

# Pre-consultation responses



Dear Councillor,

Thank you for your time in reading this and with the current situation I will keep this extremely brief:

1. Please considered carefully and in detail all the changes proposed in the IRMP. There are significant consequences to the Service and impacts upon the employees.
2. I do not believe that full due consideration can be given to these proposals and certainly no valid public consultation during the current national emergency.
3. I urge you to read the materials made available to you by all those invested in the process and consider postponing any attempt at a robust Public Consultation at this time.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself or the FBU my representative body should you require anything further.

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Firstly I'd like to thank you for taking the time to read this e-mail and hope you are safe and well in these uncertain times.

I am aware that you will be part of a Fire authority meeting tomorrow and wanted to touch base with you before then.

I'm concerned that many of the proposals put forward to you by ESFRS are to the detriment of the service and put members of the public at risk.

You would, I'm sure, had lots of massaged statistics paraded in front of you proving the points that they want to prove, which looks good on paper that is formulated by civilians and bean counters in ivory towers. But that is not the real world.

Less fire engines, less firefighters and reducing station status can only mean one thing, a worsening service putting lives at risk.

They will tell you it's not about money, but anyone of any intelligence will know it is.

The finer details of the proposals will be fought over by rep bodies and firefighters who's lives will be turned upside down with less money and worsening conditions.

But, what I am asking is for the Fire authority is to use common sense and suspend the IRMP until this pandemic is over.

It is not possible to hold a public consultation whilst people are worrying if their loved ones are going to live or die.

You can not get a true feeling from the public when they have bigger problems.

I am disgusted that I even need to lobby this point, and shame on ESFRS for not taking it upon themselves to suspend the process whilst the country is in crisis.

Once again money comes before lives.

Attached<sup>12</sup> is some factual information formulated by fire service staff (operational not civilian) that actually work on the front line, please take the time to read and digest.

I hope this helps you in formulating your decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> ESFRS Draft IRMP 2020-2025 – FBU Briefing Paper

<sup>2</sup> FBU 2019 Demand Management Review Birds Lifts AFA's Response

Dear Councillors,

I am writing to you as you are about to be asked to agree to commencing public consultation in relation to ESFRS draft IRMP proposals.

Attached<sup>34</sup> is a briefing paper produced for members of the Fire Authority by the Fire Brigades Union, so that members may understand and be sighted on the FBU's position in relation to the proposals set out in the IRMP.

Please take the time to read the attached document. Also attached is our previously submitted response to the Demand Management Review proposals.

I would also wish to add, that myself, the FBU and other members do not believe that now is the correct time to be consulting on any IRMP let alone one that sets out such drastic changes to how services are delivered. We are in the midst of the Covid pandemic. Now is not the time to be changing the Service. I also feel that the changes proposed are overly excessive and damaging to the staff within the service and the community that we serve.

I'm concerned that many of the proposals put forward to you by ESFRS are to the detriment of the service and put members of the public at risk. I'm sure, had lots of statistics presented to you proving the points that they want to prove, which looks good on paper that is formulated by civilians who have never worked for ESFRS or an emergency service. We have to remember that is the real world, less fire engines, less firefighters and reducing station status can have a massive impact to all communities within East Sussex, and a worsening service putting lives at risk.

They will tell you it's not about saving money or cost cutting, but anyone of any intelligence and who can read between the lines will know it is.

The finer details of the proposals will be fought over by rep bodies and firefighters who's lives will be turned upside down with less money and worsening conditions. But, what I am asking is for the Fire authority is to use common sense and suspend the IRMP until this pandemic is over.

I am disappointed that I even need to lobby this point, and shame on ESFRS for not taking it upon themselves to suspend the process whilst the country is in crisis.

The FBU are of the opinion that the IRMP must be delayed and reviewed post Covid pandemic. Should the Fire Authority go ahead with public consultation there may well be legal challenges to the legitimacy of the consultation under the IRMP framework document. Plans will also most likely have to be reviewed and changed, due to changes in the roles of firefighters in society.

Please support our view and postpone the IRMP consultation until the full affects of the pandemic are known.

Kind regards,



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<sup>3</sup> ESFRS Draft IRMP 2020-2025 – FBU Briefing Paper

<sup>4</sup> FBU 2019 Demand Management Review Birds Lifts AFA's Response

Dear CFA Members

I'm a long serving employee of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, with twenty plus years as an operational Fireman.

I'm aware that tomorrow, you will be undertaking a Fire Authority meeting (hopefully remotely). During this meeting, I know that the agenda will include discussions and voting upon the upcoming Fire Service I.R.M.P.

My concerns initially are that, the Service is currently stretched during the Covid-19 Pandemic, with requests being made on operational staff to help other public services and the pressure being put on staffing levels due to isolation. I feel the situation should force you to suspend/postpone the implementation of the I.R.M.P and any discussions about it, until this Pandemic is over.

I feel the service, Nationally and Locally will emerge from this pandemic looking quite different from how it currently stands. Any premature implementations of "efficiency cuts" may be detrimental to the public and Public Service employees you currently represent. I'm aware that any changes to the Fire Service and how it looks, now and in the future, should be open to public consultation. The public should have the opportunity to scrutinise your decisions in an open forum, not just remotely or via a hastily constructed questionnaire. For these reasons, please consider your vote tomorrow.

Your decisions effect all of our futures.

Yours

With Regards  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Councillor Roy Galley

I am writing to you with my concerns about the management team within ESFRS still going forward with the IRMP. I have served within esfrs for over 25years working as the Watch Commander of the on call staff on a day crewed station as well as working as the Watch Commander on a shift station in the city. I believe that working within roles across different work groups I have a good understanding of the concerns of my work colleagues. Due to the fact of covid 19 and the changes it has within our communities, the risks have changed since the IRMP was completed now people are staying home the possibility of more mental health issues more unemployment people in poverty and lots of other unknown consequences to all of our lives.

Surely it would be wise to wait until this pandemic is over and review our IRMP to get a better picture of what resources are needed and how best to serve our community.

Please reflect on this tomorrow when you have your meeting.

Kind Regards  
[REDACTED]

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I am writing with regard to the above and the proposed changes set out in this review that are set to be discussed at the Fire Authority Meeting tomorrow.

I understand it is your aim to request tomorrow that the Fire Authority agree that these proposals are submitted for public consultation.

I am well aware these proposals were in the making before the outbreak of Covid-19, but in my opinion to continue with the public consultation whilst in the midst of a global pandemic is appalling.

No one knows how long or how far reaching this pandemic will be and what the impact on every aspect of society will be in the short medium or long term.

Right now, the general public need reassurances that all their emergency and public services are fully available, accessible and reliable during this time and in the future.

In case you are not aware, my husband is a Firefighter on [REDACTED]. After passing his 16 week recruits course he was posted to [REDACTED] Fire Station and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED], he has worked [REDACTED] for his entire service to date [REDACTED] years.

To you, my husband may just be a number on your payroll, but he is and always has been fully committed to his role within ESFRS [REDACTED]. It is my understanding from his colleagues that he is an experienced, fully competent, reliable, solid Firefighter, and is extremely proud to be.

The proposals put forward in this review I find personally insulting and are totally disregarding not only my husbands personal commitment to the service, but to all Day Crewed Wholetime Firefighters, Crew Managers and Watch Managers.

It makes no sense to me to disregard the extensive experience, skills set, specialist qualifications, topography and knowledge of the much wider station ground, that your Wholetime personnel have as a collective - not to mention the relationships that have been built within the community - to essentially have your most experienced front line personnel working office hours Monday to Friday 09:00 - 17:00.

Moving onto the RDS element of the review and your proposal to have RDS cover evenings and nights from 17:00 to 09:00, and weekends from 17:00 on a Friday to 09:00 on a Monday. I am very interested in how you see this working, when, without the Wholetime personnel, there are gaps across the service for availability during these times, as well as a lack of qualified and competent Firefighters, JO's and drivers. You already have all this availability, qualifications and commitment from your Day Crewed Wholetime personnel.

Myself and our children have lived alongside the current working pattern for [REDACTED] years and essentially live with the alerter too. This is no easy way of life and requires us all to be on board and committed to the requirements of my husbands career. Something we want to do, are committed to doing and are extremely proud to do.

Referencing back to the current global situation we all find ourselves in, to have the additional worry, stress and anxiety of these proposals and their financial impact, is crippling and having a serious effect of our well being. We as a family lived through the stress and anxiety of the Rural Review in 2010/2011 and that was a very difficult time.

In conclusion, I am strongly asking you to reconsider putting these proposals out for public consultation.

Yours sincerely  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Councillors,

I am writing to you as you are about to be asked to agree to commencing public consultation in relation to ESFRS draft IRMP proposals.

Attached<sup>56</sup> is a briefing paper produced for members of the Fire Authority by the Fire Brigades Union, so that members may understand and be sighted on the FBU's position in relation to the proposals set out in the IRMP.

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<sup>5</sup> ESFRS Draft IRMP 2020-2025 – FBU Briefing Paper

<sup>6</sup> FBU 2019 Demand Management Review Birds Lifts AFA's Response

Please take the time to read the attached document. Also attached is our previously submitted response to the Demand Management Review proposals.

I would also wish to add, that the FBU and our membership do not believe that now is the correct time to be consulting on any IRMP let alone one that sets out such drastic changes to how services are delivered. We are in the midst of the Covid pandemic. Now is not the time to be changing the Service. Post pandemic, the Fire Service nationally may change, we are already seeing firefighters take on additional roles including driving ambulances, transporting deceased, testing of sick, and the distribution of PPE.

The FBU are of the opinion that the IRMP must be delayed and reviewed post Covid pandemic. Should the Fire Authority go ahead with public consultation there may well be legal challenges to the legitimacy of the consultation under the IRMP framework document. Plans will also most likely have to be reviewed and changed, due to changes in the roles of firefighters in society.

Please support our view and postpone the IRMP consultation until the full affects of the pandemic are known.

If you have any questions then please ask.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

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Dear Cllr Dowling,

Firstly many apologies for leaving this until the last minute but ESFRS have not made it very easy to obtain relevant information.

My name is [REDACTED] and am an Uckfield resident who served with ESFRS [REDACTED] before retiring [REDACTED]. I was fully involved in the working groups to deliver the crewing models for ESFRS during the previous two Operational Response Reviews and feel that I am suitably qualified to raise serious concerns regarding the proposals for service delivery in the current IRMP. My main focus during these processes was to ensure that a guaranteed and effective emergency response to rural communities was maintained.

If not to late, I would be grateful if you could review the attached<sup>7</sup> document prior to tomorrows 'virtual' meeting and consider my concerns.

I will partake in the formal consultation process once launched.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]



## **ESFRS Draft IRMP 2020-2025 - FBU Briefing Paper**

First and foremost, the FBU are of the opinion that the IRMP must be suspended until the immediate threat and potential impacts on the Service from the Covid-19 pandemic have passed.

Nationally and locally the Service may look quite different when we emerge from the pandemic. Currently we are seeing firefighters carry out new and varied roles including the driving of ambulances, delivering of PPE, transportation of deceased to mortuaries

This is not the time to be looking to make cuts or savings to the Service.

Response to proposals

### **Proposal 2 - Day Crewed to Day only**

- This is not supported by our members. It will produce over reliance on the retained system. Historically at many RDS stations it has proved very difficult to recruit and retain RDS staff.
- No immediate response cover at weekends. No guaranteed on-call/RDS cover.
- Reliance on surrounding shift stations for cover.
- Service have actively depleted RDS numbers by filling wholetime posts with RDS rather than externally publicly recruiting.
- The Service shall be hoping that the current day crewed (who shall lose their day crewed allowances) shall take up secondary contracts as retained firefighters. This is not possible without a collective agreement with the FBU. The agreement would need to reduce rest periods under the working time directive. We do not support reducing down rest periods, as the rest periods ensure staff are fit for work.
- Negative impact on work life balance of those working day only, even more impacted if staff take on secondary contracts.



- Should day only personnel not be willing or able, due to the lack of a collective agreement, to take up secondary contracts as RDS staff then the Service shall not be able to implement their plan effectively.
- Day crewed changing to day only will impact both pay and pensions negatively of our members.
- Bexhill is the busiest daycrewed station in our family group of similar Services.

### **Proposal 7 - Changes to Wholetime Shift Stations**

- A change to flexible rostering is not supported by our members. Our members do not wish to change their shift pattern. Many have spouses who work around the fixed shift pattern of 2 days followed by 2 nights, and childcare is often planned around the shift pattern.
- The change will negatively impact work life balance. It will negatively impact families of firefighters and in particular female firefighters due to impacts on childcare having to be booked in fixed places and days.
- This system has failed in many authorities around the country.
- Flexible rostering removes the team aspect of emergency work. All reports into emergency and military cite team cohesion as vital for safe working. Flexible rostering removes this team aspect as firefighters will work with differing people each shift. Strengths and weaknesses of individuals will be unknown until they manifest themselves at an emergency.
- Flexible rostering crewing negatively impacts training, competency and training does not take place as a team but as individuals. It is extremely hard for organisations to monitor and ensure competency when delivered individually instead of as a team.
- Flexible rostering does not remove the need for overtime or fixed term contracts, in fact nationally when flexible rostering has been introduced there has been an increase in overtime bills and fixed term contracts. This has been evidenced in our own region in the South.
- Proposal goes against current work that is ongoing between FBU and Service regarding training and competency delivery and recording.

### **Proposal 4 & 5 - Changes to Crewing in Hastings Area - Specialist Appliances (Aerials)**

- This is a reduction in cover, being badged up as an improvement.
- Aerial cover will not be guaranteed.
- Services data does not support reduction in any cover in Hastings area as a whole.
- Aerial cover appliances will not be permanently crewed, but will be shared crewed with a fire appliance at Hastings.

- Post Grenfell moving to shared crewing of Aerials is poor decision making in the opinion of the FBU. Fire Services that have shared crewing of aerials are reviewing their decisions post Grenfell. ESFRS are putting the public at greater risk with this proposal.
- Reduction in cover in the Ridge area as proposed downgrading to daycrewed from wholetime shift. Impacts included reduced cover at night, increased attendance times in Ridge and surrounding rural areas.

### **Proposal 3 - Changing the number of stations that have 2 Appliances**

- This proposal cuts second appliances at Stations where the second appliance is dependent on RDS firefighters.
- Historically, ESFRS have failed to recruit, failed to retain, and moved RDS into wholetime positions instead of running wholetime recruitment. The FBU have repeatedly stated this is shortsighted. What the FBU predicted has now happened. These appliances are often not available due to the above failings to be able to crew them. Had suitable recruitment and retention taken place, they would have been available more often and utilised more often for operational response.
- This is a direct cut to resources and will negatively impact firefighter and public safety.

### **Proposal 6 - Previous IRMP decisions**

- The FBU supports the proposal not to pursue changes to fire appliance size, for smaller appliances. The pressures on space due to work around contamination and environmental changes mean that more space on appliance is needed, not less.

### **Lift Releases and Trapped Birds**

- FBU have previously submitted a formal response to these proposals. See separate letter titled ' FBU 2019 Demand Management Review dated 15/08/2019.

### **Reduction to Personnel Across the IRMP Proposals**

- Reduction of 6 wholetime posts per day crewed station - 36 total posts.
- Reduction of RDS across service due to removal of secondary appliances.
- Reduction of 4 - 5 posts due to shift change to wholetime shift stations.



# Fire Brigades Union

## *South Eastern Region*

**Brigade Secretary: Mark Brown    Brigade Chair: Simon Herbert**

Richard Fowler  
East Sussex Fire Service Headquarters  
Malling House  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
BN7 2DZ

15/08/19

### **RE: Demand Management Review, Lifts, Birds, AFA's**

The Fire Brigades Union have reviewed the documentation provided by the Service regarding the Demand Management Review. The scope of this review appears cover operational response to incidents involving birds, lifts and those generated by Automatic Fire Alarms.

With regards to the recommendations in the briefing paper regarding incidents involving birds it is the opinion of the FBU that the current policy should continue.

With regards to the recommendations in the briefing paper relating to incidents involving lifts then the FBU are of the opinion that the current policy of responding to lift incidents should continue. The current task analysis also appears suitable as there are currently no technological solutions that would allow numbers to be reduced. However, we do acknowledge that work can be done to potentially reduce the numbers of these incident types. That work could include working with premises that have a high number of incidents relating to their lift equipment.

The FBU do not support the current weight of attendance to Automatic Fire Alarm activations, when the policy was originally brought in by ESFRS the FBU challenged the decision and we continue to not support the decision. For clarity, the FBU are of the opinion that the full PDA (predetermined attendance) should be sent to alarm activations for the potential incident type ie fire.

The FBU obviously support work that seeks to work with premises to reduce false alarms, however when an emergency response is mobilised then it should be the full incident PDA.



Finally, the Service appear to ignore the fact that at every attendance, irrespective of incident type or whether it is a false alarm, there is an opportunity for the Service to interact with the community they serve and should be making every contact with the public count. Every time an appliance is mobilised it has the potential to also deliver a fire safety message, to review an SSRI for the premises or carry out other fire safety work.

Therefore, we do not view these incident types as a burden on resources but rather as opportunities to carry out engagement work, use equipment in an operational environment, enhance knowledge of the built environment and improve both firefighter and public safety.

Kind regards,

Simon Herbert

East Sussex FBU Chair

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

Dear Sir,

Re: East Sussex Fire & Rescue IRMP proposals

Proposals 2 and 3, if implemented, raise serious concerns to me about the ability of the service to deliver an effective and appropriate emergency operational response to rural communities and I offer the following observations for your consideration.

### Proposal 2 – Changes to day crewed duty stations

*We are proposing to change staff contracts at our current Day-Crewed fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield.*

*On these stations, firefighters work a combination of “positive” and “standby” hours over a 24-hour period. Positive hours are worked on the fire station and standby hours are worked on-call from a location within a five minute ‘turn in’ time of the station (in the same way our on-call firefighters do). Day-crewing duty systems are traditionally used by fire and rescue services where risk levels are lower e.g. less urban. Two workgroups or “watches” of six staff cover an average of 42 daytime hours per week and remain on-call during evening periods helping to **guarantee** fire engine availability.*

*We propose to introduce a ‘Day Only’ crewing model, maintaining a 24/7 response from these stations through a different crewing pattern. In this arrangement, full time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover in the evening and at weekends. The differences between the existing system and day-only is that day-only does not require the fulltime staff to provide additional on-call cover during the evening and weekends. This cover is provided by existing and newly recruited on-call staff (see Proposal 1). The evidence in our ORR demonstrates that this is an effective way to provide emergency cover on these stations based on community risk.*

*The community would still have a 24/7 response from these stations **but it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend** in these station areas. However, our analysis shows this represents a very small number of incidents and that this proposal **will therefore have a negligible impact on: - community risk - attendance standards - incident demand***

### Concerns

The current Day Crewed duty system was designed to **guarantee** the availability of at least one fire appliance from each of the six stations 24/7 by the fulltime firefighters being available on call at night. ESFRS state that they will invest in on call firefighter recruitment. However, the recruitment and retention of on call personnel has been an issue that fire services nationwide have been struggling with for many years and is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon.

Therefore, as their own on call appliance availability statistics demonstrate, ESFRS will be **unable to guarantee** a fire appliance from any of the current day crewed stations during evenings and weekends.

### **Evidence from neighbouring FRS**

West Sussex FRS changed their crewing arrangement to that now being proposed for Day Crewed stations in East Sussex. A freedom of information request provides the evidence below that the system is totally flawed.

Note; Given that WSFRS have recently over to a new data system, we have not yet carried out any in depth analysis on data collected from December 2019 using this system. As such, the data we have provided covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018 to the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

#### **1. How many FRS incidents in West Sussex have been attended by East Sussex fire appliances in the past 12 months?**

In the period from 01/12/2018 to 30/11/2019 appliances from East Sussex attended 146 incidents. In the four stations you specifically mentioned the following numbers of attendances were made:

<b>Station</b>	<b>Number of Attendances</b>
Haywards Heath	6
Burgess Hill	13
Shoreham	88
East Grinstead	19
Other WSFRS Stations	20

#### **2. What is the average availability of appliances during on call periods (evenings & weekends) at; Haywards Heath, East Grinstead, Burgess Hill and Shoreham fire stations.**

For the period between 01/12/2018 to 30/11/2019 the average availability of each station is as follows:

<b>Station</b>	<b>% Availability</b>
Haywards Heath	59.13%
Burgess Hill	58.42%
Shoreham	28.06%
East Grinstead	39.04%

There is a glaring lack of evidence to show that East Sussex can ensure sufficient on-call personnel to provide appliance availability for evenings and weekend considering that West Sussex have been consistently failing.

**The current proposal 2 fails to guarantee the availability of any fire appliance during evenings and weekends outside of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings whereas West Sussex FRS do at least maintain some 24/7 cover in the North of the county at Crawley and Horsham.**

### **Proposal 3 - We are proposing to change the number of fire stations that have two fire engines based on them**

*This proposal will move our resources to where they are most needed. Every one of our 24 stations has at least one fire engine and nine have second fire engines. A further three stations have a hybrid system where a “maxi-cab” fire engine is provided; this has a larger cab to carry more firefighters and is currently considered a two-fire engine station.*

*We have reviewed the usage and availability of these fire engines against the risk profile and concluded that the second fire engines at day-crewed and on-call stations are under-utilised. We also want to reclassify our “maxi-cab” stations as single fire engine stations. This affects: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield; along with the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst.*

*Benefits to the community. The public would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean that, if a second fire engine was required at an incident, it would come from a different fire station. However, this is often what happens already, particularly during the daytime when low on-call firefighter availability means that these fire engines are only available between 10-50% of the time.*

*The Operational Response Review data suggests **the risk impact from these changes is low**. We have analysed historical data including demand, levels of activity, on-call availability and what each incident was and what we did there. 74% of all calls in these fire station areas are dealt with by one fire engine. The following chart shows the average number and type of incidents attended by the second engines in 2017/18. **This includes calls into other fire station areas which can be as high as 50% of their total calls.***

#### **Concerns**

Removing the very fire appliances that, if crewed, ensure the resilience of the service, will at times result in the resources of East Sussex undoubtedly being stretched beyond breaking point whatever the statistics say. *Resilience: the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness*

The service is using the ‘statistical’ reason of ‘under-use’ of these fire appliances to scrap them without fully explaining all of the reasons for their lack of operational use to the public. The main reason being the fact that they are simply not available due to the lack of available ‘on-call’ firefighters. ESFRS management has itself been major contributor to this issue over recent years by utilising its on call firefighters to fulfil full time roles on temporary contracts to plug gaps in full time crewing thus rendering them unavailable for their on-call role. Gaps created by the services’ own policies and its failure to adequately identify future staffing requirements and not recruit full time firefighters for nine years as they slashed posts during the austerity measures.

The statistics show a three-fold increase in standby moves across the service over the past ten years. These are where fire appliances are moved to provide emergency cover in other areas due to incidents elsewhere and sometimes require additional moves behind each appliance. In theory the reduced number of emergency calls across the county should bring about a reduction of required cover moves. However, reasons for the increase include; non availability of on call fire appliances and more fire appliances required to deal with incidents due to the reduced crewing levels on each appliance following the last round of cuts!

## **Residential Developments**

*Details of residential development sites have been considered through our analysis, as well as the number of households that are to be constructed on a given site. These are illustrated in the individual Station Risk Profiles, along with a description as to whether they are inside or outside of attendance standards. The total long-term proposed additional growth works out to a total growth of 2,729 additional dwellings per year. All of the currently proposed residential development sites sit within our attendance standards. We have used our 'Housing Development Risk Assessment Toolkit' (HDRAT) to predict the increase in risk as a result of future housing and population growth and to assess whether we need to change how our resources are deployed in the future. The planned growth in the largest development areas are deemed to be well-below average dwelling fire risk.*

## **Concerns**

The Risk Profile for Uckfield claims that there are 'no residential allocations'! The authors of the report have conveniently chosen to ignore the 1,000 dwelling estate currently being built at Ridgewood Farm "which is not included as this is a former allocation as part of the old Wealden Core Strategy (February 2013)". Add to this the potential for a further 1,500 dwellings following the rejection of the Wealden local plan, Uckfield, along with other Wealden towns could see a huge increase in properties and residents. See Uckfield News story [Uckfield Fears New Big Housing Estate Plans](#)

Information regarding the household demographic is based upon the census of 2011!!

## **Summary**

If approved, these proposals will pare emergency response and resilience to the bone and can only have a detrimental impact on rural communities across the County despite the IRMP claiming to 'Prepare For A Safer Future'.

Irrespective of the statistics, it is physically impossible maintain the same level of response and resilience to when removing so many fire appliances and crews from the system and extending attendance times.

Given the current state of the country (and the world) and its total lack of preparedness, I would suggest that it is time to stop relying on statistics alone to manage our public services and to start basing decisions on the real world needs and expectations of the tax paying public.

We have emergency services 'in case' we need them and while prevention and protection measures can help reduce the risks, we pay for and expect an effective emergency response in our moment of need. Hiding behind manipulated statistics to further reduce resources and emergency cover across the County make this IRMP the most dangerous document that ESFRS has ever produced.

I believe the old term is 'there are lies, damned lies and statistics'!

Yours faithfully





# Public Consultation responses



Could you just confirm how you are consulting with residents who don't have access to the internet? I know there are options on line, but for those that can't get online in the first place, how are you contacting them?

Thanks  
[REDACTED]

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Hi,

It is extremely disappointing to find that after ten years of cuts and in the middle of a global pandemic you are going along with this process. Having strong public services is saving lives right now. If they are weaker then more people die. People who are doing important jobs outside of their role while other people quarantine safely are being told they will lose their jobs if this goes through.

The survey is also done poorly in a leading and biased manner. A transparent attempt to get positive answers to ambiguous questions. This is presumably my tax paying for someone to produce this? What a disgrace.

Proposal 1 question implies we are getting more fire engines overall when they are actually reducing. All you are doing is setting a new lower limit for a very specific time of day. This is disingenuous and leading.

Proposal 2 question is worded to imply that if you disagree with introducing flexible crewing you also disagree with investing in training and prevention and protection teams. You cannot link these two items in one questions. I could go on but feel it would be a waste of my time as like most consultations of these type they have been carried out with the goal of pushing an agenda.

How about you guys fight back with the government. Openly discuss the funding cuts from central government with the public. Ask them to back you against the government cuts.

This capitulation is obscene and galling to see you waste tax payers money on a deeply flawed survey and consultation.

Please protect our fire service and employees and the public as you are charged with doing.

Thanks  
[REDACTED]

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Hello,

I am emailing after learning of Safer Future ESFRS proposals which would essentially cut resources and staffing for our fire service.

I have friends within the fire service who have explained that the proposed increase in fire appliances actually amounts to a reduction of available appliances as many of these would be shared across services.

A proposed shift to 'day-crews' amounts to a loss of hours, earnings, and operational staffing of fire crews.

At this time of uncertainty, it is imperative that our fire service is better funded and increased, not reduced. I would happily pay more tax to be able to provide the fire service with the support they need to continue the excellent work they do across the board.

Kind regards  
[REDACTED]

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Firstly thank you for having saved our home in 2017.

I called 999 at 16:00 and by 16:10 the fire was under control, we would have lost the house had it not been for the amazing work of the local professionals to whom we are grateful.

