

## IRMP 1 - Integrated Crewing Model Project

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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### 1 Purpose of Report

This report advises Members of the progress made in relation to the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 1 Integrated Crewing Model Project, including the outcomes from consultation on potential changes to the Wholetime Duty System (WDS). It also seeks approval to progress changes, as recommended by the Project Board.

### 2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Support the recommendation that a new duty system for wholetime staff be implemented on or before 1 January 2017, based on:
  - 4 Watch Flexible Rostering duty system
  - locally managed rostering<sup>1</sup>
  - on a shift for shift basis<sup>2</sup>
  - with start and finish times of 0800-1800 and 1800-0800.
- b) Direct officers to negotiate with Representative Bodies as required to implement the changes;
- c) Recognise the consultation that has already taken place and delegate responsibility to the StraP Working Group to monitor the Service's implementation of these recommendations and report progress back to the Fire Authority at its October 2016 meeting.

<sup>1</sup> Locally managed – this would give maximum flexibility and responsibility to staff, however, should this fail to deliver the desired staffing, then the centrally managed option would be the fall-back position.

<sup>2</sup> Shift for a shift definition – a system whereby a day and night shift are of differing lengths, but are agreed / accepted to be treated as being of equal length for the purposes of rostering onto duties and for payment. Should there be any dispute raised by either party, the Service would immediately adopt a system of annualised hours or equal shifts of 12 hours

### 3 Background

In October 2014, the Fire Authority considered proposals for inclusion within the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2015 to 2020. Within these was a proposal to consider changes to the shifts currently worked by Wholetime Duty System (WDS) staff. At this meeting the Fire Authority required officers to:

1. Undertake a project to identify all possible options that could reduce the current WDS staffing costs by approximately £400k per annum, whilst continuing to deliver a service matched to risk;
2. Ensure any resulting model matches resources to risk and is able to make use of the operational workforce as a whole; and
3. Report back to the Fire Authority with possible options within 12 months of starting the review.

The project was broken into two stages:

**Phase 1** was a review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing duty system, identifying alternative duty systems, which can offer cost savings, improved productivity or improved staff welfare.

**Phase 2** was identifying suitable arrangements for providing resilience to the new duty system.

### 4 Improving the Efficiency of the Wholetime Duty System

The starting point of the review was to identify the specific needs of the Service and the key requirements of any new work pattern from a staff perspective (as defined by staff). These are shown in tables 1 and 2 below.

<b>Table 1 – Needs of the Service</b>
<b><i>Required Outcomes</i></b>
Meets the needs of the IRMP
Deliver Optimum Crewing
Maintain 28 Frontline Fire Engines
Resilience
Maintain or Increase Firefighter Safety
Sustainability / Affordability
Appropriate Access to Specialist Support Vehicles
Saving of up to 400k

<b>Table 2 – Key Staff Requirements</b>
<b><i>Essential</i></b>
No compulsory job losses
Family Friendly
Appropriate work/life Balance
<b><i>Desirable</i></b>
Something simple, easy to follow and understand
Continuity and predictability
Variable levels of flexibility to suit individual needs
A system that could allow some primary crewing of specialist appliances

The scope for change within the duty system was regulated by the need to maintain the Service's existing Operational Model. This model provides the Service with five fire appliances on immediate turnout and a further 23 able to turn out within 5 minutes. Those on immediate response are primarily crewed by Wholetime Duty System (WDS) firefighters, who work a shift system, based on the following pattern:

- 2 Days (0900hrs to 1800hrs)
- 2 Nights (1800hrs to 0900hrs)
- 4 Days off

This is a nationally recognised duty system, as described within the Scheme of Conditions of Service for Firefighters (Section 4, Part A – Hours of Duty and Duty Systems).

The optimum level of crewing required on duty to deliver this capability is 23 operational firefighters on days and 24 on nights (an additional member of staff is required for the periods when Telford Central's second appliance is deployed to Tweedale) and this provides 5 firefighters on every "first" appliance and 4 on a "second". This is the level of crewing required to deploy the current safe systems of work for undertaking interior attack firefighting.

Traditionally each Watch is established with an average of 40% additional staff above the "optimum" level to allow for leave and other absences.

