

Report of West Yorkshire Fire Service

Report to Outer South Area Committee

Date: Monday 15th October 2012

Subject: Proposals for Changes to Fire Service Emergency Cover in West Yorkshire

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Ardsley & Robin Hood Morley North Morley South Rothwell
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

The report outlines the proposed changes to West Yorkshire Fire Service, particularly to the Fire Stations of Hunslet & Morley and Garforth & Rothwell which cover the Outer South Areas.

All of the information provided in this report has been taken from the West Yorkshire Fire Service Consultation titled 'Proposals for Changes to Emergency Cover in West Yorkshire' which is available from the West Yorkshire Fire Service website.

Recommendations

Area Committee are requested to note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides the opportunity for Members to discuss the potential issues arising from the proposed mergers of Hunslet and Morley and Garforth and Rothwell fire stations.

2 Background information

- 2.1 In the past five years there has been a dramatic reduction in the numbers of fires and associated deaths and injuries in West Yorkshire. There has also been similar reductions in the number of other emergencies, for example road traffic collisions. By the end of 2010/11, the total number of emergency incidents attended in one year has reduced by over 29% from its 2006/7 figure.
- 2.2 The full West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) consultation process provides details on proposals to continue to provide an efficient and effective fire and rescue service whilst acknowledging the challenges posed by fundamental changes to public sector funding. Despite these financial challenges we now face, we cannot lose sight of our ambition of "Making West Yorkshire Safer" and we are proud that accidental dwelling fires and related deaths have been reduced to their lowest ever level.
- 2.3 Last year West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority commenced an extensive programme to modernise the Fire and Rescue Service and maximise the use of resources. This included a commitment to build five new fire stations in areas that provide the best response in an emergency. The investment by the Authority in modern fire stations is fundamental to the strategy for the delivery of our services and in particular the provision of an efficient and effective response to emergencies.
- 2.4 The proposals in the consultation documents continue this approach as part of a strategic plan for implementation between 2013 and 2020.
- 2.5 The strategic plan aims to rationalise and redesign the service against the backdrop of a significant reduction in funding, by reducing the risk to the community wherever possible and making sure that resources are in the best place at any time day or night. The Service will also continue to develop new ways of delivering services, maximising changes in technology and working practices.
- 2.6 In the last five years efficiency savings of £8.8m of which £7.3m were achieved in the last two years. This clearly demonstrates that savings can be made, whilst at the same time the numbers of fires, deaths and injuries continue to reduce. West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority is facing its biggest challenge in over 60 years.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The current proposal affecting the South East area are concerned with Proposal 8 (Hunslet and Morley) and Proposal 10 (Garforth and Rothwell).
- 3.2 **Proposal 8 – Hunslet and Morley**
The areas covered by Hunslet and Morley fire stations are served by three fire engines, one at Morley and two at Hunslet. Changes in risk and demand support the

merger of these two fire stations and the removal of one fire engine. It is therefore proposed that a brand new fire station containing two fire engines is constructed in an optimum location to replace those at Hunslet and Morley. This merger also supports the proposal affecting Garforth and Rothwell.

Key Points:

- Operational activity for fire engines based at Hunslet and Morley area has reduced by 31% since 2006/7
- The risk levels in the six wards affected by this proposal range from very high to low risk
- The location of the new station will provide good motorway access and excellent links to other high-risk areas via Leeds Ring Road
- The Leeds based Fire Response Unit will further reduce the demand on fire engines in these areas
- All predicted emergency response times in the area will remain within the Risk Based Planning Assumption
- A single fire station containing two fire engines, serving both areas, will align operational activity to other areas of West Yorkshire
- Targeted community safety and risk reduction activities will continue, focussing on the areas most affected by these proposals prior to implementation

