

APPENDIX 1

DRAFT RESPONSES FROM THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY TO THE ISSUES RAISED BY CONSULTEES REGARDING THE DRAFT RISK REDUCTION PLAN ACTION PLAN 2009-10.

Risk	Comment/Issue Raised	Draft response from the Authority	
	REVIEW OF OFFICER COVER		
1	View that this proposal might as well be removed as the officer cover review has already been completed and the operational assurance system is already underway.	As in previous years, respondents have commented from two opposing perspectives:	1)
1	View that this proposal would appear to have been accepted already, without proper consultation.	a) that the Authority must have already taken its decisions because the level of detail accompanying the proposals leaves no room for amendment following consultation, or	2)
1	View that this review has already been started despite the proposals being still out to consultation.	b) that the Authority is unsure of its own proposals because the level of detail accompanying them is insufficient.	3)
1	View that the actual review has already been carried out and is ready to be implemented, making the consultation period a waste of time.	The Authority is seeking a balance between presenting outline proposals for people to contribute their own views on how they would like to see the proposals being developed, and continuing to work on some of the detail in order to assess the impact and tease out possible obstacles. The details of this proposal are still being developed in light of comments received and ongoing discussions with stakeholders.	4)
1	Comment from the Fire Brigades Union that it does not disagree with the concept of the proposal in improving the response option and providing operational assurance at incidents.	The Authority is encouraged by this expression of support.	5)
1	Complaining that there was insufficient opportunity to evaluate the details about these proposals that were presented towards the end of the consultation period. Will need more time to reflect in order to engage properly in the process.	Ongoing evaluation and incremental changes would be necessary as part of the process of introducing this change.	6)
1	Agreeing that this would enable investment in other areas of the Service.	As previously stated, details of the full impact of changes – including the impact on the budget - are still being developed, taking into account comments arising from the	7)
1	View that the proposed officer cover would cost more in salaries, transport, training, accommodation, IT and transitional costs.		8)

Risk	Comment/Issue Raised	Draft response from the Authority		
1	Agreeing that officer cover should be reviewed, but concerned that the additional cost of changing to the new system will have to come out of other budgets, and that the RDS staff have not had a say in scrutinising the proposed arrangements for their impact on the RDS.	consultation.	9)	
1	Reminding that it is important to include full costings in the plans, including salary on-costs which can be significantly higher than salary costs alone.		10)	
1	Concerned that the rota system underpinning the new structure would be unworkable and a serious risk for the organisation.	These concerns and reminders have been noted. All aspects will be carefully assessed before and during implementation as part of change management processes.	11)	
1	Warning that the proposed changes are fraught with danger and should be reconsidered.		12)	
1	Reminding that staff who don't work shifts may not be available when RDS staff want to contact them, or when the public want to have Home Fire Safety Checks (evenings and weekends).		13)	
1	Concerned that line management responsibility for RDS stations will be confused during the roll-out of this proposed change, that implementation will cost a considerable amount, and that clarification over the ALP posts is needed first.		14)	
1	Suggesting that the data used in developing the officer cover review does not take into account the length of time that officers attended incidents. Had they been relieved after 4 hours, more would have been needed to be called in.		15)	
1	View that an opportunity is being lost to use RDS staff as a flexible option to bolster the operational cover.		16)	
1	Suggesting that a full review of all Operational and Tactical officers should be conducted prior to finalising this proposal about in order to ensure that all aspects of their day to day work have been considered.		17)	
1	View that the proposed changes should take into consideration the career paths available for staff to progress through the Service.		18)	
1	Any work regarding a new officer structure should be suspended until the consultation process has concluded.		The Authority is keen to avoid inertia and to maintain an open and constructive dialogue with stakeholders throughout the period of implementing change.	19)
1	New officer cover arrangements should not be introduced until such time as the public and other stakeholders give positive feedback.			20)
1	New officer cover should involve the Fire Authority, management and the Fire Brigades Union.	21)		