Wholetime personnel also provide the Service with skilled staff to crew the specialist appliances: Rescue Tender, Water Rescue Unit and both Aerial Ladder Platforms. This is currently achieved through 'switch crewing', where personnel alternate between appliances on stations as required.

Analysis of staffing levels over a three-year period showed that there were, on average, 1.8 personnel above the optimum crewing numbers required per shift throughout the year. In addition, an average of £134,788 is paid per year in structured overtime to cover other periods, where staffing falls below optimum.

This analysis clearly shows that the current ways of working are inefficient in two ways:

- The Service employs more personnel than are necessary to crew all Wholetime Fire appliances at optimum levels: 23 on days, 24 on nights and
- The current system is not flexible enough to provide opportunities to balance staffing deficiencies by exchanging duty shifts.

The Project Board carried out broad-ranging research into identifying potential alternative duty systems, which could be operated to optimise the availability of staff. This was done in conjunction with departmental Champions, made up of volunteers from Watch based operational staff.

The initial research identified 5 options that merited more in depth investigation:

- Option 1 – Three Shift System (3 x 8 hours ‘Metropolitan’)
- Option 2 – Self-Rostering Shift System
- Option 3 – Four Watch Flexible Roster Shift System
- Option 4 – Five Watch (Cambridge) Shift System
- Option 5 – Day Crewed Plus 96/96 Shift System

Table 3, on the following pages, outlines the four options, including their key advantages and disadvantages.

**Table 3**

Duty system	Outline	Advantages	Disadvantages
3 Shift System – 3 x 8 hrs (Metropolitan)	Uses 4 Watches and 3, eight-hour shifts: 2 early shifts, 2 mid shifts and 2 night shifts, then 2 days off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to reduce staff numbers by 8</li> <li>• Same high level of service to the public despite reduction in operational posts</li> <li>• Potential to reduce spend on overtime</li> <li>• Optimum crewing can be achieved</li> <li>• Increased productivity</li> <li>• Health benefits from reduced shift duration</li> <li>• Compliant with Working Time Directive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires 50% more attendances at work</li> <li>• Increased travel costs</li> <li>• Less weekends off</li> <li>• Not compliant with Grey Book</li> <li>• Less family friendly</li> </ul>
Self-Rostering	Within certain criteria, the hours a firefighter works will be primarily managed through local discussions with work colleagues, rather than a centrally imposed rigid system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family friendly</li> <li>• Potential to reduce staff numbers by 8</li> <li>• Same high level of service to the public despite reduction in operational posts</li> <li>• Potential to reduce spend on overtime</li> <li>• Optimum crewing can be achieved</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Organisational resilience</li> <li>• Compliant with Working Time Directive</li> <li>• Compliant with Grey Book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT solution required to fairly manage shift allocation</li> <li>• Significant changes to policies and procedures</li> <li>• Loss of Watch based system, which concerns staff</li> </ul>
4 Watch Optimum Crewing Shift System (Flexible Rostering)	Based around the existing 2-2-4 rota pattern, but with the addition of rostered off-duty shifts, which means continually operating with optimum crewing numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family friendly</li> <li>• Potential to reduce staff numbers by 12</li> <li>• Same high level of service to the public despite reduction in operational posts</li> <li>• Potential to reduce spend on overtime</li> <li>• Optimum crewing can be achieved</li> <li>• Organisational resilience</li> <li>• Maintains continuity for Watch based training / management</li> <li>• Allows the Service to maintain a large number of its existing policies</li> <li>• Compliant with Working Time Directive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of staff availability will create additional responsibility</li> <li>• No opportunity for short-term compensatory leave</li> </ul>