The cost still came in at £1.6m.

Recently the Fire at the George Hotel demonstrated the need for local appliances, without rapid response we could have lost large parts of the Citadel.

Whatever happens please retain the highly skilled resources at the same or higher level in Rye.

Kind Regards

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I note that you are considering revising all fire services in East Sussex.

Why not take the French approach and combine Fire and ambulance services. The Pompier System in France works very well. Why duplicate premises; vehicles and sometimes personal. I know that unions might be opposed to this sensible system. Why not try it on a trial basis in some places. Uckfield would be ideal to amalgamate Fire; Ambulance and Police including para medics on one site!

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To all decision makers,

I oppose the plans to reduce the fire service coverage for Hastings.

I disapprove most strongly that this is being carried out in what appears to be a covert manner.

Hastings is a growing town with the erection of many more homes and the conversion of bigger houses into flats. as a result we need more emergency service cover not less.

Please do not make this cuts.

Yours sincerely,

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Dear Sirs,

I grew up in Peacehaven from 1972 – 1991 and my parents still live in the house that I grew up in. In more recent years I have lived in Newhaven for a few years and more recently moved to Seaford.

Even though Seaford has it's own Fire station, Peacehaven does not and relies upon the Fire station in Newhaven and a fire engine sent from Roedean fire station.

Well, being someone that works in Hove and until recently has travelled both to and from work by either bus or car I can safely say that especially during rush hour periods between 4pm – 6pm, the traffic especially through Rottingdean is quite constant. Even with using the bus lane, I doubt that a fire engine would be able to get to where my parents live in the eastern end of Peacehaven before the house is burnt down and their lives are lost that has come from the fire station at Roedean.

Now, if there is more than one fire that the fire station at Newhaven is called out to go too, then quite naturally it would go to one that is within Newhaven as it is closer than say to the other call which maybe a property in Peacehaven. This point concerns me, as my parents are in their mid-70's with difficulty with walking and your actions by reducing the fire service capability will almost certainly in the situation that I have described have placed my parents at best in danger and worse they would have died due to the lack of time it had taken a fire engine to get to the property.

If you are going to reduce the number of fire engines at Newhaven, can I suggest that a Fire station is setup in it's place within Peacehaven that can then cope with the requirements of the people living in Rottingdean, Saltdean, Telscombe Cliffs and Peacehaven. Otherwise, I can see many people such as myself in future wanting to claim back the money being paid as part of the council tax back as the fire service would not be doing the role that it was setup to do, which is save lives.

I must confess I am not a conservative supporter and never will be as in the past when they have made cuts such as these, it has cost people's life's when more money should have been put into the Fire, Police and Health services. Why do you think that Colonel Tom Moore felt that he needed to be raising what was originally £1000 and has turned out to be over £29 Million!

Please think about the cost to people's lives, before you make a decision on cutting the fire engines at Newhaven Fire station.

Yours faithfully,

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Reading the proposals of cuts to East Sussex Fire & Rescue service are appalling, how can cutting 10 fire fighting appliances be safe when in East Sussex there countless building of dwellings going on thus increasing the amount of residents & therefore putting more lives at risk ... making these cuts will cost lives

These cut should & must not happen

Yours sincerely

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This is the first time I have contacted councillors with regard to decisions to be made. I feel so strongly against the proposed cuts to a public service we all rely on. To even consider cuts to emergency services at this time of global crisis is obscene. Does this mean that as a councillor you consider money is more important than peoples lives? The public have put their hands in their pockets to give more money to emergency services with charitable contributions. This shows the high regard that they are held in. What planet are councillors on to even consider these proposals. You are so out of touch with your constituents that the chances of your re-election is extremely remote. I also noticed that there is no mention of any cuts to the corporate empire of so called "support staff". Ask the public if they would rather have a Best Value Officer or a firefighter I know the answer. We are all watching you with interest to ensure you do the right thing. Thank you for you time.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

- it seems obvious to me that rather than reduce or try to close this fire station, it not only needs to stay but be enlarged, simply due to the very large increase in new houses and therefore the population increase and business developments in the immediate area.

The service therefore needs to be improved, especially with the additional homes and circumstances and to certainly not be reduced which can only result in the obvious loss of both service, property and most probably lives.

I do wonder who has made this decision and whether it has already been fully approved? If so I believe this is a very short- sighted decision, and can only, in the end, put lives at risk.

Please do let me know about the " who and why" this is being considered?  
Thank you.

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Dear Carolyn

I am rather disappointed by the proposal that will mean ESFRS no longer attend when asked by the various wildlife rescue services to help release birds which are trapped in netting.

The implication seems to be that this kind of call-out could result in resources being unavailable to deal with human crises (how often has this actually happened - do we know?). I realise that there are many people who

have an irrational hatred of pigeons and gulls and won't give a jot, but there are many of us who will be as distressed as the trapped birds if they are left to die.

More importantly, I suspect this will result in an increase in injuries to people who are desperate to save these creatures but who lack the proper equipment to do so.

Frankly, this looks like totally unnecessary penny-pinching, and is a potential PR disaster.

Incidentally, call-outs might be reduced if people could be dissuaded from putting up netting in the first place, especially if they are not going to maintain it properly.

Hope you are keeping well,

kind regards

[REDACTED]

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Dear Carolyn,

Rumour and I hope it is only a rumour has it Easy Sussex County Council is proposing to cut all fire services in Newhaven and Seaford.

There is still a lot of industry in Newhaven should a fire break out needing all hands on deck and then a house fire occur in Seaford what happens?

Common sense tells you you cannot leave Seaford, Alfriston, Denton, Newhaven with on protection. What is the point of building a first class new fire station in Newhaven only to waste all that money. (Warwick House a prime example of money wasted!). Let's not make another mistake.

I hope you and every councillor for this area will defeat any motion to cut the fire service any further.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

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Dear Councillor

I am writing to you as a local resident and business person.

Recently, I've learnt that East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service are proposing some very worrying cuts to the amount of fire cover they currently provide.

As a resident of Newhaven and someone who runs a small dance school in Peacehaven, I have never needed the Fire Service in a professional capacity, but like most council taxpayers, I know it is there should that need arise. Exactly like an insurance policy.

Apparently, as a member of the Fire Authority, you will be asked to vote on taking away one of the fire engines at Newhaven Fire Station. Not only that, but reducing cover at weekends. I think this means there will be no full-time firemen on duty for the whole weekend and we will be waiting longer for a fire engine to arrive?

I was directed to and have read some of the literature from the Fire and Rescue Service, which is stating that this is somehow more efficient and making me safer?

Personally, I fail to see how getting rid of a fire engine, (And Newhaven's is one of 10 fire engines that they wish to get rid of!), makes me, or the people of Newhaven, or East Sussex at large, any safer at all!

The school I run is in a village hall and is for young children between the ages of 3 and 18. It is open every Saturday morning and afternoon. I think I can expect a fire engine to arrive there, perhaps 10 minutes later than it otherwise would have if you vote these changes through? That could mean the difference between life or death to anyone trapped by a fire!

It would be nice to receive a detailed explanation, from you, as to why you think these cuts are justified and to why you think I will be safer?

If it is to save money, which I suspect is the real case, will I be receiving a rebate on my council tax for the reduced service?

I have signed a local petition which has nearly reached 10,000 signatures and I note there are hundreds of comments from local residents, all of whom appear very angry about this.

Finally, I would urge you to think very carefully before you agree to these needless cuts and perhaps see if there is another way to deliver the service without such a severe reduction in cover.

Yours faithfully

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I am contacting you as a very concerned resident of East Sussex living in Seaford, regarding the proposed cuts to the Fire and Rescue services in the eastern part of the County. As members of the Fire Authority, I ask that you seriously reconsider these proposals to reduce the effectiveness of the front line service. These cuts will seriously adversely affect the response times of the service and will certainly put local residents lives at risk.

I have contacted my MP with my concerns and she has answered saying, "the government has not asked for this reduction, and the funding is adequate. I am not sure why these proposals are on the table and have asked for an explanation from the Authority"

The fact that this is being done during the Covid-19 crisis, when the public can only have a limited input into theses proposals is a disgrace. Should these cuts take place, I can only say that I hope you never need the services of our highly respected Firefighters on the ground.

Regards

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Dear Councillor,

I write to you regarding the wide ranging proposed changes to East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

I recognise the need for any organisation to periodically review, reassess and re-evaluate it's role and objectives and of course to work within budget constraints and save money.

I do not accept the need to continue with a public consultation while the country suffers the most serious threat in our lifetime. To carry on with this consultation at this time is beyond comprehension and totally unacceptable.

I urge you to reconsider the timing of this consultation at what can only be described as a global crisis. Clearly no-one knows what the future holds now. The only thing you can now do to retain the credibility of East Sussex Fire Authority is to withdraw the consultation immediately.

Thank you,

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Good Evening Fire Authority Members,

I would like to raise my concerns at the way East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service appear to manage public monies, I have outlined several areas which i would be grateful if you could look into and challenge, especially with the newly advertised integrated risk plan which has been proposed.

1, /The public were informed back in 2016 that the Newhaven Fire Station was to be sold in order to build a combined Fire & Police Station in Newhaven ( Saxon House ). Since the new station has been operational the old station in Fort Road has been used for storage and vehicle park for all and sundry why has the building been left for all this time before being offered for sale. The station valued (estimate) at£0.515in 2018/19 yet in 2020 is being

offered at the same value. Not sure if you are aware but since the new station has been operational the crews are not able to do water drills in the yard due to complaints from neighbouring properties also concerns were raised because of water damage to the historic walls. The old station had many years of life left, adequate parking ,good access and plenty of space to carry out training unlike the new station with very limited facilities.

2, East Sussex originally had there own control centre yet we the public was informed that the way forward was for East and West Sussex to combine the Operational control centres and that it would save money West Sussex County Council were not happy with the service being provided by East Sussex Fire & Rescue service they withdrew there co operation One of the reasons given by WSXCC was the equipment used by ESXFRs was not up to the standard expected. Now I see that ESXFRS has entered into another agreement with Surrey Fire & Rescue Service to provide the same service for the brigade. The amount of money being wasted by ESXF&RS on this communication system should be fully investigated . Over the last few years many thousands of pounds have been spent on this system.

3, Revenue budget programme monitoring 2019/20 , I am concerned that Marlie Farm incident in 2006 is being used as an excuse for the lose off appliance and equipment which surely insurance covered the loses in 2006/7 why some 14 years later are we using this as an excuse.

4, Fuel tank replacement £400,000 surely in this day and age like the other emergency services such as Police and Ambulance service fuel could purchased by fuel card from service stations thus giving the service this savings.

5 Combined Aerial Rescue Pump i note in the same revenue report that £25,000 for improvements to this vehicle yet in the proposed integrated risk management plan this vehicle is proposed to be replaced this in its self i question as the vehicle is only 6 to 7 years old yet special appliances generally have 15 year life span this vehicle replaced an aerial which we was told was the way forward and would save money for the public purse yet we are now looking at spending in excess off £700,000 to replace the CARP with a vehicle we originally had, I take it this vehicle not fit for purpose as i also note it is not included in the appliances allocated to Eastbourne Fire Station.

6, Compressed foam (CAFS) i note that the cost of foam has increased and when used effectively is good fire fighting media, however i must question the amount of fires in East Sussex that appear to be total burn outs is this value for money if the end result is the same.

7,I note that once again all cuts proposed appear to be at the operational front line yet once again as per the last integrated risk plan NO senior officer or Principal officer reduction, surely with such a small fire and rescue service is this required bearing in mind that this level of management has been in place since the 1970's when East Sussex Fire Brigade joined with Brighton Fire Brigade along Hastings Fire Brigade and the reduction of appliances and equipment and Firefighters.

I look forward to your reply and comments.

Regards



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Good morning,

I have read, with some dismay, that you all voted to approve the public consultation on cuts to the provision of fire cover in East Sussex. I have to say that, in my opinion, the timing of this consultation is beyond shameful - did you all think that you could just slip it under the radar while the entire population of the UK is in the grip of the Covid pandemic?



Furthermore, I believe the proposals are fundamentally flawed in that they are based on what, at best, is lies, damned lies and statistics and, at worst on data that I would suggest is misleading. In short, a classic case of smoke and mirrors.

The proposals may be dressed up as a 'plan to transform the Service' but they are cuts to the Service. As a former employee of ESFRS I could explain, in great detail, why these cuts present a very real danger to the community of East Sussex, but I do not intend to do that now. If any of you are interested to hear those reasons, you are very welcome to contact me.

I realise that in politics you are required, on occasion, to follow the party line - this is not one of those occasions. This time, there is an expectation on the part of every single person who voted for you, that you will do the right thing and vote against the proposals put forward by the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Senior Leadership Team.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

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To whom it hopefully concerns,

I am writing to you as a Wholetime Firefighter of over 22 years service for East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS), [REDACTED]. I am also the Fire Brigade's Union (FBU) Representative for my station.

My intention is to write this in 'layman's terms', as I wish to emphasise the gravity of ESFRS plans and do not want to lose you in terminology etc.

You may or may not be aware that ESFRS have (on 23/04/20) had their plans for the next few years 'okayed' by the Fire Authority to go out to public consultation. Myself and my fellow firefighters working for ESFRS vehemently oppose these proposed changes and are further saddened by the way ESFRS are attempting to push them through in the current climate of COVID 19 and 'social distancing'. In 'normal times' some public meetings would at least be held to present their plans. However, in the current climate, 'public consultation' will be confined to members of the public sourcing the information on the internet. The way this generally works is that if no-one questions/challenges the plans (or are potentially unaware of them in the first place) then they are deemed acceptable and implemented.

The FBU have already voiced their concerns, both regarding the plans and the timing of this process, but calls (and proposals by 4 members of the Fire Authority) to postpone until we are out of this pandemic have been ignored (outvoted).

ESFRS management are telling YOU (the public) that the service provided will be more efficient and that you will see little or no change. THAT IS NOT TRUE.

ESFRS plans include:

1) The downgrading of The Ridge Fire Station from 24/7 response to Day Crewed.

This will mean: Slower response times during evenings, night time and early mornings to residents local to The Ridge and the outlying villages. These are exactly the times (from my experience) when fire deaths are more likely to occur.

2) The removal of the 2nd Fire Engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield (so only 1 Fire Engine left at each of these stations).

ESFRS is a relatively small brigade and thus have always been heavily reliant on Retained (Part-Time) firefighters. Due to Government led cuts over recent years, resulting in the depletion of Wholetime firefighters in East Sussex, this service have been plugging the gaps on Wholetime stations (no wholetime recruitment took place for 8 years) by offering Retained firefighters short-term contracts and, in many case, wholetime contracts. This is 'robbing

Peter to pay Paul' and has unsurprisingly led to Retained fire stations not having enough staff to crew their fire engines on countless occasions, as their workforce have already been poached to fill spaces on Wholetime stations.

ESFRS management are telling you that such proposed changes reflect their analysis of risk within the county. The real reason they wish to remove the 2nd appliances from these stations is that they can rarely crew them (for the above reason). What is really required are MORE RECRUITMENT OF RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS but this is too difficult. It is not that ESFRS is adapting it's cover to fit the risk..... more a case of changing it to fit it's own shortcomings.

This plan would also mean that when fire engines are sent to stand by at busier stations (eg. in Brighton, Eastbourne or Hastings), when the crews from the busier stations are delayed for some time dealing with an incident, the crews that are standing by are more likely to be leaving their towns without fire cover, as even if there are enough personnel available..... they do not have another fire engine to use.

3) Day Crewed Stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven and Uckfield would change from being crewed 7 days a week (08.30-18.30) to being crewed Monday-Friday, with Retained firefighters covering all evenings and weekends.

ESFRS admits this will slow the response to incidents over weekends.

This is also most likely to be unworkable. Plans to enhance the pay of Retained firefighters (at these stations only) will surely not convince them to sign up to working virtually all their weekends and evenings throughout the year, to the detriment of their families. As mentioned before, there are limited numbers of Retained firefighters already.

4) Changing the shift patterns of Wholetime firefighters on 24/7 shift stations from current 2 days then 2 nights shift pattern to 'self-rostering'.

This is another means to cut firefighter jobs and would leave 24/7 shift stations even more dangerously low on personnel than they are currently. ESFRS says this would be more 'family friendly', but firefighters at these stations have always been fully satisfied with their current shift pattern.

In total, the plans of ESFRS, including those mentioned above, could mean a loss of more than 60 Wholetime firefighters and 10 Fire appliances, as well as the loss of some specialist capabilities.

With the planned reduction in fire appliances, I believe it is important that you are aware of the following: Due to cuts over recent years, the likelihood now is that the majority of fire engines will arrive at an incident with the bare minimum crew of 4 (would more than likely have been 5 or even 6 in years gone by). When turning up to a house fire it is generally deemed unsafe to enter the house to extinguish the fire and potentially rescue people inside without a certain number of firefighters, and this number is usually not reached until the 2nd fire engine arrives. Obviously, moral and social pressure and the desire to carry out our job means that we will make every effort to deal with the job at hand, but quite clearly the fewer firefighters and fire engines available, and the further they have to travel puts both US AND YOU in greater danger!

Lastly, with all these cuts planned for your fire service..... nobody knows how much ESFRS need to save!

If you wish to have your say regarding what your local firefighters see as reckless, irresponsible and dangerous cuts, please contact

your local Fire Authority Members, MP, Councillors

Also visit: 'Save East Sussex Fire Service - Stop The Cuts' on Facebook

You can also email concerns to: [Consult@esfrs.org](mailto:Consult@esfrs.org)

Please feel free to come and speak to firefighters at your local Fire Station (maintaining 2 meters safe distancing of course).

Kind Regards and Stay Safe

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Dear Sirs

We experienced a horrendous barn fire on our family farm at 4am this morning. It involved our quad bike and our late fathers beloved tractor which unfortunately are no longer. It is not clear on the cause but it is being noted as suspicious. Our barn roof has also had extensive damage. The barn adjoining this stabled my little girls treasured ponies who are loved beyond measure and our farm dogs. Two fire engines attended from Crowborough within minutes and had the fire under control. We cannot praise or thank them enough for saving our barns, our animals and our belongings. Their professionalism shone through. If they'd been 5 minutes later it would have been a different story altogether.

I understand you've all voted to approve the public consultation of cuts to the fire service. If these cuts had already taken place then this morning we would have been lucky to have 1 fire engine attend, we also wouldn't have had the junior officers who attended today as they're both wholetime. This would have meant a whole different story for us as a family. It is likely we would have lost both of our barns, our animals, our belongings. We would have been comforting our little girls falling asleep crying tonight that they'd lost their ponies.

This is an unnecessary cut. The service right now is outstanding, a service to be proud of. Trained heroes saving lives and livelihoods. If these cuts happen how will 1 fire engine and retained firefighters respond to all the emergencies with the expertise we were lucky to receive today? I cannot imagine calling the fire service and being told there isn't a fire engine free to come to us or it's going to be 20 minutes to get to us. You cannot allow people to stand and watch fires burn their buildings and homes down. Please reconsider these proposals. I would be prepared to pay more council tax if these cuts are about finance and I'm sure many would agree with me.

If however you're still of the opinion these cuts are required I would be grateful if you could give me a minute of your time to reply and explain to me in order that I may have the opportunity to understand your personal view on the situation and how a potentially slower, less experienced, 1 fire engine crew (if any) this morning would have benefited us more than the amazing service we received.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

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Dear Councillor Lambert

Can I start by saying that I am very disappointed to hear you have decided to proceed with the consultation process at this time. I do agree that there should be a process to consult with the public of East Sussex over such dramatic reductions in fire appliances across the county. However the timing shows a lack of understanding of what the public of East Sussex are going through at this time, thousands facing financial difficulties, job security, redundancy, social anxieties, illness and loss of loved ones during this time, limited numbers being able to attend funerals the list is endless.

Firefighters are being asked to carry out extra duties putting themselves at risk and their families, this will add more stress to them having to think about new working patterns/hours and losing valuable resources.

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East Sussex resident/ Council tax payer

Dear Sir/Madam

Every Thursday we clap the NHS and all our vital key services and workers for all their hard work.

It has come to my attention that a major cut is proposed to one of our main and crucial services, The East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Link [fbu.org.uk](http://fbu.org.uk) April 27.

These proposals will be met with anger by the public, as they rely on this service on a daily basis for incidents big and small.

Fire Fighters are out on the front line helping in this crisis and are still responding to fires and other emergencies as well.

These proposals are dangerous under normal circumstances , but to put such a proposal forward amidst the Covid pandemic is completely shameful.

The cuts will have a detrimental effect on the fire fighters and their ability to rescue and help members of the public and must be stopped.

I also understand that the government has not asked for this reduction and funding is in fact adequate.

I will therefore send a copy of this e-mail to the government

Thank you

A very concerned member of the public

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Dear Cllr Galley

Firstly, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this as I know you are terribly busy.

I am writing to you today to express my deep concerns over the proposals East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) have put out in their IRMP. As a tax paying resident of East Sussex, I am very worried to see a proposal to remove seven fire engines and have three fire stations reduced to one fire engine status resulting in an overall loss of 10. The proposals to not have a permanent crew for height vehicles is badly thought out, especially after the terrible fire at Grenfell Tower. I am worried to see firefighter numbers reduced during an international pandemic when they are helping the ambulance service. Recently East Sussex has had several big fires, most noticeably the Claremont hotel in Eastbourne. I have read the data provided by ESFRS and noticed there is no data on the fire engine call outs from 2018/19 and 2019/20. I understand that a lot of work has clearly gone into this IRMP but a lot of statistic that are being used online and in social media cherry pick one year and do not use the most up to date information. The fire service and indeed the world is in a vastly different place now compared to how it was in 2009 when the data provided starts. I have read that nationally fires and calls to the fire service are going up and wonder what the data would look like if the latest information had been included?

I would also like to draw your attention to the removal of a 4x4 vehicle from Wadhurst fire station. I cannot understand why ESFRS or the fire authority would want to remove a resource that is used for off road firefighting or any situation a 4x4 is needed. Ashdown forest has large fires nearly every year and it is worrying to see that risk being ignored. I have also seen online that 2019 the UK recorded the highest ever amount of wildland fires in history. This really does not seem like the time to get rid of a vehicle like this when it is internationally recognised that climate change is going to be such a big factor in our futures. Please can I ask for reassurances that this particular point will be challenged and that you will indeed be recommending that this vehicle is not removed from service at Wadhurst fire station.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this.

Kind Regards,



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Dear Councillors

It has come to light that it appears you have been misled with massaged statistics presented to you regarding the proposals for fire service cuts.

What has been presented to you are statistics running up to 2018 this is misleading.

To give an example from January 2019 to January 2020 at Newhaven Fire Station there has been an increase in actual calls (recorded in the station call log) of 12.5%.

Now this is every time the station is called upon. Incidents on our station ground are up 6%.

This increase in calls is due to factors brought in by ESFRS recently for example the introduction of 4i technology, assisting SECAMB and the loss of an engine at Hove. This will not change, if anything increase in the future and who knows what duties will fall upon ESFRS due to Covid19.

This is just one example how we feel you have been misled and we would invite you as fire authority members to challenge the statistic that you have been fed and seek up to date actual facts.

As far as Newhaven Fire station is concerned the station ground we cover in the process of re-generation, 1000's of new homes are being built or in the planning stage. Millions have been spent on infrastructure (new road bridge under construction) to increase commercial viability with new businesses moving in to new industrial estates every day and the massive re-generation of the port.

Logic would tell you this is not the time to down grade the fire station, take away a fire engine and cut full time post by 50%.

As a station we would welcome engagement with the fire authority so you have a well rounded view of how the fire service actually works whilst we are in this period of consultation.

We look forward to your response.

  
Dear Carolyn

I am writing to you both as one of your Seaford South constituents and as a serving wholetime ESFRS firefighter.

I understand from colleagues that you may have voted recently to approve the baffling decision by the service management to push ahead with public consultation on an unprecedented and unnecessary series of cuts to local fire cover, despite the ongoing pandemic. Given the woefully low levels of public engagement with such consultations in the past, I am concerned that current events will push this review ever further to the periphery, meaning it receives even less scrutiny than it might otherwise have had. It is also impossible at this stage to predict what impact the pandemic might have on future funding arrangements and budgets, so the current proposals may be hopelessly out of date by the time the consultation is complete.

The loss of ten fire appliances from a service that has been praised recently by HM Fire Inspectorate for the efficiency of its resource allocation has already precipitated a major public backlash, as evidenced in the local press and on social media. This response is, I feel, entirely justified and is only likely to ramp up as the service continues to seek to implement the cuts. In view of this, I would respectfully ask you to reconsider your support for the decision to go ahead with the consultation and to back any future calls to halt the process.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,  


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Hi,

I am writing to you not just as a concerned resident of East Sussex but also as one of the county's firefighters. What is being proposed is endangering the lives of everybody. I have personally attended two house fires in the last 3 weeks which, had it not been for our second fire engine at Newhaven, would have resulted in disastrous consequences. It was due to the fact that we had our second fire engine that the incidents did not escalate. The numbers being shown are not true, also. It states on the website that Newhaven's main appliance was mobilised 423 times, in fact it was mobilised to 720 calls. We have our log book as proof of this. The numbers are being skewed to paint a different picture to you! Please find out the facts!

What is being proposed is just not going to work. I am an on call firefighter and with the new model, it is highly likely that myself and many others will have to resign. The hours will not work for those of us who are firefighters working around our regular jobs. It takes years to train firefighters to full competency and this loss of personnel risks many of the fire engines not being able to be fully crewed. We already give so much of our time to the fire service and this proposal could mean that we are working through the night and at weekends, whilst also having our regular jobs to do. I'm sure you can understand this is just not feasible.

You have a chief fire officer who has never been a firefighter. I urge you to please consult with us, the firefighters, who are working on the frontline and understand the catastrophic impact this could have to our communities. Find out the facts before you make your decision. Cuts cost lives.

Warm regards,

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Dear Sir,

It has come to my attention that there are plans by East Sussex County Council to downgrade the Ridge Fire Station from a 24/7 to a 'day crewed' response facility.

As a local resident I wish to object strongly to this proposal to reduce the crew by 50% during the evening, overnight and early morning...the most common times for emergency call out.

Conquest Hospital is less than a mile away and should a major incident occur there it is negligent to wait for 'on call' staff to arrive..from a much larger radius than in the past. There are also 2 large secondary schools and a primary school in the immediate vicinity that could also be at high risk in the morning or overnight.

It could be disastrous to cut these vital local services...as the present national disaster highlights. We have to be prepared for emergencies not scramble around after the event.

I would be interested to hear your views on this issue of our local security.

Yours faithfully

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Dear Councillor

I hope you are keeping safe and well.

I am writing to you as a member of the fire service. I have served from the age of 21 some 19 years ago, working [REDACTED], all in operational front line roles and all 19 years have been served in Hastings.

I understand that you are considering the IRMP recommendations which have gone to consultation. I fully appreciate the difficult position you and the management team are in, having to balance the efficiency savings, financial savings alongside the impact on individuals in the community.

The purpose of my letter is to explain the impact on a significant portion of the population in our area which I believe has not yet been expressed to you in the proposals you have been presented with. Please bear in mind I am talking with first hand front line experience.

