

Shaping the Future of your Fire and Rescue Service

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Service Redesign Consultation Summary Report – April 2017



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1. Executive Summary

This report summarises the responses from the public consultation on proposals for changes to our service delivery which incorporates our core functions of Protection, Prevention and Response. It provides information about how the consultation was conducted, statistical data and analysis of qualitative findings.

The consultation ran from 12th December 2016 – 13th March 2017. It was carried out by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) on behalf of the Royal Berkshire combined Fire Authority (RBFA).

This Service Redesign Consultation was the final stage in a series of consultations throughout 2016 and into 2017 with the people of Royal Berkshire, which have helped us to understand your views as we shape the way we deliver our service to you.

Our core service delivery functions of Prevention, Protection and Response fulfil our statutory duties to manage risk in Royal Berkshire.

We also have a statutory duty to balance our budget and are required to find savings of £2.4 million by April 2020 due to a reduction in central government funding. This will be achieved through internal restructuring across the organisation to provide a sum of £1 million and a further £1.4 million of savings has been proposed in the Response options contained in this consultation, by making changes to fire stations and crewing arrangements. This Service Redesign Consultation consulted on changes to:

Prevention: Eight proposals relating to the delivery of Prevention work across Royal Berkshire, including work around water and road safety in schools, expanding health and well-being schemes, and reducing risk of injury or death due to fires particularly targeting those most vulnerable in society

Protection: Two proposals relating to the delivery of Protection work, specifically changes to the focus of fire safety audits and the impact of future infrastructure projects on fire safety specialists.

Response: Seven options of combined scenarios which would save the required amount of money. These options look at crewing arrangements and removal of fire engines.

The key aims of our consultation were:

1. We need to make changes that will maximise our contribution to enabling people across Royal Berkshire to lead safe and fulfilling lives.
2. We must ensure that we continue to balance the Fire Authority's budget, in an environment of shrinking financial resources.
3. We must do all that we can to align any changes we make to the aspirations of our staff.

What we consulted on

The following pages provide an overview of our proposals and options.

Prevention

Proposal 1 and 2 -To reduce the number of vulnerable people dying due to accidental fires in the home, and to reduce the volume of fires occurring in homes and the injuries that result from them.

Proposal 3 and 4- Through working with our partners we aim to reduce road deaths and injuries by 20% in Royal Berkshire over the next five years. We also propose aligning to the UK Drowning Prevention Strategy 2016–26, with the stated aim reducing the number of drowning incidents by 50% by 2026.

Proposal 5 - Fire and rescue staff completing normal home fire safety checks would expand the scope of the visit to look out for other vulnerabilities to the resident.

Proposal 6 and 7- We would continue to expand our schemes to deliver a range of services to support children's health and wellbeing. We would aim to do this on a cost recovery basis. We also propose developing relationships with county-wide organisations to progress pathways to employment and apprenticeships for young people.

Proposal 8 – We would introduce counselling to reduce fire-setting activity amongst adults. We would do this as a mainstream activity rather than as a pilot.

Protection

Proposal 1: We propose to focus our audits in the places people are most at risk and where fire safety standards are not being met.

Proposal 2: We propose to consider the impact major infrastructure projects planned in Royal Berkshire over the next five years may have on our fire safety specialists.

Response

Option 1

- 3 x Remotely Managed Stations
 - Wokingham Rd from Caversham Rd
 - Langley from Slough (Change: Windsor from Maidenhead)
 - Theale from Whitley Wood
- Disestablish the RSU
- Close 2 x RDS stations
 - Pangbourne and Wargrave

Total Savings = £1.31M

Option 2

- Introduce Pool shift system for all WDS staff
- 3 x Remotely Managed Stations
 - Wokingham Rd from Caversham Rd
 - Langley from Slough (Change: Windsor from Maidenhead)
 - Theale from Whitley Wood
- Disestablish the RSU
- 1 x RDS Station closure:
 - Pangbourne

Total Savings = £1.31M

Option 3

- Introduce 3 Watch shift system
- 1 x Remotely Managed Station
 - Wokingham Rd from Caversham Rd
- Disestablish the RSU

Total Savings = £1.4M

Option 4

- Introduce 3 Watch shift system
- 2 x Remotely Managed Stations
 - Wokingham Rd from Caversham Rd
 - Langley from Slough (Change: Windsor from Maidenhead)
- 1 x RDS Station closure:
 - Pangbourne

Total Savings = £1.34M

Option 5

- 1 x Day Crewing Plus Station:
 - Theale
- 3 x Remotely Managed Stations
 - Wokingham Rd from Caversham Rd
 - Langley from Slough
 - Wokingham from Bracknell (as well as Ascot)
- Disestablish the RSU
- Close 2 x RDS Stations
 - Pangbourne and Wargrave

Total Savings = £1.58M^{*} (Net = £1.4M)
*reinvesting £180K into RDS project

Option 6

- 1 x Peak Demand fire engine
 - Windsor (and move all staff to 12 hour shifts)
- 2 x Remotely managed stations
 - Wokingham Rd from Caversham Rd
 - Langley from Slough
- Disestablish the RSU
- Close 2 x RDS Stations
 - Pangbourne and Wargrave

Total Savings = £1.34M

Option 7: Do nothing- Total Savings = £0

Prevention

The Service Redesign consultation contained eight proposals for the way in which we deliver our Prevention work. These proposals concentrated on supporting vulnerable people in the community and schools education programme delivery.

Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with the Prevention proposals with no difference between staff and public opinion. The qualitative data showed that those in support of these proposals felt it was essential to protect the vulnerable and elderly, maximise resources, and that fire safety education was a key requirement.

However, across all proposals there was a general concern around where the funding for increased community and well-being work would come from and also a feeling that this work should not be the responsibility of the Fire and Rescue Service. Suggestions were made about collaborative working with other health and well-being partners.

The findings did show that whilst the majority of respondents agreed with providing water and road safety, they did not want this to happen at the expense of fire safety, and in general felt that this should come down to other safety education providers.

In relation to the potential reduction of fire safety education, we have also presented specific views from schools as a key stakeholder.

Protection

The Service Redesign consultation contained two proposals about the way in which we deliver some aspects of Protection work. Specifically, the delivery of fire safety audits.

Overall, the majority of all respondents were in agreement with the implementation of both the Protection proposals. There was little difference in opinion between staff, the general public and organisational responses.

In relation to Proposal 1, the qualitative themes suggest that those in agreement with focused fire audits for the most at risk felt that this was a sensible and cost effective approach. Whilst those opposing this proposal felt that it should be made available to everyone.

In relation to Proposal 2, the qualitative themes showed a difference in respondent opinion around the potential additional demand major developments could have on Protection work. Some felt that the risk was generally small, and others that the fire service should be involved early on in the planning and implementation of future infrastructure developments.

In general, suggestions focused on how any additional demand could potentially be met by seeking extra funding, charging developers for RBFRS' expertise and being involved at the early intervention stages of development.

Response

The Service Redesign consultation contained seven options for changing the way in which our response services are delivered. Each of these seven options save (approximately) the required £1.4m. In the survey, we asked respondents to rank these options in order of preference. We also asked them to provide reasons behind their selections.

Overall, data showed the most preferred was Option 1, and the least preferred was Option 7. However, there were a number of differences between the general public and staff preferences, as well as a host of reasons for choosing their most and least preferred option. It is important to read the pages within the Response section of this report to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of these findings.

We also looked at the qualitative feedback about the specific scenarios contained in the consultation report. We present a number of views around potential station closures and changes to crewing arrangements. In general, there was a strong opposition to the closure of Wargrave Fire Station, illustrated by the strength of individual resident responses in this area. We also received strong opposition from RBFRS personnel who would be affected by the potential disestablishment of the Retained Support Unit. However, the Retained Firefighters Union stated they would not challenge this proposal and the Fire Brigades Union offered qualified support. Furthermore, any shift changes were generally disliked by staff, and the reason most cited for this was the impact on staff well-being and family life. Of all the proposed shift changes, qualitative comments reflected that remotely managed stations seemed the more preferred option of them all.

2. Methodology

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides the statutory instrument that requires fire and rescue services (FRS) to have due regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England [revised 2012]. The framework provides guidance on Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP), and suggests that an IRMP should:

‘Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies, and partners.’

Cabinet Office guidelines [revised January 2016] suggest that the length of consultation should be proportionate to the nature and impact of the proposals. This consultation period ran for 13 consecutive weeks from 12 December 2016 – 13 March 2017.

In carrying out the consultation, RBFRS followed the legal principles that underpin consultation. These are known as the four ‘Gunning Principles’ which specify how public bodies should consult. They specify that:

1. Consultation should be carried out when proposals are at the formative stage

2. Sufficient information is provided to allow intelligent consideration of the proposals
3. Adequate time is given for response
4. Responses are conscientiously considered before decisions are taken

You can access RBFRRS's consultation strategy [here](#).

Pre consultation engagement

The consultation team undertook engagement activity before the consultation launched. This was for a number of purposes:

- Focus groups were held with key stakeholders in order to understand their initial views on the types of service changes which may be presented within the consultation documents, and how we can ensure that we are promoting the consultation to all relevant groups and communities within Royal Berkshire.
- A crewing survey was undertaken with current whole-time fire-fighters to ascertain their views of the current shift system, and how they would feel about any changes to this through different shift pattern implementation.

The findings and feedback from this pre-consultation activity and the underpinning evidence was presented to the Fire Authority following a series of workshops and task and finish group meetings to inform their decision making in developing the final consultation options.

You can access this report [here](#).

Staff crewing survey (August 2016)

The staff crewing survey comprised of an online survey with 24 key questions that asked current wholetime fire-fighters for feedback about their current shift system. This information was presented to the Fire Authority and used to inform option development for the Response consultation options.

Staff focus group (August 2016)

The primary purpose of the staff focus group was to explore the factors that affect decision making on the crewing option proposals, particularly those that were not derived from risk modelling, such as level of challenge and impact on service. This was to complement the staff crewing survey, giving a deeper understanding of the issues from a group of staff who do not work the whole time duty system. Secondly, the focus group was used to assist with developing the survey questionnaire by looking at how we would pose questions to the general public and key stakeholders not familiar with the fire and rescue service (FRS).

External focus group (September 2016)

The primary purpose of this focus group was to provide decision makers with a deeper understanding of the issues in this consultation by seeking the views of external stakeholders. Secondly, the focus group was used to assist with developing our engagement approach with

different communities across Royal Berkshire and how we could provide the information and ability to provide feedback in an accessible format.

Resources

The consultation was publicised through social media platforms, flyer campaigns, online and paper mainstream media and radio. Consultation material was made available via a number of accessible methods. These included:

- Online via www.rbfrs.co.uk
- PDF copies via email
- Consultation events
- Paper copies on request
- Easy Read document
- Consultation video

A stakeholder analysis was undertaken to try to ensure that these communication methods were appropriate. Table A below summarises the communication methods used for each stakeholder group during this consultation:

Table A: Communication methods used for each stakeholder group

Stakeholder Group	Communication Method
Public	<p>The public were able to access all relevant information on our website and take part in an online or printed questionnaire (accessible options were available on request).</p> <p>Public engagement events were also held in three locations across Berkshire. These drop-in sessions were held on week days and weekend dates in Pangbourne, Wargrave and Windsor to maximise exposure. The locations were chosen as proposals to close these fire stations fully or partially are included in the consultation.</p> <p>A short video was produced by the Corporate Communications team to provide information to viewers about the consultation and how to take part. This was used both for staff and external stakeholder engagement.</p>
RBFRS Staff	<p>RBFRS staff were also notified via intranet postings, signposting to the consultation material and questionnaire, with timed reminders sent during the consultation process.</p>

	<p>Information about the consultation was also published via internal publication methods - Cascade, The Shout and the internal intranet page.</p> <p>Direct contact was made with the following recognised representative bodies; Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Fire Officers Association (FOA) and the Retained Firefighters Union (RFU).</p> <p>Briefing sessions were held with middle managers to enable a structured programme of face to face staff engagement, providing teams with information on the consultation, an opportunity to ask questions and encourage participation across the organisation.</p>
<p>Government, local authorities and public sector</p>	<p>We sent direct details of the consultation to the following via email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local MPs • Opposition party leaders • Unitary authorities • District, town and parish councils • Police and Crime Commissioner • Blue light partners • Education providers • GP surgeries • Neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services • Housing providers • Social services <p>Emails sent to the local MPs, opposition party leaders, Parish Councils and the leaders of each Unitary Authority included a personal letter from the Chairman of the Fire Authority - Councillor Colin Dudley.</p> <p>Emails sent to partner organisations included a personal letter from Chief Fire Officer Andy Fry.</p>

	<p>All other contacts received a general email signposting them to the RBFRS website where they could find out more about the consultation.</p> <p>Members of the consultation team attended meetings in each local authority in 2017:</p> <p>Wokingham Borough Council – 24 January Slough Borough Council – 31 January West Berkshire Council – 7 February Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead – 21 February Bracknell Forest Council – 1 March Reading Borough Council – 6 March</p>
<p>Businesses</p>	<p>We sent details of the consultation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport providers • Higher risk premises • Local women’s business group
<p>Community organisations/minority groups</p>	<p>We sent details of the consultation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community centres • Women’s representative groups, such as The Women’s Institute and Athena Network Berkshire • Students and young people via contacts at Reading University, YES Slough and Berkshire Youth • Older people’s groups- such as Age UK, sheltered housing support and community groups • Organisations representing minority ethnic communities – such as Slough CVS and Berkshire Muslim Arab Association <p>The consultation team directly engaged with the number of key community organisations listed above to raise awareness about the consultation. A number of these groups advertised the consultation information to their service users via social media, email or their website.</p>

Corporate Communication Consultation Engagement

Throughout the consultation period, RBFRS have used a number of different channels to raise awareness and encourage more people to take part. Here are some of the channels which were used:

Video

Before the consultation began the RBFRS Communication team filmed a short video with the intention to give people an overview of the consultation and encourage them to take part. The video featured short interviews with Chief Fire Officer, Andy Fry and the Chairman of the Fire Authority, Councillor Colin Dudley, together with video footage from across our Prevention, Protection and Response activities. The video has now been viewed over 3,000 times on Facebook and YouTube.

Local media

At the beginning of the consultation on 12 December 2106, RBFRS formally announced the consultation through a written press release which was distributed to media contacts in Berkshire. This was then published on our website and intranet. As a result of the press release several local and Berkshire wide publications have published articles about the consultation.

Website

A dedicated webpage for the consultation was set up on the RBFRS website (www.rbfrs.co.uk/consultation). This was a place to host all of the consultation documentation and provide direct links to complete the survey. A link to our YouTube video explaining the consultation was also hosted here.

Social media

Social media was also used extensively throughout the consultation. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn were all used as communication channels. Specific target groups were identified on each platform and specific messages were aimed at each group.

- **Twitter** - Tweets were sent on a regular basis to notify people about the consultation. This included specific tailored tweets aimed at particular locations or options which had been included. The hashtag #ShapeRBFRS was used to link RBFRS tweets about this subject. Our top tweet had 257 engagements, with 63 people clicking through to the consultation webpage.
- **Facebook** - The RBFRS Facebook page was used to host information about the consultation, including the consultation video, and links directing people to take part. The video was viewed over 2,500 times on Facebook alone and we reached over 8,000 people.
- **Instagram** - We posted several images and a short video on Instagram, directing people to visit the RBFRS website for further information.

- **LinkedIn** - Details of the consultation were also published on the RBFRS LinkedIn page.
- **YouTube** - The consultation video was posted onto our YouTube channel and has received 591 views to date.

Middle Management Briefings

Middle manager briefings were delivered to RBFRS staff as an additional form of staff engagement. The middle management team delivered a centrally produced presentation to inform and explain about the Service Redesign consultation. In the sessions, staff were given the opportunity to ask questions and were encouraged to express their views and feedback about the proposed changes through the online questionnaire.

Public community activities

The consultation team held six public engagement events in Pangbourne, Wargrave and Windsor. These were held both on a weekday afternoon and weekend date in January and February. These informal events were designed as drop in session where members of the public could find out more about the consultation, ask any questions they had and take away reading material and a paper based version of the questionnaire to complete and post back.

The attendance at each meeting was as follows:

- 20 January 2017 – Pangbourne Fire Station: 25 attendees
- 26 January 2017- Wargrave Fire Station: 12 attendees
- 31 January 017- Windsor Library: 14 attendees
- 18 February 2017 – Pangbourne Fire Station: 50 attendees
- 19 February 2017 – Wargrave Fire Station: 35 attendees
- 25 February 2017- Windsor Library: 8 attendees

3. Analysis of Data

Online questionnaire

An online questionnaire was designed to support respondents to give their feedback electronically. The questions used in this survey included demographic data questions and then a number of quantitative and qualitative questions for each Prevention, Protection and Response proposal. These questions asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the different consultation proposals, and also asked for their views and feedback around these. Additionally, we also asked respondents to rate the seven Response options on a scale of 1-7, 1 being their most preferred option and 7 being their least preferred.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was used in a number of ways during the Service Redesign consultation:

- Indication of response rate to the survey – including skipped questions and partial completions.
- Equality and diversity information to analyse the demographic profile of respondents.
- Indication of the capacity in which the respondents were replying – such as an individual resident of Royal Berkshire or on behalf of an organisation. This also included whether they were employed by RBFRS or were related to any member of staff. It was important to ascertain if the response was from an organisation as this may mean their views have come from a collective group of people- such as a school or high risk premises.
- Response from Unitary Authority – we were also interested in which Unitary Authority the respondents were replying from.
- Overall percentage of responses for each Protection and Prevention consultation proposals. This information indicates the weight of respondent preference for each proposal.
- Ranked preference of the Response options, rated from most preferred (1) to least preferred (7).

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected via open ended survey questions, to enable respondents to provide individual, rich and detailed feedback on the consultation proposals. We used this data to analyse the reasons behind respondents' answers and looked for themes to provide a narrative to accompany this information.

It is really important to us that we not only understand peoples' views about the consultation proposals but that we try to seek to understand the emotion and feelings behind these.

Qualitative data was analysed in a simplified way, using the basic principles from 'Grounded Theory' methodology. The essence of this methodology is to move through a step by step process and arrive at an understanding of the data. This process starts from scratch and understanding is built around the data itself and is specific to this context only.

Firstly 'categories of data' are identified and text is 'coded' by which categories it is deemed to be within. Categories are instances within the text where the same issues are repeated again and again in slightly different ways, but which all talk about the same key point(s). One comment can be coded to include several categories if the respondent spoke about more than one common topic.

Later stages involve linking categories together and arranging smaller categories into groups below key higher ones, in a hierarchical manner. The researcher moves backwards and forwards between the coding and categories, to ensure as much data as possible is captured

within them, until no further categories are required. More data was analysed as it became available, up until closure of the consultation. As the analysis becomes more robust, ideally new data should fall into pre-existing categories with ease.

A written record is kept during the process to track changes, developments and to aid the process of sharing the data with other colleagues for them to check. This process of multiple checks and constant development ensures that the final analysis is robust and inclusive.

4. Response to Consultation

In total, we had **1050 responses** to our Service Redesign consultation.

Table B: Number of responses for each feedback method

	Survey Responses	Email Response	Written Response	Telephone Response
Number of Responses	1003	37	7	3

This shows that we had **1003 responses via our online survey**, and a cumulative **total of 47 non-survey responses** (including email, written and telephone).

Data from the online survey showed that the **highest percentage of respondents heard about the consultation through social media (20.38%)**:

How did you hear?	% of responses
Social Media	20.38%
Website	13.79%
Email	14.11%
Poster/flyer	12.75%
Newspaper	6.06%

TV/Radio	1.36%
Friend or relative	6.90%
RBFRS engagement event	15.88%
Other (I.e. word of mouth, Parish Council, Residents Association, internal intranet)	8.78%

Responses from Organisations

As part of the questionnaire, we collected data that reflected whether people were responding on behalf of an organisation or public body. For the purpose of this we have defined 'organisation' as a group of individuals representing a collective view on behalf of their members. We received the following:

Organisation or body	Questionnaire	Email	Letter
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service		✓	
Catalyst Housing		✓	
Cookham Parish Council	✓		
Crown Estates	✓		
Crowthorne Parish Council	✓		
Elderly Peoples' Club- Wexham	✓		
Elizabeth Fry Charity	✓		
Enbourne Parish Council			✓
Fire Brigades Union Berkshire		✓	
Home Care Agency	✓		
Hungerford Town Council		✓	
Hurley Parish Council		✓	
Loddon Residents LTD		✓	

Office of the Prime Minister		✓	
Old Windsor Community Response Team	✓		
Old Windsor Parish Council		✓	
Pangbourne Parish Council	✓		
Reading Borough Council	✓		
Retained Firefighters Union		✓	
SERGO PLC	✓		
South Central Ambulance Service			✓
St Mary's CE Primary School	✓		
Thatcham Town Council	✓		
Wargrave Parish Council		✓	
Willows Riverside Home Park Resident's Association	✓		
Wokingham Borough Council			✓
Wokingham Parish Council		✓	
Woodley Town Council Planning Committee		✓	
Unspecified District Councils x 2	✓		
Un-named Schools x 8	✓		

We received written responses from the following RBFRS departments:

- Human Resource and Learning and Development
- Personnel from Wargrave Fire Station (Station 9)
- Personnel from the Retained Support Unit (RSU)
- All other representative responses are summarised under each of the proposals in the main findings section.

Petition Response

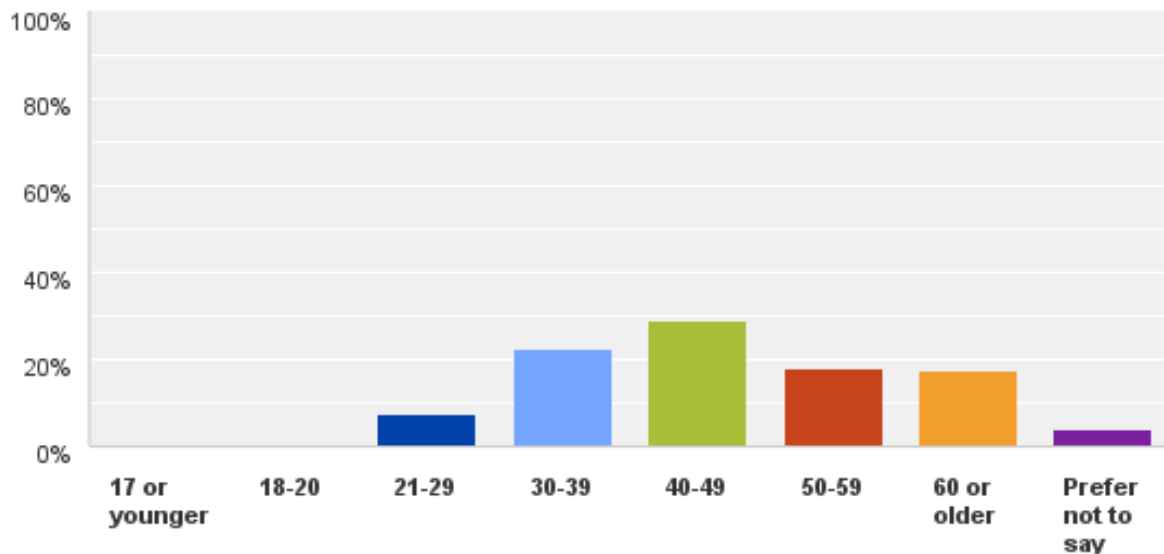
We received 245 signatures on a petition, which opposes the closure of Wargrave fire station, from representatives of Wargrave. A breakdown of the respondents and some examples of

the comments we received on this petition are shown in the Response section of this report. The petition comments can be read in full in Appendix G.

Respondent Profile

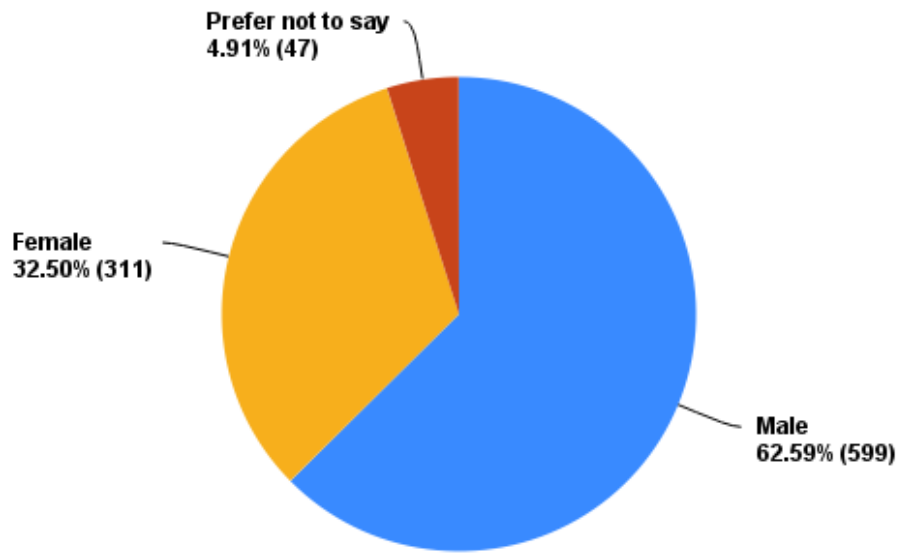
The figures below illustrate the demographic profile for all responses via the online Survey Monkey questionnaire. RBFRS are committed to promoting equality and diversity, and therefore by collecting this information we are able to monitor the response rate to our consultation across a range of communities and backgrounds. This enables us to continually evaluate our work and to improve efforts to engage a representative sample of people within Royal Berkshire as a process of ongoing development. The equality and diversity information also enables us to monitor the weight of responses from RBFRS personnel in comparison to members of the public.

a) Age



Data shows that **most of respondents were aged 40-49 years old (29.05%)**, with the least number of respondents aged 17 years old or younger (0.74%).

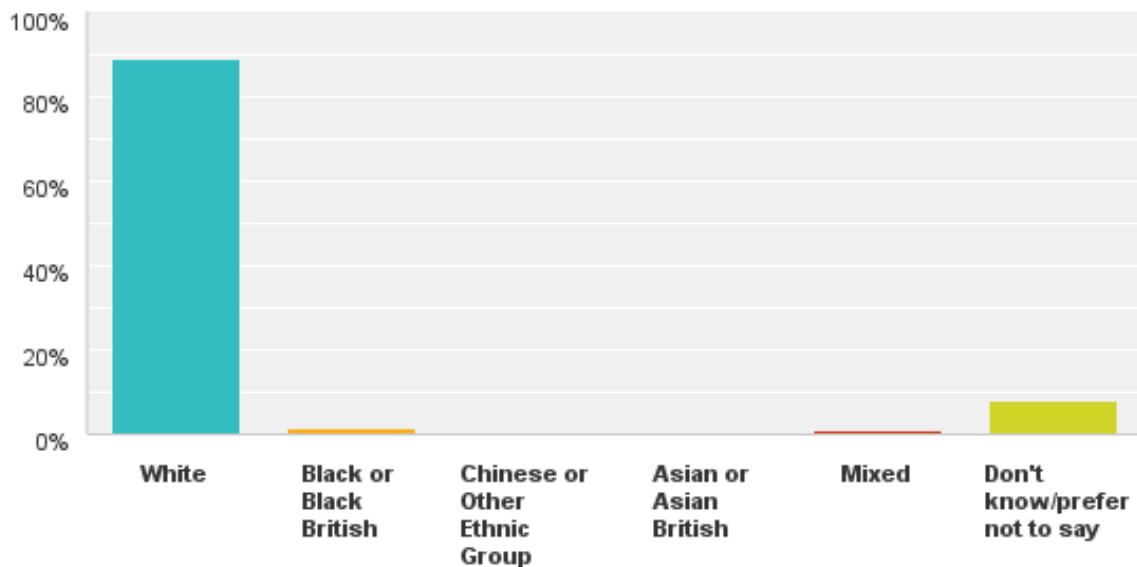
b) Gender



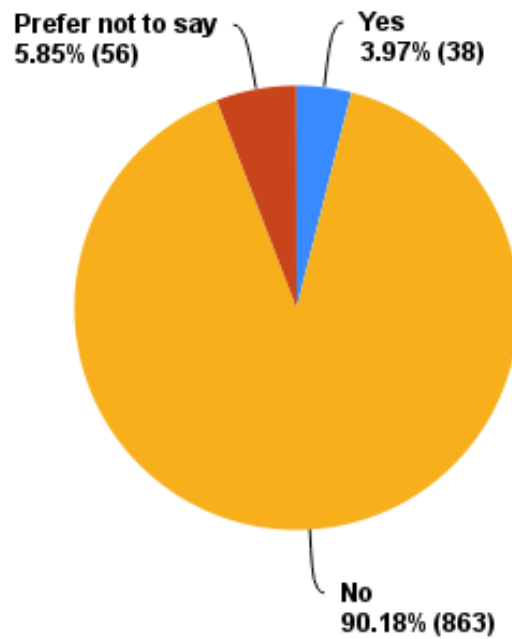
Data shows the **majority of respondents were male (62.59%)** compared to females (32.50%). 4.91% preferred not to say.

c) Ethnic Origin

Data shows that the **majority of respondents classed their ethnic origin as 'White' (88.92%)**.

