fire fighters should be doing Hydrant maintenance. It improves local knowledge of their locations, and relies less on the MDT working or being kept updated. Also as the number of fire calls are decreasing, so are people's commitment. It would be a good retention method.
I think we have lost quite a bit of local knowledge by not testing the hydrant's ourselves. The MDT is good but it can't tell you what the hydrant is like in a real life situation.

Why not go back to doing the old way of getting stations to do their own hydrant testing, it has 2 advantages, 1. Station personnel would know their way around the station area, and financially wholetime staff are being paid anyway.
As I have limited experience with regard to this topic I cannot really comment. However if this was undertaken by operational crews a saving could be made and it would increase operational awareness of crews on location and state of water supplies which can only be of benefit to the service and the community we serve.
On many occasions we have found Hydrants that we have had to big out in our area.
Why not bring it back to station level? Costs saved and local knowledge used and improved.
It must be effective or the Manager responsible for it would have found an alternative.
From what I've heard watches would be more than happy to do this as we would be seen in the community more often being active
it would be better for WT to undertake this role again , a valuable topography exercise knowing where all the hydrants are and making sure that they are maintained
We no longer have crews knowledge of hydrant efficiency as witnessed at the Tayluer Arms fire when the actual output didn't meet the amount mentioned on the MDT
if firefighters maintain the hydrants they find out where they area should they need them in an emergency
Let WT personnel reassume this role -
Would it be possible to employ 1/2 personnel from Service to do this Job. Once hydrants tested or inspected by Watches if problem found, it could be reported directly to Hydrant Technician. He/She then has a time frame in which to go to that Hydrant and rectify problem. Obviously training would be needed and you could employ them like an Associate Trainer and they log there time as and when. When watches go out and inspect they could be responsible for simple stuff like Hydrant plates and clearing out pits and the more technical stuff done by the Hydrant Technician.
Many hydrants have just been painted and not cleaned out.
some hydrant found in poor condition
Not experienced any problems, although not had cause to use that may hydrants other than on station. I would ask does anyone carry out spot checks on hydrants from the brigade? Just to ensure the work is being carried out? It's not good finding issues on a call out
Why can't this be done by internal personnel on secondary contracts ?

Do you think the current Fire Hose Testing contract is effective?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	31%	36
No	22%	26
No opinion	48%	56
Tell us about any problems you have experienced with it (if applicable)		29
<i>answered question</i>		118
<i>skipped question</i>		20

Tell us about any problems you have experienced with it (if applicable)

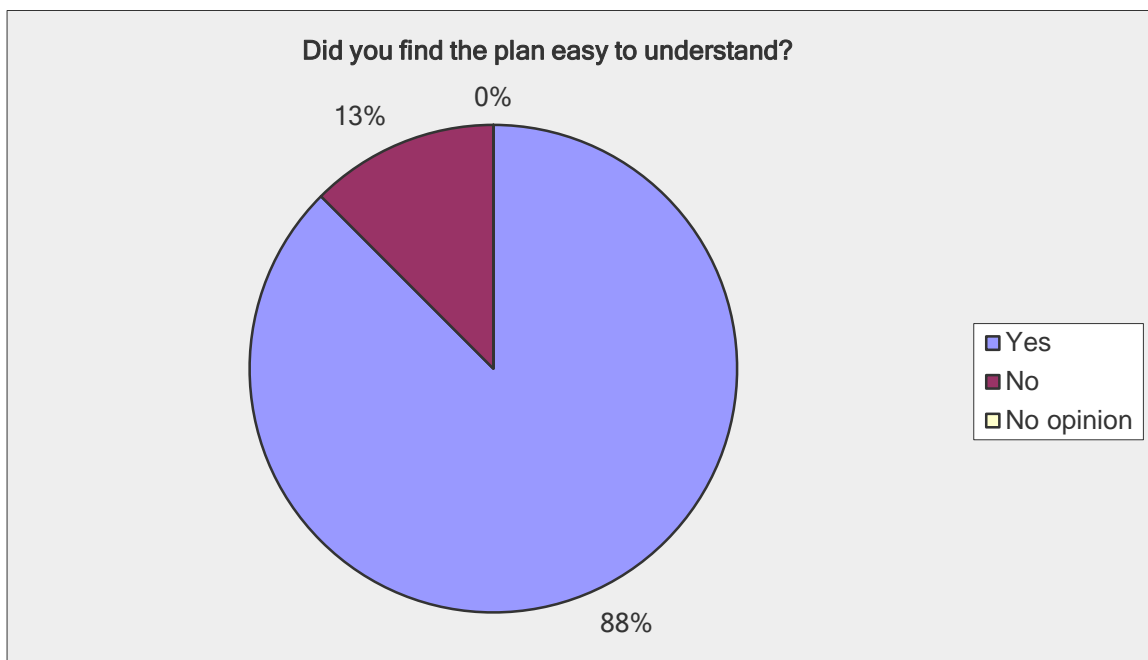
The service offered is okay but the tasks carried out should and can be done as normal station routines.
Minimal problems with hose over the years, however again, seems expensive when it could easily be facilitated in house, as with hydrants
Any contracts which could be brought back in house without having a detrimental effect on current performance should all be explored.
Again with appropriate training I feel we could do this in house
I believe it works, but from a personal opinion I feel that the act of hose testing would be able to be incorporated in to drills etc. with no additional problems. (as used to be the case). The recording of the annual tests used to be an alternating colour mark on the hose (white odd years/ red even), and whilst