3.3 Overview

- 3.3.1 The fire stations at Hunslet and Morley currently provide the initial emergency response for the Ardsley and Robin Hood, Beeston and Holbeck, City and Hunslet, Middleton Park, Morley North and Morley South wards. These fire stations cover an area that contains approximately 51,500 houses and has a population of approximately 118,500.
- 3.3.2 The areas covered by Hunslet and Morley fire stations are classified as high risk and medium risk respectively. The risk for individual wards ranges from very high to low risk. Building a new fire station between Hunslet and Morley will ensure a fire engine is located where it will provide optimum benefit for local communities and meets the demands of a high quality modern fire service.
- 3.3.3 There is currently an establishment of 24 firefighters at Morley fire station to ensure a minimum of five on the one fire engine and the establishment at Hunslet is 44 firefighters to ensure there are nine on the two fire engines at any time.
- 3.3.4 A number of alternative locations for the new fire station have been considered and the best solution is to construct a fire station with two fire engines in the South Leeds area approximately two miles from each of the existing fire stations. This provides the best emergency response times into the wards currently covered by the two fire stations of Morley and Hunslet.

3.4 Assessing the Impact of the Proposals

- 3.4.1 In 2006/07 fire crews from Hunslet and Morley attended 3008 operational incidents, including 157 house fires and 96 road traffic collisions. In 2011/12 this had fallen to 2068 operational incidents, including 91 house fires and 67 road traffic collisions.

This represents a significant reduction in risk over the past five years and emergency calls have reduced by over 31% and house fires by 42%.

- 3.4.2 Currently the fire engines at Hunslet are utilised at operational incidents for 6.9% of the time they are available and the fire engine at Morley is used just 4.4% of the time. Both of these are lower than average for the same type of fire station. The fire engines at the new fire station would be utilised at operational incidents for 9.2% of the time, which is a far more efficient use of the resources and more in line with the average utilisation for similar fire stations.
- 3.4.3 The attendance time to an emergency in all of the wards covered by the new fire station will be within the time set by the Risk Based Planning Assumptions approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority. A detailed explanation of the RBPA is available in this consultation document and in the Community Risk Management Strategy found on the website www.westyorksfire.gov.uk.
- 3.4.4 These proposals would also reduce emergency response times for fire engines into the very high-risk ward of Beeston and Holbeck.
- 3.4.5 The Fire Response Unit in Leeds District will continue to reduce the amount of time that local fire engines spend dealing with small “nuisance” fires. This means that there will be fewer disturbances to community safety and training activities and more importantly, fire engines will remain available for incidents where life or property are at risk.
- 3.4.6 The proposal would have a minimal impact on countywide emergency response times.

3.5 Risk Levels and Risk Reduction

- 3.5.1 WYFRS delivered 12612 Home Fire Safety Checks during 2009/12 within the six wards affected by this proposal. This activity has contributed to the reduction of risk in these wards and in particular a dramatic reduction in serious house fires.
- 3.5.2 Due to the road and motorway network, the area currently covered by Hunslet and Morley experiences a number of road traffic collisions. Work with partners in a range of road safety initiatives have helped reduce road traffic collisions in the area by 13% since 2010 and the location of the new station will provide excellent motorway access and good links to other high-risk areas via Leeds Ring Road.
- 3.5.3 The proposal for a new fire station to serve the communities of this area represents a significant investment and long-term commitment. Priorities, objectives, and targets focus upon risk reduction and form part of the Leeds District Risk Reduction Plan, which is the primary risk reduction strategy for the area. A revised plan will be developed to continue to reduce risk in the area as far as possible commencing
- 3.6 April 2013, the plans priorities would be as follows:
- Through targeted activities aimed at preventing incidents in the first place, the risk in the Beeston and Holbeck ward will be reduced

- The risk in Morley South, Morley North and Ardsley and Robin Hood wards will also be reduced by working with other agencies and targeting the homes most at risk of fire
- The higher risk wards of City and Hunslet and Middleton Park will be made safer places to live by working with other agencies to identify and support vulnerable individuals

3.7 **Special Risks and High Risk Sites**

3.7.1 West Yorkshire contains a number of specific sites that represent special or high risks and these are considered when developing operational response arrangements. The Royal Armouries Museum, Morley Railway Tunnel, and Kodak Polychrome are some of the higher risk sites within the Hunslet and Morley areas. The response time from the new station to these sites will still be good and work with occupiers of such premises will continue to reduce the likelihood of a fire occurring and detailed plans are in place for potential emergencies occurring at all of these sites.