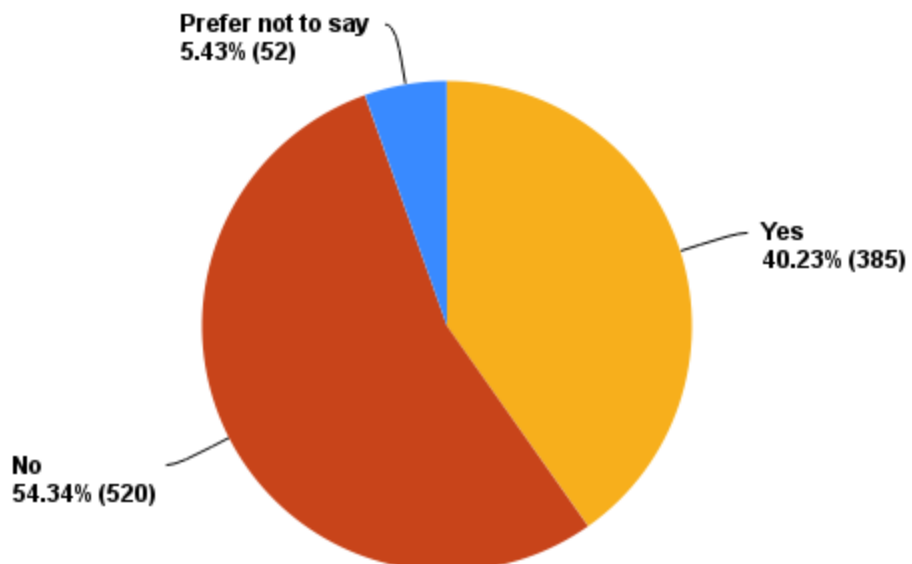


d) Disability



Data shows the **majority of respondents classed themselves as not having a disability (90.18%)** with the minority of respondents classing themselves as having a disability (3.97%). 5.78% preferred not to say.

e) Employment



Data shows **majority of respondents identifying themselves as not being employed by RBFRS (54.20%)**, compared to those who are or have been (40.34%). 5.46% preferred not to say.

Unitary Authority

Data shows the percentage of responses from each Unitary Authority in Royal Berkshire. **The highest number of responses came from the Wokingham Unitary Authority (31.62%)**, and the least number of responses came from Slough Unitary Authority (5.78%). We also received a small percentage of responses from neighbouring counties and organisations.

Unitary Authority	Proportion of response rate (%)
Bracknell Forest	7.25%
Reading	20.27%
Slough	5.78%
West Berkshire	19.43%
Windsor and Maidenhead	13.13%
Wokingham	31.62%
Other - Oxfordshire - Gloucestershire - Hampshire - Wiltshire -TVFCS	2.25%

Summary

Overall, we received a 222% increase in our overall response rate (1050) in comparison to our previous consultation response rate for our Response Standards consultation (326).

5. Main Findings

This section will describe and explain the quantitative and qualitative findings for each of the consultation proposals for Prevention, Protection and Response.

In this section we will reflect the analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data from our online survey. We will also present examples from the non-survey responses we received.

The appendices report in full the consultation responses from the following organisations and representative bodies:

- The Fire Brigades Union (FBU)
- The Retained Firefighters Union (RFU)
- The Retained Support Unit (RSU)
- Wargrave Fire Station
- South Central Ambulance Service
- Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Wargrave petition

The data analysis will be broken down into the following sections:

- Prevention - Page 24
- Protection - Page 42
- Response - Page 50

We appreciate every response that we have received throughout this consultation from staff, the general public, organisations and representative bodies alike. As we received over 1000 responses to our consultation and a large number of qualitative comments, we cannot publish each individual one. Within the sections that follow, we have carefully considered all comments and selected those that we feel best represent a balanced view of the overall feedback we received.



PREVENTION

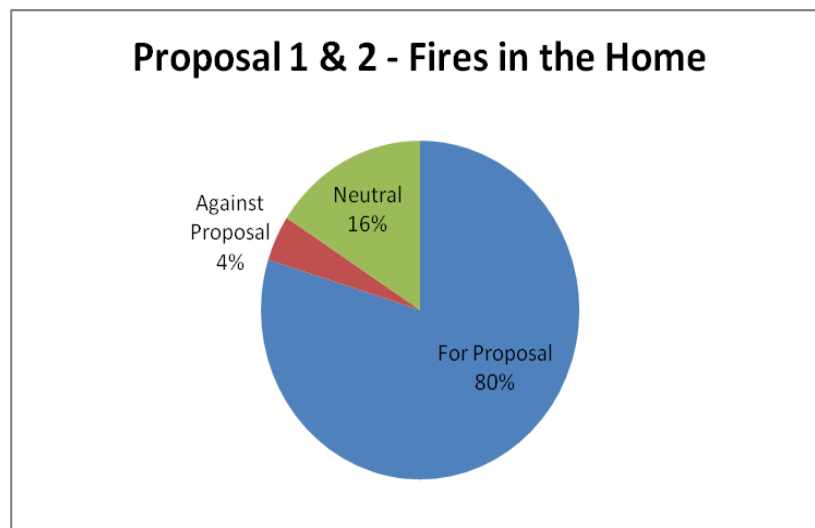


In this section, we will present the percentage of overall agreement and disagreement with the Prevention proposals, as well as the possible reasons behind these findings using qualitative data.

Proposal 1 and 2- Fires in the Home: Do you agree with our proposed approach to promoting home fire safety in Royal Berkshire?

Quantitative Findings

From 1003 survey responses, 713 answered this question. The chart below shows that **80% of all respondents agreed** with Proposals 1 and 2:



Qualitative Findings

There were a further 50 qualitative comments (public 58.00%, current staff 36%, and organisations 6%). The most recurring themes were as follows:

Number of qualitative comments	Main themes emerging and % of comments	Sub themes
50 comments (Important. For all qualitative comments in tables within the report. Comments may contain more than one theme, and are therefore counted independently in each. The total of all the percentages is therefore not required to	54.00% of all comments mentioned 'Support for (36%) or Against the Proposal (18%)' (1). 20.00% of all comments mentioned 'To Fund Emergencies as Priority' (2).	(1a) Extended to more people/ everyone (20%). (2) No sub themes identified.

total 100%)	10.00% of all comments mentioned 'Questions around Funding' (3).	(3) No sub themes identified.
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There is equal support for the proposals from both staff and the public. Those respondents opposing the proposals tended to represent a view that wishes to have the same provision of home fire safety checks for all. Those offering supportive qualitative comments tended to demonstrate more insight into the logic behind targeting those most at risk, and maximising the efficiency of resources. The sub theme to 'extend to more people' was given as both a negative to not support the proposal because it did not include enough people, and as a positive, that they agree with the proposal 'so long as it includes more people'. Some participants, whilst agreeing that home fire safety was important, were also concerned about how the additional resources would impact upon funding.

For the proposal

'I fully support the proposal to further target fire safety interventions to those most vulnerable from fire and to share information with partner agencies in order to clearly identify those most at risk. Any technology that assists people to remain in their own homes has got to be a good thing. Funding for this should be shared', (Individual resident).

'Regular education of residents is an important part of the fire services role' (Organisation response).

'Home fire safety checks have been done for many years and they take up a lot of man power for the crews that are tasked with completing them. The addresses that are used are usually out of date, wrong and target the wrong people. A dedicated team of people to carry out these high number of Home fire safety checks is needed and to work closer with the right authorities to target the right people' (Staff).

Against the proposal

I would prefer to offer this service to any resident who feels they would benefit. To target a specific group i.e. elderly or vulnerable is unfair when those who don't fit into any of your 'categories' would also benefit from a shorter streamlined version of the visit' (Individual resident).

Where will the funding come from?

'Who pays for the 'technologies' like misting systems, not RBFRS I hope?' (Staff).

'Who pays for this though? We carry out many HFSC's in 'vulnerable' homes, but find they have a huge plasma TV on the wall and all the gadgets under the sun around the home. Is RBFRS paying the technologies such as misting systems?' (Staff).

'Who's going to fund additional systems like cooker shut off and room misting systems' (Individual resident).

Fund emergencies first

'Money should first be allocated to responding to emergencies first and when budgets allow the undertake other engagements' (Staff).

'Education is extremely important part of RBFRRS engagement with the community in a bid to reduce incidents and therefore fire deaths however with the best will in the world incidents will occur and as such we need properly crewed appliances to enable us to respond effectively and safely so if budgets allow the yes we should educate but never at the detriment to frontline appliances' (Staff).

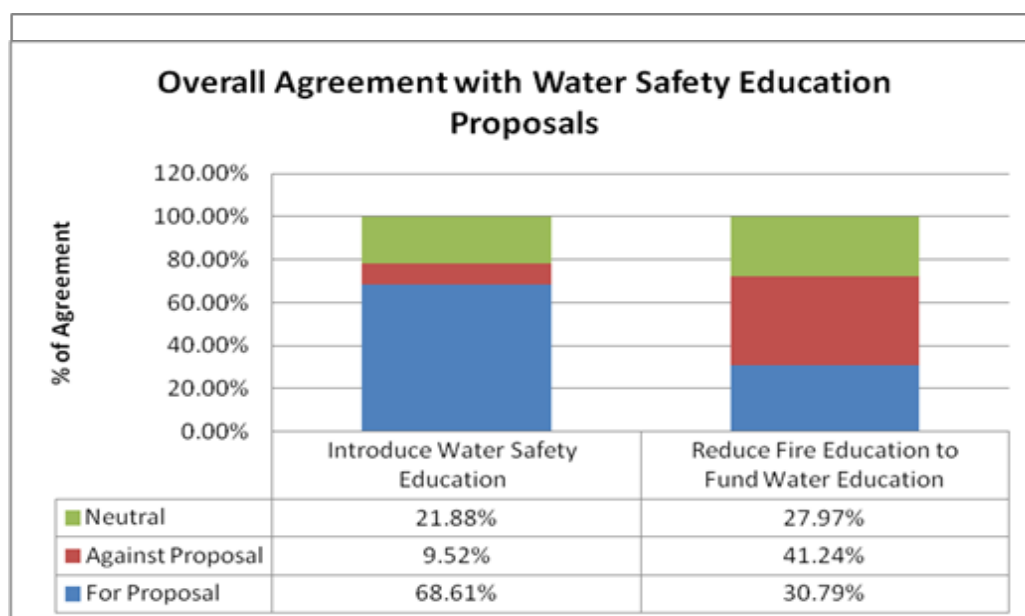
Proposal 3 and 4 - Road Safety, Water safety and reduction of Fire safety to provide this.

Quantitative Findings

From 1003 survey responses, 708 answered the question on the road safety education proposal, and 707 the question on reducing fire safety education to introduce road safety. 704 answered the question on the water safety education proposal and 708 the question on reducing fire safety education to introduce water safety.

The charts below show that the support for proposals 3 and 4 is high - **78.39% agreed with road safety education** and **68.1% agreed with water safety education**, but drops considerably, by almost half, when asked to reduce fire safety education in order to achieve this - **38.19% agreed to reduce fire education** to fund road safety and **30.79% agreed to reduce fire education** to fund water safety.

The results are summarised in the tables below:



Qualitative Findings

There were a further total 393 qualitative comments surrounding the four questions summarised above (public 61.32%, current staff 31.81%, and organisations 6.87%). There were almost double the qualitative responses to the fire education reduction questions than for the proposal specific questions, indicating a strong opinion on whether fire safety is reduced as explored below.

Qualitative comments regarding safety education tended to have strongly overlapping themes, and thus have been analysed together to provide a more holistic and uncomplicated view.

Across the safety education questions, two main categories, and a further three sub-categories, were identified which encompassed the vast majority of the data. These are illustrated in the table below:

Number of qualitative comments	Main themes emerging and % of comments	Sub themes
68 comments about providing road safety education	61.53% of all comments mentioned 'Support For (24%) or Against the Proposal (37%)' (road safety) (1).	(1a) Provide both/all fire, road and water safety education (32.82%)
69 comments about providing water safety education	51.35% of all comments mentioned 'Support For (43.24%) or Against the proposal (8%)'(1)	
129 comments about reducing fire safety education to provide road safety	45% of all comments mentioned the importance of 'Focusing on Fire and Rescue Core Responsibilities' (2).	(2a) Fund emergencies as priority (8.14%) (2b) Not fire and rescue service work/responsibility (22.14%)

127 comments about reducing fire safety education to provide water safety education.		
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- There is little difference between staff and the public in terms of support or opposition to Proposal 3 and 4.
- The qualitative themes display important emotional responses, also indicating that safety education is also *felt* as very important.
- Those opposing the proposal tended to have the view that all forms of safety education should be provided to everyone. Those offering supportive qualitative comments tended to relate to targeting those preventions which are likely to be most effective and reduce the most deaths and injuries, maximising the efficiency of resources.
- One consistent view was that fire deaths were reduced because of good preventative education in the past, and the concern that reducing fire safety education now, might have a negative impact on the current rates.
- 45% of comments expressed a view that the fire and rescue service should concentrate on its core responsibilities. 22.14% of comments stated that the type of education in question was not the responsibility of fire and rescue and that it should be provided by another agency.
- A common view consistent throughout all of the 8 Prevention proposals data was, again, the notion that whilst Prevention was important, it should be prioritised behind Response resources (8.14% of comments in proposals 3&4).

For the proposal

'It is a good way of using fire crews as a resource when they are not attending emergency calls, they have an engaging voice to give a powerful message from personal experience' (Individual resident).

'As a headteacher, this is a very welcome service' (Organisation response).

'Road risk is higher than fire risk due to likelihood of road incident compared to fire. Therefore it is reasonable to use existing funds for road risk education (if there is no new money)' (Employed in Berkshire, Road safety).

'We are surrounded by streams, rivers and lakes so water safety makes sense' (Individual resident).

'Both are needed and you are the best people to provide them. That is what providing a public service is all about - services to the public' (Individual resident).

Against the proposal

'I agree we need to deliver more but I don't agree we reduce the fire education by 40% in order to deliver it. We should deliver both to a higher level in schools and our time should be directed away from home fire safety checks that do not target the correct people. Employ a team of people to do the home fire safety checks' (Staff).

'Providing combined sessions on road and fire safety would be very helpful. Risk that a reduction in fire safety education could impact longer term' (Organisation response, Road safety).

'Just because the fires have reduced doesn't mean you should stop - once these messages and education reduces bad habits will creep in and the number of fires and injuries will increase again. Prevention is an important ongoing project...' (Staff, Road safety)'

Focus on fire and rescue core responsibilities

'Money should first be allocated to responding to emergencies first and when budgets allow then undertake other engagements' (Staff).

'I agree as long as it is not going to have a detrimental impact on front line services by reducing that budget to increase education budget' (Individual resident).

'But is the Fire Service really the best organisation to be doing this. Is there not a partnership program that could implement this?' (Individual resident).

'The fire service cannot take on every life prevention education' (Individual resident).

'As the FIRE and rescue service our core business involves education about fire safety. Road safety is the responsibility of the Police and should remain that way. We have seen successful reductions in fire deaths over the years due in part to the fire safety education that the fire service has delivered' (Staff).

'Police and others could potentially provide road safety education. Only the fire service covers fire' (Individual resident, Road safety).

'Fire safety must be priority 1. All other activities are (also) addressed by other agencies. Crazy for fire service to downgrade fire prevention' (Individual resident).

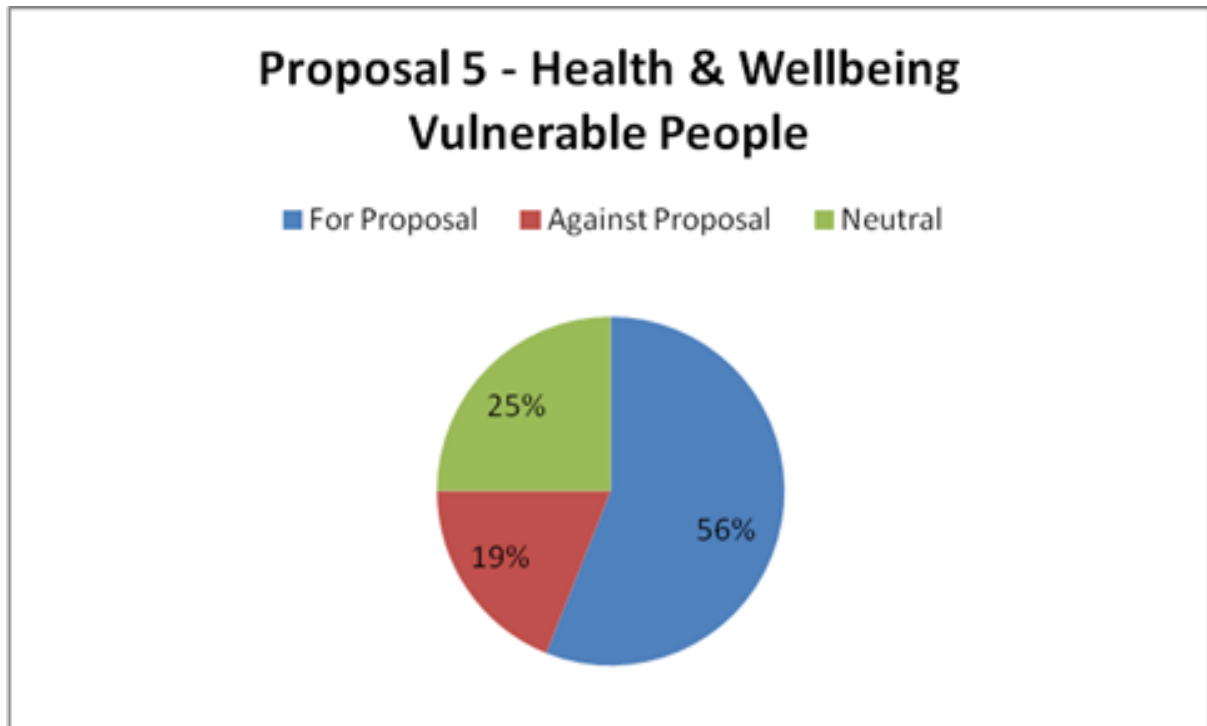
'Fire safety education is fundamental, core business. Other organisations are providing water safety education to the various age groups. Only the fire service is offering fire safety education' (Staff)

'Fire safety is the Fire service's unique area of expertise - in a division of labour with other services this is the one it must retain and emphasise' (Individual resident, Road safety).

Proposal 5- Health and Wellbeing: Do you agree with our proposal to provide a wider health and wellbeing agenda that would support vulnerable people in their homes in Royal Berkshire?

Quantitative Findings

From 1003 survey responses, 701 answered this question. The results show that **56% of all respondents agreed with Proposal 5**. The results are summarised in the chart below:



Qualitative Findings

There were a further 109 qualitative comments (public 61.47%, current staff 34.86%, and organisations 4.59%), from which three main themes and a further three sub-themes were identified to encompass the vast majority of the data. This is illustrated in the table below:

Number of qualitative comments	Main themes emerging and % of comments	Sub themes
109 comments	76.15% of all comments mentioned the importance of 'Focusing on Fire and Rescue Core Responsibilities' (1).	(1a) Too many responsibilities (11.93%). (1b) Fund emergencies as priority (7.34%)

	<p>18.35% of all comments mentioned 'Concerns Surrounding Funding and/or Training' (2).</p> <p>3.67% of all comments raised a concern as to whether 'The Proposal May be Seen as Intrusive' (3).</p>	<p>(1c) Not fire and rescue service work/responsibility (53.21%)</p> <p>(2) No sub themes identified.</p> <p>(3) No sub themes identified.</p>
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- Some comments indicated a lack of support for health and well-being proposals generally, stating priority should be given to Response resources.
- Another theme across all the Prevention proposals is that the work is outside of remit of the fire and rescue service, and is the responsibility of other agencies to provide and/or fund. In regards to this particular Prevention proposal, nearly 54% of comments reflected this point.
- Many participants generally supported the proposals, but were concerned about the specifics of how, whose responsibility and at what cost these plans would be implemented. A number of comments expressed concern about the proposal being seen as intrusive.

The following comment summarises many of commonly repeated concerns surrounding the implementation of the proposal to support vulnerable people in their homes;

'However, I do not believe that we have sufficient training to do this. There are signs that we may miss, and because we have attended the property in this capacity, the individual's needs may be overlooked. On the other side of the coin, we may well end up highlighting issues that seem, without the correct training and knowledge, to be important, therefore putting an increased demand on other public services by us referring these issues to them. There should also be a clear list of what we should and should not be expected to do so that we are all singing from the same hymn sheet. It could turn out that our obligations differ from station to station, or even watch to watch. That would then leave us open to criticism from the public, with 'well, they did it for somebody else' being used. In the worst case scenario, you may even be held liable for not doing something that has led to an accident, such as not fitting a handrail. If some watches provide this, and some don't and the resident goes on to have a fall, where would we stand? Not just legally, but morally too?' (Staff).

It is important to note that in general, the proposal went down positively. However, the vast majority of comments voiced concerns regarding how appropriate such a policy is, as part of the fire and rescue service. These concerns cover all aspects from successfully implementing

the proposal, through to whose responsibility it is to provide it, and to whether the resources could be better utilised elsewhere.

Focus on fire and rescue core responsibilities

'Providing an emergency response with the correct resources including the correct number of crew should be at the top of the priority list' (Staff).

'I agree as long as it is not going to have a detrimental impact on front line services by reducing that budget to increase Health and Wellbeing budget' (Individual resident).

'Again ...we are not the only resource out there and we are not the most suited to deliver this training, we can only provide excellence in what we do best' (Staff).

'This could perhaps be done by social/health care services and leave the fire service to fight fires etc' (Individual resident).

'No this is the job of the NHS and should be properly funded by government and provided by NHS staff' (Individual resident).

'Firefighters are not trained in social work, they can provide information to social services if they attend the property of a vulnerable person but specific issues need to be identified by social services' (Staff).

'I don't see it as your job to check on nutrition, personal well being etc. Isn't this what GP's, social services, and neighbours are for? I do agree that if you spotted something amiss during a home fire safety check that it should be reported to the relevant authority' (Individual resident).

'You're spreading the firefighters too thin and asking them to do too much. Giving a limited, poor amount of information across many topics is worse than giving quality safety information across fewer safety critical key topics' (Staff).

'Care should be taken that fire fighters are not requested to do the job of social services. They are not social services staff and should not be required to act as such. The work that they do in terms of saving people and being in very dangerous situations is extremely valued and should be valued by the organisation too. It seems as though they are determined to de-value this and make fire fighters 'jack of all'. (Individual resident).

Concerns surrounding funding and/or training

'As this would be a benefit to other government agencies. This policy while worthwhile should receive extra resources from central Government Local Authorities and the NHS and not be entirely funded through the existing RBFRS resources' (Organisation response).

'As long as this is funded by the health service or central government and staff are trained correctly in delivery. Again we are very well placed to deliver this with current skill sets and our place within the community' (Staff).

'Only if you are given ADDITIONAL funds to do it' (Individual resident).

'We do not have the knowledge and training to provide this' (Staff).

The proposal may be seen as intrusive

'The document states that 'RBFRS has a privileged position for access to people's homes'. True - so very great care must be taken not to abuse that privilege. Some might think this agenda intrusive...' (Employed in Berkshire).

'Safeguarding is already on crews minds on visits. The proposal to check for nutritional needs would need to be done in a very sensitive way and I think many crews may feel uncomfortable bringing this up' (Staff).

'I do think you need to be mindful of how this change will be perceived. It could be seen as invasive so careful implementation is paramount' (Individual resident).

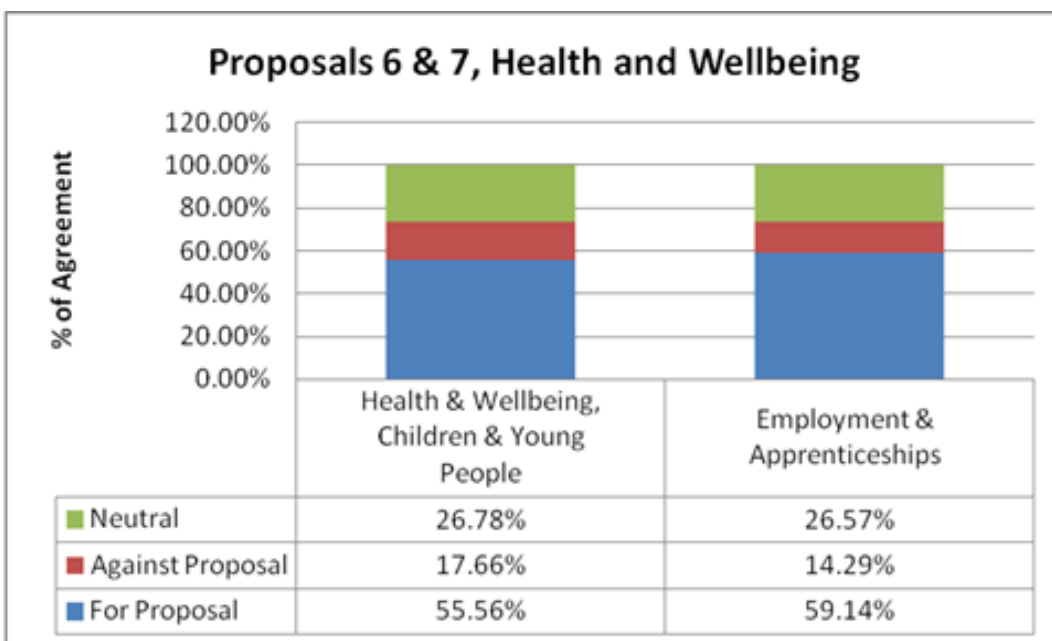
'There is a fine line to walk in this and a limit to how hard crews can push other agenda's when they were invited into to discuss fires' (Staff).

Proposal 6 and 7- Health and Wellbeing: Do you agree with our proposal to provide a wider health and wellbeing agenda that would support children and young people in Royal Berkshire?

Quantitative Findings

From 1003 survey responses, 702 answered this question. Findings show that **55.56% of all respondents agreed with Proposal 6** and **59.4% agreed with Proposal 7:**

The overall results are summarised in the table below:



Qualitative Findings

In addition, there were 79 qualitative comments surrounding supporting children and young people, from which two main themes and a further four sub-themes were identified:

Number of qualitative comments	Main themes emerging and % of comments	Sub themes
79 comments around support for children and young people.	<p>73.42 % of all comments mentioned the importance of 'Focusing on Fire and Rescue Core Responsibilities' (1).</p> <p>12.66% of all comments mentioned 'Support of the Proposal' (2).</p>	<p>(1a) Focus should be placed on 'core fire and rescue responsibilities' (25.32%)</p> <p>(1b) Fund emergencies as priority (7.59%)</p> <p>(1c) Not fire and rescue service work/responsibility (46.84%)</p> <p>(1d) Too many responsibilities (10.13%).</p> <p>(2) No sub themes were identified.</p>

Some comments again indicated a lack of support for health and well-being proposals generally, stating priority should be given to Response resources.

Another theme across all the Prevention proposals is that it is the responsibility of other agencies to provide/fund. In regards to this particular Prevention proposal, nearly 47% of comments reflected this point.

Focusing on fire and rescue core responsibilities

'Yes but only if it is truly on a 'cost recovery basis' as proposed' (Individual resident).

'Health and wellbeing should be delivered by professionals within the NHS' (Staff).

'I think that this would be a positive move but not if it is at the detriment of the services ability to promote fire safety, road safety and water safety' (Individual resident).

'The fire and rescue service can't do everything and it is my opinion that this is of lower importance than the earlier proposals' (Individual resident).

'When funds are limited the fire service should concentrate on their core area of expertise. Also this should be addressed by/with other agencies' (Individual resident).

For the proposal

'Through fire fit schemes it could have a positive effect on the youth of Berkshire' (Staff).

'Covering cost on the fire fit schemes which youngsters really enjoy from some very highly trained and inspiring fire fighters is a great thing for communities around Berkshire' (Individual resident).

'Anything that RBFRS staff can do to help children and young people would have a positive effect on behaviours and education in all areas of life and not just fires' (Previous staff).