Duty system	Outline	Advantages	Disadvantages
5 Watch Shift System	Uses an annualised hours calculation to operate a 10-week cycle of a mix of the 2-2-4 rota pattern (7 tours) followed by 2 weeks of 8.4-hour day duties (and 4 off duty shifts - weekends). All leave and training courses would be taken with the 2 weeks of day-duty periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to reduce staff numbers by 16</li> <li>• Same high level of service to the public despite reduction in operational posts</li> <li>• Potential to reduce spend on overtime</li> <li>• Optimum crewing can be achieved</li> <li>• Organisational resilience</li> <li>• Maintains continuity for Watch based training / management</li> <li>• Compliant with Working Time Directive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of staff availability will create additional responsibility</li> <li>• Fixed leave is restrictive for staff</li> <li>• Some leave periods do not include time off during school holidays</li> <li>• Cambridgeshire FRS experience issues with industrial relations due to the way this was implemented</li> </ul>
Day Crewed Plus	The base rota consists of four consecutive duty shifts of 24 hours duration followed by 4 days off duty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to reduce staff numbers by 18 personnel</li> <li>• Very cost effective</li> <li>• Reduced travelling time for personnel</li> <li>• Potential salary increase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response standards would be reduced overnight</li> <li>• Not family friendly – staff away from families for a long period</li> <li>• Management of staff availability will create additional responsibility</li> <li>• May require redundancies in order to achieve required staffing numbers</li> <li>• Long-term sustainability is questionable</li> <li>• Potential for reduced community safety activities due to the requirement to provide recovery periods</li> </ul>

The analysis showed that all of these options provide the potential to meet the Service's needs and the ability to make significant savings. However, it was clear that the extent, to which they catered for the staff requirements varied. Therefore, it was important to consult directly with the staff, who would be affected to get their views on what would be the biggest change to their working conditions since the 1970s.

## Consultation process

An online survey tool was used as the method of recording and collecting views during the consultation. Prior to the start of the consultation period members of the Project Board visited all WDS Watches to give a presentation on the various options being explored. The main purpose of this was to provide staff with the opportunity to seek clarification on how each duty system could work. They were also provided with a document that detailed each shift option and a copy of the questions contained within the online survey.

The online survey was open to staff for a period of 8 weeks, closing on 31 January 2016. 84 out of 179 (47%) staff completed the survey.

## Survey Results

This section summarises the statistical results that came from the survey. Staff were also given the opportunity to provide written comment on each of the duty systems. All of their responses are provided in Appendix A to this report.

## Shift Patterns

Wholetime staff were asked to rate each of the alternative shift options in order of their preference:

Shift Name	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice	3 <sup>rd</sup> Choice	4 <sup>th</sup> Choice	5 <sup>th</sup> Choice
3 x 8hr	0	1 (1%)	6 (7%)	16 (20%)	59 (72%)
Self- Rostering	11 (13%)	62 (75%)	7 (9%)	2 (2%)	0
4 Watch Flexible Rostering	71 (85%)	12 (15%)	1 (1%)	0	0
5 Watch (Cambridge Model)	0	4 (5%)	48 (59%)	26 (32%)	4 (5%)
Day Crewed Plus	2 (2%)	3 (4%)	20 (24%)	38 (46%)	19 (23%)

This shows that:

- The 4 Watch Flexible Rostering Shift System is most preferred; and
- The Self-Rostering Shift System was ranked second.

### Local or Central Management

A number of the shift patterns include flexible rostering, which would require monitoring to ensure it was implemented fairly. Staff were asked if they would prefer this to be centrally managed (by the Service) or locally managed (by their managers). The results below show that staff would prefer a locally managed roster.

	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice
<b>Locally</b>	71 (87%)	11 (14%)
<b>Centrally Managed</b>	11 (13%)	69 (86%)

### Shift Duration

The current day and night shifts are of unequal length (9 hour days and 15 hour nights). If this was not taken into account, then some unfairness could result from any system based on flexible rostering.

To overcome this potential problem, a system involving either 2 x 12 hour shifts or annualised hours (where the hours worked are monitored, rather than simply the number of shifts) could be introduced. Wholetime staff were asked to rate their preference on these two options.

	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice
<b>2 x 12hr</b>	27 (33%)	54 (66%)
<b>Annualised Hours</b>	55 (67%)	28 (34%)

If either of these options had to be introduced, their preference would be the annualised hours option.

If 12 hour shifts were to be introduced, staff were asked to rate, in order of preference, their preferred start and finish times.

The 0800–2000 was the favoured option.

