

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

RETAINED REVIEW

1 Purpose of Report

To inform Members of the progress of the Retained Review Implementation Project and to seek approval for re-profiling of future investment in the Retained Service to match latest recruitment targets better.

2 Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- a) Note the progress of the Retained Review Implementation Project; and
- b) Approve re-profiling of future investment in the Retained Service to match updated recruitment targets better.

3 Background

At its meeting on 14 December 2005 the Fire Authority resolved to:

- Note the recommendations of the Best Value Review into the Retained Duty System within Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service; and
- Approve investment in the Retained Service, as detailed within the draft Best Value Review and summarised within the report.

At the subsequent meeting on 8 February 2006 the Fire Authority agreed to:

- Sanction the continuation of the Retained Review Team; and
- Agree a change of reference for the Retained Review Team from Review to Implementation of Recommendations.

4 Progress

Appendix A contains a Progress Report Matrix, which gives an overall picture of the progress of the implementation project.



5 Outcomes

Much of the Retained Review focused on the issues surrounding the recruitment and retention of Retained Duty System Firefighters and ultimately appliance availability. Whilst it is still too soon to be sure of the long term outcomes of the recommendations made within the Best Value Review Report, early indications are that progress is being made in those vital areas.

Appliance Availability

A number of our Retained Duty System stations have struggled to maintain appliance availability during daytime hours between Monday and Friday. Much Wenlock, Craven Arms and Cleobury Mortimer Fire Stations being the poorest performers, simply due to the lack of daytime cover personnel in those areas.