'Given that I am part of service delivery I am yet to see a child or young person that doesn't have an interest or respect for what we do. If we can help the children and young adults within Berkshire than this again can only be a good thing moving onwards' (Staff).

(i) Do you agree with our proposal to engage in pathways to employment and apprenticeship schemes for young people?

In addition, there were 92 qualitative comments surround apprenticeships, from which three main themes and a further seven sub-themes were identified:

Number of qualitative comments	Main themes emerging and % of comments	Sub themes
92 comments	<p>41.30% of all comments mentioned needing 'More Information' (1).</p> <p>39.13% of all comments mentioned 'Support For or Against the Proposal' (2).</p>	<p>(1a) Fire service jobs? (10.87%)</p> <p>(1b) Apprenticeships as operational? (6.52%)</p> <p>(1c) Training/Funding (13.04%)</p> <p>(1d) And more information generally? (19.57%)</p> <p>(2) No sub themes identified.</p>

	34.78% of all comments mentioned the importance of 'Focusing on Fire and Rescue Core Responsibilities' (3).	(3a) Fund emergencies as priority (8.70%) (3b) Not fire and rescue service work/responsibility (15.22%) (3c) Too many responsibilities (2.17%)
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Some comments again indicated a lack of support for health and well-being proposals generally, stating priority should be given to Response resources.

In regards to this particular Prevention proposal, nearly 35% of comments reflected that they feel this work is not focusing on the core responsibilities of the fire and rescue service. This proposal in particular also seemed to illicit a lot of confusion, and many comments were asking questions and requesting further information or clarity (41.30%).

More information needed

'If this is related to jobs in the fire service, fine. Otherwise seems a little outside the core remit (Individual resident).

'If applicable to entry to the fire service' (Individual resident).

'Would this be possible service wide due to health & safety regulations? Should apprentices be going out on fire-calls, if they are going to be on stations?' (Staff).

'Not in operational roles - far too risk critical. RBFRS will be able to offer apprenticeships in the support service departments especially HR, IT, Stores, Corporate Comms, LTD training centre company' (Staff).

For the proposal

'Develop future employees and increase awareness of the many roles that the Fire Service carries out' (Staff).

'The fire service is a positive employment choice that provides both an income and a good moral base for society led young people' (Individual resident).

Against the proposal

'The role of firefighter is not something that should be degraded down to an apprenticeship' (Individual resident, Against)

'Recruit training should be a full 16 week programme. I have had a mixture of new starters recently and the best quality (all rounder) firefighters have completed full initial training compared to an RDS transfer or other brigade transfer. An apprenticeship scheme undermines this even further. The Thomas report states entry level in services should be harder than is currently set too' (Staff, Against).

'I don't believe the Fire Service is an appropriate workplace for this kind of scheme' (Individual resident).

Focus on fire and rescue core responsibilities

"The reason I disagree is because we are the fire and rescue service not the social services. Currently the organisation is facing huge financial pressures, we are riding with fewer trucks, fewer fire-fighters and less money for a disillusioned workforce, I feel we are taking responsibilities on that are not our issue but are that of local government' (Staff).

'Pathways to employment are the responsibility of central government NOT the fire service! (Individual resident).

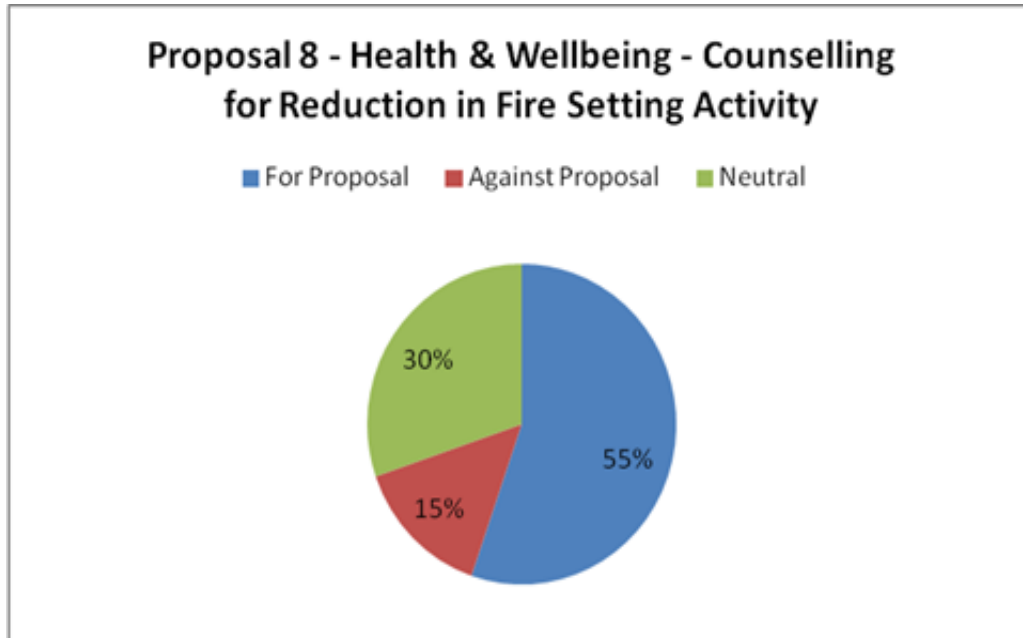
'It is not the role of the fire brigade to supply this service' (Staff).

'This could be good in the theory. I can see that RBFRS are becoming very corporate in their approach and ways of thinking. It should not be forgotten that this is an emergency service. The women and men at the forefront put their lives on the line daily. They should be the focus of the organisation. Not corporate pen pushers' (Individual resident).

Proposal 8- Health and Wellbeing: Do you agree with our proposal to provide counselling for reducing fire-setting activity amongst adults as a mainstream activity in Royal Berkshire? (This is currently a pilot project)

Quantitative findings

From 1003 survey responses, 700 answered this question. Findings show that **55% of all respondents agreed with Proposal 8**. The results are summarised in the table below:



Qualitative findings

In addition there were 76 qualitative comments, (public 59.21%, current staff 35.53%, and organisations 5.26%), from which three main themes and two sub-themes were identified:

Number of qualitative comments	Main themes emerging	Sub themes
76 comments	<p>52.63% of all comments mentioned the importance of 'Focusing on Fire and Rescue Core Responsibilities' (1).</p> <p>27.63% of all comments were in 'Support the</p>	<p>(1a) Not fire and rescue service work/ responsibility (32.89%)</p> <p>(1b) Fund emergencies as priority (13.16%)</p> <p>(2) No sub themes identified.</p>

	Proposal' (2). 17.11% of all comments had 'Concerns Around Training/Funding' (3).	(3) No sub themes identified.
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Some comments again indicated a lack of support for health and well-being proposals generally, stating priority should be given to Response resources.

In regards to this particular Prevention proposal, nearly 52% of comments reflected that they feel this work is the responsibility of other agencies, rather than that the fire and rescue service.

Focusing on fire and rescue core responsibilities.

'If cuts have to be made then they should be on the educational areas such as this' (Organisation response).

'This should be left to the police or youth offending teams. Stick to educating young people the dangers' (Individual resident).

'I think this should be carried out by specialists in mental health' (Staff).

'Seems a waste if the logic is 'we would assess whether we were the most appropriate organisation to do the work'. I would guess that most if not all cases would end up being passed to 'other organisations who may be more qualified or better placed to provide the fire setting intervention'. RBFRS are a fire service not a social care service' (Staff).

For the proposal

'For a FIRE service this can only be a positive thing to do' (Individual resident).

'I am aware of the success of RBFRS pilot work with adult offenders who have a history of arson. Fire setting can result in particularly serious fires, causing deaths and major damage, so I think this is money well spent. If a course of counselling prevents just one major fire it more than pays its costs' (Employed in Berkshire).

'I have seen the really positive results that counselling produce's to reducing fire setting. As with all preventive work it is extremely difficult to measure the outcome. I can say that the response of those women who have participated in this form of counselling has been a very different attitude and awareness to the whole risk. Their own feedback would support this. I think that this should be vital part of the Fire Services strategy nationally' (Organisation response).

'Strongly support - directed counselling to adults at risk could save lives' (Individual resident).

Concerns around training/funding

'Counselling is a profession and can take many years to become qualified. Does the question mean staff would be trained to achieve suitable qualification or is the organisation using an outside agency for this service?' (Staff).

'I do not believe that we have the resources, time or suitably qualified personnel to undertake this' (Staff).

'No- This should be dealt with through mental health interventions and specifically trained social workers not fire service prevention staff with limited or basic training' (Employed in Berkshire)

Responses from Schools

There were 32 responses from Organisations, nine of which specifically identified as being a school. Some useful comments were added through the Prevention proposals, directly related to the perspectives of a school:

Prevention Proposals – Road, Water and Fire Safety

'Not all young people attend clubs and not all clubs have transport. This will only get to a small percentage of people. Could this project not be extended and worked together with the Police dive team?'

'As a Head Teacher, this is a very welcome service.'

'I also believe inviting young people to presentations about road safety and sharing stories and videos about the consequences to their actions is important. Three years ago the Reading Hexagon had a road safety show with a Mum who lost her child on the road. This is very powerful and makes it real. Using life stories and showing this happens to everyday people makes the situation more real. I believe if this could come into Schools and not be down to the teachers alone would have a bigger impact.'

'Providing combined sessions on road and fire safety would be very helpful. Risk that a reduction in fire safety education could impact longer term.'

'Feel children still need fire as well as road and water'

Prevention Proposal 7 - Apprenticeships

'I would be more interested on who is being targeted for the apprenticeship schemes and what would be required. This could be done by working with local Schools and youth groups so young people know the fire service is not just about fighting fires and should be taught to young people in Year 9 (13 - 14 years old). This way recruitment happens at a young age and young people have pathways to aim for if they are interested.'

Non Survey Responses

We received a few non-survey response that came via email, letter or phone in relation to the

Prevention Proposals. In particular, organisational responses from both SCAS and Berkshire FBU illustrate their views on these proposals. (See appendices).



PROTECTION

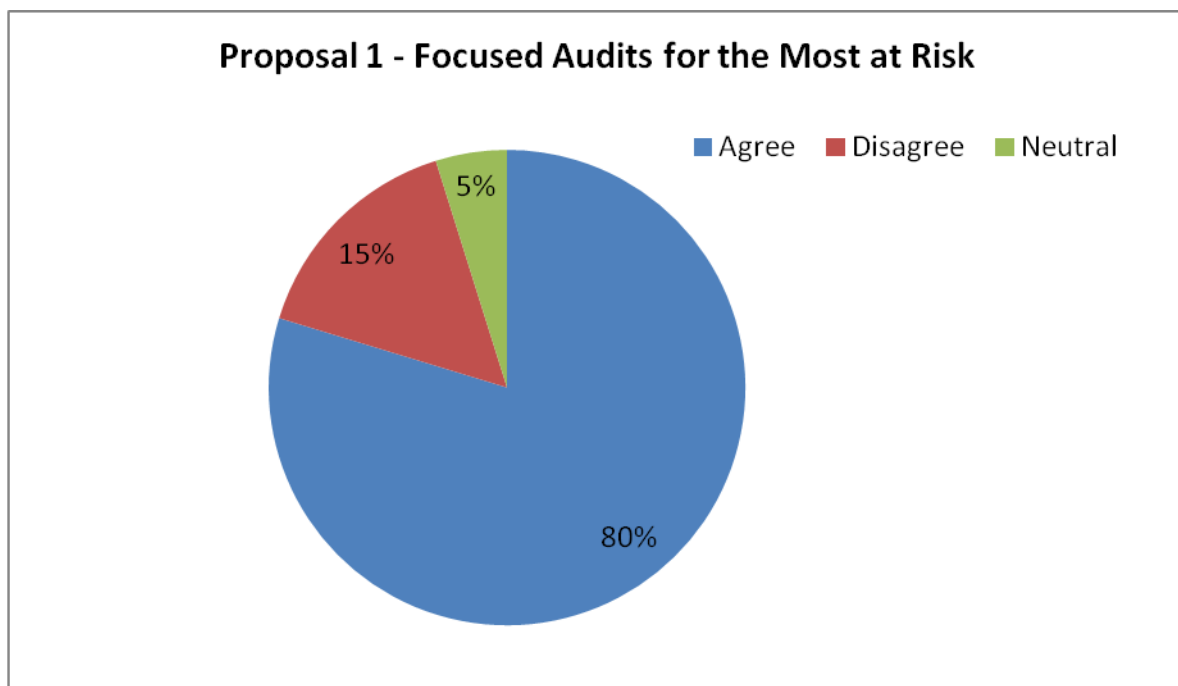


In this section, we will present the percentage of overall agreement and disagreement with the Protection proposals, as well as the possible reasons behind these findings using qualitative data.

Proposal 1: Do you agree with our proposal to focus our audits in the places people are most at risk and where fire safety standards are not being met?

Quantitative Findings

From 1003 survey responses, 680 answered this question. Findings show **80% of all respondents agreed with Proposal 1**. The results are summarised in the table below:



Qualitative Findings

There were a further 51 qualitative comments (public 64.70%, current staff 29.41%, and organisations 7.84%), from which three main themes and one sub-theme were identified to encompass the vast majority of the data:

Number of qualitative comments	Main themes emerging	Sub themes
51 comments	39.22% of comments referred to 'Making Safety Audits Available to Everyone/More than	(1) No sub themes identified.

	<p>Proposed' (1).</p> <p>33.33% of proposals 'Voiced Support for the Proposal' (2).</p> <p>9.8% of comments suggested to 'Impose Fines on Those not Complying with Fire Safety' (3).</p>	<p>(2) The proposal was 'obvious' in nature. (17.65%)</p> <p>(3) No sub themes</p>
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There is equally strong support for the proposal, from both staff and the public. The qualitative insights display important emotional responses, also indicating that fire safety audits are *felt* as very important. Those opposing the proposal tended to feel that we should be able to provide the same fire audits to all. Those offering supportive qualitative comments tended to support the notion of targeting those most at risk, and maximising the efficiency of resources.

Available to everyone/more than proposed

'Failure to provide comprehensive provision will surely just move the problems from one setting to another' (Individual resident).

'Whilst focusing audits is important, it should not be to the detriment of other areas' (Individual resident).

'I understand that more resources are needed to tackle the amount of cases that require further action but I am concerned that reduced visits to complying companies might encourage them to relax their stance on fire safety' (Staff).

'How can this be fair for other tax payers' (Individual resident)

'As long as other places are not forgotten' (Staff).

'Agree, but don't let the ones that generally perform well get complacent regarding their obligations under the reform act' (Staff).

For the proposal

'The most at risk and vulnerable require greater attention and this would be most cost effective' (Organisation response)'

'This is a sensible approach as these are the sort of properties that fire deaths occur and worst of all potential injury to firefighters People rarely die in modern office developments' (Staff).

'This seems to be a no brainer. Surely you are all about reducing risk and not just being seen to carry out audits sometimes in premises that meet and exceed all relevant standards' (Individual resident).

Fines

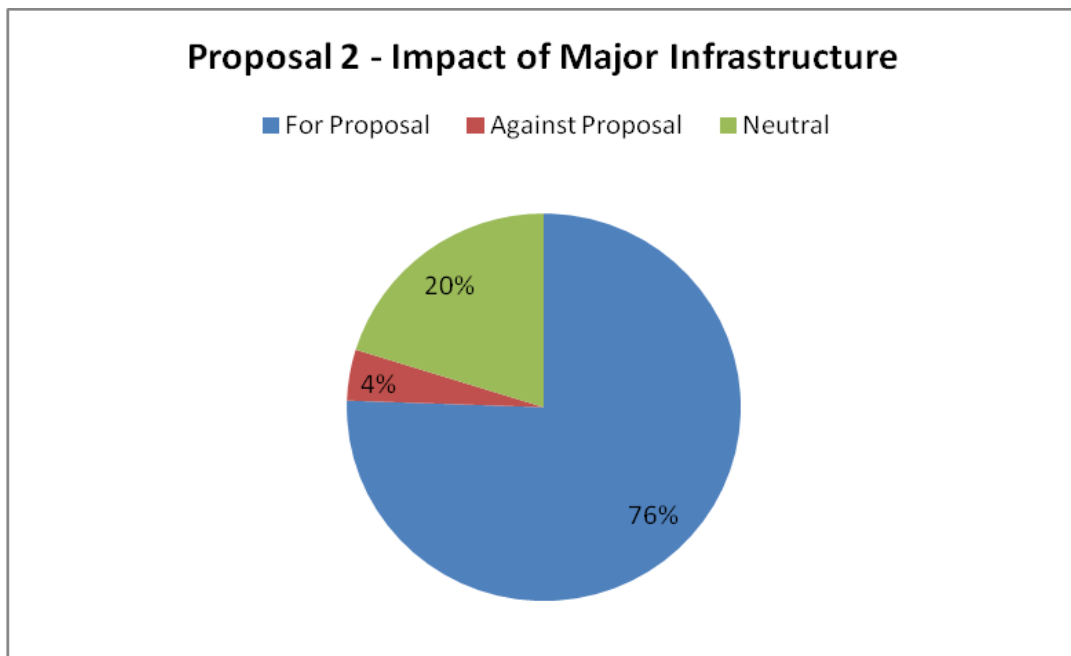
'If businesses and landlords are charged for inspections they will be more inclined to fix things if they know that a failure will cause a re-visit in a shorter period of time' (Individual resident).

'Yes, but we need to ensure that we will prosecute the worst offenders. What is the point of inspecting all of these premises, if we do not prosecute them? We need to have teeth and a robust legal system within RBFRRS or within the T.V collaboration' (Staff).

Proposal 2: Do you agree with our proposal to consider the impact of major infrastructure projects and developments planned in Royal Berkshire so we are able to meet the additional demands placed on our service?

Quantitative Findings

From 1003 survey responses, 679 answered this question. Findings show that **76% of all respondents agreed with Proposal 2**. The results are summarised in the pie chart table below:



Qualitative Findings

There were a further 55 qualitative comments (public 61.82%, current staff 34.55%, and organisations 5.45%), from which four main themes were identified to encompass the vast majority of the data:

Number of qualitative comments	Main themes emerging and % of comments	Sub themes
55 comments	<p>‘Comments For/Against the Proposal’ (For- 14.55%, Against -3.64%) (1).</p> <p>36.3% of comments refer to ‘The Proposal as ‘Obvious’ (2).</p> <p>23.63% of comments relate ‘To Keep Current Resources’ (3).</p> <p>14.55% refer to ‘Charging More/Get Additional Funding’ (4).</p>	<p>(1) No sub themes identified.</p> <p>(2) No sub themes identified.</p> <p>(3) No sub themes identified.</p> <p>(4) No sub themes identified.</p>

There was a clear difference in opinion as to what impact major developments would actually have. Some felt the risk was small, due to the developments having to meet current standards anyway. Conversely, some felt it important for the fire service to be more pro-active and provide early intervention during the planning stages of developments. Many of the supportive comments expressed agreement with a sense that it was the ‘obvious’ course of action.

For the proposal

‘This makes a lot of sense with the amount of major housing projects happening and other large scale development in the county we do need to plan for the future’ (Staff).

‘This is critical. A new hospital, cross rail or 31 storey tower block should all be consulting with RBFRS to ensure that the end product is something that is safe for everyone. If you need a 50m long ladder and you don't have one, you should be discussing this with the planners before the building is built!’ (Individual resident).

‘With the increase in housing planned for the Borough this need serious consideration. Particularly where plans to reduce services that are adjacent to a large increase in house building’ (Organisation response).

Against the proposal

'I don't believe major developments will have as many demands as perceived. All buildings will have been built to the current standards with adequate or above fire safety in place and will be much safer than say older existing buildings' (Staff).

Usual practice/obvious?

'Fairly obvious' (Individual resident).

'If you didn't take major infrastructure projects into account you wouldn't be forward looking. Heathrow, Cross rail, Heathrow express tunnel, Expansion of Slough. All of these developments will put added pressure on all areas of the service and have to be taken into account' (Staff).

'Major development of Berkshire is not new. Is there any evidence that RBFRS Officers have not been keeping up?' (Employed in Berkshire).

Keep resources

'This will be interesting going forwards into 2019 and beyond due to the ever increasing workforce within RBFRS and the ever popular national trend of maintaining fire / risk cover with less and less personnel and resources' (Individual resident).

'Proposal 2 is valid, but shouldn't the fire service be expanded to cope with major projects and developments rather than its resources refocused?' (Individual resident).

'If there is a clearly identified increase of businesses and infrastructure in Royal Berkshire, how can we justify cuts at a time of more demand' (Employed in Berkshire).

(i) Do you have any comments on how we might best meet the additional demands placed on our fire safety specialists from the major developments that are planned in Royal Berkshire?

There were 134 (public 67.91%, current staff 26.87%, organisation response 5.22%) comments providing suggestions on how to meet the additional demands placed. From these, five main themes were identified, which encompassed the vast majority of the data and informed the discussion.

Number of qualitative comments	Main themes emerging and % of comments	Sub themes
134 comments	'Charge/Seek Funding' (24.63%) (1). 'Employ more Staff/Work with Other Agencies' (20.90%) (2). 'Keep Current Resources' (20.15%) (3) 'To Train More Staff' (12.69%) (4). 'Early Intervention' (6.27%) (5)	(1) No sub themes identified. (2) No sub themes identified. (3) No sub themes identified. (4) No sub themes identified. (5) No sub themes identified.

Over 25% of comments expressed that the cost of these additional demands should not be the responsibility of the fire and rescue service, and should fall upon the developers, or be provided by RBFRS at a cost. Other common opinions suggested (as above) that the process of dealing with additional demands should begin early, in the planning stages of developments.

Staff and public alike (20% of comments), expressed an understanding that the additional demands would be difficult to meet without a simultaneous increase in staff, or division of the work load across other agencies. Similarly, a further 14% of comments addressed the same issue, but with the concern that no further resources should be cut in light of the increased demands on the service.

Charge/seek funding

'Lobby local and central government for increased funding to enable the service to retain and improve current services' (Individual resident).

'Keep involved. The fire safety specialists must be involved. This is a safety question. Continue to fund this. Or, charge the developers for your services' (Individual resident).

'Can RBFRS offer their expertise on a consultancy basis and generate income from it?' (Individual resident).

'Charge the greedy developers!' (Individual resident).

'Charge developers for our expert advice and input There are many private companies making money providing this sort of service and a the local authority we should be the prime provider and the first organisation involved' (Staff).

'The organisations making the infrastructure changes should be charged for this service and it should be compulsory' (Organisation response).

Employ more staff/other agencies

'Recruit more fire fighters. Pay them well, treat them with respect!' (Individual resident).

'Work in partnership with allied agencies such as NHS, social care, police and with community organisations' (Individual resident).

'I think that you should put in place a network of fire safety (protection) specialists across the three Thames Valley FRS's. This would increase capacity, capability and resilience, as well as being a more efficient route than attempting to put more resources into individual organisations' (Staff).

'Employ more specialists' (Staff).

Keep resources

'With more residents, housing & offices we will need a greater capacity to ensure service levels and save lives. Let's not shut anymore fire stations but open new ones' (Individual resident).

'Report notes that we already have fewer fire stations in Berkshire than almost anywhere else in the country - and fewest by head of population. Closing fire stations when there are so few, while adding more major developments which will lead to more congestion on already busy routes, can only lead to longer response times and poorer service' (Individual resident).

'To meet additional demands placed on the fire service, the most important consideration is to retain and keep in place all current resources. Thus providing the brigade with the ability to survive in a highly demanding environment. To remove long standing proven operational resources would be of serious detriment to an already stretched fire service. For these reasons I believe it to be of the utmost important that Pangbourne fire station remains open' (Staff).

'The locations of the assets are roughly in the correct position. Why spend millions of pounds moving stations' (Staff).

To train more staff

'Training some frontline crew members to a decent level of fire safety and risk management would only help the fire safety dept as the level of access crews get into areas in need of improvement is second to none. This would only make Berkshire a safer place. Currently any info passed onto the fire safety depts. is gratefully received, but crews never ever get any feedback as to whether their observations were pertinent or unfounded. The crews don't even know if the info was acted upon!' (Staff).

'You could train WM's in IFE and use them to assist in the areas they are based. This will provide them a qualification and the ability to inspect premises when attending incidents etc.

This would help identify and further risks in the community and assist the fire safety department' (Staff).

'Train more non uniformed personnel into the role' (Individual Resident).

'Offer additional training to individuals whose primary role is not in fire safety but who have an interest in it and pay them an agreed amount for carrying out fire safety work, therefore freeing up the fire safety specialists to carry out the more complicated inspections' (Staff).

'Could retained staff be trained as fire risk assessors to help meet the additional work load?' (Staff).

Early intervention

'Fire safety should be involved at the earliest possible planning stage to have a greater input and minimise risk. It would also assist with deploying the counties resources' (Organisation response).

'Ensure planning departments refer major development proposals to RBFRS for comment. Establish early liaison between RBFRS and the developers of major infrastructure projects in Royal Berkshire' (Individual resident).

'It should be mandatory for the Fire Safety teams to be involved right at the very beginning when plans are first being formulated for new developments, before the plans go in front of the council planning departments' (Staff).

Non Survey Responses

We received a few non-survey responses in relation to the Protection proposals. In particular and similar to Prevention, organisational responses from both SCAS and Berkshire FBU illustrate their views on these Protection proposals. (See appendices).



RESPONSE

We asked those consulted to: Please rank the proposed Options 1 - 7 in order of your preference, with 1 indicating your most preferred option and 7 indicating your least preferred option.

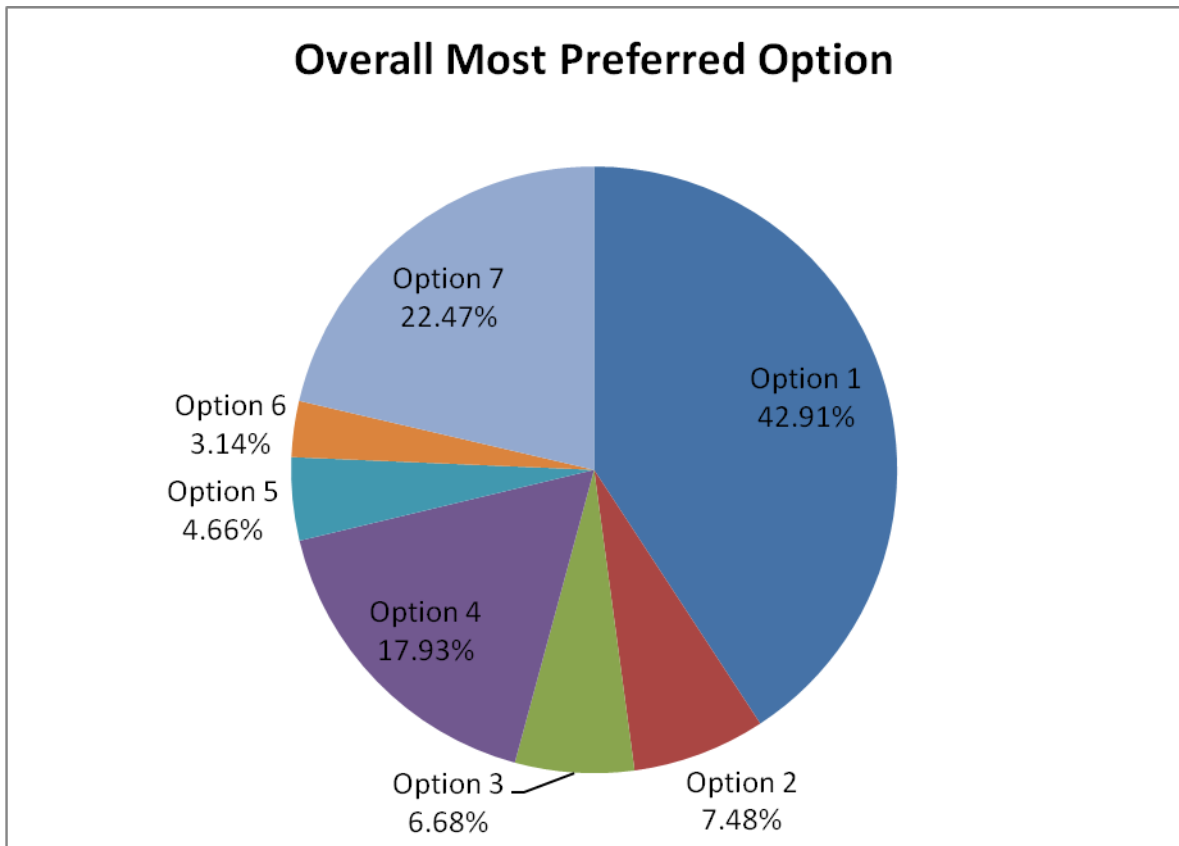
MOST PREFERRED OPTION

Quantitative Findings

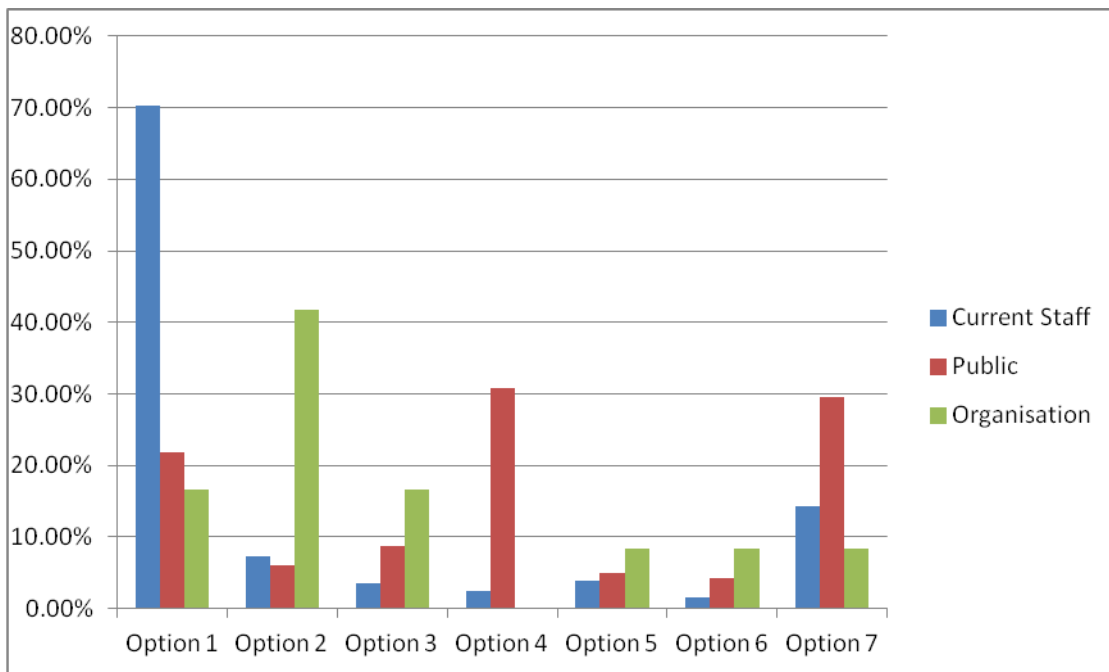
Of the 1003 overall survey responses, 540 completed this question, ranking each of the seven proposals in order of preference.

