

Resources & Fire and Rescue Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 December 2023.

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service: Resourcing to Risk

Recommendation

That the Resources and FRS Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the contents of the report.

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Members will be aware that Cabinet on 9 November 2023 supported the Resourcing to Risk model and authorised officers to conduct a consultation exercise on Option 2a. Option 2a aligns resources to activity levels and risk. The model introduces an evening shift and removes shift systems that are not sustainable.

1.2 The current model is not suitable or sustainable into the future because:

- There is the highest fire appliance availability during lowest periods of risk and activity.
- There is the lowest fire appliance availability during highest periods of risk and activity.
- There is no guaranteed fire appliance availability other than wholetime appliances which makes managing fire cover difficult on a day to day, hour by hour basis. This is due to reliance on 'on call' availability which fluctuates and is significantly reducing.
- There is no guaranteed resilience for surge events, extreme weather incidents, e.g. flooding or high activity as this currently relies on on-call crews.

Maintaining the status quo is not an option.

1.3 Details of the Resourcing to Risk model, the options considered, including the proposed option 2a are set out in the Cabinet report which is attached at Appendix 1.

1.4 A consultation will be conducted, beginning on Monday 11 December 2023 and ending in March 2024. After this, all responses will be analysed and considered in formulating the final recommendations made to Cabinet in Spring / Summer 2024.

- 1.5 This report is presented to members to aid understanding of the proposed model and to equip members with the relevant information to respond to queries from their residents, communities, business and partners. It also provides members with an outline of the approach WFRS is taking to the consultation and seeks members' views on how best the WFRS can reach all communities and business in Warwickshire to ensure a robust and comprehensive consultation.

2.0 Resourcing to Risk – Option 2a

- 2.1 Resourcing to risk is about having the right resources in the right place at the right time linked to activity levels and risk. Not all parts of Warwickshire experience the same level of activity or risk. It is about putting our resources in the place where they will make the biggest difference.
- 2.2 The model guarantees that 12 fire appliances (fire engines) are available during the times of the day when activity levels are highest (0800- 2200hrs). These fire appliances are positioned across Warwickshire where they can make the biggest impact whilst providing an acceptable level of service across the County.
- 2.3 The model guarantees that 8 fire appliances are available during the times when activity levels are lowest (2200-0800hrs). These fire appliances are positioned across Warwickshire where they can make the biggest impact whilst providing an acceptable level of service across the County.
- 2.4 The model introduces 'surge' teams enabling 20 fire appliances to be available across Warwickshire within 2 hours between 0800-2200 and 16 fire appliances to be available within 2 hours between 2200-0800 for any large or protracted incident or event.
- 2.5 Prevention and Protection activities are delivered between 0800-2200hrs, and the model provides guaranteed availability to deliver these interventions during this time.
- 2.6 The new model introduces an evening shift, ensuring that fire appliance availability is guaranteed between 0800-2200hrs and positioned in the locations where they make the biggest impact whilst providing a level of service across the County. Firefighters that are currently on "on-call" contracts will have the opportunity to work on the evening shifts and surge teams.

3.0 Approach to Consultation

- 3.1 There will be a period of meaningful consultation on these proposals. This consultation will take place from December 2023 to March 2024. This gives

the opportunity and time for all stakeholders to have their say on these proposals.

- 3.2 Through this period of consultation, the Council will be seeking the views of our communities, partners (including the District and Borough Councils and the Town and Parish Councils), our people in WFRS and Representative Bodies.
- 3.3 This consultation will include face to face meetings at community venues across the County, through our website and via our social media channels. The face-to-face meetings will be attended by Warwickshire County Council Cabinet Members and senior officers from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- 3.4 The consultation responses will be analysed, and the findings and a final report provided to Resources and Fire and Rescue OSC prior to being considered by Cabinet.
- 3.5 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed and formed part of the Cabinet report of 9 November 2023. The Assessment considered the approach to consultation and how those with protected characteristics could be encouraged and enabled to respond to the consultation. The Equality Impact Assessment will be kept under review throughout the consultation process and adaptations made as necessary.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The risk-based resource configuration enables early interventions at fires, restricting the ability of smaller fires to grow into larger fires, and a more rapid-fire suppression, resulting in lower financial loss.
- 4.2 The high-level financials for each of the options considered are set out in Section 3 of the Cabinet report attached at Appendix 1.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 There are not considered to be any detrimental environmental implications to resourcing to risk.
- 5.2 The risk-based resource configuration enables early interventions at fires, restricting the ability of smaller fires to grow into larger fires, and a more rapid-fire suppression, resulting in lower contaminants entering the environment.
- 5.3 Transitional planning will allow the Service to adopt enhanced technology such as low emission vehicles, and the reduction in emissions from building stock through the adoption of sustainable specifications.

5.4 The delivery model also increases available training time for staff for climate events and adaptation, such as more prolific flooding and wildfires.

6.0 Timescales and next steps

6.1 The public and stakeholder consultation is underway, running from 11 December 2023 to March 2024.

6.2 The responses to the consultation will be the subject of detailed analysis with support from the Council's Business Intelligence Team between March – April 2024 to enable a firm recommendation to be made to Cabinet.

6.3 It is envisaged that the proposed recommendations be brought back to this Committee for overview and comment in Spring 2024 before final recommendations are brought to Cabinet in June/ July 2024 for decision. Full Council will consider any changes to the Community Risk Management Plan as a result of the consultation, and any final proposal.

Background papers

Appendix 1 – Cabinet report and appendices – 9 November 2023

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/a - this is a county wide matter

Other members: