



Shropshire
Fire and Rescue Service

IRMP Proposed Actions 2010/11



Staff Consultation Response Document

November 2009



Executive Summary

Following the introduction of its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Proposed Actions 2010/11 document in August 2009, the IRMP Members Working Group (seven Members of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority) has conducted three months of consultation with staff, public and stakeholders. This report summarises the feedback received by the Working Group from staff.

The Fire Authority's approach to the consultation process complied with guidance issued by both the Cabinet Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). Additionally, the consultation process followed the recommendations of Opinion Research Services (ORS), who are independent research consultants contracted to assist with this and other consultation exercises on behalf of the Fire Authority.

All staff were provided with an opportunity to complete a questionnaire which asked for their views on each proposed action and the consultation process. Staff were also reminded of the importance of providing additional comments which would support their responses. This enables the IRMP Members Working Group (the Working Group) to consider that feedback and then make recommendations for change, identified as a consequence of the feedback, to the Fire Authority. As in previous years the consultation also presented the opportunity to keep staff, public and stakeholders informed of the progress made with the current IRMP actions.

Employee Representative Bodies (RB's) were also asked to comment, again supported by the same presentations given to staff. Following completion of the consultation process, full details of the feedback received from staff and their RB's has been included in this report, along with the Working Group's response to that feedback and any subsequent recommendations to the Fire Authority.

The feedback received during this process has been extremely perceptive and constructive. The significant outcomes from the consultation process, with our staff, are as follows:

The Proposed Actions Document

- The majority of staff found the IRMP Proposed Actions Document easy to read and informative (over 84% of responses);
- 75% of staff state that they are happy with the Fire Authority's IRMP process, and only 8% state that they are not happy with it;
- Although the Working Group is disappointed by the relatively low number of staff that completed questionnaires, it is very appreciative of the written comments contained in the responses and the verbal feedback given to Members during all of the IRMP presentations to staff. The detail contained in the comments has helped to ensure Members are able to make an informed decision on this year's proposals.

The Proposals

a. District Development Teams

- A majority of people (64% of respondents) agreed that there is a need for the District Development Teams;
- 46% agreed with the proposed structure and only 23% stated they disagreed;
- Whilst the Working Group was pleased to see the high level of support for the District Development Teams, it notes the concerns that some people have about the proposed structure of those teams;
- The actual structure of the teams will not be known until Officers have completed the role-mapping work, which will be undertaken as part of the implementation project;
- In the event that this proposal should be accepted by the Fire Authority, the Working Group recommends that a full evaluation of the project should be conducted, within the first 12 months, to ensure the benefits from this proposal, and the impacts from the next one, are being effectively managed.

b. Reduction of Wholetime Ridership Factor

- A small majority of staff (53%) agree with the proposal to reduce by 8 Wholetime Firefighters and re-invest the savings into the District Development Team (DDT);
- A slightly larger majority (61%) would be against the Fire Authority reducing the posts and not re-investing back into the DDT;
- Opinion is split about whether the Fire Authority should leave the Wholetime numbers as they are, with 33% agreeing for this to happen, 30% disagreeing and 38% not expressing a preference;
- The Working Group note the concerns of staff and the Fire Brigades Union, that reducing the Wholetime Service by 8 posts may result in the Service not being able to crew its front-line appliances, or a reduction in the levels of morale amongst staff;
- As stated with the previous proposal, in the event that this proposal is accepted, the Working Group will recommend to the Fire Authority that a review of the benefits and impacts achieved will be undertaken within the first 12 months of the implementation project (after the first phase of staff reductions), with the results being considered by the Fire Authority before it agrees to progressing to the second phase of staff reductions.

c. Consolidation of Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) cover at Telford Central

- This proposal attracted much comment, both during the presentations and in response to the questionnaire;



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- An alternative proposal was put forward by Shrewsbury staff, very early on in the consultation process, which suggests that ALP cover should consolidate at Shrewsbury and the Incident Response Unit (IRU) should go to Telford;
 - The Working Group have taken particular note of this alternative proposal and, having given both options much consideration, will be recommending to the Fire Authority that the alternative proposal of consolidating ALP cover in Shrewsbury should be considered as the most effective way forward.

These findings will be reported to the Fire Authority at its meeting on 16th December 2009. At that meeting, the Fire Authority will consider these outcomes, in combination with the feedback received from the Public and other Stakeholders, and make a final decision on what proposals it will choose to implement. The approved actions will be published in the IRMP Action Plan 2010/11 in April 2010.



Contents

Page No.

Executive Summary	2
Contents	5
Purpose of Report	6
Approach to Consultation	6
Response to the IRMP Proposals 2010/11	9
1. The Proposals Document	9
2. District Development Teams.....	15
3. Reducing the Wholetime Ridership Factor	30
4. Consolidating ALP Cover.....	44
5. Overall satisfaction with the IRMP process.....	57
Other comments received	63
Appendix A - How the figures shown in the 'Averaged Response Graph' were calculated.	64

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide:

- Details about the consultation process undertaken with the staff and Employee Representative Bodies of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, on the IRMP proposed actions 2010/11.
- The feedback received from this process; and
- The IRMP Member Working Group's response to the comments made following this consultation process.

The results from this consultation process will be used to assist the Fire Authority in developing its IRMP Action Plan for 2010/11, which will be published on its website in April 2010.

Approach to Consultation

The consultation process for Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority's IRMP proposed actions has been undertaken as detailed in the IRMP Consultation Strategy 2010/11, and builds upon the experience gained in previous IRMP consultations.

In keeping with consultation best practice, the Fire Authority has concentrated a lot of its effort on getting feedback on its proposals from its staff (the people likely to feel greatest impact from the proposed actions). To this end, a presentation on the Fire Authority's proposed actions was presented on forty two occasions to members of staff within Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. A total of 434 staff, representing 66% of the workforce, attended the consultation presentations. The presentations were given by a member of the Service's IRMP Team, an Executive Officer and in the vast majority of cases at least one representative from the Fire Authority's IRMP Members Working Group who responded to any questions asked.

Members of staff were provided with a questionnaire at each presentation so that information about their thoughts on the proposals contained within the presentation could be gathered.

Representative bodies were also invited to submit their comments and to this end a submission was received from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), which covered National and Local issues and in particular gave feedback on the following targeted areas;

- Update on the previous years proposals
- Regional Control Centres (RCCs)
- Economic climate
- Current initiatives
- IRMP Proposed Actions 2010/11

Where clearly attributable, comments from the FBU have been inserted within the feedback for each of the questions asked within the consultation questionnaire.

The Questionnaires

The questionnaires consisted of a series of 'questions' or 'statements' about the proposed actions. Staff were asked to rate their 'level of agreement' with each statement on a scale of 'Strongly Agree' through to 'Strongly Disagree'. In addition they were invited to submit any other comments they considered appropriate. The questions/statements on which they were asked to comment were as follows;

- 1) Did you consider the proposed actions document;**
 - a) Easy to read
 - b) Provides sufficient information to form an opinion on the proposed actions

- 2) In relation to the proposed action to create District Development Teams, do you agree;**
 - a) There is a need for District Development Teams?
 - b) With the proposed structure of the DDT's?

- 3) In relation to the proposed action on changes to the Ridership Factor. Do you think the Fire Authority should;**
 - a) Move 8 wholetime posts into the District Development Teams
 - b) Reduce by 8 wholetime posts and don't re-invest in the DDT's (i.e. reduce the burden on the tax-payer)
 - c) Not make any changes to the wholetime service

- 4) In relation to the proposed action on the ALP Location. Do you agree with the Fire Authority's proposal to;**
 - a) Consolidate the ALP cover to Telford Central?
 - b) Locate the spare ALP at Shrewsbury?

5) Are you satisfied with the IRMP consultation process

The closing date for responses was the 6th November 2009. This ensured that all feedback received could be duly considered by the Fire Authority's IRMP Members Working Group prior to taking any recommendations for changes, to the proposed actions, to the full Fire Authority meeting on 16th December 2009.

The overall number of responses to this consultation process was slightly down on last year, with a total of 120 questionnaires being returned by the close of the consultation period; this represents only 28% of those staff directly consulted with (only 18% of all staff). The table below shows a break down of the respondents to the questionnaire by department and/or groups.

All responses, including those returned anonymously, have been included in the statistics and comments contained in this report.

Group of Staff	Number of Responses	Number of Staff*	Percentage of staff
Retained	57	322	18
Wholetime	39	228	17
Officers	4	17	24
Fire Safety	4	23	17
Training	4	19	21
Headquarters	9	47	19
Anonymous	3	-	-
Overall figures	120	656	18

*figures accurate as of 10th November 2009

How the results are presented in this report

The report has been split into 5 sections. Each section details the responses made by staff to one of the questions listed in the questionnaire. The last section deals with other comments made, that do not specifically relate to one of the 'Questionnaire Questions'. Each of the sections comprise of the following sub-sections:

- The question/statement on which people were commenting;
- A summary of the responses and comments received;
- The IRMP Members Working Group's response to the feedback received;
- A summary table showing the number of responses received and the overall breakdown of percentage figures for each of the 'Agreement Ratings' (i.e. 'Strongly agree' through to 'Strongly disagree').
- Tables and graphs showing a detailed breakdown of the response from the various groups and departments within the organisation; and
- Comments received from staff and their Representative Bodies.

The IRMP Presentation 2010/11

Response to Question 1

Question asked:

- 1) Did you consider the proposed actions document is;
 - a) Easy to read
 - b) Provides sufficient information to form an opinion on the proposed actions

Response Summary

The majority of respondents (84%) stated that they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Tend to agree with the statements. Only 1% 'Strongly Disagreed' or 'Tended to disagree' with 16% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. There is overwhelming support for this statement.

Comments from staff showed the benefit of the presentation, however one member of staff thought there was too much 'management-speak'. The Fire Brigade's Union are very supportive of the process and appreciate the effort the Fire Authority puts into its interaction with staff on these important issues.

The IRMP Members Working Group's response

The Working Group notes all comments made. Although it has been disappointed by the relatively low number of staff that completed questionnaires, the Working Group is very appreciative of the written comments contained in the responses and the verbal feedback given to Members during all of the IRMP presentations to staff. The detail contained in the comments has helped to ensure Members are able to make an informed decision on this year's proposals.

Although possibly fewer in number than in previous years, there have been a few comments from staff that indicate that they feel that the consultation process is a 'done deal'. Members and Officers have continuously stressed, throughout all presentations, that this is not the case, and the Working Group is sure that any changes to the initial proposals, as a consequence of the feedback received, will be further evidence of this.

Summary table of responses to this question**Q1a: The document is easy to read**

	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	29	25.2
Tend to Agree	67	58.3
Neither	18	15.7
Tend to Disagree	1	0.9
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	115	100

Q1b: The document provides sufficient information for you to form an opinion on the proposed actions

	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	19	16.7
Tend to Agree	62	54.4
Neither	26	22.8
Tend to Disagree	5	4.4
Strongly Disagree	2	1.8
Total	114	100



Detailed summary of responses**Q1a – The document is easy to read.**

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall response	112	26	57	16	1	0
Fire Safety	4	25	50	25	0	0
Headquarters Officer	9	33	67	0	0	0
Retained	4	50	50	0	0	0
Training	55	33	58	7	2	0
Wholetime	4	50	50	0	0	0
Anonymous	36	8	56	36	0	0
	3	0	100	0	0	0

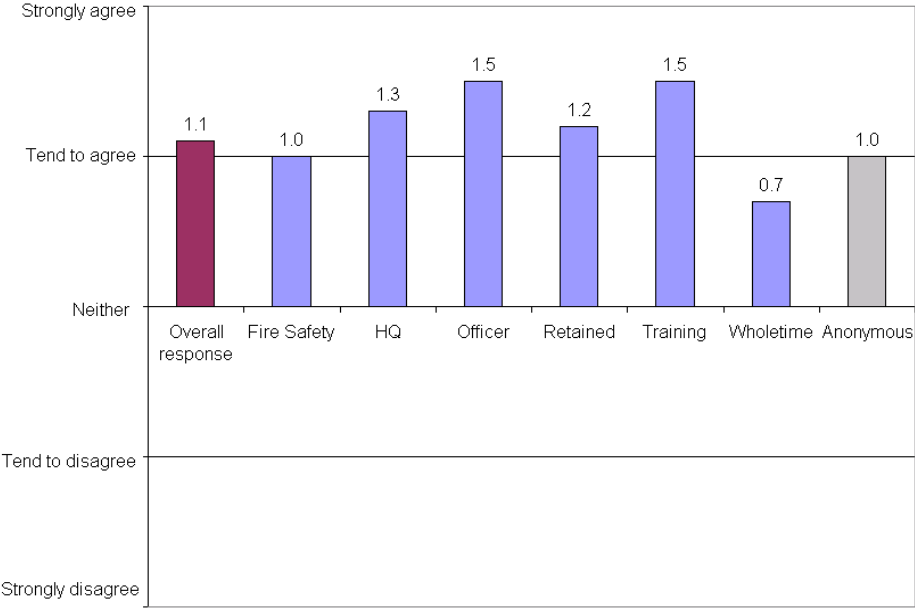
Q1b: The document provides sufficient information for you to form an opinion

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall response	114	17	54	23	4	2
Fire Safety	4	0	25	50	0	25
Headquarters Officer	9	11	67	22	0	0
Retained	4	25	50	25	0	0
Training	54	28	61	9	2	0
Wholetime	4	25	75	0	0	0
Anonymous	36	3	42	42	11	3
	3	0	67	33	0	0

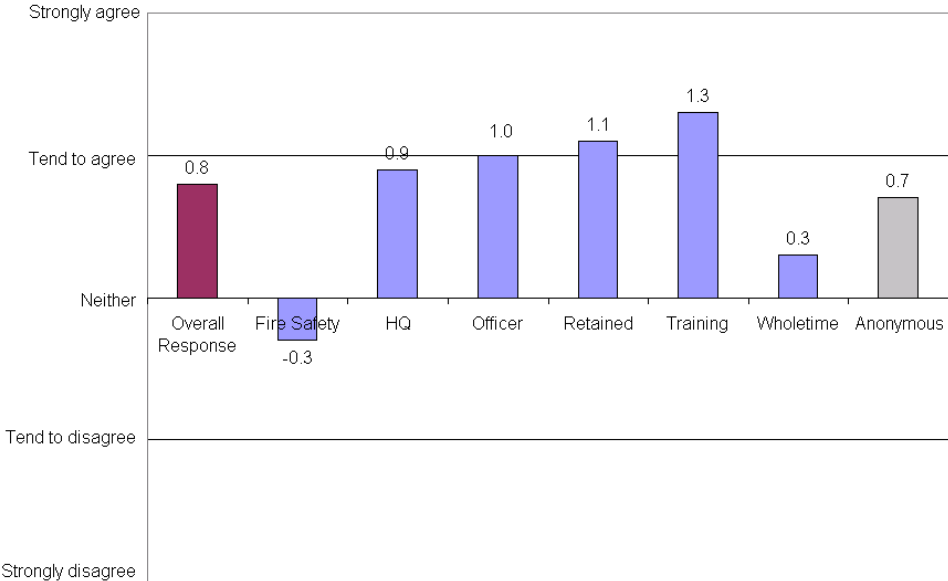


Averaged Response Graphs¹

Q1a – The document is easy to read.



Q1b: The document provides sufficient information for you to form an opinion



¹ See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.



Comments made in response to Question 1

Comments in agreement with the statement

- Good Clear and to the point.
- Proposed actions are clearly defined and explained in the IRMP PowerPoint presentation
- Presentation carried out to a high professional standard
- Easy enough to read
- Easy to understand
- All questions answered
- Very informative
- Clear structure with correct level of information
- Very well presented and clearly delivered
-

Neutral comments

- Most of the information I took on, or considered, was from the presentation
- Together, with the presentation, although that showed the statistics to prove a point in one direction only
- I feel you are able to 'form' an opinion, but to form an 'informed' opinion the presentation is required.
- Do not feel it affects this station

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- The questionnaire could be more simplified
- A lot of management speak
- Lots of information but not a lot of actual solutions. Need to look further ahead to move with the situations that have arisen so that we can make progress in the future.
- Obviously the document focuses upon the positive implications, but not so much the negative implications.
- Presentation does not include all calculations to show how figures have been arrived at. Therefore there is no opportunity to challenge them. Ridership being an example. Also showing that WT staff costs are the greatest, without showing that they deal with approx 50% of calls in Shropshire, is out of context.

Comments made by the Fire Brigade's Union

Although we have pointed out a weakness in the restrictive nature of the proposals under the ridership factor, we recognise that SFRS continues to genuinely interact with staff and stakeholders during its IRMP consultation programme.

The use of tick box questions is an unavoidable necessity to ensure a reasonable response rate. The need for brevity, again to ensure a reasonable response rate is also an unavoidable necessity.

However, we do appreciate that SFRS places much emphasis during the presentations to encourage people to substantiate their views by filling in the comments section of the questionnaire. We also appreciate that SFRS places more



importance to these qualitative responses rather than to the quantitative tick box answers.

This is in direct contrast to another FRS in the region, facing severe cuts to frontline services, where their consultation document has created a political storm amongst MPs and councillors, for being wholly inadequate and detrimentally misleading.



Response to Question 2

Question asked:

In relation to the proposed action to create District Development Teams do you agree;

- a) There is a need for District Development Teams
- b) With the proposed structure of the DDT's

Response Summary

A majority of people (64% of respondents) agreed that there is a need for the District Development Teams, but only 46% agreed with the proposed structure. However, of those that did not agree with the structure, 31% expressed no specific preference leaving only 23% who specifically stated their disagreement with the structure. In relation to the responding 'Groups', Fire Safety staff appear to be least in favour of the proposed structure.

Many of the comments in favour of the DDT's, see the need for additional training and development as main driver. Having said that, the main concern about the structure appears to that it is top heavy, and that perhaps it would benefit from fewer Station Managers.

The Fire Brigade's Union give strong support for the DDT's but also gave some reservations about the structure, both in terms of the number of Station Managers and the impact that not having Crew Managers will have on the ability for Firefighters to progress through this function.

The IRMP Members Working Group's response

The Working Group notes all comments made. Members are pleased to see that the principle of the District Development Team appears to be well supported by most sections of staff. It notes the concerns that some people have about the proposed structure of the teams. As highlighted during the presentations, actual structure of the teams will not be known until Officers have completed the role-mapping work, which will be undertaken as part of the implementation project.

As stated during the presentations to staff, in the event that this proposal should be accepted by the Fire Authority, the Working Group recommends that a full evaluation of the project should be conducted, within the first 12 months, to ensure the benefits from this proposal, and the impacts from the next one, are being effectively managed.



Summary table of responses to this question**Q2a: There is a need for the District Development Teams.**

	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	33	28.0
Tend to Agree	43	36.4
Neither	23	19.5
Tend to Disagree	12	10.2
Strongly Disagree	7	5.9
Total	118	100

Q2b: I agree with the proposed structure of the District Development Teams.

	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	18	15.5
Tend to Agree	35	30.2
Neither	36	31.0
Tend to Disagree	21	18.1
Strongly Disagree	6	5.2
Total	116	100



Detailed summary of responses**Q2a: There is a need for the District Development Teams.**

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall response	118	28	36	19	10	6
Fire Safety	4	0	50	0	25	25
Headquarters Officer	8	25	50	13	13	0
Retained	4	50	50	0	0	0
Training	57	37	37	21	4	2
Wholetime	4	75	25	0	0	0
Anonymous	38	13	34	24	21	8
	3	0	0	33	0	67

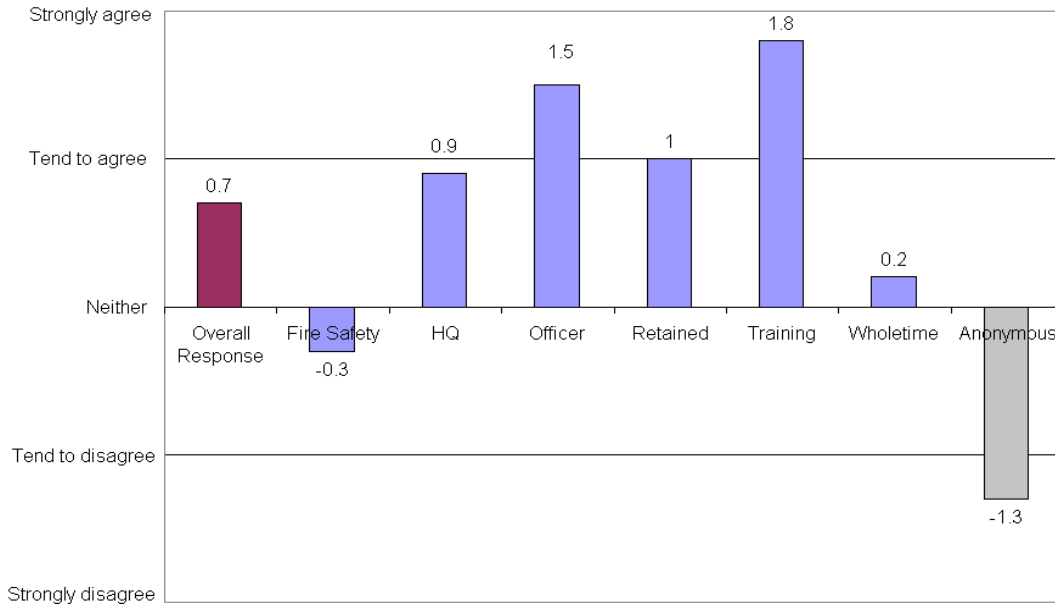
Q2b: I agree with the proposed structure of the District Development Teams.

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall response	116	16	30	31	18	5
Fire Safety	4	0	0	0	75	25
Headquarters Officer	8	25	25	25	25	0
Retained	4	0	0	75	25	0
Training	56	25	45	23	5	2
Wholetime	4	0	75	25	0	0
Anonymous	37	5	14	43	30	8
	3	0	0	33	33	33

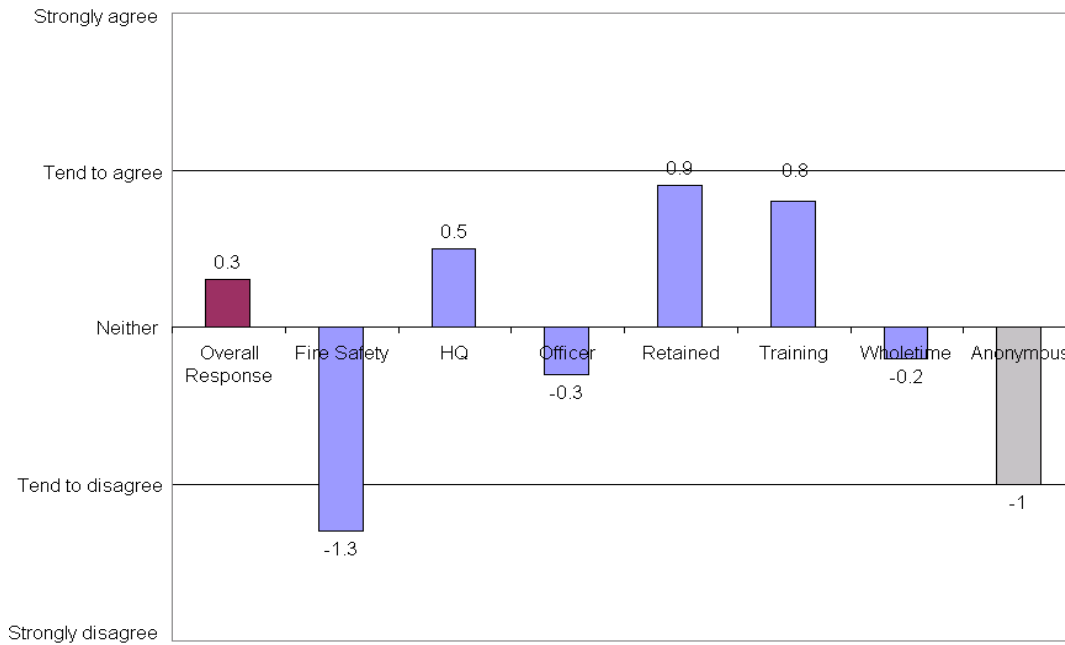


Averaged Response Graphs²

Q2a: There is a need for the District Development Teams.



Q2b: I agree with the proposed structure of the District Development Teams.



² See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.

Comments made in response to Question 2***Comments in agreement with statement***

- It gives crews a chance to forward themselves and develop new skills.
- If training resources will be freed up for wholetime, it can only be a good and improving skills in retained personnel
- Improves training facilities and personnel development for all
- Creating these teams will ensure that retained crews will become more skilled and equal to wholetime crews
- RDS training and management skills for JO's is an area that has a need for more development
- The DDT's could help on bringing all training to the same standard
- To make best use of resources is the best way forward
- The DDT's can continue the good work of the RSO's in providing operational cover, support and training
- I think the DDT's would be good for monitoring and supporting new recruits and also a good opportunity for a chance to progress your own career if you so wish
- I agree the need for the teams because of the vast difference in skill between the wholetime and the retained
- Agree that RDS Firefighters Training should be more structured, and competence judged our ability and not time served
- I think it is important to have a clear management development support structure in place
- Support of the Development of RDS is essential
- The DDT's will/could provide a valuable resource to the brigade in my opinion
- More help will be needed by trained personnel if NVQ is adopted
- A development system for retained is needed at the moment it appears not to be on a par with wholetime firefighters
- Additional support and training routes for RDS, additional employment opportunities in a potentially rewarding role. Resilience for RDS and wholetime cover. Route for team building with other station personnel
- RDS development is key to having a more competent workforce
- Agree with proposed
- There is an obvious need in my perception but I hazard a guess that the man in the street may see an alternative view
- Ensures that retained skill levels are on equal par to the wholetime
- A huge need to develop our RDS
- Should improve retained personnel's training and development, but needs to be tested
- There is a need for DDT's so that more training is available for all staff and releasing training school staff to provide more training in specialist areas
- It gives the flexibility and another tool to work at Community and training level. They should concentrate on training and further development of the retained firefighters within their area
- More uniformed training throughout the brigade. Help keep pumps on the run, assist in station management team in training, structure and delivery, arrange complete drills and develop alternative training sights (water rescue



- More training for SFRS personnel, keep up crewing levels, help station management and arrange off station drills
- Introduction of the DDT's at the proposed structure is correct as SM's need to have a management role to deliver and monitor staff under their supervision. Roles of a lower structure i.e. WM's may have less authority to control and initiate the required level of training to RDS. The appropriate line management is required to oversee and monitor.
- Agree with proposed
- Support RDS staff in all aspects and support the management of stations
- Good Idea
- If it improves training for RDS staff it's a good idea.
- Any support given to WT/Retained is a positive step.
- It can only be a benefit to have this and this way be able to monitor development better for RDS
- Yes, if there are the development needs explained than ANY member of the service must have support. However not at the expense of reducing wholetime personnel.
- More support for stations
- To support the retrained training needs
- Capacity of RDS Dev Officer will soon reach level which may impact on availability etc. Having local team will benefit all concerned
- Keep retained cover on 100%. Help set up drills.
- Will benefit this station
- With less incidents, more training is required to keep competencies up. New recruits have a lot to take on in a short time. A follow up period to check on competencies is required to take some of the pressure off station managers. Give more assistance to station managers to deliver training.
- I believe there is a need for a CM role in the DDT's . This would keep their structure more inline with FRS structure and allow for personnel to progress. I believe that the DDT's should also take more of a SM role, bridging the gap between stations and their 1 GM who is clearly over worked. The running of RDS training should feature highly on their responsibilities, by hopefully taking over from the training dept in certain areas.
- Need for DDT's to establish more parity of competence between retained and wholetime
- Anything to help the training of retained FF is helpful and help to keep stations on the run.
- All that the RSO's do now
- Help manage stations and improve what we get
- The RDS needs greater support to help manage the system properly. The introduction of the DDT would greatly improve and help manager these stations properly.
- I agree with proposed structure, but am unhappy with the possible reduction of opportunities for structured overtime for WT due to DDTs covering operational deficiencies.

