

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION RESULTS

1 Purpose of Report

To advise Members of the outcome of an extensive three-month period of consultation on the Fire Authority's draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan for 2007/08, and to recommend changes to these documents as a result of that consultation.

In addition, to seek approval for the IRMP Members' Working Group (the Group) to progress the 2007/08 IRMP process to the implementation phase.

2 Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- a) Note the extent of the consultation exercise undertaken with staff, stakeholders and the public with regard to the draft IRMP Action Plan 2007/08;
- b) Approve the changes to the IRMP documents, as proposed by the Group as a result of feedback obtained through the consultation process;
- c) Delegate responsibility to the Group to progress the IRMP process, as detailed in Section 10 of this report; and
- d) Note the thanks of the IRMP Members to all staff, the Fire Brigades Union and the officers involved in the IRMP consultation.

3 Background

At its meeting on 19 July 2006, the Fire Authority agreed to delegate responsibility to the Group for the creation of the Authority's 2007/08 draft IRMP Action Plan. Members also gave delegated responsibility to the Group for the IRMP consultation process to be held between August and November 2006.



4 Approach to Consultation

As described in the IRMP, the Fire Authority's approach to consultation complied with guidance issued by both the Cabinet Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Additionally, the consultation process followed the recommendations of Opinion Research Services (ORS), who have been contracted by the Fire Authority to assist with various consultation exercises for a number of years, including the Fire Authority's annual IRMP consultation.

The central tenet of this guidance was that the extent of consultation should be proportional to the scope of the IRMP and should focus upon communities or interest groups particularly affected by the changes. Because the draft Action Plan includes proposals that are likely to impact on the service to all parts of the Shropshire community (including all members of the public and businesses in Shropshire), the focus for the process has been on trying to encourage feedback from all sections of the community. In addition, two of this year's proposals relate directly to Tweedale Fire Station. An additional public scrutiny panel was, therefore, arranged in the Telford area. A further dedicated focus group consultation presentation was arranged for the residents of Cuckoo Oak Green (the closest residential properties to Tweedale Fire Station).

Summary details of the consultation work undertaken with staff, members of the public and other stakeholder organisations are provided in this report. Appendices A and B provide the detailed reports on this work.

5 Consultation with Staff and Representative Bodies

As in previous years, and in recognition that the group most likely to be affected by changes proposed within the draft IRMP and Action Plan are the employees of the Fire Authority, the IRMP Members' Working Group focused a good deal of attention upon consulting effectively with this group. Copies of the plans were placed at all stations, watches and departments within the Service and staff were encouraged to consider, and comment upon, the information and proposals they contained.

Additionally, all staff were encouraged to attend one of forty two IRMP presentations conducted between 25 August 2006 and 17 November 2006. A total of 418 staff attended these presentations, representing 71.3% of the workforce. Each of the presentations lasted approximately two hours with staff being provided the opportunity to question the IRMP Team and/or Members of the Fire Authority's IRMP Working Group. Details relating to the forty two meetings held are provided at Appendix C to this report. Following each presentation staff were asked to complete a questionnaire seeking their views on the proposals, thus providing valuable written feedback.

All representative bodies were invited to a meeting and presentation by the IRMP Team and Members' Working Group prior to the commencement of the staff consultation process. They were also invited to attend any (or all) of the forty two presentations at stations and Headquarters.

Full details about this consultation process and the responses received are included at Appendix A to this report. The Fire Brigades Union response to the proposals is attached in its entirety at Appendix D. No responses were received from the other representative bodies.



6 Consultation with the Public and Stakeholder Organisations

The three methods of consultation with members of the public were as follows:

- Formal 'Scrutiny Panels';
- Focus group of Tweedale residents; and
- An on-line questionnaire.

Details about this work are given below. Full details about this consultation process and the responses received are included as part of Appendix B to this report.

Public Scrutiny Panel

A 'Public Scrutiny Panel' is a group of people, representing a cross-section of the community, who can be called upon for various consultation requirements, over a number of years. Experience from previous years' consultation with ORS demonstrated that the most effective means for consulting with members of the public continued to be the use of 'Scrutiny Panels'. The benefit of using Public Scrutiny Panels is that the Fire Authority is able to demonstrate that an 'informed' process of consultation has taken place.

ORS recruited a total of 42 members of the public to attend one of three Public Scrutiny Panels, held in Ludlow, Shrewsbury and Telford. Panel members received the Fire Authority's IRMP documents prior to the meetings. During the meetings, the Fire Authority's IRMP Team gave a summary presentation on the purpose of IRMP and the specific proposals contained in the Fire Authority's proposed Action Plan. After a lengthy question and answers session, the group was split into several smaller groups. Each group then discussed and agreed responses to various questions relating to the Fire Authority's proposals. Whilst the IRMP Team were available to answer any additional questions, they did not take part in these discussions.

Tweedale Residents Focus Group

The proposal to relocate a fire appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale was identified as having a potential impact on the residents living nearest to the existing Tweedale Fire Station - Cuckoo Oak Green. A presentation was given on the IRMP proposals and, in particular, the changes affecting Tweedale Fire Station, to which all residents were invited. A total of 20 residents attended this presentation.

A Member of the Fire Authority and members of the IRMP team answered questions raised by the residents. Additionally, a total of eleven questionnaires were returned by the residents of Cuckoo Oak Green. The IRMP Members Working Group held its meeting on the 29 November at Tweedale Fire Station. This gave Members the opportunity to view first hand the issues that had been raised by the residents, prior to making their recommendations to the Fire Authority on the draft IRMP. The response from these residents is included in Appendix B to this report.

Subsequent to this meeting a letter has been sent to all occupiers of Cuckoo Oak Green, informing them of the recommendations being made to this Authority meeting.



On-line Questionnaire

To enable more members of the public to contribute to the consultation process the Authority included an on-line questionnaire within the IRMP section of its website. This work was not conducted by ORS.

The questionnaire provided information about the Fire Authority's IRMP proposals and asked a series of questions on which the Fire Authority was seeking specific comments. Space was also provided for any other comments. The questionnaire was made available for three months, giving ample time for people to respond.

Awareness of the questionnaire was raised with the public by signposting it on the homepage of the Service website and through the distribution of posters, advertising its existence, to all Post Offices, supermarkets and Parish notice boards in the County. Press releases were also sent to all news media outlets in and around the County, which resulted in several articles in the local press.

This effort resulted in a total of twenty two responses. A number of Cuckoo Oak residents submitted detailed comments, which have been included in a separate section of this report.

7 Consultation with Stakeholder Organisations

Two methods were used to consult with organisations that have a vested interest in the service delivered by the Fire Authority, namely:

- Formal 'Stakeholder Forums'; and
- A paper questionnaire.

Details about this work are given below. Full details about this consultation process and the responses received are included as part of Appendix B to this report.

Stakeholder Forums

On the recommendation of ORS the Fire Authority determined that the most effective means for consulting with organisations and businesses most likely to be affected by the Authority's proposals was through stakeholder forums. This format of consultation allows for the proposals to be explained on a face-to-face basis prior to obtaining the views of stakeholders through in-depth discussion.

More than 430 organisations were, therefore, informed of the Fire Authority's draft IRMP Action Plan 2007/08 and the possible impact it could have on them. These included:

- Local County and Unitary Councils;
- District and Borough Councils
- Police and Ambulance Services in Shropshire;
- Neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services;
- Primary Care Trusts;
- The top 100 largest employers in Shropshire;
- The Environment Agency and Environmental Health departments; and
- Shropshire's diversity forums.



It was, however, disappointing that only 3 people attended the forum. It is possible that this low level of support was due to the fact that the impact this year of the IRMP on stakeholders will be limited to changes in resource distribution, rather than a significant change in fire cover provision. This did, however, prove the value of also using the dual approach of both forums and questionnaires, which received a much higher degree of engagement from stakeholders. The forums were managed through a structured approach by ORS, and the forum members' views on the Authority's proposals were obtained and reported in a 'Consultation Report'. The findings from this work with stakeholders are summarised in the relevant sections of the full ORS report included as the Annex to the Stakeholder and Public Consultation Response Document (Appendix B).

Questionnaires

The Fire Authority was keen to make sure that those organisations that were unable to attend one of the Stakeholder Forums had every opportunity to comment on its proposals. Every invite sent out to the forums, therefore, also included a paper questionnaire, which gave details of the proposals and asked for their thoughts.

Also, in recognition of their involvement in, and impact on, the local communities of Shropshire, the Fire Authority put great effort into obtaining feedback from Shropshire's Parish Councillors. This involved:

- Sending a questionnaire to the Clerk of all parish councils;
- A presentation to the Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) Executive Committee; and
- A presentation to the South Shropshire District Council, Safety Policy Panel.

The Authority received 72 completed stakeholder questionnaires.

The feedback from the Authority's Public and Stakeholder consultation process is detailed in Appendix B to this report.

8 Summary of Consultation Findings

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

- There is significant support for the relocation of the wholetime appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale.
- The residents of Cuckoo Oak Green support the relocation of the Telford appliance to Tweedale but have some concerns about the impact on the local environment.
- There is support for the introduction of a pilot Small Fires Unit.
- There are concerns from staff that the introduction of a 20 minute response standard for small fires will lead to an escalation of the incident prior to the arrival of the Fire Service.
- There is support for the introduction of response standards for other life risk incidents. Water incidents are clearly identified as the most significant of these, however, it is recognised that this may present some difficulties in rural areas



- There is very mixed opinion on attendance at other non-life risk incidents. In the main there is support for continued attendance at these incidents, however, the way we respond (blue lights and sirens) needs further investigation. There is support for charging at a proportion of these other incidents, e.g. repeat lift calls, release from objects, and commercial property flooding.

9 Recommended Changes to Draft IRMP Action Plan 2007/08

Having considered all of the feedback received, at its meeting on 29 November 2006, the Working Group makes the following recommendations to the Fire Authority on how it should progress its Draft IRMP Action Plan 2007/08:

Telford Central Appliance to Tweedale Relocation

- a) One wholtime appliance and staff should be relocated from Telford Central Fire Station to Tweedale Fire Station, as proposed in the Draft Action Plan 2007/08.
- b) The capital provision of £20,000 for alterations to Tweedale Fire Station should be increased to £35,000. This will enable the Authority to explore options for alleviating the concerns raised by the local residents of Cuckoo Oak Green.

Pilot Small Fires Unit

- c) A twelve-month pilot project for the introduction of a 'Small Fires Unit' in the Telford area, utilising the existing Tweedale Land Rover appliance, should be introduced, as stated in the Draft Action Plan 2007/08.
- d) The attendance time for small fires should be developed as part of the 'Small Fires Unit' pilot project.

Other Life Risk Incidents

- e) Further work should be undertaken to aid the development of response standards for 'life risk water incidents'.

Other Non-Life Risk Incidents

- f) Responding to Incidents:
 - i. Blue lights and sirens should not be used, when responding to the following incidents, where there is no risk to life:
 1. Lock in/out of property
 2. Removal or release from objects.
 - ii. All incidents involving lifts, which do not involve entrapment or injury (i.e. confinement in the lift car) due to a break down, will be subject to a charge being made on the building owner(s).
 - iii. There should be no change to the current charging policy for flooding of commercial property - to remain discretionary, i.e. continues to be at the discretion of the deputy Chief Fire Officer.



- iv. There should be no change to the existing policy for Road Traffic Collision – ‘services only’, which involve cleaning the highway (i.e. recharged to the Environment Agency to recover costs).

The Fire Authority Members of the Group also wished to put on record their thanks to all staff and the Fire Brigades Union for their constructive input and involvement in the IRMP process. In addition, the Members wished to thank the officers of the IRMP team and, in particular, the IRMP Manager, Joe Whelan, for their commitment and hard work during the consultation process.

10 The Next Stages

Subject to the agreement of the Fire Authority that the proposed amendments detailed above be made to its draft IRMP Action Plan 2007/08, it is also recommended that authority be delegated to the Group to oversee the following stages of the IRMP process:

1. Update and finalise the Action Plan to reflect the agreed changes;
2. Provide feedback to consultees with regard to the outcome from the consultation process and the changes made as a result;
3. Publish the Fire Authority's second year IRMP and Action Plan for 2007/08 by 1 April 2007;
4. Develop implementation projects in accordance with the actions stated in the Action Plan 2007/08; and
5. Commence implementation of these projects.

11 Financial Implications

The Fire Authority's IRMP Action Plan 2007/08 will require investment of approximately £160,000 revenue to enable the introduction of Watch Managers (4) at Tweedale. An additional £35,000 capital provision is required to upgrade the existing facilities for use by wholetime staff and to explore the options for alleviating the concerns that have been raised by the local Tweedale (Cuckoo Oak Green) residents.

12 Legal Comment

The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006/08, issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government, states that ‘Fire and Rescue Authorities must each have in place and maintain an IRMP which reflects local need and which sets out plans to tackle effectively both existing and potential risk to communities’.

13 Equality and Diversity Implications

The consultation process adopted by the Fire Authority and, in particular, involvement of three Public Scrutiny Panels, taken from a cross-section of the community, has ensured that representatives of all members of the community have been consulted.



14 Appendices

- Appendix A** Staff Consultation Response Document
- Appendix B** Stakeholder and Public Consultation Response Document
- Appendix C** Timetable of presentations given during IRMP Consultation
- Appendix D** Fire Brigades Union IRMP Consultation Response Document

15 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority:

- 18 October 2006 Minutes Item 20 Integrated Risk Management Plan Update
- 19 July 2006 Report 19 Integrated Risk Management Planning Members' Working Group Update, and Minutes
- 10 May 2006 Minutes Item 20 Integrated Risk Management Plan Update

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	

For further information about this item please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201, Andy Johnson, Divisional Officer Performance and Risk, on 01743 260287, or Joe Whelan, IRMP Manager on 01743 260182.



Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority



Draft
IRMP Action Plan 2007/08

**Staff Consultation Response Document
November 2006**

Executive Summary

Following the release of its Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan for 2007/08 in August 2006, Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority has conducted three months of consultation with its entire staff. In the light of the continuing service assessments being conducted by the Audit Commission in 2006 this year's presentation on the Draft Action Plan also emphasised the progress that SFRS has made in its previous three IRMP's with the support and dedication of its entire staff. The major changes in this year's proposal would affect wholetime staff at Telford and retained staff at Tweedale, together with the local communities in those areas.

To support this process early consultation also took place with those staff that would be directly affected. This was achieved through the formation of a wholetime watch working group, and presentations and discussions with the retained firefighters at Tweedale. This early work undoubtedly paid dividends in terms of staff involvement and engagement as has been recognised by comments on the consultation process in the Fire Brigades Union's formal response document.

A great deal of effort was put into obtaining feedback on the document from all members of staff within Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. The consultation process involved presentations to all staff by members of the Fire Authority Members' IRMP Working Group and the Service's IRMP Team on the contents of the document. All staff were then asked to complete a questionnaire which asked for their views on various aspects of the document and the proposals contained therein.

Employee Representative Bodies (RB's) were also asked to comment on the draft document, 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 Fire Authority's response to that feedback.

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

- Recognition and significant support for the proposed relocation of one wholetime appliance and crew from Telford Central to Tweedale will give a more even distribution of resources and better service to the local community;
- There is general support for the introduction of a pilot Small Fires Unit for the Telford area.
- There are concerns from staff that the introduction of a 20 minute response standard for small fires will lead to an escalation of the fire prior to fire services arrival.
- There is strong support for the development of response standards for other incidents. Water incidents are clearly identified as the most significant hazard.
- There is mixed opinion on how we respond to other non life risk incidents. There is however support for changing the way we respond (Blue Lights) to incidents of Lock in/out and Removal or Release from Objects where no life risk is involved from the majority of staff.

Outcomes will be considered by the Fire Authority on 20 December 2006. Any changes approved by the Authority will be made to the appropriate document and then the final version of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Action Plan for 2007/08 will be published on 1st April 2007.



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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform all interested groups of:

- the details of the consultation process undertaken with the staff and Employee Representative Bodies of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, on its Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan for 2007/08;
- the comments received from the staff and Employee Representative Bodies of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority from this consultation process; and
- Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority's response to the comments made on its Draft IRMP Action Plan 2007/08.

The results from this consultation process, combined with the results from the Fire Authority's consultation with the public and stakeholder groups in Shropshire, will be used to assist the Fire Authority in its decision to make changes to the Draft IRMP Action Plan for 2007/08, prior to its final release on 1 April 2007.



Approach to Consultation

The consultation process for Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority's 2007/08 Draft IRMP Action Plan has been undertaken as detailed in the relevant section of the Draft Plan, 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 efforts on getting feedback on its proposals from its staff (the people likely to feel greatest impact from the draft proposals). To this end, a presentation on the Fire Authority's Draft Action Plan was presented on forty-two occasions to members of staff from all sections and departments in Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. A total of 418 staff, representing 71.3% of the workforce attended the consultation presentations. In the vast majority of cases at least one representative from the Fire Authority's Members IRMP Working Group and a member of the Service's IRMP Team gave the presentation and responded to any questions asked. On completion of each presentation members of staff were provided with a feedback questionnaire so that information about their thoughts on the proposals contained in the Draft IRMP Action Plan for 2007/08 could be gathered.

The Questionnaires

The questionnaires consisted of nine 'statements' and one question about the Action Plan. With the nine statements, staff were asked to rate their 'level of agreement' with each statement on a scale of 'Strongly Agree' through to 'Strongly Disagree'. The question asked for a 'Yes' or 'No' response in respect of response times to other incidents. The statements and question on which they were asked to comment were as follows;

1. The Draft Action IRMP Plan is well laid out and easy to understand.
2. The Draft Action Plan and supporting evidence documents contain sufficient information for me to make an assessment of the effectiveness of our service.
3. The proposal to relocate one wholetime appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale will give a more even distribution of fire cover resources in the Telford area.
4. The proposal to relocate one wholetime appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale will provide a better service to the local community (quicker response, reduction in fire damage).
5. The provision of a Small Fires Unit makes best use of resources and is a positive step in providing a modern and efficient Fire and Rescue Service.
6. The provision of Small Fires Units will improve the level of service delivery to the local community in the Telford area.
7. A 20 minute attendance time would be appropriate for small fires in the open (grass, bins and rubbish), where no life or property is at risk.
8. Attendance standards should be set for each of the following types of life risk incidents; Rescue from;
 - i. Water
 - ii. Height
 - iii. Equipment
9. Should the Authority use the same response times as have been set for Life Risk Fires and RTC's (i.e. 10, 15 and 20 minutes for high, medium and low risk areas respectively) for the incidents identified in question 8?
10. The use of 'Blue Lights and Audible Warnings' should not be used when proceeding to the following type of non-life risk incidents.
 - i. Small fires



- ii. Animal rescues
- iii. Gas leaks
- iv. Domestic property flooding
- v. Commercial property flooding
- vi. Lock in/out of property
- vii. RTC services only
- viii. Removal or release from objects

All responses had to be back to the IRMP Team by the 17 November 2006. This ensured that all feedback received could be duly considered by the Fire Authority's Members IRMP Working Group during the last week in November, prior to taking any recommendations for changes to the draft document, to the full Combined Fire Authority meeting on 20 December 2006.

The overall response to this consultation process has been good, with a total of 184 questionnaires being returned, this is a slight improvement from the previous years consultation responses [172]. This represents approximately 31% of all staff. The table below shows how many members of staff from the various departments within the organisation responded to the questionnaire. In view of the relevance of the Fire Authority's draft proposals to Wholetime staff, the response from this particular group (only 29%) is a little disappointing.

All responses, including five anonymous returns, are included in the statistics and graphs contained in this document.

Group of staff	Number of responses	Number of staff	Percentage of staff
Retained	100	298	34
Wholetime	47	161	29
Officers	8	30	27
Control	7	18	39
Support Staff	9	62	15
Training	3	8	38
Fire Safety	5	9	56
Anonymous	5	-	-
Overall figures	184	586	31

How the results are presented in this report

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

- o The statement or question on which people were commenting;
- o A summary of the responses and comments received;
- o The Fire Authority'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').
- A detailed breakdown of the response from the various groups and departments within the organisation; and
- For the nine statements, a summary graph which averages the responses for each of the various departments. The graph depicts the 'Average Agreement Response' for each identified group. This figure has been calculated by attaching a score to the response received from each respondent. These figures are then averaged for each of the various staff groups shown in the graph. Full details on how the graphs were constructed are included as appendix A. The table below shows the scoring used for this calculation:

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

- Statement 9 asked for either a 'Yes' or 'No' response. The results of this statement are given as a proportion of each staff group agreeing or disagreeing with the question.



The Action Plan

Response to Statement 1

Statement made:

The IRMP Action Plan is well structured and easy to understand

Response Summary

The overwhelming majority of respondent (97%) stated that they either 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' and only 1% disagreeing. There appears to be general support for this statement.

Most of the comments made by staff relate to the presentation used in the consultation process, rather than the actual IRMP Plan. One respondent commented that the presentation was long.

Fire Authority's response

The Fire Authority notes all comments made.

The Fire Authority recognises that the IRMP process is an integral part of SFRS risk management and reduction strategy, and as such the Authority remains committed to consulting on it with all areas of the Shropshire community as widely as possible.

During staff consultation sessions no time limit is set for consultation presentations, staff are encouraged to ask questions and become involved in the process in order to gain the most benefit to them. The duration of each presentation is therefore largely dependant on the participation and the involvement of the audience.

Summary table of responses to this statement

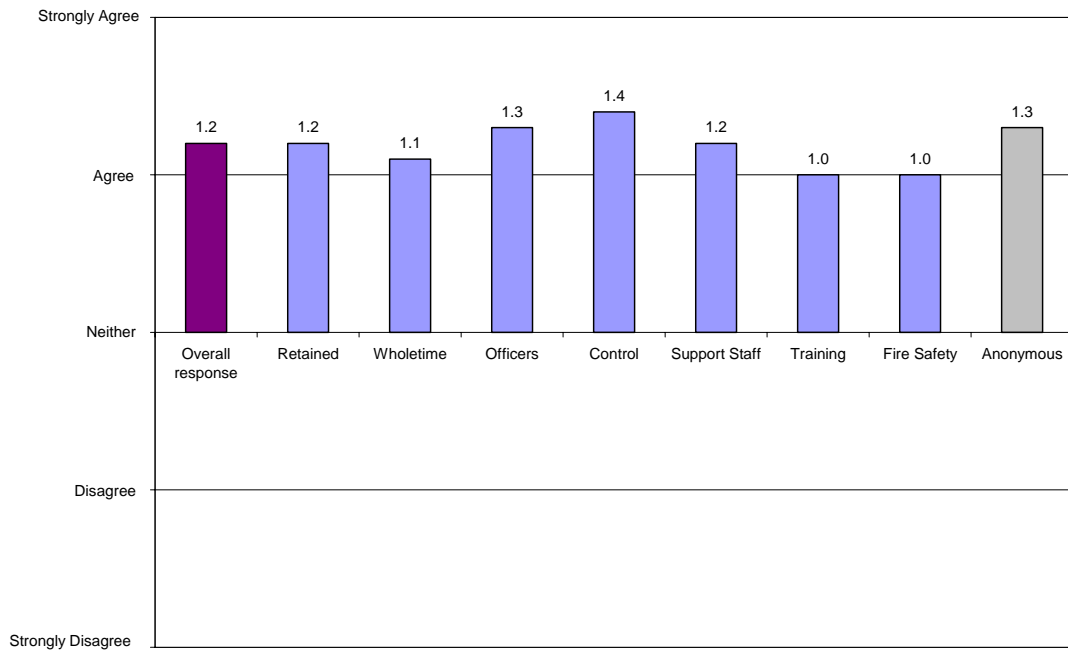
	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	38	21
Agree	138	76
Neither	4	2
Disagree	1	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	181	100



Detailed summary of responses to Statement 1

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		%	%	%	%	%
Overall figures	181	21	76	2	1	0
Retained	100	24	74	1	1	0
Wholetime	47	13	81	6	0	0
Officers	7	29	71	0	0	0
Control	7	43	57	0	0	0
Support Staff	9	22	78	0	0	0
Training	3	0	100	0	0	0
Fire Safety	5	0	100	0	0	0
Anonymous	3	33	67	0	0	0

Averaged Response Graph for Statement 1¹



¹ See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.



Comments made in response to Statement 1

Q1Comments

Comments in agreement with statement

- Better presented and easier to understand than in previous years.
- Very well presented
- Excellent presentation by ADO Whelan
- I thought it was well presented and easy to follow and understand
- Very well presented too
- Very well presented.

Neutral comments

- The only comment I would make would be to make fewer breaks for questions. The presentation I attended lasted for 3 hours with some people not seeing all of it, due to having to leave for other commitments.
- However, had to take a one-sided viewpoint.

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- Only ever given one perspective.
- Research into the impact of TC/TW move not carried out prior to consultation??



Response to Statement 2

Statement made:

The Draft Action Plan and supporting evidence documents contain sufficient information for me to make an assessment of the effectiveness of our service.

Response Summary

With over 90% of responses stating that they either 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree', there tends to be general support for this statement.

Comments from respondents in the majority of cases found the information (together with the supporting web information) to be sufficiently detailed to make an informed judgement, and it was helpful to know in what direction the service was heading. However a minority of comments indicated they thought the information did not give a balanced view.

Fire Authority's response

The Fire Authority notes all comments made.

The Fire Authority comments made in response to Statement 1 are also relevant here

Summary table of responses to this statement

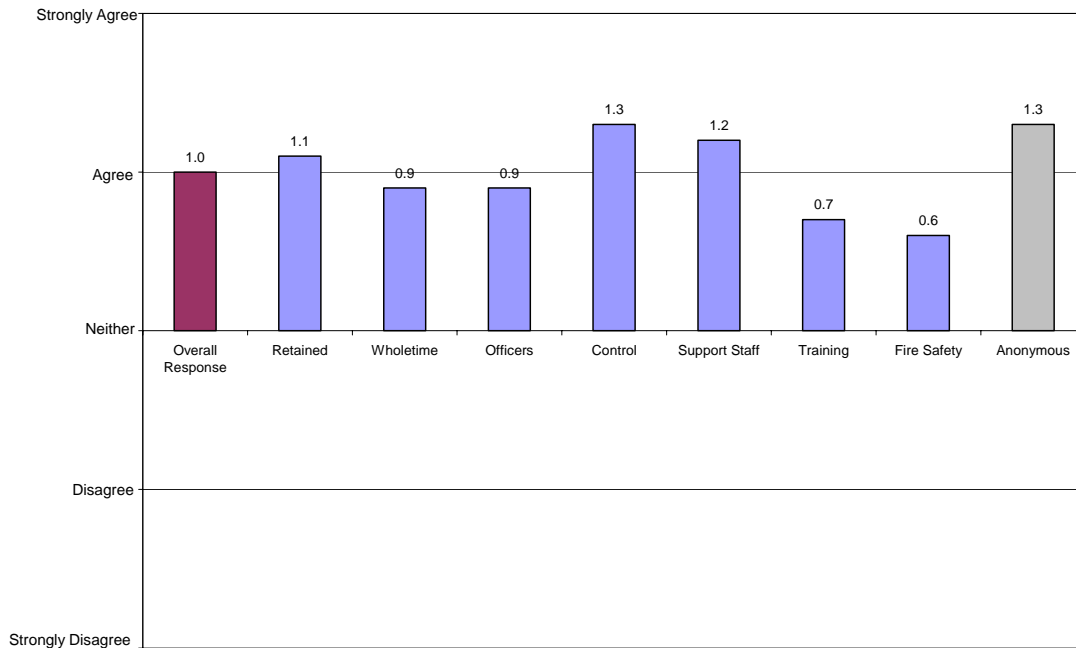
	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	23	13
Agree	144	80
Neither	10	6
Disagree	4	2
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	181	100



Detailed summary of responses to Statement 2

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	181	13	80	6	2	0
Retained	100	13	84	3	0	0
Wholetime	47	9	74	13	4	0
Officers	7	14	71	0	14	0
Control	7	29	71	0	0	0
Support Staff	9	22	78	0	0	0
Training	3	0	67	33	0	0
Fire Safety	5	0	80	0	20	0
Anonymous	3	33	67	0	0	0

Averaged Response Graph for Statement 2²



² See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.



Comments made in response to Statement 2

Comments in agreement with statement

- Further detail not feasible at this level of consultation.
- Further background obtained from website - good.
- It gives me sufficient information to make an assessment of the statistics of the effectiveness of our Service over the period of time when collated.
- Based on information given
- It is good to know where the Fire Service is heading and the reasoning for different changes.
- Hard work and very informative. Plan gave a perfect overview of past and future proposals. To be more effective and offer better performance value.

Neutral comments

- I don't know whether there should be more information, therefore unable to judge.
- I realise government constraints in this area but would like to see more weight applied to empirical evidence and less to protected analysis.
- As above! Would an independent assessment be fairer?
- Supporting evidence docs not shown to us (emailed 25/09 docs on web)

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- Some of the information was incorrect
- Demonstrated positives, unusual that there were no positives.
- Only ever given one perspective.
- The information doesn't assess the effectiveness of our service in relation to the Health, Safety and Welfare of firefighters attending incidents.



The Proposals Response to Statement 3

Statement made:

The proposal to relocate one wholetime appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale will give a more even distribution of resources in the Telford area.

Response Summary

The overwhelming majority of respondent (96%) stated that they either 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' and only 1% disagreeing. There appears to be significant support for this statement. This level of agreement is also reflected in the response from operational staff as shown in the breakdown of the individual group responses.

Fire Authority's response

The Fire Authority notes all comments made.

The Fire Authority appreciates the support shown by all staff and the Fire Brigades Union in recognising the improvements in provision of fire cover for the community in the Telford area that this proposal will bring. The Authority believes that this level of engagement and support is a direct reflection of the good climate of industrial relations within the SFRS.

The Fire Authority acknowledges that further detailed work on mobilising criteria for the Telford area will form part of the implementation plan. This work will involve appropriate staff and their representatives.

An initial assessment has been conducted on the impact of this proposal particularly in relation to the operational activity of the current Tweedale RDS appliance as shown in the preliminary assessment of the new station turnout areas. However until the mobilising criteria for the whole of Telford are accurately defined (e.g. new station areas) it is not possible to give a definitive answer to the question of the impact on staff.

