

## Rescue Tender Crewing Project

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Paul Raymond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260205 or John Das Gupta, Head of Area Command, on 01743 260284.

### 1 Purpose of Report

This report informs Members of the outcome of the initial stages of the Rescue Tender (RT) crewing project and outlines the three options being put forward to staff for consultation.

### 2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the summary results from the initial staff consultation on providing RT cover in the future; and
- b) Consider and decide upon the Chief Fire Officer's recommendation that the Service consults on the three options outlined in the report and conducts a series of trials of each option; and
- c) Agree that the Chief Fire Officer report back to the Fire Authority in 2013 with proposals for an alternative staffing model for the RT and, where necessary, other appliances from 2014 onwards.

### 3 Background

The outcomes of the 2010 Public Value review programme sets out what the Service is aiming to achieve within the four year period of the current spending review.

The most significant change within the programme proposed for 2014/15 involves changes to the crewing of the Rescue Tender. The change will require the identification of new ways of staffing the RT appliance to achieve a £297,000 reduction in staffing costs. This equates to the loss of eight Firefighter posts.

The initial staff consultation phase of this project was conducted at Wellington Fire Station. Staff came up with a variety of options for consideration which are set out in the Appendix to this report.

A long list of initial options was considered by the project group and proposals then made to the Service Management Team (SMT). SMT decided that a number of options should be trialled within the Service during 2013 to determine the most appropriate staffing model for the RT. Consultation on all aspects of the trials will continue as they are undertaken. Once the consultation has been completed a report will be submitted to the Fire Authority.

## **4 Options to be Considered**

A number of options are to be considered and within each option, various staffing configurations will be the subject of trials. The principal options to be investigated are as follows;

### **Option 1**

#### **Continue primary crewing of the RT and all existing wholetime (WT) pumping appliances**

Continue to crew the RT with two staff within the current and future projection of staffing.

26 staff are currently required to provide crews for the frontline appliances at the three wholetime stations.

An example of how this could be achieved is would be to reduce the number of crew members on pumping appliances from five to four.

### **Option 2**

#### **A European model of staffing**

A European model of staffing appliances, which has been explored by staff whilst taking part in exchange visits, most notably at Regensburg in Germany.

This involves crews responding to incidents with the most appropriate resource and equipment available.

It is proposed to consult on a number of staffing models where crews from Wellington would respond to an incident and take the most appropriate appliance for the incident. This may be either the pumping appliance or RT, or both, depending on the type of incident.

One proposal is to crew both appliances using five staff split between them.

### **Option 3**

#### **The introduction of a dedicated Retained Duty (RDS) watch to staff the RT**

This would require the instigation of a new Watch of RDS personnel solely dedicated to staffing the RT.

Initial investigations found that there are insufficient numbers of W/T staff living within 5 minutes of Wellington Fire Station to staff the RT on a wholetime / retained basis. The Service would, therefore, need to recruit staff specifically for this option. Because of this, testing this option with a practical trial may prove difficult to achieve.

## **5 Financial Implications**

Options 1 and 2 would achieve the full £297,000 savings required from April 2014.

Option 3 will achieve the full saving in relation to a reduction in wholetime posts. However, given the level of operational activity of the RT, deployment costs would be in the region of £30,000. This does not include RDS staffing costs which have been estimated to be in the region of £35,000 per annum.

## **6 Legal Comment**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **7 Equality Impact Assessment**

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this report.

## **8 Appendix**

Rescue Tender staffing options raised during consultation by staff from Wellington Fire Station

## **9 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.

## Rescue Tender staffing Options raised during consultation by staff from Wellington Fire Station

Staff were consulted in the initial phase of the project and the outcomes are summarised in the table below.

<b>RT Options</b>	<b>Explanations</b>
<b>Status Quo</b>	<p>Maintain a ridership of 5 and 2 from watch strength of 8.</p> <p>This would require the deficiencies being made up from a combination of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand-ins from other stations</li> <li>• Structured overtime</li> <li>• Leave Buy Back scheme</li> </ul>
<b>New Appliance</b>	<p>Various options put forward including with and without a HI-AB but basically a pumping appliance with smaller water capacity (1800L) and only essential firefighting equipment. This would increase the capacity to carry enhanced rescue equipment</p> <p>Another option may be to mount the HI-AB on another Brigade vehicle, perhaps the LPU?</p>
<b>Change Ridership</b>	<p>By reducing the ridership of the conventional fire engine it may be possible to maintain staffing of both appliances with watch strength of 8, riding 4 on one fire engine and + 2 on the RT</p>
<b>“Switch Crewing”</b>	<p>Either utilising the above crewing or riding 5 on the fire engine and 1 on the RT with a second person switching to the RT when required or possibly calling in RDS staff when the Rescue Pump is committed.</p> <p>Another option would be that for RT calls the Rescue Pump goes off the run and either proceeds to support RT or the staff utilise an Incident Support Unit to travel with the RT. The Rescue Pump could then be crewed by RDS staff.</p>
<b>RDS Crewing Options</b>	<p>Up-skill RDS staff to crew the RT and/or use off duty W/T staff to crew RT. This could also be in combination with switch staffing option?</p> <p>Alternatively create an additional RDS Watch at Wellington who concentrate solely on RT skills</p> <p>Introduce mixed crewing for the Rescue Pump</p>

RT Options	Explanations
<b>Relocate RT</b>	<p>Move the RT to Shrewsbury or Telford (if it remains a 2 pump station)</p> <p>The greater number of staff could make Switch crewing more viable?</p>
<b>Remove RT</b>	<p>Removal of the RT from the fleet not an acceptable option in view of the recommendation within the Public Value consultation.</p>
<b>New Shift Patterns</b>	<p>e.g. 5<sup>th</sup> Watch Low Activity Response Station (LARS) 3 Watch 24hr shifts</p> <p>A possible long term objective? Changing crewing at one station will bring issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other Services offer excessive premiums of up to 27% enhancement on basic firefighter salaries.</li> <li>• Operating different duty Shropshire reduces resilience and flexibility across the service.</li> </ul>
<b>Rostered Reserve</b>	<p>Create a reserve pool of staff at WL who are rostered to overcome any shortfalls in staffing.</p> <p>Other leave related options include annualised hours and fully rostered leave</p> <p>This may be combined with a leave “Buy Back” scheme?</p>