

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FIRE AUTHORITY UPDATE

TO: Cambridgeshire County Council

DATE: 27th March 2012

FROM: Chairman, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

1. FIRE AUTHORITY BUDGET 2012/13

- 1.1 The Fire Authority has agreed a Budget for 2010/11 of £29,810,000. Just over half of this will be funded via the Council Tax, which will increase to £59.31 per annum for a Band D property..
- 1.2 The Local Government Finance Settlement only provided provisional figures for two financial years (2011/12 and 2012/13). Government continues to review the current formula allocating grant to Fire and Rescue Services. Any announcement on the revised formula and the resulting settlement will now not be known until December 2012. This is significantly later than we originally believed it would be and does present the Authority with a significant challenge in building any firm plans.
- 1.3 Significant changes have been made to the way grant is allocated to Fire and Rescue services. For Cambridgeshire, our grant was reduced by 9.5% for financial year 2011/12. The reduction for the forthcoming financial year is 3.08% which means the service will receive grant of £13,027m for 2012/13.
- 1.4 The budget has been prepared for the medium term after making a number of assumptions, which are:
 - From 2012/13, an increase in council tax of 2.5% will be applied;
 - A pay award will be received in 2012/13 of 1%; and
 - Non pay inflation will track government inflation projections, with the exception of Fuel. This has been reflected separately at 22%.
- 1.5 An additional £444k has been taken from the grant in 2012/13, over that received in 2011/12. The combined control savings of £457k and additional support budget reductions of £220k have been applied to the budget. These savings, along with an increase to council tax of 2.5% ensure inflationary increases can be met.
- 1.6 The significant challenges for this Authority occur in years 3 and 4. Estimates still suggest that we will need to find £900k in year 3 and £1.580m in year 4. The Service Redesign Programme remains on track to deliver these savings.

However, it is worth noting that this is only an estimate and will be dependent on the final settlement formula.

2. SERVICE REDESIGN

- 2.1 The current Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) imposed a reduction of £4.2 to £5.5 million in the Service budget by April 2015. In response the Service is implementing £1.6 million of cuts by April 2013, and needs to identify, agree and be ready to implement a further £3.9 million of budget cuts by April 2015.
- 2.2 The key objectives for the Service in driving out the significant cuts to its budget are to:
- Ensure the changes required to deliver the cuts are made within the limited time available, in order to minimise pressure on Service financial reserves,
 - Focus on maintaining, as far as practicable, an equivalent level of service delivery,
 - As far as is possible, minimise the impact on staff.
- 2.3 In May 2011, following the presentation of the phase one feasibility studies, the Fire Authority agreed a package of cuts which, if successfully implemented, will generate an estimated £4,327,600 of savings. The Service Redesign Programme remains on track to deliver these savings. In addition to the approved savings, the Fire Authority agreed that a number of these feasibility studies should be progressed into full business cases.
- 2.4 The Fire Authority also tasked the Service to develop a second phase of feasibility studies to ensure the Service is in position to make the potential maximum of £6 million of savings emanating from the Government cuts package. The options considered under the phase two feasibility studies would, if it was necessary to implement them, have a significant impact on service delivery and result in additional redundancies in both support and operational staff. Any announcement on the revised formula and the resulting settlement will now not be known until Autumn 2012 and so the decision to escalate the second phase feasibility studies to business case level has been deferred until the final level of budget reductions is known.
- 2.5 All phase one savings identified are either in the process of implementation or have business cases being developed in readiness for Authority decision by May 2012.

3. COMBINED FIRE CONTROL

- 3.1 The new Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Combined Fire Control was launched on October 25, 2011. It carries out the command and control function for both Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service.

- 3.2 In the first month a total of 1,598 emergency calls had been answered by the Combined Control, 985 in Cambridgeshire and 613 in Suffolk. These figures do not include duplicate calls, where multiple calls are received about the same incident. The Combined Fire Control offers a more resilient and cost effective mobilising system to both services and the communities they serve.
- 3.3 The Combined Fire Control has the capacity to be further enhanced in the future. Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is currently working on a business case to see if merging their control function with the Combined Fire Control would work in practice and what level of savings it would bring. The Fire Authority has given approval for the Service to progress discussions with Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service. The Business Case will be considered by Buckinghamshire Fire Authority in April 2012.

4. RESILIENCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004, imposes a duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to *put in place business continuity management arrangements to ensure that they can continue to exercise their functions in the event of an emergency so far as is reasonably practicable. It cannot be assumed that the Armed Forces will be available to provide cover in the event of industrial action by fire-fighters.*
- 4.2 The current Government view is that Fire and Rescue Services will be able to operate a limited service in the event of a national dispute.
- 4.3 Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service achieved the British Standard for business continuity management (BS 25999). We were the first Combined Fire Authority (CFA) to achieve this standard, demonstrating our commitment to ensuring a more resilient and consistent approach.
- 4.4 The Service has organised “resilience contracts” with Group Managers and Station Managers, under which they agree to provide fire cover to the Service in the event of local, regional or national industrial action and pandemic flu or other similar event. Contracts are renewed on an annual basis and have been renewed in 2011. However, in the event of industrial action over occupational pensions, aimed directly at government and not the Fire Authority, there is a risk that these agreements may not be met.
- 4.5 Senior Managers will provide a level of operational cover during any period of industrial action. There will be other personnel who either do not belong to a Trade Union involved, or who simply do not agree with taking industrial action, who will also provide operational cover.
- 4.6 The Retained Duty System (RDS) makes up a significant proportion of the fire cover within Cambridgeshire. During previous periods of industrial action, members of the RDS have provided fire cover within their station areas. The Retained Firefighters Union has an informal no strike agreement. However, the Fire Brigades Union has targeted the retained service in recent years, and

is now the largest union representing all firefighters. The Peterborough Volunteer Fire Brigade has traditionally provided fire cover during periods of industrial action.

- 4.7 The Service is currently reviewing methods of providing additional critical elements of operational cover utilising support staff. We are exploring opportunities to utilise Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) drivers who could release an operational officer to carry out the more technical operational roles such as the wearing of breathing apparatus or use of road traffic collision equipment.
- 4.8 Fire Control: The Service is currently reviewing its business continuity arrangements for the post cutover date for the Combined Control Centre. The capability exists to establish a remote control centre utilising laptops and mobile telephones to mobilise fire appliances where available. Clearly, the combined control centre will require even greater coordination, as the Service will have to liaise with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service.

5. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2010 – 2015

- 5.1 The IRMP was prepared by ORH Limited in conjunction with the Service. The latest performance data from 2010 has been included in the IRMP.
- 5.2 Actual performance within the Service is currently better than our target performance in 9 of the 12 targets contained within the IRMP.
- 5.3 Of the three targets not met, two have been missed by a negligible amount, as to be statistically insignificant. These are:
- Accidental Fires in non-domestic premises: the rolling 3 year target is 239 fires per 1000 premises. Actual performance was 240 fires per 1000 premises. It is worth noting that the number of actual fires during 2010 was only 222.
 - First appliance attendance within 18 minutes: the Service has set a target of attending 95% of all incidents within 18 minutes. The actual performance for 2010 was 94.8%.
- 5.4 The third target is for average first appliance attendance: the Service aims to attend all incidents (first pump) with an average attendance time of 9 minutes. The actual average performance has actually seen an increase from 9.00 mins in 2007, to 9.29 mins in 2010. Although average attendance times for the first appliance have increased, this has been attributable primarily to the increase in the proportion of incidents being attended initially by the RDS. Significantly, it is important to note that although average attendance times have increased, the community is not receiving a worse service. Attendance times to individual towns and villages have remained static.
- 5.5 Cambridgeshire FRS have reviewed the IRMP, concentrating on the targets contained within it. Although performance has been good in most areas, at this stage it is proposed to retain all the current targets in order to corroborate

the trend in performance over a sustained period of time. Where performance has not met the target, it is similarly proposed to retain the current targets.

6. PROPERTY SCHEMES

- 6.1 The Fire Authority vacated the Parkside Fire Station site in Cambridge, and moved to a temporary fire station at Coldhams Lane in May 2011. The scheme for the redevelopment of Parkside Place is well underway and on track for completion by end of January 2013.
- 6.2 The Authority is also progressing development of a new training facility in Cambridge, which is due for completion in July 2012.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Document	Location	Contact
Fire Authority Minutes 2011/12	Fire Service HQ Hinchbrooke Cottage Huntingdon	Michelle Rowe 01223 699180 Michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk