

Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee
15 July 2013

Report by the Chief Fire Officer and
Chief Executive

DRAFT FIRE AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO FACING THE FUTURE

REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members will recall the paper to this Committee at the 11 June 2013 meeting which introduced Sir Ken Knight's report "Facing the Future" and also informed Members that the Fire Minister, Brandon Lewis MP, had encouraged elected Members to comment on the report so he could consider those comments prior to the Government's response in Autumn 2013.

Fire Authority Members considered the report at the meeting on 24 June 2013 and they formulated a draft response to it at their Member Day on 5 July 2013. The draft response is included at Appendix 1 and the appendices to that draft response are included in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

The Fire Authority will be asked to approve a final response at their meeting on 26 July 2013 which will then be submitted to the Fire Minister.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members are asked to consider this report and make any such recommendations as may be appropriate to the Fire Authority.

REPORT DETAIL

2. Sir Ken Knight was commissioned by the Government in December 2012 to review efficiencies and operations in Fire and Rescue Authorities in England. His report "Facing the Future" was published on 17 May 2013 and was brought to this Committee on 11 June 2013.
3. The Fire Minister Brandon Lewis MP encouraged elected Members, during a teleconference that the Chair of the Fire Authority and officers took part in, to respond to the report in order for him to consider comments before the Government responds to the report in Autumn 2013.
4. Fire Authority Members formulated a draft response at their Member Day on 5 July 2013 which is included at Appendix 1. The Fire Authority will be asked to approve a final response at their meeting on 26 July 2013 which will be then submitted to the Fire Minister.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPATIBILITY

5. The annual review of the Strategic Plan will take into account any implications resulting from the Government's response in Autumn 2013.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCES/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

6. None directly arising

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. None directly arising.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/HR IMPLICATIONS

8. None directly arising.

CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

9. None directly arising.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10. None directly arising.

COMMUNICATION ACTIONS ARISING

11. The final response will be submitted to the Fire Minister and shared with staff.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

12. None directly arising.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR ACCESS

13. Sir Ken Knight's report "Facing the Future".

RECOMMENDATIONS RESTATED

14. Members are asked to consider this report and make any such recommendations as may be appropriate to the Fire Authority.

R HANNIGAN

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HUMBERSIDE
Fire & Rescue Service

Facing the Future

Draft for HFA Comments

This submission is the result of a Member debate which followed a number of briefings and individual Member reviews of Sir Ken Knight's report 'Facing the Future'. It lays out the key observations made by Members of the Humberside Fire Authority and represents their views of Sir Ken Knight's report.

It is fair to say that there were no great surprises revealed within the report though it is felt that Sir Ken's observations were coloured by the views of central government during a period of austerity. Would similar conclusions have been drawn during a period of national prosperity? Many of the issues raised have been highlighted in previous reports such as the Bain Review, 'Rising to the Challenge' and 'Fire Futures'.

Bearing all of this in mind the Humberside Fire Authority have implemented change as a result of previous reviews and have in fact exceeded the savings thought possible by the Audit Commission in 'Rising to the Challenge' (see Appendix 2 'HFRS Efficiency Overview'). There is merit in many of the suggestions proposed by Sir Ken and the Authority will evaluate these and implement those which benefit the community we serve.

The following paragraphs outline HFA Member view by chapter.

Chapter One

This chapter works on the premise that a reduction in demand of 40% over 10 years has not been matched by a similar reduction in firefighters. Whilst the 11% reduction in whole time firefighters may have been accurate when the statistics were published, many Services, including Humberside, have seen much greater reductions in excess of 25% over that period. The report assumes that a reduction in demand merits a similar reduction in response capability. Unfortunately this cannot be the case as the risk, particularly in hazardous industries, still exists. Would the government be assured by a Fire and Rescue Service that could not deal with another Buncefield even though such incidents do not occur often? Humberside currently hosts 32 top-tier COMAH premises, some of which are orders of magnitude larger than Buncefield. In addition to this concentration of heavy industry, Humberside FRS has to be ready to deal with incidents at sea, within the Humber Estuary and in the busiest port complex in the UK. It would be unwise to surrender the resources needed to initially contain a large incident in this area.

It is forecast that by 2050 Yorkshire and the Humber will have the highest instance of river and surface water flooding and even now the Humber area has the largest population at risk from tidal inundation in the UK. Whilst having no statutory duty to manage flood risk, Humberside FRS commits significant resources to community resilience, flood planning and water rescue, a commitment that can only increase.

There is an odd paradox in the report which on the one hand questions why some authorities spend almost twice as much per person per year in some areas than others, but goes on to say that the fire funding formula is fair. This Authority agrees that the

formula is fair as it allocates resources according to need. The report also says that cost per person has no correlation to performance outcomes. In Humberside that relationship is clear. Humberside is the sixth most expensive Service per head of population in England. It also delivers the fifth quickest emergency response in England, which is commensurate with the high level of risk identified previously. Whilst recognised by the funding formula, this level of risk is largely driven by external factors such as geography, the local economy, deprivation, health inequalities and poor educational attainment. Until these matters are addressed it remains crucial to continue effective community safety activities and to deploy adequate response resources.

It is puzzling that Sir Ken chose to anonymise the various performance and spending data. This is all in the public domain and is not something to be hidden. In Humberside we understand the data and are dealing with it.

What is clear, however, is that one size does not fit all. Even agreeing with Sir Ken's assertion that we live in a new era of demand and risk each Fire and Rescue Service has its own unique set of challenges hence the adoption of Integrated Risk Management Planning.