Summary table of responses to this statement

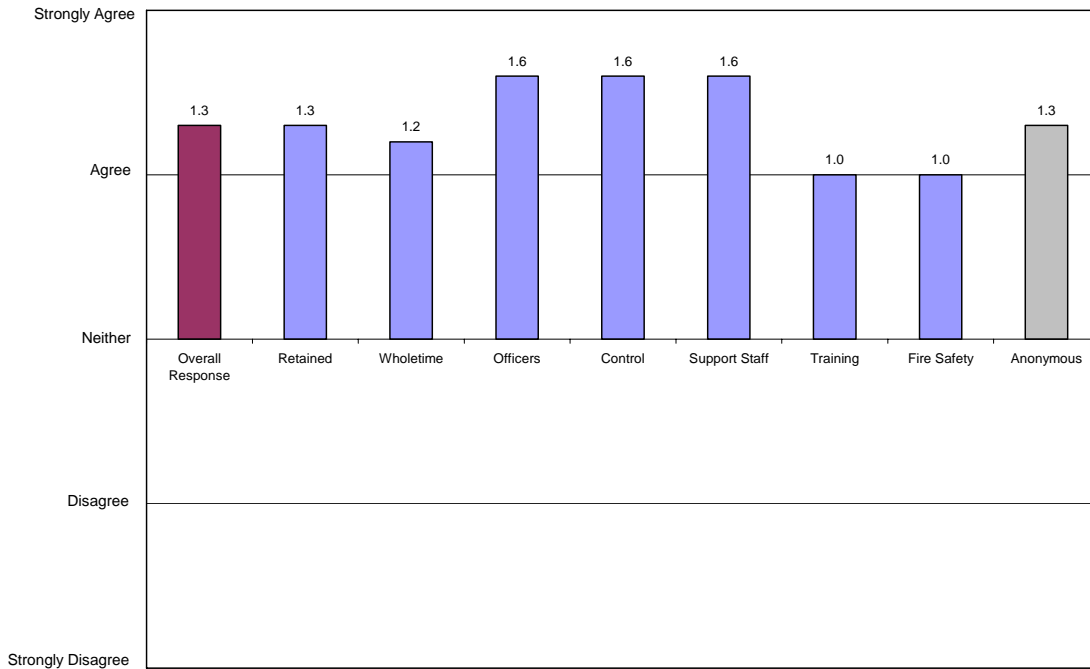
	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	63	35
Agree	111	61
Neither	6	3
Disagree	1	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	181	100



Detailed summary of responses to Statement 3

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		%	%	%	%	%
Overall Response	181	35	61	3	1	0
Retained	100	36	60	3	1	0
Wholetime	47	26	70	4	0	0
Officers	7	57	43	0	0	0
Control	7	57	43	0	0	0
Support Staff	9	56	44	0	0	0
Training	3	0	100	0	0	0
Fire Safety	5	20	60	20	0	0
Anonymous	3	33	67	0	0	0

Averaged Response Graph for Statement 3³



³ See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.



Comments made in response to Statement 3

Comments in agreement with statement

- A well planned idea but the continued response to the town centre complex needs monitoring.
- Based on information given
- However, if you distribute all two-pump station's appliances more equally, this would have the same effect.
- It is a positive move that will be of significant benefit to the local community. Fundamental to the universal acceptance of this scheme, is that the transition relating to the splitting of watches is as smooth as possible, taking into account the numerous issues involved.

Neutral comments

- Feedback over 3-4 years would be required to confirm the above.
- I believe this will depend on the continuing support for the retained crews
- The only concern I have is if TC8 goes out on a call, will fire authority and local business be happy that there is no app at TC or will cover moves happen.

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- Only have Brigade evidence
- Implications for retained staff at surrounding stations if wholetime cover at Tweedale encroaches on the areas that they currently respond to.
- Given today's living working climate situation I think there should be more fire appliances allocated to deal with incidents as required.
- Why has the impact on staff not been looked at prior to consultation?

Comments from the Fire Brigade's Union

SF&RS have been moving toward this proposal over a period of time, and according to the figures this makes perfect sense. It does not always follow that the figures are correct, but in this instance, the figures confirm what would be considered professional judgement, in that it seems to make perfect common sense on the ground too.

The benefits to the community are clear to understand as laid out in the Action Plan and we concur with these benefits (see above). One aspect of benefit that is overlooked here is that of safety of firefighters. Faster attendance times will lead to increased safety for firefighters; as procedures that keep firefighters safe will be implemented at an earlier stage of the incident.

In order for these things to run smoothly, we hope that there will be sensible and constructive interaction between SF&RS and the FBU to avoid the difficulties that were faced last year, as mentioned earlier.

Despite all these reservations, this proposal will provide a significantly large improvement to the Telford area, for a relatively small financial outlay.



Implementation has been earmarked for September 2007 onwards and audit and review in 2009. This would indicate that plenty of time is being set aside to implement the change. This is a sensible step and we hope that the time is used wisely; as we feel that it will need to be.



Response to Statement 4

Statement made:

The proposal to relocate one wholetime appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale will provide a better service to the local community (quicker response, reduction in fire damage).

Summary of responses

Again this statement received overwhelming support from support from staff – with 92% of RDS and 93% of wholetime staff either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. No wholetime staff disagreed with the statement.

A number of respondents felt that they needed to see the results of the implementation before they could make a final assessment of the benefits. Only one negative comment was received which related to the morale of exiting RDS staff at Tweedale.

Fire Authority's response

The Fire Authority notes all comments made.

The Fire Authority comments made in response to Statement 3 are also relevant here

Monitoring of response performance will form an integral part of this programme to ensure that any changes to the mobilising criteria deliver an improvement to the current level of incident response performance.

Summary table of responses to this statement

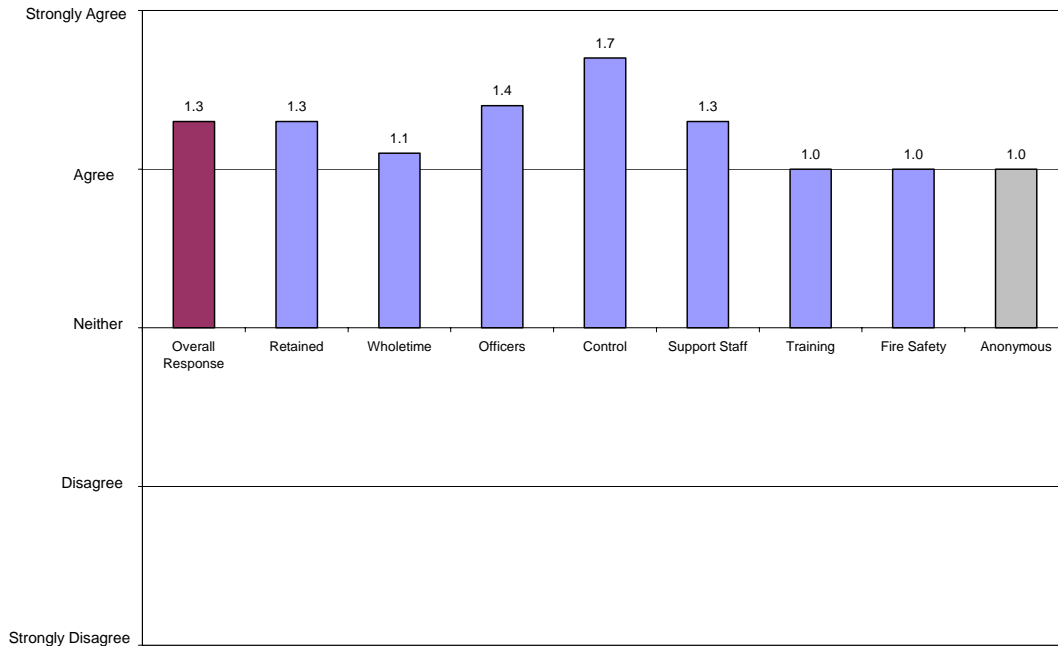
	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	66	36
Agree	102	56
Neither	10	6
Disagree	2	1
Strongly Disagree	1	1
Total	181	100



Detailed summary of responses to Statement 4

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	181	36	56	6	1	1
Retained	100	43	49	5	2	1
Wholetime	47	21	72	6	0	0
Officers	7	43	57	0	0	0
Control	7	71	29	0	0	0
Support Staff	9	33	67	0	0	0
Training	3	0	100	0	0	0
Fire Safety	5	20	60	20	0	0
Anonymous	3	33	33	33	0	0

Averaged Response Graph for Statement 4⁴



⁴ See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.



Comments made in response to IRMP Statement 4

Comments in agreement with statement

- However! The precise details on how the different stations will interact need to be thought through, what knock-on effect will it have on the service provided by other stations.
- Obviously wherever an appliance is situated, response will be quicker in that area.
- However, if you distribute all two-pump station's appliances more equally, this would have the same effect.
- CFS activity can become more localised. A possible one stop shop in a high risk area could be looked at.

Neutral comments

- Feedback over 3-4 years would be required to confirm the above.
- Dependant on developments in other parts of the brigade
- Time will tell
- Will obviously provide a quicker "first appliance" time to some areas but will also provide a slower "second appliance" time to others.
- To provide an appliance of specific nature would, I think, give a better response cover. i.e. a Small Fires Unit 'specialist'.
- Broseley will still be over 8 minutes in parts. Need to study area e.g. access and not rely on software alone.

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- I would imagine that the moral of TW1 crew will drop, having a lot less calls than they are used to,

Comments from the Fire Brigade's Union

See the comments in previous section regarding this proposal



Response to Statement 5

Statement made:

The provision of a Small Fires Unit makes best use of resources and is a positive step in providing a modern and efficient Fire and Rescue Service.

Summary of responses

Overall there is support for this option, with 59% of all respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. However amongst operational staff this is less clear. When the average response for wholetime staff is taken, the result is neutral. A significant number of responses felt it appropriate to await the outcome of the trial before making an assessment of the benefits.

While a number of respondents recognised the benefits in not committing a major appliance to small fires, an equally large number of responses raised concerns about fires having more time to develop or spread and safety of crews.

Several respondents felt that it was unsafe to base response on information given by the caller.

A number of crewing arrangements were suggested by respondents – wholetime or switch crewing with the ALP/TC8.

Fire Authority's response

The Fire Authority notes all comments made.

The Fire Authority recognises that staff have some concerns about the introduction of a 'Small Fires Unit'. However as part of the pilot, strict mobilising protocols will be introduced to minimise the risks to both staff and public. In addition the types of incidents that the Small Fires Unit attends will be strictly defined to minimise the health and safety concerns that staff has raised.

As part of the pilot study different crewing arrangements for the SFU will be trialled in order to establish the most efficient way of delivering the service and also to identify the benefits.

Summary table of responses to this statement

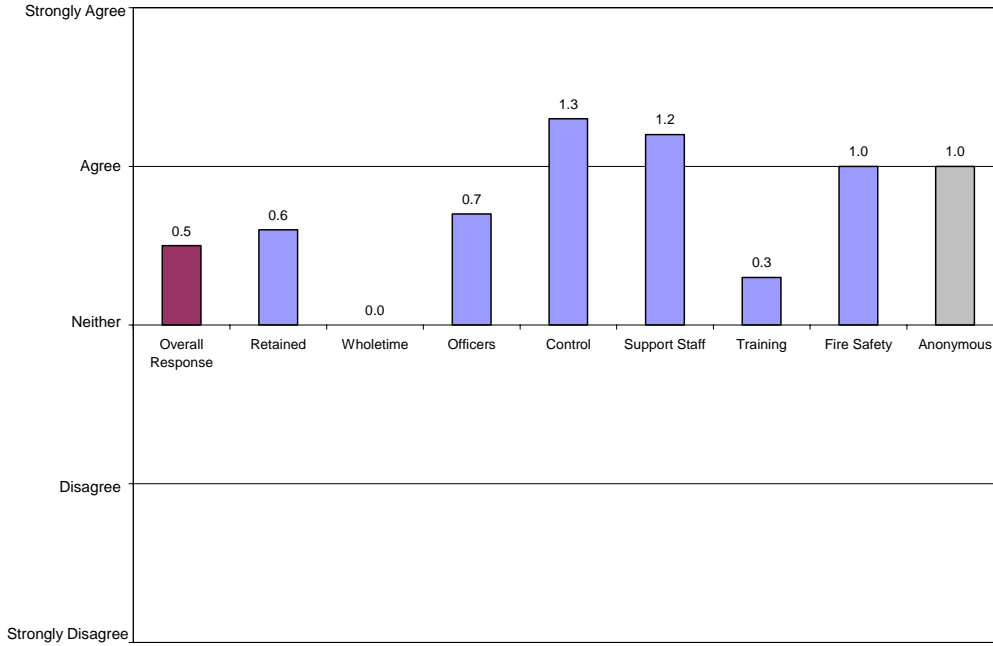
	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	23	13
Agree	82	46
Neither	45	25
Disagree	22	12
Strongly Disagree	8	4
Total	180	100



Detailed summary of responses to Statement 5

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	180	13	46	25	12	4
Retained	100	10	54	23	10	3
Wholetime	46	2	33	35	20	11
Officers	7	43	14	14	29	0
Control	7	57	14	29	0	0
Support Staff	9	33	56	11	0	0
Training	3	0	67	0	33	0
Fire Safety	5	20	60	20	0	0
Anonymous	3	33	33	33	0	0

Averaged Response Graph for Statement 5⁵



⁵ See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.



Comments made in response to Statement 5

Comments in agreement with statement

- Should be used as a dual-purpose vehicle (Crew 4) for Ironbridge access problem.
- With the proviso of further details on crewing and utilisation procedures.
- I agree that a trial period is the best step forward but I will reserve my opinion until later.
- As it will not tie up appliances at minor bin fires etc.
- If crewed by WT Ff's.
- I agree, but I feel that the small fires unit will be more effective if located at Telford Central. Switch crewing with the ALP.
- It is a good idea in principle but it is impossible to say prior to trial period whether it is best use of resources. I do agree it is a positive step in advancing our provision.
- In principle the small fires unit is a good idea, however, we need to see the results of the trial to be able to make judgements as to whether it is making the best use of resources.
- Should be manned by wholetime possibly switch crewing with special appliance. I feel Tweedale are having this to soften the blow of losing calls.
- The small fires unit pilot should provide a platform to address the problems associated with the restricted access to properties in some parts of Ironbridge.
- I agree providing that the situation in Ironbridge is taken into account when purchasing a new small vehicle.
- As long as stringent mobilising procedure is adhered to.
- Possibly. The plan to perform a comprehensive 'pilot' scheme is wise as most people could not predict possible 'knock on' effects.
- It is a good cost effective idea but should be crewed by switch manning the ALP crew at TC then alert 2 retained to come in and ride TC8 moving 2 Telford personnel onto ALP
- Should be crewed by wholetime staff.
- Small unit to be crewed by wholetime staff (where there are surplus at any of the stations), both day and night - Whilst not attending incidents they can carry out CFS activities.

Neutral comments

- Providing more than 2 people staff it. Will prevent lone working.
- Not enough evidence available to quantify this statement until the pilot project provides evidence.
- My suggestion would be don't sign it as "small fires unit" based on the anecdote of the Merseyside SFU - Kids will set fires larger.
- Will wait until the outcome of the trial period
- We do not know yet. I thought there was a trial taking place to see if it does make use of resources.
- Unsure if it will be effective. Be interesting to see how trial would go first
- Unsure at present as there is insufficient evidence at this moment in time
- All depends on who staffs the appliance and how many personnel man/staff the appliance. Must be minimum of 3 (two on branch - personal safety/security) Must be thought out
- Decision out until pilot scheme has been run



- I would like to see the outcome of the pilot before a firm view can be given.
- Must ensure crew are not put at extra risk by only sending a crew of 3
- Why is a different way of delivering a service classed as 'modern'
- This will only be established by the trial.
- Unless VERY strictly controlled, reducing the number of firefighters attending an incident may lead to personnel being put in positions of danger and/or morally difficult predicaments. (As discussed).
- Will await results of trial.
- I'm split can see the advantage of unit but would rather see an appliance turned up if I had a problem
- Due to the lack of information being received from Brigades that have taken part in such schemes, I feel that to take a positive or negative viewpoint would be ill informed.

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- This will lead to management issues regarding the availability of the normal appliance
- May cause problems with larger arson issues.
- Not very relevant to current L4P.
- Health and Safety /Cost. Whole station will have to be alerted for two ff to attend one incident
- Most rubbish and bush fires require copious amounts of water due to deep seated. With L4P carrying little water and only 2 personnel I can see a number of problems i.e. vehicle being left unattended whilst dealing with fires
- Still concerned at its turnout as only responding vehicle to incidents which may require greater resources.
- Directly opposes the statement of no. 4. [better service, quick response to the community]
- Large fires start from small fires; this could put Ff's at risk! You cannot rely on information from the public. Better safe than sorry.
- Potential for disaster because of miss-information from caller or control
- Due to capabilities/safety
- I think a small fires unit would not have enough crew to deal with grass fires in the summer, especially after the summer this year.
- Firefighters are vulnerable to attack, when only in 2s. Also unable to act if incident escalates or is too large for them. Will not produce any financial saving. A pointless exercise.
- This, given the area in which it is proposed, has the potential to endanger the safety of firefighters.
- With the Control going regional and loss of local knowledge, it's a massive call for the person at Control to mobilise it.
- How do we know that?
- Small units = less crews, less equipment, more risk to personnel??
- The sending of limited resources on the 1st attendance could prove to be dangerous to firefighters for H&S reasons, i.e. manpower and equipment and dangerous development of the incident.
- Why not use TC ALP crew whilst on test period. Use of Tweedale seems to be sweetener to offset truck loss.
- H&S issues - safety of crew 3 person crew would be better



- I think this will have a negative response from the public and will not deter small fire arsonists. I also believe there is too much ambiguity between a fire and a small fire and it may backfire.
- As this is a rural area, a larger area is covered by one appliance and a smaller one may not be beneficial.
- Reduced attendance times, more responsibility for Ff's. Public will see local appliance not responding to local fire, while the unit attends from TW. Impact on retained
- I cannot see a lot of benefit using retained staff to attend certain jobs when wholtime firefighters are free to respond to the incidents, not to mention the extra cost. I do not feel that "small fires" interrupt our training or essential work enough to warrant a small fires unit. Yes, we do get called out and interrupted but not always to small fires. The cost of setting up and running the small fires unit would not be proportional to the amount of hours it is used, (i.e. it was proposed it may only be used during daylight hours). Also, is there enough supporting evidence to say we are not reaching our targets in CFS and training due to interruption by small fires? As a member of our retained staff I think the addition of extra calls (expected 200 - 300) would put a lot of extra strain on family life and is contrary to the family friendly working directive. I understand some have expressed an interest but not all can be expected to be so keen especially after a few years of it running.

Comments from the Fire Brigade's Union

Although we believe that SF&RS is piloting this scheme for honourable reasons, i.e. that it is a genuine attempt to provide better fire cover (but also to use Tweedale Retained Duty Staff to greatest advantage as well, due to their possible reduction in calls); we perceive the scheme with scepticism.

This scepticism arises from the fact, rightly stated in the document, that other services across the country are introducing similar schemes. Elsewhere in the country we feel it is little coincidence that where these schemes (in many different, but always similar, guises) have been introduced; much industrial unrest has followed.

We explained in last year's response to IRMP about the pressure on firefighters to act at an incident when the lag between appliances becomes too great:

Similarly, there may well be occasion where the Small Fire Unit is called to an incident which is too large for them to cope with. The Standard Operating Procedures, against which Firefighters are trained, can then not be put into practice, leaving them with a lack of resources being available when they are most needed; in the early stages of the incident. The further delays in the arrival of fire appliances will then result in risks being taken over and above those planned for under these Standard Operating Procedures and will result in firefighter injury.

As with the previous proposal, the consultation for this pilot has been handled well and sensitively by involving staff at Tweedale and using an operational staff focus group in the early stages of the construction of the IRMP.

In conjunction with the previous proposal, further investigation perhaps needs to be carried out on the new station grounds in the Telford area. We suggest that changes to



the second and third appliance attendances to incidents may not significantly reduce the number of callouts that RDS at Tweedale currently receive. In fact the opposite may be true. In which case, the service may need to look at the burden of extra calls to those staff that a Small Fires Unit may bring.



Response to Statement 6

Statement made:

The provision of a Small Fires Unit will improve the level of service delivery to the local community in the Telford area.

Summary of responses

Again as in the response to the previous statement there is overall support for this statement (61%). There is a slightly negative average response from wholetime staff, as opposed to a slightly positive response from RDS staff. There is much stronger support for the proposal amongst officers, control and support staff.

As in the previous responses a number of staff wanted to await the outcome of any trial before making a judgement on whether it would provide an improvement in service delivery. This statement attracted significantly more negative than positive comments for this proposal.

Fire Authority's response

The Fire Authority notes all comments made.

The Fire Authority comments made in response to Statement 5 are also relevant here.

As part of the implementation project, fire control operators will be involved in developing the decision making criteria for the mobilisation of the SFU, ensuring that an appropriate risk assessment methodology has been followed. The primary role for the RDS staff at Tweedale will remain the crewing of the major appliance. Crewing arrangements for the pilot SFU will be designed around this principle, and will not jeopardise the availability of the main pump 'TW1'.

Summary table of responses to this statement

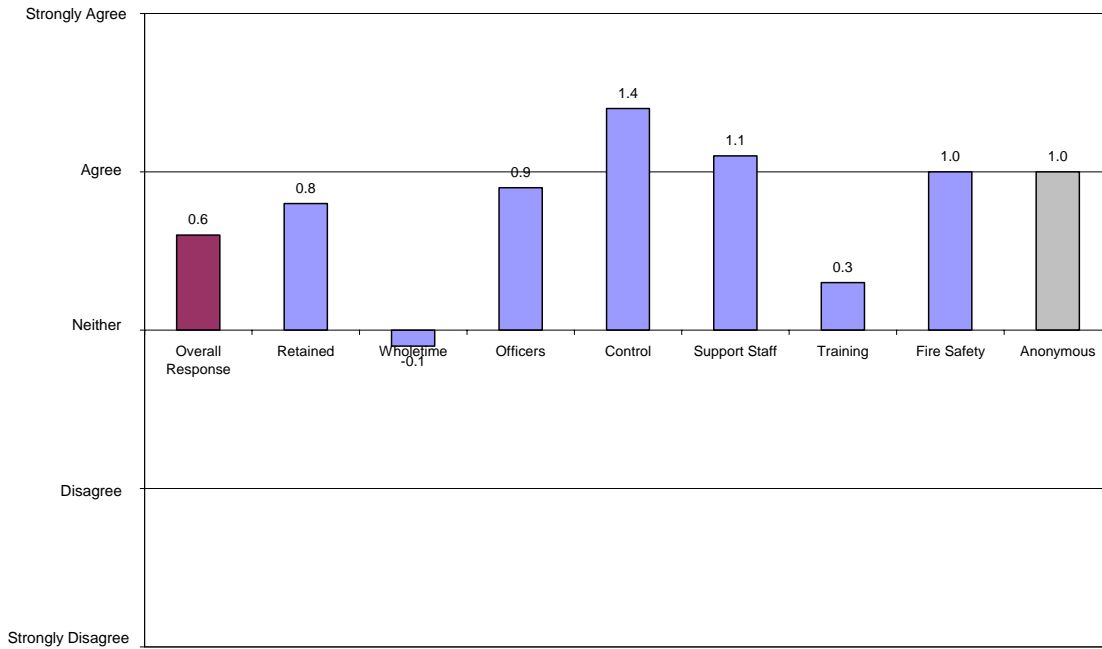
	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	27	15
Agree	83	46
Neither	43	24
Disagree	22	12
Strongly Disagree	4	2
Total	179	100



Detailed summary of responses to Statement 6

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	179	15	46	24	12	2
Retained	99	15	56	20	8	1
Wholetime	46	0	33	35	26	7
Officers	7	43	14	29	14	0
Control	7	71	0	29	0	0
Support Staff	9	22	67	11	0	0
Training	3	0	67	0	33	0
Fire Safety	5	20	60	20	0	0
Anonymous	3	33	33	33	0	0

Averaged Response Graph for Statement 6⁶



⁶ See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.



Response Comments made in response to Statement 6

Comments in agreement with statement

- With the proviso of further details on crewing and utilisation procedures.
- The theory behind the SFU is sound but again a practical trial period is needed before assessing the financial and resources implications.
- As stated previously the ALP crew could switch staff the appliance after 10.00pm or sooner if needed
- For reasons already stated, but yes why not take it to the community and see how they feel about a small fires unit.
- The area is very busy and would benefit from the use of a smaller appliance.

Neutral comments

- Dependant on trials.
- Will wait until the outcome of the trial period.
- May be worse if not 4WD and larger than L4P.
- This may possibly be the case. However, again we must reserve judgement until the trial has taken place.
- Unsure at present as there is insufficient evidence at this moment in time
- I don't feel I can make a valued judgement until observing results of a pilot study.
- Depending on type of incident
- What will the impact i.e. upon the other resources at TW
- This will only be established by the trial
- Possibly. The plan to perform a comprehensive 'pilot' scheme is wise as most people could not predict possible 'knock on' effects.
- Only if we can guarantee sufficient staffing to crew both appliances
- Limited use - daytime only when wholetime on CFS work. Tweedale retained main appliance would more than likely be off the run while the small fire unit was out, due to insufficient daytime manning. May as well use main appliance and keep it on the run

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- Again unsure at this moment. Worried that small fires soon become big and other things become involved
- As was discussed, large fires always start as small fires. Merseyside case study - Small fire arson progressed to large fire arson
- May cause problems with larger arson issues, multiple fires or increased amount.
- Longer response time, unable to deal with certain incidents. Retained appliance busiest in brigade, not best use of resources, switch crew with ALP.
- ONLY! When they are placed where they are needed the most and not as a sweetener to retained crews at TW. The use of the vehicle for other things and establishing crewing arrangements will decide whether service level will improve.
- The fact that the trial is taking place at TW, which has the least small fires, will NOT improve the service



- delivery to local community of the Telford areas, which have far more small fires.
- Difficult to assess. Potential for lowering in level of service currently provided if caller's information does not match incident.
 - The current provision deals with incidents very well and I believe the SFU with not better this
 - I feel this is a scheme to keep Tweedale retained staff happy after loosing some fire calls
 - Don't believe they will improve the delivery any better than what we already do
 - Not practical
 - Will have little or no benefit. The cost is not worth the risk. It will not increase response times or extinguish fires more effectively, therefore will be no improvement to the local community.
 - See previous answer No. 5.
 - Big fires start as small, if this is a financial experiment, it could go wrong.
 - Is this is a long term financial reason?
 - With the Control going regional and loss of local knowledge, it's a massive call for the person at Control to mobilise it.
 - How can that be answered without evidence.
 - Small units = less crews, less equipment, more risk to personnel??
 - I don't feel it will improve the service at all. A reduction in cost maybe, but not service.
 - Small fires unit - if not used an appliance would be sent = service to community would not be affected
 - Again split I consider it would be advantage dealing with nuisance calls would not be the same as an appliance turning up at an incident
 - The level of service will be the same, if anything worse, surely more staff and a larger appliance is better service. A lot of rubbish fires we visit are bonfires and 2 people in a van is not enough. If the L4 is calling for back up surely this is not better
 - I don't think there will be an improvement unless it is manned by wholtime personnel due to response times and the possibility of inc escalating
 - If at TW long way from north Telford, more chance of injury to public.
 - No again, we are not interrupted that often. As for tying up appliances on small fires stopping them from responding to more serious incidents, can be handled and managed effectively with intelligent mobilising. (Maybe taken off one job to respond to another). The service we provide to the public may also be affected in a negative way by the mobilising of a small fires unit to an incident that needs more resources. We have all been to "bin fires" that turn out to be wheelie bins against someone's house and/or grass fires that are actually car or caravan fires. It happens way too often to risk covering these incidents with minimised staffing equipment, leading to dangerous escalation of the incident and great embarrassment to the SFRS.

Comments made by the Fire Brigade's Union

Here lies the real crux of the matter. Is there any real benefit identified to the community?



Firstly, the supposition that small nuisance fires prevents fire engines from being available for more serious life threatening incidents. This is overly optimistic as a direct benefit of this pilot. Fire engines mobile to suspected “nuisance calls” have in the past been redirected whilst on route to the call, when a more serious call has been received. Also when in attendance of a small fire, the Officer in Charge (OIC) is able to make the fire appliance available from the fire ground. By definition of a small fire therefore, there is little if no danger, that a serious incident is going to be missed.

Secondly, the contention that it will reduce the disruption to crews engaged in risk reduction activities has more credence. But this also has limits to how often this is actually going to be of any benefit. How will this pilot work if RDS are to crew the unit and crews at the wholetime stations happen to be available? Whether the pilot runs successfully will need to be measured very carefully against any real benefits.

The financial benefits must also be considered, but that is also difficult to see how it can be measured as more efficient than what is already in place. Balancing the cost of sending RDS on the unit into wholetime areas against a crew of 5 RDS on a fire engine in the Tweedale area is puzzling as the previous proposal puts a wholetime appliance at Tweedale. We recognise that the document is only looking at the period of the pilot; but it must also be measured against aspirations of the long term configuration. We would suggest that the financial saving, if any, will be negligible.



Response to Question 7

Statement made:

A 20 minute attendance time would be appropriate for small fires in the open (grass, bins and rubbish), where no life or property is at risk.

Summary of responses

With only 56% of respondents ‘Agreeing’ or ‘Strongly Agreeing’ there is less support for this statement than for the introduction of a Small Fires Unit. There is a reduction in support from both wholetime and RDS staff for the proposal.

The main concern of respondents is that the caller may not give sufficient information and/or the incident would escalate before the arrival of the fire service. A number of respondents were concerned that public perception would be this is a reduction in service level.

Fire Authority’s response

The Fire Authority notes all comments made.

The Authority recognises the concerns that staff have with this proposal. It particularly notes the comments in respect of the possible escalation of an incident prior to arrival. There are currently no attendance standards for these types of fires. To ensure that the pilot study is operated in a safe and effective manner the Authority will implement a maximum 20 minutes response to any incident that the SFU is utilised for.

Summary table of responses to this statement

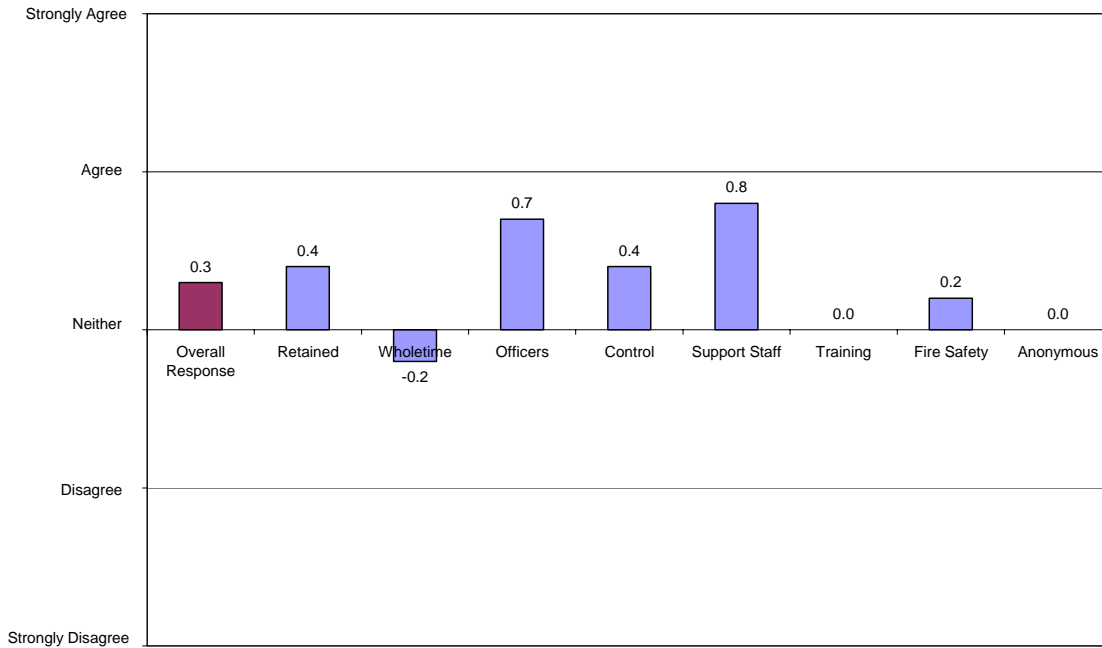
	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	17	9
Agree	85	47
Neither	20	11
Disagree	46	26
Strongly Disagree	11	6
Total	179	100



Detailed summary of responses to Question 7

	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	179	9	47	11	26	6
Retained	99	13	49	10	22	5
Wholetime	46	2	37	9	46	7
Officers	7	29	43	14	0	14
Control	7	14	43	14	29	0
Support Staff	9	0	78	22	0	0
Training	3	0	67	0	0	33
Fire Safety	5	0	60	20	0	20
Anonymous	3	0	33	33	33	0

Averaged Response Graph for Question 7



Response Comments made in response to Question 7

Comments in agreement with statement

- Providing Control staffs extract all suitable information prior to mobilising a Small Fires Unit. If they don't then the SFU could have to make up on arrival!
- Can you guarantee it is in the open, if so, yes.
- As long as there is no chance of spread.
- If bins or rubbish, would be out in 20 minutes anyway.
- Only if fire is 100% one of the above
- I am comfortable with this proposal as it is broad spectrum and it may lead to a further downgrading of other incidents in the long term, even though this is clearly not the intention at present.
- Depending on type of incident and the possibility of escalation. Needs to be measured over period of time
- As long as there is no doubt that fire could spread to property or put public at risk
- I agree in most cases this would be appropriate, however, the rapid growth of a fire in 20 mins could potentially put property and life at risk.
- As mentioned at the presentation, important to obtain all relevant information before responding as small fire may have 'knock on' effects.
- Information provided by Control will give a good indicator as to the situation status.

Neutral comments

- Not sure about grass fires - delay may lead to a significant escalation of the incident
- Dependant on trials
- May need to 'sold' to the public.
- Though after 20 minutes the fires themselves may well be hard to find with crews spending more time searching than extinguishing.
- Not sure.
- The big reservation I have with this is that Control must question callers further than they do at the moment to establish the nature of the call carefully before deploying the small fires unit.
- Who would make the decision on the size and condition of the fire?
- Weather conditions need to be taken into consideration as dry conditions and strong winds will lead to rapid fire spread which could involve properties and have the potential to become life risks.
- Who decides what is appropriate?
- My only reservation with regards to this time span relates to the way (negative), that we could be viewed by the general public and the possibility that we are leaving ourselves open to criticism if anything goes wrong, due to longer/delayed turnout.

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- However, public perception is that the Fire Service respond quicker and will need to be carefully implemented and advertised.
- Who deals with this, the caller?



- It is possible that the incident could escalate.
- A possibility of dangerous escalation of the incident. Also the estimation of the size of fire by the public.
- Incident may develop.
- May develop into a large incident.
- Always a possibility of it getting bigger.
- Small fires could escalate quickly as they occur in dry spells when rapid spread is possible.
- Always a possibility of the incident getting worse.
- It could be large fire if 20 minutes to attend.
- Always possible the incident may escalate.
- Further fire spread could develop within 20 minutes.
- I am sceptical that members of the public will be able to risk assess as to what is a small fire and what will still be a small fire in 20 minutes, Even with intelligent integration from Control.
- Depends, a delay may turn a small incident into something larger.
- A small fire has the potential to escalate. Control may not always get complete details of incident. An emergency response as soon as possible will ensure that additional resources can be ordered on if required.
- Time for small fires to escalate and anti social behaviour to go.
- Is the person making the call qualified to say if it's small and not a danger.
- Because incidents can escalate and information given to Control may not be precise.
- A small fire in a "skip" or a plastic bin, or pile of rubbish in Wellington town centre or any other local community giving off toxic gases, I think the locals would soon be on the complaints trail.
- Many small fires are actually larger fires - important Control gain as much information as possible, especially when call is from children.
- All fires start off small.
- Refer - Merseyside case study. During the wait for attendance, members of the public will try to intervene and may cause harm to themselves.
- It would allow the fire more time to spread, therefore requiring additional appliances
- Difficulty in control staff gleaning adequate information as to potential for fire spread, and risk to personnel. Public opinion likely to show concern
- Very dangerous area to be considering. Every fire should be dealt with ASAP and no matter how you mobilise you will end up getting caught out.
- They still have the risk to spread
- Again I worry, bins can be next to houses or cars
- Grass fires can cause a lot of damage to areas of outstanding beauty and wildlife and I don't think 20 minutes attendance is acceptable
- I believe in the eyes of the public this will be unacceptable and will lose some of our respect as an EMERGENCY SERVICE
- Can we rely on the public to supply the correct information?
- The extremely dry summer this year proved to be a problem with grass fires. Town park had a large area of grass on fire, a 20 minute attendance time could have seen an increase in the area on fire and



increase in resources

- Especially in summer months, 20 minutes can be the difference between a bucket of water and a 3/4 pump attendance.
- Fire spread. Earlier attendance will reduce risk to firefighters as they will intervene at an earlier stage in the development of the fire.
- If there were not enough crew after small fire unit went out, we couldn't man major.
- Some small fires have turned into large ones. Is this the direction we need to go?
- 20 minutes is a long time when you are unsure of the size of the fire.
- If the response was to be a small fires unit, a reduction in the attendance of personnel and equipment, along with increased attendance time may prove a high risk strategy.
- In 20 minutes a "small fire" could quite easily be an extremely "large fire".
- Extra calls to Control. Public perception, possible spread.
- 20 minutes too long. Control questioning must be more detailed. Small fires - 20 minutes, later larger fire.
- Mainly due to a worry over public perception of the level/quality of service. Twenty minutes (although this is a maximum) is a long time for a member of the public to be waiting (as they often do), if they feel the need to wait.
- Because the potential of small fires to grow with such a delay is high.
- Again, as already stated, a time delay could prove to make the small incident into a far larger one if not dealt with quickly and H&S reasons.
- People may be tempted to take risks to extinguish fires if the FS are 'too slow'.
- Bins, could be attached to a building but not on turnout printer
- A bin fire against a property can develop into a serious fire and grass fires can spread a long way in 20 minutes
- Recently I attended an incident that came through as a rubbish fire on attending it was a bin next to a front door this became a house fire person reported. Also grass fires spread rapidly it we can deal with it quickly then a make up would not be require
- Incident can quickly change e.g. grass fires spreading bin fires spread to property. The attendance needs to be quicker than 20 minutes
- No can guarantee there is no risk until an appliance arrives.
- A fire is always a danger no matter how small.
- It could turn into something more serious.
- What effect will this have on wildlife in the countryside?
- 20 minutes is not an acceptable time to allow a fire to burn unattended. Although there may be minimal or no risk to life or property, there certainly is a risk of dangerous escalation or injury to persons, either from kids being totally unaware of the dangers, to persons feeling obliged to tackle the fire as fire crews are not yet in attendance. If this unit is to respond to small bin fires only, I am sure that after 20 minutes the fire would already be out by natural means, or by public intervention. Hence making the turnout of the small fires unit a complete waste of resources and contrary to what we are trying to achieve.



Comments made by the Fire Brigade's Union

See the comments in previous section [7] regarding this proposal



Response to Statement 8

Statement made:

Attendance standards should be set for each of the following types of life risk incidents:

- Rescue from water;
- Rescue from height;
- Rescue from equipment/machinery.

Summary of responses

Overall there is support (91%) for the introduction of additional response standards for these other life risk incidents. The area most supported is the introduction of response standards for water rescue incidents (93%) against 89% for incidents at height.

Individually all staff groups gave support for these standards.

Fire Authority's response

The Fire Authority notes all comments made.

The annual number of incidents involving rescue from height or machinery is significantly lower than that involving water, and as such it would be difficult to produce any meaningful results with such a small number of incidents. However SFRS will always treat these incidents as a potential risk to life, and provide an emergency response as quickly as possible on all occasions.

While there is significant support from staff for the introduction of these standards, the Authority is conscious that there remains a significant amount of development work that is required before such standards could be introduced i.e. the location and deployment of resources. It is therefore proposed that further work is carried out specifically in respect of response standards for water incidents.

Summary table of responses to this statement

Water	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	74	45
Agree	81	49
Neither	5	3
Disagree	2	1
Strongly Disagree	2	1
Total	164	100

Height	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	38	24
Agree	104	65
Neither	13	8
Disagree	4	2
Strongly Disagree	2	1
Total	161	100

Equipment/Machinery	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	60	37
Agree	86	53
Neither	10	6
Disagree	2	1
Strongly Disagree	3	2
Total	161	100

Overall	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	172	35
Agree	271	56
Neither	28	6
Disagree	8	2
Strongly Disagree	7	1
Total	486	100



Detailed summary of responses to Statement 8

Water	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	164	45	49	3	1	1
Retained	86	43	53	3	0	0
Wholetime	44	52	41	0	5	2
Officers	7	14	86	0	0	0
Control	7	43	57	0	0	0
Support Staff	7	71	14	14	0	0
Training	3	67	33	0	0	0
Fire Safety	5	20	60	0	0	20
Anonymous	5	40	40	20	0	0

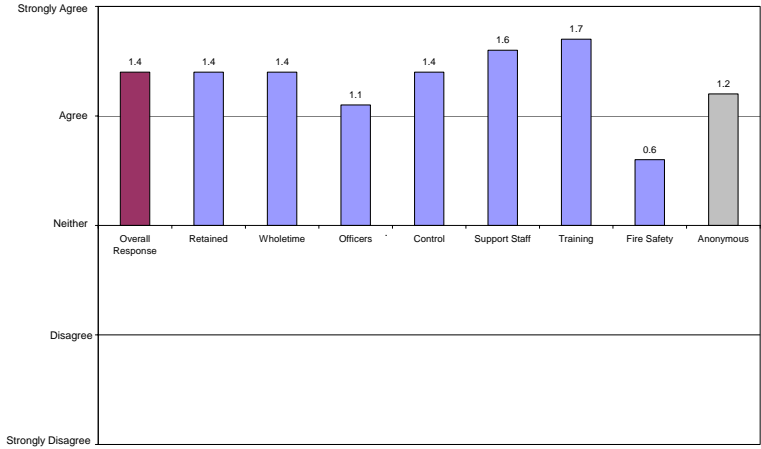
Height	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	161	24	65	8	2	1
Retained	83	20	69	11	0	0
Wholetime	44	34	52	5	7	2
Officers	7	0	100	0	0	0
Control	7	14	57	14	14	0
Support Staff	7	29	57	14	0	0
Training	3	33	67	0	0	0
Fire Safety	5	20	60	0	0	20
Anonymous	5	20	80	0	0	0

Equipment Machinery	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	161	37	53	6	1	2
Retained	83	36	57	7	0	0
Wholetime	44	43	45	5	5	2
Officers	7	0	100	0	0	0
Control	7	57	29	14	0	0
Support Staff	7	29	43	14	0	14
Training	3	33	67	0	0	0
Fire Safety	5	20	60	0	0	20
Anonymous	5	60	40	0	0	0

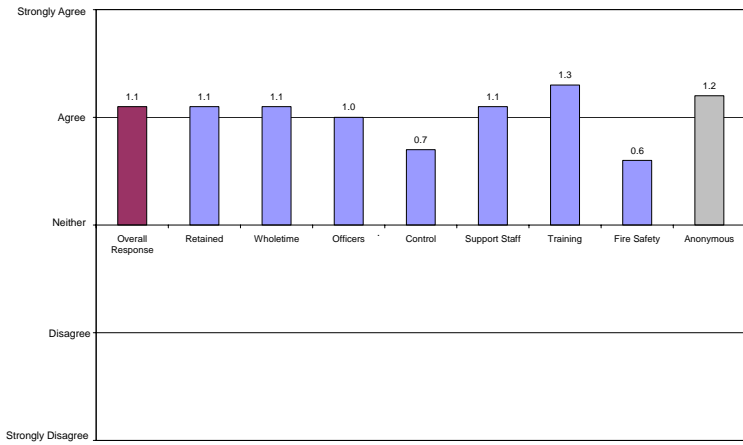


Averaged Response Graph for Statement 8⁷

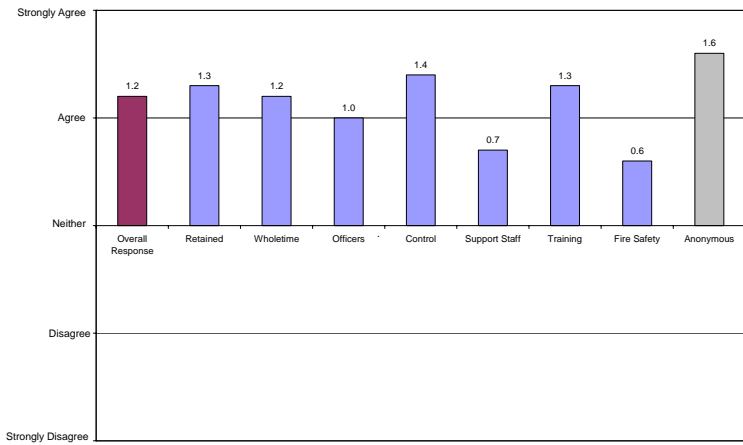
Water



Height



Equipment/Machinery



⁷ See appendix A for how these figures were calculated.



Comments made by the Fire Brigade's Union

This is a larger piece of work than it first appears. Credit to SF&RS for tackling these issues as there will be a diverse opinion on many of the different facets included in the range of this subject.

One question posed in the Evidence Document is whether other life risk incidents should affect the same response standard as life risk incidents of fire and RTC. We would expect that the common sense answer to this is largely that any life incident should attract the same standard if it is within our remit to attend in the first place.

It is clear that the diverse range of incidents that the fire service attends will always create the need for more training in the many areas. It is incumbent on the service to ensure that all staff are competent in these areas and that there is enough quality time and resources set aside to maintain high standards.

The overriding impression of the initial figures shown for this Action Plan is that there is a requirement to strengthen our Line Safety and Water Safety provisions. It appears that more widespread training is going to be needed in the Water Safety provision as a matter of urgency.



Response to Question 9

Statement made:

Should the Authority use the same response times as have been set for Life Risk Fires and RTC's (i.e. 10,15 and 20 minutes for high, medium and low risk areas respectively) for incidents identified in question 8?

Summary of responses

There is overwhelming support for the introduction of attendance standards for other life risk incidents. Only two respondents gave negative comments, one of which highlighted the difficulty we would encounter in rural areas.

Fire Authority's response

The Fire Authority notes all comments made.

The Fire Authority comments made in response to Statement 8 are also relevant here.

Summary table of responses to this statement

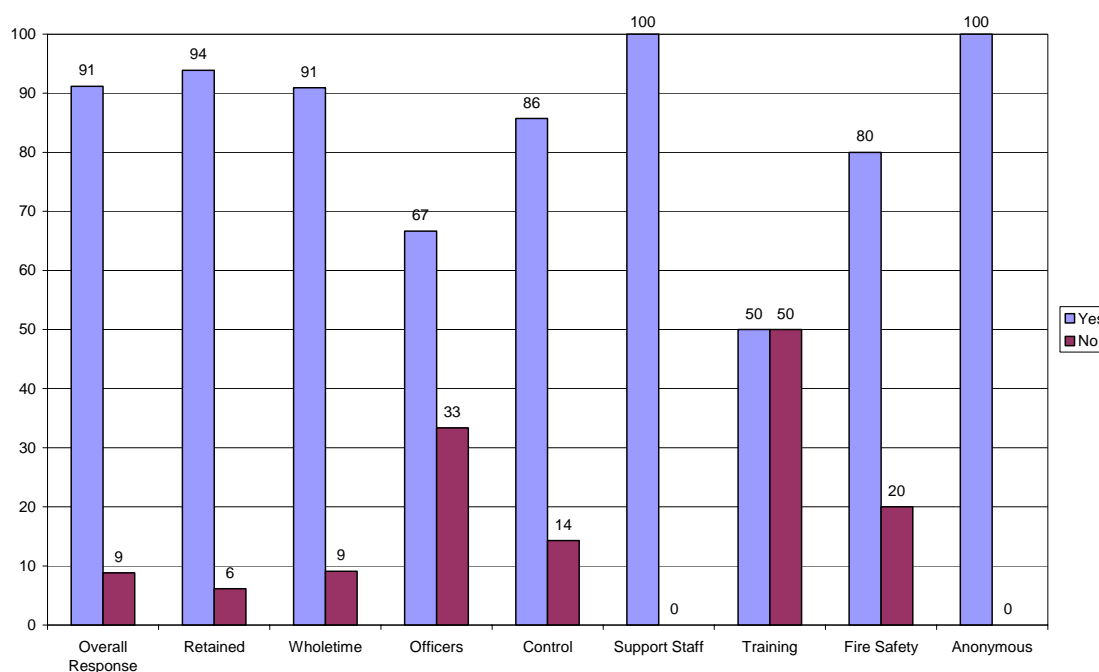
	Count	Total %
Yes	155	91
No	15	9
Total	170	100



Detailed summary of responses to Question 9

	Number of responses	Yes %	No %
Overall Response	170	91	9
Retained	98	94	6
Wholetime	44	91	9
Officers	6	67	33
Control	7	86	14
Support Staff	5	100	0
Training	2	50	50
Fire Safety	5	80	20
Anonymous	3	100	0

Averaged Response Graph for Question 9



Response Comments made in response to Question 9

Comments in agreement with statement

- Life risk should always attract a minimum response time, regardless of geography. 10 minutes could be the difference between injury and death.
- These attendance times should be calculated carefully based on the relative incidents. To simply say "One in 10 minutes" as is done with fires to RTC's, could result in crews arriving at an incident in no way prepared, equipped or trained to deal with that incident. Sending an ill-equipped crew with the instruction "stabilise the situation" will probably, in time, result in danger to crews/members of the public due this deficiency.



- Response times need to be set for water rescue and rescue from equipment/machinery, as these are life risk. Rescue from height is not really life risk as person likely to have got to the height them selves, I don't really consider this a life risk so response time NOT required.
- Life risk incidents should be the same but not lift rescues/height rescues etc unless the call dictates a more speedy response.

Neutral comments

- Water rescue in/around SY - I make sure any SRT personnel are full kitted in PPE before leaving station. Although this is time consuming, it is better than turning up at an incident and having SRT trying to dressed with incident pressures "on top" of you and SRT.
- Unable to comment as totally dependant on situation.
- I need further information to remark on this ideally the answer should be YES.
- Each incident should be assessed at first call to FB as to potential severity to life risk
- Not sure
- I do not fully understand the implications that could arise from these changes, so am unable to answer the question.
- Get there as quickly and safely as possible.
- Response time alone is not the only consideration. The response must include sufficient personnel trained to an appropriate level and suitably equipped. Attendance standard must take into consideration incident type.
- Would it be better to set response time based on the type of incident rather than the risk area. E.g. does rescue from machinery mostly occur in rural areas (Agric.) which should be (presumably) the slowest response?
- Turn out time should be the same no matter what the risk.
- Response times need to take into account the complex nature of the incident i.e. water rescues require a longer time to assemble appropriate equipment etc.

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- The question appears erroneous! If a LIFE is at risk it must by default be HIGH priority regardless of location.
- Remote areas may prevent.

Comments made by the Fire Brigade's Union

See the comments in previous section [8] regarding this proposal



Response to Statement 10

Statement made:

The use of 'Blue Lights and Audible warnings' should not be used when proceeding to the following type of non-life risk incidents;

- a. Small fires in the open with no risk to property
- b. Animal Rescues
- c. Gas Leaks
- d. Release from Lift (not trapped in mechanism)
- e. Domestic property flooding
- f. Commercial property flooding
- g. Lock in/out of property
- h. RTC services only
- i. Removal or release from objects (e.g. rings handcuffs etc.)

Summary of responses

Overall there is limited support for these changes, in ranked order of support these are;

	Percentage	
	Agree	Disagree
Removal/Release	69	19
Lock in/out	68	18
Commercial Flood	52	36
Domestic Flood	48	41
Small Fires	44	45
Lifts	42	41
Animal Rescue	36	52
RTC Services only	34	53
Gas Leaks	28	75

Fire Authority's response

The Fire Authority notes all comments made.

The Fire Authority understands the concerns of staff on this issue, many of which were expressed during consultation presentations. While it is recognised that the number of accidents involving appliances whilst responding to incidents is low; and our drivers are trained to a high standard, it would be remiss of the Authority not to take steps to reduce the risks, where appropriate, in this area.

In view of the level of support from staff for modifying the way we respond to 'Lock in/out of property' or 'Release or Removal' from objects where life is not at risk, the Authority is minded to make these changes to the way it responds to these incidents. The remainder of the incidents looked at received a less positive response and no changes are proposed.

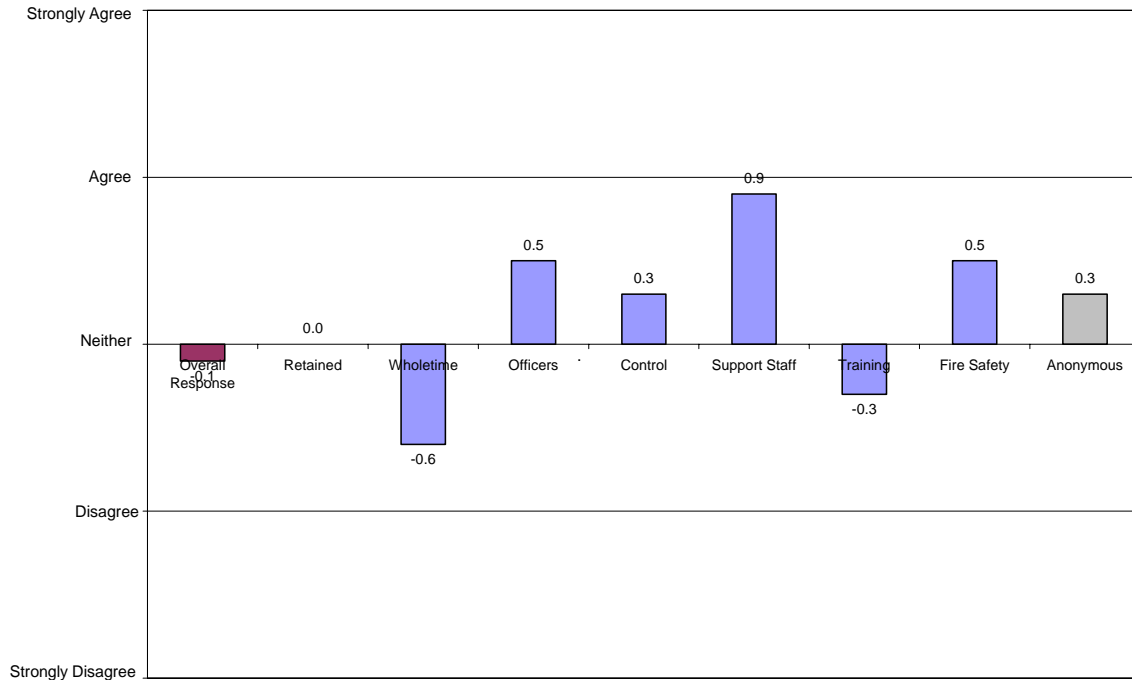


Summary table of responses to this statement

Small fires

Small Fires	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	16	9
Agree	60	35
Neither	18	11
Disagree	49	29
Strongly Disagree	28	16
Total	171	100

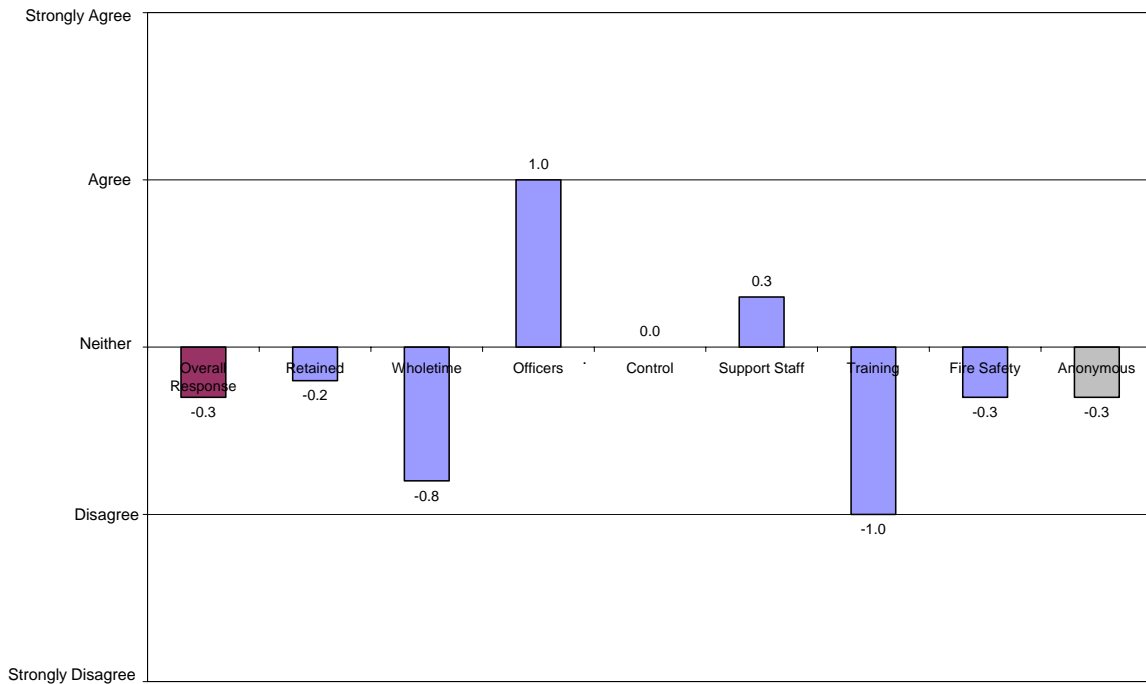
Small Fires	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	171	9	35	11	29	16
Retained	97	11	34	9	32	13
Wholetime	42	7	17	14	33	29
Officers	6	0	83	0	0	17
Control	7	0	57	14	29	0
Support Staff	8	0	88	13	0	0
Training	3	0	33	0	67	0
Fire Safety	4	25	50	0	0	25
Anonymous	4	25	25	25	0	25



Animal rescue

Animal Rescue	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	10	6
Agree	51	30
Neither	22	13
Disagree	58	34
Strongly Disagree	31	18
Total	172	100

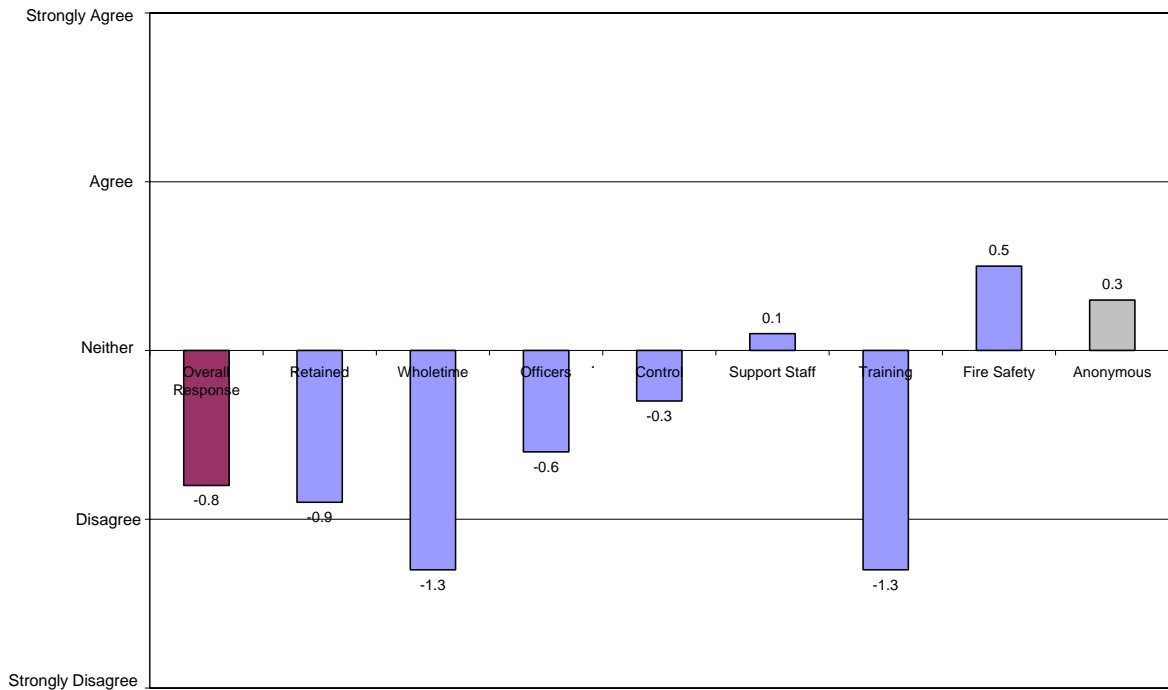
Animal Rescue	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	172	6	30	13	34	18
Retained	97	7	31	11	34	16
Wholetime	42	0	19	14	38	29
Officers	7	29	57	0	14	0
Control	7	0	57	0	29	14
Support Staff	8	0	50	25	25	0
Training	3	0	0	0	100	0
Fire Safety	4	25	0	25	25	25
Anonymous	4	0	25	50	0	25



Gas Leaks

Gas Leaks	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	6	4
Agree	24	14
Neither	13	8
Disagree	74	44
Strongly Disagree	53	31
Total	170	100