Start / Finish Time	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice	3 <sup>rd</sup> Choice	4 <sup>th</sup> Choice	5 <sup>th</sup> Choice
<b>0600 - 1800</b>	4	7	23	8	37
<b>0700 - 1900</b>	27	26	9	17	1
<b>0800 - 2000</b>	34	24	14	4	3
<b>0900 - 2100</b>	10	17	19	27	6
<b>1000 - 2200</b>	5	5	14	23	32



In summary, if the Service were to adopt a new duty system, simply based on the statistical outcomes from the survey, the preferred shift pattern would be:

- 4 Watch Flexible Rostering
- locally managed flexibility
- annualised hours
- start and finish times of 0800 – 2000 and 2000-0800

However, these numbers do not provide the full picture of what staff think. The tables below summarise the comments made by staff, specifically when asked about the two most statistically preferred duty systems, as well as the more general comments made during the whole survey.

<b>Staff comments in relation to the 'Self Rostering Duty System'</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With annualised hours or a shift for shift approach the system could be run with other combinations of hours other than an equal 12/12</li> <li>• Increase exchange of knowledge and ideas between colleagues, through working with different staff members more frequently. Mutually agreed / beneficial flexibility. Having annualised hours further increases flexibility</li> <li>• A 12 hour shift system is also unfriendly to family life as a single parent and is less likely to be able to be adapted to a 10/14 hour shift pattern – which seems to be favoured by most Brigade members</li> <li>• I feel 12 hour day shifts is far too long and would lead to fatigue</li> <li>• 12 hour shifts are not family friendly and morale will be affected'</li> </ul>
<b>Staff comments in relation to the '4 Watch Optimum Crewing Duty System'</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would be beneficial to run this system with 9 and 15 hours shifts, so that we do not have 12 hour shifts, which would be catastrophic for personnel with young families who do not have any support locally</li> <li>• Easily adapted to a 10/14 shift system. This keeps it family friendly. It keeps team morale up and training is more easily controlled, as well as school visits, BFS and CFS visits. Most firefighters would be happy to accept a shift for a shift no matter what the start and finishing times were</li> <li>• This would allow the continuity of a Watch based system. This system could also be adaptable to different duration shift systems other than an equal 12/12</li> <li>• This follows the current 2-2-4 system which I, and other staff, like. But I would rather it was 9/15 hours and annualised hours</li> <li>• Keeps Watches together, is easier for training, managing sickness/leave/development, and improves staff morale. Easily adapted to 10/14 hour shift pattern this is favoured by most Brigade members who will be affected. Seems to be the most family friendly option and best for single parents who have to get child care. Most people are happy to use the 'shift for shift' system regardless of what hours are worked</li> <li>• 12 hour shifts and short notice recall to duty will be major factors which will need attention. This would still represent an erosion of terms and conditions, but once those two issues are resolved it would attract less opposition</li> <li>• Times as they are now, work for me. Any changes like 12/12 will have an impact on my work/home balance</li> <li>• If a change in shift times is believed to be necessary then a 10 hour day and 14 hour night would be much more productive</li> <li>• 12 hour shifts are unfriendly to families and it would be impossible to arrange child care</li> <li>• I like the annualised hours and the fact that it maintains the 2-2-4 system</li> </ul>