Neutral comments

- I believe the proposed structure can only be determined when the results of the initial pilot are known in the spring 2010



- If this is to save money it probably won't as there will no doubt be more vehicles required (at least 4) and more structured overtime paid to make up for the shortfalls on watches to provide this team
- I do not believe I have enough understanding of the Retained System to pass comment
- I think there is a need to develop retained crews due to a contrast of skill levels, however I think the structure needs to be reviewed. Is it necessary to have a Str Manager, Watch Manager and 2 firefighters? Would it be more appropriate for WM and 3 FFs?
- Relating quality of development to improved service to community needs further explanation as I suspect most communities are more than happy with their service and they will not notice any changes but the cost increase. These have more effect internally. The ability for RDS to move to W/T appears to be coming in under the radar, as qualification through ADC is an bridged version of the W/T system, creating an inequality
- If it is necessary, as was explained in the consultation, to have "assurance" on retained competence then more staff are definitely required. I think there may be a danger of making the retained NVQ/development program too onerous though
- I agree the DDT's are good idea and if they could be provided without removal of wholetime posts I would be strongly in favour, however in a world of finite resources I believe that wholetime services is more important
- Think the idea has its benefits, but on a personal note I found working solely within my team was more beneficial i.e. learn from the experienced crew to form a critical relationship
- I do not believe I have enough understanding of the Retained System to pass comment
- Think the idea has its benefits, but on a personal note I found working solely within my team was more beneficial i.e. learn from the experienced crew to form a critical relationship
- Operationally, I am not in a position to comment. However, with regard to development, it is appropriate that they fully support RDS in their development from the initial stages through to WM level. However this must be driven from the Central Development Team which is the main driver of competitive standards for the service
- Structure will need to incorporate a qualification scheme in order to offer enough support to staff delivering training eg. Ba I RTC I
- Not able to comment as do not have enough understanding of the operational side
- DDT's should provide good training to retained staff and also be available to cover deficiencies in retained ONLY stations
- I think it vital if members of the DDT are from the RDS , their skills will need to be upgraded to the same as the WT staff
- The role is appropriate but may be seen to be less than cost effective given the organizations current resourcing of the existing NVQ/ development process
- The team for development needs a chain whereby they can develop and go for promotion
- Not conversant enough to give informed opinion
- I can see the need for the DDT and would agree that DDTs could improve the RDS competence. I do not agree that having DDTs could allow more time for training centre staff to allocate to WT. No evidence to support this.



- I feel the introduction of 2 extra posts is excessive. I think the existing 2 RSO posts per district could be better utilized and then one extra post with an option of one more after a period.
- Structure may need to be adjusted to assist in career development

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- The structure needs to be reviewed
- Personally I think the money could be better spent. Keep the current RSO system. Don't have the DDT's involve more wholetime and retained in joint training thus confirming competency
- I think 16 personnel in the DDT's is a little top heavy
- I do not agree that as many resources need to be used up on the retained
- Couldn't and shouldn't the CM's and WM's be able to confirm competency of their crews? The current RSO's can continue helping, arranging and assisting them
- This can be done within the current Watch Manager role map that exist on stations at present. Individuals are placed at this level and should have sufficient training and resources provided to carry out the requirements of the watch manager map !!!
- Every retained station has Watch Managers, Crew Managers, plus already eight RSO's to support them. Speaking to retained colleagues they feel RSO's could do more for them anyway
- I don't think there is a need. With increased levels from 94% to 99%. Why bother spending another £513k moving staff round?
- I felt this subject was misguided
- Albeit I am comfortable with the current concept of RSOs and what they achieve
- My understanding of the RSOs role and function is to provide cover for retained stations to maintain operational capability (keep pumps on the run)
- If the organisation has identified that operational capability cannot be adequately maintained at retained stations with the current number of 8 RSOs, then an increase in the number is understandable. Notwithstanding, an increase of 8 seems excessive and to provide different levels of rank (role) which basically means the second trawl of 8 RSOs will cost more than the current 8 RSOs is unjustifiable
- I think they would be a waste of money and don't see they would have a big enough role to benefit the brigade
- I think the current RSO posts could carry out the development in rural areas of the RDS. Wholetime watches could carry on helping with the development of RDS
- (These comments relate to the presentation) Again misleading information. RDS officers have more support than illustrated. The comparison with the wholetime managers is unfair as these managers have far more responsibilities. This is a classic case of " sledgehammer to crack a nut "
- Is the number purely to reduce the number of frontline firefighters by 8?
- We need to develop the existing team not add more layers. We have already addressed a lot of the issues they just need implementing
- It would appear that the current RSO's spend a large majority of their time maintaining appliance availability. The proposed DDT's are likely to fall into the same trap as there is not enough evidence as to exactly what their role will be and how and when they will provide the proposed support to RDS. How have the proposals for the structure been arrived at? It is probable that the DDT's will also end up covering the departed staffing levels on WT stations if the ridership factor changes



- I'm not sure that the proposed structure is necessary. There are people in the community who could provide a part time management role w/o having to join the response service (much cheaper)
- The structure you proposed for the DDT is clearly a serious amount of money in relation to the wages of those individuals, which seems far too excessive to me
- I don't think that 4 station managers are required - 1 x WM + 1 x CM + 2 x FF is more appropriate, 1 x SM in overall charge
- If the organisation have identified that we need to increase the number of RSOs to maintain operational capability, why dress their role up as 'District Development Teams (DDT)'. If their role is to be increased to DDT who and when are they going to develop? Considerations:
 - When the RSOs (DDT) are at work, the people they are supposed to be 'developing' will surely be at their civilian employment so how will they achieve their role and function?
 - When the retained Fire Fighters are at the retained station, surely they should be 'on a shout' so how are they going to be 'developed' during times of operations? Are we suggesting that they will be assessed whilst on operations and if so, how will that actually be carried out?
 - Training during drill nights makes sense, however not to the expense of employing an extra 8 x RSOs under the guise of DDT, training time would be minimum and the training value would be very limited. In summary, I understand that there is a need to maintain competency of the Retained Fire Fighters, however, I am not convinced that we can justify the introduction of 8 extra RSOs as a DDT absorbing that extra financial burden. If however statistical data can identify/Justify that we need to increase the number of RSOs to maintain operational cover, perhaps that is more understandable
- I feel the structure needs to reflect the full role required by the team. At this stage this is not 100% clear - structure may need to change. I feel there is a danger they will simply improve RDS availability and not fulfill the ride set.
- The presentation does not make clear the work to be undertaken and why more staff are necessary. The presentation of the management structure is completely misleading as all RDS stations already have WM and CM to deal with admin the same at WT. The only difference is time available. As RDS managers are responsible for staff for very limited time periods, this doesn't seem an issue.
- Not sure NVQ is a step forward for RDS. May be off-putting to some. Possibility of losing staff due to nature of NVQ process.
- I believe there are already ample resources in place to assist the RDS and assure their competence.
- 8 posts were already made. To save household paying an extra 6p why not utilise flexi-duty officers to assist RSO's? A practice that worked a few years ago.
- Taking the current climate and SFRS's available resources into consideration, I have decided that I strongly disagree that there is a need for District Development Teams and as such have developed an alternative plan that I believe will be both economically efficient and extremely rewarding to both WT FF's and their retained counterparts. I believe that WT FF's could expand their current retained responsibilities so that they are the staff implementing the proposed specific training and development programmes. Each WT watch contains the necessary qualifications for this to be successful as they each possess at least one qualified assessor, a Watch Manager and Crew Manager, not to mention the wealth of experience and varied expertise that the FF's contain. I am also aware that



currently there are FF's who although happy with their rank and role would like to expand their horizons without necessarily seeking promotion. This added responsibility would go some way into solving this issue and could reinvigorate WT FF's seeking alternative direction. The system would work by delegating each new retained duty system entrant a WT Firefighter, responsible for mentoring them through their specific training and development programmes. New managers would be mentored via the WT Watch and Crew Managers. Alternatively the watch would provide this as a whole and I believe that both systems would work. Retained and WT relations can only be strengthened through this and a greater understanding of each others responsibilities will benefit SFRS greatly. There are understandably issues regarding the implementation of this plan, the biggest being that shift patterns will not allow WT watches to regularly be available for retained drill nights. However, this could be solved in 2 ways. Retained drill nights could be on 2 different nights based on a rota of 2 weeks, for example, the first 2 drill nights of a month could be on a Tuesday to coincide with the WT night shifts and then the last 2 could be on a Thursday night again to coincide. This would make 4 consecutive weekly drill nights out of 7 available for training. Alternatively, instead of WT watch adopting a retained station, 2 would adopt. For example, if green watch and blue watch Wellington adopted the same station then 2 out of every 4 drill nights could be achieved without need for the retained to have 2 different drill nights. After speaking to several members of GW there is great support for the above plan. Many are aware that the creation of DDT could provoke bad feeling due to the ability for them to move into WT employment without going through the WT recruitment process. If this plan were to go ahead, I believe that it would only be possible by ensuring that WT ridership remains as it is due to the extra responsibility proposal would bring. Even taking this into account it is still economically more viable than the creation of the DDT's. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

- Structure I believe is wrong. It think it would work better with 1 ff, 1 CM, 1WM - natural promotion structure.
- Increase WT training instructors to deliver the training to retained duty system. Even make instructors in training crew managers to fill vacancies.
- This cannot be achieved within the proposed system as there is no Crew manager role
- For above reasons no need for DDT's
- Don't see how 8 WT posts are needed when retained system only work 3 hours a week. They have not needed this much support in the past so why now? Why not use flexi-duty officers to support them.
- I do not support the reduction in WT contingent to provide this proposal.

Comments from the Fire Brigade's Union

The Fire Brigades Union in Shropshire has a long and documented support to providing full time support for Firefighters working the Retained Duty System (RDS). In our responses to IRMP 04/05 and repeated in 05/06 we also clearly identify the need to support training and the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) in the RDS system as well as in the wholetime system.

Our view in 04/05 was:



“On Retained Stations, ... the need for supporting staff is greater and IPDS will even more underline this need... . IPDS by its definition of proving competency places greater emphasis to a more accountable training structure. In our opinion this can only be done by providing retained stations with some sort of full time support. If there were full time junior officers and firefighters attached to retained stations, they would be able to pick up the burden of preparing and delivering the required training.”

Once RSOs had become established in the Service we pointed out in our response to IRMP07/08:

“It is however, disappointing for us that the Retained Support Officers (RSOs) were engaged at firefighter level and not crew manager level, as our position paper to the service some years ago proposed. This would have afforded greater flexibility and opportunity for both the service and the individuals. It would also have reflected the level of work that RSOs will be drawn into.”

We are however not into the business of trying to claim credit or score points here. The point is that; The Fire Brigades Union is very supportive of the intent to support RDS with a better management structure and development programmes.

Before going into detail of this proposal, it is necessary to firstly re emphasise the huge success of the Retained Review in Shropshire and the continuing implementation of the 27 recommendations it made. The dedication of the RSOs has yielded a very positive effect on the whole service. This has manifested itself in a significant improvement in the areas of training, exercises, appliance availability, recruitment, retention, CFS and general coordination of the Service. This shows the advantage of employing Firefighters in these roles, where the full value of the Firefighter rolemap can be utilised.

It is also time to review the work carried out by the present RSO. We suspect that their role has developed over the years and the level of responsibility carried by the RSOs is probably above that of Firefighter. The Service has benefitted greatly from the enthusiasm and willingness of RSO to do that bit extra.

Comparable Management Structure

The presentation given to staff tried to demonstrate the difference in management support between the Wholetime and RDS service. Although we agree there is a need for greater management support for RDS, the assertion that the only management currently available to RDS is 2 Group Managers, compared to a plethora in the Wholetime service is misleading and not truly representative.

There are Crew Managers, Watch Managers and Station Managers involved in both parts of the Service. The difference is the time allocation to deal with management issues.

Therefore we agree that it is clear that further full time support is needed, but the presentation exaggerates this need.

Job descriptions- The Role of Retained Development Managers

The proposal identifies in the Action Plan under “Benefits to the Community”, that by introducing Retained Development Managers to create a District Development Team, their undertaking will be:

“The teams will support and compliment the introduction and delivery of structured development programs for all new retained duty system entrants and managers to ensure competence in their role. They will also improve support for retained duty system station management teams, further develop local and county exercises and provide specialist training. These teams may also conduct the initial retained duty system recruit training, previously carried out by the training department. This will benefit our wholetime staff through greater capacity being available from the training department. District Development Team members will, where necessary, be used to cover wholetime operational deficiencies”

As with any proposal, the difficulty is how much detail and research can realistically be done before implementation and how much will be left to a pilot scheme, or perhaps just develop the project over time, with regular monitoring.

Therefore it is not without sympathy but, we must assert that there is not enough detail of what the Development Managers remit of work is going to be, nor how the structure of the team will marry up to the rest of the organisation.

The reason we feel that there should be more detail is due to the assertion in the presentations that the post are likely to consist of 4 Watch Managers and 4 Station Managers. This would indicate that the service has a greater idea of what they want to achieve with these post, but is trying to keep flexibility by not providing that detail.

It is with this in mind that the Fire Brigades Union will look forward to being involved in mapping the new Job Descriptions to the relevant Fire Service Rolemaps.

Another concern that the above “Benefits to the Community” statement raises is the contradiction of the purpose of District Development Managers which is outlined under “Proposal” of the Action Plan. The proposal highlights that recruits on the RDS need their competency assured to the same level as Wholetime hence the introduction of these posts. However, under the “Benefits to the Community” it indicates that the Retained Development Managers may conduct the initial recruit training, rather than the dedicated training staff.

We would support the use of Retained Development Managers in other areas of the service, and would encourage that they be used to support the entire service, not just RDS. One example of this, given in the proposal, is developing local and county exercises. However, using them to conduct initial training for RDS would be a mistake as it will, in our view undermine the credibility of the recruit training between the two systems.

If Retained Development Managers are to assist in the initial recruit training, then they must be involved in all initial recruit training Wholetime and RDS. Also, if they are trained to be assessors, then this facility should be available to all recruits and



development Firefighters, regardless of duty system. However, this then raises the question of how they fit into the structure of SFRS: Are they District Teams or attached to Training, or Workplace Development?

Whatever the outcome of how they align to the structure of SFRS, it is our strong belief that the District Development Teams should have a much wider remit and should be used to benefit the entire Service.

Assessment and Verification of Development Programmes

The role of the Development Managers shown during the presentation leads us to make the comparison with those that have been undertaken in SFRS in recent years under the Rank to Role process.

