

RFU Interim Response to Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service's draft IRMP

The following is a brief summary of our concerns relating to the draft IRMP proposals as contained in the draft IRMP.

The details surrounding Leicestershire's proposals are contained in 4.2 of the attached LFRS report:

The proposals that are being presented are:

1. *Remove one of the two wholetime crewed fire engines from **Loughborough** fire station.*
2. *Close **Central** fire station and sell the building.*
3. *Establish **Market Harborough** as a single fire engine wholetime crewed fire station.*
4. *Revise existing plans to introduce the Day Crewing Plus duty system at **Wigston** fire station by establishing a two wholetime crewed fire engine station.*
5. *As a consequence of establishing the revised crewing arrangements at **Wigston** and **Market Harborough**, close **Kibworth** fire station and sell the building.*
6. *Establish **Lutterworth** as a wholetime crewed single fire engine fire station. Wholetime fire engine to be crewed between 0700 hours and 1900 hours Monday to Friday. On-call cover will be maintained outside of these hours.*
7. *Replace the on-call fire engines at **Melton** and **Coalville** fire stations with Tactical Response Vehicles.*
8. *Replace the fire engine at **Billesdon** fire station with a Tactical Response Vehicle.*
9. *Remove the on-call fire engine from **Hinckley** fire station.*

It would appear that the service wishes to justify changes to Wholetime stations, which would reduce the Wholetime establishment (*Loughborough and Central*) by moving these Wholetime posts to other locations which are currently RDS, thus removing the need for Wholetime compulsory redundancies.

Last year **Loughborough** only responded to 289 calls, excluding False Alarms (FAs) at a cost of **£6,656** per call. Yet the proposal is to have a Wholetime appliance at the station - why? 50% of all station calls last year were to FAs. The cost of the station last year was just under £2m. The potential for savings at this station is huge by using a duty system other than the inflexible 4-shift system. Such a change would not increase risk by any notable amount (if any).

Last year 64% of **Central's** calls were false alarms. Non-false alarm calls totalled 481.

Market Harborough responded to 82 calls last year (exc. FAs) yet the service proposes to transfer a Wholetime establishment to the station - why? The cost per call at Market Harborough was just **£3,082** last year.

Wigston only responded to 206 calls last year (exc. FAs) at a cost of **£6,133** per call. The Day Crewing Plus (DCP) model clearly isn't what is needed here.

Kibworth has a lower rate of FAs (32%), and cost only **£2,754** per call last year (exc. FAs), why close this station other than to attempt to justify the Wholetime establishments within the surrounding areas?

Lutterworth is the second most cost-effective station behind **Ashby**, costing only **£1,795** per call last year (exc. FAs). FAs were at the lower end of the scale at 38% yet the proposal is to place a Wholetime crew here from 0900-1700 Mon-Fri. Is there high risk during these periods? Does the risk reduce outside of these periods? Will a Wholetime crew at Lutterworth stop incidents occurring compared to a Retained crew? The answer to all these questions is no. So what is the real reason for the proposal?

There is no justification to replace generic fire appliances with small Tactical Response Vehicles (TRVs) at **Coalville** and **Melton Mowbray**. TRVs may be the lasted fad within principle officers across the country but it is hard to see how such a change provides any real benefit, TRVs may be useful in areas such as the West Midlands but to compare a metropolitan service with Leicestershire is not appropriate.

Again, our view is that the proposed change is to reduce the number of call types these appliances can attend and justify other changes across the service by increasing their number of calls.

We see no justification to remove the **Hinckley** appliance that responded to 200 calls last year (exc. FAs) at a cost of £4,211 per call last year.

We appreciate call levels, call type and cost are not the only considerations to be used when formulating changes within an IRMP but they are primary issues.

The consultation document does not demonstrate any significant risk to justify the current proposals and neither do these proposals contain measures to overcome appliance availability issues at any of the RDS stations that are experiencing difficulty or state how having a Wholetime establishment at a specific station somehow reduces risk; two major points relevant when taking into account public safety and best value for the taxpayer.

There are plenty of opportunities to better utilise the Retained workforce in Leicestershire and reduce the need to rely on some Wholetime establishments which would realise massive savings, the exact thing the proposals are supposed to identify.

We note that the proposals do not contain any station costs which seems odd considering that the main reason for the proposals was to identify savings.

All the figures are as a direct result of a FOI request to the service. The only figures that have been formulated are the costs per call which are calculated using the service's own data.

We would also like to make reference to Sir Ken Knight's Report, 'Facing the Future', which made a number of recommendations including a better utilisation of Retained firefighters. It appears from the contents of the draft IRMP that the service disagrees with Sir Ken's report, is this the first of the Fire Authority?

Anthony Morgan
RFU President