Chapter Two

In 2005 Humberside Fire and Rescue Service began the transformation from a predominantly response Service to a Service that put prevention first. That transformation has seen a Service working effectively in partnership to reduce risk and consequently being able to reduce response resources. In 2007 we were established for

709 whole time firefighters a number that had reduced to 526 by 2013. This Authority agreed a challenging set of risk-based response standards (including a second appliance standard) and all operational resources are deployed according to these standards. The current operational efficiency programme will remove any remaining excess capacity whilst still allowing standards to be met.

That programme proposes converting some whole time appliances to retained appliances but this can only happen where response standards permit. Sir Ken appears to underestimate the difficulty in recruiting and retaining RDS firefighters in rural areas and particularly in ensuring that they are properly trained. With the best will in the world, retained firefighters do not spend sufficient time at work to be competent in such functions as technical rescue, marine firefighting and hazardous materials handling.

Innovative staffing models are, in reality, less efficient and less resilient than they were first thought to be, case law relating to pensions particularly having reduced financial savings. Models such as Day Crew Plus and LLAR do not appear to be sustainable in the light of the Working Time Directive and have very high start-up costs.

Comments about Elected Members avoiding station closures and redundancies do not reflect an understanding of the wider responsibilities of local authority politicians, nor do they acknowledge the consideration that Elected Members give to the views of the communities that they represent. As well as having a role on a Fire Authority, they have a role within their parent Authorities and must consider the impact of any job losses on the local economy. Elected Members are the representatives of the communities they serve and as such speak on behalf of their constituents but, regarding station closures, they do

so with full knowledge of the results of the extensive stakeholder consultation which takes place around options for consideration. Fire stations provide great confidence to communities and no local politician wants to see fire stations closed with skilled workers, including firefighters, made redundant so that their skills are lost to the community. Within this context Chief Fire Officers are expected to forge links beyond the fire and rescue service and work with local authority Members and officers to support local communities and the local economy. They must therefore balance the wider impact of station closures and redundancies against the potential savings made within a single Service. This Authority does however agree with Sir Ken that sharing premises with other blue light services makes a great deal of sense and can deliver worthwhile savings in some locations.

Rather than increase the number of retained firefighters at the expense of capability, Humberside FRS intends to increase the range of services provided by firefighters to include supporting the local ambulance services and being proactive in flood prevention and recovery. This local approach will minimise the latent capacity referred to, but it should be borne in mind that National Resilience is also entirely reliant on local fire and rescue services in a large scale emergency. Government could support this approach by reviewing the Grey Book to ensure that it facilitates a flexible and professional workforce.

Chapter Three

This Authority fully supports blue light interoperability and is actively seeking to support local ambulance services. It has good relationships with Humberside Police and is

pursuing collaboration in premises. Such collaboration should only take place where true efficiencies are evident, for example, it would not be wise to leave a building derelict simply to co-locate with another Service.

Humberside Fire Authority has considered the benefits of sharing Chief Fire Officers, Corporate Management Teams and a full merger. In all cases the savings to be made were small compared to the obstacles to be overcome. It should be noted that the only English merged Fire and Rescue Service has raised its precept in both of the past two years, which calls into question the true efficiency of such arrangements.

Whilst collaboration with the Ambulance Service and the Police is desirable, authorities should not confine themselves to these two services. Opportunities to collaborate with other Fire and Rescue Services, local authorities and in some cases the private sector can have equally great potential for improvement in savings.

The report returns again to the benefits and potential savings to be achieved by joint procurement. Why, after the failure of Firebuy, is this seen as a critical efficiency initiative? Over 80% of the Fire Authority budget is spent on staff costs, therefore the savings to be made by joint procurement are relatively small. The fire industry is diverse and vibrant and any move to joint procurement is likely to stifle this sector and reduce choice with very limited savings, however, where joint procurement is beneficial it is already carried out in any case through various framework agreements.

Chapter Four

In general this chapter appears to lack insight into the reality of local authority life. Combined Fire Authorities cannot set a budget in deficit and neither can they go to a parent authority should they run short of funds. They must therefore maintain a prudent level of reserves. Most CFAs have been building reserves in anticipation of difficult times to come. Unless government changes legislation to allow firefighters early access to their pensions it will be impossible to reduce staffing by voluntary redundancy sufficiently quickly to balance the books. This situation could exhaust HFA reserves by 2017.

HFA Members are well supported in terms of knowledge and understanding but short periods of tenure on the Authority can lead to excessive resources being allocated to Member development. A longer tenure, perhaps of four years, would provide ownership and leadership by Authority Members.

Humberside Fire Authority has now adopted a Board Structure so it has become the single decision making body in terms of fire and rescue. Robust scrutiny is provided by the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee, which consists entirely of independent members. It is therefore possible to provide strong local leadership and effective scrutiny within the CFA model. It is disappointing that this was not used as a case study in Sir Ken's report.

Sir Ken states that whilst a number of Services have set up trading arms, he questions whether Fire and Rescue Authorities have "the right skill sets to trade efficiently". This

does not do justice to Humberside Fire Authority whose trading arm has competed successfully with private sector organisations to win a number of high value contracts. Fire and Rescue Authorities can trade effectively by using the broad experience of Elected Members, many of whom have had successful careers in business. He fails to recognise however that trading will only ever provide a small proportion of the revenue needed to run a Fire and Rescue Service and that the surplus generated must be balanced against the risk to the Authority.

Chapter Five

Sir Ken's report clearly states that the potential savings identified are unlikely to be achieved by some Services and that the scale of change needed to transform the Fire and Rescue Service is unlikely to be achieved by local action alone. This clearly indicates the need for some action by central government.