Figure 1
Retained Appliance Availability

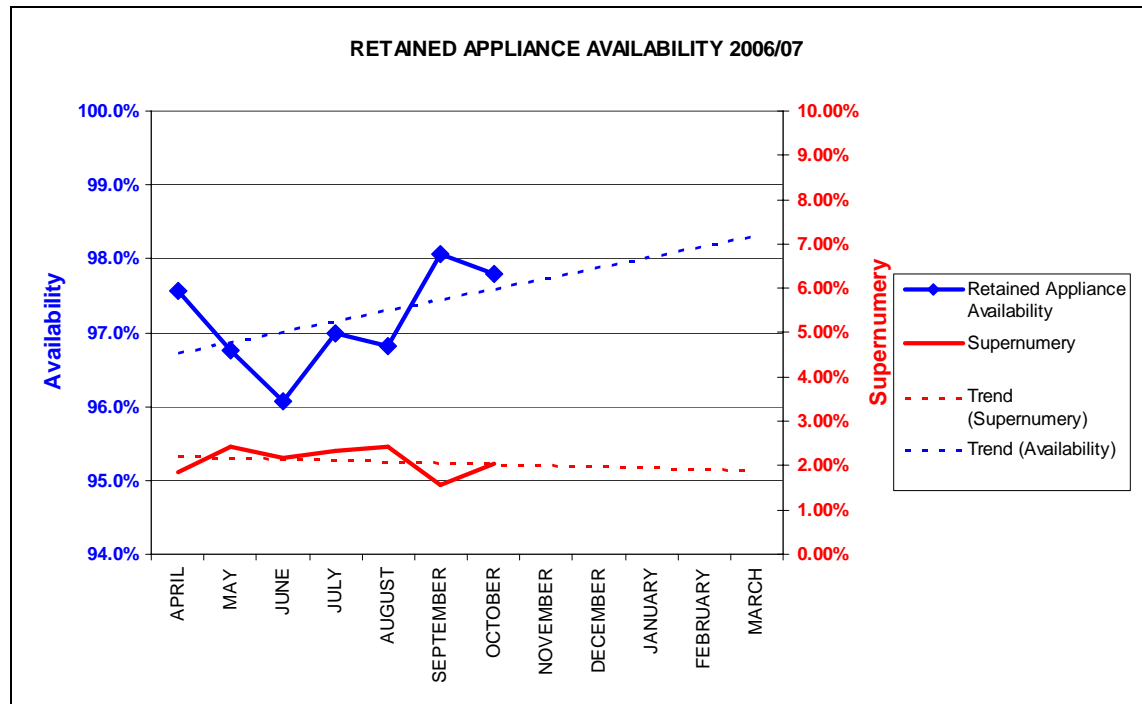


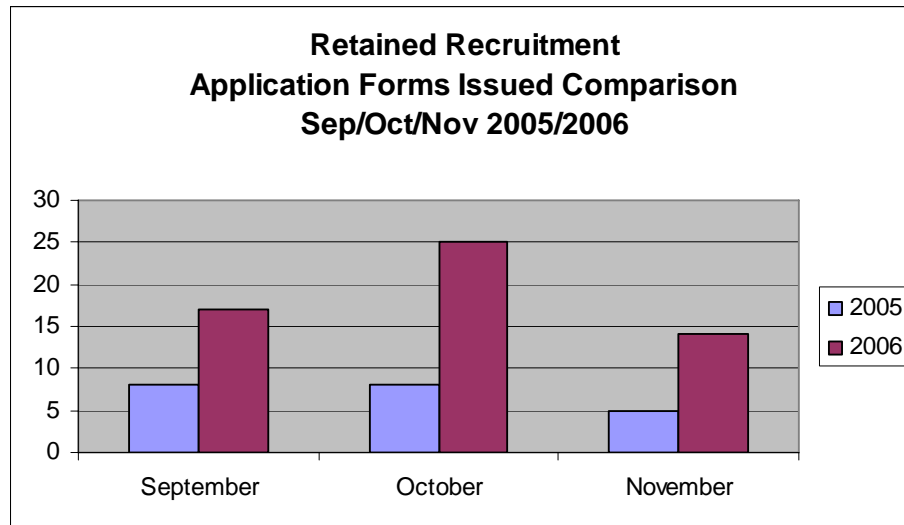
Figure 1 shows an improving trend in appliance availability and a reducing trend in the number of occasions that appliances are crewed by only three firefighters. During October, a slight drop (0.3%) in retained appliance availability, and a small rise (0.49 %) in the number of occasions that Retained appliances had a crew of only three, is due to the attendance of the Retained Support Officers on a risk assessment and health and safety legislation course and a fire safety in the business community short audit inspection course.



Recruitment

Comparison of Application Forms Issued September/October/November 2005/06

Figure 2
Comparison of Application Forms Issued Sep/Oct/Nov 2005/06



The graph above shows a 166% increase in the number of people wishing to become retained firefighters over the most recent quarter, when compared with the same period in 2005. This demonstrates the very positive impact being made by the recruitment initiatives introduced through the best value review and, more importantly, means that 14 people are through to the medical examination stage of the recruitment process and that, as such, it is expected that the January and April Retained recruit courses will be full.

Retention

On average over the last four years the turnover of Retained Duty System staff has been 9%. In 2005 19 personnel left the Service.

Retained Duty System firefighters leave the Brigade for a number of reasons, primarily due to changes in their personal circumstances, i.e. they move away from the area or their employment or personal circumstances may change.

Table 1 (on the following page) shows the number of leavers as a figure and a percentage for 2005 and 2006 (January to October) with a comparison against the percentage figure for English and Welsh Brigades during 2004/05, these being the latest figures available.



Table 1 Leavers Comparison 2005/2006

	2005	%	2006 (January to November)	%	National % England & Wales ¹
Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service	19	6.4	14	4.6	8.2

Community Fire Safety

Community fire safety work continues to be carried out across the County by all Retained Duty Stations. The additional £75,000, which Members agreed to transfer from the Retained Support Officer element to the community fire safety element of the Retained budget in July 2006, is being put to effective use, as demonstrated by the figures in Table 2.

