

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

3 December 2013

Item:

Improving the way we respond to and support incidents – changes to the emergency vehicle fleet

Report by the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

- 1.1 This report details the on-going developments in the emergency vehicle fleet as part of our corporate aim of improving the way we respond to and support incidents, as described in the Service Plan 2013-2018. The emergency vehicle strategy includes the introduction of Rescue Pumps and Light Rescue Pumps, the development of the Small Fires Vehicle concept, the replacement of Special Equipment Units and Multi-Role Vehicles and the introduction of a number of other specialist appliances such as Command Support Vehicle , Animal Rescue Vehicle and Environmental Protection Vehicles.
- 1.2 Although the main driver for this proposal is the vehicle strategy and improving our fleet and operational capability it is also recognised that some of the changes will also result in significant financial savings from both the capital and revenue budgets. .
- 1.3 Information has been used from the review previously conducted regarding the rationalisation of emergency response within Hampshire.
- 1.4 Operational personnel and representative bodies at all affected stations have been consulted on the proposals that have been or are about to be implemented. As other changes are proposed further consultation will take place.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Authority note the changes already made to the emergency vehicle fleet, and the further planned changes.
- 2.2 That the Authority note the financial savings these vehicle improvements have already achieved, and the potential for further savings in rationalising and improving our emergency vehicle fleet, especially if combined with the forthcoming risk review.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 As part of the Safer Stronger Board proposals, a project was commissioned to review the rationalisation of emergency response within Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- 3.2 This review considered a range of options for the Service in relation to emergency response vehicles, and each of these changes and their rationale are detailed below.
- 3.3 Rescue Pumps –
The introduction of Rescue Pumps in 2011 saw a significant improvement in the capability of these new appliances when compared with the traditional Water Tender or Water Tender Ladder appliances. We intend to continue with this strategy and phase out all Water Tender and Water Tender Ladder appliances.
- 3.4 Light Rescue Pumps –
During 2014 we will introduce Light Rescue Pumps. These are a scaled down version of the Rescue Pump, with the similar but reduced capability built on a smaller chassis which will better suit some of our inner city areas and more rural areas. The Light Rescue Pumps will bring a cost saving over the larger Rescue Pumps but still offer improved capability over the previous Water Tender and Water Tender Ladder appliances. Because we haven't yet agreed a final specification for Light Rescue Pumps the Vehicle Replacement Programme currently only lists Rescue Pumps for purchase (7 in 2014/15). It is our anticipation that we will amend this into a combination of Rescue Pumps and Light Rescue Pumps (figures yet to be decided) which will bring a reduction in planned capital spend next year.
- 3.5 Small Fires Vehicles –
During 2012 we expanded the Small Fires Vehicles into both Portsmouth and Basingstoke, and introduced the use of Land Rovers for small fires. This has meant that we can target these small fires with an appropriately sized vehicle across the county, leaving larger appliances for use at larger incidents, and getting much greater use out of our Land Rover appliances.
- 3.6 Response Support Vehicles –
As a part of this review we have considered the various support vehicles that we currently use at incidents. Both the Special Equipment Units and the Multi-Role Vehicles were becoming outdated and the vehicles themselves were coming towards the end of their operational lives. As a result of this the Service has decided to introduce the Response Support Vehicle (RSV) as a replacement to the SEU's and MRV's combining both of their operational capabilities. The current disposition is 4 SEU's based at Cosham, Redbridge, Basingstoke and Winchester, and 3 MRV's based at Havant, Rushmoor and Eastleigh. During early 2014 we will remove all seven of these vehicles and introduce three operational RSV's based at Redbridge, Basingstoke and Cosham. This change will mean a reduction in capital spending over the next 2 years of around £1 million and a revenue saving of £434,000 per annum by the reduction of 12 firefighter posts at Winchester.

3.7 Command Support Vehicles –

Currently 5 stations function as command support stations providing logistical support for incident commanders at larger incidents. These stations are issued with a station van which has limited capability for this task and so during late 2013/ early 2014 we will issue all 5 stations with an enhanced and larger van providing much more capability and getting more ancillary equipment to the scene of a large incident much more rapidly than at present. These appliances will carry a range of equipment and carry out a number of the functions previously carried out by the SEU or MRV previously stowed on SEU's and MRV's.

