

**HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY  
(SPECIAL MEETING)**

**9 MAY 2016**

**PRESENT:**

**Representing East Riding of Yorkshire Council:**

Councillors Chadwick, Finlay, Green, Hodgson, Jefferson JP, Matthews and Turner

**Representing Kingston upon Hull City Council:**

Councillors Allen, Clarkson, Fudge, Mathieson and Wilson

**Representing North Lincolnshire Council:**

Councillors Briggs (Chairperson), Grant, Sherwood and Waltham

**Representing North East Lincolnshire Council:**

Councillors Burton, Hudson, Jackson and Sutton

Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery, Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer/Secretary and Committee Manager were also present.

Mr M Allingham, Mr A Smith, Mrs M Thomlinson and Mr C Vertigans (Independent Co-opted Members of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee) also attended as observers.

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Payne and Sharpe.

The meeting was held at the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Kingston upon Hull. Meeting commenced at 2.45 p.m.

(The Chairperson welcomed the Independent Co-opted Members of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee and all other persons who were present.)

**5114 NEW MEMBER** - The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Margaret Chadwick who had been appointed a Member of the Fire Authority by East Riding Council in place of Councillor B Pearson.

**5115 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - There were no declarations.

**5116 MINUTES – Resolved** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 25 April 2016 having been printed and circulated amongst the Members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chairperson.

**5117 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS** - The Monitoring Officer/Secretary stated that no questions had been received from Members in accordance with Rule 12, Part 4 of the Constitution.

**5118 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS** - The Monitoring Officer/Secretary stated that no petitions had been received and no requests for a deputation had been received under Rule 13, Part 4 of the Constitution.

**5119 OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME OPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION** – Further to Minute 5095 of the Authority held on 25 April 2015 the Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery submitted a report indicating that Members had received detailed reports and presentations, at a number of Fire Authority meetings and Member Days, on a range of options for the Operational Efficiency Programme. At the Authority meeting on 11 December 2015 (Minute 4996 refers) Members had approved a number of

those options to go for formal consultation with a view to implementation in line with the Service's retirement profile. The outcomes of that consultation were reported to the Authority on 18 March 2016 (Minute 5069 refers). A summary of the options consulted upon, and a narrative explaining the options themselves and the impact of implementation, was included at Appendix 1 to the report. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery informed Members of an error in Appendix 1 relating to Option 1 in that there would not be an increase in Crew Manager posts. As Members were aware the financial projections for the Authority, detailed at paragraphs 11 to 13 of the report meant that there was still a need to reduce expenditure on operational response. The options consulted upon could reduce the expenditure as required, whilst ensuring that the Service continued to meet the Authority's Response Standards.

Taking into account the outcomes of the consultation, and considering the professional views of Officers in the Corporate Management Team, it was not recommended that all of the options that could be implemented were actually approved for implementation. The report detailed the rationale behind the Officer recommendation to only implement Option 1, which was the option to reduce the number of fire engines in Immingham from three to two and maintain both fire stations, but to manage both of the engine crews from Immingham East with the engines then split between the two stations as appropriate. The report also detailed the rationale behind not recommending the implementation of any of the options consulted upon at the East Riding Retained Duty System (on-call) stations.

Members had been presented with detailed information relating to the options consulted upon at the Authority meeting on 11 December 2015 and at the Member Days on 27 November 2015 and 18 January and 26 February 2016. That information had had a particular focus on the following:

- First engine response standard performance
- Second engine response standard performance
- Risk predictions
- Financial impact

At the 11 December 2015 Authority meeting Members considered every change to operational resourcing that could be implemented within the Authority's Response Standards, but decided that some of those changes were not ones that the Authority could support and so only approved formal consultation on the following options:

- Option 1 - Merge the Immingham stations at Immingham East Fire Station and remove one fire engine.
- Option 2 - Remove one fire engine from Immingham West Fire Station.
- Option 3 - Remove one fire engine from Market Weighton Fire Station.
- Option 4 - Remove one fire engine from Brough Fire Station.
- Option 5 - Remove one fire engine from Hornsea Fire Station.
- Option 6 - Remove one fire engine from Withernsea Fire Station.

That consultation commenced on 11 January 2016 and the outcomes were presented to the Authority at the 18 March 2016 meeting of the Authority,

A detailed analysis of the consultation responses was presented at the 18 March 2016 Authority meeting. The report summarised a few key areas where they related directly to information which Members might specifically consider when choosing one or more options for implementation, as set out below:

- (i) There was a strong preference amongst consultees for Option 1 (merging the Immingham Stations and removing one fire engine) to be their first choice (351 chose that option, with the next highest being 26 people who chose Option 2 - removing an engine from Immingham West).