**Table 2
Home Visits and Smoke Detectors Comparison 2005/2006**

	Home Safety Visits	Detectors Fitted
2005/06	13,000	4,233
2006/07 (1 April – 31 Oct)	14,049	4,864

National and Local Issues

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service continues to be at the forefront nationally regarding retained issues, which is very much reflected by the high profile that the Brigade has achieved in the specialist press. Locally, the investment of £824,000 in the Retained Service, and especially the introduction of the Retained Support Officers, has raised awareness of the Service in Shropshire, which is clearly evident from the increase in applicants to join the Service.

Fire Conference Telford 8 and 9 November 2006

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service officers facilitated and presented at a Retained Workshop at the recent Fire Conference. The keynote speech at the Conference was given by Angela Smith, Member of Parliament and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State with responsibility for Fire. During her address she highlighted the importance of the Retained Duty System and the need to focus on issues affecting the Retained Service.

¹ Department for Communities and Local Government Fire and Rescue Service Operational Statistics Bulletin for England and Wales 2004/05 Published October 2006



Visit of Angela Smith, Member of Parliament and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, 14 November 2006 – Newport Fire Station

Following a Regional Management Board meeting held at Wellington, Angela Smith visited Newport Fire Station, where she met Elected Members of the Retained Review Team, officers of the Brigade and a number of Retained personnel from around the County. During her visit she said that she was "very impressed" with the work done to recruit staff and send the message out to employers about the benefits of employing a professionally trained retained firefighter. Mrs Smith said:

"Being on call causes difficulties but there is a lot of help from employers. We must make it as easy as possible for them. Retained firefighters save lives and we need them. We need the quality of people I have met here."

6 Financial Implications

As a result of the Retained Best Value Review, Members previously agreed to the following short and medium-term investment in the Retained Service.

Year	Budget Increase	Reason for Budget Increase	Shortfall in Fire-fighters (start of year)	Increase predicted (end of year)	Revised Shortfall
2006/07	£824,000	All aspects of Retained Best Value Review, including the introduction of 6 XL Cabs and the recruitment of 18 additional firefighters	- 21 (includes previous shortfall)	6 (21 recruits 15 leavers)	- 15
2007/08	£95,000	The introduction of 3 further XL Cabs and 9 further firefighters	- 24 (15+9)	17 (32 recruits 15 leavers)	- 7
2008/09	£98,000	The introduction of 3 further XL Cabs and 9 further firefighters	-16 (7+9)	16 (31 recruits 15 leavers)	0
2009/10	£91,000	The introduction of 3 further XL Cabs and 9 further firefighters	- 9	9	0

As described earlier in this report, although recruitment is showing very positive signs of improvement, the targeted increase of an additional 21 firefighters during 2005/06 has not been achieved. It is anticipated that, although 21 firefighters will have joined the Service, 15 others will have left, i.e. an overall increase of 6 firefighters will have been achieved.



Members will be aware that this has resulted in ongoing underspends in the Retained budget but that, where possible, these have been used to benefit the Service, for example, by increasing the amount of community fire safety undertaken by Retained firefighters.

As shown in the table on the previous page, the Fire Authority will, therefore, commence 2007/08 with a shortfall of 24 Retained firefighters. Through improved recruitment and the increase of initial recruit courses from 3 to 4, it is anticipated that this shortfall can be reduced to 7 by the end of the year, and then eliminated entirely in the following year as shown in the table.

To avoid/reduce underspends in the coming year it is, therefore, recommended that future investment in the Retained Service is re-profiled to match recruitment targets, as shown in the following table.

Year	Planned Investment £	Strategy and Resources Revised Investment	Current Proposal
2006/07	824,000	824,000	824,000
2007/08	919,000	824,000	824,000
2008/09	1,017,000	919,000	1,017,000
2009/10	1,108,000	1,017,000	1,108,000
2010/11	1,108,000	1,108,000	1,108,000
Total	£4,976,000	£4,692,000	£4,881,000

From the table above it can be seen that, compared with the projections considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee, an additional £98,000 will need to be found in 2008/09, and £91,000 in 2009/10. Investment will, however, catch up with the original planned levels in 2009/10.