The presentation shows that a possible structure would be 4 Watch Managers who would be the Assessors of the development programme and 4 Station Managers who would be the Verifiers. Bearing in mind that this is intended to be an IPDS based system, and not at full NVQ level, this proposal will not integrate into the present structure of Assessors and Verifiers on Wholetime watches and in the Workplace Development Department.

Pyramid management structure

The cost of this proposal is £513,000 which is more than £200,000 than the savings made from the following proposal. The proposal recommends that each of the 4 teams would consist of 2 Firefighters, 1 Watch Manager and 1 Station Manager. There is clearly no progression for the Firefighters within the team as there are no Crew Manager posts. There will be 4 Station Managers having direct responsibility for three people, which does not seem to correspond to other Station Managers in the Service. The most difficult question therefore must be; where and how will this management structure tie into the rest of the Service?

Clearly there is more work to do on this proposal, which is admitted by the Service, but our view is that SFRS would be better served if the structure of the Development Teams is more pyramid like. The inclusion of Crew Managers and a reduction of, possibly Watch Managers, but certainly Station Managers, will provide a better structure

Future Staff Mobility

Future staff mobility between RDS and Wholetime shift system will be the long term outcome of this proposal. It has long been The Fire Brigades Union's position that a Firefighter is a Firefighter, whatever the duty system that is being worked. This proposal will close the gap between the training and development that is undertaken by those two parts of the Service. SFRS must be applauded for this, and for the commitment that this proposal brings to address that issue.

There will be some complications that will need to be addressed over the coming years to ensure that there is no deferential equality impact that this proposal will bring in the long term. The National Firefighter Selection test and Assessment Development



Centres will need to be equally applied to all. Of course the selection process for Wholetime posts will need to remain advertised to the public for all applicants regardless of whether the applicant is already a Firefighter working on the RDS, due to the restriction of locality placed upon RDS recruitment.

Financial

As stated, we believe that there is scope within this proposal to review the level of the roles that the Development Managers have been estimated at. That would mean that the intention of this proposal could be achieved at a lesser cost than the figure stated in the Action Plan. However, at an average increase of 7 pence per week to the average household in Shropshire, we believe that this scheme and what it has the potential to achieve will represent enormous value for money and greatly improve service delivery in every aspect for SFRS.



Response to Question 3

Questions asked:

In relation to the proposed action on changes to the Ridership Factor. Do you think the Fire Authority should;

- a) Move 8 wholetime posts into the District Development Teams
- b) Reduce by 8 wholetime posts and don't re-invest in the DDT's (i.e. reduce the burden on the tax-payer)
- c) Not make any changes to the wholetime service

Response Summary

A small majority of staff (53%) agree with the proposal to reduce by 8 Wholetime Firefighters and re-invest the savings into the District Development Team (DDT). A slightly larger majority (61%) would be against the Fire Authority reducing the posts and not re-investing back into the DDT. Opinion is very much split around whether the Fire Authority should leave the Wholetime numbers as they are, with 33% agreeing for this to happen, 30% disagreeing and 38% not expressing a preference.

Comments from staff in favour of the proposal to move resources from the Wholetime into the DDT consider this to be a more efficient use of our resources to meet an identified need. However, many people have concerns about the resilience of the Wholetime system, and some feel that we should not make these 'cuts' now, but should wait until there is a need to do it to meet the budgetary pressures likely to come on all public services .

The Fire Brigades Union are concerned about the impact on our family friendly policies as a consequence of staff having less flexibility over leave selection and more difficulties in taking time off in lieu. They present evidence that exemplifies how the reduction in staff will leave very little surplus left in the Wholetime system, potentially leading to occasions when the Fire Authority cannot meet its aim of staffing all appliances 100% of the time. They would prefer that the Fire Authority considered reducing the numbers by 4 and then come out to consult again on the reduction of the other 4 firefighters, when the impact of the first 4 is better known.

The IRMP Members Working Group's response

The Working Group notes all comments made. It particularly notes the concerns of staff and the Fire Brigades Union, that reducing the Wholetime Service by 8 posts may result in the Service not being able to crew its front-line appliances, or a reduction in the levels of morale amongst staff. The Working Group believes that by reducing the number of staff in two phases, and including a review of the procedures for staff booking time off in lieu and leave during the first phase, the impact on staff will be kept to a minimum. As detailed in the response to the previous proposal, should these proposals be implemented, the Working Group will recommend to the



Fire Authority that a review of their benefits and impacts will be undertaken, within the first 12 months of the implementation project. The results from this review will be considered by the Fire Authority before it agrees to progressing to the second phase of staff reductions.

The Working Group restates the position of the Fire Authority, that any reductions in posts that occurs as a consequence of this year's IRMP, will be made through 'natural wastage' and will not involve staff being made redundant.

Summary table of responses to question 3

Q3a: Move 8 wholetime posts into the District Development Teams

	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	22	19.3
Tend to Agree	39	34.2
Neither	21	18.4
Tend to Disagree	19	16.7
Strongly Disagree	13	11.4
Total	114	100

Q3b: Reduce by 8 wholetime posts and don't re-invest in the DDT's

	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	3	2.9
Tend to Agree	7	6.8
Neither	30	29.1
Tend to Disagree	32	31.1
Strongly Disagree	31	30.1
Total	103	100

Q3c: Do not make any changes to the Wholetime service.

	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	20	19.2
Tend to Agree	14	13.5
Neither	39	37.5
Tend to Disagree	20	19.2
Strongly Disagree	11	10.6
Total	104	100



Detailed summary of responses**Q3a: Move 8 wholetime posts into the District Development Teams**

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall response	114	19	34	18	17	11
Fire Safety	4	0	0	0	50	50
Headquarters	9	11	44	11	22	11
Officer	3	67	33	0	0	0
Retained	55	29	40	20	7	4
Training	4	25	75	0	0	0
Wholetime	36	6	22	25	31	17
Anonymous	3	0	33	0	0	67

Q3b: Reduce by 8 wholetime posts and don't re-invest in the DDT's

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall response	103	3	7	29	31	30
Fire Safety	4	0	0	0	50	50
Headquarters	7	0	0	57	29	14
Officer	3	0	0	0	67	33
Retained	47	6	11	40	21	21
Training	4	0	0	0	50	50
Wholetime	35	0	6	17	40	37
Anonymous	3	0	0	33	0	67

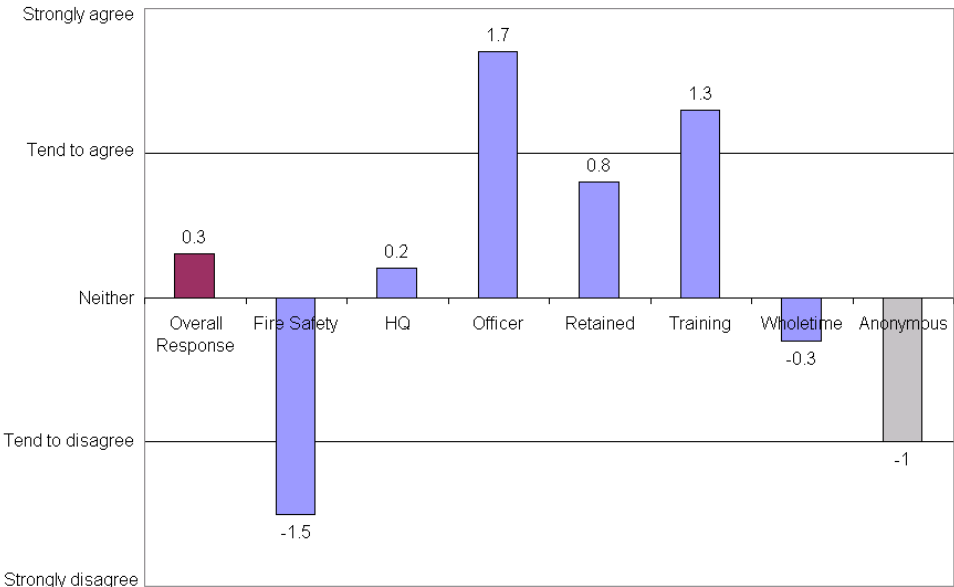
Q3c: Do not make any changes to the Wholetime service.

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall response	101	20	12	38	20	11
Fire Safety	4	25	25	50	0	0
Headquarters	7	14	29	29	14	14
Officer	3	0	0	0	33	67
Retained	48	10	6	50	19	15
Training	4	0	0	25	75	0
Wholetime	35	37	17	26	17	3
Anonymous	3	0	67	33	0	0

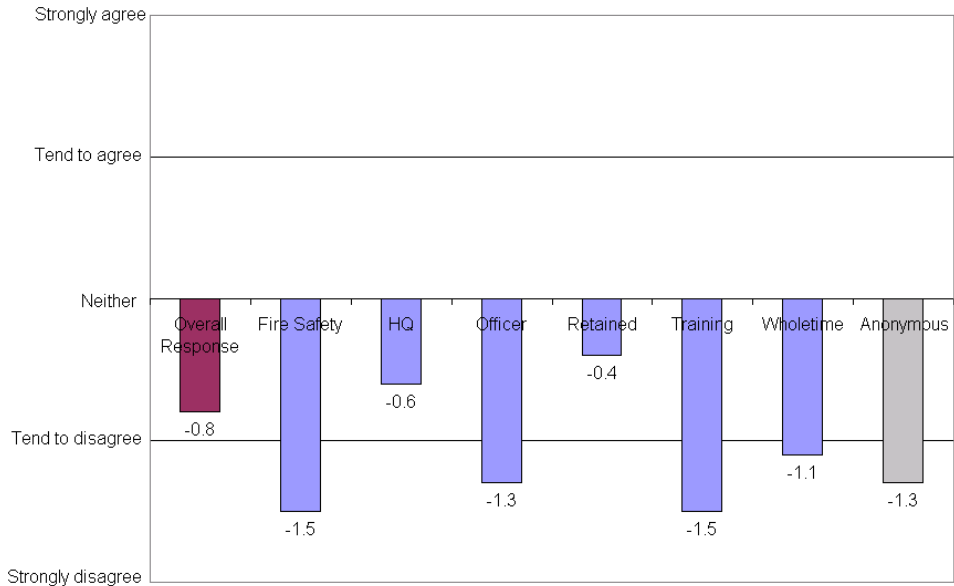


Averaged Response Graphs³

Q3a: Move 8 wholetime posts into the District Development Teams



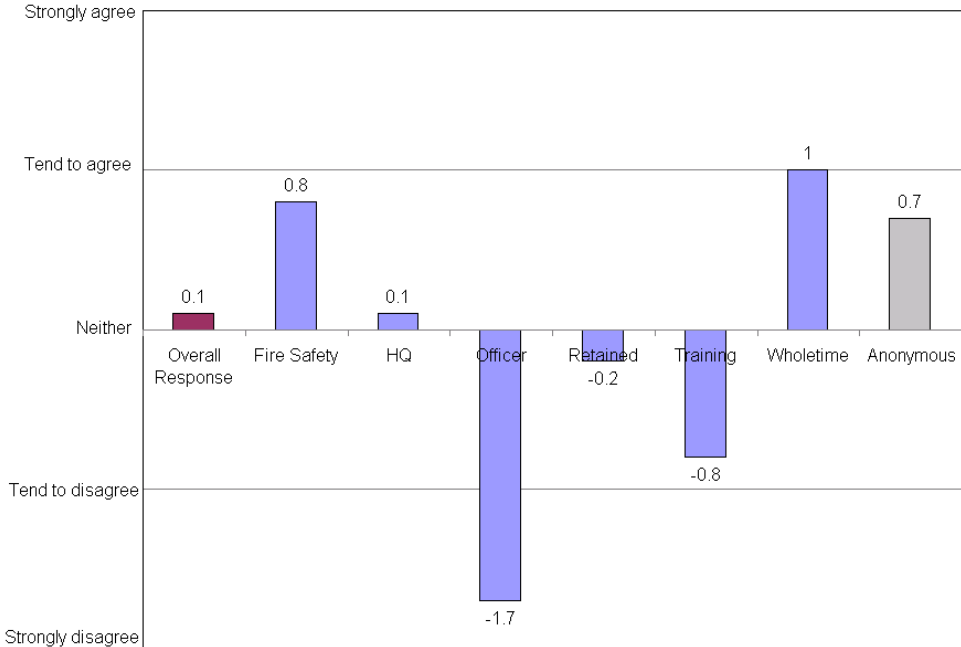
Q3b: Reduce by 8 wholetime posts and don't re-invest in the DDT's



³ See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.



Q3c: Do not make any changes to the Wholetime service.



Comments made in response to Question 3***Comments in agreement with the statement***

- It has been identified that there is a need for DDT and this seems a logical step to maintain efficiency levels and the shift pattern
- Logical move and cost effective way of providing ongoing firefighter development around the brigade
- This will help all-round with retained recruit training and backup for wholetime cover
- Moving 8 W/T to DDT's is by far the best option rather than losing posts in the brigade
- RDS - Wholetime movement - may be difficulties for acceptance - require support opportunities to ensure levels of competence are ensured
- You would still have the benefit of using the team for other duties
- Improving efficiency can only benefit the brigade in the current economic climate, especially when there will be no detriment to operational cover
- I do agree only if it doesn't affect moral of the wholetime crews and appliances are crewed at all times
- I think retained firefighters are the best use of resources and the wholetime are far less efficient
- If moving 8 wholetime posts keep the present shift pattern
- Most efficient way of using the staff from SY once the ALP moves
- I think it makes a good use of the budget, this then will be able to support the development of the RDS staff
- If the move will improve skills and free up training resources it will be a positive.
- No loss of posts with fully trained personnel in support posts
- No job losses. Using skilled personnel in other posts
- This will give flexibility within the brigade, a reduction in tax would be good for tax payers. If you can do a combination of both parts above (posts to DDT's and savings for tax payer) I think this would reach a happy medium
- We clearly need to invest more resources to the RDS Development
- I don't think this is an option - it needs to move with the times and give value for money
- Will provide training and support to large number of personnel - huge increase in personnel in development positions over the coming year, 100+ Ff and 20-30 CM/WM. More structure to RDS roles
- I have been aware for some time working in District that the ridership value was high across the Service. For efficiency this is the best option as there is no support for District Managers.
- I believe that the reduction in ridership factors will have no detrimental effect on service provision. With structured overtime any deficiencies can be quickly and easily covered with little cost implications
- If the 8 DDT can cover watches if there are staff shortages then it would be a better use of resources.
- With SFRS being a predominantly rural brigade investment in the RDS is essential to attract quality people who have the ability to be trained effectively.
- We need more RSO's within the Service
- I don't feel it will have a great effect on cover as the overtime is available



- I feel the DDT's are required and as stated need the correct structure.
- RSO's can get used for cover often to keep availability up in stations
- Means of progression must be clear. Attracting personnel from WT shift - increase in structured overtime means limited financial impact
- If posts are to be taken away from watches they should be moved to other depts, ie. DDT.
- Why have WT staff sitting on station if they are not required.