- (ii) None of the other options were preferred by consultees. The lowest number of people choosing an option to be their first choice was for Option 5 (removing an engine from Hornsea - 7 people).
- (iii) There was a strong preference amongst consultees for the second choice to be Option 2 (removing an engine from Immingham West) (261 chose it as second choice, with the next highest being the 33 people who chose Option 4 – removing an engine from Brough).
- (iv) In the areas where there was a choice to be made between two options that could not both be delivered the following was noted:
  - There was a strong preference for Option 1 (merging the Immingham stations) over Option 2 (removing an engine from Immingham West) with 368 people choosing Option 1 against 59 people choosing Option 2.
  - There was a preference for Option 4 (removing an engine from Brough) over Option 3 (removing an engine from Market Weighton) with 211 choosing Option 4 against 99 choosing Option 3.

The report reminded Members that they had been regularly briefed on the Authority's medium-term financial position, and that information was also shared during the consultation. At that time a shortfall of £2.1m was anticipated by 2019/20, but there was an expectation that the Authority would be able to save around £1m by the Service Redesign Programme, which was looking at all activity away from fire stations. Since that time the Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2016/17 had been released, and Members decided at the 15 February 2016 meeting of the Authority to increase the precept by 1.25%. As a result, the forecast budget shortfall by 2019/20 was now £2.2m, and assuming that the Service is able to save £1m from the Service Redesign Programme that would mean that the Authority will need to make £1.2m of operational savings. Whilst the option recommended was expected to only save £1.1m, it was anticipated that the remaining £100k can be saved from discretionary spends in other areas.

The report set out the Officer view on the operational impact of the options as follows:

- (i) All of the options which were consulted upon could be implemented within the Authority's Response Standards. The impact on performance against those standards, and the risk and financial impacts were shown in detail at Appendix 1 to the report.
- (ii) It was the opinion of Officers that the most important consideration is the First Engine Response Standard. All of the options, with the exception of Option 2, had a predicted zero impact on performance against that standard.
- (iii) There are two main categories of options which were consulted upon:
  - a) Removal of a full-time fire engine (Options 1 and 2)
  - b) Removal of an on-call fire engine (Options 3, 4, 5 and 6)

The difference in financial savings between the two categories were significant, due to the cost differential between operating full-time fire engines and on-call fire engines.

- (iv) It was the opinion of Officers that it was preferable to remove a full-time fire engine rather than an on-call fire engine for the following reasons:
  - a) If a full-time engine was removed the savings were such that it would be possible to maintain all of the on-call fire engines consulted upon. This was in contrast to the fact that even if all of the possible options to remove on-call engines were implemented it would still require the

- removal of a full-time fire engine to achieve the budget savings required.
- b) If a full-time fire engine was removed the savings will be realised more quickly as staff movements can take place to absorb the change across all full-time fire stations. This was in contrast to changes at an on-call station being reliant on the staff leaving that station in isolation. Depending how quickly staff at an on-call station left it could mean that the Authority might have to consider compulsory redundancies at some point in the future.
  - c) The removal of one full-time fire engine would have less of a negative impact on the operational resilience of the Service as a whole than the removal of three on-call fire engines, even without considering that further changes would have to be made if only on-call options were implemented.
  - d) The removal of a full-time fire engine from the Immingham area would have a less negative impact on the geographical spread of fire engines than the options in Hornsea, Withernsea and Market Weighton, due to the proximity of other fire stations. It was felt the option at Brough would have a broadly similar impact.
  - e) Removing one full-time fire engine from Immingham would still leave two fire engines in the town, and therefore the initial response to dwelling fires or Road Traffic Collisions in the area would be unaffected. This was in contrast to the other options which would all see only one fire engine remaining in the affected towns, with the second fire engine being mobilised from another area.
- (v) It was the Officer opinion that if a decision is taken to remove one full-time fire engine from Immingham then Option 1 (merging the stations and removing an engine) is preferable to Option 2 (removing an engine from Immingham West), for the following reasons:
- a) The financial savings are higher.
  - b) There would be a reduction in Watch Manager posts, while still maintaining the same number of fire engines.
  - c) The same arrangement was successfully implemented in 2014 in Grimsby.
  - d) It will make it easier to maintain the specialist skills required in the area, such as Technical Rescue, due to the fact that the two crews needed for the response can train together more easily.
  - e) The predicted impact on the First Engine Response Standard is zero for Option 1, compared to an increase of 0.09 for Option 2.
  - f) Both stations will still remain open, and the crews can be deployed to either as required.
  - g) It will increase the ability to enhance the use of Immingham West Fire Station as a training venue, both for our own staff and for the generation of income by the delivery of training to external organisations.

With regard to an Implementation Plan the report indicated that it was the Authority's stated intention to only consider compulsory redundancies as a last resort. If the recommendations in the report were approved then it will be possible to implement them fully

without the need for compulsory redundancies. The implementation would be managed in line with the Service retirement profile. That would mean that the engine would stay available until such a point that crewing would not allow it. However given recent retirements it was likely that if an option at Immingham is approved that will be the case very quickly, although work will be carried out locally to establish the exact date to make the change. Whilst the crewing at the stations would be managed from Immingham East, with both crews starting and finishing their shift there, both of the stations themselves would remain open as operational fire stations, with the engines used at either station dependent on operational demands and risk in the area. In the first instance an engine will remain available at each station during night-time sleeping hours, in the same way as had been successfully managed in Grimsby. That arrangement will be reviewed periodically to ensure that the engines are located in the most appropriate location at different times of the day.