## General comments made throughout the survey

- I would rather the working hours be 9/15. Annualised hours doesn't require it to be 12/12
- I have worked different shift systems in neighbouring Brigades, I would like to raise my concerns about the daily hours. Having worked an 11 hour day and 13 hour night, I immediately found a significant drop in staff morale and general wellbeing
- I have worked the 12/12 system within and organisation and once again staff found the shift too long. I am sure this has been highlighted and investigated but wanted to raise my concerns as this Brigade prides itself, I believe, on good working relationships and it would be a real shame if this was broken
- I would like to state that I would prefer to keep the 9/15 shift pattern as it is the most family friendly for me and I have been working this system for 18 years. If it does need changing then perhaps a 10/14 shift pattern would be more acceptable
- I do not feel that 12 hour shifts or annualised hours would be of any benefit. 12 hour shifts would need to include a second meal break during the day shift and you would therefore would not see any increase in productivity compared to a 9 hour shift. I do agree that productivity can be improved but feel that the best way to do this is with a 10 hour day and a 14 hour night. An 0800 start could see all routine checks and inventories carried out with staff ready to start their day at 0900. This coincides with the majority of businesses and schools and would resolve some of the issues experienced in the past as Watches are currently generally not in a position to carry out any visits away from the station prior to 1000
- 12 hour shifts will affect station morale and put a strain on family life. I would welcome an option in which night shifts would be slightly reduced and days increased to no more than 10 hours. I also believe that 12 hour days will be no more efficient than the current shift system
- I think that many firefighters consider the current system fair, and we use the shift for shift principle within the exchange of duty system
- I feel more flexibility with regards to the 12 hour shifts should be considered. For example a 10 hour day and a 14 hour night would be more productive than the current 9/15 system and would have less of an impact on the home lives of staff. This would have a greater effect on morale and bring will it more benefits
- In reference to Question 14. I don't want 12 hour shifts. I'd much prefer to do 10 hour days and 14 hour nights
- Annualised hours are not wanted. We already acknowledge a shift for a shift and should stay with the existing shift lengths
- It is possible to keep the current shift system with an understanding from staff that it's a shift for a shift when exchanging duties – regardless of whether it is a day or a night (hours irrelevant), and have the optimum crewing model in force so that the organisation has a bank of staff with hours owing to cover shortfalls
- Could the Brigade not consider 10/14 hour shifts which would allow parent to see their children either in the morning or in the evening?
- A 12 hour day shift seems excessive. This does not include travel distance for staff which could mean a day ends up being 14 hours plus
- To increase productivity on days, a new start time of 0800 and finish time of 1800 would gain the extra time mentioned in the presentation. This would also allow the continuation of the Wholetime going to RDS station to do training with them on their drill nights. 12 hour shifts would not allow for this

- I think we should consider using staff to keep RDS appliances on the run. I would like to see the opportunity for more flexible working. Maybe part time hours should be considered as we are miles behind other organisations such as the ambulance service and the police
- Currently, any shift exchange is done on a shift for shift basis, with almost universal satisfaction
- I believe 12 hour shifts will have a major impact on home/family life. This in turn would have an effect on staff morale. I think a longer night shift allows more family time in the mornings and in the evenings. From my experience all staff seem happy that a shift is a shift
- I would not choose 12 hour shifts. Most of us would want to maintain 9/15 hour shifts and Watch based. This has been championed to you in the initial information gathering stage. I would hope that the above can be maintained as anything else has massive implications and causes a great deal of stress and anxiety to staff who have to find ways of balancing their family/work life situations, which can be very difficult and costly.

## **FBU Response**

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) provided a response to the IRMP Action Plans and 20:20. This comprehensive response covered various items, including views on national issues, specifically the Fire and Rescue Service move from the Department for Communities and Local Government to the Home Office and Police and Crime Commissioners.

On local matters the FBU commented on the Service's IRMP Projects 1, 2 and 3. The full response is set out in paper 11c on the agenda for this meeting. The FBU made several recommendations in relation to IRMP 1 Integrated Crewing Model, which are detailed below with a response from the Project Team.

### **Recommendation**

*Consider reinvesting cuts back into the Service by the greater availability of special appliances.*

### **Recommendation**

*Efficiencies realised through the change to shift pattern should be reinvested to the WDS fire engines to enable sufficient staffing for the reinstatement of a fire engine at Tweedale.*

The Integrated Crewing Model Project was initiated in order to identify efficiencies to the value of £400k. Proposals offer the opportunity to phase the reduction of staff to achieve this figure, any reinvestment of funds are outside of the scope of this project and would be subject to a management decision.

### **Recommendation**

*The number of cuts to establishment levels in each option is too high. The options are primarily designed to even out fluctuations in staffing and reduce the overtime bill. Cuts to the establishment levels on each of the options cannot be afforded.*

### **Recommendation**

*Calculations of watch strength need to be re-examined. The low levels of staffing described for each of the options will not sustain the crewing levels necessary.*

Phasing the reduction of staff can allow the Service to assess the impacts of change steadily over a period of time. Calculations throughout this review, based on staffing numbers over the previous three years support the changes proposed within this report. The FBU are correct in their recognition that the options are designed to even out fluctuations and reduce the overtime bill.

**Recommendation**

*Resilience staffing maintained at +1*

Should the Service opt to staff at the FBU's requested level of +1, the Service would reduce the potential savings possible by approximately £160k. This could be adopted while the Service establishment supports it. This would provide an opportunity to review the advantages or implications of staffing at +1.