He also provides examples of some alternative forms of governance that could promote the transformation to which he alludes.

Privatisation has already been ruled out by the Secretary of State, and this Authority supports that position, and the current research into a staff owned mutual appears to be making little progress. Moving towards a more national model appears to fly in the face of localism, whilst moving to a county structure would split Humberside into four unsustainably small units. Merger with another Fire and Rescue Service offers few efficiencies and merger with the Police or Ambulance Service fails to recognise the differences in purpose of these functions.

Police and Crime Commissioners taking responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services seems to be gaining traction, though it could be argued that this arrangement has not yet been proven and will not be until at least the end of the first term of office. Humberside Fire Authority believes that a public body of 22 Elected Members, from four Local Authorities and three political parties is highly representative of the communities it serves. This Authority is democratically accountable to those communities and is trusted by them to deliver an efficient and effective fire and rescue service. We cannot agree that a Police and Crime Commissioner with responsibility for fire and rescue would be more effective.

What is the way forward?

We must not lose sight of the fact that the Fire and Rescue Service in England is not a failing service. On the contrary it has, with others, driven down demand by 40% in 10 years, delivers a great emergency response and is seen as a partner of choice by many other agencies. Even though it labours under four different governance structures, it is universally trusted and respected by the community it serves. This does not happen by accident, it happens because it is well led, well managed and employs great people who are well trained and highly motivated. It is not however perfect as Sir Ken rightfully observes.

The Service needs government leadership. That does not mean that it needs to be micromanaged. The government should develop a Vision for the English Fire and Rescue Service (for example see Appendix 3 'HFRS Vision 2020') and it should fund the Service accordingly. It should value fire and rescue staff and capitalise on their ability to get a job done. It needs to change legislation to remove the current restrictive employment

practices seen in many Services and it should revise industrial relations now to ensure that community safety cannot be compromised by industrial action.

The Humberside Fire Authority has managed the grant reductions set out in CSR 20210 and has frozen the Council Tax precept for the past three years. Staff work more flexibly and are delivering a more diverse Service than ever before. This cannot however go on indefinitely. Continued grant reductions will firstly cause the Service to miss the challenging performance targets it has set and will ultimately put communities and staff at risk. We therefore urge you to recognise the vital work of the Fire and Rescue Service and to accept that a well-motivated, highly trained and professional emergency service is a national asset that must not be allowed to fail for lack of funding.

The Fire and Rescue Service must be efficient but first and foremost it must be effective. It should meet the needs of local communities, national resilience and government expectations.

Submitted on behalf of Humberside Fire Authority by

Councillor John Briggs

Humberside Fire Authority Chairman



HUMBERSIDE
Fire & Rescue Service

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service



Efficiency Overview

Introduction

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service has been governed by the Humberside Fire Authority (HFA) since local government reorganisation in 1996. The HFA consists of 22 Elected Members drawn from the four constituent authorities covered by the Service. It is now the sole decision making body for Fire and Rescue in the sub-region and it is subject to rigorous scrutiny by the independent, non-political Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

Elected Members are nominated annually by local political parties which results in a significant yearly change of HFA members (13 in 2010/11, 10 in 2011/12). Whilst this causes issues around experience and continuity HFA Members participate in at least eight

Member days per year which somewhat mitigates the situation.

HFA Members work well together and are largely able to put aside local matters and political differences to work for the benefit of HFRS.

Elected Members are fully involved in the Service's efficiency programmes and whilst avoiding operational detail provide officers with criteria against which they can develop plans for Member debate and approval.

Against this backdrop this report lays out the efficiency journey taken by HFRS over the past five years and provides a look forward to further efficiency measures that are being considered by the HFA.

Recent History of Efficiencies

In 2007 a new Corporate Management Team (CMT) was formed under the leadership of a new CFO. This team set out to reduce the revenue budget by approximately £2.7m by making significant operational savings. These savings were made possible by the introduction of risk based response standards which replaced the earlier Riverdale Standards.

Proposals included the closure of one whole time fire station, three RDS fire stations, the reduction of one whole time pumping

appliance and the conversion of one whole time pumping appliance to RDS. Whilst technically sound these proposals proved to be unacceptable politically and to affected communities, particularly as this predated the current challenging financial climate.

Ultimately HFA approved the closure of one RDS fire station, the conversion of one whole time pumping appliance to RDS and the introduction of a Combined Aerial Rescue Appliance which generated recurring savings of over £1.3 million per year.

Efficiency 1- Closure of Sledmere Fire Station	
Savings made	£78k per annum
Outcomes	The outcome was the savings shown and the area still provided with an effective fire and rescue provision from other stations. The move from carrying out Home Safety Visits (HSVs) in high risk areas to a more intelligence led approach targeting high risk individuals in any area, with a range of preventative services, means that residents of Sledmere and the surrounding area who need preventative services will have equity of access despite their rurality

Efficiency 2 – Changing Goole Wholetime Duty System (WDS) engine to Retained Duty System (RDS)

Savings made	£733k per annum
Outcomes	The outcome was significant savings as shown above whilst still maintaining the ability for the Service to meet the Fire Authority's Operational Response Standards.

Efficiency 3 – Introduction of Combined Aerial Rescue Pump

Savings made	£420k per annum
Outcomes	The outcome was the savings shown and the introduction of a combined aerial rescue appliance which required less overall crewing levels.