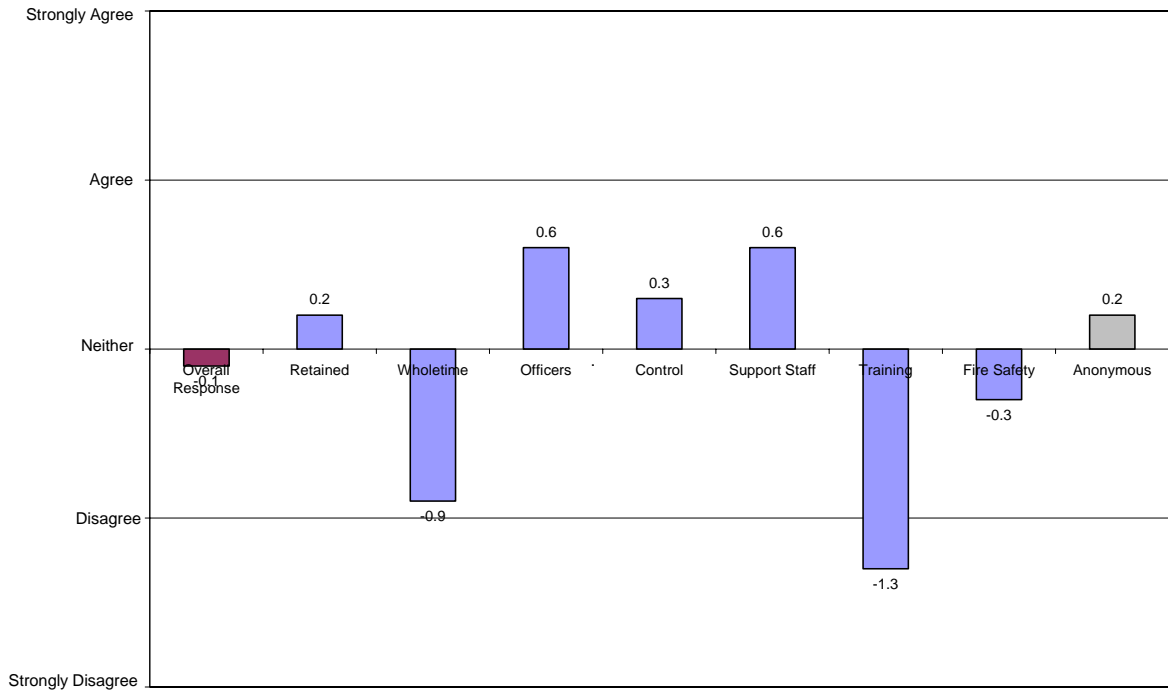
Gas Leaks	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	170	4	14	8	44	31
Retained	95	4	15	3	43	35
Wholetime	42	0	2	7	52	38
Officers	7	0	14	29	43	14
Control	7	0	43	0	43	14
Support Staff	8	0	38	38	25	0
Training	3	0	0	0	67	33
Fire Safety	4	25	25	25	25	0
Anonymous	4	25	25	25	0	25



Release from Lifts

Release from lift	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	11	6
Agree	62	36
Neither	28	16
Disagree	47	27
Strongly Disagree	24	14
Total	172	100

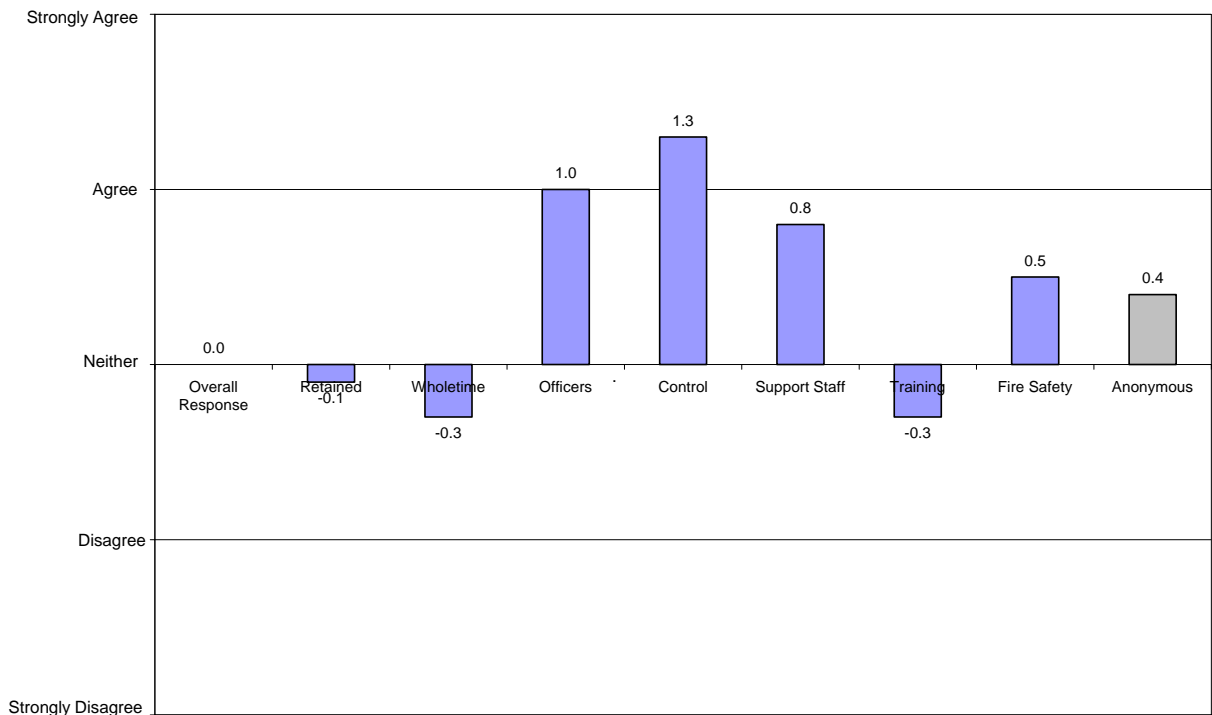
Release from Lifts	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	172	6	36	16	27	14
Retained	96	6	45	17	26	6
Wholetime	42	2	12	17	36	33
Officers	8	13	63	13	0	13
Control	7	14	43	0	43	0
Support Staff	7	0	71	14	14	0
Training	3	0	0	0	67	33
Fire Safety	4	25	0	25	25	25
Anonymous	5	20	20	40	0	20



Domestic Flooding

Domestic Flooding	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	13	7
Agree	72	41
Neither	19	11
Disagree	48	28
Strongly Disagree	22	13
Total	174	100

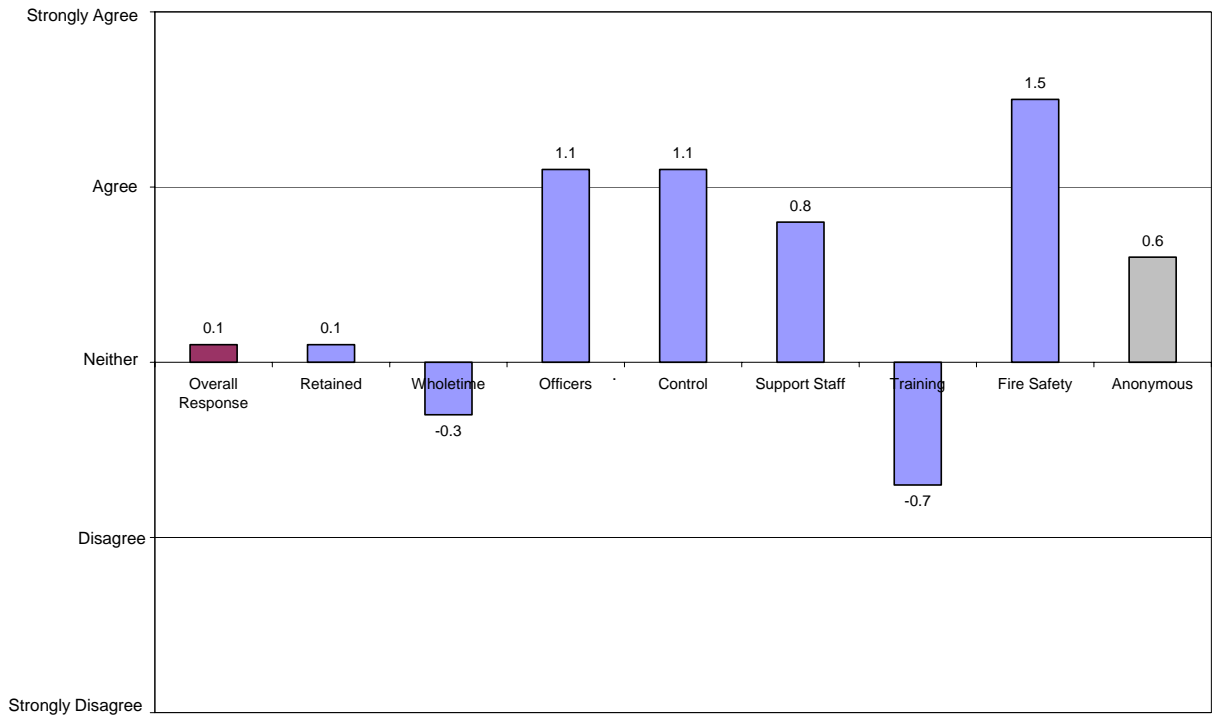
Domestic Flooding	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	174	7	41	11	28	13
Retained	98	6	36	13	35	10
Wholetime	42	5	33	14	24	24
Officers	7	29	57	0	14	0
Control	7	29	71	0	0	0
Support Staff	8	0	88	0	13	0
Training	3	0	33	0	67	0
Fire Safety	4	25	50	0	0	25
Anonymous	5	0	80	0	0	20



Commercial Flooding

Commercial Flooding	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	16	9
Agree	73	43
Neither	20	12
Disagree	42	25
Strongly Disagree	19	11
Total	170	100

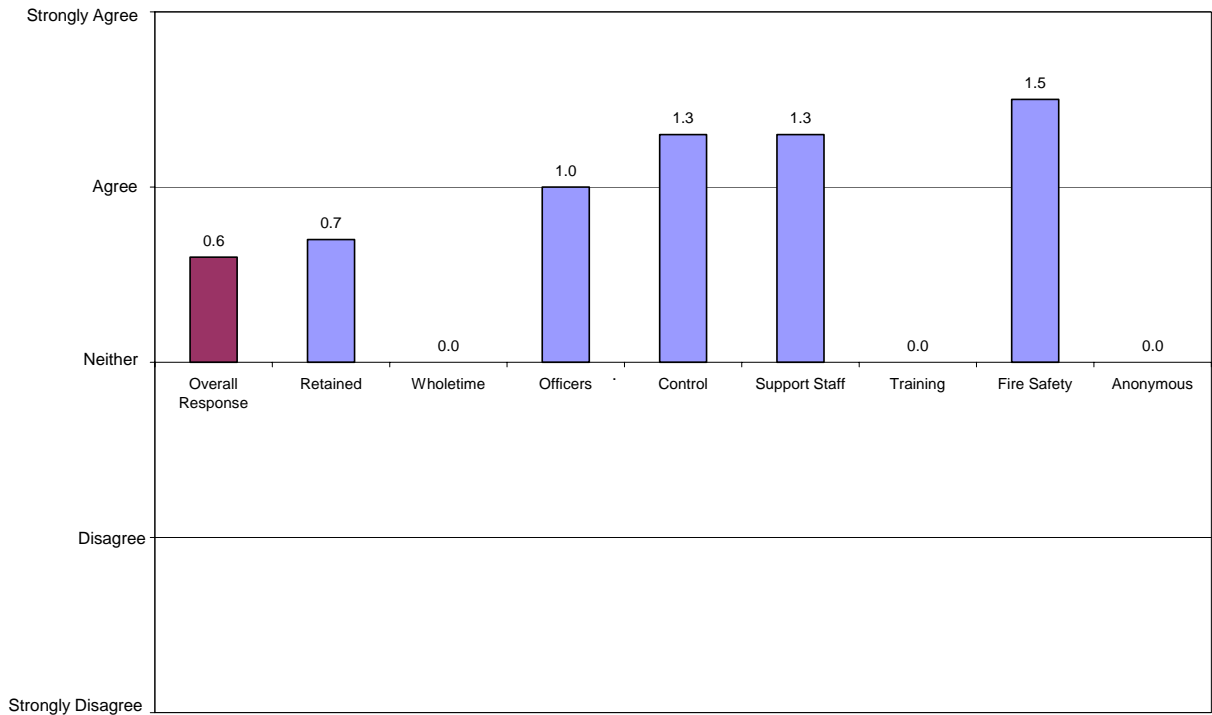
Commercial Flooding	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	170	9	43	12	25	11
Retained	94	7	40	13	31	9
Wholetime	42	5	33	17	21	24
Officers	7	43	43	0	14	0
Control	7	14	86	0	0	0
Support Staff	8	0	88	0	13	0
Training	3	0	0	33	67	0
Fire Safety	4	50	50	0	0	0
Anonymous	5	20	60	0	0	20



Lock in/out

Lock in/out	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	31	18
Agree	86	50
Neither	25	14
Disagree	15	9
Strongly Disagree	16	9
Total	173	100

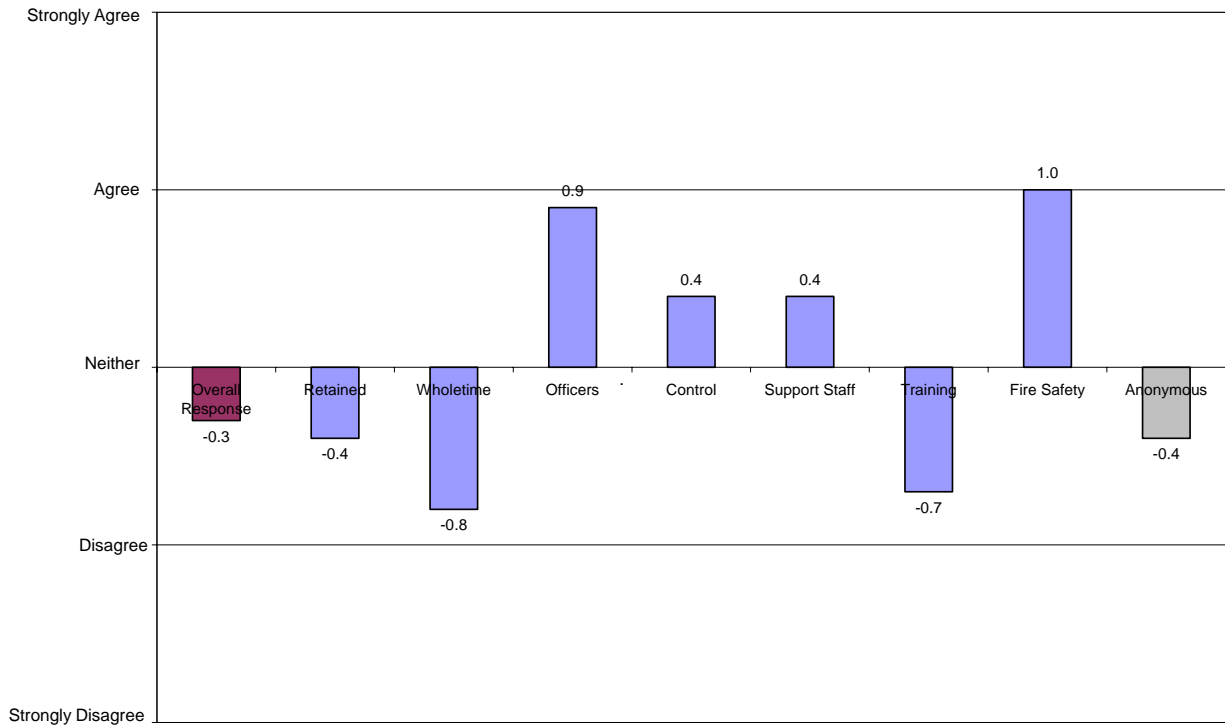
Lock in/out	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	173	18	50	14	9	9
Retained	97	18	54	16	6	6
Wholetime	42	12	36	14	19	19
Officers	7	14	71	14	0	0
Control	7	29	71	0	0	0
Support Staff	8	25	75	0	0	0
Training	3	0	33	33	33	0
Fire Safety	4	75	0	25	0	0
Anonymous	5	20	40	0	0	40



RTC Services only

RTC Services	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	9	5
Agree	51	29
Neither	22	13
Disagree	58	33
Strongly Disagree	34	20
Total	174	100

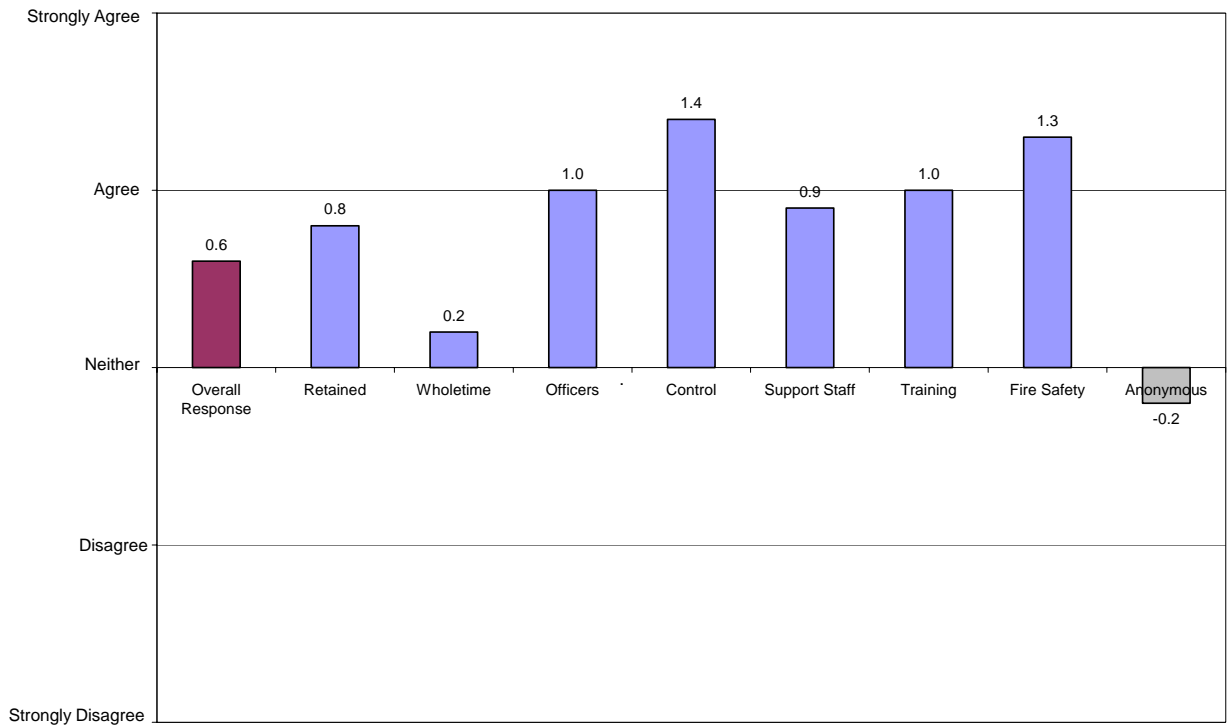
RTC services only	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	174	5	29	13	33	20
Retained	98	4	27	15	37	17
Wholetime	42	0	21	10	38	31
Officers	7	14	71	0	14	0
Control	7	14	43	14	29	0
Support Staff	8	0	63	25	0	13
Training	3	0	33	0	33	33
Fire Safety	4	50	25	0	25	0
Anonymous	5	20	20	0	20	40



Removal or release from objects

Objects	Count	Total %
Strongly Agree	40	23
Agree	80	46
Neither	20	12
Disagree	18	10
Strongly Disagree	15	9
Total	173	100

Release from objects	Number of responses	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Overall Response	173	23	46	12	10	9
Retained	97	23	51	11	10	5
Wholetime	42	12	40	17	17	14
Officers	7	43	43	0	0	14
Control	7	43	57	0	0	0
Support Staff	8	50	25	0	13	13
Training	3	0	100	0	0	0
Fire Safety	4	50	25	25	0	0
Anonymous	5	20	20	20	0	40



Response Comments made in response to Question 10

Comments in agreement with statement

- Subject to info reported from caller to Fire Control.
- Lock in/out of property' - unless the cooker/candles or open flame, i.e. fire has been left on in property.
- Animal Rescues - After first ensuring that a delayed turn-out would not result in any person putting themselves at risk in attempting to rescue the animal prior to our arrival
- Proceed using risk assessment based on all available mobilising information.
- Control to decide from call information - not OiC.

Neutral comments

- Neither - Would need to be based upon information given at TOC. Past experience of calls received by Fire Control from other agencies have turned out to be persons trapped.
- Lock in incidents may require BL and AW if persons are young/old or in distress. Clarify the use of BL and AW for fire investigations. I suggest only to 'Make Progress' e.g. stuck in traffic tailback, gridlock. The use of BL and AW may be needed to ensure progress is made even to non emergency incidents under EXCEPTIONAL CONDITIONS e.g. Gridlock.
- Totally dependant on individual situation
- Flooding depends if affecting electrics
- This obviously requires assessment of the time taking into account the condition of the trapped. [Lifts and Removal/Release from objects]
- Again this should be down to OiC of appliance to assess the severity of call from information provided by control

Comments in disagreement with the statement

- Lock in/out of property - (Disagree) Dependant on information gathering, child, vulnerable person etc.
- Difficult to respond to! ALL fires start as small fires. Delaying a response could lead to vigilante action.
- You don't know how people cope with situations.
- It's reassuring to hear audible warnings

Comments made by the Fire Brigade's Union

The varying nature of incidents requires different responses. For example, if the public were to suggest that lights and sirens should not be used for flooding or RTC services only; what if the flooding or RTC was causing excessive traffic, resulting in the fire engine being stuck in traffic not able to reach the incident? Lift rescues may also cause a difference of opinion. Lift rescues may largely be regarded as low priority, but there will be instances where the person trapped is in distress. They may have been trapped for a considerable time depending on the premises, or there may be other reasons for their distress.



There will be a myriad of different scenarios that would illicit a different response from members of the public. One overriding consideration from our point of view is protecting our members that drive fire appliances. In the inevitable event of an accident whilst responding to an incident without visible or audible warning, our members that drive appliances will be vulnerable to prosecution and private claims against them. It is doubtful whether SF&RS's insurance policy will be very supportive in such an event.

Therefore, we recommend that the service continues to trust the judgement of their trained personnel and continues to train its drivers to the high standard that it presently does.



Other comments received

Other comments received from staff

- Automatic fire alarms pending confirmation of fire. All discretionary depending
- Did not receive full presentation due to operational incident.

Other comments received from the Fire Brigade's Union

The FBU gave a very detailed response to the Fire Authority's Draft IRMP Action Plan 2007/08. A copy of their response will be made available to all Fire Authority Members and members of the public as part of the consultation report presented to the Fire Authority on 20 December.

Fire Authority's response to other comments made

The Fire Authority notes the all comments received.

The Fire Authority wished to put on record their thanks to 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:

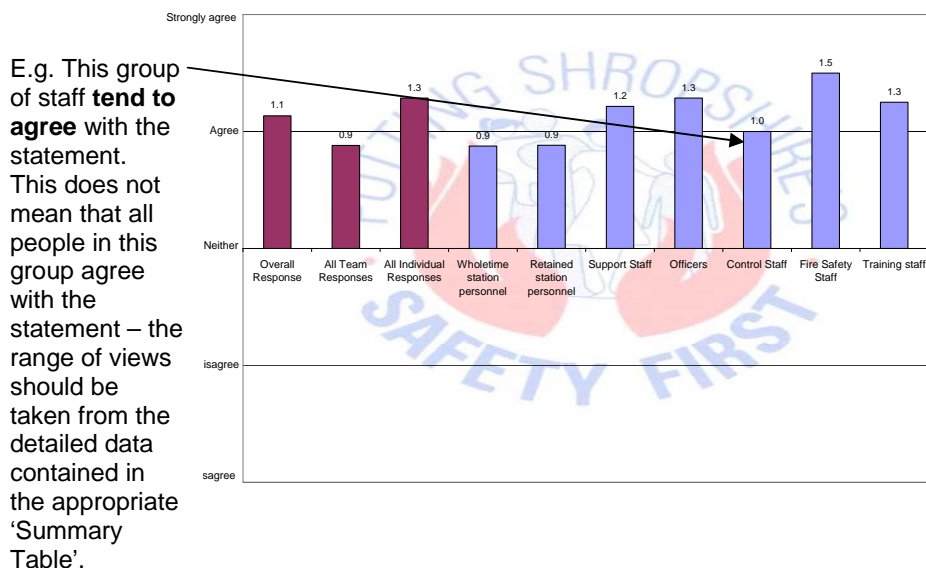
An individual or team were asked to rate their response to each statement about the Fire Authority's IRMP and Action Plan on the following scale:

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).



Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority



Draft
IRMP Action Plan 2007/08

**Stakeholder and Public Consultation
Response Document
December 2006**

Executive Summary

Following the release of its Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan for 2007/08 in August 2006, the Fire Authority has conducted three months of consultation with all interested parties. This report summarises the feedback received by the Fire Authority from members of the public and stakeholder organisations.

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 (DCLG). 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.

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

- There is significant support for the relocation of the Wholetime appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale.
- There is support for the introduction of a pilot Small Fires Unit.
- There is support for the introduction of response standards for other life risk incidents. Water incidents are clearly identified as the most significant of these, however it is recognised that this may present some difficulties in rural areas
- There is very mixed opinion on attendance at other incidents. In the main there is support for continued attendance at these incidents, however, the way we respond (blue lights and sirens) needs further investigation. There is support for charging at a proportion of these other incidents e.g. repeat lift calls, release from objects, commercial property flooding.

These findings will be reported to the Fire Authority at its meeting on 20 December 2006, when the Fire Authority will make any changes it considers appropriate to its Draft Action Plan 2007/08. The Action Plan 2007/08 will be published by 1 April 2007 and the changes it contains will be implemented.



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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform all interested parties of:

- The details of the stakeholder and public consultation process undertaken by Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, on its Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan for 2007/08;
- The comments received from stakeholders and the public of Shropshire from this consultation process; and
- Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority's response to the comments made on its Draft IRMP Action Plan.

All of the feedback contained in this report, combined with that received from the Fire Authority's consultation with its staff, will be used to inform the projects that have been proposed as part of the Fire Authority's Draft Action Plan for 2007/08.



Approach to Consultation

As described in the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), the Fire Authority's approach to consultation complied with guidance issued by both the Cabinet Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The central tenet of this guidance is that the extent of consultation should be proportional to the scope of the proposed changes contained in the Draft IRMP Action Plan, and should focus upon communities or interest groups particularly affected by these changes.

To ensure the Authority received independently corroborated feedback from this process, the Fire Authority solicited the help of a consultancy company (Opinion Research Services or ORS) to conduct a significant part of the consultation process. ORS have many years experience in consulting on behalf of Public Service bodies across the whole of the country, including involvement in many fire authorities IRMP processes.

With proposed relocation of a fire appliance from Telford Central to Tweeddale fire station and the redeployment of staff used to crew this appliance, potential changes to the way we respond to small fires and other non-emergency incidents it was considered appropriate to attempt to gain feedback from all elements of the Shropshire community (members of the public and businesses alike) and our own staff. As two of the proposals directly related to Tweeddale Fire Station an additional public focus groups was arranged in the Telford area and a specific presentation arranged for the residents of Cuckoo Oak Green.

The consultation results in this report form only part of the consultation process undertaken by the Fire Authority; with additional consultation also having been undertaken with the staff of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. Results from the staff consultation process have been included in a separate report.

This report summarises the consultation process with members of the public, their representatives, the business community and other organisations that have a vested interest in Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Consulting with the Public

The three methods of consultation with members of the public involved:

- Formal 'Public Scrutiny Panels';
- Focus group of Tweeddale residents; and
- An on-line questionnaire.

Public Scrutiny Panels

Building on experience from previous years consultation with ORS the Fire Authority determined that the most effective means for consulting with members of the public remained through the use of 'Scrutiny Panels'.

There is an increasing need for the Fire Authority to have an ongoing process of consultation. This is not only for its IRMP's, but also for other issues upon which it must consult each year



(e.g. budgetary planning). In order to maximise the quality of public involvement, it is important that people should be able to voice 'informed' opinions.

One of the main issues that emerged from the consultation undertaken during the Fire Authority's first year IRMP was that there was a relatively low level of awareness of the changing role of the Fire Service amongst the general public. This necessitated a significant amount of time being spent on providing information to enable people to discuss the issues in an informed manner.

For this reason ORS recommended that 'Scrutiny Panels' be set up within Shropshire. A 'Public Scrutiny Panel' is a group of people, representing a cross-section of the community, who can be called upon for various consultation requirements, over a number of years. These Panels will therefore build up a level of knowledge and expertise regarding the workings of the Fire and Rescue Service. The benefit of taking this approach is that the Fire Authority is able to demonstrate that an 'informed' process of consultation has taken place. Essentially, the more people know, the more likely they are to have useful insights and ideas to contribute.

ORS recruited a total of 42 people who attended one of three panels, held in the north, east and south of the county. The recruitment process used ensured that panel members represent a true cross-section of the community.

These panel members received the Fire Authority's IRMP documents prior to the meetings. During the meetings, the Fire Authority's IRMP Team gave a summary presentation on the purpose of IRMP and the specific proposals contained in its proposed Action Plan. After a lengthy question and answers session, the group was split into several smaller groups. Each group then discussed and agreed responses to various questions relating to the Fire Authority's proposals. Whilst the IRMP Team were available to answer any additional questions, they did not take part in these discussions.

A summary of the responses received is provided in the next section and details all responses received. The ORS report is included as an Annex to this report.

Tweedale Residents Focus Group

The proposal to relocate a fire appliance from Telford to Tweedale was seen as having a potential impact on the residents nearest to the existing Tweedale Fire Station - Cuckoo Oak Green. A letter was sent to the occupiers of the twenty residential properties in Cuckoo Oak Green inviting them to a dedicated consultation presentation at Tweedale Fire Station. The presentation was given on the IRMP proposals and in particular the changes affecting Tweedale Fire Station. Together with Elected Members of the Fire Authority and members of the IRMP team questions raised by the residents were answered. A total of 20 residents attended this presentation. Additionally a total of eleven questionnaires were returned by the residents of Cuckoo Oak Green.

On-line Questionnaire

To enable more members of the public to contribute to this consultation process the Authority included an on-line questionnaire within the IRMP section of its website. This work was not conducted by ORS.

The questionnaire provided the respondent with information about the Fire Authority's IRMP proposals and asks a series of questions on which the Fire Authority was seeking specific comments. Space was also provided for any other comments they wished to make. The questionnaire was made available for three months, giving ample time for people to respond.



Awareness of the questionnaire was raised with the public by signposting it on the homepage of the Service website and through the distribution of posters, advertising its existence, to all Post Offices, supermarkets and Parish notice boards in the county. Press releases were also sent to all news media outlets in and around the county, which resulted in several articles in the local press.

This effort resulted in a total of thirty three responses, eleven of which were from the residents of Cuckoo Oak Green. These comments which have been included in a separate section of this report.



Consulting with Stakeholder Organisations

Two methods were used to consult with organisations that have a vested interest in the service delivered by the Fire Authority. Namely;

- Formal 'Stakeholder Forums'; and
- A paper questionnaire.

