

Environmental and Community Services Select Committee

22nd June 2016

Impact of Future Fire and Rescue 2

Report by Executive Director of Communities and Public Protection and Chief Fire Officer and Director of Public Protection and Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Executive Summary

This report details the 'Actual' outcomes of the Future Fire & Rescue programme phase 2 (FFR2) against the 'expected' outcomes for each of the 8 FFR2 proposals post implementation on the 1st April 2015.

Members are being asked to scrutinise the actual impact of FFR2 on customers, communities, and the organisation against the expected outcomes expressed in the FFR2 proposals.

Recommendation

1. That the Select Committee consider and comment upon the 'actual' outcomes against the expected outcomes of FFR2.

1. **Background – Implementation of the Future Fire and Rescue Programme 2 (FFR2)**

- 1.1 Future Fire and Rescue Phase Two (FFR2) is part of the five year FFR Business Change Programme. WSFRS was required to develop proposals as to how it would operate with a budget reduction of £1.6m from April 2015.
- 1.2 A report was presented to Environmental and Community Services Select Committee (ECSSC) in September 2014 outlining eight proposals relating to the disposition of appliances and crewing systems, as well as a reduction in management and administration costs.
- 1.3 A requirement from ECSSC was to carry out a review of the efficacy of the FFR plans after 12 months, following implementation.
- 1.4 The review was to consist of the eight 'expected-outcome' based proposals (listed below), including measures to demonstrate continued work to improve our prevention, protection and response activity.
 - 1.4.1 **Proposal 1:** Move one of the two immediate response fire engines at Horsham to Littlehampton, making it a 24-hour immediate response station

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- 1.4.2 Summary of expected outcome: Improve Service performance and make more effective use of immediate response resources. This proposal would result in a net reduction of one fire engine and seven posts.
- 1.4.3 **Proposal 2:** Introduce 'Group-Crewing' model at immediate response stations: Bognor Regis, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham, Littlehampton and Worthing.
- 1.4.4 Summary of expected outcome: Increased efficiency through a reduction of 19 posts whilst maintain existing crewing levels where possible. There will be no reduction in response standards.
- 1.4.5 **Proposal 3:** Remove the 2nd fire engines at Midhurst, Petworth and Storrington, leaving one fire engine and 4x4 vehicle at each station
- 1.4.6 Summary of expected Outcome: Frees up resources with minimal impact on performance and improves flexibility for getting firefighters to the incident using the 4x4 vehicles. Resources would be more proportionate to local risk and operational demand. Sending a second fire engine to an incident could take longer, depending on the location of incident. Historically, the second engines at these stations have often been unavailable. This proposal would result in a reduction of three fire engines, but current Full Time Equivalent (FTE) at these stations will remain.
- 1.4.7 **Proposal 4:** Closure of retained unit and removal of 3rd fire engine at Crawley. Based on low utilisation it does not contribute significantly to overall performance and existing emergency cover arrangements.
- 1.4.8 Summary of expected outcome: Resources would be more proportionate to risk and operational demand. There would be a delay in the attendance of a third fire engine, if compared to those occasions when the current third fire engine at Crawley was available. This proposal would result in a reduction of one fire engine and 10 retained firefighter posts with minimal impact on Service performance.
- 1.4.9 **Proposal 5:** Implement revised day crewing model at Variable Crewed Stations at Shoreham, Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead
- 1.4.10 Summary of expected outcome: Increases the hours these stations provide immediate response from 50 to 60 hours per week through new shift working arrangements. Community safety work will be delivered in the same way it is delivered at immediate response stations. This proposal would result in a net reduction of two firefighter posts (38 to 36 posts across four stations). Emergency response standards are maintained at reduced cost.
- 1.4.11 **Proposal 6:** Increase operational capacity and support for communities in flooding and other severe weather events.

1.4.12 Summary of intended outcome: Improved capability for preparing for, responding to and supporting the recovery from flooding and severe weather related events.

1.4.13 **Proposal 7:** Reductions in management and Support Services.

1.4.14 Summary of intended outcome: Reduced costs in management and administrative functions.

1.4.15 **Proposal 8:** Utilise additional trained staff to improve operational resilience.

1.4.16 Summary of intended outcome: Improved operational resilience and support for major incidents and/or extreme weather conditions. This will be through implementing a more formal and robust arrangements, for the effective co-ordination and use of skills and resources.

1.5 Following implementation of FFR2, the service achieved the £1.6m efficiency saving and demonstrated this by confirming a 'balanced budget' in early April 2016.