Within Hastings we have 2 station, Bohemia Road and The Ridge. The IRMP suggests that downgrading the ridge to be a daytime only appliance would assist in increasing the response to the majority of vulnerable areas.

The ridge station has been located to ensure that the residents of the outlying areas such as Fairlight, Guestling and the areas between Rye and Hastings have a quick response when needed. Downgrading the ridge will result in these areas having a 5-10 min delay in response. You will likely have been told that a retained / day crew (who the proposal suggests will respond in an evening) will take a max of 5min to get to the station, get dressed and crew the appliance. Having been in charge of a retained crew in [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] years (in addition to my roles in Hastings) I can categorically tell you that this timescale is not accurate in reality, as the majority of calls I attended were nearer the 10min mark before a fire engine even left the station.

In my experience this additional 5-10min could be the difference between life and death in the areas I described above. The headline statistics which are spoken about show where fire deaths occur and not where there would have been a fire death had we delayed our attendance by 5-10min.

I recall a number of incidents where an increased attendance time would more than likely have resulted in a fatality. [REDACTED]

Leaving a fire for a further 5-10 minutes we know from experience and research has a devastating effect on the chances of survival and also increases the risk to our front line crews. If you are being told that there is a low risk in these geographical areas, then I would suggest the person telling you this speaks to [REDACTED], you can make statistics show anything, however speaking to those who know first hand and have seen the benefits of what we have now I hope will give a more realistic view.

I have a number of examples of such incidents which I would be happy to share with you if you wished to come on station and meet myself and our crew for a cup of tea one day, or indeed a zoom call.

I hope you do not mind me emailing you direct, however I believe that the decisions you are making will have an immediate effect on lives, and you deserve to know all the facts in order to make a balanced and considered decision.

Kind Regards.

[REDACTED]

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Thank you for the letter that arrived today. Please carry on doing what you do at the moment if it ain't broke don't fix it!

I would just like to make the point on Non emergency calls . In my mind they are important weather it is a trapped animal, seagull, Dog or cow they are all sentient beings and feel pain and distress. It could also be a natural disaster . So please please do not drop this important part of your service . On a lighter note from a public relations point of view rescuing a distressed animal will always earn you Brownie points from the public!

Best wishes for your service you will always get my vote,,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam,

I received today a general circular from you. I believe the timing of sending this letter, during a pandemic is a poor decision. Many people are trying to avoid the handling of post for obvious reasons. I don't think I need to elaborate any further.

We are very grateful for you being there,  
We fully trust how you run our Fire Brigade, and wouldn't attempt to try to give advice on any changes.  
thank you for your amazing Bravery!!

[REDACTED]

Dear Councillor Galley,

I am writing because I have recently become aware of the proposed cuts to the East Sussex fire service. As a resident of Crowborough I am very concerned about the fire services ability to function effectively and keep the public safe if we have a reduced number of fire crew and appliances in East Sussex.

Do you support these changes? The implications of which will mean that fire cover is reduced and resilience lost. I am concerned that reductions of the sort proposed would mean that it would not be possible to cover all households in the county and that it would become a post code lottery as to whether a fire crew could attend an incident. I do not want the lives of my family and friends put at risk in this way and as a servant of the public neither should you.

I am sure that the proposed cuts are just a cost cutting exercise and have not been proposed with the livelihoods of our firefighters or public safety in mind.

I am further shocked by the back door method in which these changes are being proposed at a time when we are in lockdown and there can be no public meetings or discussion on the subject. Shame on those who have chosen this time, a time when we have never needed our front line workers more to try and implement such drastic cuts with blatant disregard for public safety.

I sincerely hope you will see it as your public duty not to support these cuts.

Cuts cost lives!

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

The Ridge fire station.

As a local resident on the outskirts of Fairlight village, I am most concerned about the proposed downgrade of the Ridge fire station. This is our nearest fire station and downgrading it will place our lives at risk.

I urge that this proposal is abandoned and that the current cover, 24/7 is maintained.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]

Hi

I shall have to remember that in future if a fire should occur I will advise "it" to happen during the day ,not sure whether the "fire" will take any notice of me & wait for a more suitable time ! I do wonder sometimes.....



Hi everyone,

I hope you are well. Firstly, thank you for taking the time to read this. I am writing to you to ask a small favour. If you do not already know, there are plans for a major cut back to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND HELP STOP THIS HAPPENING.

Planned cuts include:

- o Remove 10 fire engines from towns and villages across the county. Affected stations are Bexhill, Battle, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye, Uckfield, Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst.
- o Cut dedicated crews for aerial appliances in Hastings.
- o Cut wholetime jobs at Lewes, Newhaven, Uckfield, Crowborough, Battle and Bexhill.
- o Downgrade The Ridge fire station from 24hr immediate response to only daytime immediate response.
- o Cut staffing levels of wholetime firefighters at all shift stations across the county.

These proposals are extremely dangerous! They will impact heavily on a critical lifesaving service. They will negatively impact public safety as well as firefighter safety and will also impede firefighter's ability to rescue and assist members of the public.

**Further reply:**

Thank you for replying to my email but this is not what the frontline firefighters have been told!

Where have you obtained your information because mine have come directly from our East Sussex Brigade. The appliances you are mentioning, which are replacing the ones already in place, are inadequate for the emergencies they are talking about, so will actually increase response times.

Your facts and figures quoted are only up to 2018 and calls have actually increased by 12% since the stats were calculated.

Can I suggest that maybe you get your facts correct before sending such a rude email and consult with the frontline firefighters rather than senior officers who have never even worked on the ground.

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Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to protest the dreadful possibility that The Ridge Fire Station may be downgraded to part time from 24/7. As we live in one of the villages that rely on their service it feels as though lives in the villages are less important than those in the towns. Please DO NOT put residents at risk by making changes to the working hours and conditions of these vital firefighters - we need them.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

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To whom it may concern

This is a resource that is essential anyone who is unable to get out of their house quickly in the event of a fire. Having had a bedroom gutted in a previous fire when the fire tender got to me in 4 minutes and I had already emptied two fire extinguishers on it I will probably not get out in time at night .

I'm a high level paraplegic and not getting any younger

We have already decimated the the does the government not think that enough.

Thank you

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Hi.

As you will know East Sussex fire and rescue service are making some 'changes/cuts' to their service. Now as a resident of the town of Rye I'm deeply deeply concerned with the fact that ESFRS are moving/cutting (whatever

way you want to dress this situation up!). As a member of the fire authority I've got a few questions that I would like to ask that ain't in the Information with the proposals and can't seem to find it anywhere.

1. Can you tell me the response time for a second fire appliance to a house fire in camber (if broad oak isn't available - as as a tier 3 station would be up to a 30 minute response time). And not one from Kent (after all we all pay our East Sussex Council tax).
2. Can you tell me what the recruitment level has been at Rye for the last 5 years?
3. Can you tell me how many times that the second appliance has been used last year?
4. In the proposal the words 'slightly longer' are used....How long is slightly longer?

I hope you can give me the true answers please.  
I look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks

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I wish to register my concern that The Rldge Fire Station is not downgraded from 24/7 to Day-Crewed as I understand it being considered. I consider such a reduced in service is a dangerous attempt at economy and oppose it strongly.

Yours, [redacted] Fairlight resident.

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I am MOST concerned to read that there are plans to make The Ridge fire station a 'day-only' category. I live in Fairlight and had reason to call the fire service many years ago [redacted]

If I lived any further out in more rural parts of the catchment area, I dread to think what could have happened.

This is an absolute nonsense. It was a nonsense when it was first tested and discussed,, and is still the same. How can reducing the service make anyone feel safer?

I will fight this and join any campaign that fights it. We pay our taxes, we have a right to feel safe in our homes. The local service does that by being on 24/7 preparedness.

[redacted], Fairlight resident.

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To chief Fire Officer of the ESRSA, Chair of ESFRS, Councillors and Wealden Member of Parliament

We write as a residents of Crowborough We would like to make the following observations and comments as to how it relates to Crowborough.

We have not completed the questionnaire as We don't believe the questions asked reflects the situation as seen by the public generally.

In the case of of Crowborough and probably other towns on the list -

Firstly- safeguarding the Ashdown Forest (with one fire engine!!) - even in the document outlining the proposed changes there is an admission that "incidents demand significant resources for the FRS". How can this be with one fire engine and Crowborough being "out on a limb" to rely on swift help from other fire stations at times. Likewise with road traffic accidents - Crowborough is on the busy, but narrow, A26 which unfortunately has a high incident rate of road traffic accidents, often with deer involvement. The report states it may take a little longer for another appliance to arrive but even five minutes delay could be devastating both to lives, property or land. Again in the report there is mention of an increase in East Sussex of 14.4% in the number of households, population increase of 11.0% and house development increase by nearly 3,000 (certainly a lot in Crowborough!) and yet the fire

service will be expected to manage these increases by a decrease in staff and vehicles! I also note that the control centre is going to be yet again further centralised in 2021 covering an even larger area. This in turn could impact response times with less knowledge of the area locally.

Proposed cover of 55 hours a week out of 168 (so approx a third) to be manned by fully trained full time firefighters. So for 113 hours we will be reliant on what I understand will be mainly, if not wholly, retained firefighters who by their nature lack the years of full time experience and the on going daily/weekly training they undertake whilst on shift for their four day/night shifts.

There will always be unfortunately the occasional "big "incident (Ringmer Fireworks/Shoreham/ Eastbourne locally and Grenfell )after which there is often an expensive inquiry which invariably finds fault with the fire service in the "blame game" society in which we live. If you are going to reduce the level of response, personnel, equipment this is not likely to improve.

Again in the report on Workplace planning it states "expecting staff to retire, putting pressure on recruitment". So "releasing" firefighters does not seem a good idea if the force may be short in the future.

At this point we would like to say it to so wrong to start this consultation period during this unprecedented time in the country's history! The whole thing is going to go under the radar when everyone is focused on the pandemic. A lot of the general public will not have even heard about it. We would have thought by law there ought to be a Public Meeting as at other times? (Obviously not possible in these times) Stress and worry for our men and women in the Fire service and their families. Just at a time when they are on the front line, as ever, of this crisis. No one knows how life is going to be after all this. It will be different that's for sure. It is not the time, if at all, to be considering such drastic changes.

These are not the first cuts to the fire service we have experienced in recent years. Time after time there has been paring back of service. There must be a time when there can be no more.

Remember it's not that long since there were cuts to the Police Service and we know how badly that worked out, forcing a u turn both locally and nationally. Don't let this happen to the fire service. Remember the word SERVICE. That is what it is and we deserve to keep it.

We hope our views will be considered in the light of these proposed cuts

Regards

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We are completely opposed to the downgrading of The Ridge, Fire Station. All the villages to the east of Hastings, i.e. Fairlight, Pett, Icklesham, Westfield, Sedlescombe, Brede, to name just some of them also Rye itself would suffer in response time when dealing with emergencies that require the fire service. Its a matter of life and death when consideration is being given to these ill thought out plans.

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Good afternoon

In response to your posting earlier today, it is comforting to know that we have a fully manned Fire station in Uckfield should the 'dreaded' ever happen.

However, I wonder if I may take this opportunity to mention something that always worries us in Maresfield Park because it is a well known nightmare for delivery people to find addresses which in some cases are nonexistent.

I believe there are about one hundred properties in the Park and there is a map of all of them which you may already have in your possession for the crews bearing in mind that the Archway blocks the main entrance to large vehicles.

This is just an observation from a resident who has a copy of the latest house plan.

Thank you for being there if we need you.

With best wishes

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Dear sir/madam,

I read with concern your plans to withdraw the incredible fire Land Rover from Wadhurst.

I want to air strong opposition to this. Savings are hard to defend when it comes to emergency services, especially in an area of woodland and isolated properties, where a fast, all round vehicle can help save lives quickly.

Please re-consider. I will raise this in wider circles.

Kind regards,

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Hello Matt

I will make sure this is passed onto the crews from Wadhurst who attended last night.

I have recently emailed Richard Fowler about the importance of keeping the Landrover at Wadhurst and how disappointing it is to see that it has been already been removed from the list of specials and county map which the public view on the consultation currently taking place. Richard has assured me that no firm decision has been made yet regarding the removal of the Landrover from Wadhurst.

This weekend has highlighted again the importance of maintaining 5 4x4 in the county more importantly the one at Wadhurst, it has attended 2 separate off road fires in Hastings and Ashdown Forest this weekend.

I also want to make yourself and Richard aware of the forward thinking decision made by the JO,s at Wadhurst last night, they were alerted to attend Crowborough as standby, the crew contacted ESFC to confirm that they had enough personnel to crew both 78P5 & 78M1 and suggested that they took both to Crowborough for the standby considering the type and size of incident. This proved to be a great decision as both were sent on to the incident.

Hopefully this information can be carried forward to the future Ops meeting when considering the Landrover removal.

Kind regards

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Dear Councillors

Having read fully the IRMP documents and having understood the content, it seems to me that you are having your intelligence insulted.

The main issue is that the statistics being used to form your decisions are massively out of date. The work done to provide the detail in the IRMP proposals uses figures running up to 2018. This is not a true reflection of how the fire service works today.

We have 2 fire engines at Newhaven 87P1 and 87P4, we also have a special appliance 87S2 a foam tender. We cover Newhaven, Peacehaven, Telscombe Cliffs, Seaford and surrounding villages including the port.

We also spend an amount of time covering incidents in Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne and Lewes. This mainly be due to the fact currently we have 2 fire engines at Newhaven

The total amount of times Newhaven fire station was called upon to provide a service was 740 times in year 2019. This was an actual increase in total calls of 12.5% on the previous year and shows a trend.

With the increase in house building, the increased commercial development and the massive investment in the port, we think this proposed cutting of services from by ESFRS could not have come at a worse time.

The Proposals for Newhaven are;

- Cut one fire engine from the station
- Downgrade fire station from Day-crewed to Day-staffing
- Cut 50% of the full time firefighting staff
- Cut Foam Tender from the station
- Introduce a Command Unit and an Operational support unit (OSU)

The public consultation IRMP document is very misleading and full of loaded questions based on out of date data and unfortunately the Fire Authority has been briefed on this out of date data for many months now and it is hard for them to listen to up to date facts but there are some key issues pertaining to Newhaven fire station I would like to point out, but we are not alone in these cuts proposals this is county wide.

The key issues are;

1. Cut a fire engine (87P4) - This engine was used 51 times in 2019, but what is not brought to the attention of the Fire authority is that every time our first fire engine goes out (87P1) the second engine remains on station giving cover to the community when the first (87P1) is busy. No break in cover, safer community.

Also when attending a fire 87P1 will turn up with a crew of 4, made up of an officer in charge (OIC), driver/pump operator/breathing apparatus board controller and 1 Breathing apparatus (BA) team (2 x firefighters). Before the OIC can commit a BA into a burning building, to conform to Health and safety and fire service national risk assessments the OIC must wait for another BA team to be available before committing the first. This is a national H & S standard and can only be breached in the most extreme circumstances.

For Newhaven the second BA team is on the second engine (87P4) the engine they want to cut.

So 87P1 will have to wait for an engine from either Roedean or Seaford that's an extra 10/15 minutes, that's the difference between life and death, or losing your property or business.

2. Down Grading of Newhaven Fire Station - This would reduce the communities fire cover greatly. The proposal states it wants full time firefighters to man the station possibly 9 til 5 and no weekend cover. Times outside these hours would be covered by on-call firefighters responding from their homes. As it stands at the moment the full time firefighters are split into 2 watches of 6, doing a four days on, four days off rota system, covering a total of 96 hours per watch, being bolstered by on-call firefighters.

The trouble with relying on the on-call firefighters is there is not enough of them to cover all the hours required. There is a tradition of on-call not turning into station for a call for up to 10 minutes, then getting ready to go out, that 12/15 minutes from time of call. There is problem getting on-call firefighters to be available at crucial times of the day ie. 6am to 9am and 5pm to 7pm because they have their primary employment and have to get to and from work. Also most on-call firefighters are full time firefighters from shift stations and so are hampered by the working time directive.

3. Introduction of command unit and OSU - This on the surface is not a bad thing if the station is not downgraded, but if it is and you have a call for one of these vehicle outside of 9 to 5 it causes a problem. Out of office hours they will only have 4/5 on-call firefighters on duty, if they get a call for one of the new vehicles that

would mean the main fire engine 87P1 would no longer have a full crew so would not be available, so no fire cover for the community.

4. 50% full time firefighter posts lost - Loss of skills and experience.

Above is a quick precis of how the fire station works and what the cut proposals would mean to the community.

Unfortunately the statistics used to make up the IRMP and are fed to the Fire Authority Councillors are out of date, running up to 2018. Things have changed since then, the introduction of the 4i mobilisation system, loss of an engine from Hove and the close working with SECAMB has increased our calls hugely and will only get greater.

I hope this gives food for thought and would welcome any Councillors to the station now that lock down has been relaxed to have the situation explained fully.

If you would like any more information please do not hesitate to contact me, as there is a mountain of information not suitable for this e-mail

Regards

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I am concerned at the proposed cuts to the fire service, particularly at a time when it has become more clear than ever how important the emergency services are. I hope you will look again at the plans.

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I have read the proposals and it is pretty clear that the net result will be a worse service. What we need is a better service not a worse service. If a better service will cost more then personally I would be happy to pay more. I know other people who would do the same. I have lived in Switzerland and their fire service is far superior because people are willing to pay for it. These proposals must be rejected.

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Hi all, I hope I find you all well in these difficult times.

I just wanted to share with you my views and concerns on the removal of 78M1, as proposed in the IRMP.

It feels like this vehicle may have been lost amongst the many other vehicles that rightly need review, and that a decision has been made for it to be removed based solely on the amount of times it has gone out in the past, rather than on the predictions of the future of our climate, and the actual amount of hours use the vehicle has had. It may have only gone out in an operational capacity a few times in recent months which makes it look like an underused resource, but as an example during the recent forest fire the crew were out for approximately 8 hours in one go in, which in reality is the same amount of use another vehicle would have if it went to 8 one hour incidents in the same timeframe.

I would also like to note that we are terribly reliant on the 4x4 capacity of our neighbouring services when we have forest fires. Other than for re inspections, I don't think I have ever been to a fire in Ashdown forest where there has not been a WSFRS 4x4 attendance. Certainly last year when we had 2 simultaneous forest fires, we would have been in a desperate situation without the 4x4's we had and the help of our neighbours.

Finally, If the cost of the new style sprinters is the issue, then there is nothing wrong with our current vehicle and I am confident I speak for the whole station when I say if a sprinter isn't an option we would happily keep it. It seems absurd that a vehicle like 78m1 should be classed as having the same working life as the rest of the fleet. After a conversation with a mechanic recently he confirmed that it costs almost nothing to service and run, and

that out of all the operational vehicles we have the parts are the most ready available when repairs are needed. Although it doesn't have all the latest safety features, it is still legal, and driven by trained response drivers.

To summarise, the IRMP/ORR is described as being about putting our resources where we most need them. In my opinion, 78M1 is needed more at Wadhurst fire station, serving the local communities, than it is at an auction house.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
"I object to the proposed cutbacks and am in agreement with the FBU's defence".

[REDACTED], Piddinghoe resident

Dear Sir,

I have trawled through the mounds of documentation for the Consultation on the future. I must say it is too cumbersome and lacks effective clarity over much of what is being considered.

My main concern relates to any reduction in "resource" where man-power of equipment as a time of increasing risk across many areas. Risks are increasing now and will do across a number of areas. We should be investing more in staffing and equipment. Note that for any capital expenditure the costs will be low as interest rates are at rock bottom. We should be spending now for the future.

To reduce at this time shows very poor Management and judgement. We MUST NOT do this.

I guess you are unlikely to pass this direct to the Decision Makers, but rest assured I will be raising my concerns at the highest level both in Sussex and at National Level.

Regards

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Dear Sir/madam

Please see Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council consultation response below:

The Council is concerned that the gradual removal of posts, and the cutting of second engines at our nearest stations, Lewes and Uckfield is a risk to fire protection across our Parish.

Whilst acknowledging the extensive work that has been done on risk analysis, growing extremes of weather lead to a clear potential of larger and more severe fires in the countryside during extended periods of high temperature.

The Council would like the Service to re-consider the cut of second engines at Lewes and Uckfield.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Clerk to Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council

Cllr Lambert,

I write as a very concerned, and somewhat bewildered, resident of East Sussex.

I have just read the article in today's Sussex Express where you claim that 'There are positive proposals in fire plan'. Can you enlighten me as to what these are please?

I fail to see what is positive about removing 10 appliances, delaying response times, cutting firefighter jobs across at least 6 fire stations and asking the residents of Eastbourne & Hastings to choose whether they have 2 fully crewed appliances or take 1 and the Ariel Ladder Platform (ALP)?

Whilst you state that the service's government grant has been cut over the last decade you fail to mention the increase in council tax which 'to be invested in protecting the public'!! How can this be investing in the protecting the public when the service wishes to cut its frontline response so drastically?

Following the recent HMICFRS report for ESFRS it states in its overall summary that they are good at responding to fires and other emergencies and to national risks.

It also states that they are good at using their resources efficiently and have a realistic and robust financial plans in place. And the service is good at making its services affordable now and in the future.

These were the only areas in which they performed good, requiring improvement everywhere else.

With this in mind how on earth can they justify cutting where they are good???

Referring to the 'positive proposals', you say that the Fire Authority believe the plan will offer benefits to the staff of ESFRS, and to the public to help keep everyone safe.

HOW??

Having read the proposals thoroughly, ESFRS will have to cut posts, remove fire appliances and change firefighters lives to achieve public safety, is this correct?

All this whilst Firefighters, along with others, assist the government in the middle of a global pandemic!!!

I appreciate your time in this important matter and await your response,

Yours,

[REDACTED]

#### **Further reply:**

Thank you for your response.

I do however have some further queries from your replies.

Firstly I disagree that there are positive benefits to those impacted by a change of crewing system. You say it will provide staff with more control over when they work but the system requires them to 'book' their hours upto 6 weeks in advance. How can this give them more control if they don't know when they will be working in 6 months time? The current system allows them, and their partners, to plan when they are working for the rest of their career, not just 6 weeks!! It may well have been welcomed by some in other services but they have then had to cope with pumps going off the run and an increase in the use of overtime to cover crewing shortages. Not the best use of their resources I guess!

Add the pay cut and the complete change in work pattern to Day Crewed staff and the impact on their families lives, along with increased stress and anxiety, then this clearly is not a positive move.

The 'pool' of firefighters, resilience pool, will be formed by utilising firefighters released from their wholetime positions in the service. It will not be populated by those 'On Call' firefighters who have seen the second appliance removed from their station. They will simply have to sign an unknown quantified contract or lose their position on that station. That will be their only choice. This proposal, that apparently shows clear evidence about where the resources should be, ranges from data covering 9 months to 9 years, dependant on how you want it look. Not clear evidence in my eyes!!

Your views around council tax and future funding I do tend to agree and know doubt we will see further cuts from Government over the coming months and years in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The basis of the IRMP is to ensure that the right resources are in the right place at the right time. There is little, if at all, mention of the financial savings that can be achieved through the implementation of the cuts, so therefore should not be led in any way by money. The fact that this proposal refers to reinvesting then it shouldn't be about savings!

The balancing of risk and resources, which ESFRS appeared to have got wrong previously, is surely not justified by removing the resource, which in turn increases the risks?

Remove a life buoy away from beside a water course and the risk of serious injury or death will increase.



Remove a fire appliance away from towns and the the risk of increased fire damage, serious injury of loss of life will increase.

It states in the proposed IRMP that changes will have a very low impact on dwelling fire rates. Low impact is still an impact that surely you would not want any member of the public experiencing, or any member of your family? The 'sound evidence' within the IRMP proposal is figured to fit exactly how the service wants the public to see. It does not give a balanced review into how ESFRS has allowed itself to get to where it now!

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Dear Sir,

[REDACTED] I am writing to you about the upcoming changes included in the initial consultation document. As you are aware, although with very little detail, the service is looking to firstly put the community we serve, here in Uckfield and it's surrounding area's at risk by removing our second appliance and changing our working pattern, potentially removing our availability at weekends.

If the service were to instigate these changes, there potentially will not be a Fire appliance available from Friday evening through to Monday here in Uckfield as at present, potentially the whole time crews will not be able to nor want to work at the weekend, if we are working all week. The statistics on availability over the weekend period for the RDS over the last 18 months are quite shocking and as you are aware, the issues surrounding recruitment and retention of our RDS colleagues isn't and hasn't been for some years now, sustainable.

Although there are no real figures and lot's to read between the lines in the consultation document, I firmly believe that offering a salary to an individual to become an On-Call Firefighter may sound like the golden answer but things are very different to when the RDS was developed and society, peoples working patterns and employers 'goodwill' have vastly evolved.

As much as I do understand change, efficiency and financial restraints, for me professionally and the person I am, I am greatly concerned about the future.

Personally, I have valid reasons why I cannot give cover at weekends but my crew also have their own, very relevant reasons. If an individual is working Monday to Friday and giving cover during the weekday evenings then, as I hope you can appreciate, why and how can they also be on call all weekend and I worry for them, their wellbeing, family life and the whole idea of work/ life as opposed to a balanced life/ work as we should all be living.

I feel that the service is adamant that the two watches will cover the weekend to bolster the availability alongside our RDS colleagues but sadly this is far from the truth and this is not just the case in Uckfield. Again I raise the point, why would anyone wish to work all week then not be able to free themselves from here if they so wish to at the weekend.

This process will transform my crew's financial situation and ultimately their pensions but without doubt, first and foremost, we all genuinely care about our community we serve and we have grave concerns, that we won't be able to serve them, in the manner to which they deserve.

I am not the most eloquent nor is this a angry rant (not my style) and I hope you read this as it is meant.

I appreciate your time and wish you a good weekend

Regards  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you in response to the disturbing news that East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Senior Management are looking to cut our incredibly important Fire Service vehicles and personnel for the sake of 'saving' money where as these imposed cuts are actually going to prevent 'saving lives'.

By trying to enforce this idea it will put incredible pressure on the already limited resources that East Sussex Fire and Rescue already have to work with. It will put mental and physical strain on our Firefighters on the front line, increase the time taken to get to fire and rescue calls resulting in a higher risk percentage - i.e. risk to LIFE

East Sussex has been exposed to huge residential development in recent years and we need to match this population increase by expanding the Fire Service in those areas but definitely not cutting them and their resources? The spectrum of work which the Fire Service covers no other service can provide, it is a service which is the difference between life and death.

Rural areas such as Wadhurst need there 4x4 vehicle as the surrounding terrain, roads and rescue calls they get require a nimble, sturdy smaller vehicle that can handle these emergency's and work a long side the fire engines. To take this resource away would be making many geographic areas of East Sussex unreachable for any fire and rescue calls. Please refer to the recent forest fire at Ashdown Forest on 17th May 2020 - Warhurst's 4x4 vehicle was invaluable and vital for containing.

It is our prerogative to maintain and support our one of our most valued emergency services especially in the current climate where they are front line, working with other services and yet are having the rug pulled under their feet by those in positions who are trying to play God for power but actually destroying the service.

THESE CUTS ARE NOT SAFE

The people responsible for pushing these cuts are jeopardising the safety of civilians and those working at East Sussex Fire and Rescue and that is criminal. That is unacceptable.