Stakeholder Forums

On the recommendation of ORS the Fire Authority determined that the most effective means for consulting with organisations and businesses most likely to be affected by the Authority's proposals was through stakeholder forums. This format of consultation allows for the proposals to be explained on a face-to-face basis prior to obtaining the views of stakeholders through in-depth discussion.

More than 430 organisations were therefore informed of the Fire Authority's Draft IRMP Action Plan 2007/08 and the possible impact it could have on them, and were invited to attend either of two forums arranged in Shrewsbury and Telford during October 2006. This included:

- Local County and Unitary Councils;
- District and Borough Councils
- Police and Ambulance Services in Shropshire;
- Neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services;
- Primary Care Trusts;
- The top 100 largest employers in Shropshire;
- The Environment Agency and Environmental Health departments;
- Shropshire's diversity forums.

However the Authority was disappointed that only 3 people attended the forum. It is possible that this low level of support was due to the fact that the impact of this years IRMP on stakeholders will be limited to changes in resource distribution, rather than a significant change in fire cover provision. This did however prove the value of also using the dual approach of both forums and questionnaires which received a much higher degree of engagement from stakeholders. The forums were managed through a structured approach by ORS, and the forum members views on the Authority's proposals were obtained and reported to the Authority in a 'Consultation Report'. The findings from this work with stakeholders are summarised in the relevant sections of the full ORS report included as annex A.

Questionnaires

The Fire Authority was keen to make sure that those organisations that were unable to attend one of the Stakeholder Forums had every opportunity to comment on its proposals. Therefore, every invite to the forums that was sent out also included a paper questionnaire which gave details of the proposals and asked for their thoughts.

Also, in recognition of their involvement in, and impact on, the local communities of Shropshire, the Fire Authority put great effort into obtaining feedback from Shropshire's Parish Councillors. This involved;



- Sending a questionnaire to the Clerk of all parish councils;
- Presentations to the Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) Executive Committee; and
- A presentation to the South Shropshire District Council, Safety Policy Panel

The Authority received 72 completed Stakeholder questionnaires.



Summary of Responses from the Public

This section contains a summary of the feedback received from members of the public via the on-line questionnaire and the Public Scrutiny Panels.

The section has been split into four parts, each one dealing with one of the four proposals:

- Relocation of Telford fire appliance to Tweedale;
- Pilot small fires unit;
- Response Standards to other life risk incidents; and
- Response to non life risk incidents

The graphs included within each part have been compiled from the thirty one questionnaires that were completed [Eleven responses were received from residents of Cuckoo Oak Green which form part of a separate section]. All of the comments received via the questionnaires have also been included.

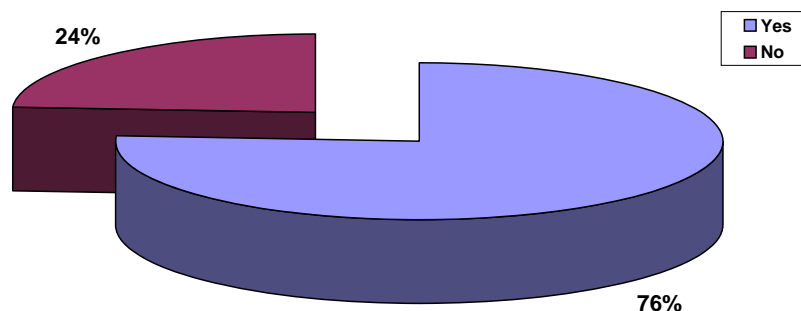
Each part also includes a summary of the views expressed during the Public Scrutiny Panels held at Shrewsbury and Ludlow. The full Public Scrutiny Panel report from ORS has been included as an Annex to this report.

Relocation of Telford Central (Stafford Park) Appliance to Tweedale (Cuckoo Oak Roundabout)

Questionnaire Response

Over three quarters of respondents agreed with the proposal to relocate one wholetime appliance from Telford Central Stafford Park to Tweedale Cuckoo Oak Roundabout

Do you agree with the proposed relocation of one fire engine from Telford Central (Stafford Park) to Tweedale fire station (Cuckoo Oak Roundabout)



Comments Received

- Will this proposal mean that Tweedale will become a continuous wholetime station? From a public perspective this will come a much better spread of fire cover, however I'm not sure what your crews will think Whilst I appreciate that many members of the general public can not differentiate between types of appliances, it maybe useful to perhaps refer to the machine in question using a generic term something along the lines of a pump appliance etc as opposed to 'fire engine' which could be taken to mean aerial or other specialist appliance.

Scrutiny Panel Results¹

Generally speaking the proposal was 100% acceptable to the overwhelming majority of participants. It was described as sensible, cost-effective and evidence-based, providing the same level of cover only allocated better to improve effectiveness.

Main Benefits

The relocation of one wholetime fire engine from Telford Central to Tweedale was thought to have several distinct benefits:

- A better distribution and placement of resources in the Telford area, with no reduction in service
- Improved cover for a larger area
- A faster response in Tweedale and A442 area
- Greater flexibility for FRS in attending incidents.

Concerns

For the majority, there were no disadvantages associated with this proposal. There were, however, concerns for a minority:

- The cost of the changes
- Potentially reduced response times for a second incident in the Hollinswood, Malinslee and Priorslee areas
- *Having only one engine at Telford Central could prove problematic if a major industrial fire happened in the town.*

Costs

The costs associated with the relocation were generally accepted; they were viewed as well justified to improve the service received from the FRS in the Telford area.

Staff costs were judged to be reasonable in that...

- Cover at Tweedale fire station will be 24/7
- The area will gain another wholetime station
- Watch Managers are essential.

The capital costs were deemed essential to upgrade facilities, provide accommodation for staff, effect service improvement and for the FRS to function effectively.

¹ Opinion Research Services – Report on Consultation on Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/08



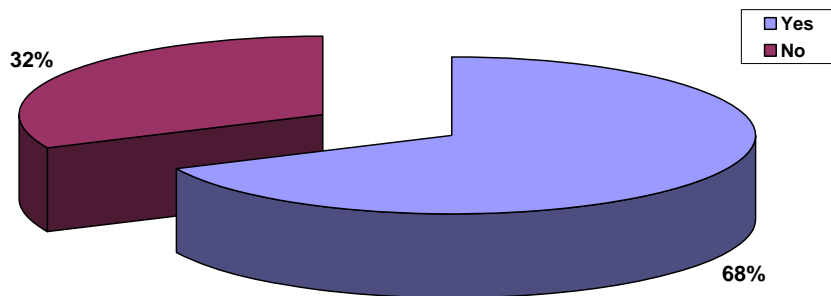
The costs seemed modest to some participants, who questioned whether they had been underestimated.

Pilot Small Fires Unit

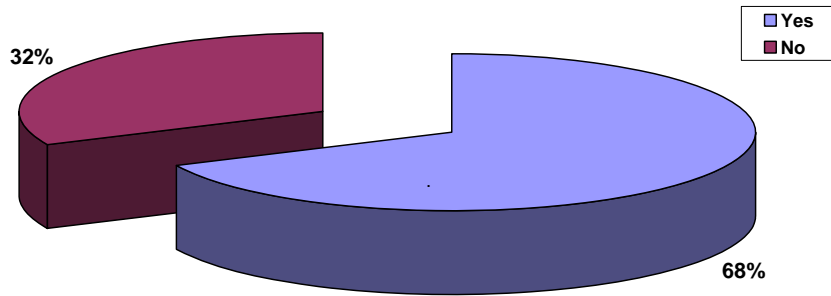
Questionnaire Response

Over two thirds of respondents agree with the introduction of a pilot project to trial a 'small fires unit' and the same proportion thought that it would make better use of our resources.

Do you agree with the proposal to pilot a study looking into the future use of a small fires vehicle in Shropshire



Do you agree that this proposal to pilot a study looking into the future use of a small fires vehicle in Shropshire will make better use of our resources?



Comments Received

- Why not use small fire unit for home safety visits etc and use the fire engine for fires- which may not be a bin fire if malicious arson is involved.
- From your own figures it would appear that Wellington have far more need for a Small Fires Unit. From a geographical point of view, I would have thought Telford would be far more central. Is this being used as an olive branch to the retained crew at Tweedale to make up for the loss of earnings once the wholetime pump is based there? Whilst I can see the logic in using the L4P for the trial, I presume that if the pilot is successful then any purpose built unit would be equipped with CCTV, CAFS (or similar) and would also be off road capable (for all those burnt out cars on waste ground). I also note that some of these Small Fires Units (in other brigades) are fully crewed and available between peak hours for this type of incident (i.e. 1600-2300). As I stated previously I can't imagine many retained personnel being content repeatedly being called out during the evening to nuisance fires in communities other than there own. Can't imagine that any firefighters engaged regularly on this type of work will find it very fulfilling.
- On the face of it, this seems like a positive initiative and worth exploring. Implications for the Retained Budget will be interesting to observe after the trial period has ended. I'm not however automatically convinced by the argument for freeing up large fire appliances. There will inevitably be a delay in the retained pump attendance on some occasions as crews travel to the station and a small fire could spread and become a larger fire in some instances. Is there evidence of your claim regarding delays to more serious life threatening incidents? If so, why not provide it?
- The channel islands have done this for years even for chimney fires
- On health and safety grounds this proposal seems to be putting the firefighters at risk. What about risk from attack and injuries to firefighters carrying all the equipment by themselves. surely a full crew would eliminate this risk
- Makes perfect sense 'Should be switch crewed with special crew when ALP is on the run. If it's based at Tweedale 2 wholetime FF should crew it if the Tweedale upgrade takes place which would avoid a delayed turnout .The 2 retained FF could then ride appliance until the unit returns.
- This relies on the public being very specific when reporting a fire. A large and no doubt expensive publicity campaign will be required to educate the public. I have often read reports in the Shropshire Star of fire fighters attending incidents where rubbish bins have been set alight outside properties. If such an incident was not reported correctly the damage to the reputation of the brigade would be catastrophic.
- If a small fire is started by children so they can see a big red fire engine turning up? then a small van turns up instead will the children start bigger fires

Scrutiny Panel Results²

There was overwhelming agreement with the use of a smaller vehicle for smaller fires, providing the trial (which was deemed essential) demonstrates its safety and effectiveness.

Benefits

Learning from experience by way of a trial period was thought to be a very efficient use of resources.

² Opinion Research Services – Report on Consultation on Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/08



The use of a Small Fires Unit (SFU) was thought to have several advantages, as outlined below:

- Financial efficiency in that its running costs are far lower than those of the larger appliance
- Better use of staff and appliances
 - Frees up large engines for serious incidents
 - Releases firefighters on larger appliances for prevention work
- SFU can reach where large tenders cannot
- Provides firefighters with the opportunity to vary and improve their skills
- The vehicle is environmentally friendly.

Disadvantages and Concerns

The groups approached the use of a SFU with some trepidation, for the reasons outlined below:

- It could encourage children to start larger fires to ensure that a large engine attends the incident
- The vehicle could be unable to cope if a fire is larger than first thought, or if a small fire accelerates faster than expected
- A potential lack of experience on the scene
- Relying on public response to determine the severity of a call-out
- A potential catalyst for the cut-back of services; that is, replacing a large appliance with smaller appliances and less staff
- A lack of visible data regarding the success of the SFU from other forces.

Safety and Effectiveness

Participants were satisfied that the SFU would be able to deal with the vast majority of smaller incidents safely and effectively:

- Experience via a trial period will prove this one way or the other was the consensus view.

Most agreed that 'small rubbish, grass or bin fires in the open' are appropriate incidents for the SFU to attend.

It was suggested that the vehicle should be RED as *any other colour will not get public respect!*

For most, existing response standards were thought to be adequate for the pilot, to be amended if necessary following a review of scheme data.

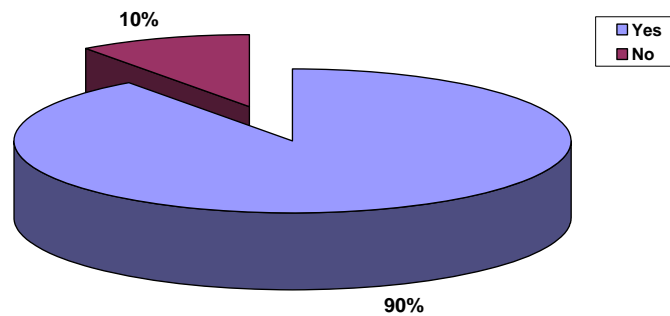


Life Risk Incidents – Setting a Standard

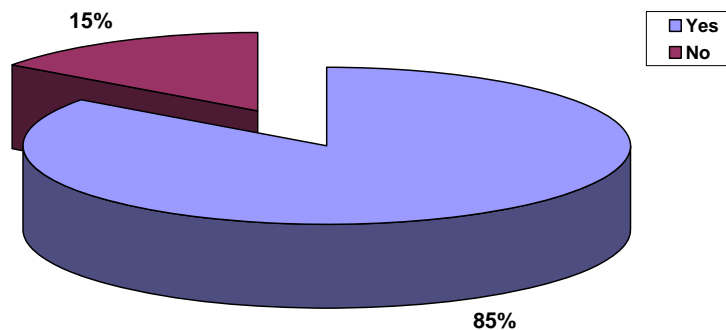
Questionnaire Response

There was overwhelming support for the introduction of response standards for other 'Life Risk' incidents. The greatest support was for the introduction of 'water' response standards, while 'rescue from height' gained the least support this was still at a very high level (80%).

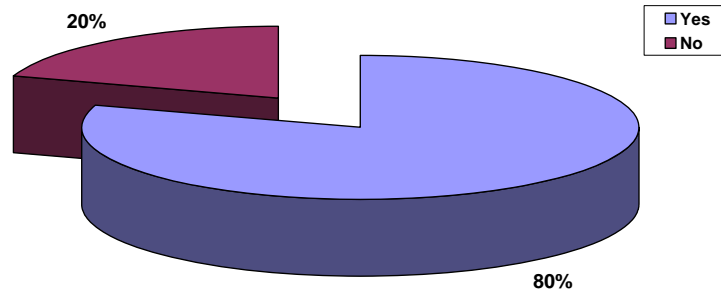
Should the Fire Authority set response standards for Life Risk Water incidents



Should the Fire Authority set response standards for Life Risk Equipment incidents



Should the Fire Authority set response standards for Life Risk Height incidents



Comments Received

- For water incidents - not possible due to geographic nature of county and availability of boat
- It also surprises me that as we head towards a 'regionalised' fire service with greater government control, that it is up to individual brigades to set their own benchmarks. A case of the police policing themselves perhaps?

Scrutiny Panel Results³

Participants found it difficult to make a judgement on this proposal. On the one hand they questioned whether it is reasonable to set response standards to incidents for which the FRS has no funding or statutory duty to respond, and that may be undertaken at the expense of duties required by law. On the other they acknowledged that the subsequent PR for turning out to such incidents is very good and that it could be very damaging for the FRS if it ceases to do so.

Benefits

- The following were seen as the main benefits of developing response standards to other life-risk incidents:
 - A timely response saves life and prevents injury
 - Retaining the trust of the public that the FRS will assist them in an emergency
 - Locating and maintaining resources where they are most needed.

Concerns

FRS attendance at non-statutory and non-funded incidents was thought to stretch resources and impact on responses to serious incidents for which the Service is legislatively responsible.

³ Opinion Research Services – Report on Consultation on Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/08



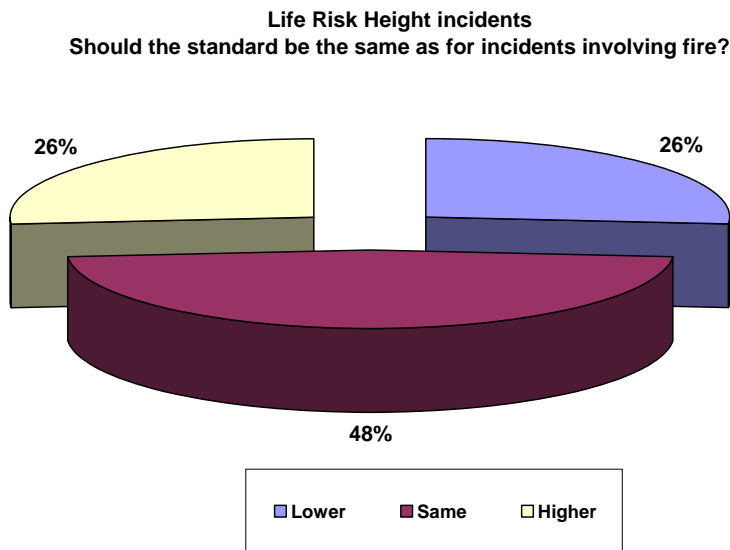
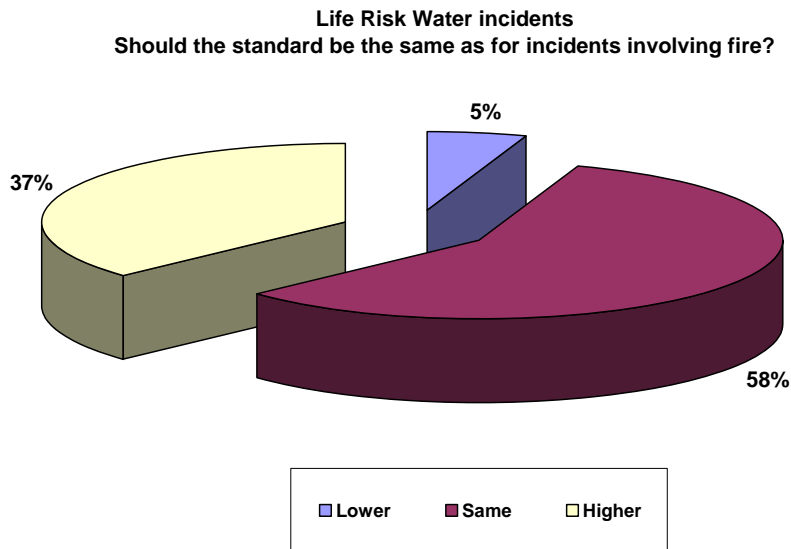
Another concern was that the Service is attending incidents that are the responsibility of other services such as the Police.

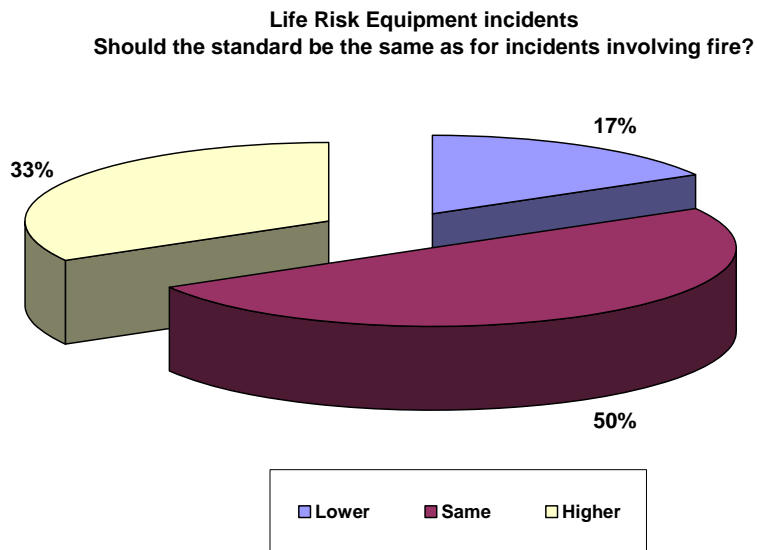


Life Risk Incidents – Response Standard

Questionnaire Response

Overall the response here indicated that in the view of the public if response standards are set these should be to the same standards we use for response to life risk fires.





Comments Received

The only comments received were the same as for the previous question

- For water incidents - not possible due to geographic nature of county and availability of boat
- It also surprises me that as we head towards a 'regionalised' fire service with greater government control, that it is up to individual brigades to set their own benchmarks. A case of the police policing themselves perhaps?

Scrutiny Panel Results⁴

The general view was that all incidents where there is a definite risk to life (or where there is doubt about such risk) require a response time equivalent to fires and RTC's.

Others reserved judgement on response standards to other life-risk incidents as they required more information on and understanding of the incidents.

Rescue from Water

- Water-related incidents were thought to always pose a threat to life and as such, response should, it was believed, be the same as that to fires/RTC's.

Rescue from Height and Equipment

- Although recognising the need for a response time for such incidents, the majority did not feel they warrant as fast a response as fires, RTC's and water-related incidents.
- Some saw these incidents as a relatively low priority and not needing a formal response time at all.

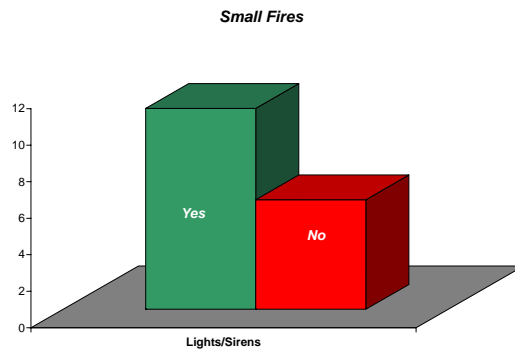
⁴ Opinion Research Services – Report on Consultation on Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/08



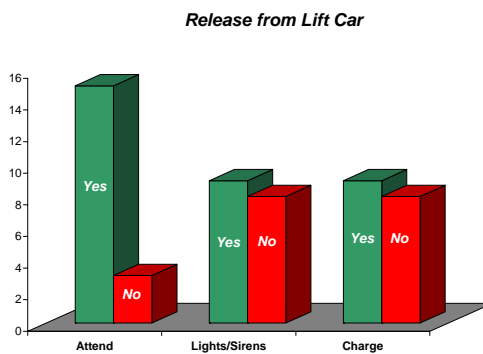
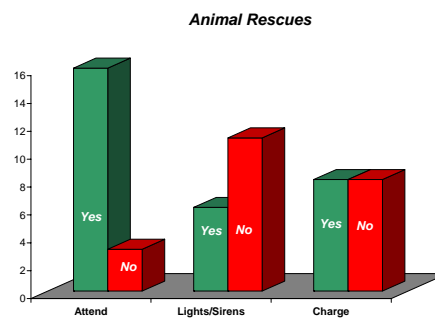
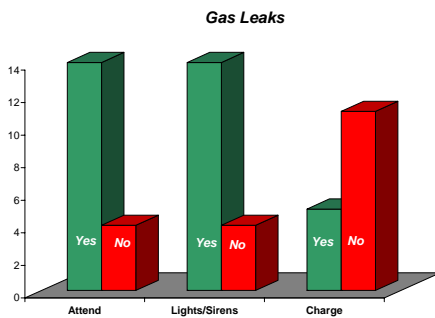
Response to incidents that do NOT involve risk to life.

Questionnaire Response

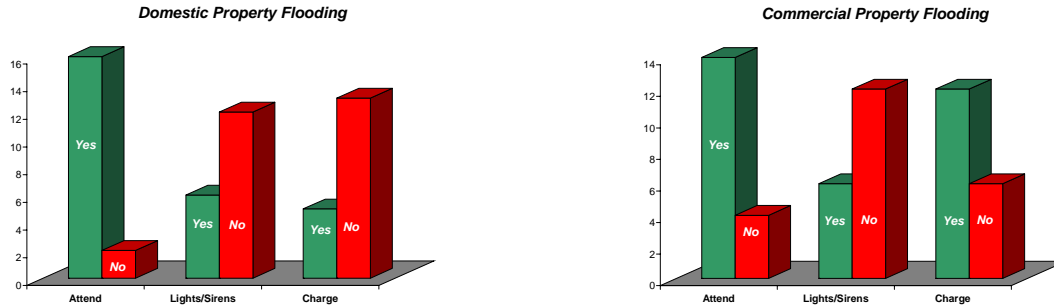
There is a slight majority of public responses in favour of using sirens and blue lights when attending small fires.



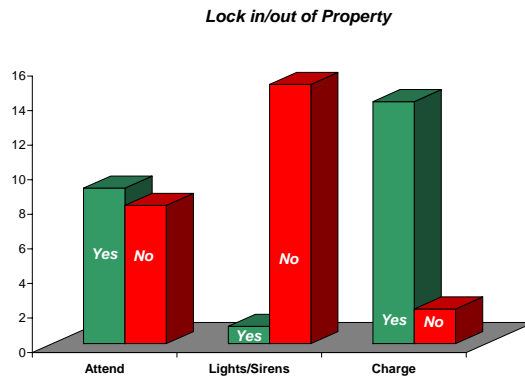
There is clear support from the public to continue attending gas leaks using blue lights and sirens. While there remains support to attend animal rescues and lift car releases, there is not a consensus on the use of blue lights and sirens.



Again with flooding there is agreement that we should continue to attend both domestic and commercial property (without blue lights and sirens), but the question of charging is reversed, the majority of the public think it should remain charge free for domestic property, but we should charge commercial premises.

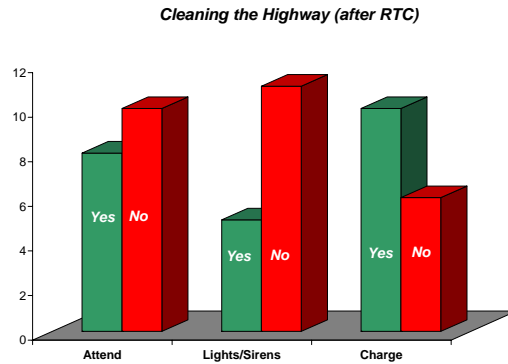


Attendance to lock in/out of property there is a very slight majority in favour of continued attendance, but overwhelming support for responding without lights and sirens and charging for the service.

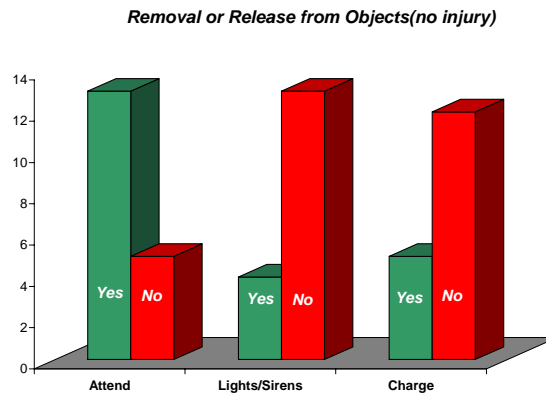


Incidents of cleaning the highway following RTC's resulted in a slight majority saying we should not attend, but if we do it should be charged and not on a blue light response.





With regard to release or removal of objects from persons there is a distinct majority in favour of us attending, but not on blue lights and not charging for this service.



Comments Received

- Beware that all incidents can become life threatening without timely intervention
- This section worries me greatly, due to the large amount of variables affecting the outcome of incidents it is impossible to neatly 'risk assess' them into sections that you have done above. As regards animal rescues, whilst these should not take priority over other incidents, I appreciate that they can be a good source of knowledge and practicable experience for crews. Therefore the fire service should attend where possible but without the need for blues and twos. However, try explaining that to the mother of a child who's just lost all its toys in a flood and you didn't respond urgently.

Likewise the factory owner whose just lost his business because salvage operations weren't implemented quickly enough to save his machines The public need to be sure they can rely on the fire service, not have to think what importance their call has and whether there will be a charge. This will be counter productive as people won't call and you'll end up with larger incidents on your hand. Of course for things like being locked out etc, then you should be seen as the last resort and not an easy touch.

- Although I answered yes to Q1&Q2 regarding the use of lights and sirens, I believe that the onus should be on the driver/s to proceed according to the needs of the specific incident (based upon information gained by Fire Control Staff) and the risk to themselves and other road users. This would need to be reflected in driver training



and referred to in Service Operational Orders. 'Generalised statements with wide ranging conclusions. I might support these proposals if you gave me the chance of looking at some detail without having to email or phone someone

- Need to respond as usual don't know how serious it is until you arrive very dangerous position if someone suffers due to slow response

Scrutiny Panel Results⁵

Some did not feel it appropriate for the FRS to set response standards for non life/property-risk incidents; it should, they believed, get there 'as and when', prioritising incidents that could cause severe distress.

Others felt there should be standards for non life/property-risk incidents, but that they should be a good deal lower than to those that pose a risk to life.

Benefits

The only perceived benefit of this proposal was that developing response times would provide the FRS with a standard by which to judge its response times, resource allocation, methods and so on.

Response Standards

The general consensus was that the FRS should attend non life/property-risk incidents 'as soon as possible'. As such it was felt that response times need to be flexible, but no higher than the 20 minute low-risk standard.

Use of flashing lights and sirens

Participants across all four sessions were of the view that 'blues and twos' should be avoided as far as possible, especially in the case of minor incidents where human life is not threatened. This, it was felt, would cause less distress to the general public, lessen the danger to FRS staff and other road users and increase road safety.

Charging for attendance

- Respondents advocated that the FRS should charge for the following non life/property-risk incidents:
 - Animal rescues
 - Lock-ins/outs
 - Lift rescues (charge property owners)
 - Highways cleaning
 - Gas leaks
- It was also suggested that the FRS charge...
 - *When there is evidence of negligence*
 - *At its discretion as now*
 - *For repeated attendances when somebody is responsible for doing what should not have brought the FRS out in the first place*

⁵ Opinion Research Services – Report on Consultation on Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/08



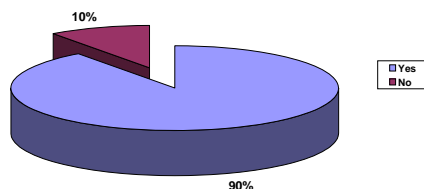
Summary of Responses from the residents of Cuckoo Oak Green

Relocation of Telford Central (Stafford Park) Appliance to Tweedale (Cuckoo Oak)

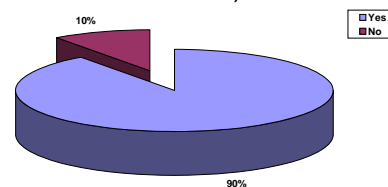
Questionnaire Response

A total of eleven questionnaires were returned by the residents of Cuckoo Oak Green. Despite reservation about the impact on the immediate environment there was overwhelming support for this proposal, however in the main the written comments were mainly concerned with increase traffic and noise pollution.