- Option 1 was the highest ranked, with 42.91% ranking it as their 'most preferred option'
- Option 7 was the second highest ranked with 22.47%
- Option 4 was the third highest ranked with 17.93%
- Option 2 was the fourth highest ranked with 7.48%
- Option 3 was the fifth highest ranked with 6.68%
- Option 5 was the sixth highest ranked with 4.66%
- Option 6 was the seventh highest ranked with 3.14%

The pie chart visually illustrates the overall *most preferred* option:



The figure below illustrates the *most preferred* option for each respondent group:



There are clear differences in the results when taking into account the respondent group:

- Option 1 was chosen by 70.27% of RBFRS staff
- Option 7 was the second most preferred option from RBFRS staff with 14.29%

The figures from the general public do not reflect the 'overall view' of Option 1 as the most preferred option:

- 30.77% of the general public chose Option 4,
- 29.56% of the general public chose Option 7
- 21.90% of the general public chose Option 1

Figures also showed:

- 41.67% of organisations chose Option 2

Responses by Unitary Authority:

Data showed a clear link between those from the Wokingham Unitary Authority (where Wargrave is situated) and choosing Option 4 (an option which does not include the proposal to close Wargrave station).

The table below illustrates this in more detail:

Unitary Authorities*	Percentage of all public responses	Most Preferred Response Option
Slough	2.86%	1 – 83.33%
Bracknell Forest	4.88%	1 - 26.67%
Windsor and Maidenhead	14.65%	7 – 28.13%
West Berkshire	16.84%	1 – 34.15%
Reading	17%	1 – 48.39%
Wokingham	41.25%	4 – 47.18%
Combined Unitary Authority Responses (Outside of Wokingham)	56.23%	1 – 34.68%

- There were 245 responses from members of the general public from Wokingham Borough, 153 completed the question asking them to rank the options.
- Overall, the largest group of responses came from Wokingham Borough with 41.25%
- Of these 47.18% chose Option 4, and next preferred was Option 7 with 31.03%
- This means that 78.21% of the Wokingham Borough resident respondents chose an option which did not include the proposal to close Wargrave fire station, or wished for there to be no change (Option 7)

There were 334 members of the general public belonging to unitary authorities outside of Wokingham Borough:

- Outside of Wokingham Borough, Option 1 was the most preferred with 34.68%
- Option 7 was the second most preferred with 27.42%

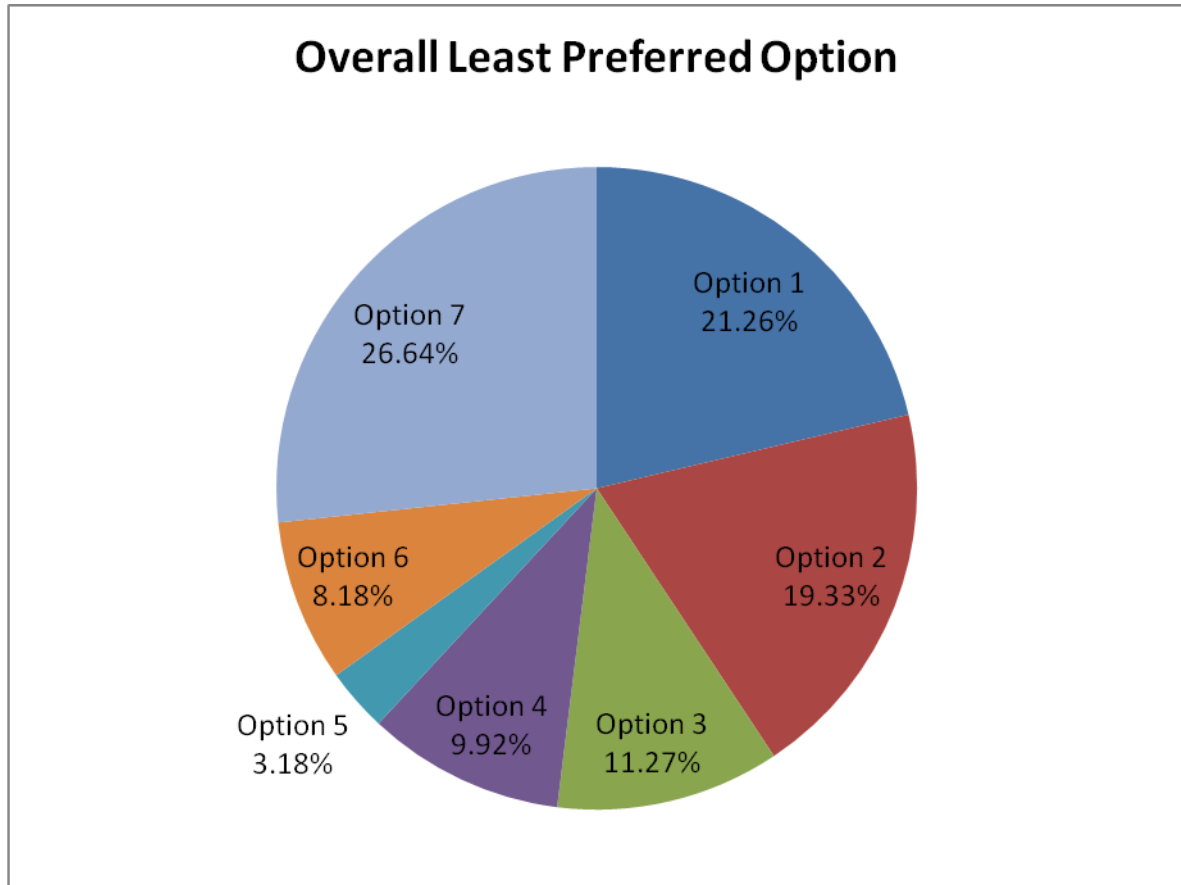
LEAST PREFERRED OPTION

Quantitative Findings

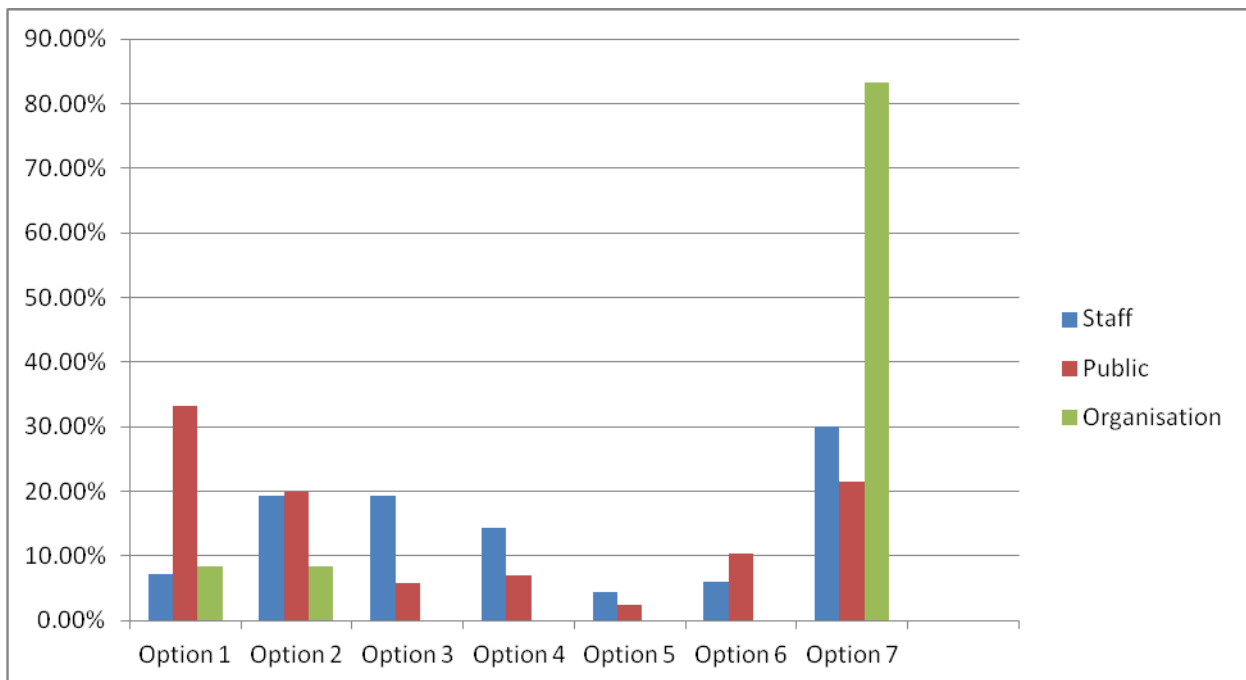
Of the 1003 survey responses, 540 completed this question, ranking each of the seven proposals in order of preference. Overall:

- Option 7 was the highest ranked, with 26.64% ranking it as their 'least preferred option'
- Option 1 was the second highest ranked with 21.26%
- Option 2 was the third highest ranked with 19.33%
- Option 3 was the fourth highest ranked with 11.27%
- Option 4 was the fifth highest ranked with 9.92%
- Option 6 was the sixth highest ranked with 8.18%
- Option 5 was the seventh highest ranked with 3.18%

The pie chart visually illustrates the overall least preferred option:



The figure below illustrates the least preferred option for each respondent group:



There are clear differences in the results when taking into account the respondent group:

Staff:

- Option 7 was the least preferred option for staff with 29.95%
- Option 2 was the second least preferred option for staff with 19.32%
- Option 3 was the third least preferred option for staff with 19.21%

General Public:

- Option 1 was the least preferred option for the general public with 33.21%
- Option 7 was the second least preferred option for the general public with 21.53%

Organisations:

- Option 7 was the least preferred options for organisations with 83.33%

Responses by Unitary Authority:

Data by unitary authority showed some agreement with the overall figures for least preferred choices featuring Options 1, 6 and 7. All unitary authorities other than Wokingham, chose options 6 or 7 as their least preferred. Wokingham Unitary Authority chose Option 1 as least preferred. This may be a reflection that this option is one of those that contains a proposed closure of Wargrave station.

The table below illustrates this in more detail:

Unitary Authorities*	Percentage of all public responses	Least Preferred Response Option
Bracknell Forest	4.88%	7 – 50.0%
Reading	17%	7 – 27.27%
Slough	2.86%	6 – 50.00%
West Berkshire	16.84%	7 – 35.90%
Windsor and Maidenhead	14.65%	6 – 36.67%
Wokingham	41.25%	1 – 47.59%

Combined Unitary Authority Responses (Outside of Wokingham)	56.23%	7 – 33.06%
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Qualitative Findings

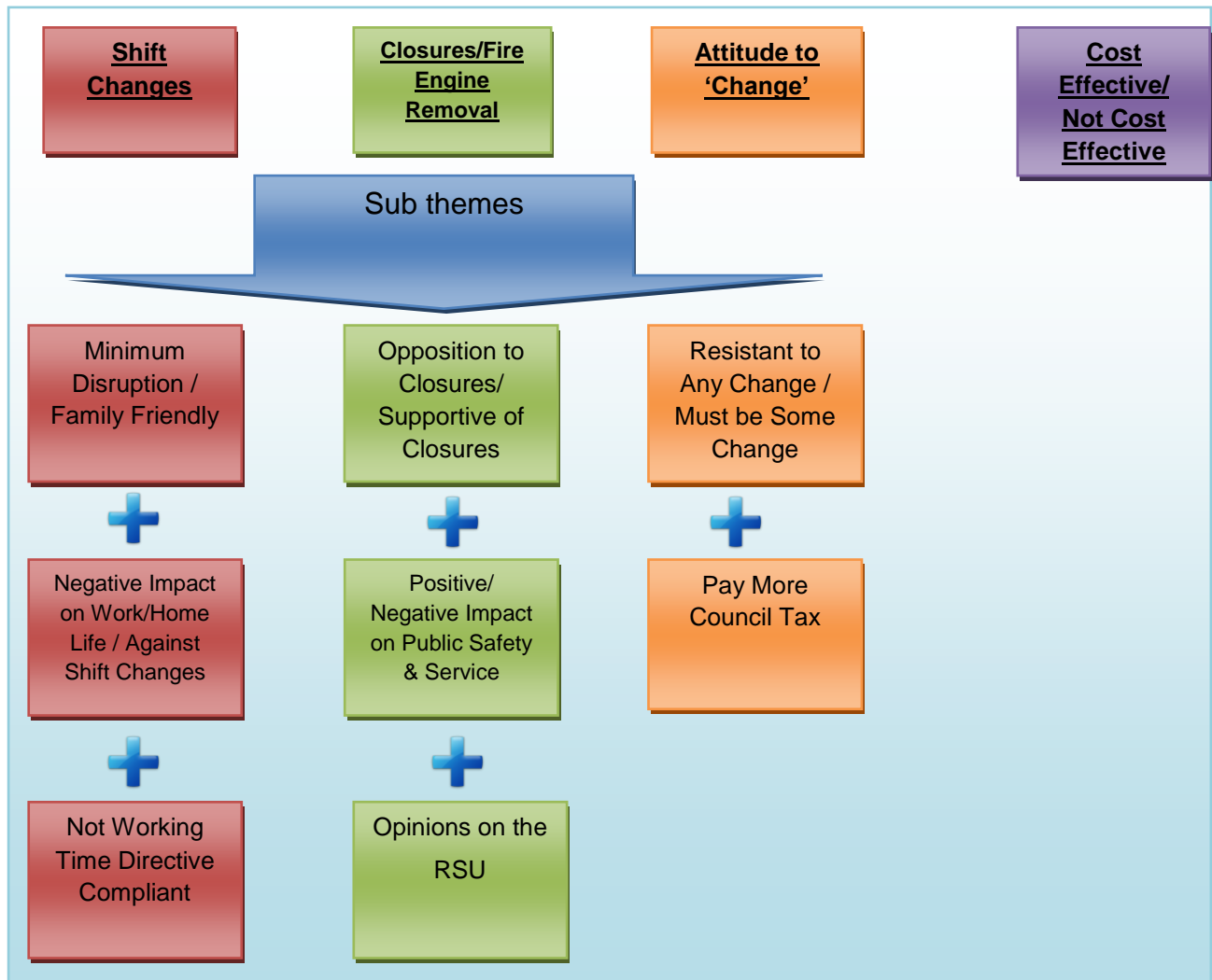
Please provide reasons that you chose your most preferred and least preferred options?

There were a further 750 qualitative comments (Public 53.14%, Staff 44.60%, Organisations 2.14%) combined from the open-end responses to 'reasons for most preferred' and 'reasons for least preferred' choice. Many of the themes appeared both as reasons for most preferred choice (this choice does what I *want*) and least preferred choice (this choice does *not* do what I want). Therefore both sections will be presented all together in one narrative.

For example 'shift changes' was a common reason given for choice of most preferred option in terms of 'this option does not contain any shift changes'. It was also given as a reason for least preferred option in terms of 'this option contains shift changes that I do not want'.

- Four main dominant themes were identified to encompass the vast majority of the data
- A total of 8 smaller sub-themes were found within these

The chart below summarises the main dominant themes and the related sub-themes within them:



The table below shows how often each of the themes occurred within the comments:

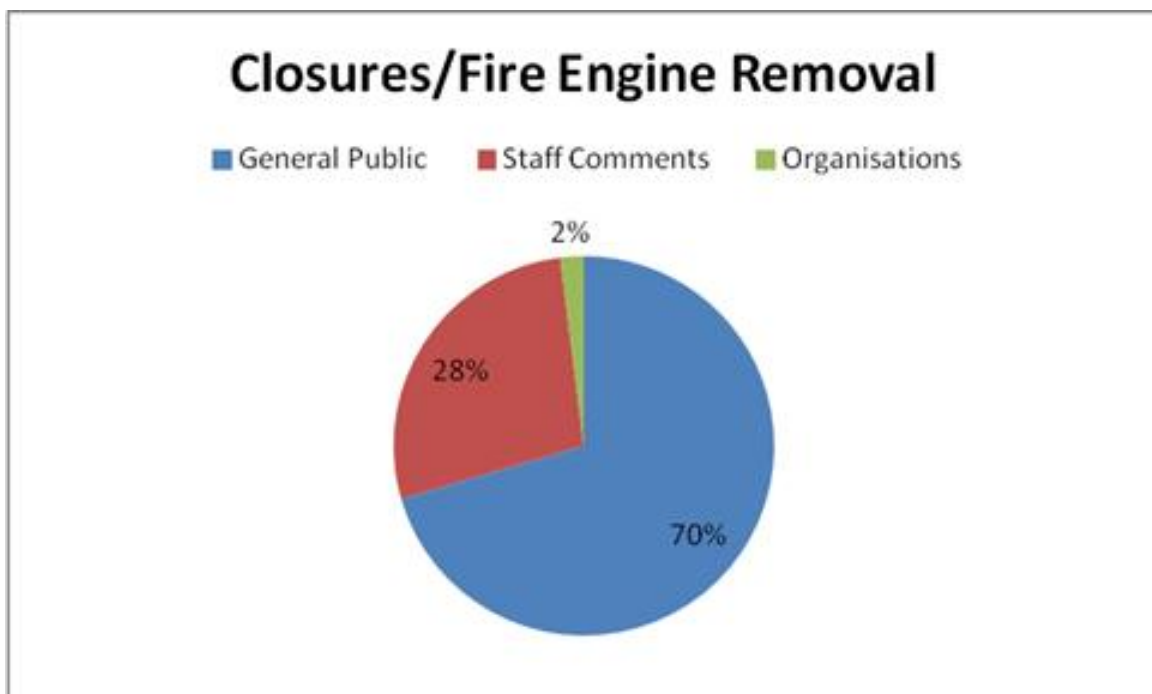
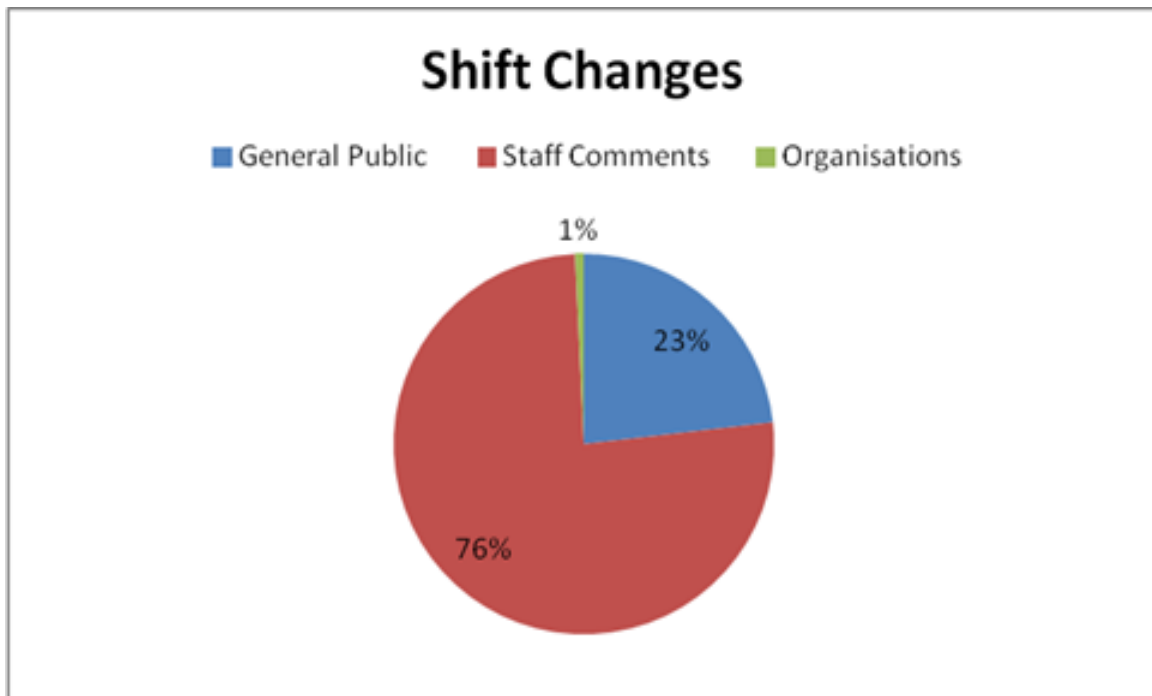
Number of qualitative comments	Main themes emerging	Sub themes
750 comments	<p>46.53% of all comments mentioned something about 'Closures/Fire Engine Removal' (1).</p> <p>34.53% of all comments mentioned something about 'Shift Changes' (2).</p>	<p>(1a) Opposition to Closures 28.93% / Supportive of Closures 5.47%</p> <p>(1b) Positive (7.33%)/Negative (12.40%) Impact on Public Safety and Service</p> <p>(1c) Opinions on the RSU (6.93%)</p> <p>(2a) Minimum disruption / Family Friendly (17.73%)</p>

	<p>15.73% of all comments mentioned something around their 'Attitude to Change' (3).</p> <p>13.07% of all comments mentioned 'Cost Effectiveness' (4).</p>	<p>(2b) Negative Impact on Work/Home Life/ Against Shift Changes 16.13%</p> <p>(2c) Not Working Time Directive Compliant 2.40%</p> <p>(3a) Resistant to Any Change (2.13%)/ Must be Some Change (9.07%)</p> <p>(3b) Pay more Council Tax (4.93%)</p> <p>(4) No sub themes identified.</p>
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The general public gave different reasons for their most and least preferred choices than members of staff.

- The most common reason given for choosing an option (both most or least preferred) was '**closures / fire engine removal**'. The general public made up 70% of all of the comments showing this reason, and only 28% were staff.
- Conversely '**shift changes**' was the second most common reason for choosing an option. Here, staff made up 76% of all the comments mentioning this reason, and only 23% were public comments.

This is illustrated in the charts below:



To summarise, the general public are most concerned about losing resources, whilst staff are most concerned with changes to their current shift patterns as demonstrated in the charts above.

Examples of quotes from each of the four main qualitative themes

We will now present a selection of quotes from the qualitative data we collected, to help illustrate the reasons why respondents chose their most and least preferred option:

Closures/ Fire Engine Removal

A huge number of comments stated closures/fire engine removal as a reason behind their option choices. Generally this theme was more important to the general public than to staff. The general public as a majority tended to choose options which did not close stations as their most preferred, and choose options with closures as their least preferred. Staff giving closures as a reason, tended to refer to closures in a positive way. They generally showed an understanding of the evidence presented behind reasons for the station closures.

Positive towards Closures

'With the move to a fire station at Theale the evidence in your report would indicate that the level of fire cover to the Pangbourne area will improve. Wargrave appear unable to crew for the majority of time. The RSU whilst creating a short term benefit no longer appears to be effective. The shared station idea has legs and appears to be a sensible way of saving money' (Individual resident).

'Pangbourne and Wargrave struggle to crew for most of the time therefore it seems obvious to close those two RDS stations first' (Staff).

'Achieve the savings with the minimum disruption and job losses. The remotely managed stations appear on paper a good idea. The supporting documentation indicates the RSU has failed in its task and that the retained stations are rarely able to respond meaning they are effectively closed anyway' (Individual Resident).

'The two retained stations that are mentioned are very often not crewed and therefore when the few fire calls are received they are unable to respond to them anyway...thus this is wasted Service money...' (RBFRS Staff).

'If any cuts are made it would provide best result for the public. Remember, it is fire cover that is important, not having retained fire stations that are not able to crew' (RBFRS Staff).

Negative towards Closures

'No actual station closures. Although I haven't been involved in the OR for the placement of stations, closing any station is very bad for public morale. If you can deliver without closure that goes down better' (Individual Resident).

'Given the geographical location of the Wargrave Fire Station, its removal would affect a large population and area. The station provides an invaluable service to not only the local community but also to the wider neighbouring area. Whilst mindful of the financial situation, the Parish Council is strongly opposed to the closure of Wargrave Fire Station...' (Organisation response).

I feel it is very important to maintain as many fire stations in Berkshire as possible. The RSUs are vital particularly in places where it may not be possible to get to hospital quickly, either because of a remote location or for reasons of traffic/high density. It does not appear that this option is much more expensive (Individual resident).

'RBFRS has reduced its operational effectiveness so much in the last 10 yrs, that reducing it even more will put lives at risk and have an adverse affect on how it is perceived by the public, who pay their council tax for the intervention that RBFRS has to provide in their time of need' (Individual Resident).

'Disestablishing the RSU is short sighted and will have a far greater impact on the organisation and resilience / ability to manage in day to day fire cover for the county' (Staff).

'The closure of the RDS Stations is the least cost effective solution. Savings are less actually than stated. As there is an under spend on this section of the budget. It means the loss of two Fire Engines and a reduction in the flexibility and resilience of the whole Brigade' (Organisation response).

'Retained stations are good for the community and cheaper to run in fire fighters wages. Closing them down is a shame for community and a risk to Health and life' (Individual resident).

'Any option that does not involve the closure of my local fire station is my least preferred option' (Individual resident).

Shift Changes

The majority of participants who chose Option 1, mentioned shift changes as their reason for choice, because it was the only option that *did not* make significant changes to shift patterns in any way. As indicated in the table, the vast majority of those giving shift changes as a reason for their choice were staff. The term WDS refers to 'Wholetime Duty System'. Many of the comments around wanting to keep current shift and not change shift patterns, were from participants choosing Option 1:

'Option 1 as this has the least impact on the WDS workers in regards to shift patterns and any possible job loss....and keeps WDS staff a little happier as shift patterns are not messed around with' (Staff).

'This would cause the least change for personnel working for RBFRS and have the least impact on social, family life and secondary employment. This would also, in my view, be the easiest and quickest option to implement' (Staff).

'This option appears to provide reasonable savings without disrupting the function of the service in a major way or causing conflict with your work force which would surely happen if shift changes are imposed' (Individual Resident).

'As a member of frontline staff, this option has the least impact on my life outside of work. To keep the shift system as it stands now is priceless, not just for me but for the majority of my colleagues who live in this area. Unfortunately, our wages are not in line with inflation rates over the past few years and this is one of the most expensive areas in the country to live at present. Employees in this organisation rely on the current shift system so that extra money making opportunity can be sought to make ends meet each month... (Staff).