This country is in crisis and they are silently trying to take 10 fire engines 100 firefighters out of action and downgrade stations, it is immoral - the fire service educates and is a necessity not something that can be played with and undervalued.

Minutes mean a life saved, a building saved, a business saved - increase the response time, lack of fire fighting power then they are solely to blame for the consequences. We can never allow this to happen. Heads should be hanging in shame; this county and our country needs these resources and our full support behind them.

This covid-19 smoke screen will not hide the failure to the East Sussex Fire and Rescue imposed by those pushing for these cuts - there is no justification for it will simply cost lives.

I vote to save our incredibly important Fire Service and not diminish and destroy it.

Please do not allow this to happen, please fight for our Firefighters who go above and beyond every time they put on their uniform - confident they can successfully and safely do their job with the essential equipment and resources required.

I am a mother with two young children and it honestly scares me that the Fire Service is being undercut and that this idea is even being considered.

Yours faithfully,

A very concerned member of the public



Today (23 March ) West Sussex Fire Brigade rescued a swift trapped in the eaves of a house at Climping, W. Sussex. They are happy to rescue birds, and surprised that East Sussex Fire and Rescue are consulting as to whether or not to rescue birds! Shame on you.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
West Sussex Wildlife Protection

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How do you hold a public consultation with no public meetings?

What you and the fire authority are doing is not acceptable, I find it all so disgusting.

You speak of respect, democratic processes and freedom of speech. Absolute rubbish, you all show little respect for public opinion, no respect for your employees opinions, and no regard or respect for public safety. This IRMP has nothing to do with safety, your only interests are saving money, end of.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Dear Mr Galley.

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First and foremost I hope this email finds you and you family fit and well.

I write to you today Regarding the above proposals and the affect that these WILL have on not only myself, wife and children but yourself and family and the whole of the East Sussex community that you serve and that they pay for.

I have read the IRMP and I truly urge to not let these drastic measures come to fruition. I understand that some change is probably needed in the service but not at this dangerous level.

And not at the cost of so many full-time highly experienced frontline fire-fighters who live in the towns that they serve

I personally am one of these fire-fighters [REDACTED] posted to Crowborough. [REDACTED] becoming an ESFRS Fire-fighter was a great honour and to be posted in the town were I live was a level of responsibility I have taken very seriously.

I have made my life in this town and being one of its fire-fighters is something that's more than a job. Upon my employment I was told that I would be full-time at Crowborough. Being a Day Crewed fire station I would need to live in a house within a certain distance of the fire station because part of the role is being on-call with an alerter to be able to GUARANTEE a fire appliance 24/7/365 days of the year for the town because of its geographical location and population that we cover. And because of this I would receive a Day Crewed allowance of which my mortgage would be based on. So this is what I have done and built my life and family around this. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

But it is now being suggested that this way of working at Crowborough fire station is no longer a relevant working practice. I am devastated at these proposals and the complete lack and disregard for the feelings and impact that this could and will have of the full-time fire-fighters and their families at Crowborough .Not only financially but mentally and emotionally.

As it stands with these proposals I really do not feel respected or valued by the senior management that have come up with IRMP which is I might add not completely telling the whole correct story,from what I can deuce as well is that the facts and figures have been manipulated some what.

Simply put under these proposal's, you will not be able to guarantee the paying public a fire appliance with a fully qualified and experienced Team within the period's of time stated that are in the IRMP .How can you when the

part time workers have full time commitment's/jobs elsewhere and some also already have full time jobs within ESFRS and Full time jobs within other fire services.

This already puts these part time employee's out of the time frame on a regular period because of the shifts they work in their primary employment.

Please consider the IRMP very seriously as you are the ones undersigning it and making an absolutely huge difference to a lot of other peoples livelihoods, family and personal situations some of which may never recover from both mentally and financially.

**Addition sent to certain FA Members:** *I know that you yourself did not want to go ahead with this during this highly difficult/stressful and unpredictable time and I urge you to make the other Members understand the gravity of this IRMP. You the Fire Authority need to talk to the frontline if you want to make a real difference.*

Yours Sincerely



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Dear Councillor Lambert,

First of all, I hope that you are well and have the support you might need in this challenging time.

I write to express my concern at the proposed cuts to both Newhaven and Seaford Fire Stations. I understand that Newhaven will lose one of its two fire engines and Seaford will also be affected by the proposed cuts. I note that the document produced by the Fire Service is titled "Planning for a safer future". There seems to be a contradiction between title and proposals.

Seaford is part of a large rural district with a high population of people over 65. Seaford itself is densely populated and following the neighbourhood plan will eventually become more so. In addition, it hosts in normal years people on camp and caravan sites where there is inevitably a fire risk, heightened by the rising temperatures associated with climate change. There have already been cuts to the local fire service during the years of austerity. I know you will be aware of all this and hope that as a result, I can count on you to oppose these plans when they come up for approval at East Sussex County Council.

Finally, please do all you can to ensure that when schools begin taking in pupils again, they are able to do so with all possible precautions taken and that no school will be forced to open if its staff and or the parents feel that it is not safe to do so.

Yours sincerely,



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Good Morning,

I understand that it is being proposed that the ALP in the City of Brighton and Hove will be primary crewed, but the aerial appliances in Hastings and Eastbourne will be dual crewed.

Can I ask what happens if the City appliance goes off the run through damage servicing or defect, will we still get a primary crewed aerial to cover the risk in the City from Hastings or Eastbourne like we do now.

Also if you do send the Aerial over from the dual crewed stations won't that take an appliance off the run at Hastings or Eastbourne which reduces fire cover in these areas, which increases the risk??

Kind Regards



Dear All,

I would like to express my gravest concerns over the proposed cuts to the Emergency Fire and Rescue Services in East Sussex.

The Areas covered by the Stations affected in these proposed cuts are really rather unique. There is a lot of rural, coastal, high rise and agricultural property in these areas and the beautiful Ashdown Forest. The incidents that occur here are wide ranging and varied. The area includes Towns which are designated for countless new housing developments, bringing more residents and more cars to the area.

Numerous incidents in recent months have required many of these stations to work together and cover each other, supported by Retained Crews. How will this be possible on the same levels in future, with less Crew, Appliances and Specialist Vehicles/Equipment?

I have deep concerns over the desire to rely more heavily on Retained Crews. The time taken to get them to the training level of a Full Time Firefighter, is much longer and let us not forget, they are all doing this alongside a "day job". I have an acquaintance who is Retained Crew, and their employer is not particularly supportive of their second role for the Fire Service. They have to take unpaid leave to do any training (Fire Service payment for this is not equal to lost earnings) and can only be on call in their own time.

A few weeks ago, they were on a shout all night, at an incident that required several of the East Sussex Stations to attend together, with specialist vehicles that are proposed for cuts. Had that been a week night, that retained crew member would have worked all day, been up all night and then had to go back to their day job on 2 hours sleep. If we rely on that sort of cover as permanent crewing options, it is only a matter of time before someone endangers themselves or a colleague on a shout or in their day job. Worse still, makes a mistake (human error/lack of judgement happens to us all, especially when tired) which costs untold damage to life or property of the public.

I am very concerned about how some figures and information in the documents seem misleading and vague. I am very aware that nationally incidents are down, but in East Sussex this is not the case. 8,812 incidents in 2015, 9,385 incidents in 2018 and 10,007 in 2019, that is an increase of 7% from 2019 and 12% from 2015. It is ludicrous that a reduction in service would be suggested, given this and the increase in housing in the area, previously mentioned. The removal of an Aerial Platform in a Seaside Town with countless High-Rise properties is beyond comprehension.

I have been very vocal on Social Media regarding these cuts and will continue to be so. I have been very concerned at the way in which some of the points raised by people about the consultation documents, have been answered (or not) by the East Sussex CFO.

As the FBU point out, Fires, RTCs and other urgent incidents do not discriminate. They happen to anyone at any time. You are playing with people's lives by proposing to reduce cover at night.

In short, the crews, appliances, expertise, and specialist knowledge/equipment, that are proposed for streamlining (i.e. cuts) in the documents, are nothing short of reckless. The public do not feel confident of the service they can expect with less Crew, less Appliances and less Specialist Equipment.

Yours

[Redacted Signature]

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Good luck in your fight against these iniquitous cuts.

My family and I have emailed all the relevant authorities in your support.

United we stand ,divided we fall.

Kind regards

[Redacted Signature]

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Dear Sir

I am extremely concerned about the proposed cuts to Crowborough Fire Station. As the biggest inland town in east Sussex, Crowborough cannot afford to lose the level of service as proposed. Crowborough is a growing town and will need more services, not less. We have already lost our ambulance station as well as a diminished police presence; please maintain the fire service we need and deserve.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED] (Crowborough resident)

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Dear Sirs,

I was very concerned to see that the fire station in Crowborough is being severely depleted not just with a massive 50% loss of firefighters but also a loss of an engine.

This is happening in spite of the huge increases in council tax over the last few years.

I really want to express my concern about this matter as surely the safety of the residents is of paramount importance. Can you please explain to me how this is being justified?

I am in strong opposition to this happening.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
Team,

Thankyou for keeping me up to date on threats to the Crowborough Fire Service by a flyer through the door this evening.

I have signed the petition, emailed Roy Galley and emailed Crowborough Town Council with my displeasure at such a stupid suggestion.

Crowborough has seen the population double in just twenty years with presumably twice the revenue, yet there are suggestions of cutting the service in half.

I would like to meet the idiot who is proposing such action and see the risk assessment which covers such stupid thoughts.

The practical teaching in schools and Universities is now virtually none existant leading to a lack of understanding about health and safety in the home.

Most electrical appliances have an incorrect fuse ( fact ) which can lead to electrical fires, maintenance on gas equipment is rare to save money so we need essential support when emergencies occur.

[REDACTED]  
Our fire service is essential and making any cuts would be plain stupidity with such a continuing increase in housing.

Please let me know if I can assist in your fight to maintain common sense.

[REDACTED]  
We have just received advice that the local fire station may be closing. I am writing on behalf of my husband as he is registered blind to raise concern as one of many residents at this news. This service is much valued by this community and it would appear we cannot sign the petition objecting to the station's closure as this would appear unavailable online. Having lived here for over 30years it has been a comfort to us to know this service is accessible and also the knowledge that the police station should be moving back to the centre of the town. With the Ashdown Forest on our doorstep and proposals for additional housing it seems short sighted to go ahead with this. At a conservative estimate we are at least 20 minutes distance from Uckfield Fire Station and similarly Tunbridge Wells as you must be fully aware. Surely having the additional appliance available in an emergency to respond quickly before matters get out of hand is not a price too high to pay, In addition we cannot afford to lose

these highly trained firefighters and subsequently have to train more; a false economy I think you will agree. Please make sure this communication reaches the ears of the right people and not just confined to the waste bin. Thankyou.

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My wife and I want to add our extreme concern about the proposed cuts to the Fire Service in Crowborough. This town is growing very rapidly with proposed planned new estates and the more recent dense newly built homes, the infills and not to mention the frequency of fires on the nearby Ashdown Forest. We believe you are proposing to reduce our highly skilled Fire fighters by 50% and cut One Fire Engine. We are alarmed that you consider these cuts to be safe. We live in a densely packed part of town in the vicinity of three schools [redacted] off Crowborough Hill and want to make our feelings very clear that we are strongly against these cuts.

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I strongly object to the proposed cuts at Crowborough Fire Station. Many new houses are being built in the area, and fires on the Ashdown Forest continue to be a serious problem. Regards

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As a local Crowborough resident I am very unhappy to be told there might be cuts to our local fire service - cuts which seem wrong and misguided when one takes into account all the new buildings going up in our town, and thus an increase in population. The last thing needed is a cut in services at this time. Please have a really deep delve into this problem and banish the thoughts of Fire service cuts. Safety must come first!!

Sincerely [redacted]

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Gentlemen,

Yet again I hear noises that the County Council wish to propose further cuts to our fire brigade. Surely in recent times with all the under cover cuts with the NHS is this not a lesson to be learnt when our country was not ready to tackle one of the biggest events in recent times both of staff and equipment. We have to admit that the Government has worked hard to correct their previous mistakes but this has all taken time, we were not standing at the gate ready to fire with all barrels to protect the population if further cuts to Fire and Rescue takes place.

I believe our station in Crowborough has only two engines based here along with two auxiliary vehicles to protect our expanding town along with the Ashdown Forest and other support. Just two weeks ago there was a devastating fire on the Forest at Ghyls Gap which was possibly started by someone having a bar-by-queue. This must have been devastating as I have been witness to a fire there some years ago, it is unbelievable how fast fire travels in conditions like we are experiencing at the moment. Then there are accidents in places like Beacon Road which has been subject to various cuts by the council with other services, I remember some years back on the other side of town when a young mother was trapped in a burning car and she could not get out, somehow her baby was saved, I think she died.

The town is expanding in numbers authorised by the councils, just look at the building down near Morrisons now, how many more people will this bring to live here, then on Crowborough Hill, then over by the council estate and the wishes of the council wanting to build even more, is it by the Sports Centre? Then there are isolated spots going on all around and of course extra traffic trying to go even faster.

I have been out on Beacon Road helping when an accident has occurred and I have seen all services doing their utmost to get here, only having one engine and less staff would the town be in position to aid any unfortunate individuals that may want Fire and Rescue to assist? Seeing someone in a car which appears as though it is about to burst into flames is not good, after a crash at Church Road or a young lad who has been propelled into a tree from his motor bike or that dreadful one where a lad was forced under a Ford Fiesta. One can go on!

Due to the increase in population and traffic should you not be considering to get a third engine based here and full time cover at the station for our town for 24/7/365?

Our boys and girls are at the sharp end here and they need your support and allow them to give a high standard of protection for us all. We hope to never to have to call them, but my goodness when you do need them it is like a life time waiting for help and then you hear the sirens and they are risking their lives to get to us and help and do their best.

They need your support to protect a very valuable service that they provide for us. Do not start getting your axe out again here!

Regards

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We are writing to express concerns about proposed changes in the current IRMP Consultation 2020-2025 on behalf of the members of the Women's Section and LGBT+ Section of the FBU in East Sussex.

The IRMP Consultation document opens with a statement regarding the service's equality and inclusion commitment. We are told that ESFRS "strives to achieve equality of access, equality of impact and equality of outcome for the services we provide" and that this is achieved by staff carrying out 'people impact assessments.' We are very concerned that the IRMP people impact assessment (still referred to as an equality impact assessment on the service website) identifies a potential negative impact of the proposals under disability and gender. We request that you ask the service to take steps to address these negative impacts. At the very least, we would expect the impact to be neutral, and our overwhelming preference would be for the proposals to have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics.

We are disappointed that reference to improving diversity within the workforce is relegated to the final pages of the document and that there appears to be no new thought on how to address these issues, despite the IRMP Consultation stating that "we actively support equality and inclusion". The paragraph is brief and refers the reader to the ESFRS Diversity Strategy 2017-2021 (the plan does not take us through to 2025). When this strategy was produced we expressed our concerns that it did not contain enough substance and would be unlikely to effect meaningful change. We were promised that a suite of enabling policies would be introduced to facilitate implementation. These enabling documents have not materialised and we believe, based on the lack of evidentiary change, that this strategy has been a failure. This assertion is supported by the findings of the HMICFRS Inspection Report published in December 2019 which found that "East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement in promoting the right values and culture"; that "the service requires improvement in ensuring fairness and promoting diversity"; and that "the service needs to ensure activities aimed at diversifying the workforce are effective." We strongly urge you to reject proposals that your own impact assessment has found will have a negative bearing on disabled persons (staff and community), carers of disabled persons, those with neuro-diverse conditions, and female primary carers. We ask that you request any proposals for change are assessed as having a positive impact on our communities and staff.

The HMICFRS Report also found that "the extent to which the service looks after its people requires improvement." Given that the people / equality impact assessment has identified that these IRMP proposals will negatively impact disabled persons, carers of disabled persons and female primary carers, we strongly urge you to consider applying the 'family test' to any proposed changes. On 18 August 2014, then Prime Minister David Cameron announced the introduction of a 'family test' which should be applied when formulating public policy. The objective of the test is to introduce a family perspective to the policy making process. The test ensures that policy makers recognise and make explicit the potential impacts on family relationships in the process of developing and agreeing new policy. The government states that policy makers should think about family impacts in a similar way to how they consider impacts on equality as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty, considering impacts at each stage of the process.

**There are 5 Family Test Questions;**

1. What kinds of impact might the policy have on family formation?



2. What kind of impact will the policy have on families going through key transitions such as becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities or the onset of a long-term health condition?
3. What impacts will the policy have on all family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities?
4. How does the policy impact families before, during and after couple separation?
5. How does the policy impact those families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown?

On behalf of our members, we are requesting that prior to approving any changes in shift or duty pattern, the Fire Authority applies the 'family test' to the proposals. We draw your attention to the following observations; ESFRS have stated that changing the crewing model to a self-rostering shift system would benefit staff as it would enable firefighters to have more flexibility in which shifts they work each month and would introduce a more family-friendly work pattern.

Having consulted with our membership, the Women's Section and LGBT+ Section dispute this assertion. Our members believe that having a regular shift pattern, where leave days change week by week in a regular progressive manner is more family-friendly than a work pattern where shifts are organised six weeks in advance. Government advises that policy makers should think carefully about how any policy under consideration might add to the pressures families might face. Policy makers should consider the nature and scale of the potential impact, and whether any negative impacts can be mitigated in any way. A self-rostering system would introduce uncertainty for firefighters around work patterns and work commitments. It can already be challenging for operational staff to make child care arrangements due to working both day and night shifts. The same applies to carers. If firefighters are only able to plan with certainty six weeks ahead these challenges would certainly increase. Many providers are already unable to offer placements or care due to our shift pattern. A higher proportion of women than men have child care and caring responsibilities. LGBT+ carers can in particular find it difficult to organise culturally appropriate respite care. Self-rostering would potentially compound these issues further.

All family members have a role to play in family life, whether that is the role fathers play in raising children, that grandparents play in supporting parents, including lone parents, or that adults play in caring for elderly relatives or disabled family members. The government reminds us that while most people would recognise these aspects of family life, policy makers can sometimes fail to take a whole family perspective into account when thinking about the design and delivery of public services, sometimes underplaying or discounting the contribution of particular members, or failing to see the opportunities to support and enhance how families support each other. Factors for consideration include how policy impacts family members' ability to balance work and family life, the time families can spend together, and the competing demands of caring for elderly family members and children. ESFRS have acknowledged that the proposed changes to the Day Crewed shift system will rely on whole-time firefighters taking on additional contracts to provide cover at evenings and weekends. Firefighters are very committed to serving the communities where they live and work. Our members currently working on Day Crewed stations believe that this sense of moral obligation combined with new financial pressures when current allowances are no longer payable, will lead firefighters to agree to contracts that will have a negative impact on their ability to balance work and family life. This may disproportionately affect women and LGBT+ firefighters who often have to accommodate the dual pressures of parental and caring responsibilities.

Couples do separate, and that can be necessary for individuals and their children. Nonetheless, separation can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of all those involved. The Service has a role to play in supporting families going through difficulties, helping them navigate separation in a way that mitigates the impact on children in particular. We are concerned the impact proposals would have on any member in the unfortunate position of having to seek assistance through the courts to make access arrangements to children. If parents are unable to commit to any planned access arrangements beyond a six week window this could cause undue stress and harm to the individuals concerned. Policy makers should consider how new policy might impact families at particular stages, and look beyond intact families or households when thinking about impacts.

The HMICFRS inspectors observed that “the service has a workforce planning group, but no workforce plan. It needs to develop one so that it is clear about its long-term workforce needs.” Under the Fire & Rescue National Framework for England it is clear that a priority for fire and rescue authorities is to develop and maintain a workforce that is diverse. A fire service should “continuously improve the diversity of the workforce to ensure it represents the community it serves.” The requirement to diversify the workforce should form part of the workforce plan when it is developed.

This IRMP consultation declares that ESFRS has reviewed diversity within our workforce and that we want our workforce to be more reflective of society at all levels in the organisation. The Service acknowledges that having a range of perspectives, cultures and experiences brings a greater understanding to our organisation, which contributes to decision making. ESFRS accepts that we know our workforce does not reflect the communities that we serve in terms of diversity and gender.

These facts were drawn into sharp relief in the HMICFRS report published in December 2019 which highlighted that whilst 50.9% of the population in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are female, only 6.5% of ESFRS firefighters are women; and whilst 6.4% of the county’s population (11% in Brighton & Hove) identifies as black, Asian and minority ethnic, only 3.3% of ESFRS firefighters identify as BAME. It was disappointing that the HMICFRS did not examine the numbers of firefighters identifying as LGBT+ (a point that has been raised with the Inspectorate). What we do know is that Brighton & Hove has the largest proportion of LGBT+ residents in the UK with around 10% of the population identifying as LGBT+. Yet despite this sizeable population, we know from our service network that less than 1% of ESFRS firefighters identify as LGBT+. As an organisation we are also behind the national average in two of these measures – in England statics for 2019 evidence that fire services employ on average 6.4% female firefighters, 4.3% BAME firefighters and 3.2% LGB firefighters.

As representatives of female and LGBT+ firefighters, we ask Fire Authority members not to introduce duty patterns that will be less attractive to already under-represented groups.

We would welcome your thoughts on these matters which are of concern to our members. If you would like to discuss the content of this letter further, we would be more than happy to make a telephone appointment given the current limitations on meeting face-to-face.

Yours Sincerely,  
Jake Kaye –East Sussex FBU LGBT+ Rep  
Jane Thompson – East Sussex FBU Women’s Rep

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Sirs,  
I have just read with surprise that you are planning to cut the fire service provision in Crowborough. I regard this as the most stupid decision anyone in a responsible position like your own could make. At a time when local authorities are proactively creating more housing and expanding the population of the area, a decision like this flies against all common sense.

What is the rationale?

I can only conclude that you are counting on the death toll following the pandemic actually reducing the size of the population so that we do not need the Fire Service.

Stupid !!!!

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We are writing to protest strongly against the proposed cuts to the fire service at both Crowborough and Uckfield.

These cuts would leave us totally vulnerable in the event of a fire and put many lives at risk. Even more so should there be a fire in Ashdown Forest.

The loss of these fire stations would also impinge on the help they provide when there is a road traffic accident when their assistance is greatly needed. Lives could be lost due to the length of time taken for a fire service to arrive from another area.

Please advise what plans you do have in place to cover these emergencies. Have you taken into account the fact that services from outside the county may not be in a position to assist when needed.

Will the result of these cuts reduce the amount we pay in community charges and does this mean we are paying for a substandard service??

We await your reply with interest.

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Dear Councillor Galley,

I wish to record my severe objections to the proposals. I find it astonishing that such a plan is even getting serious consideration.

1. Crowborough is the largest inland town in East Sussex.
2. There is a significant increase in new houses and flats being built, as well as conversions of commercial property to high density residential accommodation.
3. The FRS regularity support accidents which you will know for instance on the A26 are regular and often very serious.
4. The Ashdown Forest remains a significant fire risk, after years of poor husbandry, and to make this point 2 weeks ago three appliances were in attendance at the weekend. I have on more than one occasion this year seen the aftermath of open air BBQs.

I am not one who regularly gets involved in campaigns but this one is very serious to the welfare of the community and the fabric of our lives here.

Yours sincerely

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We would like to express our support for the Crowborough Fire Station and do not wish to see any cuts from this very valuable service. They do an amazing job and are greatly valued by all Crowborough residents. We hope you will re-consider the proposed cuts.

Many thanks

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Dear Sirs:

I was made aware of a proposal being considered to reduce the services at Crowborough Fire Station. As a long-time Crowborough resident I would urge you to reconsider these measures, the community relies on the services of the Fire Brigade.

Any loss of fire cover will be felt throughout our town and surrounding areas.

Sincerely,

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to register my strong objection to the planned cuts at Crowborough Fire Station as this will leave our town and surrounding area extremely vulnerable, by increasing risks to lives and to the vital amenity of the Ashdown Forest.

Best regards

[REDACTED]

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The proposal to cut the fire service in Crowborough is absolutely ridiculous and very very dangerous, this is an essential service, which the community relies on the loss of a fire engine and reduction of weekend and evening fire cover could be the difference between life and death for families and indeed everyone exposed to a fire situation.

Yes cuts have to be made this is understandable but to this service!!

Fire fighters losing their jobs! It's awful that this is being proposed.

We the public are paying for this service and it is my understanding that we will be paying the same with a reduced and lower protection level!

This really is unacceptable and I hope this doesn't happen.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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Dear Councillors

My name is [REDACTED]. I was a firefighter with ESFRS [REDACTED]. I left to pursue a career in another industry.

On 22nd August 2015, I was one of the first in attendance at the Shoreham air crash. After dealing with the initial carnage, I put on my breathing apparatus set and helped put the plane out, standing in a lake of fuel and roasting in my fire kit.

On 3rd December 2006, I was in attendance, again with my colleagues from Blue Watch, at the Marlie Farm incident.

In early 2016, just after 1 appliance had been 'cut' from Hove Fire Station, we were called to a shed on fire. [REDACTED] Confident in being able deal with what we might be about to face as best we could, I was nonetheless faced with dealing with it with only 1 fire appliance, with only a crew of 4, and with back-up from Preston Circus at least a few minutes behind us. A lack of life saving resources, not because of another incident taking them, but because East Sussex Fire Authority voted to take them away from us.

We were told by East Sussex Fire Authority, as we are now, that losing a fire engine would 'make the community safer due to education'. [REDACTED]

Shoreham Fire Station was downgraded under the same pretext you are giving now. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It haunts me to this day. It reminds me

of the government response, or lack of it, after Grenfell - The complete lack of ability to effectively cope with the fallout from a major incident.

During a previous round of 'cuts', all justified under the false spin of 'making the community safer', former Fire Authority Chair, Ted Kemble, actually admitted to us that he did what ever the Chief Fire Officer (Des Pritchard at the time) told him to do, "Because he's my mate (sic)".

I urge you to look at all the facts being presented, and not take on blind faith from ESFRS that these cuts will have little negative impact on peoples' safety. They will.

I am a businessman and I know about budgeting and tough decisions. But if I was dealing with peoples' lives, I would always put that first.

Fire education does work, but remember there are still people who bulk buy toilet rolls and strip supermarket shelves when instinct takes over from common sense or education.

I am currently retraining to drive ambulances during the Covid crisis, despite the potential increased risk to myself and my family. I am proud to be able to do something that will help others. I urge you to make yourselves proud and not vote for these cuts. They will cost lives.

Kind regards

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I am alarmed at the cuts proposed to Crowborough fire station. How many people have to be without the help they need in a crisis? It is especially appalling in the times we are already facing with the Corona virus.

Your sincerely,

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Hello

I want to register my strong opposition to the "proposed" cuts to the above. It seems the more we pay locally the less we get. perhaps a layer of management should be removed and the money used to keep the front line active. For a sprawling town of over 20000 people to cut this vital service is madness.

Just think, it might be you or your children that needs them after the cuts. Oops! Too late ! Cuts cost lives.

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I was contacted recently by phone and asked to take part in the consultation about the changes to ESCC Fire Service. I had no prior knowledge of the proposals, or of the response from the Fire Service Union, but I have subsequently looked into this.

