

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY OPTIONS FOR FORMAL CONSULTATION

SUMMARY

1. Members will be aware that the implementation of a number of operational efficiency options was approved by Members on 31 January 2014. Those options have now been fully implemented.
2. In approving implementation of those options Members considered the predicted impact, in particular on performance against the Authority's Response Standards. Members will be aware that Service performance was not adversely affected by implementation. In fact, largely due to continued effective preventative work and the Authority's investment in the mobilising infrastructure, performance has actually improved to a position whereby the Service is performing at a higher level against the Response Standards than it was prior to implementation.
3. Members will be aware that the financial projections for the Authority, detailed elsewhere on the agenda, mean that further reductions in spend on operational response will be required.
4. All of the potential options that could be implemented, while still ensuring that the Service still meets the Authority's Response Standards, have been presented to Members at a Member Day. At that Member Day officers also explained their professional view as to which options it would not be advisable to implement.
5. Members will be aware that at the meeting on 31 January 2014 there was one option which officers recommended for implementation that was not approved by the Authority. That option, to remove one full time fire engine from the Immingham area, has been modelled again using the most up to date data.
6. Members will also be aware that there were a number of other options which were engaged upon in 2012, but were not taken forward for formal consultation, partly due to the relatively low levels of savings which could be realised. Those options have been modelled again using up to date data, and that same data has been used to model any other potential options as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7.
 - (a) That Members approve formal consultation on a number of operational efficiency options.
 - (b) Members endorse the consultation plan set out in this report.
 - (c) Members consider the consultation results at the March 2016 Authority meeting.

BACKGROUND

8. Members were presented with information relating to a number of options to reduce the expenditure on operational response at the Member Day on 27 November 2015. That information had a particular focus on the following:-
 - First engine response standard performance
 - Second engine response standard performance
 - Risk predictions
 - Finances
9. The types of options which could be considered are:-
 - Removal of fire engines crewed by full time firefighters at stations with more than one engine.
 - Removal of fire engines crewed by on call firefighters at stations with more than one engine.
 - Removal of fire engines at specific times of the day (generally night time hours)
 - Merger of two stations and removing one fire engine at the same time.

The full range of possible options and the detailed predictions for the impact are included at Appendix 1.

FINANCIAL DRIVERS

10. The Service faces a budget deficit of around £2.1 million by 2018/19 and it is expected that another £1.1 million will need to be saved by 2019/20.
11. Members are aware that the Service Redesign Programme (SRP) is projected to identify potential savings of £1 million. Therefore this means that it is expected that £2.2 million will still need to be saved by 2019/20.
12. Other savings in addition to the SRP work are being considered, particularly from discretionary spends and it is anticipated that if the operational efficiency options recommended are approved there will also be other related savings in equipment and training which will further contribute to the overall savings required. It is also possible that the SRP savings could be in excess of £1million.
13. It is therefore felt that until the full extent of the SRP savings, and the extent of other savings which may arise, are known, it is not currently necessary to consider options to deliver the anticipated, post SRP deficit of £2.2 million. However, it is felt that savings circa £1million should be approved for implementation during 2016/17 to ensure that the deficit can be managed until the start of 2019/20.
14. If options to deliver savings of that magnitude are approved then it is felt that no further operational savings will be required to be implemented until 2019/20 at the earliest.

OTHER DRIVERS

15. Members should be aware that due to the retirement profile of the Service, and the gradual, and prudent, implementation of previously approved options that crewing levels have reduced as predicted. This means there will, if no options were approved which reduce the wholetime firefighter establishment, be a need to recruit for 2016/17.

16. Whilst recruitment would naturally be welcomed it is likely that Members will need to consider a reduction of full time firefighters sometime in the next few years in any case, given that the maximum savings available if only on call (Retained Duty) engines were considered would be circa £700k. If that is the case then it is felt that to recruit now would not be prudent, because it would simply increase the financial burden on the Authority and could also increase the likelihood that the Authority might have to consider firefighter redundancies at some point in the future.
17. The Authority has previously stated its intention to avoid firefighter redundancies if at all possible and none have been needed so far. If there was a decision taken to reduce the full time operational establishment in 2016/17 then officers predict that there will be no need to consider firefighter redundancies at any time during the period covered by the Government's latest Spending Review.
18. Members will also be aware that the Service has diversified the services we provide. We are currently providing medical services in partnership with Yorkshire Ambulance Service and East Midlands Ambulance Service and are trialling a falls response with Hull Clinical Commissioning Group. There may be opportunities to be commissioned to deliver some similar, or related, services in the future and this means that if any decisions are taken to reduce the full time firefighter establishment early then there would be a number of supernumerary staff that could be utilised if those opportunities arose. Should those opportunities be realised then it is anticipated that recruitment can be undertaken over the next few years in any case.

CONSULTATION

19. The purpose of the consultation with staff and external stakeholders is to enable Elected Members to consider the view of the consultation participants when coming to a decision as to which option, if any, should be implemented.
20. The Consultation Plan is included at Appendix 2.
21. All staff will be invited to participate in the consultation through a range of options including during visits to affected stations and online.
22. External stakeholders will be encouraged to take part using a range of methods, with particular focus upon Elected Members in our Local Authorities and the views of surrounding Fire and Rescue Services. We will also utilise the Service website and media, including social media, to encourage members of the public to take part.
23. If the Authority approve consultation on options then it is proposed that the results of the consultation, and any subsequent recommendations, are brought before the Authority at their meeting in March 2016 for consideration.

POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

24. The Authority has a proven track record of making decisions early, which has enabled officers to effectively plan and manage budgets effectively over a number of years. If there is a decision to implement one of the options recommended for consultation then officers would implement that decision when required, in line with the Service retirement profile and resources needed across Service Delivery.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

25. Whilst any one option could be implemented within each geographical area, as shown at Appendix 1, officers have a professional view regarding which should be considered for formal implementation at this time.

26. The general view of officers is as follows:-

- Options which include removing a full time engine during the night should not be considered at present. Whilst it may be necessary to review that at some point in the future it is felt that whilst they could be implemented within the Response Standards, due to the relatively small volume of incidents during the night it should be recognised that incidents during the night can have increased operational risks due to people being asleep in domestic properties and commercial properties being unattended without the information that can often be gleaned from staff during opening hours. These options are shown at Appendix 1, but are shown separately to the other options. This is because the period in which they could be removed could be varied significantly depending on Member views so the predictions shown are only based upon an example removal over a twelve hour period. If Members do decide to consult upon these options then those figures would be used for consultation but more detailed discussions would take place at Member Days regarding the variety of options available.
- Options which reduce the geographical spread of full time fire engines could be implemented, but they would naturally mean a greater reliance on fire engines crewed by on call firefighters in some areas. Whilst the on call crews are extremely capable it should be borne in mind that it isn't as easy as at a full time station to ensure 100% availability into the future and therefore the impact of reducing the number of full time fire engines in remote areas is likely to be greater than in the areas where there are other full time fire engines nearby.
- Options should be discounted which have the highest negative impact on Response Standards or risk.
- Consideration should be given to the affect on operational resilience of only implementing options at on call stations. An example of the impact of this is that to achieve the same level of minimum savings for removing a full time fire engine would require the removal of at least five on call engines. Whilst those options could still be implemented within the Response Standards the Service would be increasingly stretched at large, or simultaneous, incidents if that was the case.

27. Taking all of those considerations into account it is the officer view that the following options for consultation be considered in order of preference ie it is the officer view that the first option, to only consult upon options in Immingham, is the preferred option for consultation.

Option 1

Consult upon the two options in Immingham

- Merge Immingham East and West Fire Stations and remove one fire engine.
- or
- Remove one fire engine from Immingham West.

Option 2

Consult upon only those options which are predicted to have zero affect on first engine Response Standards

- Merge Immingham East and West Fire Stations and remove one fire engine.
- Remove one fire engine from Market Weighton or Brough.
- Remove one fire engine from Hornsea.
- Remove one fire engine from Withernsea.

Option 3

Members decide on a different range of options for consultation by either setting a different 'bar' to determine which are considered (similar to the zero effect on Response Standard 'bar' above, for example consulting on any options that have an impact on first engine Response Standards of less than 0.1%) or deciding to consult upon the full range of possible options.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPATIBILITY

28. The operational efficiency options support strategic objective 4 – making the best use of the resources we have.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCES/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

29. There are potential significant financial savings, and due to the relatively minimal impact upon Response Standards this could be seen to further improve the Value for Money of the Service.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

30. None directly arising.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/HR IMPLICATIONS

31. An EIA will be carried out ahead of any consultation taking place and will be available for consideration prior to any implementation being approved.

CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

32. Effective consultation, leading to implementation, will help to manage and mitigate risk, in particular in respect to the Strategic Risk relating to external financial support.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

33. None arising directly.

COMMUNICATION ACTIONS ARISING

34. To ensure consistency of message to the media regarding any operational efficiency options approved for consultation, a media strategy is being drawn up to deal with media enquiries arising during this period. This will be circulated to all relevant parties ahead of the consultation commencing.
35. HFRS staff, local community groups and key stakeholders will be specifically invited to participate in the formal consultation.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

36. Formal consultation will be extensive and inclusive and the plan is attached at Appendix 2

BACKGROUND PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR ACCESS

37. Consultation responses to those options which were considered in 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS RESTATED

38. (a) That Members approve formal consultation on a number of operational efficiency options.
- (b) Members endorse the consultation plan set out in this report.
- (c) Members consider the consultation results at the March 2016 Authority meeting.