**Recommendation**

*The Integrated Crewing Model must be designed to consider the entire Service. But each constituent part must be designed to be independently sustainable, before providing resilience/back up to other parts of the service. The nature and operation of any resilience pool will need to be fully negotiated with the FBU.*

**Recommendation**

*Increasing the establishment levels in Training, Operations and Fire Safety departments will first be necessary to remove the burden from the WDS of supplying staff to other departments. Once the capacity is increased enough, only then can staff from other departments be used to support the WDS.*

The integrated crewing model within Phase 2 will create a framework for the establishment of a resilient mechanism for ensuring the availability of wholtime fire appliances. The availability of on-call fire appliances is currently managed through the Group Support Team.

**Recommendation**

*Further investigation should be given to planning of courses and other demands placed on staffing to investigate whether these could be arranged or planned for differently.*

**Recommendation**

*Training courses are important to the brigade and public safety and it is imperative that quality of training is maintained (if not improved). Personnel need to continue to be detached from duty when undertaking training courses.*

Within the Integrated Crewing Model Framework, training course attendance will be considered. The Group Manager for Operational Training is currently reviewing all courses to assess the requirement for attendance at the Training Centre or whether delivery of some courses may be better delivered directly to staff at their own station.

**Recommendation**

*Develop the Flexible Shift Exchange System and encourage further its use with greater numbers of personnel. Delay introduction of shift changes until this system has been fully appraised.*

The current Flexible Shift Exchange System is a voluntary scheme. The success of this scheme is pleasing, however not all staff have signed up to this. It is therefore necessary for the Service to introduce a managed system to ensure its effectiveness.

### **Recommendation**

*Remove the 12 hour proposal from each option. Seek a collective agreement with the FBU on maintaining the present start and finish times.*

The recommendation within this report acknowledges the strength of feeling of staff and the FBU and proposes a change, which removes the 12-hour proposal but offers a proposal, which will still provide an opportunity to increase productivity through an increased dayshift length.

### **Recommendation**

*Negotiate with the FBU to introduce an incentive mechanism for staff who make themselves available for short notice recall to duty.*

A recommendation of this report is to direct officers to negotiate with Representative Bodies as required to implement the changes. This recommendation from the FBU will be considered within the negotiation. Taking the issues raised in these comments into account, the Project Board believes that the survey results actually show that, if a change had to be implemented, then the staff preferred duty system would be:

- **watch flexible rostering**
- **locally managed rostering**
- **on a shift for shift basis**
- **keeping the current start and finish times of 0900-1800 and 1800- 0900**

## **Recommendations**

Following a presentation on the rationale and reasons for change, StraP Working Group felt confident that this proposal will meet the needs of the organisation including, its financial ambitions, and recognises the preferences of staff.

They noted that, whilst the Service is keen to ensure that any change to the current duty system is consistent with the needs and desires of those staff that have to work it (as outlined in Table 2), it is also conscious of the need to deliver the service as efficiently as possible without compromising frontline delivery.

Having taken into account the strength of feeling expressed towards keeping the current start and finish times, and in order to maximise the potential productive working hours, the StraP Working Group believes that the following duty system is most likely to achieve the maximum benefits available to the Service, whilst also meeting the majority of staff concerns about any change:

- **4 Watch Flexible Rostering**
- **locally managed rostering**
- **on a shift for shift basis**
- **start and finish times of 0800-1800 & 1800-0800**

It is recognised there will be some points of negotiation such as notice periods and ability to accrue and take “time off in lieu”. It is also recognised that leave has already been allocated for 2016. Therefore, it is recommended that a collective agreement is achieved on the points of negotiation. Implementation of any new shift pattern would take place on 1 January 2017, unless an agreement is achieved between the Service and Representative Bodies to do it earlier.

Members of StraP Working Group wished to thank staff for their positive engagement throughout the process, which has helped in the development of staff needs and contributed to the outcomes of the project.

Having discussed the matter at length, StraP Working Group agreed to put this recommendation to the Fire Authority at its meeting on 3 May 2016.