Risk	Comment/Issue Raised	Draft response from the Authority	
1	Offer from the Fire Brigades Union to participate in any Officer review.		22)
1	Concern that if more Home Fire Safety Checks are to be conducted by staff on green book terms and conditions and by redeployed Aerial Ladder Platform (ALPs) staff, this would affect the workload and remuneration of RDS staff.	The Authority is grateful for these reminders that change in any part of the Service's operations inevitably impacts on other parts, and remains committed to getting the balance right.	23)
1	Concern that there is an imbalance from over-emphasising Community Fire Safety activities at the expense of training in order to maintain operational readiness.		24)
1	Suggesting that cover should be based on 'worst case scenarios', not on likelihood.		25)
1	Concern that the theory will not be matched in reality.	These concerns have been noted.	26)
1	Concern that changes to rotas may be challenged on the basis of family friendliness or health and safety considerations.		27)
	AERIAL LADDER PLATFORM (ALP) POSTS		
2	Concern that the public may not be aware that if the 12 operational ALP posts are not redeployed to Community Fire Safety posts, they might be replaced instead by staff on green book terms and conditions, which in reality would mean a reduction in the number of posts on grey book terms and conditions.	The Authority is committed to providing excellent services to a discerning public who rightly expect to receive high quality services at an affordable price. Balancing efficiency, effectiveness and economy is also an established government expectation. By continuing to consider new approaches, the Authority is able to balance the advantages of innovation against those of replicating past arrangements. Members of the public are not being misled.	28)
2	Expressing a view that the Service cannot afford to ignore cost savings that could be made by using Retained Duty System (RDS) Staff to undertake Home Fire Safety Checks instead of more expensive wholtime staff redeployed from the Aerial Ladder Platforms.	The Authority is committed to making sure that appropriate resources are allocated to relevant tasks, taking into account a broad range of factors that could affect the level of service provided to the public and the relative effects on the budget.	29)
2	Suggesting that redeployed Aerial Ladder Platform staff on better terms and pension arrangements would be an expensive way of delivering Home Fire Safety Checks when the Service already has Community Fire Safety practitioners on green book (local government) terms and conditions.		30)
2	Making the case for crewing some or all of the Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs) as RDS appliances at their current locations or at RDS stations.		31)

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2	Concern that the adopted 20 minute response standard for aerial appliances will not be achieved unless the Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs) are primary crewed.		32)
2	Concern that change to the primary crewing of Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs) would result in 'a logistical nightmare', especially during large incidents and when RDS availability is insufficient, or in cases where there are no trained ALP operators amongst the RDS crews.		33)
2	Complaint that there are insufficient details upon which to base an opinion.	As previously stated, details of the full impact of changes are still being developed, taking into account comments arising from the consultation. The Authority, through its senior managers, will be providing information and maintaining a dialogue with stakeholders throughout the period of implementing change.	34)
2	View that this proposal should be withdrawn as no-one understands the implications of the proposal. Information regarding resilience, selection, shift pattern, transport, place of work, training, etc. should be provided.		35)
2	Complaint that there are insufficient details available, and some unanswered questions. Will the 12 members of staff in these posts remain on station, or be moved to Community Fire Safety full time? Will the number of posts on watches be reduced? Will jobs be created on 'green book' (local government) terms and conditions replace them?		36)
2	Asking whether redeployed ALP staff would change from their current shift system to a day duty system.		37)
2	View that a decision not to primary crew Aerial Ladder Platforms represents a retrograde step by the Authority.		38)
	CATERING ARRANGEMENTS		
3	Questioning whether there is a need for the public to cast their opinion on whether or not there is a cook on station for personnel?	Risk Reduction Planning balances community and corporate elements of the Authority's operation, acknowledging that neither exists in isolation.	39)
3	View that this is a minor issue that should have been dealt with as a management issue rather than a two-year aim within the risk reduction plan. Adding it here trivialises the process.		40)
3	Asking whether the main issue is one of financing of cooks, or the productivity of crews returning to station to fit breaks in during the working day?	The public may not consider the Service's catering arrangements to constitute a risk, but how the Authority spends public money is important to reducing risk more broadly.	41)
3	Agreeing that fire crews at incidents for extended periods should be fed, and that the inconsistency of catering arrangements between stations should be looked into.		42)
3	View that having cooks on stations presents no risk to the public.		43)

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3	View that most people who live, work and visit North Wales have more important issues to concern them than fire station cooks.		44)
3	View that this proposal should be removed from the document immediately on the basis that it has no relevance to the reduction of risk.		45)
3	Asking since when have station cooks been a risk to the Service?		46)
3	Complaining that insufficient details have been provided upon which to base an opinion.		47)
3	View that a review of existing catering arrangements will not reduce risk to the Service or to the public.		48)
3 & 4	View that there is no purpose to including proposals 3 and 4 as these do not constitute any risk to the public.		49)
	WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW RISK		
4	Agreeing that this is a good idea, but questioning whether it really needs to have public approval to continue.		50)
4	View that this work should not be left for the 2009-10 RRP – findings should be fed into improving service delivery before then.		51)
4	Reminding that working groups have been set up in the past and questioning whether this proposal really needs to be included in this document.		52)
4	View that this proposal should be withdrawn from the document.	The Authority is encouraged by the support for this work to proceed.	53)
4	View that this proposal cannot be classed as a risk, and should be removed from the document.		54)
4	Supporting the establishment of a new working group for the 2010 – 2011 Risk Reduction Plan.		55)
4	Request from the Retained Firefighters Union (RFU) to be involved in the working group to make sure that its members' interests are taken into account.		56)
	GENERAL COMMENTS		
G	Pointing out that following the decision not to progress with the review of rostering arrangements for wholetime fire crews, these wholetime staff are now being paid overtime to maintain cover at RDS stations. A review of rostering arrangements would have done this without financial implications.	The Authority is keen to make progress now with improving services delivered to the public, to learn from the past but not being distracted into inertia.	57)

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G	View that another year has passed with little progress being seen by Retained Duty System (RDS) employees, which is demoralising for the biggest and most flexible section of the workforce.		58)
G	Suggesting that the Authority should find out how many people actually read the Risk Reduction Plan document.		59)
G	View that proposals in the consultation document should not be progressed until the consultation process has concluded.		60)
G	Dismayed at the poor quality of the consultation document and keen that the Authority should look into why such a poor document was prepared and published for the general public.		61)
G	View that the risk reduction plan should be re-written to incorporate investment in the RDS.		62)
G	View that core values should be adhered to with future risk reduction plans.	These comments have been noted. The Authority is committed to, and strongly encourages, adherence to the core values at all times.	63)
G	Complaint that core values have been ignored because staff have not been consulted on decisions that affect their lives and their careers.		64)
G	Complaining that if the Fire Authority undertakes a consultation process, the outcome of that process should not be taken for granted by the management team.	These comments have been noted. The Authority is committed to maintaining a constructive dialogue with all its stakeholders.	65)
G	Complaining that unlike the review of the Management Structure in 2002, the Fire Brigades Union has not been given an opportunity to contribute suggestions, ideas and alternative solutions apart from attending a presentation by management at the end of August.		66)
	ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTIONS		
Alt	Suggesting that staff representing the Service at partnership meetings should be at least of Group Manager level to be effective.	The Authority is grateful for these alternative proposals for inclusion in the RRP. Given the timescales to meet the requirement to publish this annual action plan by 31 st October 2008, completely new proposals will be considered for inclusion in the next one to be published by 31 st October 2009.	67)
Alt	Encouraging the Authority to formalise the group tasked with RDS issues within its Risk Reduction Plan, with a properly resourced RDS champion to make strong recommendations and strategic direction.		68)
Alt	Suggesting that as flooding is becoming a bigger issue for crews, it should be included in the plan because it needs funds to buy equipment, PPE, training and RDS availability.		69)
Alt	Suggesting that more operational issues should be included, following numerous tragic events of firefighter deaths.		70)

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Alt	Concerned that despite the inclusion of co-responding in the national framework document and several years of discussion, this has not yet been trialled by NWFRS.		71)
Alt	Asking that the Authority picks up the issue of improved IT access to electronic information at RDS stations to support performance management.		72)
Alt	Questioning why a review of catering arrangements has been included as a risk when re-grading of support staff has not.		73)

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