

Summary Sheet

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 21 March 2018

Report Title

Operation of Second Fire Engine at Rotherham Fire Station

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-wide

Summary

Following the Council's resolution in respect of Rotherham Fire Station on 24 January 2018, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has invited the Chief Fire Officer, Mr. James Courtney, to attend this meeting to provide information in respect of the reasons supporting the decision taken by the Fire and Rescue Authority in 2013 to change the operational staffing of the second fire engine at Rotherham Fire Station.

Mr Courtney, along with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mr. Martin Blunden, and the Vice-Chair of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, Councillor Alan Atkin, will be in attendance at the meeting.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board may determine to make recommendations to the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority in respect of this issue following consideration of the information provided.

Recommendations

1. That Overview and Scrutiny Management Board receive the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Vice-Chair of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

2. That consideration be given to any proposed recommendations to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority arising from the information and ensuing discussion in respect of the second fire engine at Rotherham Fire Station.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Report to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority – 23 November 2013 – ‘Strategic and Operational Plans 2013 – 2017’
- Appendix 2 Minutes of the Council Seminar held on 23 October 2013
- Appendix 3 Press Release ‘Change to staffing of second fire engine at Rotherham confirmed’ – South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service – 8 February 2017

Background Papers

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Operational Plan 2013 – 2017
Minute No. 137 – Council – 24 January 2018 ‘Notice of Motion – Reinstatement of the Second Pump at Rotherham Fire Station

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
Council – 24 January 2018

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Operation of Second Fire Engine at Rotherham Fire Station

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Management Board receive the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Vice-Chair of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 1.2 That consideration be given to any proposed recommendations to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority arising from the information and ensuing discussion in respect of the second fire engine at Rotherham Fire Station.

2. Background

- 2.1 This report is submitted to provide context to the issues to be discussed at the meeting and assist with the procedure for the meeting.
- 2.2 On 23 November 2013, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority approved the Integrated Risk Management Plan which proposed a change to the staffing of the second fire engine at Rotherham Fire Station. The effect of the change was that the second fire engine would remain permanently available in the day, but would become 'on call' at night by the end of March 2017. A copy of the report which recommended the decision is enclosed at Appendix 1. The minutes of the Council Seminar held during the consultation in 2013 is enclosed at Appendix 2.
- 2.3 South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's (SYFRS) Operational Plan 2013-2017 states that integrated risk management planning plays a key role in identifying, assessing and mitigating risks. It defines its approach "integrated risk management planning" as "... a way of saying that we look at all the risks that we face, or may face, all together instead of one at a time."
- 2.4 On 31 March 2017, the decision taken by the Fire and Rescue Authority in 2013 was implemented. A press release giving notice of the change was published on 8 February 2017 and is enclosed at Appendix 3.
- 2.5 Following receipt of a motion that was debated on 24 January 2018, the Council resolved as follows:-

This Council notes:-

1. That the government has cut funding to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (SYFRS) by £12.5 million since 2010; a 29% reduction in government funding.
2. That SYFRS expects a further cut of £1.4 million by 2019/20, and that SYFRS is subject to the same unclear policy of business rate retention from 2020 as local councils.
3. That these reductions in funding have resulted in a number of fire stations across the region needing to rely on Close Proximity Crewing and overnight Retained Resilience crews, and that the decision to reduce the staffing on the second appliance at Rotherham Fire Station to 11 hours a day was taken in 2013 following consultation.

4. That the number of accidental house fires in South Yorkshire decreased by 35% between 2001 and 2015, whilst the number of home safety checks delivered by SYFRS between 2006 and 2015 increased nearly tenfold.

This Council believes:-

1. That continued cuts to Fire and Rescue Services across the country puts lives at risk.
2. That prevention is better than a cure, and we welcome the work that SYFRS continues to do to prevent fires and promote fire safety.
3. In order to provide the residents of Rotherham with a safe level of fire cover, fire fighters and equipment, overnight and, reduce the level of risk to fire fighters attending a fire related incident, this Council supports the need to re-instate the second pump together with the required number of fire fighters on the night shift at the fire station in Eastwood when resources allow.
4. That any and all changes to fire services must be based on a robust risk assessment, prioritising the most effective measures to both prevent fires and to save lives.

This Council resolves:-

1. To support SYFRS, the Association of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities and the Local Government Association in pressing for a fairer funding arrangement for all fire authorities.
- 2.6 The issue debated by the Council on 24 January 2018 has also been the subject of regular questions to Rotherham's designated spokesperson on the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority at recent Council meetings.
- 2.7 Given the resolution of the Council and the role of scrutiny in voicing issues of concern to the community, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board issued an invitation to the Chief Fire Officer, Mr. James Courtney, to explain the financial context and the approach to integrated risk management planning which informed the decision in 2013 to change the staffing arrangement for the second fire engine located at Rotherham Fire Station.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mr. Martin Blunden, and the Vice-Chair of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, Councillor Alan Atkin, will be in attendance at the meeting. The Chair will invite them to present information explaining the background to the decision and the impact of its implementation during 2017-18.
- 3.2 Following this, Members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the representatives of the SYFRS and Fire Authority.

3.3 Members of the public will not have the opportunity to ask questions during the consideration of this item. However, agenda item 3 provides an opportunity for members of the press or public to ask general questions of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. If specific questions are submitted, the Chair will arrange for written responses to be provided where contact details of questioners are submitted.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 The Board has the option to make recommendations to the Fire and Rescue Authority in respect of the matter before it. In doing so, any recommendations should be evidence based to be considered as credible.

4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board may also determine that it is satisfied with the information provided and that no further action should be taken or recommendations made.

4.3 The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will write to the Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority and the Chief Fire Officer within 10 working days of the meeting to confirm the outcome of the Board's deliberations on the subject.

5. Consultation

5.1 As the decision was made by the Fire and Rescue Authority in 2013, there is no current consultation associated with the subject matter or this report. Information in respect of consultation in 2013 is included within Appendix 1.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 This report is submitted to facilitate Members' scrutiny of the issue and does not recommend any decisions. Members may determine to propose recommendations arising from their deliberations and the information provided.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board should seek to understand the financial implications of the original decision in 2013 and any recommendations that it may be minded to make on the subject.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board should seek to understand the human resources implications of the original decision in 2013 and any recommendations that it may be minded to make on the subject.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report for children and young people or vulnerable adults.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board should seek to understand the equalities implications of the original decision and any recommendations that it may be minded to make on the subject.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board should seek to understand the implications for the SYFRS arising from the original decision and any recommendations that it may be minded to make on the subject.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board should seek to understand the risks that have arisen from the implementation of the decision and any recommendations that it may be minded to make on the subject.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

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