Do you agree that the proposed relocation of one fire engine from Telford Central (Stafford Park) to Tweedale fire station (Cuckoo Oak Roundabout) will make better use of our limited resources



Do you agree with the proposed relocation of one fire engine from Telford Central (Stafford Park) to Tweedale fire station (Cuckoo Oak Roundabout)



Comments Received

- I fully support these proposals, however my concern is the impact on the residents living behind Tweedale fire station i.e. noise pollution, traffic pollution, general wear and tear on the roads, increased use of domestic services, water - gas.
- Maintain Tweedale at its present level - retained. Noise pollution at night, light pollution at night increased training activities. Children on estate safely play; increased traffic means more problems to them. Road surface increased damage. Underground pipes increased potential damage. No erected fence around site, depress house prices further, keep green area green not build car parking or road, - wildlife and tree protection.
- Further to our recent meeting where the road situation was discussed for this estate, I feel that an in depth look into the impact of additional vehicles and staff on the road surface is necessary. The steady build up of ambulance trainees should be considered. In 1972 it was thought that the roads were sub standard then, we now see the results developing and can only get worse.
- Before any alteration or improvements are made relating to the Tweedale site, informal consultations with the residents MUST be in place as there are personal financial implications to the residents built into the house deeds also: 1. Environmental issues 2. Noise issues 3. Property and utility issues
- Due to the close proximity of Tweedale Fire Station to the residents of Cuckoo Oak Green, consultations are a MUST. Increased traffic flow on decaying roads could become a big issue both financially and environmentally for residents.
- As discussed and proposed at the meeting on the 17 November 2006 at Tweedale Fire Station, please look at the following remarks. 1. Extra calls will mean more traffic on estate roads. 2. Extra noise caused by the above, also drills on yard especially at



night, also cleaning of equipment used on return during quiet hours. 3. Call out system alarm because of close proximity of houses. 4. All residents to initially be included in any further discussions on the proposals.

- I am extremely concerned about the following:
 1. The fire service and the station is part of my environment, my family and I live in the middle of it.
 2. How are any changes going to affect my environment, traffic, sound pollution, safety, light pollution?
 3. Building on the site.
 4. Alterations to the site.
 5. Property values.
 6. Road Conditions.
 7. Who will pay for maintenance of road and drains?

The lack of balance in the report failed to identify that the community living just a few yards away from the Fire Station would be affected by these proposals. As a result, no environmental impact assessment has been carried out of the Tweedale site and in particular the potential affect upon Cuckoo Oak Green residents and the Ambulance Service. This is not surprising when the CFO himself believes that the change from Retained to Fulltime status would not impact upon residents. This is crucial information that must be submitted to Fire Authority members before they approve/reject the 'Draft Plans' on 20/12/06.

Because of the peculiar relationship between the SF&RS, Ambulance Service and Cuckoo Oak Green residents, consideration should be given to setting up a Tweedale Users Group that was representative of those bodies/people who occupy the site. This Group would provide an avenue for continued consultation through the redevelopment phase and afterwards for ongoing site issues.

Work identified as needing to be done in the £20,000 Capital Budget for Tweedale is very sketchy? It is unlikely that it includes a new road/parking space, which is essential. Positive: With a site occupied 24 hours per day, this could provide enhanced security for residents. The whole site is likely to look tidier than the current weed infested run down estate.

Response times to Cuckoo Oak Green properties for emergencies would be enhanced. There could be future development to a 'Community Fire Station' that residents might benefit from. Telford Central will become an underutilised building. Therein lays the opportunity for revenue income, to rebalance the books through the leasing of vacant space. Negative: There will undoubtedly be an increase in traffic accessing the site from Bridgnorth Road. Site noise will be increased from present levels due to the operation of a 24 hour fire station. Consideration will need to be given to silent station alarms.

Telford Central will become an underutilised building, costing roughly the same as it does now, but providing less service to the Community for the same money. The Ambulance Service currently has a major investment at Tweedale i.e. a Training Centre and Emergency Ambulance Station.

Greater traffic flow across the front of their property could impact on their staff and course students who:

- a. wash emergency vehicles on the frontage
- b. park their own vehicles in the designated parking spaces and elsewhere
- c. park emergency vehicles on the frontage
- d. receive training on the frontage



The possibility of income generation through the leasing of vacant space at Telford Central (although a possibility) may not be realised, as past experience of available space at Telford Central has demonstrated.

The current access to the rear yard would not be satisfactory. The existing practice must cease and a new access road installed alongside the appliance bay, utilising an area that is currently landscaped.

The current parking facilities would not be satisfactory. New spaces for staff and visitors would need to be identified as part of the redevelopment of the site.

'The simple Yes/No option does not work. A Not Sure option would give a better feeling for people's reactions to the questions e.g. I answered Yes to part two of Q1 in hope, because I didn't want to answer no. I don't actually know if it will provide a better distribution or not.

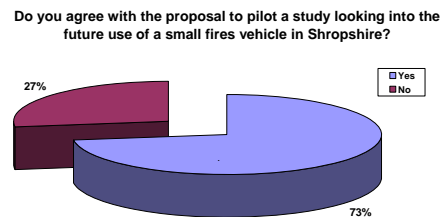
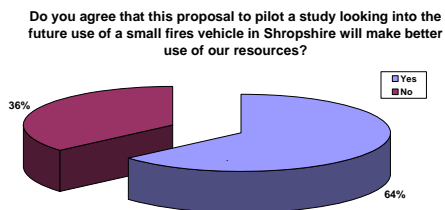
A better option still would have been grading people's level of agreement to the proposals set against a scale/range. This is a big issue. More information would have been very helpful in order to be able to make an informed decision



Pilot Small Fires Unit

Questionnaire Response

There was strong support for pilot for a Small Fires Unit with approximately two thirds agreeing it would make better use of existing resources (64%), and almost three quarters (73%) supporting the pilot.



Comments received

- Colour of vehicle - Red. Blue (Merseyside) Blue looks like a delivery vehicle. Red - be proud of what you do. Land Rover size 4x4 for smaller roads e.g. Ironbridge back streets.
- The proposed Small Fire Unit has been trialed in Merseyside. It has been reported as increasing the risk, with larger fires having been started by fire-setters/children and are questioning the availability of larger fire appliances to incidents of this type. If the proposal goes through, will the retained appliance at Tweedale be obsolete and the numbers of staff reduced to only those required for staffing the Small Fire Unit?

Other Comments received from Cuckoo Oak Residents

- Flashing lights without siren in built up areas unless a need to clear the road.
- Why do all three Actions identified in the IRMP Draft Action Plan 2007/8 only identify 'Benefits' for the proposals? If as I believe the author did not intend providing the reader with negative implications, then the validity of the whole document is brought into question. There is no balance to the report (it is flawed) and therefore the response from the reader cannot be wholly subjective. This apparent failure in the methodology that has been used needs to be rectified for future projects and brought to the attention of the Fire Authority on 20 December 2006.



Summary of Responses from Stakeholder Organisations

This section contains a summary of the feedback received from stakeholder organisations via the paper questionnaire and the Stakeholder Forum.

The section has been split into four parts, each one dealing with one of the four proposals:

- Relocation of Telford fire appliance to Tweedale;
- Pilot small fires unit;
- Response Standards to other life risk incidents; and
- Response to non life risk incidents

The graphs included here have been compiled from the 72 questionnaires that were completed. All of the comments received via the questionnaires have also been included.

Each part also includes a summary of the views expressed during the Stakeholder Forum held at Shrewsbury. The full Stakeholder Forums report from ORS has been included as Appendix 'A' to this report.

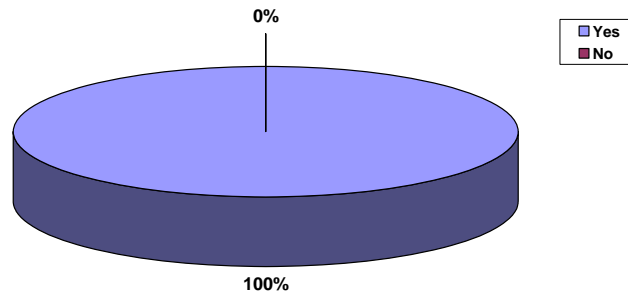


Relocation of Telford Central Appliance to Tweeddale

Questionnaire Response

All stakeholders agreed with the proposed relocation of one wholetime appliance from Telford to Tweeddale

Do you agree with the proposed relocation of one fire engine from Telford Central (Stafford Park) to Tweeddale fire station (Cuckoo Oak Roundabout)



Comments received

- Questions 1 and 2 do not affect us.
- Q1&2 - Not applicable to our area.
- I cannot comment on proposal one as this is not anywhere near our area.
- I have based my answers purely on the evidence outlined as my knowledge of the Telford area is somewhat limited.
- I am glad to see that the Fire Service is reinstating a service and expanding what was at Tweeddale in support of the communities to the south of Telford.
- I have not answered questions 1 and 2 as I feel it is inappropriate to suggest views on an area of Shropshire that is outside my working area of knowledge and responsibility as chairman of Longden Parish Council.

Stakeholder Forum Results⁶

In the main, the relocation of a wholetime engine from Telford Central to Tweeddale was *100% acceptable* to the overwhelming majority of participants. It was described as sensible, cost-effective and evidence-based, providing the same level of cover only *allocated better to improve effectiveness*.

⁶ Opinion Research Services – Report on Consultation on Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/08

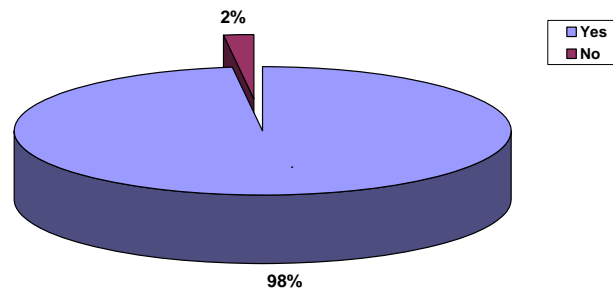


Pilot Small Fires Unit

Questionnaire Response

Again there was overwhelming support from stakeholders for the pilot of a 'Small Fires Unit'.

Do you agree with the proposal to pilot a study looking into the future use of a small fires vehicle in Shropshire?



Comments received

- I fully support your proposal to use smaller response vehicles for minor fires. It is important to ensure though that Control room personnel are aware of the need to ensure that messages received fully explain the type and extent of incident involved especially in relation to small fires to which you may send the limited appliance.
- The use of small vehicle and crew for minor problems is both logical and acceptable.
- Very good proposals. We have thought for some time that it is an utter waste of money sending a full appliance for minor incidents.
- Proposal two is a good idea as when we had a very small grass fire we had a full sized fire engine which got lost, lost 2 wing mirrors and finally needed a "bucket of water" for the incident!
- If possible please carry a pollution prevention grab pack on the new small fires unit - and any other pollution containment equipment that you would like us to provide
- Questions 1 and 2 do not affect us.
- The proposal to use some smaller fire vehicles is welcome. It has always been a concern that numbers were being reduced. No matter how large and efficient a machine may be, it can only be in one place at a time!
- I have not answered questions 1 and 2 as I feel it is inappropriate to suggest views on an area of Shropshire that is outside my working area of knowledge and responsibility as chairman of Longden Parish Council.
- Small fires are a risk until actually assessed on arrival at the scene.
- Concerns over the safety of deploying two firefighters only in response to small fires. These are often started by groups of youths who may not take kindly to having them extinguished.



Stakeholder Forum Results⁷

With regard to the Small Fires Unit (SFU), learning from experience by way of a trial period, using an existing vehicle and staff, was thought to be a very efficient use of resources.

The use of a SFU was thought to have several distinct advantages. Firstly, the vehicle itself was thought to be more financially efficient in that its running costs will be significantly lower than those of a larger appliance. This cost saving, it was suggested, *could help with the cost of moving a wholetime tender to Tweedale*

All three groups were uneasy regarding a few potential consequences of introducing the SFU. The primary concern was that its use could encourage children to start larger fires in order to ensure that a larger engine is despatched:

Youths who start fires could be enticed to light bigger fires to get a bigger vehicle or more noise

Concern about kids lighting bigger fires as a result

Participants were satisfied that the SFU would be able to deal with the vast majority of smaller incidents safely and effectively, acknowledging that it would provide an initial response that could be increased if necessary:

Satisfied that the SFU could deal with 90% of smaller incidents safely and effectively

However, that experience via a trial period will prove this definitively one way or the other was the consensus view:

For my mind the jury is out so the trial seems sensible

Indeed, some participants at Shrewsbury expected, and desired that the trial would *demonstrate need for a more multi-purpose vehicle that offers greater flexibility.*

⁷ Opinion Research Services – Report on Consultation on Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/08

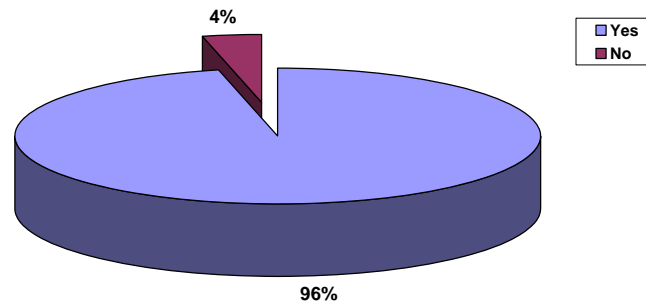


Life Risk Incidents – Setting a Standard

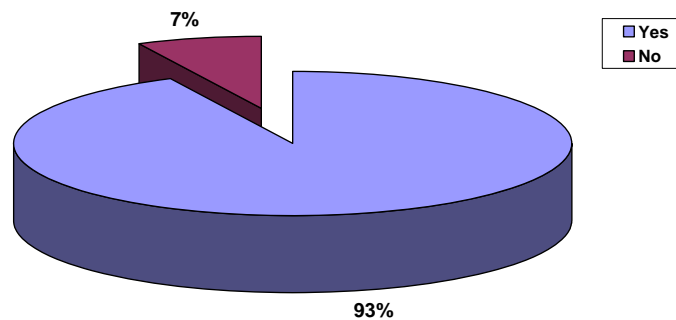
Questionnaire Response

As with the public response stakeholders overwhelming support the introduction of response standards for these life risk incidents. Rescue from height was again received the lowest support of the three incident types, however there was still significant support at 85%.

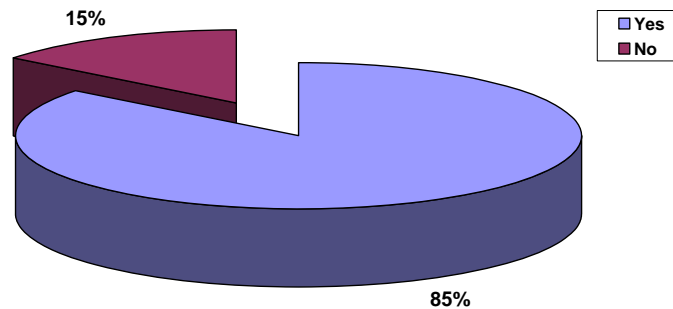
Should the Fire Authority set response standards for Life Risk Water incidents



Should the Fire Authority set response standards for Life Risk Equipment incidents



Should the Fire Authority set response standards for Life Risk Height incidents



Comments Received

Difficult to comment on response times in 3 and 4. Only trained staff in receipt of the facts would be able to make that assessment.

Stakeholder Forum Results⁸

Participants found it very difficult to make a judgement on whether the FRS should develop response standards to life-risk incidents other than fires and RTC's; they acknowledged that it poses a very difficult dilemma for the service. On the one hand they questioned whether it is reasonable to set response standards for non-funded incidents to which the FRS has no statutory duty to respond, and that may be undertaken at the expense of the duties required by law;

The FRS should be able to develop response standards but with adequate funding

On the other hand they acknowledged that the subsequent PR for turning out quickly to such incidents is very good, and that it could be very damaging for the FRS if it ceases to do so;

Responding to these incidents saves lives...very good public relations

Responding to incidents is good PR for the service

They have to maintain the perception that they are always there if needs be

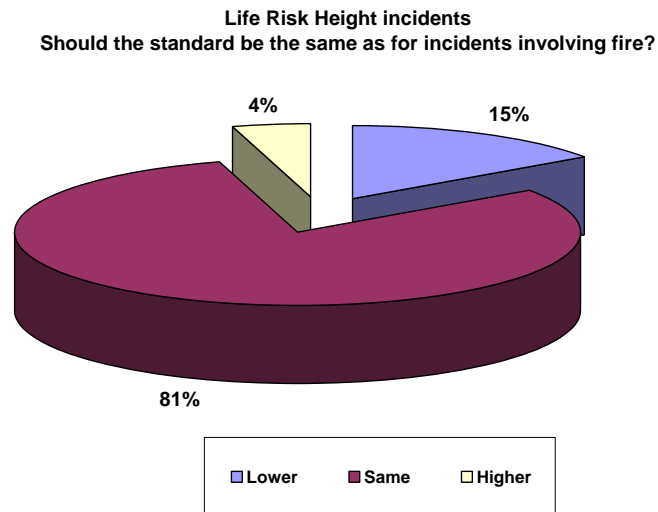
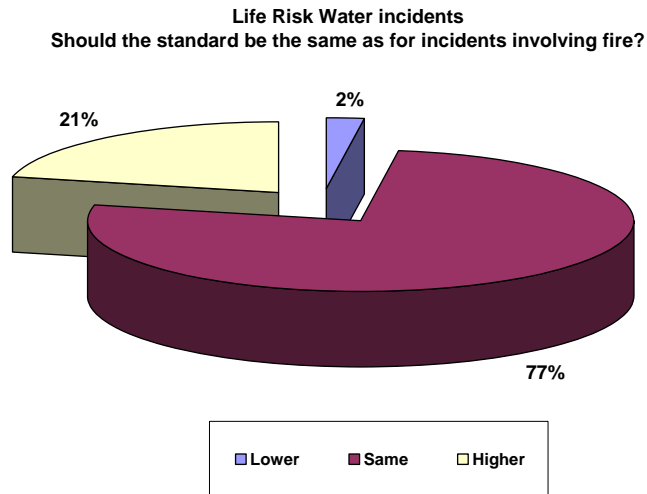
⁸ Opinion Research Services – Report on Consultation on Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/08

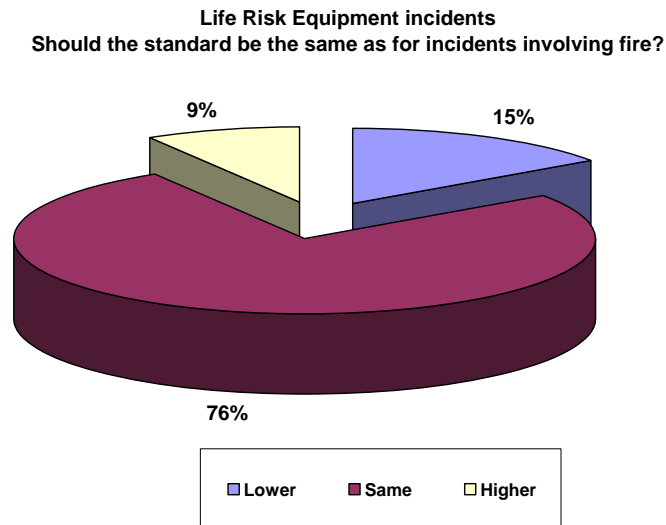


Life Risk Incidents – Response Standard

Questionnaire Response

Life risk incidents involving water received the highest response for having either the same or higher response standards than fires (98%)





Comments received

- If the incident reported is serious and potentially life threatening, then I feel sure your response would be as quick as possible.
- Difficult to comment on response times in 3 and 4. Only trained staff in receipt of the facts would be able to make that assessment.
- Depending to risk of life
- Some reservations about Question 4. Could become a longer incident and fire service wouldn't be able to deal with the situation. Risk for fire staff. Thought given after "Scrutiny Panel" session.

Stakeholder Forum Results⁹

Response to incidents involving height and equipment was thought to depend on circumstances. However, it would be fair to say that the majority did not see such incidents as warranting as fast a response as fires, RTC's and water-based incidents. Indeed, some saw these incidents as a relatively low priority and, based on historical data, not needing a formal response time – they suggested that the FRS should only be required to get there 'as soon as possible':

We would expect they will be dealt with quickly

Get there as soon as you can I would suggest!

⁹ Opinion Research Services – Report on Consultation on Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/08

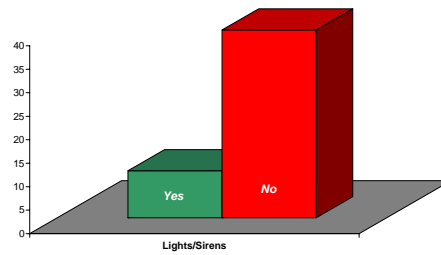


Response to incidents that do NOT involve risk to life.

Questionnaire Response

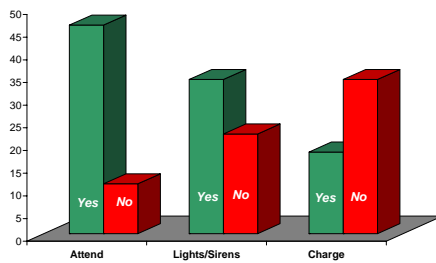
Stakeholders do not support the attendance at small fires without the use of blue lights and sirens.

Stakeholder Response - Small Fires

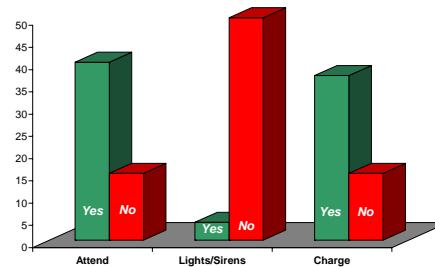


There is clear support for the continued attendance at animal rescues, gas leaks and release from lift cars. There is a clear majority of stakeholder who would support attendance at animal rescues and lift incidents without the use of blue lights and sirens. This is not the case in respect of gas leaks.

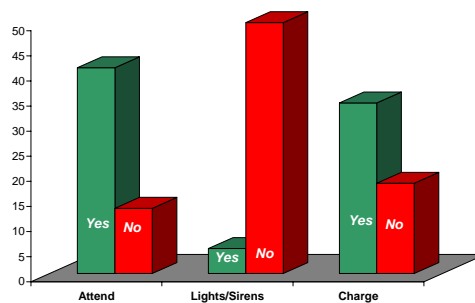
Stakeholder Response - Gas Leaks



Stakeholder Response - Animal Rescues

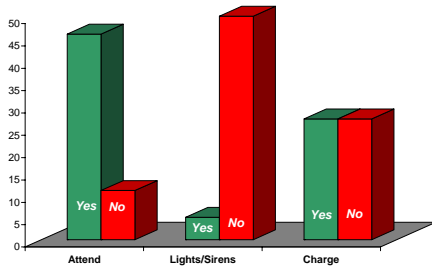


Stakeholder Response - Release from Lift Car

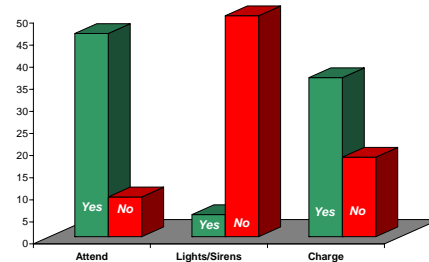


With regard to flooding incidents there remains support for our attendance without the use of blue lights and sirens. In respect of charging, incidents involving domestic property stakeholders were equally split, with a slight majority in favour of charging commercial premises.

Stakeholder Response - Domestic Property Flooding

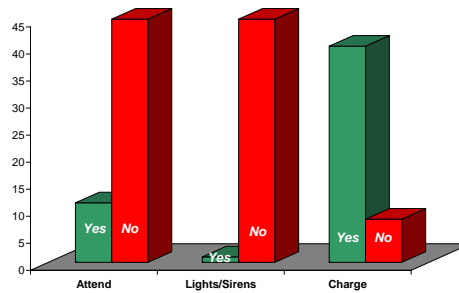


Stakeholder Response - Commercial Property Flooding



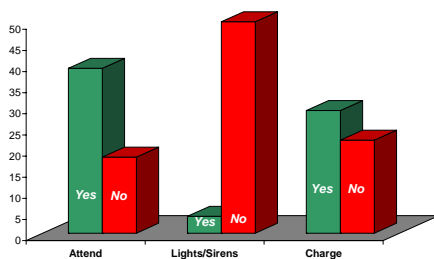
In respect of lock in/out of property there is clear support for not attending these incidents, and charging for the service if we do.

Stakeholder Response - Lock in/out of Property

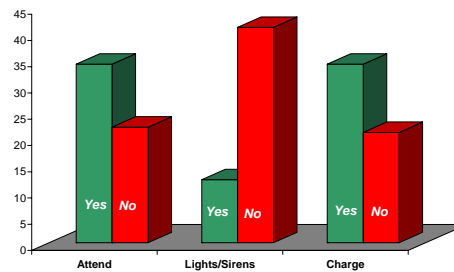


Stakeholders were marginally in favour of our continued attendance at RTC services only, and releasing or removing objects from persons (no injuries). However not responding on blue lights and sirens, and charging for these services was supported by the group.

Stakeholder Response - Removal or Release from Objects (no injury)



Stakeholder Response - Cleaning the Highway (after RTC)



Comments received

- As an emergency service we feel that you should only respond to emergency incidents and the use of blue lights. If it is deemed you are the best option to deal with other incidents that are not life threatening then for PR we believe you could attend but you should also claim for you services.
- You have suggested that the fire/rescue service should not attend certain scenarios you have not indicated who then should deal with them.
- Question 5 would bring different opinions as regards charge for a call out, i.e. rescue of an animal, some people could not probably afford to pay for a rescue or being locked in/out and release from objects. In some cases a charge would be in order perhaps but difficult to implement. The non use of flashing lights and sirens for not life threatening incidents is a good idea and is an excellent idea for road safety.
- Identify the proportion of above that is actually the cause or could cause risk, harm or loss of life.
- Not sure about this. If you have the suitable equipment maybe you should help if there is nothing more urgent.
- Charging - Where the problem in general is minor flooding or not attributable to a particular person or group, no charging. However, where a person or company has found itself responsible for the problem then charging would be in order.
- I think there is a need to consider charging for some incidents as the public need to be responsible for their own actions at times
- Animal rescue should be re-charged if the incident is a result of careless management. A gas leak could be re-charged to the utility company or the insurance company of whoever damaged the main. Commercial property flooding - depends on the cause as to a re-charge.
- Discretionary according to circumstances. There is a difference between a stock animal trapped and in pain and (say) a cat up a tree.
- Where I have marked "No" I would expect support to be provided by another authority i.e. Gas Company, RSPC, Police, lift companies and local authorities.
- Response to the items in question 5 should perhaps be assessed individually depending on circumstances and availability of equipment.
- Depends on type of situation as pranksters should not get your attention. I am in favour of charges where the situation was definitely avoidable and pranksters should not get your assistance without being charged for a wasted journey.
- Most of the items in No.7 should not be down to the Fire Service. However, I think that they should charge for these services if they are needed. I am very much in favour of the Draft Action Plan. From the meeting, we found out that the police's job is to undertake getting people out of the river, but the Fire Service has the boat and all the cost that involves. As the police have more call for it than the Fire Service, I feel that maybe the police should have the boat (therefore reducing the budget), or at least charge for the use of it, if the Fire Service were to keep it.



Other Comments Made on the Questionnaires

The additional comments received (given in detail below), relate to several issues. This includes the lack of clarity on some matters in the Draft IRMP Action Plan, and the need for additional information in order to support people being able to provide informed feedback. Others question the validity of the Fire Authority consulting on matters that they are probably best placed to decide.

Finally, several respondents stress the need for the Fire Authority to provide a good level of service to all parts of the county, not just the urban areas. The excellent work done by our Retained firefighters, especially in the more rural parts of the county is also recognised and supported.

Comments Received

- All answers give do not take into account any high risk to loss of life.
- The army in my time used to help out with vehicles but now they request payment for some.
- In relation to questions 1-4. These questions are operational decisions best made by the Chief Fire Officer, not members of the public. If the country sees fit to appoint a "fire chief" then we should allow him to run the Authority and manage his budget to the best of his ability.
- I am not sure why this questionnaire was sent to Myddle and Broughton PC when it is mainly concerned with Telford.
- Whilst it's nice to be asked, I feel that some of the decisions should be handled by your selves.
- Thank you and good luck. I find all management plans very interesting. A lot of planning is about cost, the more money you have the better you can do things. Like a lot of things "IN LIFE". Depending to risk of life
- Will you please provide me with some more information concerning the "first response element" and the "second element" as mentioned on page 4. *[Response made by letter with further details 16/11/2006 JW].*



Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority's Consultation Response

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority is very grateful to the stakeholder organisations and members of the public that have contributed to this consultation process. The feedback that has been received has been extremely perceptive and constructive and will help to inform the projects that will be undertaken as a consequence of the IRMP Action Plan 2007/08.

The Fire Authority would like to make the following responses to the comments received on its draft proposals.

Relocation of Telford Central (Stafford Park) Appliance to Tweedale (Cuckoo Oak)

The Fire Authority notes all comments made on this subject and is pleased with the level of support shown for this proposal. The Fire Authority recognises and acknowledges the concerns of the local residents. Increased funding from the capital budget will be allocated to this project to allow the Authority to explore options for alleviating these concerns. Further work will be undertaken in conjunction with the local residents to investigate the possibilities for the long term site development, and the ways to address any potential impact.

Pilot Small Fires Unit

The Fire Authority notes all comments made on this subject.

The Fire Authority is pleased to note that the public and stakeholders support the introduction of a pilot project for delivering front line services in a different way for Shropshire's communities. While the number of firefighters deployed at incidents involving small fires will be lower, the safety of both the public and our staff will remain the overriding factor in determining the appropriateness of deploying the Small Fires Unit to any incidents.

Life Risk Incidents – Setting a Standard

The Fire Authority notes all comments made on this subject and in particular the positive response to water incident. The Authority will investigate the development of response standards for water incidents. The number of incidents annually involving rescue from height or machinery is significantly lower than those involving water. As such it would be difficult to produce any meaningful results when dealing with such a small number of incidents. However SFRS will always treat these incidents as a potential risk to life, and provide an emergency response as quickly as possible on all occasions.

Life Risk Incidents – Response Standard

The Fire Authority notes all comments made on this subject. Further investigative work will now have to be undertaken to establish the most practical way forward in dealing with this issue. The Fire Authority is conscious that there remains a significant amount of development work that is required before such standards could be introduced i.e. the



location and deployment or provision of additional resources. It is therefore proposed that further work is carried out specifically in respect of response standards for water incidents.

Response to incidents that do NOT involve risk to life.

The Fire Authority notes all comments made on this subject. While there is general support for the continued attendance at the majority of these incidents, there is a wide range of opinions on how we respond (blue lights) or if we charge. We therefore propose to alter the way we respond to none life risk incidents involving 'Lock in/out' and 'Removal or Release from Objects'. Additionally we intend to introduce charges for attendance at Lift incidents where the reason for the call is a mechanical failure. We will continue to charge for flooding affecting commercial property on a discretionary basis, and seek recovery of our costs for spillages on the highway via the Environment Agency.

Other Comments

The Fire Authority notes all comments. While it is recognised that some respondents felt it was 'nice to be asked' and 'we should allow him [Fire Chief] to run the Authority and manage his budget to the best of his ability, it is a requirement of the IRMP process (DCLG Guidance Note 2) that 'before final decisions are made ... you will be expected to have consulted:

- The general public
- Community Organisations
- Public Representatives
- Business Organisations
- Local Authorities
- Employees
- The DCLG; and
- Any other interested parties.