Neutral comments

- Achievement of 'balance'. However, consideration needs to be given to the possible detrimental effect that access to structured overtime may have on attracting staff to specialist roles on training / Development / Fire Safety. This also raises concern over the availability of staff for training (specifically management and FSC). This is currently still very difficult and has financial implications.
- Assuming you will implement this action it should be on the understanding that should it prove to be not working e.g.. Pumps going off the run. That these posts or some of these posts can be reinstated
- The posts (DDT's) are needed and have to come from somewhere but the consultation implied we'd have to try and see what the knock on affects to staffing were. This could make leave choice, overtime , special leave etc quite awkward.
- This is a no brainer for me, do nothing at present
- You have evidently identified that the organisation can reduce the number of whole time posts by 8, as such would it not be prudent to hold back on these changes so that we can offer these posts as 'cuts' at a later stage. As people leave through natural wastage the 8 posts should be left vacant, and when we are forced to make cuts we simply offer these posts as a sacrifice, the benefit being, the organisation will already have adapted to the reduction in numbers prior to the enforced change.
- As a council tax payer, I think any reduction should be seriously considered, however whether you pay firefighters from the wages budget or from overtime makes no difference as the money will still be spent. Retaining status quo would provide more resilience
- If you just reduce and don't backfill you have just lost positions
- I believe in keeping the wholetime posts rather than having the DDT's but understand that cuts have to be made for the taxpayer
- I feel we as a Brigade should provide the best service to our personnel and by selection of the best candidates with proven experience and skills, the DDT's should be recruited from primarily wholetime. With movement of staff from SY and TC with the ALP proposal move, we need to try and establish wholetime morale levels, which I feel would drop to a lower level if DDT's were recruited from RDS.
- Something has to be done, but are 16 DDT members efficient
- Not enough experience of ops requirements to comment on impact
- It would be best for WT to be part of the development team because they have had more training
- Don't think it is good to heavily rely on overtime so think we need 8 posts we have. Unsure whether it is better to move posts into DDT's or for service to remain as it is - I do not have the operational knowledge



- Having strongly agreed to reduce the WT staffing by 8 I wonder has anybody calculated how much has been spent over the past years on overtime cover for WT fire fighters to maintain 100% cover??
- To get the correct structure a committee needs to be set up to iron out problems. Use retained knowledge as well as wholetime.
- I tend to agree the need for DDT's and understand this needs funding, but am concerned about the effects on WT leave, compensatory leave, etc.
- Maybe allow RDS to stand in on whole time if no one available.
- May not have a choice to reinvest in DDT post if government cuts are severe!
- I feel WT posts should be used, but more consideration should be given from where they come from. Better use of IC could be utilized.
- Wholetime don't understand retained system.

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- "Public Value" None of the above ! I would reduce the W/T establishment by 4 and invest four posts in the area of supporting WT and RDS in a development programme based qualification process
- 16 posts in the DDT is too many.
- I feel that the proposed reduction in the wholetime posts will leave the service with very little 'room to manoeuvre' should budget cuts be imposed in mid term. The service may have no options and will be forced to downgrade a wholetime pump.
- Why reduce anything at this stage when it was clearly highlighted that changes may be forced upon at sometime in the near future.
- Further reduction in WT posts is not warranted as the service is already too reliant on overtime to maintain staffing levels. A further reduction in posts will only exacerbate the situation. Potential effects on availability of appliances, health, safety and welfare of staff and alternative arrangements to find DDT's should be fully investigated.
- The introduction of PPV would require more personnel for its operation which is for the safety of frontline fire fighters and given recent firefighter deaths surely this is more important 8 'wanderers' around stations.
- If items 1+2 are not linked, why is option 1 above included ?
- Any changes to wholetime will affect fire cover and make leave more difficult. Question whether posts can be lost through natural wastage.
- The Ridership Factor is a budget statistic and not in the best interest of the community we serve.
- This reduces us below optimum staffing down to minimum which is not the same. It places an additional burden on staff to do overtime and whilst the budget is only 50% used - this is because of need not a lack of desire to do Overtime. By paring to the bone, any problems will have a greatly increased impact
- As an ALP operator, the ALP is an excellent piece of equipment that assists in stopping fire spreading rapidly (3 pigeons pub, Oswestry). We need that 2nd ALP as back up to provide relief crews and when faults develop (eg. Kingpin on more than one occasion). The staffing over the last month has been bare minimum and control were crying out for ALP operators. A reduction of a further 8 posts would be a disaster



- I feel that the structured overtime budget will be squeezed and DDT Personnel will be covering wholetime staff shortages
- Any changes to wholetime will affect fire cover and make leave more difficult. Question whether posts can be lost through natural wastage
- If this is just about money then reduce the posts through natural wastage and don't move the money around
- Don't have DDT's. Invest some of the money in more structured training packages for all retained stations so core competency needs can be met
- With regard to the ridership factor. The 28 is a minimum to provide the safety measures to be put in place for Breathing Apparatus incidents. I feel it is a very short step to then reduce it further. There will be an increase in the requirement to provide further training for all FF's following Warwickshire so the training element of ridership may have to be increased
- the transfer of DDT personnel to wholetime will also reduce promotion opportunities
- The IRMP is a tool that is designed to reduce risk to the community, yet every year we use it, as admitted by management, to make efficiency cuts. We pay out thousands of pounds on what I see as irrelevant or luxury job titles and positions, whilst reducing operational watch based positions so increasing the risk to the public despite what has been quoted in the press there has been a massive increase in non operational staff uniformed and non uniformed
- The wholetime are for less efficient
- We will have less firefighters at large incidents. We would be struggling for staff and sickness/leave could be a problem
- Again I think the introduction of 2 development posts is excessive. Perhaps have 4 W/T posts. I think the RSO's are very under used.
- Changes are needed however job cuts not way forward unsure about moving the 8 posts
- This part of the presentation only shows a history, not how ridership is calculated. The figure does not change as a result of alternating minimum staffing. It changes only as a result of foreseeable absences. Clearly SFRS does not have sufficient WT staff numbers now, as demonstrated by chance on structural overtime. So any reduction makes no sense.
- Again the requirement to reduce posts is justified by the ridership factor and 'inefficiency'. I would much rather have five on all appliances. The RDS appliances nearly all have 8 or 9 riding positions and therefore an IC has far more options with these numbers. Crew safety and immediate actions possible with twice as many personnel.
- Strongly disagree with the loss of 8 posts when we sometimes struggle to keep trucks on the run at the moment and then rely on the goodwill of FF's to come in on their days off when they should be with their families.
- I totally disagree with the loss of WT posts when saving could be made elsewhere. Does a rural brigade warrant a large HQ staff with 1 Chief Fire Officer and 2 ACO'?
- Although the WT deficiencies can be covered using structured overtime, I do not agree that the service should become dependant upon the system. If money needs to be saved further work needs to be done on flexi duty system payments and a look into how many times flexi duty officers were/are actively used.
- See what the budget income deficiency is for 2010 and then possibly close 1 or more RDS station where it/they can be easily covered by other stations.



- Better use of staff and money to keep wholetime staff.
- It can be seen from my answers above that I believe there should be NO changes to the WT service relating to the ridership factor. From my short career so far I've already experienced working at minimal staffing levels or below, resulting in using the structured overtime procedures. This year to date there has been 52 shifts on minimal staffing or below, spread of 25 tours, ON GREEN WATCH ALONE.

Comments from the Fire Brigade's Union

The Fire Brigades Union has severe reservations regarding the proposed changes to the staffing arrangements of personnel working the Wholetime shift duty system. We doubt that the proposed changes can meet the minimum requirement of staffing availability, a contention which is supported by the empirical staffing data from 2009 (see below and appendix). We also have concerns that these changes will impact on other areas of the Service as well as its impact on family friendly policies.

Background

Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) has been the method of analysing and improving Fire Service delivery provision since 2004. SFRS in producing its annual action plans, has seen changes to intervention fire provision and altered staffing for Aerial Ladder Platforms. The proposal for 2010/11 is to remove 8 Firefighter posts from the shift duty system. This is to partially fund the creation of 8 Retained Development Managers, although the two proposals are presented independently of each other. However, the Development Manager proposal indicates the intention as 4 Watch Managers and 4 Station Managers. This therefore will be a considerable net increase in salary.

The Fire Brigades Union regard staff in excess of the minimum as a better provision, although the Audit Commission's assertion that this is inefficient has become ingrained into management psyche within the entire UKFRS.

Consideration to increase the minimum rider establishment should be given in respect of using 5 personnel to staff the second appliance at Shrewsbury, more staff being available to staff the Boat and relief crews for the Aerial Ladder Platform at protracted incidents.

Therefore it is our belief that SFRS should be looking to increase its establishment and not reduce it.

Ridership factor

The history of the ridership factor in Shropshire, although relevant to this proposal, has been presented to staff in this IRMP in reverse. The purpose of the ridership factor is to calculate the establishment number by multiplying the minimum staffing figure by a justified ridership factor (based on reliably estimated absences). The presentation however, shows the history of the minimum staffing and establishment levels to justify the change to the ridership factor.

Shift system



Each watch (shift) requires 28 staff. To fill each of these positions; each watch has a “ridership factor” to cover for various absences The current ridership factor 1.48 gives an establishment figure of 41 as follows:

- Establishment = Minimum staff x Ridership Factor = $28 \times 1.48 = 41$
- By reducing the ridership factor to 1.39 the establishment will then become
- $28 \times 1.39 = 39$

Incident Command

If we also take into account the reduction of Incident Commanders from IRMP 2005/06 there is a further effect. This reduction has led to cover for Incident Command increasingly being provided for, by the Wholetime shift duty system.

This fact has not been taken into consideration in the IRMP, and we have not included it in our calculations. However it is clear to see that it will have an impact as, if Incident Commanders are included in the establishment, then this proposal would see an establishment of 40, and a minimum staffing of 29. This equates to a ridership factor of under 1.38.

Evidence

To establish whether this new ridership factor would be adequate (as IRMP Guidance does not allow for a preplanned shortfall), staffing figures for one watch in 2009 have been collated and extrapolated for statistical purposes to show a 12 month model.

These figures show that 789 shifts will be lost in 2009 due to absence other than leave. When leave is added the number of shifts lost is 2060.

The number of person shifts required in a 12 month period is 5096.

The difference between the actual and the minimum in 2009 is 306.

By making adjustments to leave and absence figures at the same rate, the difference under the proposed model would be 143.

Leave

The current leave entitlement of 8 allows a flexibility of 23 shifts in a year. Under the new proposal this would fall to 9.

The difficulty in managing staff numbers can be shown by comparing this proposal to the changes that were made in 2006; where 8 posts were removed to reduce the number of ALPs to one.

The management intention of staffing alternately the ALP at Telford and Shrewsbury to allow for numbers to detach to the training centre for courses has not been successful. This has been for two reasons; mechanical factors of the appliances



(servicing and breakdown), but more substantially due to staffing (sickness, courses, modified duties, leave, maternity, paternity, vacancy etc). This is substantiated to some extent by the existence of the third proposal; consolidating the ALP provision to Telford.

It can only be envisaged as impossible to manage availability, courses, leave and other absences to such fine tolerances as 9 shifts in a 12 month period. It is also requiring staff to take leave at times of the year when leave is not traditionally taken or wanted. This will have a negative impact on Firefighters families as well as the Firefighters themselves.

Individuals will find the imposed necessity of taking leave in January or February rather than when their families are on leave, during summer months, unpalatable and this is likely to be a huge demotivational factor for Wholetime staff.

Overtime Principle

After the national dispute in 2002/3, the Fire Brigades Union lifted its long standing overtime ban, to enable FRSs to better able manage staffing deficiencies due to unforeseeable circumstances. It has never been intended to cover a pre planned shortfall. Notwithstanding this, the Union principally is against extending the use of overtime as opposed to employing the requisite amount of staff.

Although the current overtime budget remains under spent, this does not necessarily mean that the human capacity to undertake overtime has not been exhausted.

The need to use personnel on overtime to cover deficiencies in staff is prone to considerable fluctuation. On recent occasions it has been necessary to fill up to 6 deficiencies on a single shift at one station. The available personnel to cover the shift under present circumstances would be from an initial pool of 8.

Under this proposed new staffing model, this pool would have been 6. There are certain to be more occasions when such staffing deficiencies require such drastic measures.

This would also mean that the burden of providing cover for staffing deficiencies is shared between less people leaving the Service with the risk of not being able to guarantee 100% availability of all appliances (as promised in the IRMP Action Plan of 2006/07) due to the lack of available people.

Overtime in Practice

In consultation with our members in the Fire Control Room who are administering the structured overtime system and our Wholetime members who are asked to undertake structured overtime, there are consistently difficulties arising with the present provision for overtime. These difficulties include:

- Short notice. This is exasperated at weekends when staff have family commitments. This may be able to be challenged under gender equality



legislation as it may be more difficult for mothers and carers to make childcare and dependants arrangements at short notice

- Time to organise the overtime provision can often be a time burden for Fire Control Room staff, particularly at weekends when staff have other commitments and more find it necessary to turn down the opportunity to undertake overtime.
- Administration. Throughout the existence of the structured overtime scheme there have been many disagreements amongst staff in the procedure of booking personnel to undertake overtime and also the protocols of the rota itself.

The difficulties outlined above can only be exacerbated by the reduction of the Wholetime establishment. The risk to the Service here again is that SFRS will not be able to guarantee 100% appliance availability due to the impact on family life to our members.