3.8 **Firefighter Safety**

3.8.1 The Hunslet and Morley fire station areas contain 5261 commercial buildings. Of these, 243 pose a higher risk to firefighters due to their construction and the potential for rapid fire spread or collapse.

3.8.2 Crews have access to information for all of these higher risk sites by using mobile data terminals on each fire engine. They also regularly visit many of these sites to ensure that information is current and relevant. Where appropriate specific operational plans for these sites are developed.

3.8.3 During 2011/12, 87% of incidents were dealt with by one fire engine. The arrival time of the second or subsequent fire engines is still important for firefighter safety and the area still experiences a significant number of incidents where two fire engines are required. The fire engines from Hunslet also regularly provide back up into surrounding areas, and the new fire station will be one of the more active stations in West Yorkshire, providing cover also for part of the Rothwell area. It is therefore appropriate to have two fire engines at this new station.

3.9 **Organisational Impact Assessment**

3.9.1 This proposal is part of a package of proposals designed to address a significant reduction in grant funding from central government and to realign emergency cover appropriate to risk and demand following a significant reduction in the numbers of fires, and associated deaths and injuries. Ultimately, the sale of the two fire station sites at Hunslet and Morley will generate capital receipts to reduce the borrowing requirements of the Authority.

3.10 **Proposal 10 - Garforth and Rothwell**

Garforth and Rothwell fire stations currently cover an area with very low numbers of fires and other emergencies. Rothwell fire station is in need of replacement due to its age and condition. These two fire stations currently have one fire engine at each

station. It is proposed that these two stations are merged and a brand new fire station with a single fire engine constructed in an optimum location to replace them.

Key Points:

- Operational incidents in the Garforth and Rothwell area have reduced by 23% since 2006/7 and serious fires have reduced by 15%
- Operational activity for fire engines based at Garforth and Rothwell has reduced by 34% over the last five years
- The risk levels in the five wards affected by this proposal are low or very low risk
- Each of the existing fire engines are currently used at incidents for less than 4% of the time and this is much lower than in similar areas in the County. A single fire engine serving both areas will align operational activity to other areas of West Yorkshire
- All predicted emergency response times in the area will remain within the Risk Based Planning Assumption
- Targeted community safety and risk reduction activities will continue, focussing on the areas most affected by these proposals prior to implementation.

3.11 Overview

- 3.11.1 Last year it was planned to introduce a more flexible duty system for firefighters at Rothwell, along with a refurbishment of the station and purpose built accommodation for firefighters who would be on call. Since that time further research has been carried out along with a condition survey of Rothwell Fire Station. The conclusion reached is that a merger of Rothwell and Garforth fire stations is a more sustainable and cost effective way of providing emergency cover.
- 3.11.2 The fire stations at Garforth and Rothwell currently provide the initial emergency response for the Garforth and Swillington, Kippax and Methley, Rothwell, Ardsley and Robin Hood and Temple Newsam wards. These fire stations cover an area that contains approximately 33,000 dwellings and has a population of around 80,000.
- 3.11.3 The area covered by Garforth and Rothwell fire stations are classified as low risk overall, with individual wards being low or very low risk.
- 3.11.4 There are currently 24 firefighters at each station working shifts to ensure each fire engine is continually crewed by five staff.
- 3.11.5 Building a new fire station between Garforth and Rothwell will ensure a fire engine is located where it will provide optimum benefit for local communities and meets the demands of a high quality modern fire service.
- 3.11.6 A number of alternative proposals and locations for the new fire station have been considered, including a merger between Rothwell and Morley fire stations, and the best solution is to construct a new fire station in the Swillington area.
- 3.11.7 The general location for a new fire station would be approximately three miles from each of the existing stations to provide the best emergency response times into the wards currently covered by these fire two stations. A further proposal to merge Morley and Hunslet fire stations has a positive impact in the Rothwell area.

