

LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – IRMP CONSULTATION

RESPONSE OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Proposal 1: use of fire engines flexibly

1. The County Council recognises the logic of this idea which would allow the Fire and Rescue Service to meet its goal response times whilst also potentially giving greater coverage to the area. However, the reason that the Fire and Rescue Service is unable at present to always meet the '10 minute goal' is due to assets being committed at other incidents, availability of crew and vehicle maintenance. It is not clear how the proposal of flexibly using operational assets would enable this goal to be achieved. The County Council would welcome greater clarity on how this proposal would work in practice. However, we welcome the intention to record response times from receipt of the 999 call.

Proposal 2: use of firefighters efficiently and flexibly

2. The County Council wishes to see a continued good distribution of fire services stations and resources etc. across Leicestershire.
3. The County Council notes the principle of relocating firefighters when demand/risk indicates this is necessary, although it is of the view that, if firefighters are relocated from their 'home' station to respond to demand, this could decrease the availability and coverage of the service overall as efforts would be concentrated on areas of demand.
4. The County Council welcomes the proposal to evaluate on-call staff and recognises that the proposal to extend their response time to support/deploy might be the way coverage is still provided if full-time firefighters are concentrated in areas of demand. However, it would be useful if this was made clear in the proposals. Greater clarity is also needed around how the approach to on-call firefighters would help with recruitment and retention from the community.

Proposal 3: Purchasing a second high-reach appliance

5. With one high-reach appliance being decommissioned, it makes sense for the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service to replenish its resource.

Proposal 4: To continue to undertake education and enforcement activities, targeting those most at risk

6. The County Council welcomes the concept of providing education in homes, schools and other venues, using shared data and working with other organisations. It is similar to current arrangements, for example after a flood, but there is a lack of clarity regarding how it will happen. Continuing with

existing education and enforcement activities is also unlikely to target effectively those most at risk.

7. There is a need for the Fire and Rescue Service to be aware of vulnerable people when engaging in fire safety (and other risk prevention) activities. This is in terms of dealing with them sensitively - being aware of and knowing how to deal with potential resilience and comprehension issues and knowing how to identify vulnerable and at-risk people, how to deal with them and refer them on (e.g. to First Contact Plus and Local Area Co-ordinators).
8. With this in mind there may be a case for the Fire and Rescue Service to actually be social prescribers (alongside GPs, pharmacists and social workers – as envisaged in the Government's social prescription and tackling loneliness strategies) identifying and referring on to people experiencing or at risk of loneliness or isolation to link in to support in particular from voluntary and community sector organisations and groups.
9. The County Council would welcome the inclusion in education activities of other (non-fire related) messages that would support the County Council's objectives around prevention and emergency support within the home (e.g. around trips and falls or how to access preventative and community services). This would support the County Council's work to help people become more resilient and independent (making every contact count). In a similar fashion, if the Fire and Rescue Service shared its key education messages with the County Council, then officers such as those in First Contact Plus would be able to communicate them to vulnerable residents.

Proposal 5: To continue to collaborate with other blue light services and partner agencies to support the purpose of safer people, safer places

10. The County Council welcomes this, believing that through collaboration there are opportunities to realise significant financial and non-financial benefits. The County Council looks forward to seeing plans and proposals for collaboration.
11. The County Council would highlight the need for the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service to either know about vulnerable people who are present when they are attending a fire (or other emergency/incident) or to be aware of and be able to identify vulnerable people in these incidents. It will be important for the Fire and Rescue Services to be able to deal with vulnerable people appropriately and to help others responding (e.g. ambulance, other NHS or police) or who will be dealing with them down the line (us, NHS, districts etc.) through effective communication and not making a difficult, upsetting experience worse – undermining people's resilience and the prospects of a speedy recovery and return to independence.