2 12 months post FFR2 –findings from Impact Analysis of Proposals

2.1 The table below sets out the actual savings that were achieved through staff reduction, conversion to new crewing systems, and through the reduction in the number of fire engines.

2.2 This first part of the review confirmed the actual efficiency savings made through the reduction of physical resources. This is further supported by the balanced budget for 2015/16.

2.3

Project	Actual Saving	Fire Engine Reductions	Post Reductions	Achieved?
Proposal 1	£225K	1	7	YES
Proposal 2	£420k	0	12 8 conversions	YES
Proposal 3	£63k	3	0	YES
Proposal 4	£119k	1	10 (RDS)	YES
Proposal 5	£483k	0	9	YES
Proposal 6	Nil	0	0	YES
Proposal 7	£290k	0	7.66	YES
Proposal 8	Nil	0	0	YES
Totals	£1.6m	5	35.66FTE + 10 (RDS)	YES

2.4 Actual savings have been verified by an audit carried out by Internal Audit in February 2016 (Report attached as appendix 'A')

2.5 The actual outcomes analysis on the eight FFR2 proposals is set out below against the 'expected' outcomes in the original proposals.

2.6 Proposal 1 - Move one of the two immediate response fire engines at Horsham to Littlehampton, making it a 24-hour immediate response station

2.6.1 **Summary of expected outcomes** - *Improve Service performance and make more effective use of immediate response resources. This proposal would result in a net reduction of one fire engine and seven posts.*

2.6.2 **Actual outcome** – The project achieved the physical resource savings as identified in table 2.3 above.

2.6.3 As part of the FFR proposals, modelling was used to predict likely outcomes of proposed changes. A fire engine (appliance) that is immediate response crewed can travel a further 4 minutes than when Retained Duty System (RDS) crewed. It was therefore modelled that the first appliance performance should improve and this has proved to be the case.

2.6.4 Performance of the first and second attending fire appliance is measured against our ‘critical fire emergency response standards’, which outline the time it should take from the moment a call is made to the Sussex Control Centre to the moment the fire appliance arrives.

2.6.5 Countywide, WSFRS aims to get the first appliance to the incident within the relevant time frame according to the risk category on 89% of occasions or above; the second appliance to an incident on 83% of occasions or above and both appliances, if attending the same incident, on 80% of occasions or above.

2.6.6 The following table shows the performance of Littlehampton’s appliances pre and post FFR2.

Littlehampton Station Ground Year	First Appliance performance	Second Appliance Performance
2014/15	92%	95%
2015/16	100%	94%

2.6.7 Post FFR, Littlehampton’s first appliance arrived to all its incidents within the appropriate timeframe, which is a significant improvement. Performance of the second appliance has dropped slightly but is still well above the performance benchmark -see 2.6.5.

2.6.8 As predicted, there has been a notable improvement in median (average) attendance times for the first appliance to get to an incident in the Littlehampton area – post FFR the median attendance time for 2015/16 was 7 minutes and 52 seconds. This is 28 seconds quicker than 2014/15.

2.7 Proposal 2 - Introduce 'Group-Crewing' model at immediate response stations: Bognor Regis, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham, Littlehampton and Worthing.

- 2.7.1 **Summary of expected outcome:** *Increased efficiency through a reduction of 19 posts whilst maintaining existing crewing levels where possible. There will be no reduction in response standards.*
- 2.7.2 **Actual Outcome:** Staff reductions were managed through the WSCC management of vacancies and voluntary redundancy process. 'Wholetime' personnel at the 6 stations affected by the introduction of 'Group Crewing' were reduced from 209 to 190 staff in total.
- 2.7.3 The first year of the new crewing system was predicted to be a year of adjustment as we changed from the old system to the new, for example, honouring leave owed to staff carried over from the old crewing system to the new. Ridership factors (the number of staff available to crew the fire engine) have been a particular challenge to maintain due to fewer posts and a general shortage of staff caused by long-term sickness (over 21 days), resignations and honouring leave as previously mentioned.
- 2.7.4 When the crewing systems were designed, projections were based on having a full complement of staff on each of the 'Group Crewing' and 'Day Crew Only' stations. The Group Crewed stations (Chichester, Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Worthing, Horsham & Crawley) were planned to have 190 staff in total to operate, and the Day Crew Only stations (Shoreham, Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath & East Grinstead), 36 staff in total to operate. Due to the points highlighted in 2.7.3 above, the projections were optimistic as we currently have 14.5 fewer staff than planned for.
- 2.7.5 We predicted that our first appliances including Crawley and Worthing (two appliance stations) would turn out to incidents with a crew of 5 on the first appliance on 51.8% of occasions.
- 2.7.6 The data from the 4th quarter of 2015/16 shows that we are riding 5 on wholetime appliances 40% of the time, instead of the predicted 51.8% The current wholetime recruitment will assist in improving this. (Ridership data from quarter 4 (2015/16) was selected for analysis, as any data and subsequent findings prior to this would have been skewed due to the leave entitlement owed to staff being honoured from 2013/14 in 2014/15)
- 2.7.7 With reference to the first appliance critical attendance standards, across the service overall achievement has remained around 88% for both pre and post FFR years. Considering the Group Crewed stations, there has been an improvement in 5 of the 6 stations.