I appreciate that these test results need to be annotated across the Service, I was surprised to read that the benefits of doing the tests 'in house' would not be significant due to the additional cost of recording etc.
none
No problems, but I'm sure this could become in house
lots of hose seems to be left around the station for long periods of time don't know if this is supposed to be tested or stored
could be incorporated into a drill night
Why pay a contractor to undertake this task when you already pay WT staff who could carry it out whilst on duty???
Could this be done by wholetime?
This would be a good way to save money and I do not mind testing and recording hose testing.
Can we not do this ourselves?
Could be done on station during drills / Quarterly tests by trained fire fighters.
No problems experienced, we don't have the number of large incident where hose testing would have to be done every day. A rolling programme could be devised so that hose from stations could be taken to their nearest Wholetime station
We used to do it on station.
I don't understand why we pay good money for a service we used to carry out our selves.
As I have limited experience with regard to this topic I cannot really comment. However if this was undertaken by operational crews a saving could be made, which can only be of benefit to the service and the community we serve.
They do an excellent job and leave the hose tidy, safety is paramount when it comes to fire hose.
no problems however the hose can be tested on station as it was many years ago, which will reduce the costs down
As above, can this not be bought to station level as part of the weekly/monthly tests?
It must be effective or the Manager responsible for it would have found an alternative.
no real opinion but watches would be more than happy to do it if it cut costs
Don't know - how much is it, and could we do it?
I HAVE OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF FRONT LINE APPLIANCES BEING STRIPPED OUT OF OPERATIONAL HOSE AND LEFT ON DRILL YARDS - NEED I EXPLAIN MORE
How hard is it to test Hose with the Right equipment?? Could we not do this in House when were on Duty???
Used to be carried out by SFRS staff on station that would have been far more cost effective.
But why can't we test our own hose? If it fails then by all means have it repaired by a contractor.
Why can't it be done by staff as previously done?

The next set of questions are about:

- The new Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015-20
- Modified IRMP Response Standards

Do you wish to comment on the above document?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	22%	26
No	78%	90
<i>answered question</i>		116
<i>skipped question</i>		22



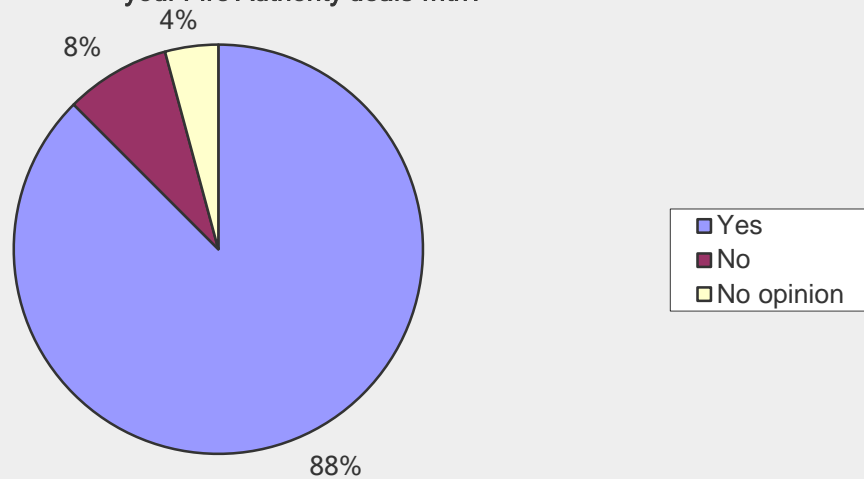
If you selected 'No', please use this space to tell us how it could be improved

It is onerous to read and understand. Simplified, plain English would assist the reader to isolate the key points without the necessity to wade through rafts of waffle!

Just quite long.

However, I have prior understanding due to my permanent role in Corporate Support, which obviously helps.

Do you feel the plan provides you with sufficient information about the risks your Fire Authority deals with?

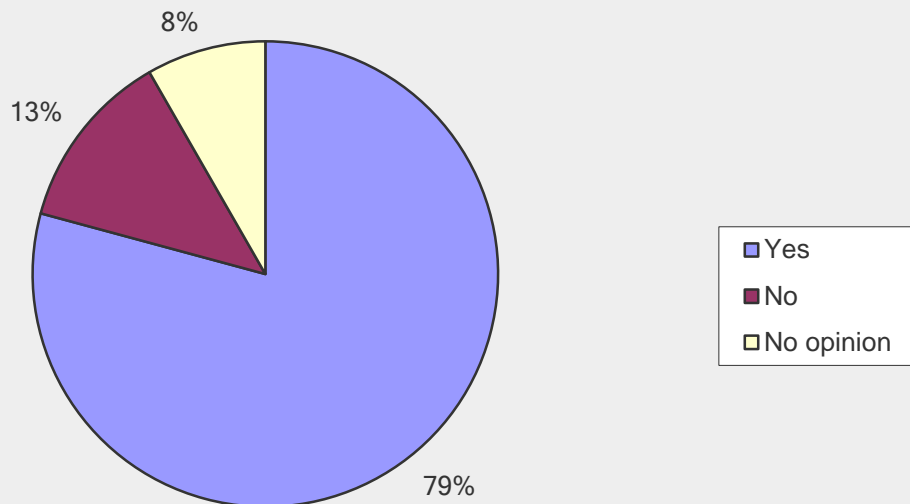


If you selected 'No', please tell us what additional information you would like

Some information is in-correct as it states 8 RDS Control operators are in Fire Control when there are only 6 in total and 2 of them have only just had their training.

After reading IRMP and didn't think there was enough info on Re-building in places like Telford! There is alot happening now building work has started again. More houses, Bigger Academy schools Massive development at Town Centre and yet we still looking at Day Crew!!

Do you feel that this Plan contains sufficient information for you to judge the effectiveness of your Fire Authority and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service?



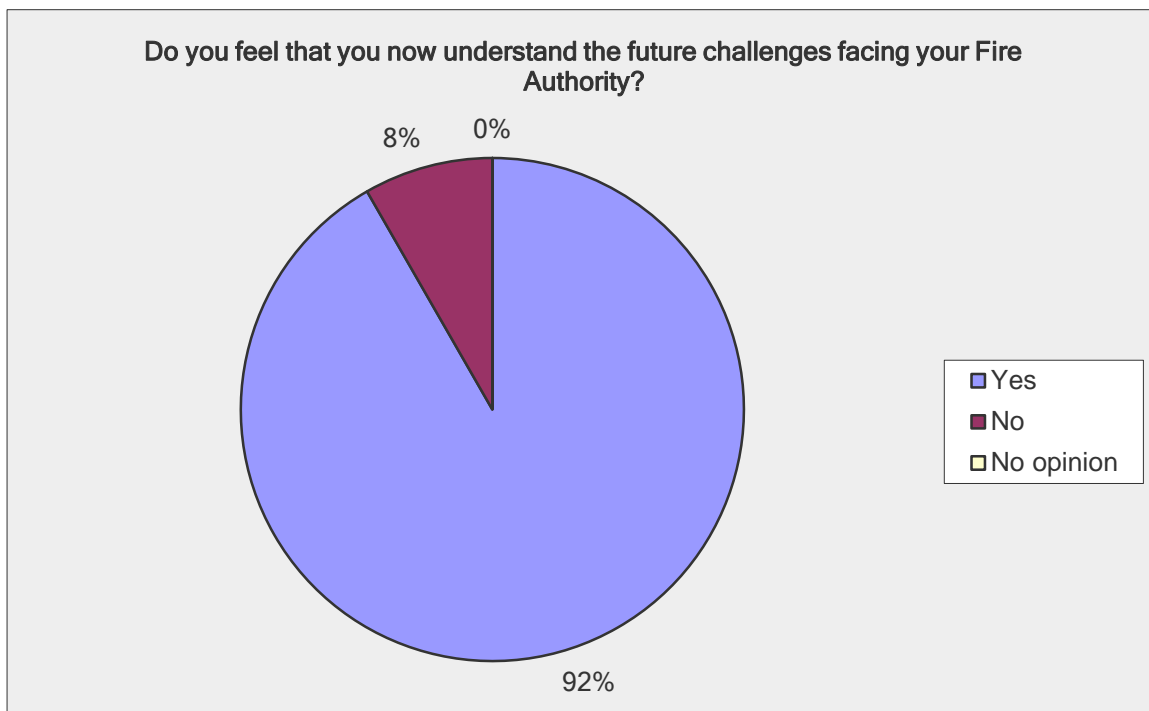
If you selected 'No', please tell us what additional information you would like

However, I would question whether the information is entirely accurate or weighted to elicit the response favoured by the Fire Service

Although it was bias, in that it was trying to promote DCP to the detriment of WDS and trying to promote a merger of fire control whilst unfairly understating the value of the current Fire Control provision.

The Plan reflects optimum/ideal levels of staffing e.g. 8 x On-Call Firefighter (Control) staff which is misleading particularly to the public, when being asked to respond without the current facts to such issues as reducing budgets and merging Fire Control.

No but you can get bogged down in statistics.



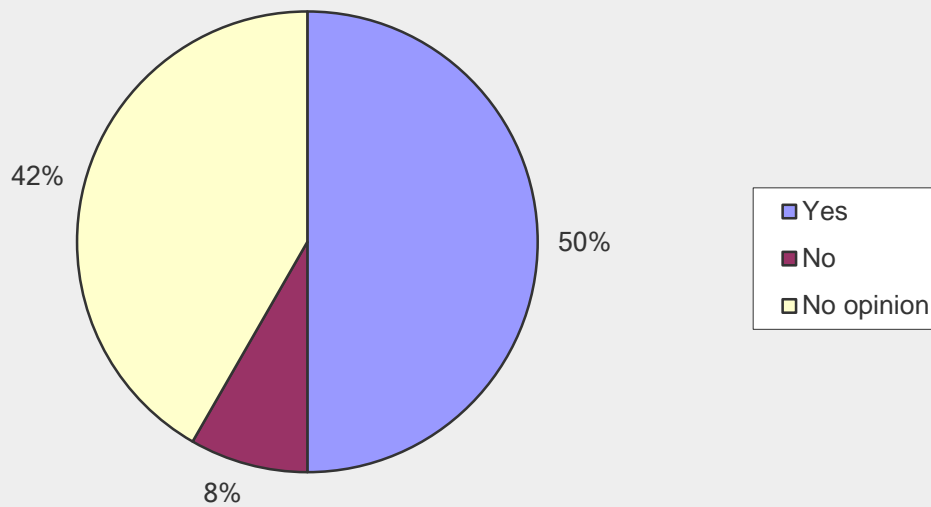
If you selected 'No', please tell us what additional information you would like

I also feel that decisions have already been made with regards to the future of the Service and no amount of consultation or appeal will have any effect.

I feel the Fire Authority are told what Senior Officers want them to hear and not always given the full picture.

Already had a good understanding of the challenges affecting the organisation.

Do you agree with the change to the terminology used in the Integrated Risk Management Plan Response Standards?



If you selected 'No', please tell us why

Just seems like we've changed them to suit our Response times. If we don't think we can make it we just move the goalposts!!!

If you need to, use the space below to tell us what else you think the plan should include and how it could be improved.

It was very detailed and I think for most members of the public just too much. No one would want to read it. There is a place for the current versions but to engage the most people we need to offer a version to the lowest common denominator in terms of level of education and interest in the subject - An IRMP for dummies if you like.

Very thorough and detailed. Change in terminology more appropriate and descriptive and it has also led to some areas having reduced attendance times eg Baschurch and Lawley.

I hope that Firefighters wellbeing is kept as the main priority

As we are here to provide a service for the unknown it is very hard to plan and as such every effort must be made to have enough equipment and staff for operational tasks of any nature. It is a shame that we have to cut corners on operational areas as this is the most important.

A look into future development in Shropshire. We cut now and then 5 years' time we will have more Houses, more Businesses, bigger schools. Can this not be shoved under the noses of politicians? How much more can we actually cut!!!!?????

Possibly clarity could be improved? - Especially as there will be members of the public that may read the document. For instance, the document states that there are 8 RDS Control operators - which is misleading as this is not the case. It also does not make it clear that not all of these operators are available at all times - indeed in the past, at times of high demand, there have only been 1 or 2 available to provide cover, which has had a big impact on individuals.