I want to make a complaint about this method of testing support for the proposals. I think that the telephone survey is a very unfair way of conducting this consultation. The questions are very complex and I was pressured to form an opinion on the spot.

I can see that you have provided plenty of explanatory materials on your website to support the online survey, but I wasn't directed to this by the person asking the questions on the phone, nor would I have time to read and absorb them before answering. I think you are likely to get results from your telephone survey that are not a true reflection of the opinions people might have if they had the full information in front of them, and I urge you to disregard them.

For example - a question like the one below contains so much detailed information, and so many points at which you might need clarification and you only have a minute or so to take this in and arrive at an opinion about it.

Yours,  
[REDACTED]

*ESFRS currently has six "day-crewed" fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield. On these stations, firefighters work a combination of "positive" and "standby" hours over a 24-hour period. Positive hours are worked on the fire station and standby hours are worked on-call from a location within five minutes of the station.*

*ESFRS proposes to introduce "day-only" crewing at these stations, whereby full-time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover during the evening and at weekends. The key difference between the existing system and the day-only system is that the latter does not require full-time staff to provide extra on-call cover during the evening and weekends. This cover is provided by existing and new on-call staff.*

*Two alternative options to resource this duty system have been identified:*

***Option A** - one team of 6 staff guaranteeing the immediate availability of the fire engine for 8.5 hours of every weekday, with each firefighter working 5 days per week. This option results in a net reduction of 33 posts, providing the opportunity to reinvest staff into the "flexible crewing pool" (see Proposal 1), training and prevention and protection teams.*

***Option B** - one team of 7 staff guaranteeing the immediate availability of the fire engine for 10.5 hours of every weekday, with each firefighter working 4 days per week. This option results in a net reduction of 27 posts, providing the opportunity (albeit reduced) to reinvest staff into the "flexible crewing pool" (see Proposal 1), training and prevention and protection teams.*

*Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?*

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Dear Ms Hart and Ms Lambert

I am emailing you to oppose the cuts for Rye Fire Station. I am very concerned that in the event of a major fire or indeed fires occurring in two separate areas there would not be enough cover with only one pump available causing delays with possible loss of life. Back in 2015 / beginning of 2016 The Camber Newsletter that is distributed to Camber residents suggested that lifeguards were not needed on the beach at Camber. Then sadly seven deaths occurred in one summer of 2016, proving how much lifeguards were needed. Don't let this be a repeat of a disaster because of a budget that I am sure could be workable.

Best wishes  
[REDACTED]

Resident of Playden.

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Dear Sir / Madam,

We are writing to express our concern about the proposed cuts to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service – in particular Crowborough, where we live. With a population in excess of 20,000, that is set to increase as the number of new houses being built continues to rise, a reduction in fire and rescue cover is nonsensical. In addition, the proximity of the very busy A26 trunk road to both Uckfield and Crowborough with its potential for road traffic accidents and the Ashdown Forest with its potential for forest fires (which, with predictions about climate change, are likely to rise in frequency in the coming years), means that the availability of a full time and fully manned and equipped fire and rescue service is imperative.

Whilst we fully appreciate that in the current financially constrained climate, authorities are obliged to review and provide evidence of improving fiscal efficiency across their many and varied services, surely public safety should be a top priority and immune from all but the very minimum of cuts?

Please reconsider very carefully the impact and potential future consequences of these proposals.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Living where we do on the edge of East Sussex, almost surrounded by forestry and open spaces, all of which are places frequented by people who are not only local but visit from miles around, Crowborough is liable to many accidents.

RTA's caused by people who underestimate the driving conditions of our twisty lanes and fires caused by the thoughtless behaviour of these visitors. Unless you have seen it for yourself no one can appreciate the ferocity of a fire on the Ashdown Forest. The speed these fires spread and the damage they cause.

Reduce the number of appliances and firefighters and the dangers caused by these incidents will escalate. To lose our current level of protection by the proposed cuts is frightening to say the least.

The fire service in Crowborough is part of community life and they are a welcome sight at many minor incidents as well as those reported in the press. I can remember being stuck in a lift at a local supermarket. My relief was great when the local firefighters appeared on the scene and slowly did all that was needed to release me. Would my rescue have been so speedy if the fire service had been reduced. I could have been stranded in there for much longer while help was obtained from elsewhere.

Another great service our local team undertake is educational visits to the local schools. These are so important, but with the proposed reduction I guess these would be axed.

Please reconsider your actions when threatening to reduce the fire cover at Crowborough.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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My husband [REDACTED] and I wish to make a formal challenge to the loss of firefighters and one fire engine at Crowborough. Currently Crowborough is undergoing a rapid period of development with more housing estates being built. Surely when a town is growing you don't reduce a vital service. I cannot understand how, at a time when there are more homes being built/proposed to be built, that you consider there to be less risk of fire/ a need for a vital service. Please reconsider your plans. I assume it is a purely financial decision. I assume that the increase in council tax the new housing occupancy in Crowborough produces would be sufficient for our fire service to continue with full staff and equipment.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

---

The council must be gaining an increase in council tax as the new homes are occupied - I personally don't like the building in areas of outstanding natural beauty but I expect some recompense in perhaps the town as a whole benefiting in terms of services - not having them reduced.

Please take note of our objection to what seems on every level a dangerous policy.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

---

To whom it may concern ...

Please can you do all you can to maintain our Fire and Rescue services in Crowborough.

I should like to protest at the proposed cuts that are being proposed across East Sussex to the Fire and Rescue service. I only feel I can comment on the cuts affecting Crowborough and Uckfield in particular, as this seems ridiculous to me. We have the Ashdown Forest on our doorstep and it was only last year when we realised, more than ever, just how dangerous fires can be - if you remember we had several very serious fires which damaged the Forest, and which would have caused even more damage had local fire crews not been available.

Crowborough is, I understand still one the largest inland towns in East Sussex and we deserve an adequate level of Fire and Rescue service to be available. We also pay for this service and therefore expect it to be made available.

As we come out of the Covid Crisis - please don't give us another one to deal with.

Yours sincerely

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Dear Sirs, we are very concerned to read of the proposed changes by the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to the stations at Crowborough and Uckfield.

With more large building developments currently being constructed in Crowborough and Uckfield with further major housing plans under consideration by Wealden District Council, the last thing we should be doing is reducing the capability of our local stations.

Crowborough as you are aware, is the largest inland Town in East Sussex, and the rate payers contribute significantly to the Local, District and County budget for these services.

We, on behalf of the residents of Crowborough and Uckfield, strongly object to these proposals by the ESFRS and ask that they be removed.

Kind Regards

---

Dear Counsellor Rose

I understand the fire station in Crowborough has been under review. Please fight hard to keep it as:

- Inevitably response time will increase if the station is not maintained.
- More housing is going up in the area which increases the density of population in Crowborough.
- Adequate infrastructure as regards services must be maintained.
- Advice to the elderly re fire prevention might decrease.

There may well be further reason but these come to mind first. Thank you for your hard work on residents behalf.

Yours sincerely

---

I am writing to strongly object to the threat to Crowborough Fire Station. We cannot have the reduction in the services that you propose this would leave the area extremely vulnerable. Please reconsider!

Regards,

---

Sir/Madam

I wish to raise my deep concerns regarding the proposed cuts in appliances and personnel in Crowborough. I am at a complete loss to understand the rationale of cutting services to the largest inland town in East Sussex particularly in view of its close proximity to Ashdown Forest, which has several large fires annually. As Uckfield, our closest neighbour, is also facing cuts in services the response time is obviously going to be much slower which will endanger the residents, fauna and flora in this area.

If these proposals do go ahead then I assume there will also be a proportionate cut in the tax we pay for the service.

Regards

---

We are extremely worried about the proposed cuts to the Fire Service in Crowborough. Bearing in mind the increase in building houses and flats in the town and the proximity to Ashdown forest, we regard the cuts as being foolhardy. There will undoubtedly be more residential properties built in Crowborough in the future, the town is growing and a full working fire service is necessary.

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Crowborough residents.

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To Senior Management team

There are many new houses under construction in Crowborough. In many there is a lot of structural wood and there will be more fires. It's a simple equation

More houses = more fires

We need the fire station in Crowborough

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Dear Sir

I was absolutely horrified to learn that East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service are proposing cuts to both Crowborough and Uckfield fire stations and teams. We live in an ever expanding town and area, and need more provisions in place not less. Making these proposed cuts will lead to a loss of property and potentially lives too. I would therefore ask you to strongly object to these cuts and to fight to not only keep the service we currently have, but to increase the level of cover.

We are currently living in a very strange period of our lives, and will all have to make sacrifices and cuts no doubt. However, it should never be at the expense of a potential life should it?

Regards

---

I am writing to say how dismayed I was to receive your leaflet regarding the cuts to the excellent fire service in Crowborough.

It appears pointless to cut the services when there is development going on everywhere and with several hundred people about to move to Crowborough the chances of fires and rescues needing attending to are more of a risk than ever.

Please could you put my name on your petition.

Thank You

---

To Roy Gallery, Greg Rose and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

I have lived in Crowborough for 35 years. I am extremely lucky that so far I haven't needed our fire service.

God forbid I need it in the future and my emergency happens in the evening or over a weekend as there will be no one there to help me!!!!

These cuts are a disaster for Crowborough and should be stopped immediately. I assume you all live in the area so I hope you don't need these services once they are cut!!!

PS. I want to send this letter to Roy Gallery and Greg Rose but the email addresses I've been given on a leaflet are incorrect. Please could you forward this letter onto them.

Thankyou.

**Further reply:**

Hi Chris.

Good job I'm retired and had time to read! I didn't read the whole consultation but focused on those parts affecting Crowborough.

Having read it, I can see that the leaflet does not tell the whole story. By saying about a loss of a fire engine it implies there won't be one available but obviously there will. Yes, there will be a loss of full time firefighters but it

seems jobs will be redistributed to make more efficient use of manpower. I believe Crowborough will have enough cover in evenings and weekends. Interesting that most call outs are for road accidents. The A26 from Uckfield is lethal and drivers ignore speed limits all the time not realising there are blind bends!

Anyway. Thankyou for giving me the information and I hope by filling in the questionnaire I've helped.

Just wandering how the rest of Crowborough residents can give their views. I wouldn't have known about the Questionnaire if I hadn't emailed you.

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Good afternoon

I've just had a leaflet put through my door about the proposed cuts. I'm absolutely appalled to hear this is being even considered.

Being near to Ashdown forest our fire service is often called upon during the summer months to put fires out. I'm further shocked that its being considered when the local council seem hell bent upon agreeing to numerous new developments which will put further demand on the fire service.

The enquiries to the new development behind Sainsbury have been few and far between, the one next to the community centre isn't even half built, Nightingales isn't finished either, then there's the new houses near Well House vets that seem to be on the market for ages, the new houses off Montargis backing into Tollwood lane (Coppice end?) another development on the cards off Palesgate lane and yet another 250 houses are waiting approval near Nightingales? We still don't know the impact Covid 19 is going to have on the economy, these houses could lie empty for years.

The volume of houses being planned for our town require improvements to our infrastructure; traffic congestion in Western road needs addressing, another school and doctors surgery will be needed to accommodate the additional residents, parking restrictions around the station need putting in place before x amount of new Crowbough residents decide they don't want to walk to the station in the morning and don't want to pay to park either.... but no you're considering reducing our fire service!!

I honestly feel that the Council has lost its focus. Looking forward to the next local elections already.

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Fire Service in Crowborough / Consultation Document

My wife [REDACTED] and I feel compelled to write to you expressing our concern, and total opposition to the proposals referred to in the Consultative Document relating to fire cover at Crowborough Fire Station.

Being fearful that the proposed cuts will be implemented, as senior citizens we have recently have a few sleepless nights worrying about the dreadful consequences, and the fearful possibilities that could occur in the event of a fire in our home.

We just cannot understand the rationale behind such proposals, particularly having regard to the increase in residential house building in Crowborough; one would think that there would be an increase in fire cover, not decrease!

In addition to the above surely cognizance should be had of the special services provided by these worthy Firefighters, both in attendance of road traffic accidents, which appear to be on the increase in, and around Crowborough; and just recently the awful forest fires in the Ashdown Forest.

Finally, Crowborough has historically sought to encourage new businesses into the Town, fearful of following many others, by becoming a ghost town. What message therefore do these proposals if implemented send to potential takers?

Please I implore you to reject these ill thought-out proposals, and allow us to sleep peacefully.

Yours Sincerely

  
Dear Mark O'Brien, chief fire officer

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I am responding to your invitation to submit responses to your consultation about the future of the fire service in East Sussex.

I live in Prince Charles Rd, Lewes, very near your headquarters.

I am copying in this response to the two members of parliament recorded in the Sussex Express, as being opposed to the plans. This is significant because it is a cross party response. As Maria says, there is no urgency to push this forward at such a critical time when there is so much before all of us, and the fire fighters have been taking on extra duties in the light of the response to Covid 19.

My experience has been that the Fire Service acts with care in our area. And we should keep the Rescue element in the work, the sea and coast and downs nearby. The fire engines are vital to respond to the needs in a wide area, and I do not think our workers are sitting around wasting their time waiting for emergencies that rarely come.

It is vital we stay secure as we come out of the emergency and in the next couple of years it will be with us. Also, we are so blessed with nature and birds, and the rare occasions when birds need rescued should not be put aside, unless human life is at risk and where the priority has always to be.

I look forward to receiving reports on where this goes,

  
Hi

I tried to get the online petition but could not get response to the <http://chng.it/mnL5MvQM> as per the flyer for Crowborough.

I feel strongly it is ridiculous to make cuts to our fire service, we have already seen Police /Ambulance services cut, we have incredible expense of new houses going up to 600 if the three new applications go thru!!(of course they will with Wealdens Planning committee!) No one wants to listen to the need for infrastructure.

Lives will be put at risk, what do we pay our Community Rates for!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

So we support you in the fight to maintain not reduce a vital service.

  
Dear Councillor Galley,

---

Please accept this email as an indication of my strong opposition to the proposed changes at Crowborough Fire Station.

This is the largest inland town in the County and as such it needs total Fire Service protection and does not need the loss of one engine and 50% of its full-time firefighters. It is also the closest station to the Ashdown Forest and there are often forest fires there which require a heavy commitment of both equipment and personnel.

It seems that the District and County Councils seem determined to do whatever is necessary to spoil this town and its environment. There is never any thought given to the population and the main thrust appears to be how can we preserve villages and smaller towns by ruining Crowborough! Recent examples would be the housing development on the junction of Mill Lane and the A26 which involved chopping down many trees,(the "lungs" of the town by a busy A road) removing part of Bluebell Wood for car parking spaces and giving planning permission all around the town for far too many houses.

So build up the town past the point where its facilities can cope, remove pollution fighting trees and then take away Fire Service cover. Great plan!

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

---

Dear Sir,

I was sorry to hear that you are proposing to cut the facilities at our local fire station.

I am particularly worried at the longer response times as certain individuals in our area deem it acceptable to have bonfires on warm summer days not only necessitating windows to be shut when we are fighting a respiratory virus but also with the bone dry conditions posing a threat to neighbouring properties and gardens.

I therefore think that if the fire fighters cannot reach us especially in evenings or weekends then there is an increased risk to life and property.

Also, as the local demographic tends to be more elderly and consequently not as mobile and there are a number of flats and apartments with more being built, often for older members of society, so a rescue service is vital. The loss of firefighters would also mean that property safety checks, which at the moment I believe are readily available for the disabled and elderly would also be curtailed.

Therefore I should like you consider whether the same level of protection can be maintained where lives are at stake.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs

I understand that you intend cutting back on equipment and staff at both Crowborough and Uckfield fire stations. I feel this is extremely foolhardy seeing that both stations are on the outskirts of a tinder box in the shape of Ashdown Forest, which can keep them extremely busy as recently May. How long will it take for a reduced number of crews to get to the residents of both towns and any road accidents that may occur in the area, particularly when attending a fire on Ashdown Forest? Crowborough is the largest inland town in East Sussex and has several large housing developments, only increasing the number of households and vehicles. Many of the local roads are already congested and this will only get worse as the population increases.

I am appalled at the thought that you could even think of reducing the size and efficiency of the Fire & Rescue service, particularly when the Local Authorities are being instructed to increase the quantity of residential properties. We have already lost the police and ambulance stations and the Council Tax bills are supposed to contribute towards these services. What are we paying for?

I sincerely hope that you will reconsider cutting the local services.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] (Crowborough Resident for 54years)

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Dear Clerk to Parish Council

I am deeply disturbed to see that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority are planning huge cuts to the fire service in East Sussex.

They plan to;

1. Remove ten fire appliances which will result in the of sixty retained firefighters.
2. Twenty four of these firefighters will be lost from fire stations with two fire appliances. These stations are Netherfield, Rye, Seaford and Wadhurst.
3. Thirty six further firefighters will be lost from day crew stations. These stations are Bexhill, Battle, Lewes, Uckfield, Crowborough and Newhaven.

This monstrous indifference towards our fire service will mean;

1. The whole of East Sussex will be ten fire appliances down from where we are now.
2. The capacity for aerial rescue will be severely diminished.
3. The Ridge Community Fire Station, 50 The Ridge, Hastings, will have night time fire cover cut.
4. Bexhill, Battle, Lewes, Uckfield, Crowborough and Newhaven will all suffer from an increase in response times to incidents.

We simply can't allow this attack on the fire service, our key workers, to go unchecked and unchallenged.

East Sussex has a variety of challenges which you will be acutely aware of. Vast areas of the area is rural which will hamper the response of the fire service in attending incidents that are in these out of town areas with their narrow, bendy roads, many of the towns within the county are seaside and holiday destinations which brings increased risk with water dangers which can be exacerbated by people not familiar with the area, accommodation risks such as fire in these establishments alongside environmental, terrorist or other incidents which the fire service is often called upon to deal with.

Would it be possible for you to take urgent action to;

1. Lobby all members of the Fire & Rescue Authority to drop these proposals and work positively with the Fire Brigades Union to devise new plans to safeguard the community.
2. Lobby all MP's in East Sussex for them to work in conjunction with the Fire Brigades Union and the Fire & Rescue Authority to devise new plans to safeguard the community.
3. Speak with Cllrs in your political group to stress how important it is they also take action to support action against the cuts.
4. Allow the Fire Brigades Union to attend the meeting where the decision will be made so a front line perspective can be heard by all who attend.

The Fire & Rescue Authority also plan to introduce less family friendly working patterns which will impede firefighters ability and their morale to do the job they love;

1. **Preserving life**
2. **Defending property**
3. **Supporting the community.**

I look forward to your support in defence of our community.

Please sign the petition;

[https://www.change.org/p/east-sussex-fire-authority-support-your-firefighters-reject-the-proposals-save-lives-2?recruiter=137903920&recruited\\_by\\_id=3f1f61b0-6fc1-11e4-833e-7736be7179ed&utm\\_source=share\\_petition&utm\\_medium=copylink&utm\\_campaign=petition\\_dashboard](https://www.change.org/p/east-sussex-fire-authority-support-your-firefighters-reject-the-proposals-save-lives-2?recruiter=137903920&recruited_by_id=3f1f61b0-6fc1-11e4-833e-7736be7179ed&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=petition_dashboard)

Go raibh maith agat, do chara,

---

Dear Consultation

I had the following questions passed to me via Phil Scott which relate to Rye. Please could I ask you to take a look at them and provide what answers you can.

1. Can you tell me the response time for a second fire appliance to a house fire in camber (if broad oak isn't available - as as a tier 3 station would be up to a 30 minute response time). And not one from Kent (after all we all pay our East Sussex Council tax).
2. Can you tell me how many times that the second appliance has been used last year?
3. In the proposal the words 'slightly longer' are used....How long is slightly longer?

If you need any further clarification please let me know. Could you let me know if this would be a direct response to me or whether these would form part of the FAQ's in case I need to direct the individual to them. Many thanks in advance

Kind regards

Questions from [REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Hi.

Thanks for passing me to the consult people. Much appreciated. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I did also ask the question of the recruitment at Rye fire station - how many firefighters have left to the number that the service has recruited over the last 5 years.

Many thanks

**Further reply:**

Thanks for your emails. Sorry it's only now that I've just got back to you. Been talking this over with my local firefighters.

Now it seems that you haven't been telling the whole truth regarding the question about the second fire engine into camber. You know that if Rye was to travel with 4 firefighters and needed to go in to a fire with BA and they didn't meet the rapid development criteria that Kent fire and rescue couldn't not control the entry control board (correct me if I'm wrong).

The question regarding 'How many times did the second fire engine at Rye get used' you came back with 14? Are you absolutely sure that's the right figure? Again I've been told otherwise.

The third question about how long is slightly longer....you generally don't know do you? I've seen all over social media that the Chief fire officer had been asked this question and has failed to answer the question.

How on gods earth can you ask the public to take a survey on cuts to the service that a simple question like that can't be answered. Shocking really.

So all I ask is that you answer the question with just simple answers.

Many thanks

---

I wish to register my objection to the proposals to reduce the efficacy of the Crowborough Fire Station both in terms of equipment and personnel. The population of Crowborough continues to grow relentlessly with the obvious effect of requiring more protection - not less.

Our friends in the local Police tell us that a fire crew is more often than not the first responder to a local road traffic accident and therefore able to give vital first aid to the injured much earlier that would otherwise be the case.

We grow tired of this specious nonsense that by reducing or removing our local services we will get a better service. We have already lost our ambulances and now the nearest Stroke Unit is a further 30 miles distant than before. Crowborough is the largest inland town in East Sussex and our local Fire Service should be enhanced, not diminished. It looks as if the proposals are to maintain the animal rescue unit but to reduce the capability to fight fires in the area. What good is that to a local resident whose home is being consumed by flames, or whose husband is trapped in a wrecked car on the A26?

---

Good morning to you.

I would like to express my concerns over the proposed reduction in the current level of emergency cover available to the Crowborough community.

I appreciate the need to balance between costs and demand but given the need for cover in the area increasing considerably ; with the Walshes Road housing developments on going and the project next to the Council offices nearing completion; and most certainly future housing expansion in our area, any reduction may have a serious effect on lives.

I would ask you to reconsider the decision.

Thank you.

Regards.

---

Dear Sirs

I am extremely concerned about the proposed cuts to Crowborough fire station

I believe they will lead to a reduction in the level of service currently provided and will lead to greater risks for the local community especially elderly people.

I would ask you to oppose the plans and to note my objections please

Regards

---

To the Senior Management Team.

Dear Sirs

I wish to register my dismay at your proposed cuts to the above Fire Station .

Apart from the attendance at road and other incidents. The Fire Team do a sterling job attending fire incidents on Ashdown Forest.

There is no way that fires can be dealt with swiftly if you carry out these cuts.

Yours Faithfully

---

Dear Mr Galley and the Senior Management Team of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Our family is very concerned about the proposed cuts to the Fire Station in Crowborough and also further afield in the East Sussex area.

With ever increasing building developments taking place, then surely as the population grows so should the essential services! Lives will be put at risk if a full service is not available locally and it is also not good enough to lose firefighters who rely on the employment. That is also lost skills.

Please, please reconsider these proposed drastic cuts and do everything possible to retain at least our current level of service, although you still need to consider the rising local population so do not stretch the service too thinly!

Your sincerely

---

Hi Senior management

I understand you want to make alarming cuts to the fire service in the area.

Is this due to cut backs , austerity?

My Councilor here in Crowborough says you think modern houses are now not liable to fire any longer.

That's interesting, is this based on science ?

What are your response times to fires and motor vehicle accidents?

Being a rural area with large tracks of heath land.

I personally think it's a short sided money only thing.

I'm sure if I were a sacked fireman I'd be pretty upset.

Regards

---

Good Afternoon

We have just received the flyer informing us of the cuts to East Sussex fire and Rescue and cant understand the reasoning behind this as there are more and more houses being built in Crowborough and we cannot see 50% of firefighters losing there jobs and a reduction of evening and weekend cover as this is when they are most needed ! This will cost lives its madness so please reconsider this proposal

---

Dear Sir / Madam,

As you are aware East Sussex Fire and Rescue have put their Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) out for consultation to the public.

As a member of public living in Peacehaven, and an experienced operational firefighter working at Preston Circus Fire Station in Brighton, I would like to highlight the impact of the proposals of the IRMP.

A layperson reading the IRMP would think that the presentation is impressive, that the proposals appear effective and that they greatly benefit the public. The key messages promoted by the IRMP are:

- No reduction of fire stations.
- Extra fire appliances to be put at Eastbourne and Hastings.
- A flexible rostering duty system allowing a more family friendly work pattern.

It all sounds too good to be true!

And it is: The IRMP fails to use the latest available data information and the data used is highly selective and does not support the proposals. It also results in a number of very serious cuts.

- Removal of 10 appliances
- Longer response times
- Only 1 primary crewed ALP in East Sussex
- Detrimental impact on Fire Fighters and their family lives
- Even the government hasn't asked for 'cost-savings'!

### Removal of 10 Appliances

Firstly, the IRMP will cut the second appliance on every day crewed station citing that (statistically) they are not used enough (Page 45): this represents a loss of 10 appliances from the service as a result of cutting the second appliance from day crewed and on-call stations, such as Rye, Wadhurst, Seaford and Heathfield. The second appliances at these stations are not idle – they are moved to provide vital stand-by cover when primary pumps are at larger jobs, such as the recent fire at Ashdown Forest over the weekend 16th May, and on Sunday 17th May when all the pumps from Brighton and the surrounding area attended a basement fire:



[REDACTED]

Additionally, the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) based at Preston Circus, Brighton was required. This is one of only 3 High-Rise capable appliances left in East Sussex following previous IRMP cuts (the others being in Hastings and Eastbourne).

In such circumstances in the future, if the Day-Crewed stations had no second appliance this would mean no fire appliance cover for a population of more than 300,000 people across an area of more than 200 square miles: Between Barcombe in the north, Uckfield in the north-east, Seaford in the east, and Shoreham (a Day-Crewed West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service station) in the west. This would be negligent.

### **Longer response times**

Page 42 states that Day-Crewed stations will change to a 9-5 Monday to Friday for day-crew firefighters; after 5pm Monday – Friday and weekends will be covered by 'on-call' firefighters. As someone who lives in a community served by a Day-Crewed Station (Newhaven) what concerns me most is the expressed impact and accepted risks of this proposal (Page 42, Paragraph 4): "The community would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the hours after 5pm during the week and at the weekend".

As a resident living in this area with the reduction of the second appliance there is one key detail lacking: HOW LONG IS SLIGHTLY LONGER? Will it be just one room destroyed by the fire or your whole house? We are not told, as they are not releasing the modelling for turnout of first and second appliances. In cases where a second appliance is required, such as a persons reported (therefore a risk to life) this could literally be the difference between life and death. It goes without saying that there is a higher risk to life at night: sleeping people take longer to respond and are often disorientated, while drivers can be less alert and will have less visibility to react to risks, especially on unlit country roads in areas around the affected stations. Suffice to say that if a member of your family crashes their car on a country road in the middle of the night it will be a fire fighter cutting them out to save their life, so you probably want them there sooner rather than taking 'slightly longer'.

### **Only 1 Fully Crewed ALP in East Sussex**

The ESFRS proposals to 'dual-crew' the appliance and the ALPs at both Eastbourne and Hastings would make Brighton the only primary crewed ALP in the whole of East Sussex. Brighton has numerous high-rise buildings, and a great deal more are found throughout the county.