2.7.8

Station	2014/15	2015/16
Bognor Regis	97%	98%
Chichester	94%	83%
Crawley	93%	99%
Horsham	94%	96%
Littlehampton	92%	100%
Worthing	96%	100%

2.7.9 The improvements in Littlehampton performance are almost certainly due to the changing in crewing system to immediate response. Chichester has had a less successful year in meeting the attendance standard percentage targets for their first appliance, but this does need to be considered in context – the median attendance time for the first appliance was 07:17 minutes for 15/16, which although slightly slower than the 14/15 average of 06:42 minutes, is still quicker than either of the preceding years (2012/13 – 07:56, 2013/14 -07:47) It is not unusual to have variations in performance from year to year as factors such as geographical location of incidents can have a large impact.

2.8 Proposal 3 - Remove the 2nd fire engines at Midhurst, Petworth and Storrington, leaving one fire engine and 4x4 vehicle at each station

2.8.1 **Summary of expected outcome:** *Frees up resources with minimal impact on performance and improves flexibility for getting firefighters to the incident using the 4x4 vehicles. Resources would be more proportionate to local risk and operational demand. Sending a second fire engine to an incident could take longer, depending on the location of incident. Historically, the second engines at these stations have often been unavailable. This proposal would result in a reduction of three fire engines, but current Full Time Equivalent (FTE) at these stations will remain.*

2.8.2 **Actual Outcome:** Three fire appliances were decommissioned through the FFR2 process and achieved the desired saving.

2.8.3 Overall, Second appliance critical attendance standards have been maintained across the service – 2014/15, 79%, **2015/16, 80%**.

2.8.4 However, as predicted second appliance performance has dropped at the three affected stations above.

2.8.5 The table below shows the percentage of occasions that a second appliance has arrived at an incident in the Midhurst, Petworth or Storrington area within the prescribed performance standard:

2.8.6

Station	2013/14	14/15	15/16
Midhurst	67%	50%	21%
Petworth	0%	20%	10%
Storrington	73%	45%	38%

2.8.7 The table below shows the 'median' attendance times of a second fire appliance in the Midhurst, Petworth and Storrington area:

2.8.8

Station	2013/14	14/15	15/16
Midhurst	14:39	16:50	17:27
Petworth	22:27	19:05	22:10
Storrington	15:17	16:19	16:40

2.8.9 Leaving the FTE the same has not made a notable difference to the number of hours the appliance at Midhurst, Storrington and Petworth are available.

2.8.10

Station	% of hours available 2014/15	% of hours available 2015/16
Midhurst	96.1%	95.8%
Petworth	74%	72%
Storrington	82%	87%

2.8.11 The table above shows that availability has declined at both Midhurst (by a fraction of a percent) and Petworth (marginally) but improved at Storrington.

2.9 Proposal 4 - Closure of retained unit and removal of 3rd fire engine at Crawley. Based on low utilisation it does not contribute significantly to overall performance and existing emergency cover arrangements

2.9.1 **Summary of expected outcome:** Resources would be more proportionate to risk and operational demand. There would be a delay in the attendance of a third fire engine, if compared to those occasions when the current third fire engine at Crawley was available. This proposal would result in a reduction of one fire engine and 10 retained firefighter posts with minimal impact on Service performance.