Strategic Plan 2011-14

In 2009 the next efficiency programme was launched but this time with a much greater lead-in time and with complete Elected Member involvement; the proposed implementation date being March 2011. This programme formed a fundamental part of the Strategic Plan 2011-14. For this programme Members set three criteria against which to judge efficiency options:-

- (1) No fire station closures/reduction in pumping appliances.
- (2) Response standards must be met.

- (3) No measurable increase in risk to communities or firefighters.

A range of proposals was discussed with Members and these included:-

- (1) Unit crewing of all special appliances.
- (2) Reduction of ridership factor from 1.4 to 1.33 and introduction of a Personnel Reserve
- (3) Riding all pumping appliances with a crew of four.
- (4) Reduction of FDS Officers from 44 to 36.

- (5) Introduction of a small fires unit.

1. Unit Crewing

This proposal resulted in a uniformed approach at crewing specialist appliances within the Service. This method of crewing provision was already taking place at six of our specialist appliance stations. Primary crewing still remained at three stations crewing an Aerial Ladder Platform, Command Unit and Rescue Support Units.

The primary unit that was used on a regular basis was the Rescue Support Unit which provided

dedicated cutters for use at road traffic collisions. As part of the Service’s on-going strategy to improve our effectiveness at RTC’s investment within the area of RTC equipment was able to provide all stations with suitable hydraulic cutting gear with dedicated cutters being provided to those stations that were identified within the risk based modelling that was carried out. This allowed for the Rescue Support Units to be removed from most of the turn outs to RTC’s.

This proposal saw a reduction in 48 Ff posts across these three stations.

Efficiency 4 Unit crewing on all specialist appliances	
Savings made	£1.8 million
Outcomes	The outcome was significant savings as shown above, also a relatively low level of capital investment led to an improved rescue capability across the whole service area.

2. Ridership Factor and Personnel Reserve

The Service historically applied a ridership factor of 1.4 to all Wholetime Duty System (WDS) personnel who are posted to fire stations. In essence it means for every designated rider position on a fire engine or a special appliance which is primary crewed, 1.4 persons are employed. So for one person's role, 1.4 persons are employed. The 0.4 covers matters such as annual leave, sick leave, compassionate leave and jury service. As sickness absence had been halved in five years, the

time had come to capitalise on this excellent performance.

By reducing the ridership factor to 1.33 a reduction of 24 Ff posts was achieved on the establishment figures at that time. Although this still provided some extra capacity on the watches to allow for the absence reason stated above a Personnel Reserve System (PRS) was also introduced so that when standard crewing forecasts an over provision of staff those individuals are reallocated to other meaningful duties such as Community Safety, Risk Information gathering and the maintenance of RDS availability at some key RDS stations.

Efficiency 5 – Ridership Factor and Personnel Reserve	
Savings made	£900k per annum
Outcomes	The outcome was significant savings as shown above, and also reductions in the long term requirements for fire station facilities, uniforms, PPE and training of staff. The link between the reduction of staff and the introduction of the personnel reserve has meant that there is effectively no wasted crewing as that can be forecast beforehand and those staff re allocated to work which contributes to making communities and firefighters safer. There have also been benefits such as the fact that staff used in other roles, particularly in Community Safety, gain a greater awareness of the wider service provision and are better able to engage with the community during their operational periods

3. Riding all Pumping Appliances with a crew of four

This was considered by Members but was not approved, a particular concern was rural areas where an appliance may wait longer for backup than in urban areas. It may be revisited again, particularly in urban areas with a number of WDS appliances in relatively close locations.

4. Reduction of FDS Officers from 44 to 36

This review not only saw a reduction in the number FDS posts from 44 down to 36 with a loss of 8 Station Managers resulting in a net annual saving, but also allowed for each remaining FDS post to be allocated a specialist role aligned with the future structure of the Service for no additional payment to the officers concerned, or to officers who become FDS in the future.

In total there are nine managers available to respond to operational incidents at any one time, a reduction of two officers from the previous position. This provides four on each side of the Humber which is required due to the geographical complexities of the Service area and one strategic manager at AM level; this is appropriate management cover for incidents up to 20 pumping appliances, simultaneous incidents and also the out of hours managerial decisions required to run the Service. It also provides specialists

in complex skills, which has greatly enhanced the service provided to the public whilst significantly reducing the cost

The rationale behind this approach was also based around the spans of control for the level of responsibility as detailed within Incident Command 3rd edition, as can be seen in the table below a SM would only be mobilised to confirmed incidents of 3 pumping appliances or more.

Command Structure	Mobilising Trigger	Operational Assurance
WM \geq 3 Pumps	3 Pumps	SM mobilised
SM $4 \geq$ 5 Pumps	5 Pumps	GM mobilised
GM $6 \geq$ 8 Pumps	8 Pumps	AM Mobilised
AM $8 \geq$ Pumps	10 Pumps	PO informed

FDS Officer Roles

The review identified a number of FDS functional roles, which would underpin the Service's approach to incident management and operational assurance, as detailed below:

- Incident Commander
- Operational Tactical Adviser
- Audit Officer
- Specialist roles (table on following page)

Specialist roles

Hazardous Materials and Environmental Protection Officers
Fire Investigation Officers
Technical Rescues
Inter liaison Officers

Efficiency 6 - FDS Review	
Savings made	£70k
Outcomes	The outcome was significant savings as shown above, and also a far better service delivery to the public due to increased skills amongst the cadre of FDS officers. There were also linked savings regarding less vehicles being required, less fuel being used and less PPE.

5. Small Fires Unit

The concept for the SFU was introduced after successful trial in 2010 where it attended 42% of secondary fires during its time of availability during the October and November period.

The unit was based on a commercially available Toyota Hi Lux fitted with equipment storage facilities and petrol driven high pressure water pump.