3.12 Assessing the impact of the proposals

- 3.12.1 In 2006/7, fire crews in Garforth and Rothwell attended 1125 operational incidents. During 2011/12, they attended 868 operational incidents therefore, emergency calls have reduced by 23% over five years.
- 3.12.2 The fire engines at Garforth and Rothwell have the lowest operational activity levels in West Yorkshire for those that are crewed by firefighters working continuous shifts. These fire engines are currently used just 3.7% of the time at incidents compared to an average of 5% for other fire engines in similar areas; this indicates a generous provision relative to risk and cost. The fire engine from the proposed new station would be in use at incidents for 5.4% of the time, still below the activity levels of many similar fire stations.
- 3.12.3 The attendance time to an emergency in all of the wards covered by the new fire station will be within the time set by the Risk Based Planning Assumptions approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority. The Rothwell ward also benefits from another related proposal in this document to merge Hunslet and Morley fire stations. A detailed explanation of the RBPA is available in this consultation document and in the Community Risk Management Strategy found on the website www.westyorksfire.gov.uk.
- 3.12.4 The proposal would have a minimal impact on countywide emergency response times.

3.13 Risk Levels and Risk Reduction

- 3.13.1 WYFRS delivered 9,324 Home Fire Safety Checks during 2009/12 within the five wards affected by this proposal. This activity has contributed to the reduction of risk in these wards; for example, since 2011 the risk rating for the Temple Newsam ward reduced from medium to low risk.
- 3.13.2 Due to the road and motorway network, Garforth and Rothwell attend a number of road traffic collisions. Although road safety is not the primary responsibility of the Fire and Rescue Service, work with partners in a range of road safety initiatives are having an impact, with road traffic collisions across West Yorkshire reducing by 24% in the last five years.
- 3.13.3 The proposal for a new fire station to serve the communities of this area represents a significant investment and long-term commitment. Priorities, objectives, and targets focus upon risk reduction and form part of the Leeds District Risk Reduction Plan, which is the primary risk reduction strategy for the area. A revised plan will be developed to continue to reduce risk in the area. Commencing April 2013, the plan's priorities would be as follows:
- The Rothwell, Ardsley and Robin Hood risk profiles will be reduced from low to very low risk through targeted risk reduction activities
 - Garforth and Swillington and Temple Newsam wards are currently medium and low risk respectively. They will become safer places to live through targeted activities aimed at preventing incidents in the first place

- The Kippax and Methley ward is currently very low risk and ongoing work in this area will sustain this, whilst at the same time working with partners to identify and assist particularly vulnerable individuals

3.14 Special Risks and High Risk Sites

3.14.1 West Yorkshire contains a number of specific sites that represent special or high risks and these are considered in operational response arrangements. Lotherton Hall and Temple Newsam are important to the country's heritage. This proposal would reduce the time taken to reach Temple Newsam, but would slightly increase the time taken to reach Lotherton Hall. Work with occupiers of such premises will continue to reduce the likelihood of a fire occurring and to protect the most valuable parts of the building and particular items in the event of a fire.

3.14.2 There are also two industrial sites falling within the remit of the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) regulations. Rocol Limited is located in Garforth and Bayfords Energy Limited in Rothwell. This proposal would reduce the time taken to reach both these sites in the event of an emergency.

3.15 Firefighter Safety

3.15.1 The Garforth and Rothwell fire station areas contain 1777 commercial buildings. Of these, 104 pose a higher risk to firefighters due to their construction and the potential for rapid-fire spread or collapse. Crews have access to information for all of these higher risk sites by using mobile data terminals on each fire engine. They also regularly visit many of these sites to ensure that information is current and relevant. Where appropriate specific operational plans for these sites are developed.

3.15.2 During 2011/12, 87% of incidents in this area were dealt with by just one fire engine. The arrival time of the second or subsequent fire engines is still important for firefighter safety and operational procedures take this into account. The likely delay between the first fire engine arriving and the second is generally shorter in this area than in other low and very low risk areas. With the very good distribution of fire engines in Leeds District and the surrounding areas, coupled with the introduction of the new Fire Response Unit, the low demand for a second fire engine can be adequately met.