To be as inclusive as possible the Authority consults will all Local Authorities whether the proposals directly affect them or not e.g. County, Unitary, District and Parish councils.



SHROPSHIRE & WREKIN FIRE AUTHORITY

Report of Consultation on Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/8



Opinion Research Services

SHROPSHIRE & WREKIN FIRE AUTHORITY

Integrated Risk Management Draft Action Plan 2007/8

Report of Consultation with Public and Stakeholders

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ORS is pleased have worked with Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority in conducting the research reported here – not only because respondents shared their views readily on the proposals being put forward by the Authority, but also because the study was undertaken in order to inform the future development of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.

We thank the Authority for commissioning the project as part of an ongoing programme of consultation. We particularly thank those involved in preparing information and presenting it during the sessions, namely Andy Johnson, Divisional Officer; Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer; Councillor Nigel Hartin, Chair of the Fire Authority; Councillor Dave Morgan, Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority and Councillor Phil Box, Chair of the IRMP Members' Working Group. Their input was essential to achieving an informed debate.

We are also grateful to all of the participants who took the time to attend and actively participate in the process, and who evidently enjoyed the experience.

At all stages of the project, *ORS'* status as an independent organisation consulting the public and stakeholders as objectively as possible was recognised and respected. We are grateful for the trust, and we hope this report will contribute usefully to thinking about the Authority's development.

We hope that *ORS* has been instrumental in forging and maintaining a link between the public, stakeholders and their Fire Service, and that the information in this report accurately reflects participants' views and priorities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Introduction

This is not a particularly long report and the detail is important in expressing the tone of the discussions – so readers are invited to examine the main body of the report for an in-depth discussion. However, it is probably also helpful to include a summary of the main outcomes – though such a concise account inevitably over-simplifies and risks accentuating the negative at the expense of the positive.

1.2 Methodology

The following report details the outcomes from the following:

- Three scrutiny panels (pictured below) with members of the public in Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Tweedale
- One stakeholder forum with organisation and business representatives in Shrewsbury

Broadly, the groups discussed the proposals contained in the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority's Draft IRMP Action Plan 2007/08.

The four meetings were qualitative forms of consultation. While the findings cannot be certified as statistically representative of all people in Shropshire, the meetings included a wide range of people and allowed them to think as well as talk. While summarising the main themes and highlighting the key points, this report seeks to be faithful to what was said. The opinions expressed were not always unanimous, but we have endeavoured to reflect both the majority view and, where useful, the diversity of views.

1.3 Key Findings

Telford Fire Cover Review

Main Benefits

- ♦ The relocation of one wholetime fire engine from Telford Central to Tweedale was thought to have several distinct benefits:
 - A better distribution and placement of resources in the Telford area, with no reduction in service

- Improved cover for a larger area
- A faster response in Tweeddale and A442 area
- Greater flexibility for FRS in attending incidents.

Concerns

- ◆ For the majority, there were no disadvantages associated with this proposal.
- ◆ There were, however, concerns for a minority:
 - The cost of the changes
 - Potentially reduced response times for a second incident in the Hollinswood, Malinslee and Priorslee areas
 - *Having only one engine at Telford Central could prove problematic if a major industrial fire happened in the town.*

Staff – advantages and disadvantages

- ◆ The proposed move was, on the whole, believed to be positive for staff at both Telford Central and Tweeddale.
- ◆ Participants were particularly satisfied that the proposal will create new posts.
- ◆ Internal promotion to Watch Manager was desirable to utilise and maximise the potential of existing staff.
- ◆ Other perceived advantages of the relocation for staff were:
 - Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel could benefit from being stationed with wholetime staff in terms of experience
 - RDS staff will be covering additional areas, which could lead to an increase in earnings
 - Better facilities at Tweeddale Fire Station.
- ◆ There was some apprehension regarding the following potential issues:
 - The relocation could lead to a reduction in the number of call-outs received by retained firefighters, adversely affecting their earnings and experience levels
 - Staff at Telford Central may take time to adjust to being the only crew at the station.
- ◆ It was judged essential that the Fire Authority consults sufficiently with staff at the affected stations and fully covers the cost of redeployment.

Costs

- ◆ The costs associated with the relocation were generally accepted; they were viewed as well justified to improve the service received from the FRS in the Telford area.
- ◆ Staff costs were judged to be reasonable in that...
 - Cover at Tweeddale fire station will be 24/7
 - The area will gain another wholetime station
 - Watch Managers are essential.
- ◆ The capital costs were deemed essential to upgrade facilities, provide accommodation for staff, effect service improvement and for the FRS to function effectively.
- ◆ The costs seemed modest to some participants, who questioned whether they had been underestimated.

Overall

- ◆ Generally speaking the proposal was 100% acceptable to the overwhelming majority of participants. It was described as sensible, cost-effective and evidence-based, providing the same level of cover only *allocated better to improve effectiveness*.

Pilot Small Fires Unit

Benefits

- ◆ Learning from experience by way of a trial period was thought to be a very efficient use of resources.
- ◆ The use of a Small Fires Unit (SFU) was thought to have several advantages, as outlined below:
 - Financial efficiency in that its running costs are far lower than those of the larger appliance
 - Better use of staff and appliances
 - Frees up large engines for serious incidents
 - Releases firefighters on larger appliances for prevention work
 - SFU can reach where large tenders cannot
 - Provides firefighters with the opportunity to vary and improve their skills
 - The vehicle is environmentally friendly.

Disadvantages and Concerns

- ◆ The groups approached the use of a SFU with some trepidation, for the reasons outlined below:

- It could encourage children to start larger fires to ensure that a large engine attends the incident
- The vehicle could be unable to cope if a fire is larger than first thought, or if a small fire accelerates faster than expected
- A potential lack of experience on the scene
- Relying on public response to determine the severity of a call-out
- A potential catalyst for the cut-back of services; that is, replacing a large appliance with smaller appliances and less staff
- A lack of visible data regarding the success of the SFU from other forces.

Safety and Effectiveness

- ◆ Participants were satisfied that the SFU would be able to deal with the vast majority of smaller incidents safely and effectively.
 - Experience via a trial period will prove this one way or the other was the consensus view.
- ◆ Most agreed that 'small rubbish, grass or bin fires in the open' are appropriate incidents for the SFU to attend.
- ◆ It was suggested that the vehicle should be RED as *any other colour will not get public respect!*

Other Incidents?

- ◆ Participants made the following suggestions in terms of other incidents to which the SFU could respond:
 - Incidents where people/animals are trapped
 - Initial assessment of RTCs and assistance at minor RTCs
 - Incidents in hard-to-access areas
 - Back-up at other incidents
 - Accidents involving children
 - Lock-ins/outs
 - Lift rescues
 - Clearing roads of debris
 - Potentially all non life-threatening incidents

Attendance Standard for the SFU

- ♦ For most, existing response standards were thought to be adequate for the pilot, to be amended if necessary following a review of scheme data.

Overall Views

- ♦ There was overwhelming agreement with the use of a smaller vehicle for smaller fires, providing the trial (which was deemed essential) demonstrates its safety and effectiveness.

Developing Response Standards for Other Life-Risk Incidents

- ♦ Participants found it difficult to make a judgement on this proposal. On the one hand they questioned whether it is reasonable to set response standards to incidents for which the FRS has no funding or statutory duty to respond, and that may be undertaken at the expense of duties required by law. On the other they acknowledged that the subsequent PR for turning out to such incidents is very good and that it could be very damaging for the FRS if it ceases to do so.

Benefits

- ♦ The following were seen as the main benefits of developing response standards to other life-risk incidents:
 - A timely response saves life and prevents injury
 - Retaining the trust of the public that the FRS will assist them in an emergency
 - Locating and maintaining resources where they are most needed.

Concerns

- ♦ FRS attendance at non-statutory and non-funded incidents was thought to stretch resources and impact on responses to serious incidents for which the Service is legislatively responsible.
- ♦ Another concern was that the Service is attending incidents that are the responsibility of other services such as the Police.

Response Standards

- ♦ ***Rescue from Water***
 - Water-related incidents were thought to always pose a threat to life and as such, response should, it was believed, be the same as that to fires/RTCs.

- ♦ ***Rescue from Height and Equipment***

- Although recognising the need for a response time for such incidents, the majority did not feel they warrant as fast a response as fires, RTCs and water-related incidents.
- Some saw these incidents as a relatively low priority and not needing a formal response time at all.
- ♦ The general view was that all incidents where there is a definite risk to life (or where there is doubt about such risk) require a response time equivalent to fires and RTCs.
- ♦ Others reserved judgement on response standards to other life-risk incidents as they required more information on and understanding of the incidents.

Developing Response Standards for Non Life/Property-Risk Incidents

- ♦ Some did not feel it appropriate for the FRS to set response standards for non life/property-risk incidents; it should, they believed, get there 'as and when', prioritising incidents that could cause severe distress.
- ♦ Others felt there should be standards for non life/property-risk incidents, but that they should be a good deal lower than to those that pose a risk to life.

Benefits

- ♦ The only perceived benefit of this proposal was that developing response times would provide the FRS with a standard by which to judge its response times, resource allocation, methods and so on.

Concerns

- ♦ The following issues were noted with regard to developing response standards to non life/property-risk incidents:
 - A lack of funding - responding to non-funded incidents could, it was felt, divert resources and crew from more urgent, statutory incidents
 - Developing response standards for such incidents could result in lengthening those to life-risk incidents
 - Staff in control centres must be properly trained in undertaking risk assessments so they are able to assess risk to life correctly during the initial call

- It can sometimes be difficult for the FRS to assess risk to life without attending an incident.

Response Standards

- ◆ The general consensus was that the FRS should attend non life/property-risk incidents 'as soon as possible'. As such it was felt that response times need to be flexible, but no higher than the 20 minute low-risk standard.

Incidents that that the FRS should not be required to attend

- ◆ Participants were of the view that the FRS should not be statutorily required to attend the following incidents:
 - Gas leaks
 - Commercial property flooding
 - Lock-ins/outs of property
 - Highways cleaning (except after chemical spillage)
 - Removal of or release from objects
 - Suicide attempts
 - Animal rescues
 - Lift rescues
 - Those where another party is in attendance

Use of flashing lights and sirens

- ◆ Participants across all four sessions were of the view that 'blues and twos' should be avoided as far as possible, especially in the case of minor incidents where human life is not threatened. This, it was felt, would cause less distress to the general public, lessen the danger to FRS staff and other road users and increase road safety.

Charging for attendance

- ◆ Respondents advocated that the FRS should charge for the following non life/property-risk incidents:
 - Animal rescues
 - Lock-ins/outs
 - Lift rescues (charge property owners)
 - Highways cleaning
 - Gas leaks
- ◆ It was also suggested that the FRS charge...
 - *When there is evidence of negligence*
 - *At its discretion as now*

- *For repeated attendances when somebody is responsible for doing what should not have brought the FRS out in the first place*

CONSULTATION PROCESS

2.1 The Commission

On the basis of its experience elsewhere, ORS was commissioned by Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority (SWFA) to facilitate and report three public scrutiny panels and one stakeholder forum during October 2006.

It was agreed that ORS would work in collaboration with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to facilitate the meetings and prepare a report of the discussions, covering the arguments and points made as well as the conclusions. SFRS encouraged ORS to facilitate the meetings and prepare this report independently.

2.2 Schedule of Meetings

The schedule of meetings and the numbers attending each were as follows.

Public Forums

A total of three forums were held with members of the public in Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Tweedale – the make-up of which can be seen in the table below. Participants were broadly representative of their local communities and, encouragingly, represented a wide spectrum of ages and social-economic status:

Scrutiny Panel	Number Attending	Constituents
Shrewsbury	16	7 Female 9 Male
Ludlow	14	8 Female 6 Male
Tweedale	12	7 Female 5 Male

Participants were invited by ORS and paid for their trouble and expenses in attending and taking part in lengthy and detailed meetings.

At Shrewsbury and Ludlow, about two-thirds of the participants had attended similar forums during the previous two years (again at ORS' invitation), and about a third were new recruits. The group at Tweedale was a 'fresh' group; participants were drawn from Tweedale, Hollingswood, Malinslee and Priorslee and convened for the purpose of this consultation as the plans under discussion would, if implemented, have an impact on their communities.

Stakeholder Forum

SWFA also invited a number of their stakeholders to a consultation forum in Shrewsbury. Although the response was somewhat disappointing, those who attended the forum fully engaged with the issues and actively participated in the Panel.

2.3 Conduct of Meetings

All four meetings went well in the sense of providing substantial information for the participants to understand, question and debate the issues fully. In order to make the meetings as informed as possible for the participants, SFRS prepared a detailed Powerpoint presentation about the principles of IRMP and its action plan proposals, covering:

- The meaning and background to *integrated risk management*
- SFRS's IRMP proposals
- SFRS's draft proposals in detail – covering:
 - The Telford Fire Cover Review
 - Piloting a Small Fires Unit
 - Developing Response Standards for Other Life-Risk Incidents
 - Developing Response Standards for Non Life-Risk Incidents

The groups were then given the opportunity to ask questions and seek points of clarification, before dividing into small groups and considering a number of specific proposals in some detail. Finally, at Shrewsbury and Ludlow (but not at Tweedale or the Shrewsbury stakeholder forum due to time constraints) there was a plenary session where the groups had the opportunity to feed back their findings and views.

2.4 Informed Opinion

The meetings began with a detailed and very informative presentation by SFRS to provide respondents with a substantial context of information within which they could understand and consider the Fire Authority's proposals. This approach was used for two main reasons:

- Members of the public are typically poorly informed about how the fire service operates and is managed; and they normally over-estimate the risk of deaths and injuries from dwelling fires. This was especially relevant due to the number of new participants at each public panel.
- The challenge was not to ask people's general impressions of the fire service but to debate very particular proposals – so the meetings needed to focus on them and the reasons for them.

Hence, a considerable amount of information was needed before participants could debate the main specific proposals in turn.

For these reasons, the consultation process should be considered as 'testing' the acceptability of the reasoning and conclusions of SFRS's IRMP draft action plan – by presenting its principles and proposals clearly for discussion. The key question the researchers were asking was:

If people are made fully aware of the background to and arguments for the proposals, how convincing do they find them?

2.5. Inclusiveness and Representativeness

SFRS' consultation programme has been detailed, systematic and inclusive – by providing significant numbers of people with detailed information about its proposals in order to foster open debate. Given that no public body can guarantee a particular level of response to its consultation initiatives, the foremost tests of success are fairness and inclusiveness – were all sections of the community given sufficient information and could they comment readily? In this case, the answer to that question is *Yes*.

Although, the outcomes of such meetings cannot be certified as statistically representative of staff and public opinion, the employee and public meetings reported here certainly gave a very diverse range of people, drawn from differing areas of Shropshire, the opportunity to 'test' the proposals in detailed discussions. The participants were diverse in terms of gender, age, social, economic and professional status, housing tenure and many other criteria. Therefore we are satisfied that the

outcomes of the meetings (as reported below) are soundly indicative of how Shropshire public opinion would incline on the basis of similar discussions.

In summary, then, the meetings are reliable and authoritative as examples of the reflections and opinions of diverse informed people reacting to SFRS' proposals.

2.6 The Report

The next section of this report has been structured so as to address each of the agenda items in some detail. The views of the public and stakeholder forums have been amalgamated within these sections, as they were not significantly divergent on any of the issues.

Essentially, the report reviews the sentiments and judgements of participants about the Fire and Rescue Service in Shropshire. Some verbatim quotations (*italics*) are used – not because we agree or disagree with them – but for their vividness in capturing recurrent points of views. ORS does not endorse opinions in question, but seeks only to portray them accurately and clearly. While quotations are used, the report is obviously not a verbatim transcript of the sessions, but an interpretative summary of the issues raised by participants in free-ranging discussions.

CONSULTATION FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

Each group was asked to address a series of questions, which were intended to focus their thinking but not necessarily constrain them. The 'worksheets' outlined some of the most relevant information to aid the panel in their thinking. Approximately 30 minutes was spent on each topic so the sessions needed to be very focussed.

Telford Fire Cover Review

Main Benefits

All three panels, as well as the stakeholder group, endorsed the proposal to move one wholetime fire engine from Telford Central to Tweedale; they saw the relocation as having several distinct benefits.

Firstly, the proposal will, it was felt, result in the much improved distribution and placement of resources in Telford and the surrounding areas. Resources will be placed where they are most required and, as a result, fire cover will be improved in higher risk areas:

Data for the South of Telford shows the need for extra cover

Good idea to spread out the appliances into the higher risk areas

It's addressing the human risk

A faster response in the densely-populated Tweedale and A442 area, with service maintained in the Telford Central area, was also seen as a positive by-product of the relocation:

Response times for Tweedale are considerably improved

The Tweedale area has nothing to lose but everything to gain!

Cover will come from two different areas but will total the same

Finally, respondents were of the view that splitting the fire cover between the two areas will provide Shropshire FRS with greater flexibility when attending incidents, and greatly assist

the service in meeting its response standards – which was judged particularly important by the stakeholders in respect of the traffic congestion in the centre of Telford:

I think it's a good idea that you do spread your fire cover...quicker response times to any life risk or any property fire

You can't expect to get out of Telford and down past Cuckoo Oak and those sorts of places quickly

The traffic around Telford is not very good so I would have thought that having somewhere in the South with a fire engine makes more sense

Concerns

There were no disadvantages associated with this proposal for the majority of panel members and stakeholders. For a minority of the public at all three groups, however, the cost of the changes was a concern:

Will cost more due to more staff and capital expenditure...will other aspects of the budget suffer?

Further, there was worry amongst a small number at Tweedale that the proposal could potentially lead to reduced response times for a second incident in the Hollinswood, Malinslee and Priorslee areas. Further, the stakeholder group was of the view that *people around Telford Central will obviously think they are losing a fire engine* and may not be receptive to the proposal if they are not in possession of the requisite background information.

Finally in terms of concerns, a small number at Ludlow were of the view that *if a major industrial fire happened in Telford it could cause a problem with only one engine.*

Staff

Participants were particularly pleased that the proposal will create new posts. Further, internal promotion to Watch Manager – which should, it was believed, be the FRS's aim – was desirable in order to utilise and maximise the potential of existing staff:

Couldn't we utilise existing staff through internal promotion rather than duplicating?

Other perceived benefits of this proposal for staff were that...

- ◆ Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel could benefit from being stationed with more experienced wholetime staff

- *You can't get enough experience...when you're training especially*
- ◆ RDS staff will be covering additional areas, which could lead to an increase in their earnings
- ◆ Facilities will be improved at Tweedale Fire Station

Although the proposed move was generally believed to be positive for staff, respondents did express concerns. Firstly, it was suggested at all three panels that the relocation could have an adverse impact on the number of call-outs received by retained firefighters; that is, the retained crew at Tweedale may not be utilised as frequently, which will have an impact on their earnings and, potentially, their experience levels:

Will retained staff lose out in being called out less and therefore having less experience?

What kind of an impact will this have on retained staff in terms of call-outs and turnout fees?

Secondly, a minority of participants at Ludlow were of the view that the staff at Telford Central may take time to adjust to being the only crew at that station.

Finally, the relocation of staff was thought to always cause some concern. As such, it was deemed essential that the Fire Authority consults sufficiently with staff at the affected stations, and covers any costs associated with redeployment.

Costs

The costs associated with the proposed move were accepted by the overwhelming majority of participants; they were viewed as well justified to increase efficiency and improve the service received by Shropshire's communities – particularly in terms of response times:

Appears cost-effective and response times are more efficient

Well justified to improve service

Seem reasonable taking into account the benefit regarding response times

Satisfied that the Service will be improved

If it saves one life...it's very cost-effective

Staff costs were satisfactory, particularly given that cover at Tweedale fire station will be 24/7 and the that the area will gain another wholtime engine. It was also acknowledged that Watch Managers are essential and that the £150,000 cost of their employment is thus reasonable.

The £20,000 capital costs were also deemed essential to upgrade facilities, provide accommodation for staff, effect service improvement and ensure the effective functioning of Shropshire FRS:

The building will need to be upgraded to accommodate wholetime firefighters and possibly another appliance bay

It's a reasonable cost for the accommodation of staff

Indeed, the costs seemed modest to some participants, leading them to question whether they have been underestimated:

£20,000 seems low for ancillary work so is acceptable...not much is bought for that!

It doesn't seem like very much these days does it?

At Ludlow, it was queried whether additional space is released at Telford Central and, if so, what this could be utilised for. Further, participants at Tweedale questioned whether local organisations or companies could assist with renovation costs at their local station.

Overall

In the main, the relocation of a wholetime engine from Telford Central to Tweedale was *100% acceptable* to the overwhelming majority of participants. It was described as sensible, cost-effective and evidence-based, providing the same level of cover only *allocated better to improve effectiveness*.

Pilot Small Fires Unit

Benefits

With regard to the Small Fires Unit (SFU), learning from experience by way of a trial period, using an existing vehicle and staff, was thought to be a very efficient use of resources.

The use of a SFU was thought to have several distinct advantages. Firstly, the vehicle itself was thought to be more financially efficient in that its running costs will be significantly lower than those of a larger appliance. This cost saving, it was suggested, *could help with the cost of moving a wholetime tender to Tweedale*.

Utilising the SFU was also believed to represent a better use of manpower, equipment and appliances. It was viewed as an extra firefighting vehicle that will free up the larger engines for more serious, life-threatening incidents, and also assist firefighters on larger appliances in undertaking community

safety as they will no longer have this work interrupted by having to attend 'smaller' incidents:

The main advantage is that the vehicles do release all other resources for high risk house and loss of life incidents

A large vehicle with six staff for a bin fire seems excessive

Staff can be doing prevention work

It certainly saves wasting a whole crew going to [smaller] incidents...they could be better served elsewhere

Other perceived benefits of the SFU were as follows:

- ♦ Smaller vehicles can reach where large tenders cannot
 - *Smaller vehicles have better access to hard-to-reach areas*
- ♦ It provides the opportunity for firefighters to vary and improve their skills
- ♦ The vehicle is environmentally friendly

Disadvantages and Concerns

All three groups were uneasy regarding a few potential consequences of introducing the SFU. The primary concern was that its use could encourage children to start larger fires in order to ensure that a larger engine is despatched:

Youths who start fires could be enticed to light bigger fires to get a bigger vehicle or more noise

Concern about kids lighting bigger fires as a result

Further, participants were apprehensive that those wishing to cause trouble could attempt to deliberately mislead control room staff by describing large incidents as small in nature:

Someone ringing in to say that it's a small fire but when they get there it's a house fire...it could be rung in incorrectly in order to cause more chaos

These scenarios described above could, it was felt, result in risk to a small crew from physical abuse and also place appliances and equipment at risk. As such, it was deemed imperative that the FRS consider the health and safety implications for staff of using a SFU.

Several participants expressed worry that the SFU could experience problems if a fire is larger than first thought, or if a small fire accelerates faster than expected:

Potential problems if the fire is larger than first thought

If the fire got bigger, the FRS could have lost time dealing with a major incident

If a fire gets out of control...can they handle it?

A small heath fire or one adjacent to property could develop into a large fire and pose a risk to persons/property due to the small vehicle being unable to cope

However, it was acknowledged that additional reinforcements can be called for should the aforementioned circumstances occur.

For a minority at the Shrewsbury public panel, a potential lack of experience on the scene of an incident was an issue; they suggested that at least one firefighter riding the SFU should be experienced enough to be able to assess an incident quickly on arrival:

Will one be an officer because a small fire could escalate into a more serious incident?

The following were given across all three panels – although predominantly at Tweedale - as further disadvantages and concerns regarding the use of the SFU:

- ♦ The reporting criteria for small fires; that is, relying on public response to determine the severity of an incident
 - *Who decides if it's a small fire?*
- ♦ Its introduction as a catalyst for the cut-back of services; for example, the replacement of the large appliance with smaller appliances and less staff
- ♦ A lack of visible data from other forces, which could be useful in judging the success and effectiveness of the SFU in other areas

Safety and Effectiveness

Participants were satisfied that the SFU would be able to deal with the vast majority of smaller incidents safely and effectively, acknowledging that it would provide an initial response that could be increased if necessary:

Satisfied that the SFU could deal with 90% of smaller incidents safely and effectively

However, that experience via a trial period will prove this definitively one way or the other was the consensus view:

For my mind the jury is out so the trial seems sensible

Indeed, some participants at Shrewsbury expected, and desired that the trial would *demonstrate need for a more multi-purpose vehicle that offers greater flexibility.*

When asked whether 'small rubbish, grass or bin fires in the open' are the appropriate incidents for the SFU to attend, most answered in the affirmative, although some felt unable to make a judgement prior to the release of historical data from other brigades:

The range of fires chosen is acceptable...

Vehicle seems appropriate for the fires stated

On a final note, it was suggested that the vehicle should be RED as any other colour *will not get public respect!*

Other Incidents?

Although acknowledging that the trial period will identify other incidents to which the SFU could respond, participants across all three groups made some suggestions as outlined below:

- ◆ Incidents where people/animals are trapped
 - e.g. people trapped in railings and animal rescues
- ◆ Initial assessment of RTCs
- ◆ Assistance at minor RTCs
- ◆ Incidents in hard-to-access areas
- ◆ Back-up at serious incidents
- ◆ Community fire safety work such as taking the vehicle to schools
- ◆ Accidents involving children
- ◆ Lock-ins/outs
- ◆ Lift rescues
- ◆ Clearing roads of debris
- ◆ Potentially all non life-threatening incidents

Attendance Standard for SFU

For most, existing response standards were thought to be adequate for the pilot, to be amended if necessary following a review of scheme data:

We believe the response standards should be the same as for emergency situations to ensure the fire is under control as soon as possible

Attendance standards should be the same as the large engine...until it can be reviewed with the pilot scheme data

For some at Ludlow and Tweedale, 15 to 20 minutes was sufficient as, in their view, *small fires are not as important so although a high standard is desirable it is not essential*. However they also agreed that more information is required from the pilot before a firm judgement is made. Further, for individual incidents, they suggested that *surroundings and dryness and so on must also be considered* when deciding upon a response.

Overall Views

There was overwhelming agreement with the use of smaller vehicles for smaller fires, providing the trial (which was deemed essential) demonstrates the SFU's safety and effectiveness:

Makes complete sense!

100% unanimously in agreement!

A high pay return on a lean use of resources

This is fine for the pilot study with the limitations of the vehicle concerned

Acceptable with the information given at this time...before the results of the pilot are in

Certainly worth piloting

It's common sense

Developing Response Standards to Other Life-Risk Incidents

Participants found it very difficult to make a judgement on whether the FRS should develop response standards to life-risk incidents other than fires and RTCs; they acknowledged that it poses a very difficult dilemma for the service. On the one hand they questioned whether it is reasonable to set response standards for non-funded incidents to which the FRS has no statutory duty to respond, and that may be undertaken at the expense of the duties required by law:

The FRS should be able to develop response standards but with adequate funding

On the other hand they acknowledged that the subsequent PR for turning out quickly to such incidents is very good, and that it could be very damaging for the FRS if it ceases to do so:

Responding to these incidents saves lives...very good public relations

Responding to incidents is good PR for the service

They have to maintain the perception that they are always there if needs be

Benefits

The following were seen as the main benefits of developing response standards to other life-risk incidents:

- ♦ *Timely response to save life or prevent injury*
- ♦ Retaining the trust of the public that the FRS will assist them in an emergency
- ♦ The FRS can locate and maintain resources where they are most needed

Concerns

FRS attendance at, and setting of response standards for non-statutory and non-funded incidents was viewed somewhat negatively in that it could stretch resources and may impact on responses to incidents for which the FRS are legislatively responsible:

It's important to develop response standards for other life-risk incidents but there are budget implications and they must not be at the expense of the duties required by law

The main concern is having the adequate funding to be able to respond to other life-risk incidents

Funding should be increased or costs refunded by third parties

Resources are being diverted away from fire incidents

Trying to keep your competency level up [for these types of incidents], with everything else everybody has to do, is hard

One suggestion made in order to overcome this problem is that District Councils could buy in required services from the FRS – although participants did acknowledge that the cost would still come from their Council Tax!

Another concern was that the Service is attending incidents that are the responsibility of other services such as the Police. These responsibilities must, it was felt, be more clearly defined in order that the FRS is attending only the incidents at which its presence is truly required.

Response Standards

Rescue from Water

Water-related incidents were thought to always pose a threat to life and, due to this risk and the sheer number of incidents, the general view was that response should be the same as that to fires/RTCs.

Indeed, a view expressed at all groups was that every incident that poses a risk to life (or where there is doubt about such risk) requires a response time equivalent to that developed for fires and RTCs as it could develop into a situation whereby speed is of the evidence:

If life is at risk then the incidents need the same attention as other incidents of a similar nature

Response should be the same as that to fires/RTCs when human life is involved

If it's a life that's at risk then you've got to do your best to save them...

Rescue from Height and Equipment

Response to incidents involving height and equipment was thought to depend on circumstances. However, it would be fair to say that the majority did not see such incidents as warranting as fast a response as fires, RTCs and water-based incidents. Indeed, some saw these incidents as a relatively low priority and, based on historical data, not needing a formal response time – they suggested that the FRS should only be required to get there 'as soon as possible':

We would expect they will be dealt with quickly

Get there as soon as you can I would suggest!

Several participants reserved judgement on response standards for other life-risk incidents as they required more information on and understanding of the incidents.

Develop Response Standards to Non Life/Property-Risk Incidents

There was evidence of a difference of opinion - both within and amongst the three panels - regarding the development of response standards for non life/property-risk incidents. Some did not feel it appropriate for FRS to set response standards for incidents where there is no risk to life. Although they acknowledged that attendance at such incidents facilitates training and a *positive public perception*, the consensus was that the FRS should *just get there 'as and when'*, with priority given to incidents that could cause severe distress to people. Others felt there should be standards for non life/property-risk incidents, but that they should be a good deal lower than to those that pose a risk to life:

They do need to attend...but prioritise!

Where the service is certain there is no life risk [it] should respond within a reasonable time but not as an emergency

Life saving is the prime objective

Benefits

The only perceived benefit of developing response standards to non life/property-risk incidents was that it would provide the FRS with a standard by which to judge its response times, resource allocation, methods and so on.

Concerns

Funding, or the lack of it, was the prime concern of participants when considering the development of response standards to non life/property-risk incidents. In order to alleviate this concern, one suggestion was that the FRS work in partnership with other agencies (such as the Highways Agency) to share the financial and operational burden.

Responding to such incidents could, it was felt, *divert resources and crew from more urgent incidents:*

Non-life threatening responses could interfere with the main objectives of the FRS

Further, there was a sense that developing response standards for less serious incidents could result in lengthening those to life-risk incidents.

