

ANNEX B

Frequently Asked Questions

This section includes the questions that Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) staff have submitted in respect of the IRMP proposals since the commencement of the Organisational Change Project (OCP) in April 2014.

Question	Fire and Rescue Service Response
<p>1. It has already been decided to revise the decision on the conversion of Lutterworth and Market Harborough to Day Crewing Plus (DCP). Why have we not reconsidered the Castle Donington development to save money?</p>	<p>The concept and design of the build programme of Castle Donington has been subject to review. This resulted in significantly reduced construction costs from the initial plans. The need for a station at Castle Donington has not changed based upon the risk profile of the area. Lutterworth and Market Harborough were identified as part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2013/16. It has been decided that no current action will be taken in relation to these projects at this time.</p>
<p>2. Have we started to review the minimum fire cover standards for the Service?</p>	<p>All of our work in developing options for change will be designed to have the minimum impact on our response standards i.e. time and weight of attack. The time being 10 minutes for risk to life, and 20 minutes for those incidents that do not represent risk to life.</p>
<p>3. Who is examining the options to reduce fire engines?</p>	<p>Every station is being included in the analysis. Demand is a factor, however there are broader operational issues that will have to come into play. We must look into more variable options to maintain fire and rescue cover in the future. Whatever we do, the negative effect of any changes in operational capability will be examined in a transparent manner. It's no longer simply about weighing up demand with risk. The IRMP will include all of this work and will subsequently be subject to full consultation. The lead for the IRMP is Area Manager Joe Tasker with Richard Hall managing the overall OCP.</p>
<p>4. Is the IRMP being written to satisfy the cuts?</p>	<p>The IRMP is about risk management – managing risk within the community and taking a planned approach to delivering the business activities of a fire and rescue service. This plan will incorporate the necessary changes to enable the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) to satisfy its statutory duties in providing a fire and rescue service within the financial constraints set by Central Government.</p>

<p>5. Are we looking at applying cross crewing to all our special appliances?</p>	<p>As stated in previous answers, we are examining all available options.</p>
<p>6. Are we considering removing a pump from Loughborough?</p>	<p>We are examining all options for reducing expenditure across the Service. Removing a pump from Loughborough is one of the proposals included within the IRMP consultation.</p>
<p>7. We are told that the new builds/ refurbishments are going to produce a profit. Is the new Headquarters (HQ) included in that answer? Should Senior Management have planned and anticipated that the austerity measures would have been extended thus postponing the new HQ? Will the general public be concerned that we are making potential redundancies and losing fire engines, but we have a brand new HQ?</p>	<p>The suitability of the previous HQ building at Glenfield was first identified as an issue in 1988. The business case to relocate to the new HQ at Birstall was determined before the national austerity program was introduced by the coalition government in 2010. At the last design phase the build costs were further reduced by 10% to accommodate the changing financial demands at the time. The financial situation has subsequently been aggravated by the extension of the austerity measures, at which time the relevant construction and maintenance contracts had already been agreed.</p> <p>With the exception of Melton Mowbray, new and refurbished fire and rescue stations incorporate the revised crewing arrangements (DCP), saving the Authority a significant amount year on year.</p>
<p>8. How much influence will the consultation have on the eventual outcomes?</p>	<p>We are required to interpret consultation findings critically while meeting the Gunning Principles. These specify that consultation should always:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be done at a formative stage – when there is still time to change an authority's decision (and it is not a forgone conclusion) • Give sufficient information for people to give intelligent consideration to the issues – so it is possible to have an informed opinion • Provide enough time for responses to be formulated and submitted – so many consultations extend over 12 weeks, though shorter times are possible <p>It is important for LFRS to manage expectations, because consultations are not referenda that automatically determine authorities' decisions. It's about giving the CFA an account of the ideas, options and/or proposals and then taking into account public and stakeholder views. Opinions will not necessarily decide public policy. The consultation will inform professional and political judgements which will assess the validity of the views/options/proposals expressed. The CFA will then conscientiously take into account the outcomes of the consultation, with time to reflect before decisions are made.</p>