Dual-crewing means that if an appliance is out at a job, then the ALP will not be crewed. In the event that the ALP is also required the appliance will have to return to the station, pick up the ALP and then drive to the job, leaving insufficient crew for the other appliance. This both reduces overall effective cover and increases response times and endangers the public, putting lives at risk. We are all mindful of the tragic loss of life at Grenfell Tower, a high-rise building in the capital. Our ALP cover is already insufficient (with no ALP appliances stationed to cover the centre of the county), but by downgrading the Ridge Station and dual crewing the ALP in Hastings this reduces coverage even further.

### **Detrimental impact on Fire Fighters and their family lives**

My next area for concern is with the proposed change in the shift station duty system.

The rota system currently follows a rolling 2 days 2 nights 4 off pattern and 'it has stood the test of time' (page 53, paragraph 2). Annual leave is planned locally well in advance to ensure adequate planned staffing cover and ensure service continuity. I have worked in the service under this system for [REDACTED] years without issue. As a mother, my husband [REDACTED] and I are able to plan our child-care arrangements with minimal stress or

difficulties well in advance. This system works brilliantly: As a family unit we know exactly what we are working every week, every month, every year due to the continuity.

Can you imagine the insecurity of only knowing your work schedule 6 weeks in advance? How can you coordinate your changing shift patterns to ensure child care? How is this proposal less stressful?

My husband [REDACTED] was involved in [REDACTED] using flexible rostering systems. He witnessed this approach and the difficulties it brings, such as reliance on expensive bank and agency staffing. Roster managers were left pulling their hair out trying to cover shifts without overloading [REDACTED]. It increased work-place tensions as some staff try to cherry-pick the best shifts and leave the unsociable shifts to the newer or disorganised [REDACTED]. It was entirely reliant on senior [REDACTED] staff spending a great deal of their valuable time on administration, rather than what they are trained to do – care for people.

The reality of any flexible rostering approach is that for someone to get their personal preferences others will have to sacrifice their own to cover them. And a senior firefighter will be at the centre of it trying to keep everyone happy, or failing to keep anyone happy. In such a tightly knit team such as that of a Watch this can have serious repercussions, especially when you can end up relying on each other for your lives in your line of work. This is before you consider the harmful impact on the mental health and well-being of fire fighters. The fixed-shift system which we operate in at this moment is fair to all and ensures adequate planned staffing to provide service continuity – flexible rostering is an unnecessary and unwelcome proposal.

The IRMP states that it tries to encourage a 'workforce better reflecting the communities in which we serve' However in Brighton and Hove 50.9% of the population is female, only 6.5% of ESFRS firefighters are women. Our Equality Impact Assessment Document states that those worst affected by the proposed shift changes will be primary care givers: 70% of primary care givers are female, so how can the proposed shift change benefit carers? In a service actively trying to encourage minority groups how will they retain those they have when these changes will make balancing childcare, work and family life too difficult?

And finally:

#### **Even the government hasn't asked for 'cost-savings'!**

In an email response to an enquiry from a firefighter, Maria Caulfield, MP (Conservative) for Lewes, stated that cost savings were unnecessary as the Fire Authority has recently received c£750k additional funding required for service provision. She said that Central government has not asked for further savings and in her opinion that the proposals will not provide savings anyway.

The IRMP proposals are reckless, dangerous and irresponsible. I am concerned as a member of the public because they put me, my family, my friends and my neighbours at greater risk. I am concerned as a firefighter because they are detrimental for firefighters and their families and damage the service that I continue to be proud to be part of after [REDACTED] years of service. I think the data shows that we need to improve fire cover in the county, so we do need a set of proposals to achieve this. What the data does not support is prioritising fire cover on certain days at particular times at the expense of cover overall.

I look forward to hearing your views on this matter.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

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Dear Member

I am truly dismayed at the cuts that have been proposed to cut fire stations, fire engines and firefighters.

We are in the middle of a pandemic where we are clapping for these key workers every week.

It seems obscene and a sign of monotonous difference to clap whilst also writing the redundancy notices for buildings, vehicles and staff that support our vulnerable communities.

There is no person in the area who can say they have not or will not need the assistance of the fire service.

I accept cuts have to be made at the direction of HM Government but this isn't the place to be looking for those savings. I recommend a wholesale lobbying of HM Government by Ch Fire Officers and Fire Authority Chairs along with their Members to redirect the need for cuts.

We have seen too much of needless cutting of late, people need to be safe in their communities; so they can raise their families, work and develop their talents, worship and see friends, and mercifully, have the protection of the fire and rescue service.

Its time we railed against HM Government on this issue and left our communities alone.

I hope I have your support on this important matter.

Go raibh maith agat, do chara,

[REDACTED]

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Dear Member

Just a few short weeks ago I rang your e-mail wanting help and I am thankful for those that answered.

I wasn't aware until today that the person who will implicate the cuts has never been an operational firefighter and nor has anyone on the Fire Authority.

I tried to speak with Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive Whittaker and it wasn't possible. There is every chance this wasn't possible cause the large job title she holds may mean she gets lost in the corridors of power.

I engaged with the Fire Authority just a few short weeks ago and received fairly predictable responses.

There are ten fire engines going to disappear, overnight, across the area. This is a disaster, what on earth are you people talking about? Its almost as if the East Sussex area should have no provision at all.

Crews for aerial rescue capability will be cut and the pumps responding will be cut.

I'm not sure how this will go down with the PCS as we need fire cover for our hotel.

If businesses feel threatened I am sure graffiti and pot holes etc may well come second.

East Sussex does NOT want a reduction in wholetime firefighters - we need to be alive to terrorism. It tells a story that unarmed civilians as firefighters, TfL and Transport Police are sent in first and suffer the worst injury.

The Ridge Fire Station and Hastings Fire Station are vital community stations. Can anyone on the fire authority explain why they were on the list?

Cllr Galley has e-mailed me and told me his private thoughts.

I imagine I'll come back to this.

Thanks for your time.

"In the words of 'Bella Ciao' we send a heartfelt message of solidarity to firefighters and workers in Italy - and across the world."

Go raibh maith agat, do chara,  
[REDACTED]

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To Senior Management Team East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

We would like to register our objections to the possible cuts to services at Crowborough Fire Station. We believe we need to have full time services at Crowborough as we are in an area of the Ashdown Forest which has regular fires in dry periods. We are also on the A26 which has regular accidents where the Fire Brigade become involved. Crowborough is forever expanding with constant new developments and a cut in services will puts the lives of people living here at more risk.

[REDACTED]

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Further to our letter of objection dated 14th May - regretfully on the evening of Saturday 16th May there was a significant fire on the Ashdown Forest. We understand that overall 6 fire appliances attended together with 4 four wheel drive land rovers. In the brave new world that is envisaged by the Powers that be at the Fire Authority the response We fear the outcome would have been very different. As far as response from Crowborough-it was a weekend so there would be no full time firefighters, only retained would be on duty. Only one fire engine and NO FOUR WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLE (as this will no longer be at Crowborough. Apparently there would be back up four wheel drive vehicles from Hastings and Seaford. Hardly a swift response from that distance. 10 acres burned that weekend but it would have been worse. This was the second fire that week and We expect there will be several more this summer. There is an " EXTREME" fire warning in place at the moment. On this alone you must reconsider these cuts. It is just too dangerous to work on such a depleted service.

Since writing last month We understand that neither the Ashdown Forest Rangers or Crowborough Town Council were contacted prior to the Consultation process being released. The very area that our Fire station covers. This is really quite unbelievable. We don't know if Wealden District Council we're consulted beforehand. Probably not. It is also unbelievable and very unsatisfactory that there will be no public meetings. Bearing in mind that due to "Lockdown and the sequelae " the inquest for the Shoreham Air crash from 2015 has been delayed until 2021 and yet you plan to go ahead with this "public consultation " which it isn't! We really wonder if it is legal? The petition against these proposals has now reached nearly 20,000. Now Crowborough households have now received leaflets through the door this will surely rise. So many people did not even know about these proposals.

You must reconsider these proposed changes. Feelings are running high in Crowborough and elsewhere.

Brighton MP brought the matter up at PMQ time this week.

Regards  
[REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Dear Dawn Whittaker,

Thank you for your prompt reply to our email yesterday.

Our fears are founded on fact because we have bothered to talk to our local firefighters about the proposals.

I would just like to point out that I did not mean " only retained firefighters" in a derogatory way. I was just stating that the weekend under the proposed changes shift would ONLY be retained firefighters as opposed to full time firefighters along with retained. (For a large incident such as a forest fire).

Also pleased to hear that new 4x4 vehicles are being introduced. Let us hope that the Crowborough Fire Station get one due to their close proximity to the Forest.

I stand by the views expressed in my earlier email of the 14th May as far as RTAs on the A26 and increases in housing, population together with the Ashdown Forest.

I would conclude by saying we are paying members of the public that ESFRS serve through our taxes and on that fact you need to listen to us. Possibly the public should be given the option of perhaps paying a little bit more through their taxes rather than just cutting the service to what we and the firefighters see as dangerous and unsuitable levels.

Again, thank you for taking the time to reply.

Regards  
[REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Dear Dawn Whittaker

Thank you once again for your prompt reply. It is not our intention to keep writing back and forth but we would just say that we HAVE read fully the proposals (some 64 pages?) outlined and we referred and quoted from this report in our first email of the 14th May. We would not have considered writing without gathering as much information as possible.

Interesting about the capping of any increase in funding.

Finally, we would take issue that it is a full and open consultation on the proposals. This cannot be without public meetings which cannot be held at this time. Hence it is NOT the time for cuts to be considered.

Thank you for forwarding our letters to the dedicated consultation so that they can be recorded.

We await the outcome!

Regards  
[REDACTED]

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Please drop these proposals. It is putting lives and property at risk, with longer response times. Delay could cost lives  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am appalled that ESFR rethinking of closing Crowborough fire station. We have an ever expanding population, by the time the latest housing is finished there will be over 28,000 people to protect in Crowborough alone.

Our taxes were used to modernise this fire station not so long ago, it is in an ideal location for Crowborough and to attend out of town emergencies.

If this station is shut how are we to get a fire service when the weather is bad? The A26 is impassable several times a year in icy or snowy weather. Traffic is unable to get up the hill in any direction to Crowborough, often due to accidents.

The increased traffic on the roads in the south east with the ever increasing housing leads to slower response times, particularly if the fire response vehicle has to come from afar, it will inevitably be too late for anyone caught in a fire. Presumably that is the price worth paying if we live in the Wealden area?

The people of this area pay their taxes just as much as anyone else in the rest of the country, why are we singled out to take the brunt of the costs. For instance Hunstanton in Norfolk have a population of 5,000, they have their own fire station and one in the neighbouring town of Kings Lynn.

If you are worried about money try altering the bureaucratic system from the top down, simplify the rules and regulations and retire those who are no longer productive.

Kind Regards

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I wish to add my voice to those of so many others living in and around Crowborough regarding the threat of reducing the capacity - both in terms of personnel and equipment - at Crowborough Fire Station.

I fully understand that savings have to be made in these times of economic stringency but it is an act of sheer folly to reduce the capability of the Crowborough Fire Station. The population of Crowborough increases relentlessly as will the need for local support and protection. Our friends in the Police tell us that the Fire crews are almost invariably the first responders to local road traffic accidents and therefore giving first aid to the injured faster than would otherwise be the case. It would seem that Crowborough will be left with the animal rescue service and not much else. This is completely unacceptable and I would urge you and your colleagues to see the sheer folly in even thinking about reducing this vital service.

**Further reply:**

Dear Mr Galley,

Thank you for your speedy response to my email and I am grateful that you took the trouble to leave double spaces between each line of your reply as there appears to be a great deal to be gleaned from "reading between the lines". I infer from your reply that your mind is already made up.

It would be interesting to know how many of the "number of changes" recommended by senior Fire Officers are based purely on the "evidence collected" of their shrinking budget rather than on the safety and well being of the people of Crowborough. It is difficult to comment on the effect of changes to shift patterns and their assumed benefits without having the full details for consideration. I would be concerned about the threat of removal of the second fire appliance from Crowborough on the grounds that it is not used frequently. At the Crowborough Rugby Club we installed a defibrillator several months ago and, to the best of my knowledge, it has never been used in an emergency but nobody in their right mind would suggest removing it for lack of frequent use.

Will there be a public meeting before those in authority sweep aside all the residents' objections and pass the proposals?

Regards,

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Dear Councillor Galley

We have been informed that there is a serious intention to reduce the resources of Crowborough Fire Station along with other Brigades namely Uckfield.

We are sure that such a plan would be a serious reduction to the safety of the people of Crowborough as well as the surrounding area and amenities such as the Ashdown Forest. The population of Crowborough as with other towns and villages has grown and will continue to grow as will the intended shopping and work facilities that support the people of Crowborough.

Indeed it would not be unfair to state that the North sector of the county either through the Wealden connection or the County Council has left the region in a far worse position that during the time when there was more local government interest and work in place.

To further reduce the safety function that has been provided by the local brigade over the years - I am 70 and have lived in Crowborough all my life and my wife has live here for 45 years - would be a callous disregard for the expected standard of safety from a professional unit which has served the village and town throughout my life. Both manpower and machinery needs to be kept up to strength as there is a near continuous need for the brigade to be available be it for industrial, domestic or environmental reason plus when major incidents occur when it may well be called to other parts of East Sussex to protect people and property from damage.

Please ensure that the Crowborough and neighbouring Fire Brigades are protected from any reductions - unlike the police presence in Crowborough of which no further comment - and halt the downsizing of everything that matters to the voting public let alone those unlucky enough to require the services of their local Fire Brigade.

We hope that you will ensure that any proposed reductions are stopped in their tracks in this matter.

Stay Aware and Keep safe

Regards

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Dear Councillor Roy

It has been brought to our notice that the East sussex Fire & Rescue Service are planning major cuts across the county and included within these plans are the following applied to the Crowborough Fire Station :

1. Loss of one fire engine
2. 50% of full time Firefighters
3. A reduction in evening and weekend fire cover plus longer response times.

These proposals we find incomprehensible as not only has this unit proved itself an invaluable service over the years in providing insurance for the saving of lives and property within this area, but furthermore by making such cuts would mean that the authorities in making them would be stating these fundamental rudiments to the protection of life and property no longer bear importance. Hence we wish to put forward our strongest objection.

Yours sincerely

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Hello,

I have been made aware of the forthcoming proposed cuts at Crowborough fire station.

I wish to object and ask that these cuts do not happen.

A fully equipped and fully staffed fire station is an essential public service and there should be more investment into it not cut-backs.

Your life and your family lives might depend on this service one day - just as for the rest of us.

Please do not make any cut backs at all. Please increase the investment into the service for more crew, vehicles and facilities.

Regards,

Dear Councillors,

Over the next couple of days i understand you will be having meetings regarding the ESFRS proposals and cuts to Newhaven Fire Station.

Unfortunately no frontline firefighters have been invited or included in these meetings so i am writing to you today with information you will need to make an informed appraisal of the potential decimation of fire cover for Newhaven and surrounding areas.

Attached is information and questions that are relevant to the issue at hand.

We would like you to raise the questions posed in the attachments as ESFRS have not been able to give us answers so maybe you will have more luck.

As front line Firefighters we see day to day how the fire service needs to be resourced, and it is surely only logical that if you take Fire engines and firefighters out of the resource pool it can only mean more risk to the community.

Couple that with the down-grading of the station which means reducing fire cover and the increased time it would take us to respond to critical incidents, the future safety of the residents of Newhaven, Peacehaven, Seaford and surrounding areas is in dire straights.

These cuts will cost lives !

ESFRS's proposals are based on outdated statistics running up to 2018, Newhaven Fire Stations mobilisations have increased by 12.5% alone, and what for the future, what about Covid 19. There is no future proofing of the fire service only reacting to outdated statistics from the past.

By its own admission ESFRS tell us it will take `slightly longer` to respond to calls. Slightly longer means a worsening service. This is not a positive step but a backward one.

Surely there is not a town council in the country that would want their communities put a greater risk for any reason.

I speak for all firefighters, we live and work in the community and we only want to help and protect, but we need the tools to achieve this.

Please read and digest the attachments and beware of spin.

Thank you





I wish to object strongly to the proposed cuts to the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and in particular my local station, Crowborough

The proposed cuts would be extremely dangerous if carried out! They will decimate a critical, much needed lifesaving service that has suffered budget constraints in previous years. They will negatively affect public safety as well as firefighter safety and will also impede firefighter's ability to rescue and assist members of the public.

New housing and population in Crowborough and the surrounding area that this station supports has grown dramatically in recent years and current and planned housing developments will put a strain on all emergency services primarily Fire & Rescue which with any more cuts would be reduced to another ineffective reactive force such as the Police which has been cut back to a near non-existent emergency service, virtually unheard of in local villages with a response time that would have previously been unthinkable and unacceptable.

The overlap assistance from and to other surrounding stations would become impossible so even if firefighters from Crowborough or another station are attending a very serious incident, if the cuts take place, backup if urgently required will not be coming very quickly and lives could be lost.

Our contribution through rates and other taxes has increased every year so why should we accept our essential services being cut.

Please stop these proposals before any lives are lost.

Hon Treasurer & Secretary  
Hartfield & Colemans Hatch Branch

Sir

Having just read the proposals for the future of fire services in East Sussex and Crowborough in particular, I wish to advise you my wife and I are vehemently opposed to the reduction of the number of fire appliances and fire fighters at the local station. In the unfortunate event of a house fire the attendance of the engine and fire

fighters, by definition, needs to be both fast and efficient. Given the proximity of Ashdown Forest and the size of our town, it is imperative we retain the current complement of services and equipment in Crowborough.

Regards

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Dear Councillor

I write to you as a retired Fire Officer [REDACTED] and former Officer in Charge of Crowborough Fire Station. At times throughout my career I have worked in most departments and crewing systems. I also served as a Crowborough Town Councillor for 13 years.

The questions in the review will lead to the result being misleading and interpreted to give the Authority reason to implement the moves and also to being accused of passing this through under cover of the overriding Covid-19 pandemic crisis.

The proposals must not be implemented as the changes/reductions will not achieve better levels of attendance as my following comments will make plain.

1. Reduction of appliances will only lead to reduced appliances attending incidents. This is already a problem where the county cannot cover two concurrent major incidents, [REDACTED]. This endangers life to all.....firefighters and the public, with unavoidable and unnecessary loss of property both homes and businesses.
2. The change to Day Crewed stations to a level of 6-7 personnel Monday to Friday does not leave flexibility to enable leave, sickness or training to be adequately covered thereby reducing appliance crewing and availability.
3. The Fire & Rescue Service has for many years not held proper Wholetime Recruit Courses. Instead it has relied on placing Retained personnel on wholetime contracts (many of a zero hours basis) . This has led to reductions of crews at retained stations resulting in these stations becoming unavailable.
4. Retained recruitment is difficult, there is no longer a large local pool of workers as firms, due to the ongoing commercial climate, are mainly unwilling to release staff. This has, with 3 above, led to the current retained personnel covering, if possible, more hours which leads to increased stress and family problems whilst reducing crewing flexibility and appliance availability. This enforces the need to maintain the current Wholetime shift and Day Crewed Levels as you cannot and will not guarantee to cover from 18.00hrs. Friday to 09.00hrs. Monday by Retained personnel at Day Crewed and Retained Stations.
5. Increased turnout times. In the years of my service on Day Crewed Stations swift turnout during on call periods was normal – at Crowborough an appliance would leave the station in 4 minutes - now it will take over 9 minutes on average. This is due to the loss of Brigade housing, longer travel time for those responding and the requirements of crews to be fully rigged before the appliance leaves the station whereas we would rig on the way as a matter of course to save lives, time being of the essence.
6. Reduction at Wholetime Shift stations would likewise endanger the lives of both service and civilian personnel. The increase in both urban and rural communities is not going to improve matters and coverage of sickness and leave will have appliances attending with minimum crews.

I would respectfully like to make you aware that today all this country has in way of Civil Defence is the Fire & Rescue Service. At present it is barely able to provide a level of service that was there prior to my retirement and

crewing levels are such that major incidents the like of the major flooding from north to south of the county could not have the attendance required of it. Government and ministers at all levels must be told by all Councillors from Parish to County Level - ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. The plate is virtually empty. Morale is at rock bottom. If it means more taxes so be it. BUT look in the mirror and ask how you will live with yourselves when further cuts lead to losing those you love?.

To those of you who have already rejected these proposals, thank you, I urge you to convince fellow Councillors, through meaningful discussion and debate to reject the Review Proposals for they will affect you all and your families, friends and those you represent.

Finally - If you wish to maintain a Fire & Rescue Service which is fit for purpose, Reject this Review and hold meaningful discussions with, and listen to, those who crew the appliances and crew the stations - Your Uniformed Firefighters, and act in a meaningful and responsible way.

Respectfully Yours, [REDACTED]

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Dear Sir/Madam,

As a Crowborough resident who lives not too far away from the Ashdown Forest, I feel that your proposal to reduce the number of fire station appliances at Crowborough does not seem all that logical. Bearing in mind the recent number and intensity of fires that have occurred on the Ashdown Forest in recent years, any reduction of the ability to quickly send appliances to the area before fires become out of control means that Crowborough needs to retain all of its appliances, and be able to respond quickly.

Your general proposals for reductions throughout the County for both appliances and retained crews, would also mean fewer appliances at nearby stations to assist, these could even be in use elsewhere and unavailable.

Global warming is undeniable, meaning that summer fires are likely to be more frequent and intense with more fire appliances being necessary to gain control, was this something taken into consideration when you carried out your risk assessment of future fire service needs for this part of the County?

Crowborough fire station is on the doorstep of the Ashdown Forest, and the most northerly fire station in the County. We want the whole County to be adequately served, not just the large coastal towns.

Yours  
[REDACTED]

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I strongly oppose the proposed cuts to the Service. Crowborough, like other other towns in East Sussex, is seeing a huge increase in population with new housing being built wherever developers think they can get away with it and with little interest from the local authority. The Service should be expanded rather than reduced.

[REDACTED]  
Hi Chris

Unfortunately an urgent meeting has been rescheduled into my diary for this afternoon and I cannot now make the consultation. I have been involved with Surrey Fire Services changes in how they deliver non-threat to life work and would like to establish a similar relationship with East Sussex Fire Service.

The primary cross over point seems to be call outs to incidents of trapped livestock. If this is an issue for your team then please could you put me in touch with the relevant personal involved in the consultation who may be able to meet outside of today's session to discuss.

Apologies again and many thanks for all your work and efforts.

Kind regards

Romy Jackson  
County Adviser  
Sussex and Surrey  
National Farmers Union

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To: The senior management team ESFRS

Please find attached our letter to Cllr Galley regarding the planned cuts you are proposing to take at our local fire & rescue service in Crowborough.

We strongly object to these proposals to an already basic service especially when compared to historic norms, if the police can get more funding so should you for this lifesaving service.

Councillor Mr Roy Galley, Head of Fire Authority  
Ref: Cuts to Fire Services in East Sussex

We are writing to you to express our concerns and objection to the proposed cut backs to our local fire station in Crowborough and to the East Sussex Fire Service in general.

Our perception of the existing staffing and fire vehicle levels at Crowborough are barely adequate now to serve our community as it is, and with the added responsibility of Ashdown Forest to protect with one appliance it is of grave concern that this will not enable adequate cover for other incidents that may occur with the added hazard to life of local residents .

Housing in Crowborough is increasing all the time, with even more large housing applications with the planning authorities at the present time, and this proposal to reduce fire cover flies in the face of common sense, with the added revenues to the community charge, this must surely be an additional financial consideration for the revenue for the future fire services in the area.

We find it appalling that as East Sussex residents we are expected to pay more each year to get a reduced service which will put our lives at additional risk from harm, this is not how we expect a responsible and caring Fire Service should be contemplating for our future planning.

Reductions in cover for other towns in the area exacerbate the problem as there will be a vast void when their services are called upon to assist, especially from Uckfield, we are at a minimum with cover now, do not reduce it further.

What message does this give to the careers of fire fighters with these continuing cuts to their professions?

We look to you to ensure that these proposals do not go ahead and safeguard our lives and the residents of East Sussex.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

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We strongly oppose any reduction to the Crowborough very busy important Fire Station A very busy station on the edge of the Ashdown Forest and the very busy A26 road

Yours

[Redacted Signature]

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I understand that there is a proposal to remove the 4 x 4 Land Rover and cut the number of Fire fighters from Wadhurst Fire station. As this is such a rural area it is vitally important that we are adequately covered by the Fire Service in the event of a serious fire. The thought of having to wait up to 30mins for an appliance to come from Crowborough or Tunbridge Wells when dealing with an emergency is inconceivable, and could well result in loss of life. Obviously, with all the additional building going on in the village there will, no doubt, be even more calls for the emergency services. Please, please do not allow these cuts to happen.

[Redacted Signature]

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For the attention of ESFRS:

Having read the proposed cuts to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services, with particular reference to Crowborough and Uckfield, I would like to express my total opposition to these moves.

It is obvious to me that the basis for the proposals is financial rather than any actual concern for practical and thorough protection for residents, businesses, land and property in the area, let alone for our firefighters.

Fire service cuts in London have led to a much more stretched and thin service. We might be treated here as a rural area, but that does not diminish, merely vary, the risk. My concerns are summarised as follows:

- East Sussex's roads are dangerous: RTCs are frequent and often messy due to speeding. There is an overpopulation of deer, that often cause accidents requiring fire service attendance. Crowborough's elevated situation can cause it to be more prone to extreme winter weather that threatens road safety.
- Ashdown Forest, the huge expanse of ecologically valuable heathland and pockets of woodland, is constantly under threat from fire, which spreads rapidly due to the nature of its flora, made even drier by the increasingly hot and lengthy summers we are experiencing as global warming continues. There were recently two large fires on the Forest, requiring not only the usual cover from Crowborough and Uckfield, but appliances from stations much further afield. Cuts to staffing and machines would make this a more frequent occurrence, thus diminishing the cover in areas who've had to 'lend' their requirement to our area.
- The population of Uckfield is rising by over a thousand, and that of Crowborough by a couple of hundred, due to the huge expansion in house building in both towns, with more development being regularly applied for. Logic dictates that a higher population increases risk. More domestic fires and accidents, more vehicles on the road, more delivery vans.
- I understand that the construction of modern housing, whilst more efficient in sound and energy insulation, brings its own problems for firefighters. Fire and smoke alarms do not prevent fires, they merely alert us to the danger of them starting. My own heat alarm tends to go off when I use the grill, reminding me to open windows (we don't have a cooker hood while our kitchen is under renovation). Elderly couples like us, a growing phenomenon in Crowborough, pose a particular risk.
- Relying on more part-time staff brings problems. Full-time staff live closer to the station. Recruitment variabilities and logistics threaten regular attendance and optimum cover and lengthen turnout times.
- Fire prevention expansion is a laudable aim. But after ten years of government cuts and the emasculation of local government, it must not be improved at the expense of sharp end firefighting.

