

Our Ref: DW/LG
Your Ref:
Please ask for: Lindsey Dunn
Date: 24 March 2009

Mssrs. Sean Sheahan, Chris Keeley, Tony Allan
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Dear Sirs

Thank you for your letter dated 10th March

The Combined Fire Authority considered the response to consultation on our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) at its meeting on 11th February 2009. I enclose a copy of that report which I hope will provide a useful information / context to your questions.

I will also try to answer your points specifically, where possible, below:

Points 1 and 2

There are no plans to reduce the overall resources of the Fire & Rescue Service. Areas that do not have a local fire station (and there are more of them that do not, than do) are covered by the nearest available resource for smaller incidents and by the sum of the strategic resources for larger incidents.

Because there is no reduction in 'front line' resources, there is no consideration of a corresponding reduction in managerial and support services. In fact, the Authority has recently agreed to an increase in 'front line' service.

Point 3

The vast majority of our junior, middle and senior managers have an operational response role, and therefore, the majority of 'management' would be included in front line costs. I think the best way to respond to the thrust of your question is to provide a rough breakdown of the costs of service areas as they relate to pay. The table below provides this. Note that just over 80% of total budget goes on pay.

Staff Group	Annual cost
Wholetime Firefighters	£18.8M
Retained firefighters	£2.3M
Control Staff	£1.1M
Manual workers	£28K
Cooks pay	£163K
Support Staff	£3.4M

To provide a meaningful assessment of the changes in these relative ratios over the past ten years would require extensive work which we do not have the capacity to undertake. This is because a large proportion of the 'growth' in support staff is not really growth in the true sense because the support was being paid for out of house, whereas it is now being paid for in house. The change from a county council function to a stand alone combined fire authority precipitated much of this change. Additionally, I consider the growth in a number of posts which are not on fire stations do clearly represent front line resources because of the nature of their work.

In respect of the future, my view is that Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service is an organisation that is now in 'balance' with resources allocated to achieve sustainable improvements in community safety. This is also the view of the audit commission.

Point 4

The questions you raise do not have a quantum answer. Within any fire authority area, resources need to be configured to where they can be most productive in reducing risk. In respect of defining NW Leicestershire and at our meeting, the reference was to the geographical area and not the politico-administrative boundary.

Point 5

We agreed at the meeting on 5th January that the removal of resources from one area cannot be seen as improving things locally. However, as also explained, it is the sum of the proposals in the IRMP that need to be considered; and it is the overall balance of risk in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland that has overriding priority.

Point 6

Yes.

Point 7

This will need to be quantified during the next phase of consultation.

Point 8

You will understand that any staff changes, whatever they may be, will be discussed with those affected in the first instance.

Point 9

The response to point 5 above applies. The further work required in our IRMP will identify to what degree the 10 minute attendance standard is best serviced by any changes.

I trust that these responses are helpful and I confirm that no decisions have been made. The IRMP seeks to challenge the status quo and determine what, if any, improvements can be made to the way we provide emergency cover. To this end, the Fire Authority will receive a further report on 24th June 2009 with more detailed proposals for change (for potentially a number of areas) and with the additional information set out in our Northern review. We will then enter a further twelve week consultation period that will be targeted at any areas affected. The Fire Authority may wish to extend the period of consultation and they will make this decision on 24th June 2009. Our current stakeholder list cannot be made available due to Data Protection.

The exact nature of the next phase of consultation has yet to be decided and will depend on the Fire Authority decision in June. I can assure you that we seek full and detailed meaningful consultation and will do all that is reasonably practical to achieve this. Do let us know if there is anything we can do to assist this and I look forward to an ongoing dialogue with our communities.

Yours faithfully

Dave Webb
Chief Fire & Rescue Officer
Chief Executive Officer

Attached/-

CFA report 11th Feb 2009 and Appendix A