Evidence from this trial was used to show the efficient use of this unit compared to a conventional engine with a crew of 5 or 4. This unit was able to attend quicker and access locations that a standard engine would not be able to fit into such as the small access roads behind buildings that can be found in all of our urban areas.

The 4x4 provision also assisted in tackling secondary fires on soft surface areas such as open ground, this unit was used to great effect during a peat fire during the trial period.

During 2012 this unit attended 379 incidents with only 26 requiring additional resources, just in crewing cost alone we are saving in the region of 60% for each incident we are attending.

Efficiency savings are also being made with other crews not being called away from HSVs and risk information inspections and the difficulties caused for the Service and our communities by having to revisit those premises. Further research is considering the concept of this vehicle for use in other areas within the Service

Efficiency 7 - Introduction of a Small Fires Unit	
Savings made	The notional cost per call has reduced, but as this has not replaced any existing fire engines significant savings have yet to be made. However the concept of using it is important for future plans which may yield significant savings
Outcomes	The outcome was not savings specifically although the notional cost per call is much reduced. The important outcome was that the concept of small fires units has been introduced with almost no opposition from Representative Bodies and now crews are used to responding in one it will make future utilisation of these vehicles linked to cost saving exercises much less challenging.

With the exception of (3) all of these were approved in March 2011 lowering the operational establishment by 80 posts saving £2.7 million per year in salaries alone. These initiatives were implemented immediately creating an immediate reduction in establishment and a temporary pool of supernumerary staff most of whom have now left the Service, but prior to leaving were utilised through the Personnel Reserve to extremely good effect.

Management Structures and other means explored concurrent to the efficiencies above

Firstly, discussions were held with all neighbouring FRS's to establish the possibility of mergers or joint management teams. Initially only North Yorkshire FRS expressed an interest in exploring such a route. During this period of uncertainty the CFO retired and the Authority appointed a temporary CFO to facilitate a merger or shared arrangement should that prove feasible.

Consideration was first given to a joint management team serving two combined fire authorities, however, this proved to be impractical as the demographics, risk profile and politics of the two Services were very different. A single team would have found itself in an ethical dilemma giving

advice to two very different authorities.

Merging HFRS and NYFRS was explored until it was realised that the benefits of such an arrangement were small compared to the risks and obstacles. The potential savings for HFRS and NYFRS were £250k and £350k per year respectively and were predominantly found from a reduced management team and joint procurement. The main obstacle preventing a merger was the inability to set a differential precept which was the only way of financing two different community risk profiles without adverse effect to cost and quality of service. Members of both Authorities considered both proposals and rejected them as they were not cost-effective.

Discussions also took place between South Yorkshire FRS and HFRS where a merger or shared management team were considered but these were not progressed as again the benefits did not outweigh the risks and obstacles. Subsequently a number of other proposed mergers have foundered, not through lack of good intent but because the financial case is weak and the obstacles many. It has been proven that voluntary mergers and shared management teams only release peripheral savings and that savings of the order now

necessary can only be achieved by reduction of establishment. Collaboration working within the region continues to provide a more efficient and effective use of our limited resources with joint working in the areas of Fire Investigation, Hazardous Materials and Environmental Protection Officers and a regional foam strategy.

Regional Fire Investigation Team

By working as a collective within the region we have formalised a more efficient approach in the provision of level

three FI officers. Level three FI officers investigate all fire fatality incidents within the region and by having this collaborative approach we are able to maintain this cover throughout the year. Currently each Service supplies two Level 3 FIs and they work a regional rota to ensure that there is at least one available at all times. This also allows for savings to be made by not having all officers within the Service being trained to the level three standards, and in addition the FI officers themselves have become much more proficient and skilled in FI.

Efficiency 8 - Regional FI Team	
Savings made	£23k immediate and around £8k per annum
Outcomes	The savings from training and qualifications are significant as they are all trained to Master's Degree level. Each Service has saved around £23k in initial training costs and officer time and an on-going saving of around £8k per year in reduced training and qualification costs and time away for those officers. In addition this has greatly enhanced the skill base of officers, and the qualifications have created greater credibility of those officers, and their investigation findings, which as in turn led to excellent liaison with the Police, forensic scientists, CPS and the Coroners Offices which has led to significant arrests including for murder, and FI Officers being classed as expert witnesses in court.

Hazardous Materials and Environmental Protection Officers (HMEPO)

A similar regional collaborative arrangement has also been put in place to provide assistance during incidents involving hazardous materials or any substance which is damaging to the environment

This also extends to the provision of qualified Detection Identification and Monitoring officers within the region although three out of the four services have this capability there are occasions that when resources are stretched use of this specialist officer is required.

Efficiency 9 - HMEPOs	
Savings made	£4k per annum
Outcomes	The outcome was savings as shown above and also the ability to cover in another Service area with consistent skills and procedures

Foam Strategy

Discussions across the four regional FRS took place to determine requirements for bulk foam capability, either individually or collaboratively. After a spate of incidents in 2010 it was reinforced that there was a need for better pre-planned collaborative arrangements.

It was clear that a collaborative approach to the provision of bulk foam would provide the most effective, efficient and economically viable approach.

The first step in determining bulk foam requirements was to identify a realistic response model to cover varying scales of incident.

The National Response model was used looking at the four levels of response, by incorporating this approach to foam delivery across the region we were able to reduce our bulk stocks of foam by 28,000 litres saving the service over £100k in replacement costs of our old foam stock.