3.8 Water Rescue Unit and Marine Incident Support Unit –

In partnership with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs the Service has introduced a water rescue capability with a vehicle and a powered boat based at Fareham. This has been at no cost to HFRS other than in training time and provides a capability both locally and nationally that Hampshire has never had before. In order to facilitate this change and to rationalise our approach the Marine Incident Support Unit has been moved to Gosport.

3.9 Environmental Protection Units –

Recognising the continued growth and importance of our environmental protection role HFRS has entered into a partnership with the Environment Agency to provide two Environmental Protection Units for the county. These will be based at Alton and Romsey. The vehicles and most of the equipment have been funded by the EA with HFRS providing the personnel and expertise to respond rapidly on behalf of the EA.

3.10 Animal Rescue Vehicles –

Following on from the successful introduction of a dedicated Animal Rescue Vehicle at Lyndhurst the Service will introduce a second vehicle covering the North of the county to be based at Basingstoke. This will remove the need for the current MRV based animal rescue capability and will rationalise our cover across the county.

3.11 Foam strategy –

During 2014 we will introduce a revised foam strategy which will see the removal of the large foam tanker appliances at the end of their life. Instead foam will be on every Rescue appliance (in the form of Compressed Air Foam or CAFS) and will also be held in demountable units which will be transported to incidents using the USAR prime mover vehicles. This will make greater use of the government supplied national resilience assets, and also rationalise our water carrier fleet and produce capital savings from replacement vehicles.

4 Supporting our corporate aims and objectives

4.1 These changes are part of the Safer Stronger Board proposal on the Rationalisation of Emergency Response.

- 4.2 These plans also support the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2013-2018, as part of our aim to 'Improve the way we respond to and support incidents'. Within this aim the Service commits to carry out a 'review of our resources, to ensure we have the most appropriate vehicles and equipment in the correct locations around the county for an effective response'.

5 Risk analysis

- 5.1 Failure to continue to develop our operational response and to continue to support incidents with the best and most suitable pumping and specialist appliances will hamper our aim of being the best fire and rescue service. Improved operational response will improve firefighter and public safety enabling us to continue to make Hampshire Safer.
- An integral part of the Service plan over the next few years will be a complete Risk Review of the county commencing in January 2014. This will use the changes already made to vehicles as one of the building blocks in completely reviewing how we provide fire cover across the county in the future.

6 People Impact Assessment

- 6.1 As this is an overarching report there are no specific people impacts arising. However various components of the strategy will have an impact (such as the crewing changes at Winchester) and these will be assessed once the proposal is finalised and before it is implemented.
- 6.2 The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of equality and human rights legislation

7 Environmental and sustainability impact assessment

- 7.1 There are no impacts arising from this report.

8 Resource implications

- 8.1 Human Resources

Various aspects of these proposals may have human resource implications. No additional human resources will be required as there will not be any increases in staff numbers. It is possible that further rationalisation of vehicles and response will result in a reduction of operational personnel. Where this is the case each change will be separately project managed to ensure that all of the human resource issues are properly addressed.

8.2 Physical Resources

No additional physical resources will be required.

8.3 Information and Communications Technology Resources

No additional IT resources will be required.

8.4 Financial Implications

There is the potential for significant cost savings as a result of rationalisation of emergency response. As an example the current changes taking place regarding the removal of Special Equipment Units and Multi-Role Vehicles and the introduction of Response Support Vehicles generates a capital saving of around £1million and on-going revenue saving of £434,000. Other changes could potentially bring further savings.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 This project has been undertaken as part of the service wide review into emergency response and the options available for rationalising it where possible. The vehicle strategy will allow the Service to provide appliances that are more suited to the type and number of incidents we are attending at this time, and to provide a better, more targeted and more appropriate level of fire cover and response across the county.

10 Background papers

- 10.1 The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report:

None.

Note: The list excludes: (1) published works; and (2) documents that disclose exempt or confidential information defined in the Act.