Time off In Lieu (TOIL)

One benefit that the Service may have overlooked (in terms of efficiency), of the current staffing provision, which will be lost under this proposal (and will also disadvantage staff); is the reduced possibility of taking TOIL. Presently, staff are able to take TOIL provided that minimum staffing levels are not affected. This allows people to take time off when they want it, but also reduces the number of people over the minimum; creating a natural efficiency (in terms of the Audit Commission).

It also saves from the overtime budget as people are using their hours to take time off rather than putting it in for payment. Using the same sample watch, over ten months in 2009, 37 shifts were taken off in TOIL, which will equate to 45 shifts over a twelve month period. A modest estimate would put this financial saving at approximately £14,000 per watch, £56,000 per year.

With the restrictions in staffing that this proposal would bring, the opportunity for staff to take TOIL will be severely curtailed. This can result in staff dissatisfaction, more overtime accrued taken in payment rather than time off in lieu and less flexibility of managing staff numbers.

Sickness Absence

The figures for sickness absence have greatly reduced in recent years, which will be of great benefit to the Service. The combined effect of restrictive leave entitlement, increased expectation of overtime and difficulty in taking TOIL are recognised as factors which will demoralise staff.

In terms of sickness absence there is no doubt that there is a direct correlation between the level of sickness absence and the morale of workers. This is shown in the study carried out in 2006 by CCH HR Management entitled "Survey finds unscheduled Absenteeism Up in US Workplaces. (www.cch.com/news/hrm/a). This study also outlines a new phenomenon; "Presenteeism", where staff attend work but do not actively participate, due to being disaffected by conditions at work.



SFRS has been praised on many occasions by both internal and external sources (including ourselves) for having a highly motivated and focused staff. We believe that the proposal to remove 8 Firefighters from the Wholetime duty shift system may well jeopardise this motivation and commitment.

Consultation

The consultation questionnaire for this proposal gives three possible options to one question. One of these options (do nothing) is not a realistic response as this would be in direct conflict with the Authority's statutory duty to implement change and is contrary to the essence of the proposal outlined on page 4 of the Action Plan. The other two options only differ in what use is made of the savings. This is highly restrictive. There is clearly opinion amongst our members that a reduction of 8 personnel to the Wholetime shift system is too many. There is no option to reduce by 4.

The Service however has been clear during staff consultation that it is looking for qualitative comments to be made by staff in response to the proposals rather than leave it just to the tick box options.

We hope that the Service pay more heed to these comments rather than the restrictive options. We believe that there will be a sizeable staff response to this proposal

Staged approach

Under one of the Control Measures of this proposal, the Service is looking to stage the implementation of this proposal over two years. This is to minimise the impact on staff. The FBU believe that this proposal should have been a two staged consultation over two years of IRMP.

In effect, SFRS should not confine itself to a proposal of 8 posts removed without an intermediate proposal or further recourse of consultation during its two year implementation.

District Development Team Impact

As already stated, the Service sees the two proposals as independent of each other in terms of finances, however there is no doubt that in practical terms there may be an interdependent reaction.

The proposal for District Development Teams outlines in its "Benefits to Community Safety" those District Development Team members will, where necessary, be used to cover Wholetime operational deficiencies.

Regardless of whether this is to be used as a last resort following the failure of structured overtime, our view would be that; if this does occur, it would indicate to us that there are not enough Firefighters employed on the Wholetime duty system and therefore the reduction of personnel on the Wholetime duty system will be deemed as failed.



Response to Question 4

Question asked:

In relation to the proposed action on the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) location, do you agree to the Fire Authority's proposal to;

- a) Consolidate the ALP cover to Telford Central
- b) Locate the spare ALP at Shrewsbury

Summary of responses

With 61% of staff agreeing (and only 18% against), there is relatively strong support for the proposal to consolidate ALP cover at Telford Central. Opinion is largely split (39% agree and 28% disagree) on whether the spare ALP should be based at Shrewsbury.

This proposal has attracted much comment, both during the presentations and in response to the questionnaire. Whilst there is some support for the option of locating the main ALP at Telford and the spare in Shrewsbury, there are people who feel that this would not work well. The main concerns are around maintaining competencies and the delay in getting the spare on the run, should it be required to cover breakdowns.

Very early on in the consultation process Shrewsbury staff put forward an alternative proposal which was that ALP cover should come to Shrewsbury and the Incident Response Unit (IRU) should go to Telford. This would meet the benefit identified in the initial proposal, which is mainly around the reduced competency requirements needed by staff based in Shrewsbury. This would also negate the need to spend £25,000 on extending a bay at Telford (although some staff consider this would not be required) in order to accommodate both ALP's. Staff also point to the additional benefits of having the IRU based at Telford, which relate to there being more room at Telford to train with the equipment carried on the IRU and that the Training Centre would then have the Fork Lift Truck available for driver training.

The major concern by staff opposing this alternative proposal is that, in combination with the movement of the appliance from Telford to Tweedale last year, removing the ALP from Telford could impact on the morale of the Telford staff.

The Fire Brigades Union are supportive of the proposal to consolidate ALP's at Telford, recognising the balancing of skills across the stations. Reflecting on the alternative proposal for Shrewsbury, they feel that the IRU should also be moved to Telford, enabling Shrewsbury to concentrate on the boat.



The IRMP Members Working Group's response

The Working Group notes all comments made.

Members have taken particular note of the alternative proposal suggested by staff from Shrewsbury, which involves the consolidation of ALP cover to Shrewsbury and the moving of the Incident Response Unit to Telford. Having given both alternatives much consideration, weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of each, Members are minded to agree with the alternative view to their initial proposal, and support consolidating ALP cover in Shrewsbury. The Working Group feels that this decision is well supported by the written and anecdotal evidence given to Member's throughout the consultation process.

Summary table of responses to this statement**Q4a: Consolidate the ALP cover to Telford Central**

	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	34	29.8
Tend to Agree	36	31.6
Neither	23	20.2
Tend to Disagree	14	12.3
Strongly Disagree	7	6.1
Total	114	100

Q4b: Locate the spare ALP at Shrewsbury

	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	13	11.3
Tend to Agree	32	27.8
Neither	33	28.7
Tend to Disagree	21	18.3
Strongly Disagree	16	13.9
Total	115	100



Detailed summary of responses to question 4**Q4a: Consolidate the ALP cover to Telford Central**

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall response	114	30	32	20	12	6
Fire Safety	4	0	50	50	0	0
Headquarters Officer	9	33	22	22	11	11
Retained	3	33	33	0	33	0
Training	54	30	31	26	11	2
Wholetime	4	25	25	25	25	0
Anonymous	37	27	35	11	14	14
	3	100	0	0	0	0

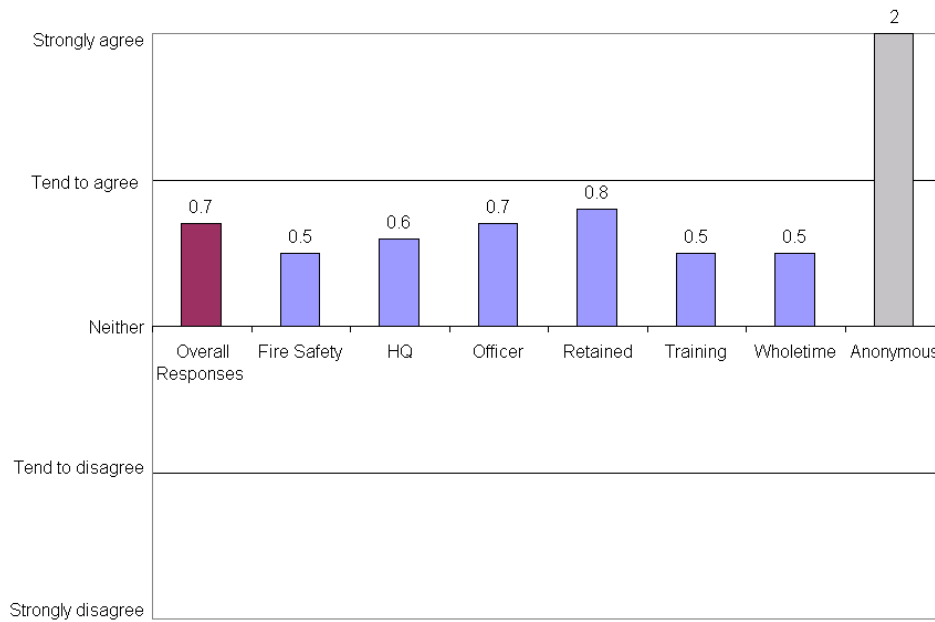
Q4b: Locate the spare ALP at Shrewsbury

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall response	115	28	11	29	18	14
Fire Safety	4	50	0	50	0	0
Headquarters Officer	7	57	14	14	14	0
Retained	4	25	25	0	25	25
Training	55	25	18	36	13	7
Wholetime	4	50	25	25	0	0
Anonymous	38	21	0	24	32	24
	3	33	0	0	0	67

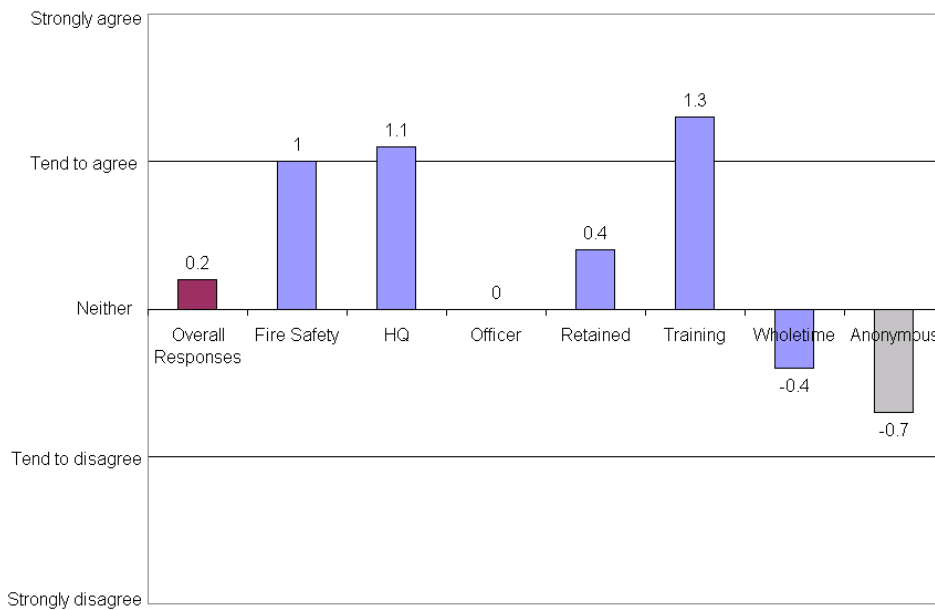


Averaged Response Graphs⁴

Q4a: Consolidate the ALP cover to Telford Central



Q4b: Locate the spare ALP at Shrewsbury



⁴ See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.



Comments made in response to Question 4

Comments in agreement with statement

- ALP to TC is good - skills only required at one place - relief provision will have to be looked at
- Give TC the ALP makes sense
- It makes sense and saves money
- This seems to be cost effective with no big change to callout times
- Operational ALP remains at TC - Spare to SY maintained by workshops. SY crews only have Boat/SRT function. IRU move to TC – Fork Lift Truck qualifications for TC staff would be an additional cost but ALP / IRU would be one less SY competency to maintain. TC would provide sufficient space for IRU training / testing. It is also rendezvous point for out of county deployment.
- Shrewsbury has enough specialist vehicles to cope with
- Not a lot of difference in PDA times, especially local to base. Already a significant number of specialist appliances at SY
- Spread specialist skills amongst stations
- Telford has the space and drill yard area/ facilities to vary training and stowage's of the ALP's
- It seems logical that as Telford has the space for the ALP
- To save costs to the rate payer in the long term
- This would take the pressure off Shrewsbury Staff in maintaining their training
- Not much in it but I feel that the county is better served by having the ALP in Telford. It would also be a blow to morale of TC staff to have the ALP removed
- I think the ALP at Telford Central is a good idea to avoid creating too many one pump no special fire stations
- TC have sufficient room and training facilities for the ALP
- The burning question is why hasn't the second ALP been changed before now, as the cost is so small
- Telford appears to be suffering from a drop in calls the ALP at Telford may help.
- No difference in turnout times specialist crews
- Both ALP's at Telford - Will fit in bays without the need for extension saving £25k
- It makes sense and saves money
- This seems to be cost effective with no big change to callout times
- By keeping the spare at SY would mean staff from TC going over to test it once a week would be good as it would give the ALP a run from TC instead of standing unused. Control systems on both need to be converted so they are the same
- Mobilisation from Telford to Shrewsbury is negligible
- This allows you two ALP's in different areas to cover a wider area. The only problem with this would be manning and training
- By keeping the ALP's at two locations they can, if needed, be crewed and used at two different areas of the County quicker
- Already a significant number of specialist appliances at SY
- Both ALPs will fit in the bays at TC. By making TC a designated ALP station it will increase the stations calls, thus helping to prevent closure or down grading of the station. A reduction of pumps at TC would severely affect resilience of the Brigade