It is recommended that in order to replace the potential higher additional costs in 2008/09 and 2009/10, resources are set aside from the projected underspend in 2006/07 to smooth out the transition back to the originally planned timetable.

7 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising directly out of this report.

8 Appendix

Progress Report Matrix

9 Background Papers

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Fire and Rescue Service Retained Duty System, A Review of the Recruitment and Retention Challenges (February 2005)

Fire and Rescue Service Circular 7 – 2005 Review of the Retained Duty System (February 2005)



Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

09 February 2005, Report 17 – Retained Service
26 April 2005, Report 23 – Retained Review
20 July 2005, Report 18 – Retained Review
19 October 2005, Report 14 – Retained Review
14 December 2005, Report 9 – Retained Review
11 May 2006 Report 14 - Retained Review
19 July 2006 Report 18 – Retained Review
18 October 2006 Report 17 – Retained Review

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balance Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Equality and Diversity		Retained	*
Efficiency Savings		Risk and Insurance	
Environmental		Staff	
Financial	*	Strategic Planning	
Fire Control/Fire Link		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Information, Communications, Technology and Data			

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Phil Clarke, Retained Project Manager, on 01743 260232.



RETAINED REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS PROGRESS REPORT MATRIX 20 DECEMBER 2006

No	Recommendation Heading	Priority	Comments	Progress	
				A*	B*
1	Terminology		Implemented		
2	XL Cabs		In progress, Albrighton Prees, Ellesmere and Cleobury Mortimer and Clun on the run. Much Wenlock due for completion early 2007.		
3	Employers recruitment packs		Packs complete.		
4	Employers support system		Work ongoing, ICT department working on web site information.		
5	Links with business organisations		RSO's fully involved.		
6	Liaison with Councils		RSO's fully involved.		
7	Partners information in recruitment packs		Partners information included in recruitment packs.		
8	National TV campaign		Copy of Report sent to ODPM. Presentation at RDS Conference Leicester		
9	Using current assets (i & ii) Using current assets (iii)		External notice boards at all stations, 4 x RSO vehicles dedicated to recruitment.		
10	Targeting female applicants		National campaign launched, also local taster sessions held in June at Telford Central, target and strategy set for Retained Recruitment.		
11	Formalise recruitment procedure		Work commenced and is ongoing.		
12	Recruitment Tests		Equipment now available for new selection tests.		
13	Exit interviews		District Officers and OIC's aware, database in operation in HR.		
14	Policy Group mechanism		New District Meeting structure implemented		
15	Policy Group /CFA Reports		Implemented from April 1 st		
16	Communications procedure		Work commenced and is ongoing.		
17	Retained Support Officers (8)		Retained Support Officers in position.		
18	Cleaning/Maintenance and Admin		Implemented from April 1 st .		
19	Retained Project Manager		In position.		
20	Pay		Continuing to monitor other schemes.		
21	Employers information, call stats etc (i & ii) Acknowledging employers (iii)		Statistics available for all stations and included within recruitment packs.		
22	Partners information, call stats etc		Statistics available for all stations and included within recruitment packs.		
23	Additional hours training		Implemented from April 1st		
24	Associate Trainers		Completed – Brigade Order Training 2 Part 11		
25	Training by Wholetime Watches		Being actioned by Training and Development staff.		
26	Community Fire Safety		Implemented.		
27	Management Procedures		Report to Policy Group by Programme Office in December		
	Priority		Progress	A* = Progress @09/10/06 B* = Progress @ 30/11/06	
	Gold Target - Implementation Target 1 st Oct 2006			Implemented	
	Silver Target - Implementation Target 1 st Jan 2007			Work has commenced	
	Bronze Target – Implementation Target 1 st April 2007			No action at present	