'We have to save money and this option is best for the work force who rely heavily on the favoured 4 on 4 off shift pattern, which is family friendly and to enable them to do part time work to increase their wage to live and work in this expensive county' (Staff).

'It will cause a high level of uncertainty and disruption to families of uniformed staff who are trying to organise their own working patterns and have a detrimental effect on household income as a result' (Staff).

'12 hour shift pattern will dramatically change lives and unfortunately mean a lot of experienced fire fighters would need to leave' (Staff).

'The introduction of a completely new shift system would completely upset the work - life balance of most operational personnel which could have a detrimental effect on morale which is already at a low ebb, for an organisation that states its staff are the most important asset and trying to motivate them I feel that this would be a negative move' (Staff).

'Too much of an impact on the brigade when it doesn't need to be. These people stay away from their families to save life's and you want to punish them!!!!???' (Previous staff).

'Lost for words. I will personally campaign against every member of the authority if they voted for this and see that they never get elected again. To plough on with something illegal shows a total disregard to their responsibilities in public office' (Staff).

'Disgraceful to expect people to work that shift. Don't waste my money on an unnecessary court case' (Individual resident).

'...Any option that sees me with less time to care for my children and be able to provide for them as I do at present will be firmly placed at the bottom of the pile' (Staff).

Attitudes to 'Change'

The general attitudes towards change were either 'don't want any change' or an 'understanding there must be some change'. Within those comments against any changes, the most common themes of shift changes and closures were repeated again.

There was a considerable amount of participants who ideally would like no changes or service cuts at all. All of these comments chose Option 7 as their most preferred. Within these comments, a significant sub-theme which repeatedly emerged was the willingness to pay more council tax. The general consensus was to keep things as they are. Some comments took this a step further and suggested going to referendum and raising council tax could be a way to achieve having to make no change:

Option 7 was the 3rd ranking 'most preferred option, and also the 1st ranking 'least preferred option. The reason it can be fairly popular as most and least preferred is because it appears that both staff and public make reference to their awareness of the need for some change. Reasons for choosing Option 7 for most preferred were dominated by themes of 'opposition to closures' and a want to 'pay more council tax'. In contrast, the reason for choosing Option 7 as least preferred was dominated by the 'understanding that there must be some change'.

'If we can get an increase in council tax this could make the saving and why change something that works best for the public' (Staff).

'I'd happily pay more so that the fire service can continue what they do so well whilst include the extra work they want to do. This includes a substantial pay increase that they have lacked for so many years' (Individual resident).

'I don't want to see the service cut in anyway, and to be able to carry out the rest of the proposals we need a workforce that is equal to the increase in work and not cuts' (Employed in Berkshire).

'I personally wouldn't mind a small increase in council tax to keep the service at the minimum level we are currently. Any other option is a reduction in the service to RBFRS and lower resilience in personnel and appliances' (Staff).

'Why cut fire services at all? Let's pay the extra and keep everyone protected. These cuts are insane, and it won't be until life is lost or large fires not tackled quickly enough that somebody realises the cuts have to stop' (Individual resident).

'At this time we can't sit back and do nothing. We have to accept changes need to happen' (Individual resident).

'RBFRS must save money somewhere, so doing nothing is not an option' (Staff).

'To do nothing is to bury our heads in the sand' (Individual resident).

'Doing nothing will not allow us to make the savings necessary and we are all aware that changes need to be made' (Staff).

'It is very unlikely that more money will be found, so savings must be made' (Staff).

Cost Effectiveness

The comments containing 'cost effective' as part of the reason for choice, were evenly split between staff and the general public. This shows a general understanding that saving money is an important aspect. This is further reflected in the previous 'attitudes towards change' section above. Whilst given as a consideration, it was often as an afterthought, having mentioned the more dominant themes. For example 'keeps current shifts, and saves money' or 'no closures, and saves money'.

"This provides the savings required in the most efficient way - the RDS stations earmarked for closure are not an effective use of resources given the number of incidents they respond to. The remote management of stations in this option provides the minimum disruption to the working patterns of the wider workforce' (Staff, Option 1).

'Getting rid of a retained Fire Station that doesn't crew and shows a clear saving although regrettable is a clear and productive way of saving' (Staff, Option 1).

'Keep the current shift pattern and Wargrave / Pangbourne are costing the Brigade too much money for the few calls they respond too' (Employed in Berkshire, Option 1).

'This makes the most sense for all. There will be no problem finding the staff for DCP, no reduction in fire cover and a huge saving in money. Absolutely the best option' (Staff).

'Maintains family friendly shift system and a similar response cover albeit with alternative crewing methods. Achieves maximum savings' (Individual resident).

Individual Scenarios

In this section we will look at the qualitative comments that relate specifically to the individual crewing arrangement and asset removal scenarios. The scenarios are the component parts of the consultation options. (Full details of each scenario are contained in the evidence reports which supported the consultation)

Potential Station Closures

Closure of Pangbourne Fire Station

Options with closure of Pangbourne Fire Station	Options without Pangbourne Fire Station
Option 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6	Option 3 and 7

Findings from the West Berkshire respondents survey data showed:

- Option 1 was the most popular with respondents from West Berkshire with 40% (even though this option contains the closure of Pangbourne fire station)
- The second most preferred Option was 7 at 34.38%, which may reflect a wish to 'do nothing' instead of closing the station.
- Only of 18% of the West Berkshire respondents chose Option 3 (the only option which does not propose to close Pangbourne station).

There were also the following qualitative comments opposed to closing Pangbourne station;

'I don't like this, Pangbourne should not be closed at all it is the only fire station nearby that would be able to respond quick. Closes of this station would be catastrophic to local communities as response times will be longer causing more damage and lose of life' (Individual resident, West Berkshire).

'Because Pangbourne is a great station with one hell of a crew! And I'm sure Wargrave are the same I think it's unfair that you as a committee would be so selfish as to choose

counselling and apprenticeship schemes over closing two stations! It's ridiculous! Whoever made this decision, who came up with this plan needs to take a short sharp look at themselves and really decide whether closing two stations is the solution because from where I'm sat looking and after everything I have read its craziness' (Individual resident, West Berkshire).

'I agree with opening a fire station in Theale if that does not mean closure of Pangbourne. Pangbourne should be upgraded' (Individual resident, West Berkshire).

All of those who explicitly mention Pangbourne and have also chosen Option 1 as their preferred option are in support of closure;

'Keep the current shift pattern and Wargrave / Pangbourne are costing the Brigade too much money for the few calls they respond too' (Employed in Berkshire, Option 1).

'Wargrave & Pangbourne are rarely crewed' (Staff, Option 1)

'Pangbourne and Wargrave struggle to crew for most of the time therefore it seems obvious to close those two RDS stations first' (Staff, Option 1).

Closure of Wargrave Fire Station

Options with closure of Wargrave Fire Station	Options without Wargrave Fire Station
Option 1, 5 and 6	Option 2, 3, 4 and 7

We had a large number of responses from individuals living in the Wokingham Borough, i.e. the area in which Wargrave Station resides. In total 245 of the 1003 survey responses were from residents who live in the Wokingham Authority area. This possibly indicates towards the strength of the local views.

Findings from the survey data showed:

- The most preferred option for respondents living in the Wokingham Borough (where Wargrave is situated) was Option 4 (the only option without the closure of Wargrave) with 31.91%. This may reflect the overall dislike of the proposal of closing their local station.
- The next most preferred option was Option 1 with 25%, which does propose closing Wargrave station. Therefore, results whilst suggestive initially, are not consistent.
- The third most preferred option was Option 7 with 18.75%.

Qualitative Comments around Wargrave Closure

There were also a number of qualitative comments opposed to closing Wargrave station:

'We need a fire station and responder unit in Wargrave. To close the Wargrave fire station is madness' (Individual Resident).

'As a longstanding Wargrave resident I have huge concerns that we may lose our local station. Wargrave is a thriving and lively community on a busy main road. We have 3 well attended local schools, GP surgery, care homes and local businesses' (Individual resident).

'Wargrave fire station should remain an integral part of the community. I believe the cost in Council tax would be very low per individual in Wargrave to meet the budget required, and I would be happy to pay for this. Why doesn't the decision go to a local referendum?' (Individual resident).

'I do not believe you should close any fire stations - but closing Wargrave when the traffic is so bad around the area and the nearest stations are Reading and Maidenhead is madness. There are a lot of elderly people living in Wargrave and Twyford and busy and dangerous main roads' (Individual resident).

'To enable them to get to us at their first attempt and, thus, save lives and property, the Fire Service needs local knowledge of Loddon Drive, Wargrave because of the restricted accesses, bridges and flood situations. The Wargrave Fire Station has such local knowledge, trains for flood purposes in St Patrick's stream and knows where they can get their water from for fires occurring during times of flooding. This is a specialised procedure; the engines cannot just pump any flood water as there needs to be sufficient depth and the water needs to be free from flood-borne debris. The specialist teams at Wargrave Fire Station have proved to be a life-line for Loddon Drive and we have no confidence that more remote Fire Stations would understand or know how to handle our special needs' (Individual resident).

'Given the geographical location of the Wargrave Fire Station, its removal would affect a large population and area. The station provides an invaluable service to not only the local community but also to the wider neighbouring area. Whilst mindful of the financial situation, the Parish Council is strongly opposed to the closure of Wargrave Fire Station... '
(Organisation response).

'It provides one of the highest savings whilst keeping fire stations open in rural places like Wargrave who would otherwise have to wait over 10 minutes for an appliance to reach them' (Individual resident).

Non Survey Responses

We received a number of non-survey responses to the consultation. A number of key organisational responses are listed in the Appendices. Some 22 of 47 of the non-survey responses related to the potential closure of Wargrave fire station. Some of qualitative examples are given below:

'Given the geographical location of the Wargrave Fire Station, its removal would affect a large population and area. The station provides an invaluable service to not only the local community but also to the wider neighbouring area. Whilst mindful of the financial situation, the Parish Council is strongly opposed to the closure of Wargrave Fire Station'. (Wargrave Parish Council)

'I am writing in support of our local Fire and Rescue Service and the NHS responder unit. It makes so much more sense to have a local facility which provides the opportunity to minimise loss of life and /or life threatening injuries. In addition it is worth emphasising the value of the NHS responder unit at a time when the NHS is under increasing pressure. Surely any service which can help with this pressure is of great value'. (Individual resident)

'I urge you to revisit your analysis and address the issues raised in the leaflet recently distributed before rashly wielding the axe '. (Individual resident)

'I am writing with my concerns that Wargrave may lose its fire station. As a family man and resident in Wargrave of almost 18 years it would be a massive loss if the station closes. The A4 and M4 are often heavily congested and the time from Maidenhead to Wargrave could literally be a lifetime away! I appreciate budgets are tough, but strongly believe Maidenhead and Wargrave should have their own resources. Please pass on all my thanks to the staff in the Fire Service, amazing work they all do to serve our community '(Individual resident)

'As a long standing resident of Wargrave, I value the existence of its fire station which has provided an excellent on the spot service for many years. Wargrave is a thriving, lively village situated on a busy main road (the A 321 between Twyford and Henley). It has 3 well attended schools, GP surgery, care homes, local businesses and many clubs and organisations. Our fire station encourages local people to train as fire fighters and maintains a high profile in the area, including participation in the NHS responder unit. It's location in Wargrave, close to the A4, also provides a ready response to emergencies in adjacent areas'.

Wargrave Petition

We received 245 signatures on a petition submitted by representatives of Wargrave, opposing the closure of Wargrave fire station. These responses were a mixture of three signatory groups. Residents from Wargrave and the surrounding areas, such as Twyford, Charvil, Hurst and Reading (192). These are considered 'local government electors' (those who live within RBFA area) and as their number was above the minimum required of 25 signatures, their submission was accepted as a petition under the guidance of RBFRS Standing Order SO19. There were also signatures from across the rest of the UK (21) (e.g. Henley, Mansfield, Salford, Leeds) and outside of the UK (32) (e.g. Malta, South Africa, Netherlands, Canada, Germany, India), both adding to overall numbers, but also considered non-electors.

The comments were reviewed in detail and the following were chosen as representative examples of the views of petitioners. You can access the full list of petition comments on Appendix G.

'It makes me feel safe knowing they are close by in a emergency for me & my daughter & we need to keep services in our village that we are proud of'.

'We are a family of five living in Wargrave and see the local fire station as an absolute necessary for the local community. One we cannot afford to lose. If this service is not there, the wait for other services to attend to local emergencies is a huge worry and could cost lives.'

'Wargrave fire station is very important in our community, and has attended to many emergencies over the years with great speed. To lose that safety is just unthinkable.'

'If there isn't a nearby fire station to attend local fires it could potentially be a life or death situation. Reading and Maidenhead are a good 20 minutes away without traffic. There are thousands of houses in this area and more being built so this service should be expanding not reducing.'

'It is vital to keep this essential service not just for Wargrave but all the surrounding villages.'

'Should be important to anyone living in the surrounding areas. We cannot afford to lose this fire station especially as there are more and more houses being built in the areas local to Wargrave'

'If there is a fire in the village then I would like to know the fire brigade could get there ASAP and not have to battle through traffic'

We also received a formal response from Wargrave Fire Station personnel (Appendix D).

Night-time closure of Windsor Fire Station

Options with closure of Windsor Fire Station	Options without Windsor Fire Station
Option 6	Option 1,2,3,4,5 and 7

- Only Option 6 proposes night closure of Windsor station. Data shows none of the Windsor and Maidenhead residents chose Option 6 as their most preferred.
- Findings show a strong relationship between the general public from Windsor and Maidenhead and their preferred option (87 participants).
- The most preferred choice for those from Windsor and Maidenhead was Option 7 'To do nothing' with 28.13%, which could also be seen as another way of opposing the closure.
- The least preferred option for Windsor and Maidenhead residents was Option 6 with 36.67%.

There was also number of qualitative comments opposed to the night time closure of Windsor station:

'Resident of Windsor. Historic town with high risk to fire and 2million visitor's safety location to M4? RT response time.' (Individual resident)

'I feel that Windsor would be left extremely vulnerable in an emergency situation, we should be increasing resources not diluting them.' (Individual resident)

'If Windsor is closed then Slough can save it.' (Individual resident)

'Please don't remove 24 hour cover from Windsor. The proposed removal of night time cover in Windsor is hazardous because: a) the town plan proposes a vast development of residential dwelling in West Windsor. Possible increasing instances of intervention by the fire service. b) the night time economy of Windsor is thriving while a large influx young people intent on a good night out assisted by alcohol and possible drugs impairing them c) there has been an increase of hotel beds in the town and more are in to planning to process so more tourists are staying overnight- the town population is increased at night. But please, remove the remove the road humps in Dedworth Rd. I know that cover can be provided to Old Windsor by Egham Fire, but with proposed road changes, in the area response time will increase of the proposed fire service changes proposed by Surrey will also impact heavily on the Egham Station.' (Individual resident)

'I am concerned about the lack of night time cover in Windsor proposed under option 6 mainly due to the traffic levels around Windsor which are only likely to increase with proposed extra house building in the area.' (Individual resident)

Individual Scenarios

Crewing Arrangements

In general, it is important to firstly illustrate the general dislike from respondents about any changes to crewing arrangements. This feeling comes from both staff and from the public alike and is illustrated in the qualitative comments that relate to why respondents chose their most and least preferred options as discussed previously. This section will now present examples of comments that relate to specific crewing arrangement scenarios:

Disestablishment of the Retained Support Unit

Options with disestablishment of the RSU	Options without disestablishment of the RSU
Option 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6	Option 4 and 7

We received a formal submission to the consultation from the Retained Support Unit personnel. This can be found in Appendix C at the end of this document.

Various comments received through the survey focus specifically on the proposal to disestablish the RSU. There was a fairly good balance between those for and against disestablishing the RSU and from both staff and the public;

'Disestablishing the RSU is short sighted and will have a far greater impact on the organisation and resilience / ability to manage in day to day fire cover for the county' (Staff).

'The RSU seem vital to filling the short fall in keeping on call fire engines available. This is the only option that doesn't remove the RSU' (Individual resident).

'Keeps the RSU established. The RSU provide vital cover for RDS units keeping them on the run most days. This will have the least impact on fire cover' (Staff).

'This option does not promote the disestablishment of the retained support unit which is needed to support the retained fire engine availability. Both are required to provide the speed of response and coverage required to keep a growing population safe' (Individual resident).

'...The supporting documentation indicates the RSU has failed in its task and that the retained stations are rarely able to respond meaning they are effectively closed anyway' (Individual resident).

'Option 1 as this has the least impact on the WDS workers in regards to shift patterns and any possible job loss. It closes 2 RDS stations that are very, very rarely available and on the run anyway, and the closing of the RSU means that people currently in that RSU role can filter back into station based watches and help plug the gaps in the global crewing levels and help save more money by not having to recruit externally. ,This option means money saved by closing units that aren't ever available anyway, helping fill vacant watch spaces without the need to spend, and keeps WDS staff a little happier as shift patterns are not messed around with' (Staff).

'Where will the continuity for training the RDS come from if the RSU is disbanded' (Staff).

'...get rid of the RSU that's costs a fortune with little to no benefit. Remote manage the stations that would be closed which ensures Job security and good emergency response coverage' (Staff).

'This option loses too many good assets that could be put to good use. The loss of Wargrave Pangbourne and the RSU is by far the most ridiculous. Wargrave could be put to good use by the resources of the RSU. Option 1 does not even consider the three watch system which is effective and cost saving. I believe three remotely managed stations is too many' (Individual resident).

Day Crewing Plus

Options with Day Crewing Plus	Options without Day Crewing Plus
Option 5	Option 1,2,3,4,6 and 7

We received 25 comments that mentioned directly views on the implementation of Day Crewing Plus (DCP). All of these comments were from RBFRS staff: There was a majority dislike of the DCP system; however some members of staff felt they would be happy to work this shift:

'This makes the most sense for all. There will be no problem finding the staff for DCP, no reduction in fire cover and a huge saving in money. Absolutely the best option.' (Staff, Option 5, For)

'DCP is illegal' (Staff, Against)

'The proposed shift changes are draconian, talk to anyone Police officer doing the 3 8's, they hate it, it is so family unfriendly it's ridiculous, as for DCP , prisoners for 96 hours, the divorce Lawyers will love it.'(Staff, Against)

'..... Your savings of £270k don't include the cost of maintaining and running a separate building which was put at £65k/year in the initial DCP report. If this figure is still correct DCP only saves £205k compared to a remote managed station's £187k which doesn't lose 50-75% of a pumps productive community engagement time. Shift system is also increasingly likely to be looked at legally, is a return to Victorian workhouses, relies on volunteers as staff can't be forced onto it and relies on said staff never insisting on taking their 11 rest periods as they are entitled to without a national agreement for staff to waive that right (As there is for 9/15's).'(Staff, Against)

'From a personal level as a serving firefighter a Day Crewing Plus system would suit me perfectly, for family reasons' (Staff, Option 5, For)

'The option will also have no material impact on public safety and will offer the Day Crewing Plus duty system to a small number of existing staff - something which volunteers will consider very welcome indeed' (Staff, Option 5, For).

Pool System

Options with Pool System	Options without System
Option 2	Option 1,3,4,5,6 and 7

We received 10 comments that directly mentioned the implementation of pool systems. Some of these are shown below. All of the comments we received reflected a dislike for this system from both staff and the individual residents:

'Pool system would prove incredibly difficult to manage individuals training and competence' (Employed in Royal Berkshire)

'Pool of shift system, what role would be carried out by those on duty if not needed for crewing purposes?' (Individual resident)

'The pool shift system would be highly disruptive to an already disillusioned workforce' (Staff)

'The pool shift system would be extremely un family friendly for those that cannot afford to live in Berkshire and who commute into work from great distances. It would also mean more job losses which we could well do without' (Staff)

Remotely Managed Stations (RMS)

Options with RMS	Options without RMS
Option 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6	Option 7

We received 26 comments that directly mentioned the implementation of remotely managed stations. Remotely managed stations appeared the most preferred of all potential changes to crewing arrangements. Many respondents cite this as their preferred crewing arrangement from all those presented in the consultation options. Some of these comments are shown below:

'Both retained stations barely crew, thus are not effective. The current shift system is not affected. Remotely managed stations are a better use of resources....' (Staff)

'This is by far the most sensible; the retained duty system is unfit for purpose and cannot be remedied easily, and remotely managed stations are proven to work, plus the existing shift system is kept.....' (Staff).

'Remotely Managed Stations - this system is already working within RBFERS (albeit under a different name)'. (Staff)

'Achieve the savings with the minimum disruption and job losses. The remotely managed stations appear on paper a good idea' (Individual resident)

'Although wholtime post will be lost the remote stations option has worked at Windsor and judging by the savings made it could be not a bad option. The retained call outs are at an all time low and I think losing these two stations and the RSU wouldn't have too much affect.'(Staff)

'Remotely managing stations whilst keeping the shift patterns as they are in my opinion are workable. I do it already and it's not really an issue'. (Staff)

'I believe three remotely managed stations is too many' (Individual resident).

'If stations do start to be remotely managed then this considerably increases the workloads of junior officers. Watch managers should be at least a 'B' grade and crew managers should be on a Watch Manager A pay grade at the very least.'(Staff)

'The remote management of fire stations was introduced between 16 and 14. This does not translate as two wholetime fire stations, yet the expectation is that this would be the case.'(Staff)

Three Watch System

Options with Three Watch	Options without Three Watch
Option 3 and 4	Option 1,2,5,6 and 7

We received 34 comments that directly mentioned the implementation of a three watch shift system. The comments revealed that most staff disliked the three watch system, but individual residents were more in favour of this change:

'The three watch system saves no money and will destroy morale and peoples work life balance'. (Staff, Against)

'The three watch system would have a huge impact on staff possible creating 25% in the loss of jobs and making it very hard for those who wish to stay in the service. This will be extremely un family friendly' (Staff, Against)

'Changing to 3 watch shift system would cause major disruption with home life; no other fire service currently doing this shift makes you think why?' (Staff, Against)

'The 3 watch system raises the working hours a lot with only 2 days off after working 15 hour shifts. This will feel as though you are never off duty and with the pensionable age increased to 60, there will be more sickness and ill health' (Staff, Against).

'I believe there MUST be a change in wholetime shift pattern; the current system is antiquated and needs modernising. A 3 watch system will make large savings fairly across the organisation' (Staff, For).

'3 watch system with 48 hours on and 4 days off or 24 hours on with 48 hours off would be a very good balance for work and home life and savings to the brigade'. (Staff, For)

'This would appear to have the least impact on the general public of Berkshire. Under the strategic commitments I would like to think that public safety was of your highest priority. Clearly the 3 watch system has the largest saving and living within a retained station community I am keen to see this service remaining' (Individual resident, For).

'3 watch shift system is cost effective and would work saving money and jobs' (Individual resident, For).

Is there anything else you would like us to consider in light of our Response Service Redesign consultation options?

There were 157 qualitative comments giving further chance to offer 'anything else' individuals felt was useful for consideration. There was a lot of overlap with previous themes and as such the list will not be repeated in its entirety. Instead this section will look at the top 4 most recurring themes only. These were; *Opposition to Closures, Against Shift Changes, Missing or Wrong information and those offering their own 'Different Approach'*.

Opposition to closures

The same consistent theme of individuals opposing closure of Wargrave and Pangbourne and Windsor at night was seen in this question, and were almost exclusively from individual residents living within the areas in question; Wokingham Borough, Windsor and West Berkshire. Particular resistance is against the closure of Wargrave station:

'If you do have to close stations, leave that saving till the end of the exercise, at least that way we get to be rest assured the cover is there for a little while' (Individual resident, Wokingham Borough).

'Wargrave is a rural village surrounded by many other villages. We already suffer from being miles away from ambulance stations and hospitals. Closing the local fire station puts everyone at risk from the extended waiting times for an emergency response' (Individual resident).

'Pangbourne has already suffered enough cuts in services and as it is a focal point for the surrounding communities it is well placed to be upgraded. Look at the wider picture' (Individual resident, West Berkshire).

'...What price do you put on a life? On 28th Dec 2016 it took 22 minutes for an appliance from Wokingham Road to reach a car on fire in Wargrave. What if a child had been trapped in that car? Wargrave Fire Fighters were available but not used. If only 1 life is saved in the next 10 years because Wargrave stays open, surely that 1 life is worthwhile? The Fire Station has struggled with staff but recently that has been positively rectified with now 9 recruits. You can save the same amount of money whether you close Wargrave or not... so why not choose the option that provides the better service option to those of us who live rurally and more likely and at higher risk of suffering a house fire than those in town due to the nature of thatched cottages, hay stocked barns in this area etc?' (Individual resident, Wokingham Borough).

'Please keep Wargrave fire station open' (Individual resident, West Berkshire).

'Save Wargrave fire station!'(Individual resident, West Berkshire).

Missing or wrong information

Many individuals used this opportunity to either request more information they felt was absent or not in enough depth within the consultation, or to dispute facts that had been presented:

'I do not believe the true savings obtained by closing Wargrave fire station will amount to the £168k claimed. A more detailed analysis should show this figure to be far less' (Individual resident, Wokingham Borough).

'I don't know if this is correct but I have heard that the First Responder service is provided or hosted by the fire service, perhaps by the Retained service. If it is correct, why it is not addressed in the consultation and what happens if the RSU and/or stations are closed down. I would not want this service to be lost to rural communities that are some distance from hospitals' (Individual resident).

'Call out and response statistics of individual stations impacted by each proposal should have been provided in addition to the overall RBFS statistics' (Individual resident, Wokingham Borough).

'You are banking most of the options on building a new community fire station in Theale. There is no community at the proposed site, no land has been secured and with this brigades previous skills it would be well over budget and no savings would be realised' (Staff, West Berkshire).

'How can we make a decision with such limited information....We talk of the inability to keep the RDS units open due to poor crewing. I thought Wargrave had more recruits who are undergoing training. Could the availability of this station change over the next 6 month (especially with help from TC, CT etc) and thus give a lot better value for money and change response times. Poor information will lead to poor results!' (Staff, Reading).

'Yes give more detail or proof of savings. For example when you look at the Graphs showing other Fire & Rescues and potential savings. The graph actually contradicts what you are trying to tell us' (Staff, Reading).

Different approaches

Many individuals had their own ideas as to what changes should be made and how:

'Increase cooperation and workload sharing with the armed forces and police facilities in the area. Offload some responsibilities to local volunteers. Cut out or share admin roles where there is duplication or overlap' (Individual Resident).

'Investigate alternative funding' (Individual Resident, Windsor and Maidenhead).

'Is there an option of merging with other local fire authorities to make larger savings??' (Organisation response, Bracknell).

Top heavy

A clear sub-theme emerged within those giving their own ideas on what should be done, that being that the RBFRS is 'Top Heavy'. This may well be reflective of staff that are under threat of closure, redundancies or shift changes. However, it is worth noting this theme from staff responses, when considering options which will further influence them:

'We seem to have too many people at the top, the fire service is firefighters and fire engines, when you prune a tree you cut from the top not the bottom, you are there to support us not the other way around' (Staff, Reading).

'Stop cutting the front line and cut from the top' (Staff).

'Save around £100K paid to councillors and look for savings less at the front line' (Individual resident).

'Take some weight from the top and combine as Thames Valley fire service?' (Individual Resident, West Berkshire)

6. Final Summary and Next Steps

This report has illustrated the process we have used to consult with the people of Royal Berkshire, our staff and other key stakeholders about our Service Redesign proposals. This consultation has looked at our current Prevention, Protection and Response arrangements, and produced proposals for changing the delivery of this work in the face of downward financial pressure. Within this report, we have analysed and summarised all responses we have received from the full range of our contact sources via online survey, telephone, email and post and have presented them for the Fire Authority to conscientiously consider.

The response rate of 1050 is the highest response to any consultation that the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has ever received. We feel that this is due to a number of factors- firstly, firstly the nature of the content in the Service Redesign consultation. Secondly, our increased efforts to ensure that, as best as possible, we have consulted with the public in an accessible, transparent and informative way. We have worked hard to raise awareness of this consultation through multiple communication channels, both internally and externally to the organisation. We have held face to face public engagement events in the areas of the county which could be subject to fire station closures. We have launched an extensive social media campaign and produced a video for the consultation to raise awareness and provide information to the public. We have also continued to engage with a wide range of groups within our communities, such as from different ethnic and religious backgrounds and different ages.

Throughout this consultation we have aimed to achieve continuous improvement in ways of working to ensure that we have tried to reach all communities in Royal Berkshire.

What happens next?

This report will be presented to RBFA at a meeting on 18 April 2017 where Fire Authority members will consider these findings. A video of the meeting showing the consideration of the feedback and the decisions made by the Fire Authority will be published on our website at www.rbfrs.co.uk.