- TC is probably the best station for the ALP. Staff for TC can quite easily travel to SY once a week to service the spare.
- This would enable staff at SY to consolidate their competencies on SRT and maintain skills such as forklift, IRU.
- IRU to TW, ALP to TC, Allow SY to concentrate on water safety and boat to maintain competencies.
- All high rise buildings are situated in Telford. It may be possible for both ALP and IRU at SY to be relocated at Telford. This would free up personnel at SY to concentrate on the boat.
- The Brigade can maintain the establishment at TC by increasing calls if both ALPs are stationed there. This will ensure WT status and make TC aerial specialists in our support of the retained. This will prevent closure of the station if wholetime status is removed due to low calls, and protect the resilience of the brigade
- Move the ALP's to TC, IRU to TW. The boat to SY, keep the skills.
- Maintaining a front line specialist appliance at TC such as the ALP will help to maintain and improve core and specialist skills which has been highlighted as one of the brigades priorities in the 2010/00 IRMP. Since 1996 and the Aerial ladder platform's inception at TC staff have built up a robust knowledge base backed up with strong practical skills since this introduction. Making TC a specialist ALP station will ensure that there is no 'skill fade' with operators, owing to it being perfectly positioned on the main road networks of Shropshire to respond quickly and effectively. Therefore offering a rapid response times which have also been highlighted in the IRMP presentation. This is especially important at TC following the station being reduced from a 2 pump station to a 1 pump station. Reducing the staffing even further at TC would send out a very negative message to staff which in turn will affect morale and could have a knock on effect. Removing the ALP from SY will also free up limited space at the station. This would help in the proposed development taking place and allowing greater space at TC to be utilised in the training and use of this vehicle. This is especially important due to each individuals obligation to complete quarterly operation of the ALP. Another benefit of moving the ALP from SY to TC will be the brigade only having to re-imburse 4 firefighters with travelling costs initially. This may only seem a negligible amount however during the present economic climate fire authorities recognise the need to be prudent. With the recent reduction from 2 pumping appliances down to 1 it is vital that emergency calls are maintained and improved on at TC as any further reduction could jeopardise the existence of the Fire Station. This would have a huge effect on the community but also impart on the brigades yearly budget and resilience as an overall reduction on wholetime pumps. It is also worth noting that the ALP which is currently based at SY is shorter in length than TC's ALP and could therefore be parked in one of the bays at TC thus avoiding any extra building work taking place, something which has been core tested by trained individuals.
- Put both ALPS at TC. 1 less competency for SY and all tests on ALP can be carried out by TC staff at no cost.
- It is beneficial for any station to have a special appliance, good for morale and more variation in training. SY already specialise with the boat and IRU.
- TC has enough room, and no other special appliances. I think both ALPs should be at TC



- No real difficulties with the spare ALP being at SY. Workshops could provide test facilities on a weekly basis with crews attending SY on a planned regular basis to train.
- To move ALP to SY will cost approx £30k to extend appliance bay which is 1 Ff's post you could save on in the 1st year by simply moving the IRU to TC and TC's ALP to SY. By doing this you will be spending £0 and saving £30k. By having 2 ALPs on one station it will become very difficult for relief crews as experienced at the recent incident in Wem.
- Too many skills required at the moment at SY

Neutral Comments

- Consolidating the ALP cover to TC and locating the spare ALP at SY would appear to be achievable at little cost but more evidence and research into testing, maintenance and availability issues for the spare ALP may be needed first
- Doesn't really matter where the ALP's are located so long as they are together
- It doesn't affect our station which again, a no brainer.
- It clearly doesn't matter too much where this appliance is located; with the exception of the ALP being parked under cover, the only issue appeared to be a training deficiency, easily solvable with a small amount of training at very little cost
- If the ALP is only used 52 times a year and never to save life, and only as a working platform, as was stated during the presentation, we obviously don't need two. I would even suggest we cannot justify one as a reserve, considering its current use. We simply need to change people attitudes and opinions, and get away from the 'what if' scenarios, there must come a point when we take a calculated, financial based risk, hence IRMP
- Obviously, if we have been directed by an outside agency (Government etc) that we need to have an ALP, then we should accept that we don't need a second one for reserve
- I can't see any advantage in either option
- No further comments if 2 operational vehicles not required
- From information shared at presentation proposal seems sensible options
- Keep the spare ALP with workshops for them to service as routine tests
- It doesn't affect our station which
- Space at Telford
- The ALP should be located at one station permanently.
- A known set location for ALP better planning for on duty.
- Intensify expertise of competence at one station which will in turn have same effect on the other stations special appliances.
- Where the ALP is stationed is irrelevant provided sufficient trained staff are provided at that station. What will occur is a problem with boat crew staffing as this has not been considered at all in this IRMP.
- Look at using retained to crew ALP and other specialist equipment - better value to money for only 50 calls per year.
- Only concern covers competence and training.

Comments in disagreement with statement

- Shrewsbury has a need and is better located for certain areas of Shropshire



- Locating the ALP's at different places seems like a "dodge" idea that would incur many long term, logistical problems. If it goes to Telford Central it should all be there
- The time factor of sending a crew from Telford to collect the spare ALP could mean serious and costly delays in turnout times
- Difficulties encountered in locating the spare ALP at Shrewsbury would be Routine testing (weekly, monthly, Quarterly), Training should the spare be utilised when the original is on service
- Both ALP's stationed at Telford
- Ideally both appliances need to be based at TC to prevent unnecessary travelling by fire service personnel
- The rendezvous point for the IRU is Telford so it would make sense to move this and not have to alter Telford Station for the ALP which could have a cost saving
- An ALP probably best suited to the general construction of properties in SY
- Remove IRU to TC. Reduce establishment by 1 post as above
- The spare ALP should be held at TC on the ALP cover station
- With regards the spare ALP location being a long term plan will prove over the years to be more cost effective to pay £25K upfront and enlarge TC appliance bay. The longer the delay the more the building costs will have escalated. Then it might not happen at all!
- Both ALP's need to be at the same location for training and routines
- Keep spare at Telford to save running about
- Based at Shrewsbury the weekly and monthly tests could create problems with staffing
- I disagree with the spare being at Shrewsbury because of the periodic tests that will need to be completed each week and that there is plenty of room at Telford with adequate training facilities
- There could be staffing problems when it comes to standard and monthly testing
- Staffing could cause a problem and also the potential to have less trained ALP operators
- SY's ALP was specifically bought to cope with narrow streets of SY (rear wheel steering, narrow and one sided jacking). As our risks are now based on life and not property there is a greater life in SY than TC. Also it is closer to similar market towns e.g Ludlow, Whitchurch
- I think that both ALP's should be located at Shrewsbury, with boat rescue, it would make sense (To Me!) to co-locate both vehicles, so in the event of a breakdown a replacement vehicle is immediately available. There is enough space at Shrewsbury if incident response moves to Telford.
- Supporting the ALP for the IRU will benefit Training Department because they will have access to a forklift without the need for purchase of a vehicle. In addition IRU will be at relevant point (TC) and training facilities for 1 run exercises etc are far better than at Shrewsbury. However Future development of Telford may require larger aerial
- IRU best suited for operational and training purposes at TC
- Having the spare ALP at SY will only cause problems on training and testing of the ALP
- I can see difficulties locating the spare at Shrewsbury because of periodic testing that is essential. It will mean crews travelling from TC to SY to carry out testing
- The ALP in Shrewsbury is not a spare ALP it is an operational. Past IRMP's have considered relocation of stations in order to ensure efficient turnout/ attendance



- times. Yet two well placed vehicles (strategically) increasing turnout times to a large area of Shropshire. Just manage the ALP's better
- Difficulty in the movement of staff to carry out standard testing of the spare vehicle
 - ALP should be at TC - personnel travelling over to SY is a waste of responses
 - Logistical problems with different ALP's and travelling
 - Different controls on each appliance
 - I would like to take this opportunity to reply to the consultation process in relation to Action Code 03/2010. I am aware that the SY/RW discussed with you the benefits and costs of having ALP crews based at TC and the spare ALP garaged at SY, but I'm not too sure if you have been given a set of statistics which record the ratio of SY ALP against TC ALP (on Red duty days) in relation to the 'designated ALP month' (as per B/O Ops3 P11). Apr 08 - Mar 09 (RW) SY ALP was on duty for 90% of designated days and 67% of non-designated days. Apr 09 - Sept 09 (RW). SY ALP was on duty for 87% of designated days and 66% of non-designated days. I believe that the figures show SY's capability to staff the ALP and gain valuable experience with this experience. I would also like to put forward the idea of relocating the IRU to TC as an alternative to the ALP. Why? 1. This would still meet the 'Benefits to Community Safety ' by having specialist operating staff at one station. 2. It would provide TC staff with another skill base to learn. 3. TC is the rendezvous point for all vehicles for New Dimensions incident. 4. TC has the available training ground for IRU equipment and 5. Swapping the IRU with ALP (TC) would not require structural alterations of appliance bays (as proven on a recent IRU/FLT course located at TC where the IRU was garaged in ALP bay at TC). I trust that the contents of the memo are satisfactory and I wait to see the final outcome of the consultation for Action Code 03./2010.
 - Long travelling times to rural areas of north and south of county. SY more central.
 - Move the IRU to TC as this is the rendezvous point for all Shropshire appliances before moving out of county on an incident
 - I think the IRU should be located at TC as it would be at no cost to extend the building
 - 2 x ALP's at SY. IRU to TC. Further consideration of boat cover by 7 use of RDS.
 - Moving the IRU makes more sense as it would not incur any building costs
 - Consideration to IRU at TC sounds worth investigating. ALP used at locations perhaps more appropriate to SY location>
 - TC also have more room to drill (IRU) as it is a problem at SY. Also the aerials could be used on river rescue as it has been in the past.
 - ALP's at SY could be maintained and competencies kept up with no travelling considerations.
 - Easier to swap personnel from one ALP to another if one goes off the run.
 - If the ALP has to be consolidated to one the the 2 stations I believe it should be SY as this area is more centrally located in the county, maintaining an efficient service to the community. There are also already purpose built buildings at SY for the ALP - saving the cost of building more.
 - I think that maintaining the numbers at SY would allow flexibility to staff the boat by having more operators on station. The IRU could be based at TC where the ALP is now and both ALP's over at SY in the two bays that house the ALP and IRU at present.



- Shrewsbury has a purpose built bay which would house 2 ALP's. if the IRU was moved to TC training would be easier with 2 ALPs in situ, saving on fuel costs having to travel from TC to train at SY. If one ALP was to break down, save time travelling to SY. Large life risk at rural Shrewsbury hospital.
- This document is a collective watch based response to the 2010 IRMP proposal to relocate SY ALP and consolidate both existing appliances to TC. The document supports reasons to retain the existing ALP sited at SY, site TC's ALP to SY and outlines proposals to move the Incident response unit (IRU) to TC. This paper does not in any way support the other IRMP 2010 proposals. It also does not suggest that the removal of TCs ALP to SY has any impact on the reduction of WT staffing levels at TC or across the brigade. The below listed are observations, suggestions and comments raised in response to the IRMP 2010 Proposals;. TC TO CREW ALP (AS PER PROPOSAL). TC presently crew ALP TC and 1 ALP SY. If the 'on the run' ALP is committed and breaks down there will be long delays in mobilising 2nd ALP due to no staffing available at SY or TC. No relief crews available at TC. No relief crew available from SY due to skills shortage. Excessive wasted crew time travelling to and from SY to perform weekly/monthly/quarterly standard tests. Increased fuel costs and ware and tear due to excessive use. TC Bay conversion to accommodate both ALPs. Unnecessary spend of public funds, appliance storage facilities already available in the brigade. Forced move of staff from SY to TC. Financial implication of fuel payments to staff moved from SY. RELOCATION OF THE IRU TO TC. The rendezvous point for the IRU and all support appliances for a regional or national response is TC. Extension to appliance bays not required. TC offers a larger area and more opportunity to train with the fork lift and mass decontamination structures. This would enable TC to become a specialist operating station providing development for crews and offers the potential to develop the brigades 'New Dimensions' approach and response. Moving the IRU to TC has a small training implication and would require staff at TC to qualify for the use of the fork lift truck and driver familiarisation on the IRU itself. The IRU based at TC would allow the vehicle to be permanently available and not be on a switch manned basis. RELOCATION TO TC ALP TO SY. SY fire station already boasts a secure adequate storage facility. SY crews initially trained on TC ALP. Workshops on site to assist with maintenance and fault repair. Easier to maintain staffing levels with use of overtime pool being greater at SY. Relief crews . Easier to organise/facilitate cover at SY because of number strength. SY has many high rise buildings, some of which are a heritage risk. The ALP cover at SY also supports the life risk based at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and does feature in their fire safety risk assessment to assist in the reduction of risk in many vulnerable parts of the building.
- SY have greater historical risk and the ALP is needed more there as when fires take hold they spread very rapidly.
- ALP to remain at SY, risks in town centre and rapid fire spread due to nature of buildings should warrant an aerial as close as possible. Move IRU to TC creating spare bay for reserve ALP.
- You would have to get staff from TC to go to SY when we have ALP problems.



Comments from the Fire Brigade's Union

The importance of maintaining an ALP at all times are shown in the rescue examples given above, the importance is also shown in the widely accepted acknowledgement that they are the only means of providing a safe working platform at height. From incidents that the ALP has attended in Shropshire (Kingpin Tyres this year being the main example), when it is required, it is both indispensable and irreplaceable.

Proposal

This proposal has sparked differences of opinion surrounding the crewing of special appliances during the consultation. The debate has extended to the Incident Response Unit (IRU) and the boat

The Fire Brigades Union in Shropshire fundamentally agree with the proposal to consolidate the ALP to Telford despite the extra cost of upgrading a bay at Telford to house the ALP.

With regard to building work, there is already work necessary to be carried out to the appliance bay at Telford, which would off set this cost. Another consideration would be to upgrade a further bay to house the IRU. The cost of upgrading two bays will not amount to double the cost of upgrading one bay. This would also allow more space to become available for the Shrewsbury rebuilding project.

It is important for SFRS that correct decisions are made to building programmes to avoid embarrassing reports in the local media such as suffered in Essex. The Essex Gazette News reported in April that the new aerial appliances bought by Essex Fire Service would not fit in their appliance bays.

The appliance bays which currently house the ALP and IRU at Shrewsbury are already a tight fit. Therefore, it would make sense to upgrade the appliance bays at Telford and house them there.

Staffing

This proposal then, although seemingly straightforward at first appearance, will create difficulties in managing the people that may be affected by this move and also balancing the specialist skills needed to staff various appliances. However, we believe it gives SFRS an opportunity to rationalise the skill levels and secure their future provision.

We do however foresee difficulties within the proposal "which would require the transfer of 4 staff from Shrewsbury." Shrewsbury therefore, would be suffering a further detrimental factor, following from the reduction of the establishment in the previous proposal.

History

This proposal is a further development of the previous IRMP proposal in 2006/07 when SFRS reduced the number of personnel on Wholetime watches by 8 in order to permanently crew one ALP. The proposal this year effectively reverts part of the



decision in 06/07 to proceed with option 3, to option 2 of that year which was to use one and store the other as a spare.

The decision in 06/07 to go with option 3, to alternate the crewing of the Aerial, between Shrewsbury and Telford, was based on maintaining competencies, and the difference between the appliances. This has been rectified by the sum of £500 to alter the controls of one vehicle so that they can be both operated in the same manner.