2.9.2 **Actual Outcome:** Confirmation was given by Sussex Control Centre (SCC) that whenever both appliances are attached to incidents, a standby appliance is mobilised to Crawley fire station to cover the period that both appliances are absent. This is standard practice and authorised by the senior mobilising officer on duty. As predicted, there has been no negative impact on service performance with both Critical Fires and Critical Special Service performance standards being met. There has however been an overall improvement in 'median' attendance times and performance in most areas, as identified in the tables below:

Crawley Station Ground

Median Time	2014/15	2015/16
1st Pump to Critical Fires	07:32	06:26
2nd Pump to Critical Fires	08:04	07:11
Special Services	08:58	08:23

Percentage target met	2014/15	2015/16
1st Pump to Critical Fires	93%	99%
2nd Pump to Critical Fires	90%	90%
Both Pumps to Critical Fires	90%	91%
Special Services	83%	88%

2.9.3 The proposal was successful in delivering the identified savings as laid out in 2.3 above.

2.10 Proposal 5 - Implement revised day crewing model at Variable Crewed Stations at Shoreham, Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead

2.10.1 **Summary of expected outcome:** *Increases the hours these stations provide immediate response from 50 to 60 hours per week through new shift working arrangements. Community safety work will be delivered in the same way it is delivered at immediate response stations. This proposal would result in a net reduction of two firefighter posts (38 to 36 posts across four stations). Emergency response standards are maintained at reduced cost.*

2.10.2 **Actual Outcome:** Actual positive hours were increased from the 1st of April by matter of course following the successful implementation of the Day Crew Only shift system. This system ensures there is wholetime staff on station twelve hours during the day from 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday.

2.10.3 Community safety is now delivered in the same way as it is on twenty-four hour immediate response station (Group Crewed).

2.10.4 The expected outcome was achieved in delivering a reduction of 2 posts and the subsequent saving as identified in 2.3 above. Emergency service standards across the service have been maintained.

2.11 Proposal 6 - Increase operational capacity and support for communities in flooding and other severe weather events

2.11.1 **Expected Outcome:** *Improved capability for responding to and supporting recovery from; flooding and severe weather related events.*

2.11.2 **Actual Outcome:** WSFRS successfully bid to take ownership of the specialist national strategic reserve High Volume Pump (HVP) unit against competition from five other services.

- 2.11.3 This is a really positive outcome for West Sussex and supports our ongoing investment in flood prevention and response capabilities. Not only does it enhance our county's business continuity and resilience planning, it also keeps us at the forefront of the national UK flood response. Even without an HVP, WSFRS has previously been able to support the national response through the deployment of specialist flood response teams, with crews trained in swift water rescue, wading, and boat operations, as well as subject matter advisors.
- 2.11.4 As well as acquiring the HVP we have also increased our swift water rescue technicians (module 3) across the Service from 25 to 35 personnel; trained over 100 of our operational staff to 'Wade Response' level 2; purchased 95x dry-suits, 8x wildwater dry-suits and 8x six person self bailing urban flood rafts and inflation kits for rescues from water and on ice. In addition to this flood response equipment, we have also purchased a 'Unimog' vehicle for working in /assisting with rescues in upto 1.2m of floodwater, as well as hard to reach areas off-road, and a Land Rover Defender that has been modified so that it can travel through floodwater at a depth of upto windscreen level.
- 2.11.5 Crews at Chichester, Bognor, Littlehampton, Crawley and the Crewing Optimisation Group (COG) have been trained and equipped to the nationally recognised module 2 level (wade teams)
- 2.11.6 We have begun a review of our existing wade capability with a view to expanding it across the Service on a risk based plan.

2.12 Proposal 7 - Reductions in management and Support Services

- 2.12.1 **Expected Outcome:** Reduced costs in management and administrative functions.
- 2.12.2 **Actual outcome:** Total savings for this proposal were £289,352 with a reduction in posts of 7.66. This is in line with projections. The workload from the reduction in posts has been absorbed into the organisation. There have been some issues around the loss of the station administrator posts with personnel concerned over the lack of a central point of contact and continuity in site management.
- 2.12.3 The table below shows that the expected savings were delivered.

	Including Hay Grades			Excluding Hay grades		
	2014-15	2015-16	Variance	2014-15	2015-16	Variance
Base Budget C & PP	6,328,000	6,198,500	-129,500	5,633,200	5,496,700	-136,500
Trading Standards	1,077,400	1,098,900	21,500	1,019,800	1,040,200	20,400
Communities	1,766,300	1,791,300	25,000	1,392,500	1,419,600	27,100
Total Budget Fire Service only	3,484,300	3,308,300	-176,000	3,220,900	3,036,900	-184,000
Actual C & PP	6,311,803	5,690,336	-621,467	5,466,017	4,949,800	-516,217
Trading Standards	1,043,828	1,069,746	25,918	982,147	1,004,355	22,208
Communities	1,981,570	1,641,255	-340,315	1,462,515	1,213,442	-249,073
Total Actual Fire Service only	3,286,406	2,979,335	-307,071	3,021,355	2,732,003	-289,352
This shows that the budget for fire was reduced by £184k and the actual spend reduced by £289k, due to budget reduction and additional staff vacancies						