## **5 Phase 2 – Identifying Suitable Arrangements for Resilience**

As a consequence of the existing retirement profile, it is anticipated that, in the initial stages following adoption of a more efficient working pattern, the Service will have excess resources that will need to be used productively. However, as the number of operational staff employed reduces down to the revised establishment levels, there will be a need to provide resilience to operational staffing through flexible methods, such as short-term contracts, resilience contracts, Specialist WDS Day Duty staff and Retained Duty System on-call staff. This will become a far more integrated crewing model.

Whilst various suitable methods of providing resilience have been identified, it was recognised there would be more benefit in progressing this part of the project, once the exact nature of the new working pattern has been established.

## **6 FBU Comment**

This report has been shared with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) prior to the Fire Authority meeting scheduled for 3 May, in order for them to provide a comment, which will be circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

## **7 Recommendations**

Having considered all of the information available, the StraP Working Group make the following recommendations:

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Support the recommendation that a new duty system for wholetime staff be implemented on or before 1 January 2017, based on:
  - 4 Watch Flexible Rostering duty system
  - locally managed rostering
  - on a shift for shift basis
  - with start and finish times of 0800-1800 and 1800-0800;

- b) The Fire Authority directs officers to negotiate with Representative Bodies as required to implement the changes; and
- c) The Fire Authority delegates responsibility to the StraP Working Group to monitor the Service's implementation of these recommendations and report progress back to the Fire Authority at its October 2016 meeting.

## 8 Financial Implications

The Four Watch Optimum Crewing Model is based around the existing 2/2/4 rota pattern, but with the addition of rostered off-duty shifts and rostered on-duty shifts to continually operate with optimum crewing numbers.

Optimum crewing is created through having the right number of staff, with the right skills available at all times. To achieve optimum crewing, it is necessary to create an operating model that provides flexibility, with a workforce that flexes to match demand, to deliver the most cost-effective service. The ultimate objective of optimum crewing is to ensure that the Service's communities continue to see and experience the same high level of service, despite a reduction of operational posts.

Calculations based on staff attendance at work averaged over the last three years show that to cover all shifts, 124.3 staff working flexibly would be required. This calculation takes into account all absences from work, including sickness and courses.

Within Phase 2 of this project the Service will be looking to reduce the number of courses that staff are required to attend away from their Watches. Along with the anticipated benefits of an Integrated Crewing Model, where there is the potential to offer short-term fixed contracts to cover long-term absences, it would be reasonable to expect that the WDS operational establishment could be reduced by up to 12 staff.

Through reducing the establishment by 12 posts, from 136 to 124, the Service would achieve an anticipated saving of £480,000 per year.

The calculation is based on flexibly covering all absences, therefore it can also be anticipated that the Service would achieve a significant saving from the annual overtime spend realised through this duty system. The current average overtime spend (calculated over a three-year period) is £134,788 per year.

However, it should be noted that implementing the changes to the duty system may require upgrades to the current IT system used to manage staff availability, which will incur costs. The level of such costs are currently unknown.

## **9 Legal Comment**

The Authority is required to consider the normal contractual principle that variations to current terms and conditions of employment may only be made with agreement (either individually or collectively) or under a right of variation already contained within the terms of employment or relevant collective agreement. The Authority should note the provisions of the Employment Rights Act 1996, which entitle employees with at least two years' service to claim unfair or constructive unfair dismissal in circumstances where there has been an unlawful variation of a substantive term of employment without sufficient justification and reasonable procedure.

The Authority is also required to consider the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, which prohibit unjustified 'provisions, criteria or practices' that indirectly discriminate against workers with protected characteristics.

Furthermore, the Authority is required to consider the provisions of the Working Time Regulations 1998 in respect working hours and rest times, insofar as the provisions are not excluded or modified for the group of workers in question.

## **10 Initial Impact Assessment**

An Initial Impact Assessment has been completed and this indicated that a full Equality Impact Assessment should be completed.

## **11 Equality Impact Assessment**

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

## **12 Appendices**

**Appendix**  
Survey IRMP 1 Consultation Responses

As the Consultation Responses document is in excess of 45 pages, a hard copy has not been included with the meeting papers but can be accessed on the Fire Authority's website via the following link:

<https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/meeting/3-may-2016>

**Paper 11c**  
FBU response to the IRMP 1 Consultation

## **13 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.