Although there has been a bit of a journey to get to this point, the experience has illustrated some difficulties which need to be borne in mind, these are set out below.

Course staffing.

Since the introduction of alternating ALP staffing model, as already explained under the Ridership Factor proposal, the intention to manage staffing by distributing courses accordingly, to accommodate this model has been unsuccessful. This would indicate that a more consistent and straightforward model for staffing special appliances is needed.

Protracted incidents

As with incidents in previous years (such as Acoustafoam), the Kingpin Tyres incident at Wem this year shows that the provision of a single ALP at times falls below the minimum that is needed to deal with protracted incidents.

It is very much down to the flexibility of staff, that when these incidents occur, SFRS is able to manage with what we have.

Reliefs

However, this ability to manage is with the present staffing levels, which are threatened by the previous proposal to reduce the establishment.

Moreover, it is experiences such as those at Kingpin Tyres, that indicates that not only does SFRS need the current staffing provision; further work needs to be done to explore the contingency arrangements at protracted incidents. This could only lead to the conclusion that SFRS needs to employ more Firefighters on the Wholetime Duty shift system, and not less.

Skills and availability levels on each watch

The opportunity of consolidating the ALP to Telford will assist the skills and staffing of the boat at Shrewsbury. The configuration of special appliances that need to be attached to the Wholetime service, due to the time needed to maintain competency, will be spread more evenly.

Shrewsbury specialising in the boat, Wellington with the Rescue Tender and Telford with the ALP will remove much of the complications of staffing appliances with people that possess the requisite skills.



As with the Rescue Tender at Wellington, it will be necessary to train as many staff as possible in the use of the special appliances at their respective station. This will remove any complications of staff availability and leave entitlement and could also assist where special appliances are detained at protracted incidents.



Response to Question 5

Question asked:

Are you satisfied with the IRMP consultation process?

Summary of responses

75% of staff state that they are happy with the Fire Authority's IRMP process, and only 8% state that they are not happy with it.

Some very contrasting comments were made, with some staff supportive of having operational and non-operational staff at the same presentations, and others preferring to have separate meetings so that each group can concentrate on those issues of greatest relevance to them.

Some people commented that the Fire Authority should be looking across the whole of the Service, and should not concentrate all of its 'cuts' on the operational side. Some people also feel that their input is not valued and that the whole process is 'a done deal'.

The Fire Brigades Union restated the praise they gave the Fire Authority last year, for their cautionary and sensible approach to IRMP, but noted that the proposals this year are more challenging and were therefore very keen to see further constructive dialogue, between themselves and both the Service and the Fire Authority, during the Fire Authority's consideration of the feedback received from the consultation process.

The IRMP Members Working Group's response

The Working Group notes all comments made and is particularly pleased with the level of support, from staff, for the IRMP process. It also notes the various comments made about the mix of staff present in each of the IRMP presentations, and how this can impact on people's ability to provide verbal feedback during those meetings.

Members are aware that IRMP has, to date, concentrated to a large extent on 'operational risk', which has resulted in the consultations being largely focussed on operational discussions. However, it is conscious that this will change over the next twelve months, as the process moves in a more strategic direction, in order to support the discussions needed with all stakeholders about the future of the Service; especially as it moves through the potentially difficult financial period that may be facing all public services over the next few years. These discussions will need to look at all elements of the Service, covering both operational and non-operational matters. The Fire Authority will continue to try and ensure that it is able to offer adequate opportunity for all stakeholders, both internal and external, to feed into these important discussions.



Summary table of responses to this question

Q5: I am satisfied with the IRMP process.

	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	20	18.0
Tend to Agree	64	57.7
Neither	18	16.2
Tend to Disagree	7	6.3
Strongly Disagree	2	1.8
Total	111	100

Detailed summary of responses to this question

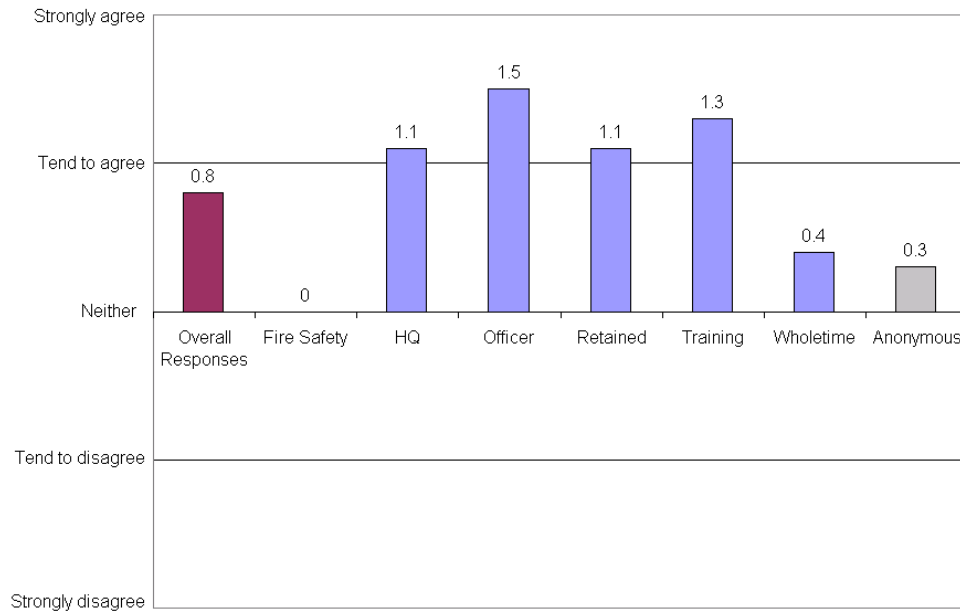
Q5: I am satisfied with the IRMP process.

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall response	111	18	58	16	6	2
Fire Safety	3	0	33	33	33	0
Headquarters Officer	9	11	89	0	0	0
Retained	4	50	50	0	0	0
Training	52	27	56	15	2	0
Wholetime	4	25	75	0	0	0
Anonymous	36	6	56	19	14	6
	3	0	33	67	0	0



Averaged Response Graph⁵

Q5: I am satisfied with the IRMP process.



⁵ See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.



Comments made in response to Question 5

Comments in agreement with the statement

- It is good to be consulted, but I am unsure how much difference our comments will make
- Consultation and working groups were set up which involved watch based personnel so they could have some input from the start of the consultation process. I would like to see this repeated when IRMP is due for reviewing
- Presentation - well delivered and information. Power point slides very good.
- There was a mix of operational personnel and non uniform - this helped me understand issues / proposals better hearing questions/ debate around the issues although I think operational staff wanted more detail than the non operational staff needed
- Not a bad procedure
- Excellent consultation throughout
- It keeps us informed and makes us feel part of the service
- This is an excellent consultation process where all can debate the issues quite openly.
- I feel that the consultation could be cut down in time as it takes up major training time for us. A lot of the IRMP does not involve us, but it is nice to know about issues being considered
- None in particular - more of consultation than in past year.
- I think that this process is fair. Looking at where the service can improve annually is paramount, but this purely doesn't always result in cuts, expenditure to achieve ??

Neutral comments

- Mixed groups of staff and members of the public would lead to more interesting discussion and an appreciation of each others view points
- The whole organisation to be looked at when it comes to saving money and not just the front line
- Prior notification of what is going to be discussed before the IRMP meeting/ consultation evening takes place so you can think of any ideas or objections prior so your concerns can be raised and hopefully answered
- Closer consultation with appropriate teams prior to recommendation. E.g. Implications of District Development Teams on current 'Development Team'.
- Early discussion would have provided a greater understanding of how DDT's would need to work in relation to current standards of competence
- More callouts to RTC's in rural areas as we could be on the scene faster than other services
- To forward the IRMP consultation questionnaire in advance of the IRMP meeting so that we have time to engage in the process with prior knowledge
- I feel the process works. However, the HQ session was reduced in detail which may impact on the decisions made by those attending.



- Use station staff, maybe 5/6 from each division/area, to bring to the meeting any other actions that came up after survey completed, so that staff feel that all their concerns are dealt with.

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- Some aspects appeared to be 'glossed over' and those of us with ops background would have liked more time to discuss issues. Split Non-Ops consultations between Grey / Green book so presentations can be adapted accordingly
- Presentation for wholetime HQ staff was reduced in content due to the attendance in conjunction with non uniformed staff. It may be beneficial to split the presentation / consultation into separate groups so that all relevant information is relayed to the appropriate departments. Too many staff attended the presentation for the size of the room (30 Sept)
- Consult the people who will be affected first and ask for their input at the start. I feel the frontline service is being cut to the bone whilst the rest of the organisation has become bloated. Lets not forget what the Fire Service is about
- Sometimes I think that the decisions are already made before the consultation process starts
- Hard to get away from the general thoughts that the decisions are already made and that any suggestions made by firefighters are futile.
- Our opinions should be considered.
- Not all the options for money saving were considered or consulted on. It seems to be just cutting wholetime. Open consultation all the facts.
- Due to the various unpredictable events the IRMP for our watch only has a couple of hours. Consequently whilst the DDT's were discussed well, ridership factor only got 30 minutes and the ALP location 10 minutes! This meant almost all the watch members had unasked and therefore unanswered questions which defeats the object of the consultation process. More time required.
- I have tended to agree in the past but there is a pattern emerging showing IRMP's are weighted against operational. We have never seen any evidence of any research into restructuring of upper management. Is there really room for 3 ACO's in Shropshire, why do we need the equivalent of DO's in charge of departments. Why not have a pool of cars rather than top of the range lease cars for officers.
- The process seems to take a considerable time. Station visits are done over a number of months which allow people to talk to neighbouring stations about the proposals. Often they do not give the full story which causes rumours to go around. The rumours can cause bad feeling from time to time which would be unnecessary, i.e. people need the full story sooner.
- Feel that these decisions have been already made.
- As a station we had no involvement in the original consultation.

Comments from the Fire Brigade's Union

We have taken the opportunity, as in previous documents, to outline the context of IRMP in both the national and local situations. These are important considerations



when making decisions about the future of SFRS and this context is undoubtedly of greater significance this year than in any other since IRMP came into existence.

We have outlined above many issues that we have identified with the Proposed Action Plans for 2010/11 and we will, as always, continue to be involved in these changes, and their implementation for the benefit of our members.

We also praised SFRS last year for having a cautionary and sensible approach to IRMP, a statement which continues to be true especially in comparison to many other FRSS.

The proposals this year are more challenging, and as we have shown above, there is much merit to most of them. There are clearly differences of opinion on certain aspects in each of the proposals, which hopefully we can find a sensible solution to.

We obviously cannot condone in any way the removal of 8 Firefighter posts from the Wholetime shift duty system and look forward to constructive dialogue with both the Service and the Fire Authority, during the review of the consultation period, before the Action Plan is finalised in the coming months.



Other comments received

- Perhaps distribute this document before the meeting.
- Don't use information without basis i.e. Risk Factor it is insulting. Look at the areas other than wholetime. Allow watches to discuss the IRMP with the Fire Authority Members without managers present. Show respect to employees i.e. Risk Factor categories.
- Provide consultation presentations to departments that fit with the role within the service to avoid dilution of information or over provision of information that is not relevant.
- Effective Presentation.
- I enjoyed the presentation and it was very well delivered by John Harrison, notwithstanding, I felt the presentation seemed to concentrate on operational issues, and whilst I understand that this is our 'core business' I felt it did not accurately represent/support the non operational staff and their role within the organisation and how the IRMP cannot be achieved without their inclusion. It's important to highlight, we are the 'power behind the punch'! At times I also felt there was an emphasis on protecting jobs, in particular operational jobs, and whilst I can understand this, its important to recognise, if the organisation is forced to make cuts they will come from across the board, not just operational personnel, as such, to labour on about issues as if they will only affect the 'operational staff' I believe is inappropriate and most certainly inaccurate. At one point I found myself looking around the room asking myself if the other non operational staff felt as I did, under valued. Secondly, reference was made to 'the tax payers' as if we were not taxpayers, when we clearly are all taxpayers, this was inappropriate. Please note, it is not my intention to be obstructive, I consider myself a team player, and I enjoyed the presentation, in addition I support whatever the organisation determines is best practice. I merely feel the issues I have raised are how I viewed things, largely based on information delivered at the presentation and the knowledge base I have gained during my time with the organisation.
- Cut the time down on the lecture
- When visiting departments which have impact on consultation process may prove beneficial to speak

Other comments received from the Fire Brigade's Union

The Fire Brigades Union gave a lengthy response to this years IRMP consultation process. Those comments specifically relating to the proposals put forward by the Fire Authority, have been included, in their entirety, in the appropriate sections above. The whole of the FBU's response document will be made available as an appendix to the report considered by the Fire Authority at its meeting in December.

The IRMP Members Working Group's response

The Working Group notes all comments made. Members of the Working Group wish thank all Staff and the Fire Brigades Union for their constructive input and involvement in the IRMP process.



Appendix A - How the figures shown in the ‘Averaged Response Graph’ were calculated.

The ‘Averaged Response Graphs’, included as part of each section of this report, provide a simple way of representing the level of agreement various groups of staff feel with each statement. They attempt to visually summarise the data portrayed in the detailed response tables provided above each graph. To ensure the information conveyed in these graphs is kept in proper context, they should be viewed in conjunction with the detailed data tables.

The figures presented in the ‘Averaged Response Graph’ were calculated as follows:

An individual or team were asked to rate their response to each statement about the Fire Authority’s IRMP and Action Plan on the following scale:

Strongly Agree --- Agree --- Neither --- Disagree --- Strongly Disagree

These responses were given a score (an ‘agreement rating’) relating to their level of agreement with the statement. The scores used were as follows:

Agreement rating	Score
Strongly Agree	2
Agree	1
Neither	0
Disagree	-1
Strongly Disagree	-2

These scores are then averaged for various group groups of staff (i.e. the ‘agreement rating’ from all respondents in a group were averaged for the number of respondents in that group). This ‘Averaged Response’ score has then been graphically represented against an axis showing the average level of agreement with each statement by that particular group (see example graph below).

E.g. This group of staff **tend to agree** with the statement. This does not mean that all people in this group agree with the statement – the range of views should be taken from the detailed data contained in the appropriate ‘Summary Table’.