Following the decisions by the Fire Authority, any changes to be made as a result of this consultation will be managed through detailed implementation plans within our programme office. In this phase we will ensure ongoing communication and consultation with any affected

staff and ensure negotiation with representative bodies takes place where appropriate. Regular reports will be prepared for IRMP lead member and Fire Authority to enable progress to be tracked.

Contact Details

If you like to keep in touch with us and find out more about the outcomes of this consultation, please use our contact details below:



You can visit our website www.rbfrs.co.uk



You can write to us with your comments, ideas or views at:
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, IRMP Consultation, Newsham Court,
Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 7SD



You can email us at irmp@rbfrs.co.uk



You can telephone 0118 938 4331 and leave us a message



You can visit your local station and discuss any issue you have with the duty crew



You can follow us on social media – both Twitter and Facebook

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

Appendix B: The Retained Firefighters Union (RFU)

Appendix C: The Retained Support Unit (RSU)

Appendix D: Wargrave Fire Station Personnel

Appendix E: South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS)

Appendix F: Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

Appendix G: Wargrave Petition



SERVICE REDESIGN CONSULTATION 2016

FBU RESPONSE MARCH 2017

Introduction

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) service redesign consultation.

The FBU's comments are intended to be constructive and seek to add clarity to the evidence provided as well as offer our views on potential savings options. The FBU welcome the engagement with its representatives that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) and RBFA have shown thus far and hope to see a continued positive relationship.

The FBU opposes cuts to front line services and welcomed the assurances given by the RBFA that no front line cuts would take place at its budget setting meeting in 2016. Some of the proposals contained within the document identify potential areas where savings can be realised with minimum impact on Public Safety, Firefighter Safety and Legal Risk to the RBFA. However, the FBU would urge caution should the RBFA desire to pursue some of the options contained within the document which could be disastrous in terms of Public Safety, Legal Challenges and Industrial Relations. It would be highly disappointing if any options that are to the detriment of our member's terms and conditions are pursued at a time when Firefighters are faced with falling living standards due to little or no pay rises, this alongside the potential of expanding roles in areas such as medical Response and Marauding Terrorism response with no additional pay.

Since austerity measures were introduced, RBFA has delivered revenue savings in excess of £4M, the majority of which have been detrimental to its Firefighters. There has been a significant reduction in the number of personnel employed to crew front line appliances which has resulted in a significant increase to Firefighters responsibilities, workloads and work methods. The FBU would question why any proposals would be put forward to the detriment of Firefighters terms and conditions when it seems that senior management are facing improvements in terms and conditions.

The FBU would question why Response proposals are working to a 10% cut the same as all departments have faced when in previous years the cuts to response have outweighed all other departments. We urge the RBFA to reject the notion that 10% savings must be found from the response budget regardless, other departments have justified why they haven't made 10% savings so why can response not do the same.

Executive Summary

Given the financial position RBFA finds itself in, the FBU is willing to cautiously enter into discussions and negotiations to expand the implementation and crewing of a limited number of WTD appliances under the remotely managed stations model found in Option 1. We would also cautiously enter in to discussions on disestablishing the RSU and working with RBFA to find alternatives to support the RDS stations. We urge RBFA to do everything possible to find alternative savings or income over the next 3 years in order to avoid the closure of RDS stations. The FBU is as always willing to engage with RBFA in order to help identify these savings.

RBFA should not lose sight of that fact that option 1 will result in the loss of uniformed posts and therefore FBU members. As a trade union although not accepting the need for austerity measures in one of the richest Counties in the world, we are willing to support this system as the lesser of all evils.

The FBU calls upon the RBFA to lobby central government in order to make valuable areas of wider response, prevention and associated response activities part of the statutory duty of the Fire and Rescue Service and to fund them accordingly, most recently seen in Wales.

The FBU has concerns relating to whether the proposed targets of 1400 full fire safety audits will be achievable following the reductions in staffing levels proposed in the re-structure.

The FBU has consistently argued that a properly integrated and professional approach should be based on risk and on improving public safety and professional standards; Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) have generally become a mechanism for managing budget reductions rather than risk.

Response to the specific sections

Prevention

The FBU notes that the consultation document identifies on page 19 that:

'We work to prevent a wide range of incidents occurring, such as; road traffic collisions and water incidents. We don't have a duty to do this wider prevention work.'

The FBU recognises that this wider prevention work has significant value to people who live, work and visit Berkshire.

The FBU notes that the consultation document also identifies on page 19 that:

'We do have a legal duty to promote fire safety across Royal Berkshire.'

The FBU recognises that it is a requirement that the Fire Authority promotes fire safety and that this activity through a combination of fire safety education, Home Fire Safety Checks and other activities have led to a significant decrease in the number of property fires within Berkshire.

The FBU recognises that wider prevention work has significant value to people who live, work and visit Berkshire. At a time when budgetary cuts by central government necessitates difficult choices regarding services that can be delivered the FBU questions whether the Fire Authority can any longer afford the luxury of providing interventions and services for which it does not have a statutory duty and is not funded.

Proposal 1

The FBU supports the proposal to further target fire safety interventions at those most vulnerable from fire. The FBU believes that the Fire Authority should vigorously pursue information sharing with partner agencies in order to clearly identify those most at risk. The FBU supports the use of assistive technologies such as water misting systems, telecare alarm systems and cooker shut offs. Such technology has a clear part to play in making vulnerable people safe in their own home and can enable vulnerable elderly and disabled people to remain in their own homes rather than moving into a residential care facility. It is our belief that funding sources external to RBFA should be identified in order to ensure that this work is both scalable and sustainable. Thought should be given to a small inventory of items such as portable misting systems that can be temporarily deployed by the Service when risk is identified but which is later substituted with a permanent solution funded privately or via adult social care.

Proposal 2

The FBU is supportive of the proposal to reduce the volume of fires occurring in homes and the injuries that result from them. It is noted that the proposal goes some way to identifying those groups most likely to have a fire in their home.

The FBU believes that as well as the targeted fire safety activities identified RBFA should continue to proactively investigate all fires in order to determine their cause. This information should then be used to inform fire safety education strategies and where necessary to ensure that any trends are identified and appropriate action taken. Where trends are identified regarding dangerous design faults in consumer products RBFA should take a proactive role in seeking a safe and timely resolution to such issues.

Proposal 3 and 4

The FBU believes that RBFA and its staff should be proud of the significant reductions in dwelling fires that has been achieved as a direct result of the fire safety education and activities that it currently delivers. The suggestion that this success will not be placed at risk by reducing fire safety education in schools by 40% is far from certain.

The FBU believes that the statement that the 40% reduction in fire safety education will be compensated for by young people visiting fire stations as members of 'out of school clubs and groups' is incorrect. Such visits are already taking place and have done so for many years, as such this is an existing provision and not an alternative. The FBU also believes that hard to reach groups of young people and those most vulnerable and at risk from fire will be the least likely to visit a fire station with an 'out of school group or club'. In this vulnerable and at risk group will be young people growing up in poverty, single parent families, young people at risk of abuse or neglect and young carers.

Every Child, regardless of their socioeconomic background, religion, race or nationality in Berkshire is required by law to attend full time education. This education is almost solely delivered in one of the many schools located throughout the county. It is for this reason that fire safety education has been delivered in the school setting and repeated through the key stages of a young person's educational journey. By so doing RBFA is able to build on the fire safety message in a manner that embeds the learning and significantly contributes to safe behaviours in relation to fire for life.

The benefit of Fire Safety education in schools is significant. Not only does it bring about fire safety knowledge, understanding and behavioural change that can influence a young person throughout their life it also contributes to other important areas. For many young people the fire safety school visit will be their first introduction to a uniformed service and this can have a positive impact in reducing malicious calls, attacks on Firefighters and arson. Additionally such visits provide the ideal opportunity for the service to present itself as an equal opportunities employer which is open to all members of the public to join.

The FBU believes that there is real value in the proposed preventative education in regard to both Road and Water Safety. It is however our belief that this value is in addition to and not instead of the existing Fire Safety provision.

The FBU therefore believes that the RBFA should lobby central government to make these new areas of work a statutory duty and fund prevention activities accordingly.

Proposal 5

The FBU is supportive of the proposal to expand the scope of HFSCs to signpost partner organisations or to conduct very limited interventions such as removing trip hazards and recognises the benefits that this approach could have for vulnerable people living in Berkshire. It is the Union's belief that safeguards must be established in order to ensure that interventions resourced by RBFA are in addition to and not instead of services already provided for such vulnerable groups.

The FBU has concerns regarding the potential impact that high volume, low priority interventions such as responding to falls and concerns for welfare could have on the Services ability to respond to Fire Service related emergencies. Additionally the FBU is concerned that the volume of work this activity could generate might impact significantly on risk critical functions such as training.

The FBU would also recommend that the opportunity is taken to continue to provide training to partner organisations who interact with vulnerable groups so that they are also able to contribute to RBFA objectives by addressing fire safety concerns that they encounter during their day to day activities. Partner agencies would also be able to use their increased level of knowledge in order to more effectively signpost services provided by RBFRS.

Proposal 6

The FBU is supportive of the proposal to support young people's health and wellbeing by expanding schemes such as FireFit on a cost recovery basis.

This can provide positive outcomes for young people and for the image and reputation of the Service on a cost neutral basis for RBFA.

Proposal 7

The FBU positively supports the proposal to create and support pathways to employment and apprenticeships for young people and would encourage the RBFA to also commit to adopting the 'Real Living Wage' as a minimum pay rate for all the staff that it employs.

Proposal 8

Whilst the FBU is supportive of further evaluation of the benefits to residents of Berkshire from Adult Fire Safe Counselling the current statistical data provided is inconclusive regarding the success rate of the pilot programme.

It is noted that the re-offending rate of participants is statistically similar to the national average and that only five out of seventeen participants are known to be still residing in the Thames Valley (although no data is available regarding participants residing in Berkshire).

The FBU would therefore suggest that RBFA invite the Probationary and Restorative Justice Services in Berkshire to commission a wider scale trial of this intervention. This trial should be subject to robust quantitative and qualitative evaluation and cost neutral to RBFA.

Protection

The FBU notes that the five options presented in the 'Protection Evidence for Service Redesign Consultation 2016' document have not been offered for consultation during this process. Instead Option 5 from this document has been selected by officers and presented in the form of Proposal 1.

The FBU also notes that Option 5 proposes no increase in staff numbers to accommodate for the anticipated business expansion in Berkshire over the next 5, 10 and 15 years but instead recommends in the executive summary that the Service fully consider this expansion and the associated resource needs. This recommendation is picked up by Proposal 2 in the Redesign Consultation.

The FBU further notes that the Service is currently formally internally consulting as part of the Service Delivery and Risk & Performance Re-structure on a 16% reduction in the number of Fire Safety Inspecting Officers with the intention of making two full time equivalent posts redundant.

For the above reasons the FBU does not believe that the Service Redesign Consultation has consulted as fully as it could have done with all stakeholders prior to making these important decisions.

Proposal 1

The FBU is supportive of more effective targeting of the risk based inspection programme with a view to inspecting more premises where people are at greater risk. The FBU has concerns relating to whether the proposed targets of 1400 full fire safety audits will be achievable following the reductions in staffing levels proposed in the re-structure.

Proposal 2

The FBU recognises the rapid rate of existing, proposed and predicted development within Berkshire and the significant increase in fire safety work that will be needed to support this. The FBU is therefore supportive of the proposal to consider these major infrastructure projects and the fire safety resources they will need.

The FBU notes that this approach is not congruent with the reduction in Fire Safety Inspecting Officer numbers proposed in the current Service Delivery and Risk & Performance Restructure.

Response

In recent years the FBU has worked hard with RBFRS and RBFA to introduce alternative crewing models to support the introduction of three additional WDS appliances to our fleet whilst at the same time delivering in excess of £4,000,000 in savings.

The FBU has a mandate from its members to maintain the current 2, 2, 4 shift systems and this can easily be achieved from option 1. The FBU question whether or not the savings against all options are accurate, Option 5 savings do not reflect the cost of running accommodation and therefore it is deceptive to state this option offers more savings than others.

Option 1

The FBU feel that this is the only viable option for RBFA to choose, it is disappointing that due to central governments ideologically driven austerity being imposed on the Fire Service that the best option is more cuts to frontline services. The removal of the RDS stations is not supported by the FBU should the relocation of Dee Road to Theale not establish, the FBU reminds the RBFA and the public to consider this should further consultation be required. The FBU finds option 1 to be the option to support with full consultation and negotiation as a lesser of all evils. This would include cuts to frontline posts and therefore members of the FBU – The FBU would like RBFA to not lose sight of this.

Option 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

These options would be vigorously opposed by the FBU and would have no choice but to consider all its options in industrial action and legal challenges to oppose options that are highly detrimental to our members' terms and conditions, Firefighter safety and public safety. The FBU believes that the morale of Firefighters would reduce dramatically should an option be imposed against their wishes where another option has been identified as negotiable.

Option 7

The FBU appreciate this option is unrealistic and a risk although we would always support the RFBA in trying to obtain an increase in budget. Again we urge RBFA to lobby central government in order to remove the 1.99% cap on its precept rises and to increase central funding. The FBU believes more clarity is required about what option 7 would actually mean to the public.

FBU reaction to scenarios

Scenario 1 Fire Engine Removal

Given the level of savings that have to be realised the FBU realises that RBFA is faced with tough decisions. Yet the FBU cannot support the direct removal of any frontline appliance that has a direct impact on firefighter and public safety without full consultation about how standards can be kept. The FBU will seek to engage with the RBFA to highlight alternative savings.

FBU DOES NOT SUPPORT

Scenario 3 Peak Demand Crewing

This shift system operated at Wokingham and Windsor during the transition period of establishing the 24 hour shift system in Wokingham and the remotely managed station at

Windsor. The shift was disliked by the personnel who worked it and it was detrimental to their Health & Safety and wellbeing.

Table 2 now describes the numbers as station callouts when clearly these have been lifted from the table in the introduction section which describes them as IRS incidents. These numbers are not a true reflection of the activity (mobilisations) of each station.

The savings against this proposal are not achievable as it would require a watch of 7 personnel and clearly the FBU as a minimum would seek a much higher salary supplement than the £1000 previously agreed as an interim.

The introduction of such duty system will have an impact on RBFRS resilience and will increase the number of mobilisations in neighbouring stations. In addition, the FBU would direct RBFA to the 'Fire Statistics England 2014/2015' report which finds that while call volumes are lower outside of these 'Peak times' the calls that do happen have almost twice the average fatality rate.

FBU DOES NOT SUPPORT

Scenario 4A 12 Hour Shifts

The savings offered by this proposal are negligible and would lead to significant opposition from our members. In addition there would be a requirement to revert to Grey Book conditions in relation to stand-down and overtime. The last review into the WDS shifts resulted in a negotiated local agreement between the FBU and RBFRS which maintained the current 2, 2, 4 and start times but, resulted in shorter stand-down time and casual overtime payments for late fire calls being paid in 15 minute increments.

A move away from the current local agreement will result in the abandonment of the local agreement and reverting to the Grey Book stand-down period and casual overtime payments, this would negate any savings.

The move to 12 hour shifts is also very unpopular with our members and is not family friendly. A large proportion of our members live outside the County by necessity and the introduction of 12 hour shifts would result in a working day of 12 hours work, an hour travel and prep time at the start and finish of each shift. When you take into account the recommended 8 hours sleep each day that would only leave 2 hours of 'free' time per day for 4 days out of every 8.

Reference is made to Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance (HSE 265) which is used to imply that the report supports the move away from the fifteen hour shift. Prior to this report, the FBU was not aware of RBFRS having the intention to move away from the fifteen hour shift and we seriously doubt that the report referred to the FRS or that it took into account the existence of the stand-down period. However, the same guidance clearly states '**Any advantages of 12-hour shifts in terms of health and well-being are likely to be lost if workers take on overtime or second jobs during their free time.**' RBFRS is already heavily reliant on overtime to maintain crewing levels at 4 riders and the maintenance of competencies and personal development. Within the document there are options for the introduction of additional shifts (Staff pool, Grey shift) so there is a contradiction. It should also be borne in mind the necessity for many of our members to undertake additional work to supplement their RBFRS income up to a liveable amount for an area which is substantially above the national cost of living.

Childcare costs to cover 12 hour shifts are substantially higher if cover can be found at all and depending on which hour the shift starts and finishes it is completely foreseeable that our members with young families would not see their children for 4 days out of every 8. Effectively the introduction of this shift system would leave our members with little or no spare time for hobbies, friends or family for 4 days out of every 8 and would question the claim that RBFA is an employer of choice.

FBU DOES NOT SUPPORT

Scenario 4B Pool System

RBFRS already operates a staff pool system, it's called pre-arranged overtime so the FBU does not see any benefit in introducing the same thing but in name. Of concern is the suggestion that RBFRS pays £828,774 in overtime payments to crew fire appliances. This is incorrect and misleading as the figure quoted includes all overtime paid to Firefighters and includes casual and pre-arranged overtime as well as overtime paid to attend training events. FBU members have already had enough of doing sustained overtime and even the appeal of the grey book overtime rate has worn off. Many people will not even consider coming in to do day shifts and a substantial amount don't wish to do any overtime. Should this proposal be introduced it would result in a further pay cut to Firefighters for additional work done.

That said, the FBU would be willing to discuss how the overtime burden can be reduced and are willing to discuss pay for activities outside of crewing appliances. Overtime for the crewing of appliances would always be at grey book rates.

FBU DOES NOT SUPPORT

Scenario 5B Three Watch

This would lead to a significant reduction in resilience during spate conditions and pandemics, and would require an increase in the working week from 42 to 56 hours. This is 33% more work with only a 25% salary uplift. Firefighters pay is already below the average for the area RBFRS serves and below the national average hourly rate.

FBU DOES NOT SUPPORT

Scenario 5D Day Crewing Plus

The FBU's views and position on this shift system are well documented and our position has been further supported by RBFRS's recent survey on shifts in which only a hand full of personnel expressing an interest in doing it. The system is significantly less productive, impacts of service delivery and is reliant on volunteers which if introduced could be at a significant capital outlay and significant increase in salaries. Given that the system would be purely voluntary and personnel would retain the right to withdraw at anytime, RBFRS could end up in a position where they would not be able to crew an appliance - a huge corporate risk. The HSE has clearly stated that this shift is in breach of regulation 6 of the Working Time Regulations (WTR). The author's interpretation that the 2, 2, 4 is in breach of the WTR is incorrect as regulation 23 of the WTR 1998 clearly allows for a collective agreement to modify or exclude the application of certain regulations.

The introduction of this shift system would result in significant outlay by the authority with no guarantee of personnel volunteering to work it. The savings it can deliver can easily be achieved by different methods which ensure 24/7 availability and support resilience. The FBU has successfully defended its members through litigation with the most recent case being in South Yorkshire FRS (SYFRS) the outcome being that it is our understanding that SYFRS are now seizing the introduction of the system.

One point which continuously gets overlooked is the fact that in order to benefit the handful of personnel willing to work the shift system at some point in the future there will be an increase in pension contributions which will be detrimental to the entire uniformed workforce as contributions will have to increase in order to cover the increased costs and maintaining within the cost ceiling set by central government.

FBU DOES NOT SUPPORT

Scenario 6 Remotely Managed Stations

Given the financial position the authority finds itself in, the FBU is willing to cautiously enter into discussions and negotiations to expand the implementation of this method of crewing a limited number of WTD appliances. The FBU is of the opinion that the removal of the station manager (SM) should be captured as part of savings and does not accept that the SMs are part of the backroom savings.

RBFA should not lose sight of that fact that this option will result in the loss of uniformed posts and therefore FBU members. As a trade union although not accepting the need for austerity measures in one of the richest Counties in the world, we are willing to support this system as the lesser of all evils and are willing to propose stations to be considered for this option.

FBU SUPPORTS TO ENGAGE IN NEGOTIATION

Scenario 8 Disestablishment of the RSU

The FBU was instrumental in the introduction of the Retained Support Unit (RSU) but given the evidence presented, it is clear that there has been little impact in the main remit of the team, to increase availability of RDS appliances. In fact unavailability of RDS appliances has increased despite the hard work of our members working the system. We have to accept that the RSU project has failed and that it is a prohibitive cost for the benefits it brings to RBFRS, public and Firefighter safety.

The savings realised from the removal of the RSU are significant and the FBU will propose an alternative support mechanism for RDS personnel.

FBU SUPPORTS ALTHOUGH SEEKS ASSUAURNCES ON SUPPORT FOR THE RDS



Retained Firefighters' Union

Response to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority 'Service Redesign Consultation'

RFU Response to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority 'Service Redesign'

Introduction

The RFU is an independent trade union, established in 1976 in the run up to the first fire service national dispute. We have a no-strike constitution and no political affiliation.

We are dedicated to representing the interests of On-Call firefighters across the UK.

This document formulates our formal response to the consultation process relating to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's 'Service Redesign Consultation'.

As an organisation that represents members of staff employed on the most cost-effective duty system in the UK, we expect the Retained Duty System (RDS) to be utilised in the most efficient and effective manner available using modern flexible practices.

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Proposals

The RFU welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the options contained in the redesign consultation document.

We fully appreciate the situation the authority finds itself in, whereby financially it needs to cut its cloth accordingly, whilst preserving the appropriate protection of the public. We understand from the consultation document that the authority will need to identify savings of

£2.4m by April 2020. However, we are extremely disappointed that the proposals show a clear disdain for the viability and effectiveness of the Retained Duty System (RDS).

The proposals claim to achieve three outcomes;

- Enable people across Royal Berkshire to lead safe and fulfilling lives
- Balance the Fire Authority's budget
- Align any changes with the aspirations of local staff

The consultation document also makes the following claim;

'The proposals have been developed to make sure RBFRS will become an ever more modern, efficient, innovative and resilient organisation, a truly outstanding 21st century fire and rescue service, and a great place to work.'

These are grand statements indeed but also very difficult to measure, specifically the first bullet point.

Our view to how a service provides an emergency service is somewhat more simplistic and pragmatic. Any fire and rescue service needs to provide an appropriate and reasonable level of response to emergency incidents whilst at the same time utilising preventative measures that are proven to benefit the local community by reducing risk to life. There are plenty of examples over the last decade which have proven to be effective, which is why call levels have reduced so dramatically.

In addition, the service provision should be delivered in a cost effective and justifiable manner.

One of the 'Strategic Commitments' of the Fire Authority is:

'We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money'.

However, none of the proposals sets out how the options provide good value for money in comparison to alternative measures. To be confident that the service is providing value for money, the authority needs to ensure that all alternative provisions of fire cover have been explored, which includes the utilisation of retained staff where appropriate, based on logistics and risk.

Berkshire is no different to any other fire and rescue service when it comes to utilising retained firefighters. The fact of the matter is that in our view, the service chooses to ignore the cost benefits of using retained staff to provide an emergency response, using poor availability of its current retained appliances as an excuse to maintain its wholtime establishment. Rather than accept the retained model as being not fit for purpose, the authority should be asking what more it can do to support its retained staff and allow the RDS to provide a cost effective, flexible and resilient provision of emergency cover to the public.

The RFU challenges the authority to provide evidence that it has provided the aforementioned support because anecdotal evidence from our members suggests this not to be the case and they feel extremely let down by their employers.

As an example we understand that the retained personnel based at Wargrave have provided a written submission evidencing where the service could have improved appliance

availability through support on such matters as recruitment and training courses, but chose not to.

We question whether the authority fully appreciates the possibilities of the RDS in Berkshire if it was managed in such a way that would allow it to flourish, as is the case in other services.

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Documents

We felt that it was important to make reference to some of the authorities own recent statements contained within past publications.

Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015 – 2019

Within the aforementioned plan, one of the 'priority areas' for improvement was to increase the reliance of the Retained Duty System¹, the same commitment was given in the Annual Plan 2016/17². Yet there is no evidence that this has been actioned, and we have genuine concerns that there doesn't appear to be any plan to improve retained resilience within the current options either.

Action Plan 2013/14

The plan³ makes reference to a retained review undertaken in 2010 and for the plan to evaluate matters affecting the provision of retained firefighter cover since the implementation of the project in 2010. We therefore ask, what were the results of this evaluation and why are they not contained as evidence in any of the options?

Annual Report 2014/15

One of the priority projects in 2014/15 was to review the role of the Retained Firefighter⁴. Due to the importance of this piece of work and its relevance to the majority of the options, we are concerned that there is no mention of the project and its findings, surely elected members would wish to have all available evidence when making such an important decision?

Day Crewing Plus

We are somewhat surprised to see the inclusion of the proposal to use the Day Crewing Plus model due the concerns formally raised by the HSE that it is in breach of Regulation 6 of the Working Time Regulations. We would be interested to know why the authority believes that the implementation of such a system is acceptable whilst in conflict with HSE guidance.

Blue Light Collaboration

The RFU welcomes greater collaboration with other blue light services. The public already expect emergency services to be working closely together to both make cost efficiencies by removing unnecessary duplication but also to share information to better protect the public.

However, any closer collaboration needs to be undertaken following the production of a robust business case to ensure greater partnership working is managed appropriately whilst

retaining the knowledge and experience of serving personnel. There also needs to be long term objectives constructed with careful planning rather than knee-jerk reactions to appease the government's wishes.

Such collaboration provides cost efficiencies that could be used to both provide some of the financial savings required and allow for funds to be invested into the RDS locally. We are therefore surprised not to see the authority making radical proposals to implement further collaboration and create greater cost efficiencies. Surely this would be preferable to the public rather than close frontline fire stations?

Workforce Reform, Risk Management, Operational Cover and Station Location

As you are aware, retained firefighters provide a flexible workforce that is extremely cost effective and we would expect every authority to fully utilise these employees across the county to maximum effect. We recognise that locally there are challenges in recruiting retained staff but more needs to be done to review current practices and processes to ensure better methods of raising awareness within local communities that there are career opportunities within the fire service.

Some excellent work has been undertaken in this area by other fire services, namely Devon and Somerset and Gloucestershire, demonstrating what is achievable using modern recruitment methods.

Looking at call levels and types across the county suggests that there is no direct correlation between the provision of response and the number and type of calls responded to by each fire station. There is an opportunity for the service to undertake a workforce review to better align work activity with cost. This is likely to realise financial savings without negatively impacting on public risk.

We therefore ask, has the authority formulated such a strategy to use as its evidence to propose the closure of frontline fire stations?

Retained Support Unit

We are aware of a number of newly constructed groups of staff that have been formed to provide availability at fire stations that would otherwise be unavailable to respond to emergency incidents. The names of these units vary from service to service but ultimately must be seen for what they are. A short-term, highly expensive provision of fire cover that neither aids the issue of the recruitment of retained firefighters nor provides the public with a cost effective and efficient provision of response.

Therefore we have no intention of challenging the proposal to remove such a facility.

The Knight Review

At this point we believe it is important and relevant to highlight Sir Ken Knight's national report, 'Facing the Future' and the recommendations for better utilising Retained staff.

Whilst the report was not a 'check list' for FRA's to follow to the letter, we applaud the fact that Sir Ken stated that the Retained element of fire cover is something that requires investment and expansion. Sir Ken's report goes on to say:

'Increasing the total 'Retained' firefighters nationally by just 10 percent (to 40 percent) could provide annual savings of up to £123 million. All fire and rescue authorities must consider whether 'Retained' firefighters could meet their risk – it is an invaluable cost-effective service.

£17 million could be saved if authorities adopted the leanest structure in their governance type.

Retained firefighters are the backbone of provision for many fire and rescue authorities, particular those that are most rural, and make up the majority of fire stations in the country.

The challenge for all fire and rescue authorities in new reduced-demand environment is to fully consider how they make best use of Retained staff. In my discussions for this review I have heard a variety of opinions on the Retained system, but the vast majority feel that it is an invaluable cost-effective service.

It is currently 10 per cent of a whole-time firefighter's salary, with additional payments made for training and attendance at incidents. As calls have dropped, therefore, the Retained system has become more expensive on a per call basis. But it still provides excellent value for money – fire and rescue authorities need to think about what call volume they consider justifies a whole-time service.'

As an organisation we agree with Sir Ken's report that it is in the public's interest to utilise Retained staff which is why it is disappointing that the service wishes to reduce, rather than increase the use of Retained staff in the county.

Retained Recruitment

It is clear that the service has experienced a problem with the availability of retained firefighters, however this is not a new issue this has been ongoing for years.