Finally, I have been watching the shrinking of local services over the years with dismay. The stress and frustration this brings to the people who have to work and make a living for themselves and their families under constant changes and worsening of their working terms and conditions is not conducive to efficient production. It frankly annoys me that those responsible for having to make financial savings bend over backwards to justify and rationalise their proposed changes (and your consultation includes shamefully loaded questions), rather than railing at central government that is the real culprit. I've seen it with the police service, only now, years later, restoring the damaging cuts made to local policing and returning desperately needed police presence to our streets, whilst pretending that this was the plan all along. I do not want the same thing to happen to OUR Fire Service, and strongly refute your proposals.

With regards

  
Crowborough

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Removing the 4x4 fire fighting Land Rover from Wadhurst Fire Station

I write to strongly oppose the removal of the above. This fire station covers all of this area we need as much fire prevention cover as possible and cannot see the reasoning of cutting any more. Some properties are down very narrow lanes, this land rover can get down there quicker than anything else.

We don't need any more cuts to the fire service in Wadhurst, they are there to save lives and protect us.

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Dear ESFRS,

We are writing to ESFRS management team to express our opposition to the proposed cuts to the Service.

We are extremely concerned to read about the planned proposals and note they include the downgrading of Crowborough and Uckfield fire stations. In the wider context, they involve the loss of fire engines and professional expertise across the county.

Both Crowborough and Uckfield fire stations serve large and growing communities on the edge of an extensive area of natural beauty, with considerable leisure activity during evenings and weekends. Crowborough Town Council, which opposes these proposals, has also outlined the Fire Services' important role in tackling car accidents, both on the busy A26 and on the network of rural routes.

We are concerned that longer response rates arising from this proposed reduced service, will lead to loss of life, greater property damage and potential environmental devastation. As temperatures rise, hotter summers make forest fires more, not less, likely.

In the current challenging climate, we also question the timing and motivation of these proposals by ESFRS. Skilled, emergency manpower are a particular asset during these times.

Ultimately, a service to which local people contribute to, needs to be fit for purpose.

We hope these proposals will be abandoned.

Yours sincerely

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Peacehaven Town Council's response to the ESFRS IRMP consultation is as follows:-

General:-

- A deadline for responses of the 19th June 2020 is not realistic. There cannot be a proper public consultation during the current COVID-19 restrictions; the consultation should be postponed as such urgency is not justified.
- The consultation documents are too complicated; a high-level summary document should be produced outlining the effects on crews and appliances.
- During the current COVID-19 restrictions is not a time to make cuts/changes, when ESFRS staff are currently more engaged with the public in various support tasks, in addition to their normal duties.

Specific:-

- A lot of the modelling data and statistics used in the consultation are out of date, e.g. population figures.
- Telscombe Cliffs is not included in the consultation.
- Natural/geographical restrictive features have not been properly considered, e.g. one road in and out of Peacehaven.
- Peacehaven is already a remote area which previous IRMP's have identified, but unfortunately nothing has been done in the new Plan to reduce these risks
- It is believed that Incidents of domestic and waste fires are increasing. ESFRS is asked to provide up-to-date data for this.
- The proposal to remove the second appliance from Newhaven and to cut staff at Rodean will put Peacehaven at increased risk as response times will increase.
- Where is the evidence that such drastic cuts in staff, appliances and response times are for financial reasons.
- It is unacceptable that whole time firefighters will no longer provide any cover at evening and weekends. This means the fire cover for the entire area during these periods will be solely dependent on the retained

firefighters being available to come in from home (and hopefully enough of them available to crew the appliance) assuming other crews are not out on a call.

Yours sincerely,

Peacehaven Town Council

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East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is currently consulting about proposed cuts.

Since 2011, fire and rescue services across the UK have had 11,500 firefighters cut from their staff, and since 2013 have seen real terms spending on their service slashed by 38%.

The council believes that removal of a fire engine from Newhaven Fire Station (a 50% reduction) will significantly compromise overall cover for the town placing great reliance upon additional appliances successfully making the additional 12-15-minute journey from Roedean or Seaford.

Likewise, the 50% reduction in the number of full-time firefighters resulting in no weekend cover, and cover by part-time/on-call staff, creates the greater likelihood of delayed response times due to their primary employment and the distance they have to travel to the Fire Station. This is also a significant dilution of the pool of experience and skills available to the service.

Newhaven Town Council believes that the proposed cuts will place the town and its surrounding villages at an increased level of danger, and will therefore to the best of its endeavours seek to maintain the current high standards of coverage and first rate service that the people of Newhaven have come to expect.

Newhaven Town Council

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Dear all,

To say I am disgusted, disappointed and insulted by your suggestions of supporting the cuts to the fire services in Crowborough is understatement. The fire services have already had enough cuts. The town of Crowborough has at least 22 thousand population, not only do we have a major A road A26, we also have the Ashdown Forest, which appears to have fires approximately twice a year. We have one of the highest council tax bills in East Sussex and you must be receiving even more with all the new houses being built. If any child dies through lack of provision the people of Crowborough will hold you all responsible.

Regards,

The cutting of the service must not be allowed! Crowborough is expanding with all the extra housing estates which are being built. A massive number of new houses are being built in the area. Nightingales(Femor Road) which originally had planning permission for something like eighty houses is now having well over one hundred houses built.

ADJOINING Nightingales another much larger piece of ground is having an estate built, so will have even more than Nightingales, also across the road what was Jordons Nursery,(Luxford Lane) there is a larger acreage ready for building. Steel Cross is mentioned every little while, the ground required for building, and not forgetting the new estate adjoining the Community centre!!

It is stupid to think of cutting down for cost as it would coast more for people and vehicles from further away. Those who want to cut costs THINK AGAIN!!! Let common sense prevail!!!

Dear Sir/Madam

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It is with extreme dismay that I read about the proposed cuts at Wadhurst Fire Station , that would negatively impact on local residents.

At a time when we are seeing secular rise in temperatures, delivering ever hotter springs and summers, the risk of wildfires is rising; as is that of normal fires.

I would like to request that you reconsider your decision. It would be useful to know whether you undertook consultation among local residents. I do not appear to have received any information on this major decision.

Warm regards

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Here we go again. Essential services cut to the bone. When will we ever learn?

The coronavirus pandemic has taught us quite a few things, but surely the most important thing it has taught us is that the basic, essential services are the most important things for people.

And your top priority is to ensure, that as representatives of the people, public servants and not masters, that the basic essentials ARE the priority.

Have we not learned that the denuding of the NHS, social services and the police force has contributed to the poor performance of the UK in this dreadful pandemic.

I can only assume that when we have the next fires on the Sussex Downs, as we inevitably will, or a major fire at a hospital, or care home or school, all of you will be rushing to help to make up for what will become another inadequate service, brought about by the usual lack of foresight and long term planning.

After all, isn't short term-ism, something that UK local and national politicians excel at?

Please learn from what the cutbacks to the NHS and social services have brought us to.

And, yes, the vast majority of the British public realise that these services have to be paid for, and if tax raises are necessary to provide these essential services, then so be it. But, any rise in taxes MUST be done in concert with a review in spending priorities, and if some non-essential services have to go then that may have to be part of the new reality.

I await your responses.

Regards,

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I am writing to say that I deplore the cuts proposed for the Fire Service. The Rye Fired Station is the nearest to me and it is a very busy station and covers a wide area. These cuts look as though they are accountancy driven and being pushed by the government which is still demanding budget reductions from local authorities.

The current Corvid 19 crisis has revealed that our Health Service is being run at about 98% capacity which has been the cause of panic at the lack of availability of staff and resources generally. Now, to try and run the Fire Service in such a way will mean people will die because there will not be enough capacity to deal with any crisis, such as two fires at the same time. Often engines are brought from other stations nearby, and from Kent for large fires. You have to have spare capacity to cope with these emergencies. There seems to be a complete lack of concern: it is only money that matters not potential loss of life.

As a Council Tax payer for many years I have seen this tax rise for fewer services as money is reduced from the central government. I am sure there have been exercises done to show what is available in a crisis, much as the project for pandemics. Are we going to repeat the failure that arose from that as regards Health services, now in the Fire service. To quote a phrase "lessons will not have been learnt" if this happens. Perhaps you need to actually consult your electorate as how they feel, and if the government still insist on cutting the County's budget, offer other cuts to your electorate and state why you are doing this. Have a transparent process.

This elector resents the hollowing out of our vital services to such an extent that they are no longer truly "fit for purpose".

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I am disturbed to hear about the proposed cuts to the local fire brigade in my larea, namely Rye. I must wholehearted request that you oppose these cuts.

I live in Lion Street in Rye, a very old and wooden part of this ancient town, just up the road from the George Hotel which as I am sure you are aware caught fire this time last year.



Had the wind been in a different direction, the centre of town would have gone up like tindersticks, very quickly. The consequences to not bear thinking about.

Given the logistical issues that arose from this incident with what is already a critically limited emergency service in proximity of an airport, 2 major holiday camps and a nuclear power station, I would like to know how you justify cutting such a vital emergency service?

Furthermore, I understand this is the 4th busiest on call fire station in East Sussex and a predominantly rural and remote area where incidents have risen over the past 3 years.

I implore you to oppose these cuts and look forward to hearing your thoughts on the matter.

Bests,

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Dear Sirs

It has come to the attention of Lamberhurst Parish Council that there is some concern regarding the future plans for Wadhurst Fire Station.

Even though it lies just over the county border Wadhurst is the closest station to the Lamberhurst community and is usually the first on the scene at incidents within its area.

Rather than trying to interpret rumour and supposition would it be possible for you to inform Lamberhurst Parish Council what is actually planned and the effect it may have on this parish.

Many thanks

Lamberhurst Parish Council

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To Whom it may concern,

Please accept this communication my response to the Services current consultation on "Safer Futures" my response is both as a service Watch Manager and member of the local community that will be adversely affected by the proposed changes in working practices and emergency response capability.

Firstly I would like to express my disappointment that the organisation has adopted an approach that appears to be deliberately misleading, contrary to the Fire Authorities own core values of integrity and accountability.

Information provided to the public indicates that an increased number of appliances would be available for "immediate response" despite significant reductions in personnel and equipment. Reduced over all call numbers are cited as grounds to make efficiency savings despite the Services own statistics presented in the ORR that indicate that Life threatening/Critical calls per head of population for each the geographical areas being fairly even across the county.

The proposal to increase resources in Hastings and Eastbourne areas is presented as a positive improvement but fails to recognise that these measures are in fact the partial restoration of resources removed from these areas around four years ago. In my opinion the need to restore resources so soon after reduction highlights the lack of realistic evaluation of risk and demand and I feel that a similar lack is informing the current county wide proposals. The data being used from the Operational Response Review is misleading as it is three years or more old, fails to take into account the increased number of multi-appliance incidents that have resulted from the reduction of appliance staffing levels (calls often demand a higher number of appliances due to the reduced number of crew) and fails to recognise the real challenges of On-Call recruitment/training and retention. I understand that a new On-Call system is being discussed but I am not confident that sufficient planning has been made nor do I believe that the financial cost and training burden is fully appreciated at this time.

During my 24 years of Service with ESFRS Operational posts have been reduced by nearly one hundred staff across the service (according to a freedom of information request posted on the Services website) Community and business safety work has been reduced for Station crews while non-operational staff have been employed to undertake these roles. Unfortunately reallocating funds and work in this way has had a negative impact on the availability of appropriate resources when Emergencies occur.

I do not object to change and I am aware that financial challenges face the Fire Service as a whole, I agree that prevention work is as essential as intervention capability and I genuinely believe that cost effective improvements

can be made, however, I do not believe that the proposals offer a "Safer Future" or the efficiency savings without severely impacting on service and resilience.

I have genuine concerns for the impact on the safety of my community, friends and family, and take no comfort in knowing that Fire Stations will not close, after all a Fire Station is a building and plays no role in dealing with Fires, Rescues or RTC's.

Finally I have concerns for my future and that of my family due as the proposal impacts negatively on my income, future pension and work life balance.

I can only hope that the proposals are reviewed and a more realistic and viable approach is identified before negative changes are implemented.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]

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To stop proposed cuts to Wadhurst Fire Station

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir or Madam,

Having studied some of the 1488 pages of information provided to the public, I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions regarding missing information.

1. Appliance availability.

Why is no statistical information provided regarding the current weekend availability of all 'on call' appliances? This is pivotal to the proposals and to emergency provision anywhere North of the coast!

2. Appliance availability.

Will your 'flexible crewing pool' be utilised to maintain on call appliance availability at night?

There is no evidence that guarantees evening and weekend availability or sufficient recruitment of on call personnel.

3. Appliance availability.

Why are reasons for appliance non availability not clearly specified?

eg; Reasons for insufficient on call firefighters.

4. Removal of 'under used' second appliances.

How many incidents would these appliances have attended, had they been available?

A clear explanation of why the second appliances are 'under used' is required.

5. Why is there no explanation for the trebling of standby cover moves?

These can only vastly increase still further under the proposals.

6. How can you claim to provide resilience when you're removing 6 appliances (9 crews inc maxicab) from the system but only providing resilience appliances 'as far as practicable'?

The appliances you propose to remove, if crewed properly, are the current resilience!

7. ALP crewing

How can you claim a 'benefit to the community' by 'dual crewing' which has the potential to take two more appliances out of the system or render high reach unavailable?

This crewing model can only mean that your claim is false.

There are many more questions raised by the documents but answers to these few would be appreciated for now.

Best regards

[REDACTED]

### Further reply:

Many thanks for getting back to me. Unfortunately you haven't answered any of my questions but simply referred me back to the information that raises them! It is this information, or the lack of clarity in it that I am questioning as explained in underlined bold below.

I note with interest that the ongoing question of 'how long is slightly longer' has finally received a four page answer which says that you don't know! The truth is that you don't know because, irrespective of the Resilience Proposal, ESFRS has no idea which appliances will be available at any one time and it would appear are scared to admit that from six day duty stations at weekends times would be at least 5 minutes longer, from The Ridge at night would be at least 5 minutes longer and second appliance time for ten stations would be at least 10 minutes longer being plenty of time for a room fire to spread into a fully developed dwelling fire. This now only seems to be a concern if you live in Brighton, Eastbourne or parts of Hastings!

Best regards

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### Letter to ESFA Members

Dear Councillor,

I write concerning the proposals contained in the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service IRMP and wish to express my deep concerns about the negative effect they will **DEFINITELY** have on public safety across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

I am a recently retired Watch Manager [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] ESFRS and worked with senior management on revised duty systems during the last two service reviews. I also spent two years revising operational procedures for ESFRS and the South East Region and believe that I am well qualified to comment on the current proposals. I have completed the online questionnaire but as the questions are so loaded in favour of the proposals without room to comment I offer my considered views on each individual proposal in the attached Appendix A together with additional supporting information regarding the potential resulting emergency cover should the proposals be implemented. (Appendix B)

Having listened to the Fire Authority meeting on 23rd April, Cllr Galleys' interview on Uckfield FM and studied the supporting information, I am seriously concerned that, once again, the Fire Authority members and the public are being seriously misled by ESFRS management.

A strong emphasis is being given to proposal 1 and the claim to be able to cover a higher percentage of properties by having more fire engines available. However, further information should be provided for the uninitiated to understand that this additional cover cannot be guaranteed, is based upon an attendance time of just one [recorded] fire engine which may be inadequate to intervene due to minimum crewing levels until the arrival of a second engine. The availability of additional fire engines for resilience appears to be promised but the detail states **as far as practicable!** Proposals 2 and 3, if implemented, raise serious concerns to me about the ability of the service to deliver an effective and appropriate emergency operational response to any rural communities and I offer the following observations for your consideration and make no apology for repeating some content in the appendices.

The current Day Crewed duty system was designed to **guarantee** the availability of at least one fire appliance from each of the six stations 24/7 by the fulltime firefighters being available on call at night. ESFRS state that they will invest in on call firefighter recruitment. However, the recruitment and retention of on call personnel has been an issue that fire services nationwide have been struggling with for many years and is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon.

Therefore, as their own on call appliance availability statistics demonstrate, (Appendix B) ESFRS will be **unable to guarantee** a fire appliance from any of the current day crewed stations during evenings and weekends despite claims regarding 'A Resilience Pool' and on-call recruitment.

The service has been repeatedly asked to clarify what 'slightly longer' means regarding attendance times if the changes to crewing systems occur and have failed to provide an answer.

The truth is that this is impossible to answer because ESFRS do not know which fire engines will be available at any one time during evenings and weekends. Following changes to reporting, ESFRS now only record the attendance time of the first arriving fire engine to incidents. However, no mention is made of the fact that this fire engine increasingly has a crew of just four firefighters which restricts their ability to intervene at certain incident

types until the arrival of a second fire engine. Scrapping the second engine at the six day crewed stations means that this second fire engine will now have to come from another **available** station for 100% of critical incidents, property fires and road traffic collisions and an attendance time for this engine is, again, impossible to predict. This fact can only endanger the safety of both the public and firefighters alike.

I have asked questions of ESFRS but have only been referred back to the information from which I raised the questions. I have made a formal complaint to ESFRS regarding inaccuracies in the consultation document but received a response which was seriously contradictory.

#### Evidence from neighbouring FRS

West Sussex FRS changed their crewing arrangement to that now being proposed for Day Crewed stations in East Sussex. A freedom of information request provides the evidence below that the system is totally flawed. What is the average availability of appliances during on call periods (evenings & weekends) at; Haywards Heath, East Grinstead, Burgess Hill and Shoreham fire stations. For the period between 01/12/2018 to 30/11/2019 the average availability of each station is as follows:

Station	% Availability
Haywards Heath	59.13%
Burgess Hill	58.42%
Shoreham	28.06%
East Grinstead	39.04%

There is a glaring lack of evidence to show that East Sussex can ensure sufficient on-call personnel to provide appliance availability for evenings and weekends considering that West Sussex have been consistently failing whilst using the same crewing model.

**The current Proposal 2 fails to guarantee the availability of any fire appliance during evenings and weekends outside of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings whereas West Sussex FRS do at least maintain some 24/7 cover in the north of the county at Crawley and Horsham.**

#### Residential Developments

**Quote:** *'Details of residential development sites have been considered through our analysis, as well as the number of households that are to be constructed on a given site. These are illustrated in the individual Station Risk Profiles, along with a description as to whether they are inside or outside of attendance standards. The total long-term proposed additional growth works out to a total growth of 2,729 additional dwellings per year. All of the currently proposed residential development sites sit within our attendance standards. We have used our 'Housing Development Risk Assessment Toolkit' (HDRAT) to predict the increase in risk as a result of future housing and population growth and to assess whether we need to change how our resources are deployed in the future. The planned growth in the largest development areas are deemed to be well-below average dwelling fire risk.'*

#### Concerns

The Risk Profile for Uckfield claims that there are "no residential allocations"! The authors of the report have conveniently chosen to ignore the 1,000-dwelling estate currently being built at Ridgewood Farm "which is not included as this is a former allocation as part of the old Wealden Core Strategy (February 2013)". Add to this the potential for a further 1,500 dwellings following the rejection of the Wealden local plan, Uckfield, along with other Wealden towns could see a huge increase in properties and residents.

In reading the information provided regarding the household demographic, my understanding is that it is based upon the census of 2011 and 'estimates' are used to quote figures up to 2017.

#### Summary

If approved, these proposals will pare emergency response and resilience to the bone and can only have a detrimental impact on rural communities across the county despite the IRMP claiming to 'Prepare For A Safer Future'.

Irrespective of the statistics, it is physically impossible to improve or even maintain the same level of response and resilience when removing so many fire appliances and crews from the system and extending attendance times. Given the current state of the country (and the world) and its total lack of preparedness, I would suggest that it is time to stop relying on statistics alone to manage our public services and to start basing decisions on the real world needs and expectations of the tax paying public.

We have emergency services 'in case' we need them and while prevention and protection measures can help reduce the risks, we pay for and expect an effective emergency response in our moment of need. Hiding behind manipulated statistics to further reduce resources and emergency cover across the county make, in my considered and professional opinion, **this IRMP the most dangerous document that ESFRS has ever produced**. I believe the old term is 'there are lies, damned lies and statistics' and I for one am fed up with rural communities being treated as second class citizens by a service that clearly does not understand the impact of its own proposals.

I urge you to reject these proposals in the name of public and firefighter safety and demand that ESFRS review their plan so that it is based purely upon risk management instead of financial savings.

Yours sincerely

██████████  
ESFRS Watch Manager (Retired)

#### **Letter to CFO:**

Dear Madam,

I write concerning the proposals contained in the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service IRMP and wish to express my deep concerns about the negative effect they **WILL DEFINITELY** have on public safety across East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

I am a recently retired Watch Manager having served ██████████ in ESFRS and worked with senior management on revised duty systems during the last two service reviews. I also spent two years revising operational procedures for ESFRS and the South East Region and believe that I am suitably qualified to comment on the current proposals.

#### Consultation

I have completed the online questionnaire but as the questions are so loaded in favour of the proposals without room to comment I offer my considered views on each individual proposal in the attached Appendix A together with additional supporting information regarding the potential resulting emergency cover should the proposals be implemented. (Appendix B)

Having listened to the Fire Authority meeting on 23rd April, the Cllr Galley interview on local radio, studied the supporting information and followed the social media farce, I am seriously concerned that, once again, the Fire Authority members and the public are being misled by ESFRS management.

The whole consultation is descending into chaos with continual accusations by ESFRS and numerous parties of 'misinformation'. These accusations are checkable against the consultation documents and having a clear understanding of service procedures I am disappointed to conclude that it is ESFRS that is promoting misinformation or at best promoting selective information in order to 'sell' their proposals to the public. It is obvious to me that those commenting on behalf of the service are either unaware of the true impact of the proposals or are dangerously spinning the narrative and are unaware of operational procedures.

I have asked questions via the consultation process but have only been referred back to the information from which I raised the questions. I have made a formal complaint to ESFRS regarding inaccuracies in the consultation document but received a response which was seriously contradictory.

ESFRS have consistently deleted social media posts in an effort to maintain a one-sided view of proceedings. Questions are not answered but discussed at length to avoid any concession and individual statistics are used in attempts to justify service wide issues.

May I suggest that manual note below is either respected or reviewed.

*ESFRS Manual Note*

*CPS06\_14\_V1 - Local Code of Corporate Governance*

*Openness is required so that people can have confidence in our staff and our decision-making and management processes. We need to be as open as possible about the decisions we make and the reasons we have made them. Consulting openly and providing access to full, accurate and clear information helps us stand up to public scrutiny.*

The strong emphasis being given to proposal 1 and the claim to be able to cover a higher percentage of properties by having more fire engines available and greater resilience is presented as a certainty. However, without the provision of further information for the public to understand that this additional cover cannot actually be guaranteed, is based upon an attendance time of just one [recorded] fire engine which may be inadequate to intervene due to regular minimum crewing levels until the arrival of a second engine, they cannot make an informed decision. Dependant on the nature of the incident and despite 'operational discretion', this can only seriously endanger the lives of the public and firefighters alike whilst presenting the incident commander an unfair dilemma.

It has become clear to me that Proposals 1, 2 & 3 have little to do with public and firefighter safety but have a lot to do with 1st pump attendance times against which your performance is measured and cost cutting. Having removed the 2nd pump attendance times during another contrived consultation in 2018 it no longer matters where that 2nd pump comes from or how long it takes to arrive giving you carte blanche to decimate the appliance fleet.

The availability of additional fire engines for resilience appears to be promised but the detail states **as far as practicable!** ESFRS state that they will form a resilience pool and invest in on call firefighter recruitment to fulfil proposal 1. However, the recruitment and retention of on call personnel has been an issue that fire services nationwide have been struggling with for many years and is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon.

Proposals 1, 2 and 3, if implemented, raise serious concerns to me about the ability of the service to deliver an effective and appropriate emergency operational response to any rural communities. As your own on call appliance availability statistics demonstrate, (Appendix B) ESFRS will be **unable to guarantee** a fire appliance from any of the current day crewed stations during evenings and weekends.

The service has been repeatedly asked to clarify what 'slightly longer' means regarding attendance times if the changes to crewing systems occur and have failed to provide an answer. The response in FAQ is a four page listing of the existing variables which fails to address the issue of 'extended attendance times' resulting from these proposals. Four pages to say 'we don't know'!

The truth is that this is impossible to answer because despite claims in the proposals ESFRS do not know which fire engines will be available at any one time on any given day. Scrapping the second engine at the six day crewed stations means that this second fire engine will now have to come from another **available** station for 100% of critical incidents, property fires and road traffic collisions and an attendance time for this engine is, again, impossible to predict. However, it is safe to say that at weekends the current day crewed stations will have **at least 5 minutes** added to the first pump attendance time and all 10 stations having their second pump removed will have **at least 10 minutes** added to their second pump attendance time, which is more than enough time for a dwelling fire to fully develop!

### Residential Developments

**Quote:** *'Details of residential development sites have been considered through our analysis, as well as the number of households that are to be constructed on a given site. These are illustrated in the individual Station Risk Profiles, along with a description as to whether they are inside or outside of attendance standards.'*

### Concerns

The Risk Profile for Uckfield claims that there are "no residential allocations"! The authors of the report have conveniently chosen to ignore the 1,000-dwelling estate currently being built at Ridgewood Farm "*which is not included as this is a former allocation as part of the old Wealden Core Strategy (February 2013)*". Add to this the potential for a further 1,500 dwellings following the rejection of the Wealden local plan, Uckfield, along with other Wealden towns could see a huge increase in properties and residents.

In reading the information provided regarding the household demographic, my understanding is that it is based upon the census of 2011 and estimates are used to quote figures up to 2017.

## Summary

If approved, these proposals will pare emergency response and resilience to the bone and can only have a detrimental impact on all, but particularly rural communities across the county despite the IRMP claiming to 'Prepare For A Safer Future'.

Irrespective of the statistics, it is physically impossible to improve or even maintain the same level of response and resilience when removing so many fire appliances and crews from the system and extending attendance times.

Given the current state of the country (and the world) and its total lack of preparedness, I would suggest that it is time to stop relying on statistics alone to manage our public services and to start basing decisions on the real world needs and expectations of the tax paying public.

We have emergency services 'in case' we need them and while prevention and protection measures can help reduce the risks, we pay for and expect an effective emergency response in our moment of need. Hiding behind manipulated statistics to further reduce resources and emergency cover across the county make, in my considered and professional opinion, **this IRMP the most dangerous document that ESFRS has ever produced.**

I believe the old term is 'there are lies, damned lies and statistics' and I for one am fed up with rural communities being treated as second class citizens by a service that clearly does not understand the impact of its own proposals.

I urge you to abandon these proposals in the name of public and firefighter safety and review your plan so that it is based purely upon risk management instead of meaningless reportable attendance times of one understaffed fire appliance and financial savings.

Yours sincerely



ESFRS Watch Manager (Retired)

## Appendix A:

### Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?*

#### Concerns:

##### **Insufficient evidence to assure viability of the plan.**

This is a leading question which, without the provision of a detailed explanation, can only lead to an affirmative answer from the uninitiated. However, the truth is that having just 15 fire engines available for 'immediate response' ie crewed by full-time staff on station has been and will continue to be the bare minimum provision from the current 36 fire engines (3 x maxicab counts as 6 engines) and the remaining 27 if the proposals are implemented. This was as a result of a management decision to remove several on-call stations from 'Key Station' status in the late 90s.