<p>9. How are we going to determine the risk levels in the IRMP?</p>	<p>We have developed a risk assessment model to identify areas at higher risk of the most serious fire and other emergency incidents. It was used to inform our IRMP, which sets out how LFRS will allocate resources to tackle the identified risks.</p>
<p>10. How are you going to determine the increased risk of riding with a minimum crew of four?</p>	<p>There is not any evidence to suggest that crewing fire appliances with four riders will increase risk to staff or the public. It is extant policy to ride with a crew of four because it is stipulated to be the minimum safe level within the relevant operational procedure. As staff will be aware, within the City Group, the normal crewing is four and in addition, it is a regular occurrence for On-Call duty system crewed appliances. This is reflected statistically because incident response data indicates that over the past five years it has occurred on more than 46% of appliance mobilisations. It is also common practice within other fire and rescue services within the UK.</p>
<p>11. The Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) and cooks were not subject to IRMP consultation, why?</p>	<p>Both the ALP and the cooks are under the heading of 'corporate planning', as opposed to the other proposals that affect the community risk model. As such the decision associated with the catering arrangements and the ALP sit with the CFA. The other proposals are legally required to be subject to formal consultation as they are part and parcel of our revised IRMP. This requirement is included within the Fire Service National Framework Document 2012. Both the catering and ALP proposals were presented to Senior Management Team (SMT) with reports that identified the costs and the rationale, along with options for the future. The catering was predominantly around the significant costs of what was a subsidised provision, and the ALP in terms of revised Pre-Determined Attendances (PDAs) significantly reducing the calls and more evenly distributing the demand between Central and Birstall Fire and Rescue Stations.</p>

<p>12. Reducing crewing from five to four in the outlying stations is currently believed to be increasing the risk to both operational staff and the community. How is the organisation going to support its initial Incident Commanders in enabling them to deploy crews as opposed to sitting and waiting for the next appliance to arrive?</p>	<p>As outlined previously there is not any evidence that crewing levels of four represents additional risks. This is all within extant policy and so does not represent a significant change other than changing the planned crewing on the wholetime single pump stations. In addition, On-Call stations have always operated with a minimum of four.</p> <p>Over the last five years we have made a huge investment in the training and development of our staff in national operational command doctrine. This will continue in accordance with national fire service guidance. In addition technology has made everything far safer. This includes the automated pump controllers and breathing apparatus board telemetry that enables us to operate more efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>As such our commanders are equipped with sufficient technology and resources combined with operational doctrine to enable the appropriate safe and effective deployment of resources. PDAs will remain the same, ensuring reinforcing appliances are mobilised at the time of the initial call.</p>
<p>13. If the proposal in relation to riding with four is safe why aren't we doing it now?</p>	<p>There is no question that riding with four isn't safe. We are currently doing it throughout the city, on On-Call appliances and on many wholetime stations regularly. The proposal of reduced ridership is in preference to suggesting station closures and additional appliance reductions. We will review the impact on the more isolated stations and create some what if scenarios to assist our analysis. The resulting conclusions from this analysis may result in slight changes to procedures and allow us to explore the opportunity of up crewing in certain situations.</p>
<p>14. How can we substantiate reducing from five to four in terms of the loss in resilience when we realise sickness on outlying stations like Oakham? Once one person books sick the appliance will be off the run until we get a replacement.</p>	<p>The five to four proposal has been the most talked about proposal. The point of the consultation process is to draw out opinions, views and issues that will be taken into consideration for future provision. During the consultation process we will continue to generate alternative ways of working that ensure that we maintain the availability of our appliances in line with our performance standards.</p>
<p>15. Have we considered the On-Call availability issues in Rutland and Harborough when reducing Oakham by a pump and reducing the crew to four? Also Stamford are now being used as medics and so their availability will reduce increasing demand on our own resources.</p>	<p>Yes we are considering all of the availability issues in our work. The IRMP takes account of our neighbouring services provision and any changes that may be considered in the future.</p>