Availability of Retained appliances is often quoted as a shortcoming in the overall provision of emergency response. An area which we feel would welcome a much improved approach, it should be obvious to all that if appliance availability is maximised then a number of issues elsewhere could be addressed. Again this can only be improved if the three-way relationship between the service, the Retained employee and their primary employer becomes a cornerstone of service provision. A number of national reports over the years have reached the same conclusion that the fire and rescue service needs to develop, as a matter of priority; national, regional and local partnerships with the business community (*i.e. Confederation of British Industry, Federation of Small Businesses, Business in the Community and specific local employers*).

This is where the input and level of scrutiny by members of Fire Authorities is crucial. If Retained appliances are off the run on a regular basis, members should be made fully aware of the situation and they should challenge senior management on what action is being taken to rectify the issue.

Publicly funded bodies now have a requirement to collect and manage data on a wide range of activities and services which they provide to the local taxpayer. Many such bodies publish information on their own websites yet seemingly fail to make use of it to increase efficiency.

Fire and Rescue Services are accountable and should put in place measures to interrogate the data they already have and create a station profile for each and every Retained fire station including those appliances attached to shift or day crewed stations.

Such a profile should include:

- station activity over the past three years and cover the times of the day when the station is most busy
- average call duration
- the number of hours per month that appliances were off the run and the reasons why:

a) Crew deficiencies

b) Skills deficiencies (*such as OIC, Driver or BA wearer*)

- number of vacancies and the period for which they remain unfilled
- recruitment initiatives and any publicity events undertaken

The service should be aware of local businesses in the area which already release staff for duty and make every effort to identify and engage with other sources of primary employment, including reaching out to those who work from home.

They should then make an approach using this information explaining that in return for the primary employer's co-operation, the service would provide their employee with skills at zero cost which would benefit the primary employer's business.

1. Trauma care

2. Risk assessment

3. Health and Safety

4. Dealing with emergencies

5. Promoting a workplace safe from fire and accidents

6. Leadership and management

To our knowledge there are no FRS who have adopted the approach now being used by Sabre (*Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers*) who have produced a costed document of the benefits to the employer for releasing their staff for front line operations.

Missed opportunity

We believe that if the service genuinely wishes to 'redesign' the service as a whole, to deliver its objectives, it needs to be more innovative than to merely close retained fire stations and implement a duty system that is far from family friendly and against HSE guidance. The authority also needs to better scrutinise why it's retained fire appliances are not available for large periods of the day and what has been done to help retained firefighters serve their local communities. There is plenty of good practice around the country if the authority chooses to speak to other services.

The authority could be at the forefront of innovation and provide a role for retained firefighters that embraces both prevention and emergency response that isn't just about fire but includes health, safety and wellbeing.

The RFU is willing to meet with elected members and service management to discuss a range of options that are available which will achieve all of its objectives including the ability to make the necessary saving of £2.4m by April 2020.

Summary

The RFU fully supports change but any change must be based on factual evidence and debated in an open and transparent manner to allow the opportunity for the public and stakeholders to take ownership of the public service of Berkshire.

We cannot support any option that includes a proposal to close a retained station for the following reasons.

Firstly, closing a retained fire station under the auspices of saving money is simply extremely short-sighted, especially in a service where the fire cover is predominately provided by the wholetime duty system. In general, a one-pump wholetime station costs 10 times that of a retained station. Any forthcoming fire service inspection would rightly challenge such a proposal, especially if the local authority is unable to provide any evidence that it has appropriately managed and resourced its retained duty system.

Secondly, such a proposal is in direct conflict with the fire reform agenda, an agenda that we broadly support. The communities within Berkshire will be short-changed if any local retained station is closed due to lack of investment and understanding of how to fully utilise and maximise the benefits of a resource that could be the central focus of the community in terms of prevention and protection of the public.

There are alternative ways of providing an emergency service in Berkshire, which would not reduce frontline resources or increase risk to the public and we would welcome the

opportunity to discuss any points raised in this document with both elected members and senior officers.

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Retained Support Unit response to RBFRS redesign consultation

Aim

The aim of this document is to highlight the possible impacts to RBFRS RDS, if the Retained Support Unit is chosen to be disbanded at the end of the redesign consultation period.

This document was produced by the 8 members of the RSU, who have all been involved in its contents and development.

What is the RSU?

The retained support unit was developed after consultation and recommendations were made in the 2010 IRMP.

Highlighted in this document was the need to support the retained service in RBFRS.

It identified the need to improve crewing and availability of retained appliances, the need for a higher level of recruitment activities for the RDS, a support system to help the RDS function and improve training.

In 2012 the RSU was formed with three main functions –

- Improve the training of RDS personnel
- Crewing of RDS appliances
- Recruitment

Initially the RSU were located at both Ascot and Newbury fire stations with funding to support 2 watch managers and 10 crew managers (although the establishment of the RSU never increase to more than 10 (2 WM and 8 CM)

The RSO's were given the directive of predominately crewing Ascot and Newbury, this lasted for approximately 9 months before more flexibility was given to support other retained stations with crewing issues.

Recruitment Issues:

Recruitment guidance was also limited; the RSU was informed that recruitment was limited to a select number of RDS stations.

RDS training courses were cancelled when there were 3 or less retained recruits available to take part in training. This had a detrimental effect on these recruits who were then held back to attend later courses (but then subsequently withdrew applications due to the amount of time they had been waiting to join)

Ascot RDS station closed so RDS crewing figures were first affected by this.

Newbury RDS station was then closed and some firefighters joined the WT (again figures show a downturn in RDS numbers because of this)

Bracknell RDS was closed and so there was a further downturn in RDS numbers due to that.

A further recruitment course was opened up for retained to WT in 2014 and this saw others leave or reduce their RDS commitments.

(Mortimer & Pangbourne were informed that they might be closed once Theale fire station was approved)

All of these moves had a massive affect on morale/numbers across the retained and lead to RDS questioning why they bothered if they weren't valued by RBFRS.

The RSU has within the last 4 years been trying to regain the RDS trust and build a better working relationship between the RDS and WT.

Since 2014 the RSU was given more freedom and more support to look into recruitment, retention, training and crewing.

It is from 2014 onwards that we should be judged...

Has the RSU Failed or Succeeded?

This is a very difficult question to quantify.

On first impression the answer is yes the RSU has failed to hit its objectives and targets.

RDS appliances are off the run more often,

Crewing figures are down on the figures from 2012

But if you dig down into the detail a little further you might be surprised;

1. RSU with assistance from RDS crews and HR, in the past **18 months** has seen **15 new recruits and 2 previous RDS** join RBFRS.

So assuming the support was in place from the inception of the RSU – the figure could have been in excess of 30 new RDS staff.

Again the increased recruitment has gone up after the RSU was given more support and flexibility to plan and implement a good recruitment model.

To achieve this the RSU has spent over 168 hours in a year running HAG events – with as many hours spent conducting leaflet drops, putting up posters, visiting local businesses, contacting clubs/community centre's etc...

For many in the local community they weren't even aware that they had a fire station.

We have assisted RDS stations hold open days; without the RSU assistance these events might not have been run as we are always approached to assist in the organisation and running of these events.

Once the HAG day has run we are there to assist and be a point of call to train and develop potential recruits – this could be assisting with how to pass written papers (reading and explaining how questions are written), helping them understand PQA or building up their fitness (this all takes time and flexibility from the RSO)

Next the RSU will run a full recruitment weekend – these are carried out at least 3 times a year and needs a minimum of 4 RSO's to run effectively and 1 or 2 HR staff. We organise dates and times to suit the candidates, we together with HR – will carry out the NFST (National Fire Service Testing) and written exams followed by treadmill test. All over the course of the weekend or in one day if the candidate has only got one day spare.

Feedback will be provided for these candidates after the event and we provide encouragement to those that fail and try to motivate them to attempt to try again.

To break this down it would roughly take the approximate yearly working hours to do the following, assuming it was continuous work based on last year's activities:

Run HAG Days: 168hrs

Run Recruitment weekends: 192hrs

Organise the events: 80hrs

Recruitment activities*: 210hrs

Supporting recruits: 84hrs

Open days: 32hrs

Equalling: 766 hrs minimum

2. Management Support at retained stations.

The RSO's provide continuous management support on RDS stations, taking over line management when required, assisting with admin, personal issues and having any easy point of contact for the station. Giving advice and help where required.

This has had the added benefit of line management and RDS crews feel more valued by RBFRRS – which can't be measured.

3. NVQ assessment and IQA retained

Retained development training programme (RDP)

The RSU has been responsible for the most number of NVQ candidates in RBFRRS in recent years; this involves the development and training of these staff.

Organising assessments, meetings, development plans, and exercises and mentoring as well as guidance, writing reports etc...

Without this support a good number of firefighters would still be in development.

Over the last year the training of new RDS personnel has passed to the RSU, this training is called the retained development training programme (RDP). This means the RSU has now taken on the workload for the training of twelve new RDS personnel. This again includes – organising training, assessments, meetings, development plans, mentoring as well as guidance, writing reports etc. If on average 3 hours per week is spent training these twelve recruits then another 36 hours per week workload will need to be taken up by another department/personnel.

If this was broken down to working hours it would be equivalent to 1.5 full time Crew Managers, or (over 2 full time Crew Managers if you include the RDP working hours)

4. Training of RDS

RSO's work in conjunction with their RDS counterparts to help deliver quality training predominantly on a Monday night at each and every retained station, although at times they also assist to deliver extra training for RDS crews on Wednesday nights or sometimes at the weekends – being flexible to the station needs.

If we just base it on just 47 Monday nights in the year that equates to 987 hrs of training a year across the brigade. (I haven't included any time for organising the training beforehand)

5. Keeping appliance's on the run

The RSU helps to keep an average of **3 RDS** appliances on the run during the daytime hours, without the crewing of the RSU on retained stations – current there would be insufficient retained available to keep 1 RDS appliance during the daytime hours Monday to Friday over the course of a month.

To crew 3 appliances with RSO's and RDS during the day it requires roughly 6 RSO's to booster crewing numbers.

Mixed crewed RDS and RSO cost of keeping an appliance on the run for an hour (2 x RSO's and 2 RDS on average) **£35.02.**

Cost - against wholtime costs (for 3 WT firefighters and 1 WT crew manager for an hour) **£54.97**

Calculate this against last year's crewing figures for the RSU – cost of crewing RDS appliances with RSO's and RDS in real terms amounts to £146,558.70.

To do this with a WT appliance the figure would have been £230,049.45.

6. Morale

It is safe to say that the arrival of the RSU has seen the morale increase amongst the RDS – they have a link to WT and what is happening to the brigade. They have support and assistance when required. Without the RSU this link will very much disappear and morale will again be reduced further amongst the RDS.

7. What else does the RSU do?

They provide resilience to the brigade in areas such as - attending careers fairs, assisting with report writing, assisting with brigade exercises, and assisting with special events – Olympics/Ascot/Flooding/Newbury show/Members days etc. They also cover WT crewing shortfalls/speak at community events (one has been detached for the full safe drive stay alive campaign for the last 2 years) help run and assist with W/T training such as the high rise course and method of entry courses.

RSO's also provide 2 PES to carryout fitness assessments where stations don't have PES's. The PES are also used to develop the fitness of potential recruits.

One RSO is in the process of getting his Level 3 PES qualification – so this would provide the potential for fire fit programmes to be run on RDS stations.

RDS Numbers

It has been an uphill struggle to recruit and retain the RDS in Berkshire, in real terms the RSU has helped to steady the declining numbers of RDS and more recently have started to reverse the trend.

When we look at why availability has reduced from our RDS stations, we can see that numerous RDS have been 'utilised in the past to plug vacancies in WT crewing – by recruitment them in WT' this ends up with RDS either reducing their hours (due to being dual contract or leaving the RDS all together).

Older more experienced RDS have also left, unable to meet the new fitness requirements. These predominately offered the best contracts of over 100hrs a week, being fully qualified too (BA, EFAD and in quite a few cases JO's).

New RDS firefighters are in development and can't be utilised in current crewing figures until they are BA qualified (this accounts for almost 20% of the current RDS staffing levels) so the crewing figures will always seem poor in comparison to a more experienced RDS workforce.

Summary and Conclusion

Although on first glance it would seem that disbanding the RSU would make a large saving to RBFRS – over £420k if pensions are included in the figures. You have to ask the following -

How will this be implemented?

What support systems will there be in place for the RDS trainee, RDS stations and to aid with crewing?

What period of time will the changes be implemented over?

Will it really be a positive saving?

Why is it that the majority of fire and rescue services have or are looking to adopted similar schemes to the RSU? You only have to look at neighbouring brigades to see these currently

working? – it was even pointed out in the OPDM guidance that there should be this support in place.

I have always believed that the RSU would have to develop and change. The ideal scenario would be to see RSO's rarely having to crew RDS appliances to cover large gaps in crewing availability, to just one or two at most. With the potential to cover some weekends or evenings if need be.

It would be my honest hope that the RSU remains in its current form until at least the end of this year – this would enable it to see the new RDS trainee's in a position that they can ride the RDS appliances.

It will also give time for extra time for the RSU to attempt to increase RDS recruitment further.

The RSU could then look to reduce in number – This would need to be carried out on a reducing scale, i.e. from 8 to 6 then to 5 or 4 (5) is the figure I believe is sustainable for the unit to carry out the majority of its current activities and to allow for 1 person to be on leave.

It is enough to crew an appliance.

It is enough to be able to provide meaningful support to RDS stations and recruiting.

It reduces the RSU budget by almost half.

It can still carryout most of its functions.

It provides the brigade with a form of resilience.

Part 2 Submission from the RSU:

The retained support unit (RSU) would like to question the IRMP 2015-19 and Response evidence Base, Pages 114 and 115 - Impact of the Retained support Unit on training and competence of the RDS.

We believe the evidence and statements in this section are not accurate. There is a large gap in the information that is provided here. One being the RBFERS audit scores for RDS written tests, which we believe is the only factual base on which to measure competence in all areas, and therefore training.

Having received a copy of the RBFERS RDS Station audit 'written' test results 2013 to 2016.

(See table below).

All RDS station scores have increased year on year with one station achieving an improvement of 24% on its average score. The average RDS Station score over this time period has improved by 16%.

This shows that the RSU has had a direct effect and greatly improved the effectiveness and quality of RDS training. Therefore increasing competence, standards and knowledge at all RDS stations.

The RBFIRS IRMP documents use stations TRI's which measure the amount of training done, not the quality, effectiveness or successfulness of the training. It states that there has been a stabilization in the level of TRI's, this is measured as a percentage amount.

We feel this statement does not give a true picture.

As the number of TRI's that are required to be completed has increased in the last 4 year time period due to new equipment and new or changes to procedures/safety requirements such as

–
 New BA procedures, new Method of entry procedures and equipment, new High rise procedures, New ISC/radio/MDT procedures, changes to working at height procedures.

There is no drop in the percentage of TRI's being completed. This means that the number of TRI's being completed has increased – therefore showing another success in the support of training offered by the RSU - By completing more training and or TRI's within the same allowed time period for training.

RDS Audit written test result table.

Year	2016	2015	2014	2013
Station				
5	Average 68% Best 79%	No Audit Completed	Average 55% Best 63%	Average 52% Best 62%
6	Average 77% Best 82%	No Audit Completed	No Audit Completed	Average 53% Best 62%
7	Average 69% Best 76%	Average 67% Best 75%	Best 73%	Average 59% Best 72%
9	Average 70% Best 82%	Average 69% Best 75%	No Audit Completed	Average 64% Best 65%
11	Average 75% Best 84%	Average 65% Best 67%	No Audit Completed	Average 55% Best 60%
15	Average 82% Best 90%	Average 64% Best 81%	No Audit Completed	Average 62% Best 76%
19	Average 76%	Average 66%	No	Average

	Best 84%	Best 84%	Audit Completed	60% Best 70%
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Wargrave Fire Station, response to RBFRS redesign consultation

Aim

The aim of this document is to highlight the possible impacts to RBFRS and the local community of Wargrave and Berkshire, if Wargrave is chosen to be closed at the end of the redesign consultation period.

This document was produced by the 7 members of the station, who have all been involved in its contents and development.

What is Wargrave providing?

The consultation document and its figures show a poor service offered by Wargrave fire station due to figures based on its passed crewing availability. These figures don't represent the potential of the fire station and the other services that it provides.

The figures for example do not include the NHS ambulance community responder or community safety activities such as station visits, fetes, HFSC that the station personnel undertake.

Before we look at the details of the services that Wargrave can provide we must first look at the issues it has faced over the period that the consultation figures represent.

Issues:

1. Recruitment

Recruitment guidance was limited to station personnel during the period of 2012 -2015 at the same time the RSU (Retained support unit) was informed that recruitment was limited to a select number of RDS stations, Wargrave was not one of the station included in the active recruitment by the RSU.

RDS training courses were cancelled when there were 3 or less retained recruits available to take part in training. This had a detrimental effect on these recruits who were then held back to attend later courses (but then subsequently withdrew applications due to the amount of time they had been waiting to join)

These issues impacted the stations recruitment as we had leavers during this time and where we would have been able to recruit normally, because of the active recruitment suspension we were left without the support needed to run our own recruiting campaign. As a result we had less crew and this affected our crewing thus affecting the figures that are represented in the consultation report.

Wargrave is situated in an affluent rural location with declining small businesses due to the economy and is in a prime location for city commuting. This affects the recruitment as many residents work outside the attendance time and the rewards for being a retained fire fighter are not appealing to high earning city workers.

New RDS fire fighters are in development and can't be utilised in current crewing figures until they are BA qualified (this accounts for almost 20% of the current RDS staffing levels) so the crewing figures will always seem poor in comparison to a more experienced RDS workforce. We have had 5 new recruits that were not BA qualified during the 2012-2015 period.

2. Availability

During an IRMP in 2008 there was a restructure that was to include the closing of Sonning and Wargrave but a new fire station for both crews to attend in Twyford. This never got finalised although it was decided during that IRMP.

Sonning RDS station was then closed and some fire fighters joined the WT system. This affected Wargrave as there was an understanding that while Sonning was open, the members of Sonning could turn out for Wargrave if crew was insufficient at their station.

This affected the crews believing they would get a new fire station but instead just got a reduction in crew and availability.

A further recruitment course was opened up for retained to WT in 2014 and this saw others leave or reduce their RDS commitments. We had 3 join WT, 2 of these members continue with WT/retained contracts but this has significantly reduced the amount of cover they can provide.

When we look at why availability has reduced from our RDS stations, we can see that numerous RDS have been 'utilised in the past to plug vacancies in WT crewing – by recruitment them in WT' this ends up with RDS either reducing their hours (due to being dual contract or leaving the RDS all together).

Wargrave's fire appliance has been used over the last few years to plug gaps in the shortage of RBFRS reserve fleet. It was used for the whole time recruits course, being taken away from the station 08:00-18:00 daily while elements of the course were under taken. The appliance has also been utilised for the fitting of CCTV on all other appliances so they were not required to complete a change over while the work was completed. Often we would arrive for drill night and the appliance was not returned to the station because the work had over run, when we needed it for drill night and also to put appliance on the run.

Also there have been a number of occasions when the appliance has been collected by a wholetime station to be used to cover periods when the wholetime pump would be off the run for defect etc. All these would have affected the availability figures for the station.

Having the required qualifications of each role to crew a fire appliance (1 x JO, 1 x ERD, 2 x BA) is often hard to achieve on RDS stations due to training requirements. It was often known for a RDS JO to drive and be OIC if there were 3 other crew members that just had BA qualification. This would crew the appliance for standby moves, make ups, AFA's, but would not be suitable for dynamic incidents like house fires, RTC's. Although this was not an agreed

method to crew the appliance sometimes it happened depending on the risk assessment of the JO before crewing the appliance. It offered extra availability if the crew qualifications were limited. The retained policy was highlighted in early 2016 and OIC's driving in charge of the appliance was stopped immediately. This seriously affected the crewing at Wargrave as the only drivers and JO's were WM Piercy and CM Cunningham so without both of these crew members on duty the crewing was drastically affected.

As previously mentioned in the recruitment issues, the recruitment process took a long time for people to pass all application process and retained development programme to be accounted towards the riders of the appliance.

3. Retention

Before the arrival of the new mobilising system in 2015 the retained station callouts dropped due to a policy that sent the nearest WT appliance to deal with low risk incidents. The retained were only used if the incident was high risk or if a second callout was received. Along with a change in call challenging from control the amount of callouts on retained stations dramatically reduced. This all added to retained fire fighters becoming less interested as we all joined to make a difference and go out on incidents, especially within our local communities.

The training requirements for new recruits was quite intense prior to 2015 when recruits were required to attend training centre every Thursday night, plus full days on Saturday and Sundays. There were lots of new recruits that found this hard to commit to and didn't complete the full course.

With the retained bounty for long service being removed also caused a negative effect on retained retention.

RBFRS and other brigades started to open up recruiting from retained to WT. As previously mentioned in the recruitment issues we had members transfer from retained to WT and also other brigades as they also offered transfers before running new recruitment processes.

Fitness testing standards increased. Older more experienced RDS have also left, unable to meet the new fitness requirements. These predominately offered the best contracts of over 100hrs a week, being fully qualified too (BA, ERD and in quite a few cases JO's).

Summary

All of these moves had a massive affect on morale/numbers across the retained and lead to RDS questioning why they bothered if they weren't valued by RBFRS.

Only since 2015 the RSU and RDS employees were given more freedom and more support to look into recruitment, retention, training and crewing at Wargrave.

The social media for Wargrave isn't at the same level as other station as we have not been permitted to have a Twitter account, Facebook and RBFRS web site page for the station could have more details to support and highlight recruitment for the station.

How is Wargrave fire station addressing the issues?

8. Recruitment

Now we have been able to actively recruit with the assistance from the RSU which has helped identify 4 new recruits that joined in 2015 and more recently have started to reverse the poor recruiting trend with a further 4 applications submitted in April 2016 but candidates didn't pass written test. 2 of these candidates are now re-applying before 12th March 2017 for the testing weekend 25th/26th March 2017. A new candidate has submitted his application in Jan 2017 and will be attending the have-a-go event on 25th Feb 2017 and testing weekend 25th/26th March 2017. This particular recruit is a paramedic with ambulance service and can provide great day time cover as well as becoming a twin service employee with RBFRS and South Central Ambulance service just as the recent government debate in parliament suggested would be the future by having a combined blue light service.

We now have access to recruitment posters and recruitment information that has been developed by RSU and corporate communications. This is stored on a central location for us all to access. We have local locations for poster and leaflet distribution and also using social media to send recruiting information which is showing great increase in responses.

On a few occasions we have requested a station Twitter account but this has yet to become active, when this is activated for us it will only help our recruiting efforts along with important fire safety messages to the public.

In 2015 the station attendance time radius was increased to 7 minutes, (4 miles approximately) again this will help us recruit from further communities and increase the resilience of the station.

9. Availability

The crew are doing the best to improve the appliance availability and this will improve over the next 6 months as trainee fire fighters complete the BA training by October 2017. Also with the 3 new candidates applying at the beginning of 2017 if they are successful with their recruitment tests the future figures will look much different than the ones used in the consultation.

When the fire appliance doesn't have sufficient crew the station personnel crew a community responder on behalf of the NHS ambulance service. This has approximately 25 calls per month and has not been considered in the RBFRS consultation.

10. Retention

The Chief fire officer said he was pro retained when he first joined this brigade but here we are on a consultation over restructure and 2 retained stations are included for closure. He said recently in a visit to Wargrave 31st Jan 2017 that he would like to invest in ways to retain retained fire fighters. Possibly by offering greater retaining fees, bounty payments reinstated or other ideas. This could be an option for Wargrave as it has a large under spend from its budget each year, as do other RDS stations. If this is to be implemented it will assist our retention.

Training centre and RSU developed a more relaxed Retained Development Programme for new recruits at the start of 2015, with more training being delivered by station JO's and RSU before attending training centre for key modules and assessment. This alleviated the requirement to attend every weekend while training and has assisted making the training flexible but achievable in the long term.

Introduction of the co-responder scheme to the station and up skilling the crew to ICA's (immediate care assistants) has improved morale on station because of the emergency medical help we can provide to the local communities if the fire engine is not available.

The RSO's provide continuous management support on RDS stations, taking over line management when required, assisting with admin, personal issues and having any easy point of contact for the station. Giving advice and help where required.

This has had the added benefit of line management and RDS crews feel more valued by RBFRS – which can't be measured.

What can Wargrave fire station provide?

1. Fire appliance.

Although historic crewing figures are not great for Wargrave we are working hard with the new active recruiting flexibility to improve the amount of crew available for the station. The training programme has been amended so that it is easier and more flexible to follow, which has helped our trainee fire fighters work fast through their training programme and are close to becoming BA qualified. After this they are keen to be sent on driving ERD course as soon as one becomes available, adding a further qualification towards the availability of the appliance.

Having this appliance available for resilience across RBFRS is a benefit to everyone in Berkshire as the crew often are able to organise a crew for long periods working at major incidents. Swinley forest fire and Windsor flooding are the most recent major incident examples of times we have provided long periods of fire cover.

Having a fire engine in Wargrave would provide a better service to the local residents when the crewing and appliance availability improves. One of the major life risks on the station ground is the retirement home Elisabeth court just outside the fire station. To say these people would not get a worst service if the fire station was to close is only based on current unavailability figures and not a true reflection of the near future potential of the fire station.

2. Prevention

We host many beaver, scout, cubs, school visits and community events with the available crew even if we don't have the qualifications to be on-the-run we still can provide a fire safety resource.

The station has various 7.2d risk visits that need to be completed and records stored on the MDT for all RBFRS appliances to obtain information on the premises if they are involved in an incident. We have a plan in place to complete 1 per month and this work would need to be completed by another station or department if the station was to close.

As a retained fire station we try to complete 2 HFSC per month, this is also being programmed into our station duties. We can complete this as a crew of 2 remaining on call with our pagers of if we are off the run we can complete the HFSC that are further away from the station utilising the information on safer data that we have just been shown how to use.

3. Training of RDS

RSO's work in conjunction with Wargrave JO's to help deliver quality training predominantly on a Monday night, although at times they also assist to deliver extra training for RDS crews on Wednesday nights or sometimes at the weekends – being flexible to the station personnel needs. This flexibility is now very recently being offered by training centre instructors. The crew at Wargrave are conscious that the RSO's are also included in the consultation so are working closely with them to implement successful training and recruitment for all new and current station personnel.

4. NHS Ambulance co-responder

This service provided by the crew at Wargrave is not included in the consultation report. The crew respond to approximately 23 callouts per month for co-responding incidents, providing immediate live saving intervention before an ambulance can attend. The demand on the ambulance service is rising and we have been able to assist with a trial scheme running from August 2016. Crew at Wargrave have attended up skill training to Immediate Care Assistants (ICA) and also completed a blue light car driving course which was jointly run through RBFRS and South Central Ambulance service.

RBFRS have been working towards the JESIP (joint emergency service interoperability programme) for some time, with the recent parliament discussions regarding a joint blue light emergency service, everything the government and management has asked of them is being fulfilled by the fire fighters at Wargrave.

By removing this asset from the local community it would defiantly provide the public of Wargrave and local communities of this life saving service.

Currently this service is at no cost to RBFRS as the costs are recovered from SCAS.

Other considerations?

1. The Fire station.

The fire station is an asset to RBFRS and could be used to run young fire fighters or fire fit schemes generating possible incomes for RBFRS.

When Sonning closed the fire station was thought to be owned by RBFRS but after its use as a fire station was terminated the fire station was then reclaimed by the owner that had rights to the building in a contract made in the deeds many years previously.

The deeds of Wargrave fire station may need to be checked for any clauses like the ones with Sonning fire station as some ex serving fire fighters have visited recently and explained that there would be no capital gain from the building as it belongs to the local council if it is not used as a fire station.

2. Resilience.

Removing the fire appliance, crew and co-responder from Wargrave would reduce the resilience within RBFRS for any major incidents as we are a very small brigade at present figures.

During periods of industrial action some members of the station had personal reasons but decided to be available and provide cover during these difficult times. The members of the station that didn't take part also made the fire appliance available to be used during the industrial action. If there was further union action this resilience would not be available. This was difficult for the station as there were different opinions however the crew has managed to continue to work together.

3. Cost.

The figure used for Wargrave fire station is a saving of £168k. However this is not the actual cost because there is an under spend which is then used by other departments.

Personnel, 7 members of the station retaining fee, callouts, Gas, Electricity, water, cleaning, maintenance, insurance, appliance, Service, Fuel, insurance, Licences, training, Miscellaneous, leaflets, Eden water, etc

Total = £68,927.13!

Massive under spend of approximately = £100k!

Over the years this under spend could have been used to help the station recruitment issues but instead it is used to support other departments.

If you are only getting a £69k saving from the station closing how will this affect the other departments that are using the £100k under spend from Wargrave's budget?