Efficiency 10 – Regional Foam Strategy

Savings made	£100k
Outcomes	The outcome was significant savings as shown above, and also a realistic response model, better cross boundary working arrangements and significant environmental benefits linked to reduced foam production and reductions in foam requiring to be disposed of at end of life.

Community Safety Review

Further savings were generated in this round of efficiencies by streamlining non-operational service delivery by carrying out a number of changes. This involved combining and widening some roles and therefore reducing the overall numbers of staff, which saw the roles of education liaison officer and community safety advocate merged and the number reduced overall. This more flexible team has been much better able to align preventative work to the specific needs of the

communities in their areas. In the area of Community Safety there was also a review of the arrangements in Technical Fire Safety which focussed the work there onto what is required in our Community Safety and Inclusion Strategy. There were a number of roles during this exercise which increased, notably around the provision of risk information to operational crews, but decreases to the numbers of middle management and operational staff providing support type roles yielded significant savings.

Efficiency 11 - Community Safety Review	
Savings made	£363k per annum
Outcomes	The outcome was better trained staff with a wider role in the community capable of delivering quality preventative services and multi-agency liaison. This had led to significant reductions in incidents (for example the number of deliberate fires are down over 25% on the same period last year), and so far also there are reductions in fatalities this year. This also involved increasing the capacity to provide operational crews with risk information therefore making them and the communities safer

Discretionary Spend

Spending officers carried out a detailed review of their levels of discretionary spend

and reduced the overall budget as a result of that review.

Efficiency 12 – Reduced discretionary spends	
Savings made	£260k per annum
Outcomes	The outcome was significant savings as shown above, and also a greater awareness of the financial situation by individual spending officers. Many small cost saving suggestions have come on the back of this.

Corporate Support removal of vacant posts

The removal of a number of vacant posts in corporate support was carried out in 2011 in readiness for the later

review of non-frontline services. This was possible due to vacancy management in those areas.

Efficiency 13 – Corporate support, removal of vacant posts	
Savings made	£143k per annum
Outcomes	The outcome was significant savings as shown above, and also the fact that vacancies had been managed to allow this and therefore there was no effect on staff.

Senior Management

On appointment of a permanent CFO the opportunity was taken to reduce Principal Officers from six

to five and Area Managers from seven to six.

Efficiency 14 – Senior Management	
Savings made	£230k per annum
Outcomes	The outcome was significant savings as shown above, and also created a smaller and more focussed Corporate Management Team.

Partnership Working and Funding opportunities

We continue to build on our partnership working which has paid dividends in the past 18 months. Our youth engagement continues to grow in strength with over 160 young adults attending the Princes Trust or BTEC programs each year, although at this time we are unable to measure the contribution that this is making to the local community and economy these programs have received National recognition.

Fitted sprinkler systems within commercial and domestic premises still remains high on our community safety register, working with our local authority partners has resulted in the funding of over £20k for portable sprinkler systems for vulnerable adults within our community which has resulting in the saving of one life to date when the system operated and extinguished a fire in a room occupied by one of our most vulnerable people.

Partnership working with DEFRA has also resulted in a capital investment of over £120k for the purchase of four type B boat teams. Ongoing revenue cost has been picked up by the Service and these teams are available for the National deployment.

Summary to 2012

These efficiency measures meant that the Service was able to exceed the savings needed to balance the budget in 2011/12 and 2012/13. In addition to these savings, reserves have been progressively built up over the past five years in anticipation of financial pressures to come. Reserves have been earmarked to fund change programmes, such as the wide area network, staff exit packages and energy saving capital projects. Combination of the three current workshops into a single new facility will be funded by reducing the number of workshop staff employed.

The final measure to emerge from the 2011-14 Strategic Plan was the formation of a Community Interest Company made possible by the Localism Act 2011. The Strategic Plan was subject to comprehensive consultation and income generation was unanimously supported by all consultees. HFR Solutions was therefore formed in March 2012 as a local authority controlled Community Interest Company. HFR Solutions provides a range of services to commerce and industry, the most significant contract so far being the provision of on-site fire, rescue and ambulance services for Tata Steel at Scunthorpe (one of the

35 COMAH sites in the Service's area). The company is generating a significant surplus and continues to grow with other significant contracts being explored. When the Service asked our staff who would be willing to work for the company,

either on a full or part time basis, over 270 staff said they would want to do so.

Efficiency 15 – Trading through HFR Solutions (Community Interest Company)	
Savings made	£500k to £1 million surplus and salary recharge per annum predicted by end 2014/15. This is based on existing contracts and contracts nearing signing.
Outcomes	The outcome has been significant income, the predicted amount shown above, and also the fact that some staff are seconded to the company means that there is also a saving in staff salaries for the Service where those staff do not require backfilling. It has been possible to partly manage the retirement profile in this way. There has also been a benefit that some existing RDS staff have now been employed by the company as full time firefighters (still providing RDS cover when not working for Solutions) and so they have better job security than previously and the likelihood of them having to leave the area for work, following the closure of a major local employer who employed many of our RDS staff, has reduced and therefore the cover to the community is not as adversely affected as it may have been.

This surplus is not used to support the normal establishment costs of the Service as a significant loss of business would lead to immediate funding shortfalls and possible redundancies. The surplus is therefore used to fund capital and revenue projects that benefit the community.

Service Vision 2020

In summer 2011 the new CMT set out to develop a further programme of efficiency savings to deal with the anticipated budget reduction in 2013/14 – 2014/15. The starting point for this programme was, in view of the government's drive to localism, to establish a long-term vision for HFRS. The aim of this vision was to focus on 2020 so that subsequent Strategic Plans could take the Service towards the vision in three yearly increments. The vision, now approved by Members after extensive consultation, has a number of key elements. It states that HFRS must continue to be effective, operate safely and provide value for money. Rather than retrenching in the face of grant reduction the vision widens our offer to communities now including community preparedness and recovery whilst continuing to deliver prevention, protection and response. The vision also aims to deliver a smaller, more flexible, workforce that will be more responsive to changing community needs.

Delivery of the vision was supported by a fundamental change in management processes from discreet directorates to multi-disciplinary Boards tasked with delivering the priorities of the Service. In addition to breaking down departmental barriers the Boards develop management and leadership skills amongst more junior managers.

Enabling Strong Decision Making

In order to create the right environment for effective decision making, the governance arrangements of the Fire Authority have been fundamentally reviewed, with a bespoke board-type structure being introduced, coupled with robust scrutiny arrangements. The new governance arrangements and those previously undertaken from 2008 onwards, has put the Authority in a much stronger position, together with a meaningful approach to both staff/stakeholder engagement and then consultation.

Current Efficiency Programme

The current efficiency programme has two main strands, the review of non-frontline services and the Operational Efficiency Programme.

The review of non-frontline services began in the summer of 2012 and was completed in November 2012 Members giving approval to new structures in December 2012. Implementation will be complete by April 2013.

The review reinforced the fact that in-house provision of non-frontline services compared very well with outsourced provision both financially and qualitatively.

The review has seen a significant restructure of all non-frontline support services which has yielded significant efficiency savings. Non-frontline management structures have also been flattened by the elimination of the Area Manager layer releasing two senior posts. The total saving generated by this review is in the order of £650k per year.

Efficiency 16 – Non Frontline Services Review.	
Savings made	£650k per annum
Outcomes	The outcome was significant savings as shown above, and also a refocusing of non-frontline support services to ensure the services provided are aligned to the needs of the Service going forward.

The Operational Efficiency Programme will take place over a longer timespan governed by the retirement profile of Grey Book personnel.

As an initial measure Members approved an establishment reduction of 24 posts in December 2012. This will be achieved by further reducing the ridership factor and creating a

staff pool operating on a flexible duty rota. This will reduce the revenue budget by a further £890k by the end of 2014/15. It will therefore be possible to balance the budget in 2013/14 and 2014/15 though it may be necessary to deploy earmarked reserves to support the supernumerary staff costs until sufficient staff exit the Service.

Efficiency 17 – Reduction in establishment due to better management of the ridership factor

Savings made	£890k per annum
Outcomes	The outcome was significant savings as shown above, and built on previous efficiency savings when the ridership factor was dropped from 1.4 to 1.33. This change further reduces the ridership factor on stations, which are supported by a centrally available staff pool to cover un-forecasted absence. There are cultural benefits as well in introducing much more flexible working and less capacity built around individual stations.

Members are currently also working through 46 potential options for reducing the operational establishment further. Not all of those options can be implemented as implementing one affects the others, but they are all being discussed so members can select the best ones to consult on. These options must fulfil two Member led criteria; the first being that response standards must be met, the second that there are no fire station closures. These options include reducing WDS pumping appliances, converting WDS appliance to RDS, variable crewing and the introduction of another small fires unit. These proposals have the potential to deliver worthwhile savings beyond 2015 without comprising our response standards.

Since March 2011 HFA have approved efficiencies that will reduce the revenue budget by over £5m (10%) by the end of the CSR period. To this can be added the £800k savings achieved in 2007/08, and any surplus income generated by HFR Solutions and salary savings of HFRS staff working for the company which at present is predicted to be over £600k per year. All of this has been achieved without redundancy and without significant industrial relations challenges. Since 2007 there have been service delivery

improvements particularly in terms of a technical rescue provision and in water rescue/flood management. The wholetime operational establishment of 709 in 2007 has been reduced to 526 in 2012, a reduction of 26% and since 2011 response times have improved

HFRS is now playing a leading role in the East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Project which will deliver an efficient and resilient virtual joint control room by the summer of 2014. The Service is also taking a lead role in the Humber LRF, the CFO being elected as Vice Chair in 2012. HFRS has been at the centre of flood prevention and mitigation during the floods of winter 2012/13 and continue to provide an off-shore response following the withdrawal of MCA funding.

The Service continues to focus on prevention as a critical activity and whilst fewer resources are available demand on the Service continues to be driven down by innovative local initiatives in partnership with other agencies. Value for money lies at the heart of this Service and whilst cost per head of population remains high the reasons for this are well understood. The demographic of the Humber area is unusual. Hull and Grimsby have some of the most deprived wards in England and educational achievement

remains stubbornly low. Health inequalities remain at a high level as does the level of poor housing. All of these factors drive up community risk. This is contrasted with a sparsely populated and relatively wealthy East Riding of Yorkshire which has a growing elderly population that requires a different approach to managing risk.

Finally there is the Humber Bank, which now has the busiest port complex in the UK and the second largest concentration of COMAH premises. Whilst the Service works with industry to manage these risks and HFR

Solutions is lowering risk by providing services to many of these premises the inevitability of a major incident occurring cannot be ignored. HFRS must maintain sufficient highly trained, professional firefighters to deal with incidents of great magnitude until reinforcements can be brought in. Even then it is essential that those commanding such incidents remain familiar and experienced in these special risks. It will be possible to reduce the operational establishment further but that must not be to a point where operational effectiveness and resilience are compromised.