3.16 Organisational Impact Assessment

3.16.1 This proposal is part of a package of proposals designed to address a reduction in grant funding from central government and to realign emergency cover appropriate to risk and demand following a significant reduction in the numbers of fires, and associated deaths and injuries. Ultimately, the sale of the two fire station sites at Rothwell and Garforth will generate capital receipts that will reduce the borrowing requirements of the Authority. The condition survey carried out on Rothwell fire station has highlighted the need for major refurbishment and the cost of this work has been estimated as being close to the cost of a brand new fire station. Therefore, taking into account the reduction in risk and demand in the area and the financial constraints facing the Authority, this proposal represents the most appropriate solution.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 In June 2011, the Authority approved a communication and engagement strategy to support the major changes that are necessary to modernise West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service in the face of reduced risk and demand and significant reductions in funding.

4.1.2 The strategy recognises that there will be public concern about changes to emergency cover in an area and therefore intends to provide as much information as is reasonable and practical and the process follows recommended best practice. The Government recently revised its guidance on public consultation and the strategy has been reviewed in light of this latest guidance and it remains appropriate. The approach used by the Authority to develop its strategy can be summarised as follows:

- Detailed consideration of the effect each proposed action could have on the community and its aspirations
- Identification of those individuals and organisations likely to be significantly affected
- Tailored communication and engagement activity to ensure key stakeholders are informed, involved and consulted when appropriate

4.1.3 In order to capture a full range of opinions and interact with communities, formal public consultation will take place over a 12 week period from 7 September until 30 November 2012.

4.1.4 Open dialogue with individuals or organisations affected by these proposals will be encouraged to provide the opportunity for views to be expressed and proposals will be published on the website and in print.

4.1.5 The Authority will have sight of the consultation responses at their meeting in December 2012 before it makes any decisions on the proposals.

4.1.6 You are therefore asked to consider these proposals and the reasons for them. If you want to share your views, it is requested that you do this in writing by 30 November 2012 via email or post, by contacting:

Hannah Stoneman
Consultation Coordinator
West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Oakroyd Hall, Bradford Road, Birkenshaw
West Yorkshire
BD11 2DY
Email: consultation@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Further information regarding consultation is available by contacting: Tel 01274 655 717.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 Community groups submitting a project proposal requesting funding from the Well being budget have an equal opportunities policy and as part of the application process, complete a section outlining which equality groups the project will work with and how equality and cohesion issues have been considered.
- 4.2.2 Internal and statutory partners are committed to equality and cohesion and all projects they are involved with will have considered these issues.
- 4.2.3 A light touch Equality Impact Assessments is carried out for all projects.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The projects outlined in this report contribute to targets and priorities set out in the following council policies:
 - Vision For Leeds
 - Children and Young Peoples Plan
 - Health and Well being City Priority Plan
 - Safer and Stronger Communities Plan
 - Regeneration City Priority Plan

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

- 4.4.1 The approach to modernisation of WYFRS which is being followed by the Authority is simple and supports the on-going ambition of “Making West Yorkshire Safer”; it centres on four pillars:
 - **Optimal resource allocation and deployment** - Ensuring resources are in the locations that will have the greatest impact
 - **Changing the way that services are delivered** - The implementation of innovative duty systems, the introduction of new equipment and vehicles, and the changing of working practices
 - **Value for money** - Do the best that can be done with the resources that are available but ensuring a high quality not a cheap service
 - **Public and Firefighter safety** – Continuing to deliver community safety initiatives and ensuring firefighters have the best equipment and training to do their job
- 4.4.2 The proposals in the full WYFRS consultation document have been developed using this approach and the impact of the changes has been assessed, measured against the planning assumptions for emergency response (how quickly the fire service gets to emergencies) which have been approved by the Authority. This provides evidence that, relative to risk, the changes ensure that fire engines are in the right places to respond to emergencies across the County.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 All decisions taken by the Area Committee in relation to the delegated functions from Executive Board are not eligible for Call In.
- 4.5.2 There are no key or major decisions being made that would be eligible for Call In.
- 4.5.3 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 No risks identified.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Area Committee are requested to note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate.

Background documents ¹

There are no background papers associated with this report

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.