Surly the best option is to keep the station open and just reduce its budget to £69k, giving a saving of £99k per year and not close a station?

4. Corporate plan and IRMP 2015-2019.

Part of the strategic commitments in the report of the plans for RBFRS 2015-2019 it states the following statement.

2. We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies. In order to fulfil this commitment, members of the Fire Authority will set evidence-based emergency response standards and monitor performance against them. We will also focus, alongside our officer colleagues, on the following priority areas for improvement:

- Increasing the resilience of the Retained duty system.

The first point in this part of the report is increasing the resilience of the retained duty system, however in the consultation you want to close 2 RDS stations including Wargrave. Slightly further down this report it describes 'Working with colleagues from South Central Ambulance Service and colleagues from other public sector organisations to support improvements in arrangements for responding to medical emergencies in Royal Berkshire' we have been doing

just this by undertaking the co-responding duties using the vehicle located at Wargrave fire station.

The vision of the future mentioned in the final part of the report talks about 'Fire stations at the heart of the community' how can closing a fire station that really is the heart of the community providing not just fire cover but medical co-responding and community events such as scout, cubs, beaver visits to the station, be fulfilling the statements mentioned in your Corporate and IRMP plan 2015-2019?

Summary and Conclusion

Although on first glance it would seem that closing Wargrave fire station would make a small saving to RBFRS – £168k. You have to ask the following -

How will this be implemented?

What would happen with the Co-responding capability offered by Wargrave?

What is the actual cost saving?

What period of time will the changes be implemented over?

Will it really be a positive saving?

Will you make the crews redundant or offer the crews opportunity to transfer into WT (as you did with Sonning, Newbury, Ascot, Bracknell) or redundancy?

What will happen with the fire station?

Will the public really get no change to their service?

How will the department using the Wargrave under spend £100k be affected?

Why is it that the majority of fire and rescue services have or are looking to improve RDS? – It was even pointed out in the OPDM guidance that there should be this support in place.

We really hope that this report is considered and its full content, because we all really don't want the fire station to close. The future could be a very different picture for Wargrave with the recruitment and training now showing positive effects.

The station has a twin service with its fire appliance and co-responder which is just what the government would like to see more stations providing this service. Consultation figures used don't give the station its full justification due to its past problems, however these are being addressed and the collaboration of services provided by Wargrave fire station are very much in line with RBFRS 2019 vision as much ahead of other stations not providing the co-responding capability.

From

Wargrave Fire Fighters and Co-responder



South Central Ambulance Service

NHS Foundation Trust

Headquarters North

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Oxfordshire
OX26 6HR

Telephone 01869 365 000

29th December
2016

Mr. A Fry,
Chief Fire Officer
Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service, Newsham Court,
Pin cents Kiln, Calcot, Reading
Berks. RG317SD

Dear Andy,

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE REDESIGN CONSULTATION

Thank you for your recent letter inviting comments on your service redesign covered by the paper Shaping the Future of your Fire and Rescue Service - Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Service Redesign Consultation - December 2016

As the consultation focuses on the areas of Prevention, Protection and Response I will offer comment under these headings: -

Prevention:-

- **Proposal 3** - Through working with our partners we aim to reduce road deaths and injuries by 20% in Royal Berkshire over the next five years.
 - SCAS, as a Category 1 responder, will have a key role to play in this area of service improvement and would ask that we are consulted on the detail when the strategy is being operationalised.

- **Proposal 5** - Fire and rescue staff comp letting normal home fire safety checks would expand the scope of the visit to look out for other vulnerabilities to the resident.
 - We fully support this ambition and would be glad to add value to the design and implementation of this project.

- **Proposal 6** - We would continue to expand our schemes to deliver a range of services to support children's health and wellbeing. We would aim to do this on a cost recovery basis.
 - Again, we fully support this ambition and would be happy to act in an advisory capacity even though the principle link may be through the local authorities.

- **Response:-** You will obviously select the best option - from the 7 you have presented - based on the effect they have on your core business. It is not clear from the documents whether there would be an effect on the co-responder schemes but I think that this could wait to be discussed once you have reduced the decision to fewer options. I am confident that your options appraisal will take into account the effect on the service's ability to react to incidents such as RTC, water rescues and other incidents where we work together.

Yours sincerely,



Will Hancock
Chief Executive



Dear Sirs

Thank you for inviting us to review and respond to your Service Redesign Consultation.

We have reviewed your proposals with a view to identifying:

1/ any potential impact on risks to the communities we serve, particularly areas which directly benefit from the availability of a cross border emergency response from yourselves;

2/ any potential impact on existing collaboration between us, and for further opportunities, building on the priorities that we have already agreed via the Thames Valley collaboration programme.

Response Proposals

In relation to the first criteria we note, in particular, the proposal to close the On-Call Fire Station at Wargrave that is included in a number of the options, being as it is in close proximity to our shared county boundary. However, given the already very low level of availability of the appliance at this location (2.4%) and the proximity of wholetime resources at Maidenhead and our own on-call and wholetime resources at Marlow and High Wycombe respectively, we consider any risks to the areas we have primary responsibility for arising from this proposal to be negligible.

We note the range of other changes to response that you have proposed and do not consider that any of these would have deleterious effects on existing or planned collaboration work. However, we do not feel that it would be appropriate for us to offer a view on which of the options would be most appropriate for your local context as this matter is best determined in consultation with local stakeholders although we are, of course, happy to share our own experiences where we have already implemented measures similar to those proposed by yourselves such as with the 'pool system'.

Prevention Proposals

In general the range of proposals for prevention seem appropriate and align well with our own direction of travel in this area, particularly in relation to the role that Fire and Rescue Services can now play in improving health and wellbeing. The

proposal to divert some of your fire safety education resources to address road and water safety risks also has merit given that deaths from these sources exceed those arising from fires, although recent rises in fires and fire deaths nationally indicate that education in relation to this risk remains an important part of our collective work, particularly in view of our statutory responsibility for this area. Again we would be keen to build on our existing collaboration agreement to support joint working in relation to prevention by, for example, sharing expertise and managerial resources to enhance capacity and exploring opportunities reduce costs through joint procurement of prevention related products such as smoke alarms, sprinklers and supporting ICT systems.

Protection Proposals

We are supportive of your proposed approach to this vital area which aligns well with both our own and that being pursued nationally. It will also provide a sound foundation from which to pursue our existing collaboration objectives in relation to harmonising policy, succession planning and ways of working across the Thames Valley. Again we see potential opportunities to further this, for example through joint training programmes for Protection Officers and closer working to enable sharing of good practice and supporting fire crews to undertake aspects of protection work to increase capacity.

Thank you again for inviting us to respond to this consultation. If you would like to discuss any of the points we have raised above please do not hesitate to get in touch. In the meantime we remain committed to supporting our existing collaboration efforts and opportunities to further these in order to deliver the most efficient and effective services that we can to the public's that we respectively serve.

Yours sincerely



Jason Thelwell QFSM
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Appendix G: Wargrave Petition

RBFRS

Comments recieved regarding the closure of Wargrave Fire Station.

	Name	From	Comments
1.	Azaima Anderson	SILVER CITY, NM	
2.	Chez Annetts	Reading, United Kingdom	
3.	KimJ CareTwoPlsHelp	Peterboro, United Kingdom	
4.	Barbara Smit	Breda, Netherlands	
5.	Michaela Weal	Hare Hatch, Reading, United Kingdom	
6.	Marianne Boyle	Reading, United Kingdom	Wargrave and surrounding villages need this station
7.	Steve Bryan	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
8.	JL Angell	RESCUE, CA	
9.	Mandy Griffin	Reading, United Kingdom	I have had a house fire and would have lost everything if not for the speed that the fireservice arrived in. Do not cut this service as real impact on people will be the result
10.	Donna T.	CONCORD, MA	
11.	Vincent Taylor	London, United Kingdom	
12.	Tom Brackstone	twyford, United Kingdom	If the fire station does close, the response time for a fire engine to arrive in an emergency could definitely have an impact on whether the incident is fatal or not.
13.	Jo Harling	Wargrave, United Kingdom	We are a family of five living in Wargrave and see the local fire station as an absolute necessary for the local community. One we cannot afford to lose. If this service is not there, the wait for other services to attend to local emergencies is a huge worry and could cost lives.
14.	Janet Beck	Toronto, Canada	
15.	Nicola Varney	Reading, United Kingdom	
16.	Clare Docherty	Twyford, United Kingdom	It's a valuable local service
17.	Tracy Mills	Reading Berks, United Kingdom	

	Name	From	Comments
18.	Natalie Scerri	Rabat, Malta	
19.	Mike Lee	Twyford, United Kingdom	It will keep us safe
20.	Christine Moring	Twyford, United Kingdom	
21.	brian harper	Reading, United Kingdom	
22.	maureen klein	hurst, United Kingdom	
23.	Carol Dukes	WOKINGHAM, United Kingdom	I was born and grew up in Wargrave. Both my Dad and Brother were firemen at Wargrave. This is a vital community service.
24.	Ed Star Issues Vieira	STATEN ISLAND, NY	
25.	Ian Benham	Carlisle, United Kingdom	I was in the service when I was 21 and it is a travesty if it shuts. Reading is approximately 6 miles away and Maidenhead is about the same distance. Lives may be lost as Twyford, Charville are covered by this station also Henley on Thames even tho it is not in Berkshire.
26.	Cherie Green	Reading, United Kingdom	Should be important to anyone living in the surrounding areas. We cannot afford to lose this fire station especially as there are more and more houses being built in the areas local to Wargrave.
27.	Nathan Smith	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
28.	Ellen Palmer	Reading, United Kingdom	Because it could make a huge difference of whether someone lives or dies in a fire in Wargrave and Twyford
29.	Mel Taylor	Reading, United Kingdom	
30.	Cath Forsaith	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
31.	Tim Wilson	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
32.	Ingrid Hahn	Oberhaching, Germany	
33.	Marjorie Cole	Reading, United Kingdom	
34.	Catrin NoForwardsPlease	ORLANDO, FL	
35.	Mel Jones-Gerrard	Leeds, United Kingdom	
36.	Karon Ford	Lower earley, United Kingdom	Local business owner, we need services kept local to support the community

	Name	From	Comments
58.	Jaime Sandall	Reading, United Kingdom	Local community
59.	Cathy Botha	Johannesburg, South Africa	
60.	David Harwood	Reading, United Kingdom	This is an important service, the next nearest station is reading, which will take an additional time to respond
61.	Jafer Mammoo	Twyford, United Kingdom	I care about the local community having the protection of the fire service in the area
62.	Nicola Davies	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
63.	Louise Walsh	Reading, United Kingdom	We need our Fire Station & the Fire Fighters who we as a community have come to rely on. It has always been an important & needed part of the village.
64.	Barry Raffel	RALEIGH, NC	
65.	Victoria Tippey	Wargrave, United Kingdom	It is important to retain a presence for the fire service within our village.
66.	Carol Luscombe	Reading, United Kingdom	
67.	Carl Ramsey	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
68.	Claire Fletcher	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
69.	Ian Matthews	Reading, United Kingdom	Any delays in getting a fire appliance to an incident may be fatal. There are multiple risks in the area served by this appliance: agriculture, river, airfield, domestic, light industrial, etc.
70.	Matthew McPherson	Twyford, United Kingdom	
71.	Patrick Donovan	BROOKLYN, NY	
72.	Peter Knowles	Reading, United Kingdom	I live in Wargrave!
73.	Kyle Stoney-Channon	Reading, United Kingdom	
74.	Lucie Jolly	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
75.	Ruth Beale	Twyford, United Kingdom	Delays cost lives.
76.	Elizabeth Miller	Twyford, United Kingdom	
77.	Reem Ingleby	WARGRAVE, United Kingdom	
78.	Emma Theron	Wargrave, United Kingdom	

	Name	From	Comments
79.	Derek Neave	Salford, United Kingdom	bcos i believe this station should be kept open as the area between maidenhead and reading has no fire cover for 20minutes once this station is closed
80.	William Clark	LYNCHBURG, VA	
81.	Carol Wendy Milligan	WARGRAVE, United Kingdom	We live just behind the Fire Station and we know how busy they can be, being called out at any hour of the day or night. It is ridiculous to even consider closing this Fire Station. They have closer access to the A4 and the A321 than the other Fire Stations, most likely enabling them to have an earlier ETA. It is most reassuring to know that we have their efficient service so close at hand.
82.	Patricia Vazquez	Mexico City, Mexico	
83.	Richard Annetts	Reading, United Kingdom	My family have been involved with three fire service for many many .years
84.	Michela Evans	Reading, United Kingdom	Simply want to keep my family and other families safe and believe if there was a fire in local area and no wargrave fire station, lives could be lost while waiting for a fire engine from further away. You can't put a price on a persons life.
85.	Jsckie Pearce	Reading, United Kingdom	Safty of people
86.	Michael Weal	Reading, United Kingdom	
87.	Samantha Symons	Henley on Thames, United Kingdom	My ex husband and my son live in Wargrave and should any fire happen I want them to be safe and for them to be reached in and emergency as quickly as possible .
88.	Natalie Jordan	Wargrave, United Kingdom	Lives, turn out will be longer in our area
89.	Liz Sealey	Wokingham, United Kingdom	I have family in wargrave and would like to know they are safe.
90.	Matjaz Bratus	Ljubljana, Slovenia	
91.	Anna Cox	Twyford, United Kingdom	Retained firepersons at small stations get to fires v v quickly.
92.	Mike Buckland	Wargrave, United Kingdom	Timely emergency response within our community; backup service to neighbouring communities
93.	lucy Calverley	Reading, United Kingdom	
94.	Derek Richardson	Wallsend, United Kingdom	
95.	Jane Jordan	Reading, United Kingdom	Local fire service asset to community
96.	Lauren Tanfield	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
97.	Sonia Hulett	Mansfield, United Kingdom	Because my dad was a fireman at this station

	Name	From	Comments
98.	Candice Kinnear	Reading, United Kingdom	It's a local service that is needed to save lives!
99.	Jeremy Mai	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
100.	richard thomas	Wargrave, United Kingdom	I live in Wargrave ! Lives will be lost if appliances have to travel from further away.
101.	Rahul kumar	hyderabad, India	
102.	Clare R	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
103.	Maria Winterbottom	Reading, United Kingdom	Fire Stations are an important service with so many things they are able to do to help and assist but mostly they can be the saviour in a life threatening situation such as house fire or vehicle accident/fire and should not be a service compromised in any way shape or form. To think this one is to be shut down is outrageous and nonsense... Why is it the government always closes or reduces funding in areas which are necessary. Maybe cut the MPs wages and you can then afford to keep services which are important and necessary to protect everyone and don't forget tax payers money should be used appropriately, I would pay more if it went to the right places and not to benefit some useless MPs who do nothing but earn big bucks. Also if you need funding then stop allowing such big banks (bailed out by tax payers)meeting their stupid amounts of bonuses.
104.	Jennifer Jones	Wargrave, Berkshire, United Kingdom	
105.	Chris Tracey	Wargrave, United Kingdom	When my pub caught fire they were there in minutes not hours
106.	Marie Matthews	Reading, United Kingdom	
107.	Jess Ban	Edmonton, Canada	
108.	Sharon Gater	Paignton, United Kingdom	
109.	David Austen	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
110.	Christine Goodland	Paignton, United Kingdom	I was born and grew up in Wargrave and this is a cause that matters to me for the safety of the people of Wargrave and local area
111.	Caroline Browne	Torquay, United Kingdom	I lived and grew up in Wargrave...I knew Tony for a lot of years...even though.. I don't live there now...I have never forgotten my roots or my friends...it is very important for Wargrave to have its own fire station...Please don't close it...Lives and homes will be put at risk if it closes ..
112.	Tim Webb	Torquay, United Kingdom	

	Name	From	Comments
113.	Kathleen Webb	Devon, United Kingdom	
114.	Nick Wood	Reading, United Kingdom	Safety!!!
115.	Lorraine Perry	Wantage, United Kingdom	We lived in Wargrave for 25 years, my husband was a fireman at Wargrave station, it is very important to have cover for the community, we now live in Wantage and we have a fire station here, one of the reasons we moved here was because of the fire station
116.	Barry Webb	Walton on the naze, United Kingdom	Born a d bred in wargrave lived just up the road from the firestation good luck with your petition, safety of people in the village is paramount.
117.	Damien Moody	Reading, United Kingdom	
118.	Katharine Evans	Quepos, Costa Rica	
119.	Graham Ingleby	Reading, United Kingdom	If there is a fire in the village then I would like to know the fire brigade could get there ASAP and not have to battle through traffic
120.	Judy Pibworth	Reading, United Kingdom	It plays a important part both in the village and supporting the surrounding villages, surely it is paramount for them to remain, no way can Maidenhead attend quickly if there was a problem in the surrendering areas it is ludicrous to shut the station.
121.	Diane Evans	Wokingham, United Kingdom	I was born in Wargrave many years ago. The fire brigade is an integral part of village life providing fast efficient help to those in need. Quick on the sport service is most important in rural communities.
122.	Paul Kelly	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
123.	Wayne Nash	Schwerte, Germany	Because I served at the station for many years and I realized how important it was to have a local fire station ,appliance and crew from the local area! Who knew the local area and it's not so easy to find locations very well!
124.	Sieglinda Du Preez	East London, South Africa	
125.	Dina ManyIssues Smith	NEWINGTON, NH	
126.	Daniel Wood	Reading, United Kingdom	
127.	Aoife McDonogh	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
128.	Susan Atkins	Reading, United Kingdom	Removing this station leaves a huge and expanding residential area too far removed from rapid help when needed.

	Name	From	Comments
129.	Dean Cooper	Reading, United Kingdom	It's our only local station,keep it local
130.	Ryan Boreham	Reading, United Kingdom	
131.	jo hall	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
132.	Austen Williams	Wargrave, United Kingdom	This service is part of the village, but more importantly this service saves lives. The thought of waiting for a crew to arrive from Maidenhead or Reading if the was a serious incident fills me with dread, and is frankly ridiculous. This service saves lives!
133.	Amelia Williams	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
134.	Andy Ward	Reading, United Kingdom	
135.	Julian SUNLEY	Tadley, United Kingdom	My p
136.	Carly Gooding	Twyford, United Kingdom	Local station
137.	Andrew Callaghan	Reading, United Kingdom	To save lives
138.	Sally Hitchman	Twyford, United Kingdom	Local fire service is important.
139.	Sheila Belli	Reading, United Kingdom	
140.	Arron Jordan	Reading, United Kingdom	Because I live in Wargrave & it saves lives.
141.	Michael Green	Reading, United Kingdom	
142.	Heather Annetts	Reading, United Kingdom	Cuts cost lives and jobs
143.	Helen Dedman	Twyford, United Kingdom	
144.	Peter Scate	Windsor, United Kingdom	Ex fireman
145.	Jill Nixon	Wokingham, United Kingdom	I work in this village.
146.	Alison Richards	Woodley, United Kingdom	
147.	Liz Mileham	Twyford, United Kingdom	Road congestion in Reading & Maidenhead will delay arrival of an engine to Twyford/Wargrave areas
148.	Kristine Wilson	Dereham, United Kingdom	Because it is needed.

	Name	From	Comments
149.	Tracy Shepherd	Henley on Thames, United Kingdom	Cut backs are increasing risk to lives in communities as they consolidate precious services
150.	Jo Holder	Reading, United Kingdom	
151.	John Flen	Woodley, United Kingdom	
152.	Carol Hudson	Wargrave, United Kingdom	Feel very strongly that we need a fire engine close at hand in case there is an emergency and that closing our fire station is a retrograde step.
153.	sandie evans	Ruscombe, United Kingdom	This is our closest firestation so obviously would reach here first if needed. Very large population of elderly within this area - time is lives.
154.	Sarah Symmonds	Maidenhead, United Kingdom	Even though I live in Maidenhead I feel the outside community need this service as it is important in the fact that if it's not there lives in the area might not be saved
155.	Debra Hemani	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
156.	Lindsay Yapp	Reading, United Kingdom	
157.	Aideen Jones	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
158.	Annette Harris	Reading, United Kingdom	It could be my house!
159.	Rebecca Strode	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
160.	Izzy Savage	Reading, United Kingdom	It makes me feel safe knowing they are close by in a emergency for me & my daughter & we need to keep services in our village that we are proud of.
161.	Adam Sokolowski	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
162.	Carol Milligan	Wargrave, United Kingdom	Our village needs to keep its excellent fire service and its also close at hand to assist Maidenhead, Reading, Twyford, Sonning, etc. and has easy access to the M4 to attend fires and accidents. It is a busy Fire Station and would be greatly missed if it were to go. Please keep it open!
163.	William Milligan	Wargrave,, United Kingdom	It could mean the difference between life and death. Knowing how long it can take on the A4 to get to Wargrave from Maidenhead or Reading, or even Wokingham, it would be ridiculous to rely on their services. Wargrave is the most central place to have a Fire Station anyway. Surely it's just common sense to keep it open?!

	Name	From	Comments
164.	Samantha Symes	Reading, United Kingdom	Born and bred in Wargrave, the fire station has always been a vital service as it sits between Reading & Maidenhead so takes that first response whilst waiting for another unit. Why take the risk with lives and adding more pressure to a great service by taking this station away
165.	Nicola Britton	Corfu, Greece	My dear family live in this village, please keep the fire station open.
166.	Rebecca Ellis	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
167.	Martin Sandall	Twyford, United Kingdom	Local community
168.	Janette Vorster	Twyford, United Kingdom	Closest fire station to where I live
169.	Linda Beecroft	Twyford, United Kingdom	
170.	Sally Saker	Twyford, United Kingdom	
171.	Hannah Wood	WINNERSH, United Kingdom	I work in Twyford and worry about how long it will take for a fire engine to get to Twyford if Wargrave Fire Station is closed.
172.	Anne Frewin	Reading, Berks, United Kingdom	Because when I phone 999 for a fire tender I want it asap and not come from Maidenhead!!!
173.	Sheila Lawrence	Reading, United Kingdom	We need a fire service closer than Maidenhead or Reading
174.	Annalise Beynsberger	Bracknell, United Kingdom	
175.	Paul Burton	Reading, United Kingdom	I don't want to lose the fast response my local fire station can give.
176.	Marion Ager	Twyford, United Kingdom	
177.	Greg Scholes	Ruscombe, United Kingdom	We should not let people's lives be endangered by having to wait when we have a service on our doorstep
178.	Matthew Galloway	Twyford, United Kingdom	The minutes difference between Wargrave and another station could cost lives
179.	Wendy Cadtle	Benahavis, Spain	Wargrave needs this. It serves villages such as Twyford where my family live
180.	Clare OShea	Twyford, United Kingdom	
181.	Debbie Horley	Twyford Reading, United Kingdom	
182.	Tim Burden	Twyford, United Kingdom	
183.	Graeme Blythe	Wargrave, United Kingdom	

	Name	From	Comments
184.	Danielle Willmott	Twyford, United Kingdom	
185.	Kelly Hynes	Reading, United Kingdom	
186.	Caroline James	Twyford, United Kingdom	The closure of WARGRAVE FIRE STATION will mean a Fire Engine will have to travel from Maidenhead or Reading to reach the village. DELAYS COST LIVES
187.	Joanne McIntyre	Twyford, United Kingdom	
188.	Kirstie Miller	Twyford, United Kingdom	
189.	Emma Hager	Twyford, United Kingdom	
190.	Kate RAMSAY	READING, United Kingdom	
191.	fIONA PRICE	READING, United Kingdom	
192.	Rachel Riley	Reading, United Kingdom	
193.	Caroline Rose-Newport	Twyford, United Kingdom	I've been in a minor fire and know how important it is for firefighters to arrive quickly. Twyford needs Wargrave station especially as the traffic could seriously delay a crew from Maidenhead.
194.	Phil Newport	Twyford, United Kingdom	Closing these fire stations puts lives at risk. It increases response times and puts pressure on main fire stations. It removes a vital community resource and after closing Sonning station it leaves Twyford covered from a long way away.
195.	Clair Maxwell	Reading, United Kingdom	
196.	Gareth Jones	Twyford, United Kingdom	I live in Twyford, no other fire station is closer.
197.	Lynn Evans	Barry, United Kingdom	I was born and lived in wargrave and this fire station is able to respond locally and to the a4 when accidents happen. I grew up feeling safer knowing they were minutes away not half not hour or more
198.	janet rea	reading, United Kingdom	
199.	Emma Ramskill	Twyford, United Kingdom	Because otherwise we in Wargrave and Twyford are at risk due to the distance of other fire stations.
200.	Rhys Davies	Reading, United Kingdom	

	Name	From	Comments
201.	Nick Chaplin	Twyford, United Kingdom	This is my local fire station and its closure could mean delays for a fire engine to attend a fire in the area.
202.	Simon Ramskill	Twyford, United Kingdom	It can take a long time to get form Maidenhead or reading - someone could die
203.	Carla Hammond	Twyford, United Kingdom	
204.	Debbie Howton	Twyford, United Kingdom	Because it's so local to me and an invaluable service
205.	Vicky Rushton	Reading, United Kingdom	
206.	Kimberly Sharpe	Reading, United Kingdom	Safety !
207.	Karen Corke	Reading, United Kingdom	
208.	Venetia Croxford	Twyford, United Kingdom	Rural areas need local facillities. My parents lived in Crazies Hill and several times had cause to need the fire brigade from Wargrave. Who knows what would have happened should they have had to wait for assistance from Reading or Henley.
209.	Hazel England	Twyford, United Kingdom	Wargrave is closer to us so could reach us faster in an emergency
210.	Linda Oliver	Twyford, United Kingdom	Reading and Maidenhead are too far from Twyford
211.	Charles Wickenden	Reading, United Kingdom	
212.	Kirsty McIlwee	Twyford, United Kingdom	
213.	Samantha Barnard	Hare Hatch, United Kingdom	
214.	Meredith Vigh	Charvil, United Kingdom	
215.	Sarah Oates	Twyford, United Kingdom	
216.	Zanna Jeary	Reading, United Kingdom	It is vital to keep this essential service not just for Wargrave but all the surrounding villages.
217.	Neil Strange	Reading, United Kingdom	Closing the fire station is an unacceptable risk to local lives.
218.	Julie Jackson	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
219.	Niall Costello	Reading, United Kingdom	The government need to stop cutting costs where it's needed... if the population was getting smaller I could understand but it's getting bigger and we are building more homes...

	Name	From	Comments
220.	Gordon Hood	Whistley Green, United Kingdom	
221.	Hilary Beavan	Hare hatch, United Kingdom	
222.	Jocelyn Robinson	Reading, United Kingdom	Because Wargrave fire station is the nearest to my house and family. If that was closed it would take a lot longer to bring in an engine to my house from Maidenhead or Wokingham.
223.	Sebina Hokonya	Reading, United Kingdom	
224.	Lily Bergeret	Reading, United Kingdom	
225.	Viv Willson	Reading, United Kingdom	Because we live in the middle of Maidenhead and reading, and Wargrave could mean life or death.
226.	Peter Stansfield	Wargrave, United Kingdom	
227.	Abby Lacey	Twyford, United Kingdom	
228.	Pippa Schutz	Wargrave, United Kingdom	Time is of the essence in emergencies and losing our local fire station would be detrimental to the community.
229.	Philip Forster	Reading, United Kingdom	
230.	Amanda Tiplady	Wargrave, United Kingdom	I live in Wargrave
231.	Sophie Brown	Charvil, United Kingdom	
232.	Kathryn Laing	Charvil, United Kingdom	Closest firestation to Charvil & surrounding villages.
233.	Aurelie Farreyrol	Machtum, Luxembourg	
234.	Susan Kershaw	Twyford, United Kingdom	We live in Twyford
235.	Sally Kernick	Ruscombe, United Kingdom	If there isn't a nearby fire station to attend local fires it could potentially be a life or death situation. Reading and Maidenhead are a good 20 minutes away without traffic. There are thousands of houses in this area and more being built so this service should be expanding not reducing.
236.	Helen Ferguson	Reading, United Kingdom	I live in Twyford and feel that a service more local than Reading or Maidenhead is required
237.	Dominic Matthews	Wargrave, United Kingdom	Need a local fire station to put out fires and be part of the community - the local schools regularly have visits to teach kids.

	Name	From	Comments
238.	Stuart Baker	Wargrave, United Kingdom	Wargrave fire station is very important in our community, and has attended to many emergencies over the years with great speed. To lose that safety is just unthinkable.
239.	Elizabeth May	Ruscombe, United Kingdom	
240.	Yvonne Powell	Reading, United Kingdom	Given the sheer number of houses in and around this area it is vital that emergency services are not cut
241.	Jung Lim Yun	Charvil, United Kingdom	
242.	Stephen Maskell	Charvil, United Kingdom	