<p>16. Will removal of the Resilience Team adversely impact On-Call appliance availability?</p>	<p>The Resilience Team undertakes a range of duties which includes supporting On-Call stations. It is not envisaged that appliance availability will be substantially affected by its removal. As part of future operational planning we will need to consider our existing On-Call arrangements and potentially adjust them when and where necessary.</p>
<p>17. In the IRMP consultation, if we are stating that there will be no impact on service, is it likely that the public will support the referendum?</p>	<p>It is the CFA's decision on whether to ask for the referendum. As a Service we need to communicate what the differences are and what the impact will be to allow the public to make an informed decision. The IRMP consultation gives us this opportunity.</p>
<p>18. Will members of staff be constrained in any way in the feedback/comments they are able to submit in response to the IRMP consultation?</p>	<p>Absolutely not. Staff can either feedback as an identified member of staff or anonymously as a member of the public.</p>
<p>19. Why are the public scrutiny forums closed meetings without the attendance of the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) representatives? Surely the public will only get to hear a one sided argument/discussion.</p>	<p>Opinion Research Services (ORS) will present the IRMP proposals in an impartial, objective, dispassionate and deliberative style. The CFA have commissioned ORS to provide an objective and impartial approach. The attendance of officers is limited to answering any of the technical questions that might arise in the discussions. ORS will lead and present the forums stimulating debate, interaction and engagement with the issues.</p> <p>This type of forum allows for the explanation of unfamiliar and important strategic issues and principles and provides time for people to become more informed.</p>
<p>20. Will there be additional IRMP consultation events arranged for operational and support staff that were unable to attend the forums at Headquarters on 27 October 2014?</p>	<p>Unfortunately due to the availability and cost of the external consultants ORS, there will not be the opportunity to repeat the events hosted on 27 October at Headquarters. There are however other opportunities to participate. These include (for those eligible) the Middle Managers' meeting on 5 December and the On-Call Discussion Evening on 8 December. Alternatively, everybody has the opportunity to attend a weekly Early Bird session or have their say via the dedicated IRMP consultation website:</p> <p>http://www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk/irmp</p>

<p>21. Will LFRS still be publishing a five year plan in line with expectations set in the recently published Statement of Assurance?</p>	<p>LFRS will publish a five year plan, however there is the possibility that this may not be by 1 April 2015 as expected. It is sensible to wait for the new Chief's input into any new plan, and as such this could delay its publication.</p>
<p>22. Do we have to maintain the current levels of General Reserve? Why can't we use these reserves to reduce the impact of the cuts?</p>	<p>The current levels within the General Reserve are determined by the Finance Director and subsequently agreed by the CFA to be at 5% of the authority's budget. This represents approximately £1.5 million.</p> <p>The requirement to hold a reserve is within relevant Local Government statute (Local Government Finance Act 1992: 32; 43) and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance. The main purpose of the current General Reserve is to provide a contingency cushion for unexpected expenditure. As such, options to use the General Reserve are very limited.</p> <p>If we did use all or part of the General Reserve it will reduce our contingency cushion, increasing the risk of over-committing the Authority financially, and only represents a one-off payment. The problem would still be there the following year.</p>
<p>23. Current expenditure within LFRS represents excellent value for money, so how can we substantiate additional cuts?</p>	<p>The Service is in absolute agreement that the current arrangements do represent value for money. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is one of the lowest spending fire authorities per head in England and Wales. The current round of cuts is as a result of public sector funding reductions.</p>
<p>24. Can we make the cuts without losing any operational firefighter jobs, appliances or stations?</p>	<p>It is unlikely that we will be able to achieve the savings without it impacting on staff numbers. We are currently looking across the Service to reduce expenditure. This includes support functions as well as wholetime and On-Call stations, with the aim being to generate the least disruptive options to service delivery.</p>
<p>25. If there is an appetite to increase Council Tax does this mean that the changes/proposals don't need to take place?</p>	<p>We must be clear that even if we are successful in gaining a £5 or £10 increase in Council Tax there is still a requirement to make the significant savings as set out in the IRMP consultation document. In addition to implementing the proposals, a significant Council Tax increase could potentially present the option to reduce the need for compulsory redundancies which may allow for reductions via natural wastage to take effect.</p>