2.13 Proposal 8 - Utilise additional trained staff to improve operational resilience

- 2.13.1 **Expected Outcome:** The improvement of operational resilience. Support for major incidents and extreme weather conditions, (or a combination of both). This will be through implementing more formal and robust arrangements for the effective co-ordination and use of skills and resources.
- 2.13.2 **Actual Outcome:** The use of 'day' staff to supplement the operational establishment by making themselves available to crew appliances has had some success in enabling appliances to be available during the day. However, the loss of staff from departments such as Business Fire Safety (BFS) has had an impact on day to day workloads. The availability of day staff varies greatly dependant on other work. The maintenance of operational competencies for staff that have another primary role is hard to maintain.
- 2.13.3 Combined crewing has been successful in making stations available that otherwise would not be. The use of the 'Cover watch' system enables depleted RDS stations to combine crewing and make them available. This method of crewing does however rely upon the personnel from the 'donor' station being available for long periods of time.
- 2.13.4 Exercise Tempest was held on the 19th February 2016. Under the auspices of the Cabinet Office this was designed to test resilience in the event of heavy snow combined with a flu pandemic. Lessons learnt will be acted upon to improve resilience.
- 2.13.5 A team from the Emerging Leaders Project is assisting small to medium size businesses in formulating emergency plans. This will make them more robust during and in the aftermath of such events as: flooding, fire, staff shortages and cyber-attacks.
- 2.13.6 The use of the 'Crewing Optimisation Group' (COG). Since its inception in 2015, as part of Future Fire & Rescue, COG has been instrumental in supporting RDS crewing and other community related activities. The team has become firmly established in our operating model and remains part of our future plans. We will seek to learn from our experiences in the team's first year, as well as look to potentially expand their role to help meet our aspirations and the new and emerging expectations on our Service.
- 2.13.7 The Service has sought to make resources more efficient and effective through investment in improved fire-fighting media. The use of Compressed Air Foam System appliances and fogging equipment means that fire can be dealt with quicker. This leads to less physical and environmental impacts. Also the impact on individuals and community will be lessened.

2.13.8 All these initiatives will lead to safer more resilient communities. Fire Service resources will be used more efficiently with a reduced financial cost in such things as insurance and lessening negative impacts on communities and businesses.

2.13.9 Weather events such as flooding are better prepared for, again reducing the disruption of day to day business for all in the County.

3 Consultation

3.1 At the time of FFR, consultation was carried out with staff members of the public and appropriate stakeholders. The results of this were presented as part of the original proposal. Staff feedback - Those working on the new system have been interviewed around a number of criteria. This covered those working the Group Crewing model, the Day Crewing Model and the Crewing Optimisation Group.

3.1.1 In May 2016, a series of informal focus group meetings were held around the county with staff working Group Crewing and Day Crewing shift systems, as well as those in Crewing Optimisation Group (COG).

3.1.2 A number of common themes have emerged, including the practical difficulties in the first transition year partly caused by honouring unspent leave from the previous year.

3.1.3 Fire appliances have been crewing with four riders, and crewing in COG and wholtime stations at, or below 'minimum crewing numbers more often than predicted. It is expected that this will be alleviated as the shift systems are embedded and the recent intake of new firefighters complete their training.

3.1.4 There is a need to review both the use of the "Firewatch" software and also management processes to ensure that they are working as flexibly and effectively as possible to minimise administration time for operational managers.

3.1.5 There are mixed views on the current 12 hour shift patterns with some seeing this as less "child care" friendly, and others finding it more family friendly. There has been a tremendous amount of goodwill among staff as they have adapted to the new model and in at least two stations, worked in difficult physical conditions while ongoing building and improvement work has been taking place.

3.1.6 All issues raised will be investigated further in the current series of senior officer visits to the stations.

3.2 Incident Command system (ICS) review – whilst the ICS review was not formally part of FFR2, the results of this may further help to assess the impact of the reduction in managerial posts.

3.3 Officers working on the new five week rota are to be interviewed and an insight report compiled from the feedback received.

At this stage, the outcomes of the consultation process have yet to be fully analysed.

- 3.4 Further Public Consultation may be carried out on the Community Risk Management Plan subject to approval from the County Council's Insight Research and Information Services (IRIS). Given notice and sign off periods it will fall outside of the twelve month period.

8.2 Equality Duty.

8.1 An Equality Impact Report is not required for this decision for the following reason:

- An Equality Impact Report is not required as no actions are identified in the report which would impact on any specific groups of people.

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Appendices:

Appendix A – [Fire & Rescue Phase 2](#)