C BLACKSELL

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Options for Formal Consultation

In each of the geographical areas it is only possible to implement one option. The options which relate to the partial removal of a full time fire engine are shown separately as they are all modelled using a notional twelve hour removal during the period which is quietest for that station; all options include removal during night time hours. Should members decide to consult upon those options then they would be included in the options within a geographical area with an explanation of that position. It would be possible to vary the length of the removal, but it would still only be possible to implement one option in each geographical location.

The removal of a fire engine crewed by full time firefighters during specified hours (modelling assumes a twelve hour removal during the station's quietest period)					
Options Number	Full Time Station	Approximate Savings	First Engine Impact (%)	Second Engine Impact (%)	Life Risk Impact (%)
Goole 3	Goole	£505k	0.00	-0.38	0.006
Hull – 1	Bransholme	£476K	-0.06	-0.11	0.002
Hull – 2	Calvert Lane	£383K	-0.04	-0.52	0.004
Hull – 3	Central	£476K	-0.06	-0.06	0.002
Hull – 4	Clough Road	£436K	-0.88	-0.14	0.003
Hull – 5	East Hull	£476K	-0.49	-0.06	0.002
Immingham/Grimsby – 3	Immingham West	£383k	-0.07	-0.03	0.002
Immingham/Grimsby – 4	Immingham East	£505K	-0.07	-0.17	0.001
Immingham/Grimsby – 5	Peaks Lane	£383K	-0.17	0.05	0.001
North and East Coast – 5	Bridlington	£505k	-0.17	-0.00	0.004
Scunthorpe – 3	Scunthorpe	£319k	-0.04	-0.03	0.008

The following tables are the options to fully remove a fire engine, either at a station with more than one engine or by merging two stations together whilst still retaining more than one engine so that both stations could be crewed during night time periods.

Only one of the options below could be implemented in each geographical area.

CENTRAL EAST RIDING					
Option Number	Description	Approximate Savings	First Engine Impact (%)	Second Engine Impact (%)	Life Risk Impact (%)
Central ER – 1	Remove 1 one on-call engine from Market Weighton	£115k	0.00	-0.74	0.003
Central ER – 2	Remove 1 one on-call engine from Pocklington	£99K	-0.07	-1.40	0.002
Central ER – 3	Remove 1 one on-call engine from Beverley	£164k	-0.07	-1.37	0.006
Central ER – 4	Remove 1 on-call engine from Brough	£109k	0.00	-0.41	0.001

GOOLE					
Option Number	Description	Approximate Savings	First Engine Impact (%)	Second Engine Impact (%)	Life Risk Impact (%)
Goole – 1	Remove 1 one on-call engine from Goole	£114k	-0.07	-1.40	0.002
Goole – 2	Remove 1 full-time engine from Goole	£1.101m	-0.07	-1.07	0.012

IMMINGHAM/GRIMSBY

Option Number	Description	Approximate Savings	First Engine Impact (%)	Second Engine Impact (%)	Life Risk Impact (%)
Immingham/Grimsby – 1	Merge Immingham East/West remove 1 full-time engine	£1.101m	0.00	-0.41	0.004
Immingham/Grimsby – 2	Remove 1 full-time engine from Immingham West	£766k	-0.09	-0.08	0.004

NORTH AND EAST COAST

Option Number	Description	Approximate Savings	First Engine Impact (%)	Second Engine Impact (%)	Life Risk Impact (%)
North and East Coast – 1	Remove 1 one-call engine from Bridlington	£99K	-0.11	0.00	0.001
North and East Coast – 2	Remove 1 full-time engine from Bridlington	£1.101m	-0.45	0.03	0.008
North and East Coast – 3	Remove 1 on-call engine from Hornsea	£110k	0.00	-0.82	0.002
North and East Coast – 4	Remove 1 on-call from Driffield	£143k	-0.04	-1.72	0.003

SCUNTHORPE

Option Number	Description	Approximate Savings	First Engine Impact (%)	Second Engine Impact (%)	Life Risk Impact (%)
Scunthorpe – 1	Remove 1 full-time engine from Scunthorpe	£766K	-0.09	-0.27	0.027
Scunthorpe – 2	Remove 1 on-call engine from Scunthorpe	£170k	-0.11	-0.33	0.027

WITHERNSEA

Option Number	Description	Approximate Savings	First Engine Impact (%)	Second Engine Impact (%)	Life Risk Impact (%)
Withernsea – 1	Remove 1 on-call engine from Withernsea	£107k	0.00	-0.41	0.001