Two further issues were noted by the public at Shrewsbury and Ludlow. The first was that risk must be correctly assessed during the initial call, and that the FRS must ensure that its control room staff are properly trained in undertaking such assessments:

The person taking the initial call must ask the right questions and make a sound judgement

Secondly, it was judged to be often difficult to assess an incident in terms of risk to life without being in attendance. As such, the FRS should endeavour to ensure that back-up is readily available to all appliances on all occasions, lest an incident happen to be more serious than first thought:

Often the incident cannot be properly assessed until they are at the scene and appropriate action taken

Response Standards

The general consensus was that the FRS should attend to non life/property-risk incidents as soon as possible, *providing the fulfilment of its primary duties is not affected*. As such, response times were required by respondents to be flexible, although no higher than the 20 minute low-risk standard.

Incidents that that the FRS should not be required to attend

Participants across the three public and one stakeholder group/s were of the view that the FRS should not be statutorily required to attend the following incidents:

- ◆ Gas leaks
 - Some saw gas leaks as the priority of gas companies, although a small minority disagreed and judged them to be the only non life/property-risk incident the FRS should be required to attend
- ◆ Commercial property flooding
- ◆ Lock-ins/outs of property
 - *Unless it's a child stuck somewhere who may panic*
- ◆ Highways cleaning (except after chemical spillage)
- ◆ Removal of or release from objects
- ◆ Suicide attempts
- ◆ Animal rescues
 - *If someone wants their cat down they should have to pay for it!*
- ◆ Lift rescues
 - *Why can't the people who maintain the lifts get the people out?*
- ◆ Those where another party is in attendance

There was certainly a strong sense, especially at Tweedale, that the FRS should only be called to non fire-related incidents as a last resort and that the public need educating in this area; that is, who else do they call under such circumstances?

Use of flashing lights and sirens

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that the use of 'blues and twos' should be avoided as far as possible, especially in the case of minor incidents where human life is not threatened:

Most medium/low risk incidents ought not to be 'at a rush' which endangers other people

Only used when there is a real need to get there in a reasonable time

This, it was felt, would cause less distress to the general public, lessen the danger to FRS staff and other road users and greatly increase road safety:

Reduces the incidence of alarm for other road users

Non-use of blues and twos would cause less distress to the general public and increase road safety

Blues and twos should not be used at all when attending non life-risk incidents because of the danger to staff and other road users

Charging for attendance

Again across all groups, participants felt that the FRS should charge (using a sliding scale) for the following non life/property-risk incidents:

- ◆ Animal rescues
- ◆ Lock-outs
- ◆ Lift rescues (charge property owners)
- ◆ Highways cleaning
- ◆ Gas leaks

Participants at Ludlow also suggested that the FRS charge...

- ◆ *When there is evidence of negligence*
- ◆ *At its discretion as now*
- ◆ *For repeated attendances when somebody is responsible for doing what should not have brought the FRS out in the first place*

Overall Comments

It is encouraging to note that, once again, all participants have actively engaged with the consultation process, carefully deliberated the issues under scrutiny and provided SWFA with considerable feedback on the proposals contained within its draft IRMP Action Plan 2007/08.

With regard to the proposals themselves, it would be fair to say that the balance of opinion was for the implementation of the first two under discussion – the 'Telford Fire Cover Review' and 'Piloting the Small Fires Unit'. There were, of course, concerns allied to both proposals but, on the whole, they were endorsed by participants, who agreed that the advantages considerably outweigh the disadvantages.

Developing response standards to non life/property risk incidents and, to a lesser extent, other life-risk incidents was a less straightforward issue for participants. They could see the dilemma this issue poses to the FRS – although it is not funded, nor is it legislatively required to attend such incidents, the fact it does so fosters such a positive perception that not responding could have a detrimental effect on public relations, respect and

esteem. Although respondents did make some suggestions as to possible response times for such incidents – and indeed commented extensively on whether response times are actually required - most could see both sides of the argument and did not envy SWFA in having to make decisions on this aspect of the FRS's work.

In all, all four sessions worked well in stimulating debate and it is hoped that the feedback received proves useful to the Authority in developing a way forward for its Fire and Rescue Service and in attempting to improve the provision received by the communities it serves.

Timetable of Presentations Given during the IRMP Consultation

Visit No.	Station/Watch/Name	Date	FA Member Attending	Officers Attended						Venue
				AT	SW	PR	LMc	AJ	JW	
1	Staff Reps (FBU, FOA, RFU & Unison)	04/09/2006	Nigel Hartin	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	Brigade Headquarters
2	Cleobury Mortimer	05/09/2006	Nigel Hartin & Dave Morgan	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	Cleobury Mortimer Fire Station
3	Tweeddale	06/09/2006	Nigel Hartin & Dave Morgan	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	Tweeddale Fire Station
4	Newport	07/09/2006	Nigel Hartin & Lt Col Denis Allen	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	Newport Fire Station
5	Shrewsbury Blue Watch	11/09/2006	David Morgan & Phil Box	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	Shrewsbury Fire Station
6	Albrighton	13/09/2006	Rodney Davies & Stuart West	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	Albrighton Fire Station
7	Telford Green Watch	15/09/2006	Dave Morgan & Alan Hussey	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	Telford Station Fire Station
8	Ludlow	19/09/2006		✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	Ludlow Fire Station
9	Shrewsbury Retained	20/09/2006		✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	Shrewsbury Fire Station
10	Wellington Blue Watch	27/09/2006	Nigel Hartin, Alan Hussey & Stuart West	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	Wellington Fire Station
11	Prees	28/09/2006	Rodney Davies	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	Prees Fire Station
12	Wellington Green Watch	02/10/2006	Alan Hussey & Rodney Davies	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	Wellington Fire Station
13	Fire Control (White Watch)	03/10/2006		✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	Fire Control Shrewsbury
14	Headquarters Staff	04/10/2006	Nigel Hartin, Rodney Davies & Phil Box	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	Brigade Headquarters
15	Fire Control (Green Watch)	04/10/2006	Dave Morgan	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	Fire Control Shrewsbury
16	Craven Arms	10/10/2006		✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	Craven Arms Fire Station
17	Minsterley	11/10/2006	Rodney Davies	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	Minsterley Fire Station
18	Wellington Red Watch	12/10/2006	Nigel Hartin, Rodney Davies, Stuart West & Alan Hussey	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	Wellington Fire Station
19	Bishops Castle	12/10/2006	Dave Morgan	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	Bishops Castle Fire Station



Visit No.	Station/Watch/Name	Date	FA Member Attending	Officers Attended						Venue
				AT	SW	PR	LMc	AJ	JW	
20	Telford Blue Watch	13/10/2006	Dave Morgan, Phil Box & Cllr Yvonne Holyoak	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	Telford Fire Station
21	Headquarters Staff	16/10/2006	Stuart West	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	Brigade Headquarters
22	Telford Training Centre	17/10/2006	Nigel Hartin	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	Telford Training Central
23	Bridgnorth and Much Wenlock	17/10/2006	Nigel Hartin & Stuart West Cllr John Hurst-Knight	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	Bridgnorth Fire Station
24	Baschurch	18/10/2006		✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	Baschurch Fire Station
25	Wem	19/10/2006	Nigel Hartin, Rodney Davies & David Minnery	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	Wem Fire Station
26	Headquarters Staff	23/10/2006	Dave Morgan & Rodney Davies	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	Brigade Headquarters
27	SALC Executive Cmte	23/10/2006	Nigel Hartin & Dave Morgan	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	Wilfred Owen Room, The Shirehall
28	Wellington White Watch	24/10/2006	Dave Morgan	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	Wellington Fire Station
29	Market Drayton	24/10/2006	Nigel Hartin, Dave Morgan, David Minnery, & Rodney Davies	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	Market Drayton Fire Station
30	Public Scrutiny Panel (Tweedale)	26/10/2006	Nigel Hartin & Dave Morgan	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	Tweedale Fire Station
31	Public Forum (Shrewsbury)	26/10/2006	Dave Morgan	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	Lord Hill, Abbey Foregate Shrewsbury
32	Stakeholder Forum (Shrewsbury)	26/10/2006	Dave Morgan	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	Lord Hill, Abbey Foregate Shrewsbury
33	Public Scrutiny Panel (Ludlow)	27/10/2006	Phil Box	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	Feather Hotel Ludlow
34	Fire Control (Red Watch)	30/10/2006	Nigel Hartin	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	Fire Control Shrewsbury
35	Telford White Watch	31/10/2006	Dave Morgan	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	Telford Fire Station
36	Church Stretton	31/10/2006	Dave Morgan	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	Church Stretton Fire Station
37	Ellesmere	01/11/2006	Dave Morgan, Rodney Davies & Cllr Dr June Drummond	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	Ellesmere Fire Station



Visit No.	Station/Watch/Name	Date	FA Member Attending	Officers Attended						Venue
				AT	SW	PR	LMc	AJ	JW	
38	Shrewsbury Red Watch	06/11/2006		x	x	✓	x	✓	x	Shrewsbury Fire Station
39	Wellington Retained	07/11/2006	Nigel Hartin, Dave Morgan, Alan Hussey & David Minnery	x	✓	x	x	✓	x	Wellington Fire Station
40	South Shropshire District Council, Safety Policy Panel	07/11/2006		x	x	x	x	✓	x	Ground Floor Meeting Room, Council Offices Ludlow.
41	Oswestry	08/11/2006	Phil Box	x	x	x	x	✓	x	Oswestry Fire Station
42	Shrewsbury White Watch	08/11/2006		x	x	x	✓	✓	x	Shrewsbury Fire Station
43	Clun	09/11/2006	Nigel Hartin	x	✓	x	x	✓	x	Clun Fire Station
44	Fire Control (Blue Watch)	10/11/2006		✓	x	x	x	✓	x	Fire Control Shrewsbury
45	Telford Red Watch	13/11/2006	Alan Hussey & Stuart West	✓	x	x	x	x	✓	Telford Fire Station
46	Shrewsbury Green Watch	13/11/2006		x	x	x	x	x	✓	Shrewsbury Fire Station
47	Hodnet	14/11/2006	Nigel Hartin & Rodney Davies	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	Hodnet Fire Station
48	Whitchurch	16/11/2006	Nigel Hartin & Rodney Davies	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	Whitchurch Fire Station
49	Cuckoo Oak Green (Tweedale Residents)	17/11/2006	Alan Hussey	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	Tweedale fire Station



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

***THE
SHROPSHIRE
Fire Brigades Union***



***PRELIMINARY
OBSERVATIONS and
OBJECTIONS to Shropshire
Fire and Rescue Service's Draft
IRMP Action Plan 2007/2008***

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Introduction

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) in Shropshire has always been in full support of the principle of risk-based fire service planning and the concept of risk based emergency cover provision, as stated in previous years.

This position was formalised in the national policy position adopted at the Fire Brigades Union Annual Conference in 2002. The FBU have been fully supportive of the approach and research into risk-based emergency cover.

We also have a common goal with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SF&RS) and the Fire Authority's (FA) stated mission of "Putting Shropshire Safety First" and feel that this year's proposals are mostly a significant and positive step toward this goal.

However, the Fire Brigades Union will remain strongly opposed to Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) being used as a tool to reduce current intervention standards through the cutting of emergency cover and staffing levels, which appears to be the trend in many other counties in the UK Fire Service. This may well impact on Shropshire, as risk management needs to be integrated and we of course have little influence on what is taking place in other Services, most particularly; our neighbours.

The Fire Brigades Union not only considers IRMP to be challenging, but also an opportunity to improve the service to the community, as well as ensuring the safety of those that deliver that service.

Methodology/ Risk assessment

The way in which IRMP has been instigated for the Fire Service, has meant that an iterative method has had to be used. What was actually needed was greater time, resources and underpinning of the system to ensure that it is applied correctly, i.e. integrated. The iterative method, in other words should be used to fine tune a plan and not in the initial stages of the plan. As we pointed out in the early stages of IRMP only dealing with restricted areas at a time, means that assumptions need to be made; namely, that the rest of the model of fire cover is perfect. The flaw in this methodology is that any actions taken in isolation from the whole brigade will have a knock on effect into other areas, without those other areas being fully assessed.

A fully Integrated Risk Management Plan, to be as effective as possible, should minimise the risks to both firefighters and the general public. To do this an holistic approach to the management of risk is required.

Now that we are entering year 4 of IRMP, the approach of SF&RS has developed comprehensively. However, IRMP must take into consideration all the variables within which the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) is required to function. This should include the management of the implementation of the proposals. This is an area where some lessons could be learned from last year's proposals and implementation, which will be dealt with later.

An example to show that SF&RS are mastering the IRMP process is in the assessment of risk provided in the Donnington area for the Telford Fire Cover Review. The FSEC computer did not accurately correlate to the incident history of that area. Although the model erred (on the side of caution; which is to be hoped for) it will still need to be investigated as to why the discrepancy existed. It is however, to SF&RS credit (an example of sensible and cautious approach to the FSEC computer model) that SF&RS has identified the discrepancy and acted appropriately at this stage.

Progress to Date

Retained Review

The FA and SF&RS appear to be extremely satisfied with the Retained Review and its ongoing implementation of the 27 recommendations. Shropshire FBU echo the positive effect that this work is having on the whole service. There is no need for us to repeat the outstanding results that this is starting to have already, as SF&RS are well aware of these. Sufficed to say that significant improvement has taken place in the areas of; training, exercises, appliance availability, recruitment, retention, CFS and general coordination.

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.

Risk Reduction Initiatives

The FBU believes that before any changes are proposed or implemented in the area of intervention, as a result of any proposals to alter activity in the areas of prevention and/or protection, the outcomes of such additional activity must clearly demonstrate proven and sustainable long-term benefits to the communities that we serve. They must also demonstrate their effectiveness and continue to be evolved to create greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Partnership working is the new area of initiative and SF&RS has demonstrated that it is at the forefront of this work in many parts of the county.

Community Fire Safety (CFS)

Operational staff, both Wholetime and Retained Duty Staff (RDS), carry out an increasing burden of CFS work. However, where is the analysis that this work being undertaken is the most effective, and that the right methods are being used? Are there any alternatives that may be a more effective and efficient use of resources?

Regardless of this lack of analysis, the Home Safety Survey (HSS) have been altered recently. Cold calling is still being used, but now each home is to receive 5 knocks before the owner is invited to arrange a Home Safety Survey (HSS). It is difficult to believe that this is the best use of resources at

the disposal of SF&RS. This addition to the work pattern appears to be Sisyphean rather than empirically justified.

Home Safety Surveys have been the cornerstone of CFS for a number of years and there should have been by now empirical evidence that this work is having an effect and a measure of that effect. The surveys are very thorough and intensive, but could some of the time allocated to it, be allocated to other initiatives. Greater involvement in schools and education must be an area to consider that may yield a greater return in comparison to effort.

Fire Safety- Protection

This is in the process of large change, with the Regulatory Reform Order consolidating the many pieces of Fire Safety legislation. SF&RS appear to be well into the process of implementing this change. It will need to be subjected to the test of time, whether the shift of emphasis away from the fire service to the occupier, in terms of responsibility, will be a successful one.

We welcome the work being done in houses of multiple occupancy. This will help to protect some of the most vulnerable people in society with regard to fire risk.

False Alarms

It is with continued caution that the work achieved in reducing the numbers of false alarms due to apparatus is supported by the FBU. SF&RS is nationally a leader in this field and is to be congratulated. However, our reservations about false alarm policy outlined in our response to last year's IRMP remains valid. It is pleasing though, to see that so far SF&RS continue to take a sensible approach to this subject, with good results.

SF&RS must stay with the pace of proliferation of fire alarms as they become available to smaller premises and even domestic dwellings. Keeping the pressure on users to maintain reliability of these systems without causing fear of false alarms caused through good intent is a fine dividing line.

False Alarms Malicious and Fire Crime Prevention

Hoax calls and Arson, to use more familiar terminology, are always going to be more difficult subjects in which to obtain success that can be sustained. This is because these acts are carried out with volition, rather than by accident or miscalculation. SF&RS must be applauded for their success thus far in this field, but in the long term, robust education programmes are the only solution to this problem. Although it is difficult to see how these crimes can ever be completely eradicated.

XL Cabs

This again is work linked in with the Retained Review Project. SF&RS are now using XL Cabs to their full advantage. The advantages and disadvantages of XL Cabs as opposed to two appliances at the initial five stations is a contentious issue that has already received enough coverage. Sufficed to say that, within the present mobilising scheme, SF&RS is now demonstrating a coherent mobilising strategy. This will help to address many concerns that have traditionally beset this change.

Additionally, the present policy of upgrading the remaining appliances at Retained Stations to XL Cabs has to be seen as the way of the future for the fire service in rural areas. It greatly aids intervention cover, the safety of firefighters and helps to fulfil the FBU's CAST analysis as well as SF&RS Response Standards.

Water Strategy

As with all areas this must come under review. It is worrying though that an assumption appears to have been made that if something has not been used at an incident in the last three years then it will justifiably be curtailed. We hope that full risk analysis, taking all factors into account, will be used before hydrants are decommissioned.

Road Traffic Collisions (RTC)

The progression of equipment for RTCs outlined on page 18 of the Action Plan is encouraging. There is a pragmatic approach to renewing equipment that is necessary for RTCs, which are becoming more and more complicated incidents to contend with.

There has recently been a greater involvement in RTC prevention in both education and publicity. The Fire Service should involve itself in prevention in areas that make up the incident profile. However, it must be remembered that it is not the Fire Service's core function and it may be necessary to allow those responsible to take the lead in this area whilst giving a supportive role to those that should be doing this work.

Water Rescue

With the more common sight of extreme weather causing flood conditions to many places in the UK in recent times, including many examples in Shropshire; the provision of a rescue boat is becoming more necessary. The increase in incidents involving water highlights the need for SF&RS to provide not only a boat, but also the sufficient and relevant training to boat users and any personnel that may be called to incidents involving water.

Civil Contingencies Act

It is pleasing to see that this is now included into the IRMP document. It is also pleasing that proper consideration is being given to logistics and welfare issues that large scale incidents bring. Extreme

weather conditions and incidents such as Buncefield need to be properly planned for, throughout the UK Fire Service.

Last Year's Proposals

Response and Resilience Standards

SF&RS and Shropshire FBU have much common ground in the policies and standards set in last year's IRMP. Please see our response document last year which detailed much of the FBU's CAST analysis and how that needed to be applied to Shropshire. Again, there is no need to repeat those points here, but it is plain to see that there is largely a consensus of opinion in these policies.

Aerial Appliance Provision (ALP) and Better Use of Existing Staff Resources

These two proposals are inextricably linked. Again, please see our response document to last year's proposals, where our thoughts are detailed at length.

Interestingly, on the very day that consultation for last year's IRMP ended, the front page of the Shropshire Star clearly showed both ALPs in use at a large fire the night previous. Since that occasion, two further incidents have occurred where both ALPs were required.

It is disturbing though that on page 24 of this year's Action Plan review that the reduction of personnel and the removal of an Aerial Ladder Platform are described as an "improvement."

As already mentioned; the FBU whole heartedly supports the introduction of the RSOs. This was funded from the savings made from cutting the Aerial Ladder provision which of course we are unable to support. What is of greatest concern to us at this point; is the lessons learned from the implementation of these two proposals.

The reduction in the posts occurred earlier than anticipated. The introduction of alternative systems to ensure that all appliances remained on the run at all times (namely structured overtime), were delayed considerably from a promised July to an implemented October. Consequently, the service was by no means able to deliver their promise of all appliances being available at all times, for a period in excess of three months. Indeed, due to several circumstances of injuries to firefighters, the amount of times that staffing fell below the minimum requirement during this period must be deeply disappointing for the service.

We believe that this is a valuable lesson for SF&RS, which must be rectified for the implementation of the Telford Fire Cover and Tweedale project proposed this year. We have already argued that IRMP needs to be integrated as in the holistic view of the risk analysis. But, it also needs to be holistic in the logistics and mechanics of implementing the proposal; risk management. It is not sufficient for this large part of a project to be left as a management implementation scheme divorced from the IRMP process. There needs to be more investigation in the construction stage of the IRMP with regard to these matters.

This Year's Proposals

Relocation of one Fire Engine from Telford Central to Tweedale Fire Station

SF&RS have been moving toward this proposal over a period of time, and according to the figures this makes perfect sense. It does not always follow that the figures are correct, but in this instance, the figures confirm what would be considered professional judgement, in that it seems to make perfect common sense on the ground too.

The figures for fire cover in the Telford area published in last year's IRMP caused us much concern. In our response to these we said:

“A 27% failure to meet a first response attendance time is worrying. Nearly half of those failures represent a fire appliance taking longer than 10 minutes to attend an incident in the Telford area. This is shocking when considering that according to the table on page 14, there are as many house fires in the Telford area than there are in the rest of the county. This is an indicator that priority needs to be given to the intervention resources in the Telford area.

When considering the FSEC model (which is based on real life fire and rescue incidents and shows the likely effect of different first fire appliance attendance times on fire and RTC death rates) it is a statistically proven fact that faster Fire & Rescue Service emergency response times will reduce fire deaths. The research used to generate FCEC also found a similar relationship between survival rates at Road Traffic Collisions and Fire & Rescue Service attendance times.”

We also had concerns with regard to the failure rates in rural area as 62% of the failures were in rural areas. We recognised that this is not good, but it is perhaps more understandable and expected, where the issue of sparcity has long been a recognised problem in rural FRS. We hope that the wider use of XL Cabs will have a positive impact on these figures.

Benefits to the community

The benefits to the community are clear to understand as laid out in the Action Plan and we concur with these benefits (see above). One aspect of benefit that is overlooked here is that of safety of firefighters. Faster attendance times will lead to increased safety for firefighters; as procedures that keep firefighters safe will be implemented at an earlier stage of the incident.

Financial Implications and Control Measures

These are two small boxes in the Action Plan that are going to cause SF&RS and Shropshire FBU a great deal of work.

Of course, as you would expect, we are extremely pleased that there will be an increase in the establishment by 4 watch managers. However, this will entail further recruitment, development and promotion and possibly transfers which will take time.

£20,000 has been set aside in the budget for building alterations. This figure has somehow been arrived at, but there is no explanation of what work is to be required or what facilities are to be provided. Either: during the construction of the IRMP this has not been considered; in which case how was the figure arrived at? Or; it has been considered, but a decision must have been made to omit this from the detail of the Action Plan. Which ever is the case Shropshire FBU will face considerable work to represent our members on the issue of facilities.

The project's delivery is described in the Control Measures section. This too will lead to considerable work for both Shropshire FBU officials and of course SF&RS.

In order for these things to run smoothly, we hope that there will be sensible and constructive interaction between SF&RS and the FBU to avoid the difficulties that were faced last year, as mentioned earlier.

Despite all these reservations, this proposal will provide a significantly large improvement to the Telford area, for a relatively small financial outlay.

Consultation

This seems to have been handled well and sensitively by involving staff at Tweedale and using an operational staff focus group in the early stages of the construction of the IRMP.

However, it does appear that consultation with residents near Tweedale Fire Station has been limited. They have had little input or chance to comment directly to the service with regard to the impact that this proposal will have on their environment.

Action Timetable

Implementation has been earmarked for September 2007 onwards and audit and review in 2009. This would indicate that plenty of time is being set aside to implement the change. This is a sensible step and we hope that the time is used wisely; as we feel that it will need to be.

Pilot Small Fire Unit.

Although we believe that SF&RS is piloting this scheme for honourable reasons, i.e. that it is a genuine attempt to provide better fire cover (but also to use Tweedale Retained Duty Staff to greatest advantage as well, due to their possible reduction in calls), we perceive the scheme with scepticism.

This scepticism arises from the fact, rightly stated in the document, that other services across the country are introducing similar schemes. Elsewhere in the country we feel it is little coincidence that where these schemes (in many different, but always similar, guises) have been introduced; much industrial unrest has followed.

That SF&RS has chosen to implement this as a 12 month pilot is of some comfort, and we will need to be perspicacious of the findings of the pilot to ensure that before any permanent or expansion of the Small Fires Unit is considered, we must be sure that it is unequivocally the correct path.

There will need to be much work completed before the Small Fires Pilot is commenced, too. Operating Procedures and Mobilising Procedures and other priorities will need to be in place. The logistics of when and by whom this unit will be staffed, will need to be investigated. Granted, it will be subject to variation during the lifetime of the pilot, but these factors must be in place before commencement of the pilot.

We explained in last year's response to IRMP about the pressure on firefighters to act at an incident when the lag between appliances becomes too great:

“The simple fact is, that on occasions where backup appliances do not arrive in an appropriate timescale firefighters have no alternative other than to act when faced with the incident. They are the professionals who have been sent to deal with an emergency situation, and there is a public expectation that they will act when they arrive.”

Similarly, there may well be occasion where the Small Fire Unit is called to an incident which is too large for them to cope with. The Standard Operating Procedures, against which Firefighters are trained, can then not be put into practice, leaving them with a lack of resources being available when they are most needed; in the early stages of the incident. The further delays in the arrival of fire appliances will then result in risks being taken over and above those planned for under these Standard Operating Procedures and will result in firefighter injury.

Another consideration for firefighter safety is the increasing amount of attacks on firefighters. These are increasing nationally at an alarming rate and we suspect many attacks are going unreported. It has in recent times, received the recognition it deserves and resulted in the Emergency Workers Obstruction Act, which became law on 8th November this year. Notwithstanding this new legislation, a Small Fires Unit with 2 firefighters attending incidents of this nature will be leaving them vulnerable to attack. We pointed out in last years response events of this nature that had occurred on a Telford estate. One year later, firefighters in Telford have faced similar events again.

Benefits to the Community

Here lies the real crux of the matter. Is there any real benefit identified to the community?

Firstly, the supposition that small nuisance fires prevents fire engines from being available for more serious life threatening incidents. This is overly optimistic as a direct benefit of this pilot. Fire engines mobile to suspected “nuisance calls” have in the past been redirected whilst on route to the call, when a more serious call has been received. Also when in attendance of a small fire, the Officer in Charge (OIC) is able to make the fire appliance available from the fire ground. By definition of a small fire therefore, there is little if no danger, that a serious incident is going to be missed.

Secondly, the contention that it will reduce the disruption to crews engaged in risk reduction activities has more credence. But this also has limits to how often this is actually going to be of any

benefit. How will this pilot work if RDS are to crew the unit and crews at the wholetime stations happen to be available? Whether the pilot runs successfully will need to be measured very carefully against any real benefits.

The financial benefits must also be considered, but that is also difficult to see how it can be measured as more efficient than what is already in place. Balancing the cost of sending RDS on the unit into wholetime areas against a crew of 5 RDS on a fire engine in the Tweedale area is puzzling as the previous proposal puts a wholetime appliance at Tweedale. We recognise that the document is only looking at the period of the pilot; but it must also be measured against aspirations of the long term configuration. We would suggest that the financial saving, if any, will be negligible.

Consultation

As with the previous proposal, the consultation for this pilot has been handled well and sensitively by involving staff at Tweedale and using an operational staff focus group in the early stages of the construction of the IRMP.

In conjunction with the previous proposal, further investigation perhaps needs to be carried out on the new station grounds in the Telford area. We suggest that changes to the second and third appliance attendances to incidents may not significantly reduce the number of callouts that RDS at Tweedale currently receive. In fact the opposite may be true. In which case, the service may need to look at the burden of extra calls to those staff that a Small Fires Unit may bring.

Response Standards for other Incidents

This is a larger piece of work than it first appears. Credit to SF&RS for tackling these issues as there will be a diverse opinion on many of the different facets included in the range of this subject.

One question posed in the Evidence Document is whether other life risk incidents should affect the same response standard as life risk incidents of fire and RTC. We would expect that the common sense answer to this is largely that any life incident should attract the same standard if it is within our remit to attend in the first place.

It is clear that the diverse range of incidents that the fire service attends will always create the need for more training in the many areas. It is incumbent on the service to ensure that all staff are competent in these areas and that there is enough quality time and resources set aside to maintain high standards.

The overriding impression of the initial figures shown for this Action Plan is that there is a requirement to strengthen our Line Safety and Water Safety provisions. It appears that more widespread training is going to be needed in the Water Safety provision as a matter of urgency.

Speed of Response

This will also attract a diverse response under consultation.

The question table in question 7 of the public consultation (10 in the staff consultation) is not going to give SF&RS a qualitative representation of the best path to take on this issue. It is too simplistic and does not take into account that drivers already carried out Dynamic Risk Assessment on the nature of the call. Drivers are trained to high standard and are fully aware of safe driving methods to nullify the purpose of this exercise.

The varying nature of incidents requires different responses. For example, if the public were to suggest that lights and sirens should not be used for flooding or RTC services only; what if the flooding or RTC was causing excessive traffic, resulting in the fire engine being stuck in traffic not able to reach the incident? Lift rescues may also cause a difference of opinion. Lift rescues may largely be regarded as low priority, but there will be instances where the person trapped is in distress. They may have been trapped for a considerable time depending on the premises, or there may be other reasons for their distress.

There will be a myriad of different scenarios that would illicit a different response from members of the public. One overriding consideration from our point of view is protecting our members that drive fire appliances. In the inevitable event of an accident whilst responding to an incident without visible or audible warning, our members that drive appliances will be vulnerable to prosecution and private claims against them. It is doubtful whether SF&RS's insurance policy will be very supportive in such an event.

Therefore, we recommend that the service continues to trust the judgement of their trained personnel and continues to train its drivers to the high standard that it presently does.

Officer review

Examining the figures for this subject, and being aware of the already heavy workload placed upon our officers, we would expect that this review will not only substantiate our officer establishment, but will demonstrate the need for greater numbers of officers to carry out the burden of an increasing workload.

There will in any instance need to be a minimum number of officers to provide operational cover. We believe that SF&RS are already operating at this minimum.

Road Safety Initiatives and other Initiatives

SF&RS has taken on a much greater involvement in road safety issues as a result of responses to the previous year's consultation.

Obviously, the fire Service attends RTCs and it is important that the fire service has input into these issues. The FBU is concerned that safety initiatives and education on these matters is not directly the

remit of the fire service. As with the many partnerships that the fire service is now involved in, road safety should be one of our partnership roles. It is not the responsibility of the fire service to take the lead initiative in this field. In our opinion, road safety is within the remit of the Police and we should be there to assist; not take over their role.

There are other responsibilities that appear to have been placed on firefighters recently, which can be regarded as ultra vires compared to their duties. The FBU will be looking carefully at these new developments over the coming months.

Bibliography

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Integrated Risk Management DRAFT Action Plan 2007/08

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Evidence Document: Proposed relocation of one fire engine from Telford Central to Tweedale Fire Station

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Evidence Document: Proposed “small fires vehicle” pilot within the Telford area

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Evidence Document: Proposal to develop response standards for “other incidents”

FBU Integrated Risk Management Planning National Document

The Shropshire FBU Preliminary Observations on the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority DRAFT Integrated Risk Management Action Plan October 2006/2007