Total Efficiencies since 2007	
Savings made	<p>£6.55 million per annum</p> <p>This is 15% of the 2007/8 overall budget</p> <p>Not including over £500k per annum predicted income from trading in addition to these savings (therefore over £7 million of cashable efficiencies predicted at present, without the current efficiencies being considered by Members)</p>
Outcomes	<p>The Service is responding quicker to incidents than 2007, and the preventative work being carried out has seen calls significantly reduce during that period as well.</p>

Current Position

During this period of significant improvements in efficiency, and changing the way we deliver our Service so it is less costly, we have also seen improvements in the way we have successfully reduced the incidence of fires, improved our response times to incidents despite a reduction in both the overall number of appliances and the number crewed by Wholetime staff and we have diversified both the services we can provide to the public and the equipment we can provide those services with.




Community Outcomes

Our work with our communities has seen the number of incidents reduced over the period from when we started the efficiency journey.

Outcomes		
Total Number of Incidents	Reduced by 40%	

Operational Response Outcomes

The response to incidents over the last three years, since we invested in a new mobilising system, has improved in the following ways:-

Outcomes		
First appliance Response Standard performance	(90% target) has improved from 95.99% to 98.09%	
Second appliance Response Standard performance	(80% target) has improved from 89.78% to 90.33%	
The average response time across all areas (8 minutes is our most stringent target for high risk areas)	The average has stayed the same at 5 minutes 48 seconds	
The average response time to RTCs in all area (15 minutes is our target)	The average has improved from 8 minutes 42 seconds to 8 minutes exactly	

During the same period we have also managed to significantly improve direct service delivery to the public from an operational point of view in the following ways:-

- Complete change of the firefighting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided to staff to improve their safety
- Introduction of training and PPE specific to water incidents to both improve the safety of our staff as well as allow us to attend a wider range of incidents, including those

which require rescue from water.

- Introduction of boats to further enhance the provision above
- Introduction of specialist Technical Rescue Teams to allow us to carry out complex rescues, line

rescues and rescues from confined spaces

- Enhanced rescue equipment on all our appliances to much improve our ability to carry out rescues from RTCs and other entrapments

Conclusion

In conclusion HFRS has a strong sense of purpose and a clear vision for the future. It has already demonstrated that it can make significant savings (greater than those suggested in “Rising to the Challenge”) whilst improving the service it delivers.

The Corporate Management Team works effectively with our Fire Authority to deliver an effective service that ensures the safety of our communities and staff, helping people to be safer and live better which contribute to the economic development of the area while delivering value for money.

R Hannigan
Chief Fire Officer

Our Vision – taking Humberside Fire and Rescue Service to 2020 and beyond

The world is changing all around us. To continue to deliver an excellent emergency service to our communities over the next 10 years and beyond, we must look ahead to what we want the Service to look like in the future and move swiftly to prepare for what is to come. Our vision creates a long-term destination for the Service and serves as a framework for our roadmap of how we will get there.

What we will be doing the same, but better

The safety of our communities will remain as our top priority; striving to make the Humberside area a safer place to live, work and visit, with fewer fire-related incidents because our work to prevent and protect against fires is working well.

By actively engaging more with our communities, we will have a better understanding of their needs and the risks that they face. This will allow us to use information and insight to focus our activity, use our resources effectively and assist in changing behaviour to keep people safer.

We will continue to help people to prepare for emergencies: working hand in hand with our partner organisations to reduce risks, helping to keep our communities safe and making them a better place to live, and educating businesses about what they can do to protect themselves and their community against fire. Our enforcement role will continue to target those businesses that put our communities at risk by not complying with fire safety standards.

Our resilience plans will continue to be robust. Having learnt a lot from past emergencies, we have plans in place for dealing with any of the risks and emergencies our communities face.

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service staff are our best asset. All our employees work hard and are dedicated to providing an excellent service to our communities. As a result, we meet the expectations of our communities by providing a consistent and effective service by training and developing our staff so they are multi-skilled and flexible to respond to any situation.

The relationships we have with our partners remain highly important and they will continue to want to work with us because we will keep making improvements to the safety of our communities.

Fires cause significant damage to the environment but we are a green organisation and are always looking at ways to be even greener. By 2020, we will be more energy efficient than we ever have been, helping us to reduce our impact on the environment. The vehicles we use will be different to what they are now and will be more suited to the emerging risks within our communities.

What we will be doing differently

Our budget will be significantly smaller by 2020. To ensure that we can continue to deliver an excellent fire and rescue service, we will have reduced how much we spend and made some tough decisions to ensure we provide a cost-effective service, delivering value for money in everything that we do.

We will have fewer people working for us but this will not have reduced our level of service as we will work more efficiently and effectively than we did before. The roles and responsibilities of our employees will be more varied and our training and development programmes will be to the highest standard, ensuring our staff have the skills to carry out their more varied roles successfully and safely. Staff will spend more time at work to train and gather information and will be better rewarded as a result. Our Control room function will be second to none with collaborative arrangements in place with other fire and rescue services to ensure we continue to meet our excellent response standards.

As a 24/7 service, new alternative shift patterns and working arrangements for all staff will provide more flexibility and enable the right services to be available when they are needed, while non-operational staff will be trained to provide operational resilience. We will work together as one team, regardless of role or rank. All our staff will be fitter, healthier and happier and as a result, our sickness levels will be lower, with fewer work-related injuries.

When people and businesses have been affected by a fire or other emergency, we will help them to recover. We will help with rehousing, repair fire-damaged homes, clear roads after road traffic collisions and provide counselling to those involved or affected by the emergency. We will learn from every incident and promote this learning to our communities and partners.

By 2020 we will also be generating income, providing emergency rescue and fire fighting services to industries.