In terms of financial/resources/value for money implications the report indicated that if all of the options which had the maximum financial savings resulting from them were implemented then the overall saving to the budget would be £1.4 million. However, other factors such as risk and the effect on response standards will be considered by Members, alongside the financial savings, when considering the approval of options for implementation. The financial projections for the Authority had been updated based on the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2016/17 announced on 8 February 2016, in broad terms the picture was as follows:

2016/17 - balanced  
2017/18 - £700k deficit  
2018/19 - £1.6m deficit  
2019/20 - £2.2m deficit.

The Authority was able to balance the budget for 2016/17. The years 2017/18 onward looked more challenging and therefore further efficiencies will require implementation during 2016/17 in order to assist with the balancing of the budget for the future years. It was worth remembering that any recurring revenue efficiencies implemented in 2016/17 will help balance the budget in future years e.g. £1m of efficiencies implemented in 2016/17 would leave a further £1.2m (£2.2m less £1m) of efficiencies to be delivered before 2019/20. Therefore, whilst significant savings can be made, in time, through the options consulted upon as part of this programme, it was likely that further savings in excess of £1m will still have to be made by 2019/20. However, there was scope within this programme to deal with the projected budget deficit of £700k in 2017/18 and go some way to dealing with the anticipated budget deficit of £2.2m in 2019/20 if options making sufficient savings are approved for implementation. It was expected that if options which save in excess of £1m are approved then the remaining savings needed can be made away from fire station activities via the Service Redesign Programme.

Members sought clarification on the alternative operational efficiency options available which can save over £1million. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery explained in answer that there were the following options:

1. Removing a full-time engine from Goole (converts Goole to a one engine retained station).
2. Removing a full-time engine from Bridlington (converts Bridlington to a 2 engine retained station).
3. Removing a full-time engine from Scunthorpe (leaves Scunthorpe with one full-time engine and one retained engine) and Remove 3 retained fire engines from stations in the East Riding.
4. Remove a full-time engine from Scunthorpe and Remove one full time engine overnight from either Hull Central, Bransholme, East Hull, Clough Road, Calvert Lane, Grimsby, Goole or Bridlington.

In explaining the above options the Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery reminded Members that although the above options had been reported to the Authority previously they not been the subject of public consultation and that consideration of any of the options would require consultation on those options specifically. In answer to a query regarding response times with regard to the Options included in the report the Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery reminded Members that the details were included in Appendix 1 to the report and stated that with regard to Option 1 Officers were not predicting any change with regard to the achievement of the Response Standard relating to the first fire engine; that there would be a reduction of less than half a per cent in the attendance time of the second vehicle, and also assured Members that in the event of a large incident it would be possible for 7 fire engines to attend within eighteen minutes. In comparison the Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery stated that the alternative options set out above would all have a higher impact on attendance times. A Member commented that he had noted from the detailed consultation responses report that whereas on previous occasions under the OEP there had been a volume of response against proposals from the Immingham area, there was not a single response from Immingham on this occasion. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery assured Members that all responses received were included in the report to the March meeting of the Authority. A Member referred to the financial implications set out on page 11 of the report and asked whether the figures for future years were predicated on a 0% increase. The Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer stated that that was correct and reminded Members that a 1% increase in the Precept would generate additional income of only £200,000 and that to address a deficit of £2.2m it would be necessary to make multiple 1% increases; that the Authority was obliged to live within its means, and also that even if the Authority approved an increase in its Precept it would still be necessary over the timescale to find further savings. A Member referred to the on-going expansion of Immingham Port and queried whether Associated British Ports and other similar businesses had been consulted. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery stated that any responses from businesses had been included in the report to the March meeting of the Authority and assured Members that all possible channels of consultation had been used and that he had personally attended a number of meetings with Councils, employees and the public; and also that Officers had examined the Local Plans of the 4 Unitary Authority areas and there were no development proposals in those Plans which had an effect on the recommendations in the report.

It was moved by Councillor Jefferson JP and seconded by Councillor Sherwood –

“That Members approve Option 1, which is the option to reduce the number of fire engines in Immingham from three to two and maintain both fire stations, but to manage both of the fire engines from Immingham East with the engines then split between the two stations as appropriate.”

Upon being put to the vote the voting was – For 15; Against 5

**Resolved** – That Members approve Option 1, which is the option to reduce the number of fire engines in Immingham from three to two and maintain both fire stations, but to manage both of the fire engines from Immingham East with the engines then split between the two stations as appropriate.

*Meeting closed at 3.21 pm*