Additional fire engine availability has always been provided by 'on-call' fire stations and 2nd engines at Day Crewed stations to boost the base figure. However, that daytime availability of on-call staff has severely diminished over the past 10 years for a variety of reasons. This proposal offers no evidence that ESFRS will definitely be able to form or maintain a 'flexible crewing pool' OR to recruit and retain sufficient on-call firefighters to guarantee the availability of additional stations. These additional stations would NOT be available for immediate response as stated but would be delayed by 5 to 6 minutes as on-call staff respond to an alerter.

##### **Proposal 2 has the potential (in the extreme) to reduce the number of available fire engines to 9 during evenings and weekends unless the flexible pool and on-call recruitment is proven.**

The further 6 'resilience' fire engines will only be crewed 'as far as practicable' and the suggestion that they could be allowed up to half an hour to turn out is laughable. The removal of 7 rural fire engines (10 crews) will obviously mean that none of them can ever be available for emergency or resilience mobilisation and every station other than three shift stations will be dependent upon the support of the next nearest available station for critical incidents 100% of the time.

The statistics show a three-fold increase in standby moves across the service, ie; resilience, over the past ten years where fire appliances are moved to provide emergency cover in other areas due to incidents elsewhere and sometimes require additional moves behind each appliance. In theory the claimed reduced number of emergency calls across the county should bring about a reduction of required cover moves. However, reasons for the

increase include; non availability of on call fire appliances and more fire appliances required to deal with incidents due to the reduced crewing levels on each appliance following the last round of cuts!

This proposal combined with proposals 2 and 3 can only increase the need for additional standby moves and could in fact severely reduce the resilience of the service putting further reliance on the already overstretched resources of neighbouring services.

### Proposal 2: Changes to Day-crewed Duty Stations

*Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?*

Concerns:

**This IS a downgrade and will extend attendance times.**

The current 'Day Crewed' duty system is designed to **guarantee** the availability of at least one fire engine from the 6 stations 24/7 through full time crewing by day 7 days per week and the duty crew being on-call at night. The day only system would be totally reliant upon on-call firefighters being available to cover nights and entire weekends. The services own statistics show that on call availability cannot be guaranteed (Appendix B) and therefore the **statement that these fire stations will continue to provide a 24/7 service is unfounded**. This proposal has the **potential to result in NO fire appliances being available evenings and weekends outside of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings due to the potential lack of on-call personnel**. This proposal **will extend attendance times** from six fire stations by at least 5 minutes at weekends and **fails to guarantee a fire engine overnight from all six stations!!** It should be noted that West Sussex FRS implemented the same duty system at their Day Crewed stations and continuously fail to guarantee fire appliance availability indicating that the system is totally flawed. Evidence confirming this is shown below in a response to a freedom of information request to West Sussex FRS.

**Q. What is the average availability of appliances during on call periods (evenings & weekends) at; Haywards Heath, East Grinstead, Burgess Hill and Shoreham fire stations.**

A. For the period between 01/12/2018 to 30/11/2019 the average availability of each station is as follows:

Station	% Availability
Haywards Heath	59.13%
Burgess Hill	58.42%
Shoreham	28.06%
East Grinstead	39.04%

There is a glaring lack of evidence to show that East Sussex can ensure sufficient on-call personnel to provide appliance availability for evenings and weekend considering that West Sussex have been consistently failing using the same crewing model.

The current proposals fail to guarantee the availability of any fire appliance during evenings and weekends outside of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings.

**West Sussex FRS do at least maintain some guaranteed 24/7 cover in the North of the county at Crawley and Horsham.**

**Under the proposals East Sussex would have none!!!**

*Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?*

I will not even dignify this question with a response as this refers solely to cost cutting and not risk management!

### Proposal 3: Changing the Number of Fire Stations with Two Fire Engines



*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?*

**Concerns:**

**This IS a downgrade and will extend attendance times.**

**100% reliance on support from other stations.**

The evidence offered in the supporting documentation is concentrated on the 'under use' of these second fire engines. Despite a fleeting reference to being unavailable due to there being no crew, nowhere does it evidence the reasons for their 'under use', the reasons for there being no available crew or their value to service resilience when available. The service is using the 'statistical' reason of 'under-use' of these fire appliances to scrap them without fully explaining any of the reasons for their lack of use to the public. **The main reason being the fact that they are simply not available due to the lack of available 'on call' firefighters.** ESFRS management itself has been major contributor to this issue over recent years through its own staffing policies and its failure to adequately identify future staffing requirements and not recruit full time firefighters for many years as they slashed posts under austerity measures. Instead, the service has utilised many of its on-call staff on temporary contracts to plug gaps in full time crewing across the County thus rendering those staff unavailable for their on-call role.

There is no evidence in the supporting documentation of how many calls these fire engines would have attended had they had an available crew or how many standby cover moves were required due to their unavailability. To keep quoting Battle's 2nd fire engine calls figure as justification on social media is totally misleading unless also presented with the availability graphs and supporting details. (Appendix B) These graphs highlight the fact that **NO** fire engine may be available at all under the proposals. The same applies to all seven stations.

The claim that these stations would still provide a 24/7 response is potentially untrue due to the proposed changes to the full-time duty system and the inability to guarantee an on-call crew.

When crewed properly, these seven fire engines are the services resilience and negate the need for a large number of standby moves.

**This proposal WILL extend attendance times of a critical second fire engine to these seven fire stations by at least 10 minutes.** Whether or not you record 2nd appliance times is irrelevant to the firefighters and public who are waiting for it to arrive!

**Crews at Lewes, Uckfield, Crowborough, Battle, Bexhill, Newhaven and Rye will now have to wait for a second crew to come from elsewhere for critical incidents, property fires and road accidents 100% of the time!!**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?*

**Concerns:**

**This IS a downgrade.**

**100% reliance on support from other stations.**

Again, there is no detailed information on how the 'Maxicab' system was intended to work for the public to base their decision.

Maxicab stations are deemed to be two pump stations and if crewed according to the original policy provide two crews (6 - 8 personnel) in one fire engine backed up by additional personnel in a Land Rover. ie sufficient resources to deal with an incident that would attract a two pump attendance elsewhere. On social media ESFRS management have argued that these are one pump stations and therefore do not count as a fire engine cut.

However, the IRMP consultation document is clear in identifying them as considered to be two pump stations confirming that the number of fire engines to be cut is **10!** (Nett 9)

**This proposal will extend attendance times of a critical second fire engine to these three fire stations by at least 10 minutes**

**Crews at Heathfield, Wadhurst and Seaford will also now have to wait for a second crew to come from elsewhere for critical incidents, property fires and road accidents 100% of the time!!**

**Proposal 4: Crewing and Fire Engine Changes at Hastings**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?*

## Concerns:

### **This IS a downgrade.**

The introduction of a second fire engine at Bohemia Road fire station is the only positive in the proposals. However, this benefit is counteracted by the downgrading of the Ridge Fire station to 'a day crewed system' which will extend attendance times to East Hastings and communities to the East and North of the town compounding the removal of the on-call fire engine from The Ridge in 2015.

Shared crewing of this additional fire engine with the high reach vehicle combined with shared crewing of the Ridge's fire engine and 4x4 vehicle means that only three of the five Hastings appliances can ever be 'truly' available.

*Note: East Sussex FRS policy is that a fire engine is only deemed as available if it has a minimum crew of four personnel. Suggestions that a crew of 4 could be split (2 and 2) to crew both the pump AND the High Reach vehicle is totally misleading and deems the pump as NOT AVAILABLE. A task analysis process identifies the number of personnel required for any specific incident type and the resources required. A fire engine without a complete and competent crew is of no use at an incident and would necessitate the mobilisation of an additional appliance.*

## **Proposal 5: Special Appliances**

Whilst this proposal is not up for public consultation, its content raises several concerns regarding appliance availability, training and competencies.

1. Reduction of 4x4 capability
2. Special appliances at on- call stations risks losing fire engine availability.
3. Special appliances on day duty stations may have no available crew if removing 2nd pump and risk fire engine availability.
4. Additional and regular training for on-call personnel will be required for special appliances.
5. Special appliances at Eastbourne, The Ridge and Bohemia Road will lose fire engine availability. (see proposal 4)

## **Proposal 6: Demand Management**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?*

### Concerns:

#### **What or who defines 'low risk'?**

An automatic fire alarm is not a false alarm until it has been confirmed as such. Statistics aside, what right does ESFRS have to ignore fire alarms at the risk of a company losing its business? Bear in mind that irrespective of maintenance and practices, the vast majority of fire detection equipment in commercial buildings is located in positions as dictated by the Fire Service through historical planning applications and fire safety inspections. Government changes to the definition of 'fire' for recording purposes resulted in a drop of thousands of recorded incidents nationwide overnight which led to their 'justification' of the austerity cuts from 2010. Numerous fires are now recorded as 'false alarm good intent' to satisfy political will and this false recording continues to be used as a lever to further reduce emergency operational cover.

#### **Lift releases**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?* **Concerns:**

#### **This is a humanitarian service.**

Have you ever been trapped in a lift which has broken down? If you support this proposal then I assume not! Irrespective of maintenance, entrapment in a confined space can be a traumatic event for those concerned and as the fire service are in a position to relieve that trauma far more quickly than a lift company this service must be continued on humanitarian grounds. The Service can still engage with building owners to ensure they are improving lift maintenance to reduce incidents.

#### **Trapped birds**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?*

### Concerns.

## Public outrage and endangering the lives of others.

Other organisations or individuals will continue to attempt the rescue of these birds as an act of humanitarian kindness. Without the appropriate equipment, these people will be putting themselves at risk of harm and may require rescue themselves, or worse. The IRMP quotes 'a small number of incidents' of this type. Small numbers of incidents is the very reason given for the proposed cutting of 10 rural fire engines and that the effect on the community would be 'negligible'. Therefore, by your own reasoning, I would suggest that this service, in conjunction with animal rescue charities would have a negligible effect on the community and would help to maintain public confidence in the service.

## Proposal 7: Changes to 4-Watch Duty System.

*Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?*

**Concerns:**

### **This proposal has nothing to do with Risk Management.**

This proposal has nothing to do with risk management but is purely about cutting further firefighter roles and money saving. The IRMP is supposed to be used to identify risk and allocate resources accordingly, and not as a cost cutting exercise. Further reducing full time posts will nullify the formation of a 'resilience pool' as the pool will also be called upon to cover crewing shortages due to sickness, leave, training etc at the shift stations.

*Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?*

Not worthy of a response.

## Building and Home Inspections

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?*

**Concerns.**

### **Not at the expense of response resources!**

I have no objection to increasing public awareness to the dangers of fire and the provision of information to reduce fires. However, this cannot be at the further expense of operational cover which is already stretched too far.

## ESFRS' Finances in the Future

*Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?* **Concerns.**

To many cuts in my area. As a Wealden resident I have to say no! Wealden residents contribute over £2 million more to the Fire Authority budget than any other district outside of 'The City' yet receive the worst service. As a reward, Wealden residents get the following benefits from this IRMP; cut 1 fire engine and 6 firefighters from Uckfield, cut 1 fire engine and 6 firefighters from Crowborough, cut one fire engine (crew) from Heathfield, cut one fire engine (crew) from Wadhurst, cut 4x4 support from Wadhurst. Would I pay more? Would you??

*To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?* **Concerns;**

Value for money is being eroded. The answer to this question very much depends upon your knowledge of the levels of service being provided. To quote a figure for Band D properties has always made the service look like excellent value. However, every time you make an increase in the precept you also reduce the levels of service provision through more cuts. Yes, these proposals **ARE** serious cuts and cannot be disguised as anything else despite the 1488 pages of statistical drivel offered as public consultation documents which are incomprehensible to the uninitiated.

## Appendix B:

**Graphs 1-6** below depict both the current availability of fire engines at the six day Crewed fire stations and the potential availability during evenings and weekends if the proposals are instigated. Under the proposals all six of

these stations will have their second fire engine removed and full-time personnel will only crew the remaining fire engine during weekday daytime. Crewing for evenings and weekends will be wholly reliant upon the availability of on-call personnel and with no detailed evidence offered in the consultation documents of how the 'resilience pool' would operate there is no evidence to prove that any of these appliances would have a guaranteed available crew at night or at weekends despite the stations' Tier 1 (day) and Tier 2 (night) status in the Operational Resilience Plan.

Graphs 7-10 below depict the current availability at the four on-call stations which are proposed as Tier 2 stations ie; available 24/7 under the proposals. No detailed evidence is offered in the consultation documents of how the 'resilience pool' would operate and there is no evidence to prove that any of these appliances would have a guaranteed available crew at any time, day or night.

In the absence of any specific weekend availability data, the only conclusion to make from that presented is that the 'resilience pool' will be insufficient to maintain fire engine availability at these stations let alone the additional six Tier 3 stations and a massive, successful, recruitment campaign will be required.

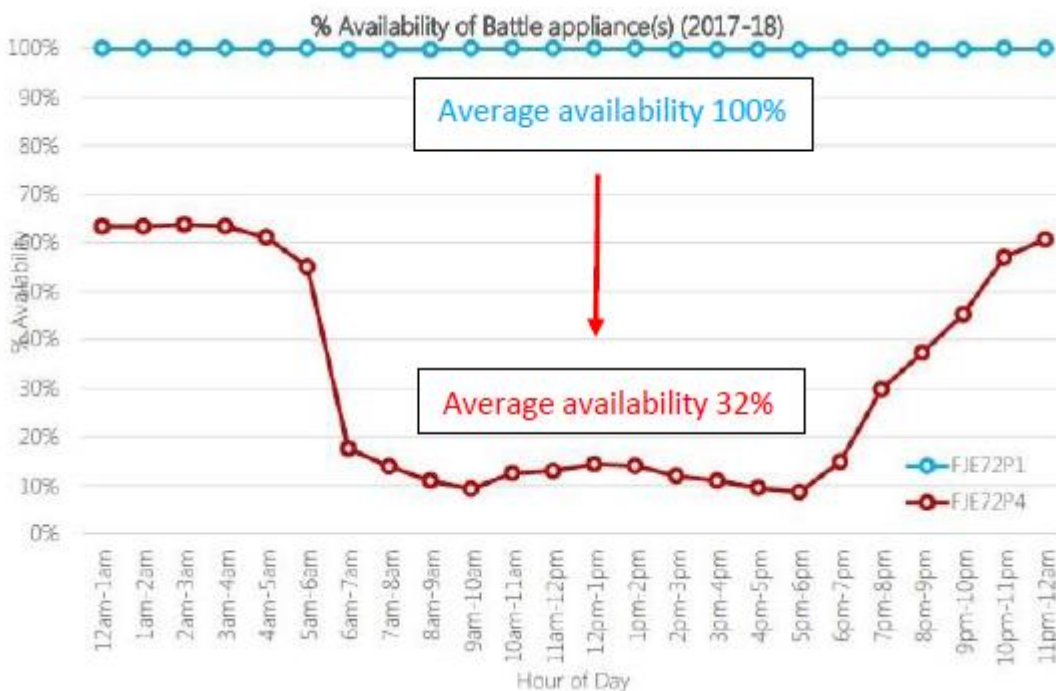
The reason of 'under use' is given for the removal of 10 rural pumps with a fleeting reference to the lack of an available crew. While activity may be low, no specific data is provided to show how many incidents these fire engines would have attended had they been available, how valuable they are to the resilience of the service when available or how many standby cover moves have been made because of their unavailability. Therefore 'under staffing' may be a more accurate reason!

Under the proposals, all 10 of these stations will be reliant upon the support of a 2nd fire engine support from the next nearest available station for 100% of critical incidents, property fires, road traffic collisions etc.

### 1. Battle

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



### 2. Bexhill

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

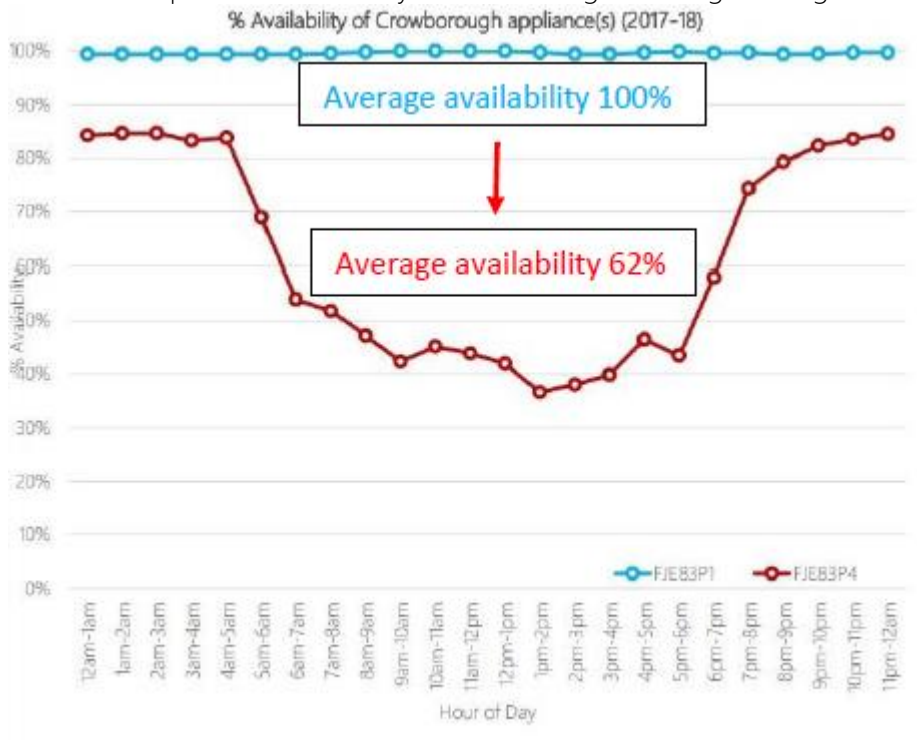
Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



### 3. Crowborough

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

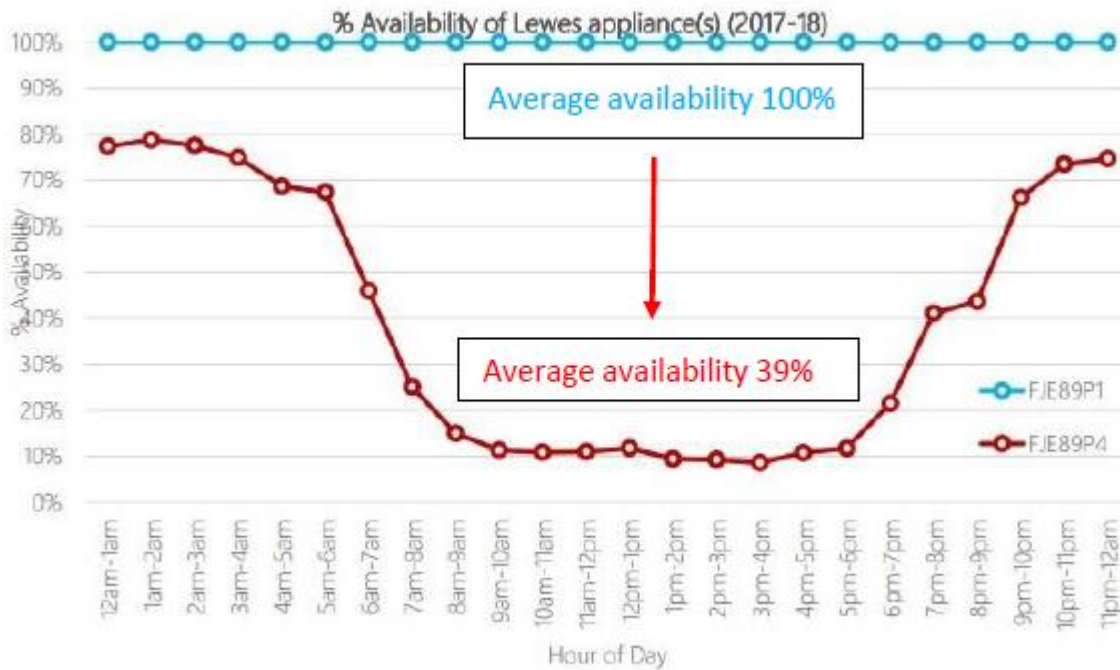
Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



### 4. Lewes

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

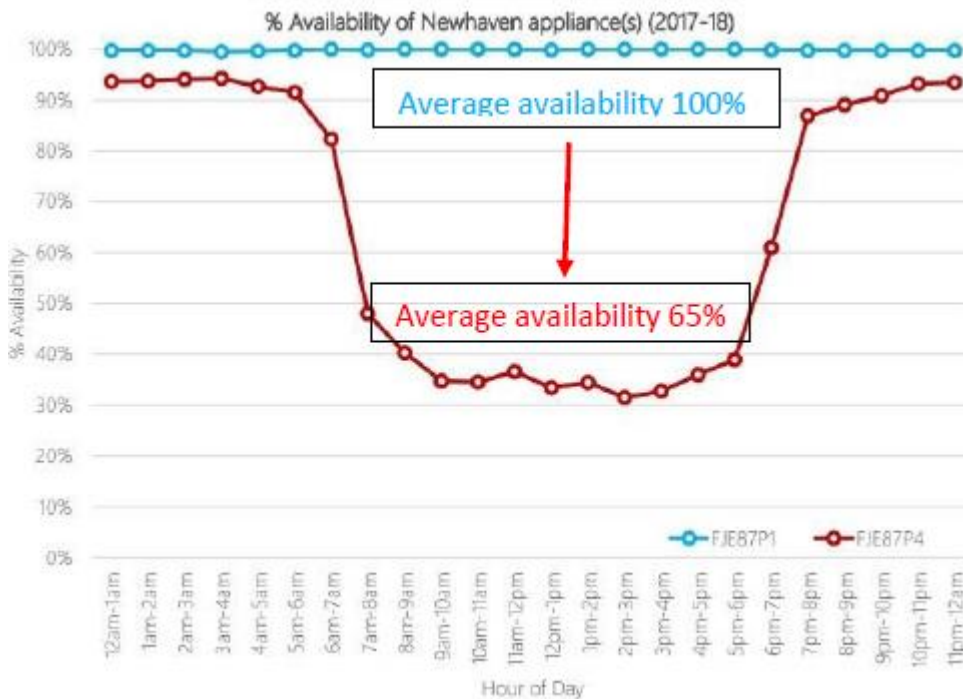
Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



### 5. Newhaven

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

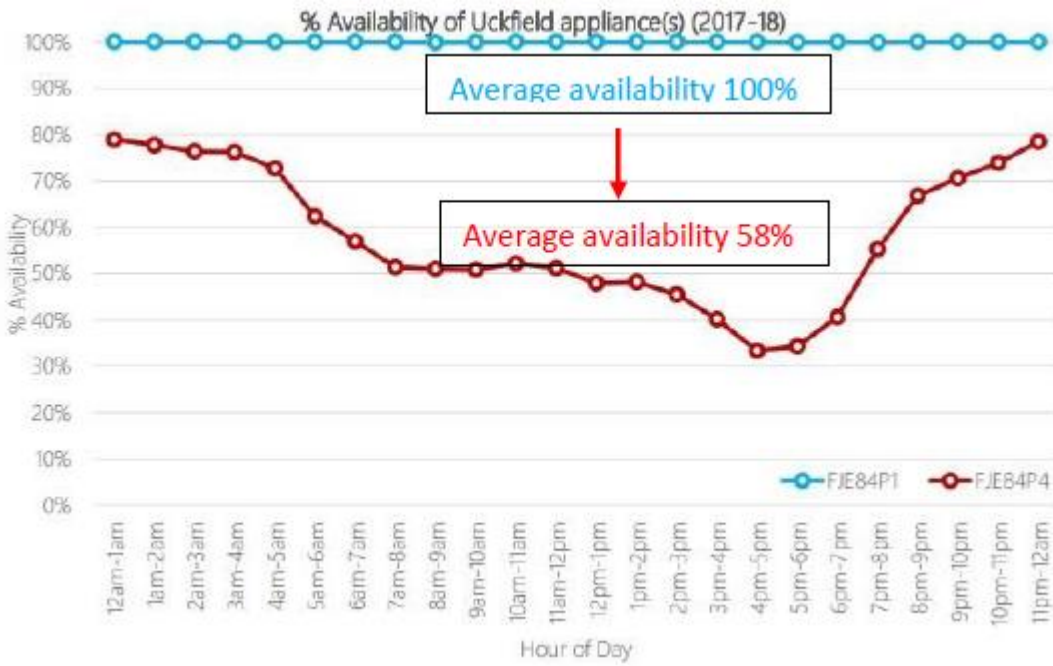
Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



### 6. Uckfield

Blue denotes current guaranteed availability of one fire engine 24/7 and availability for weekdays daytime only under the proposals.

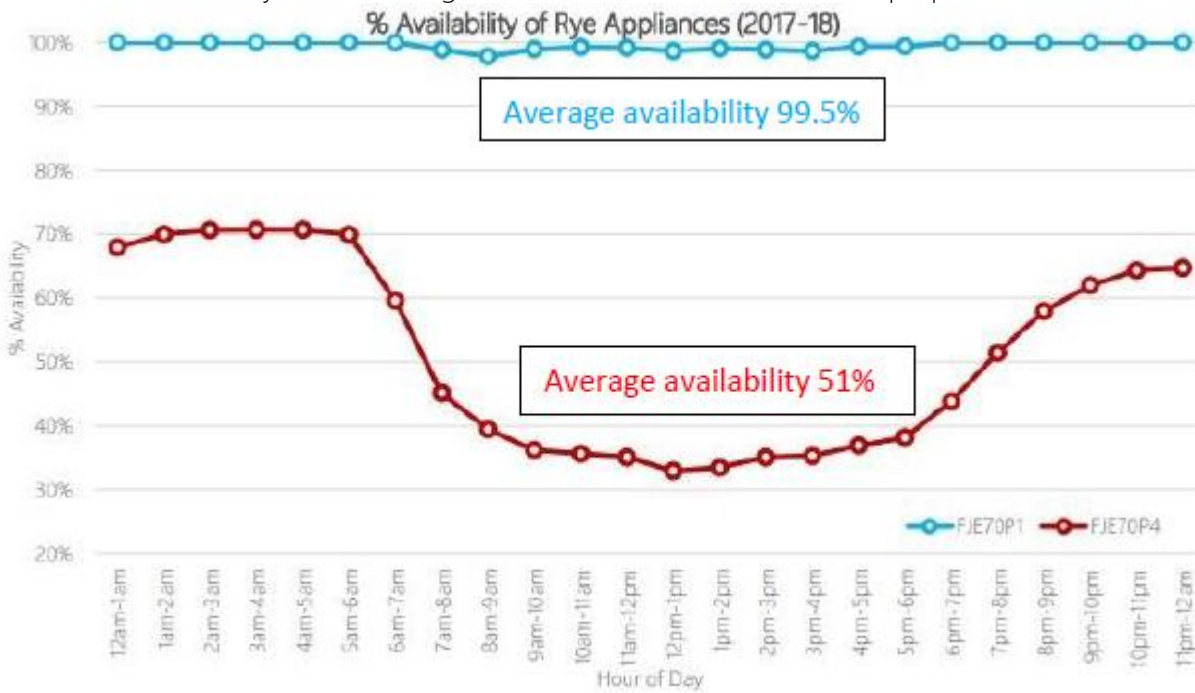
Red denotes potential availability of one fire engine during evenings and weekends under the proposals.



### 7. Rye

Blue denotes current availability of one fire engine which would remain under the proposals.

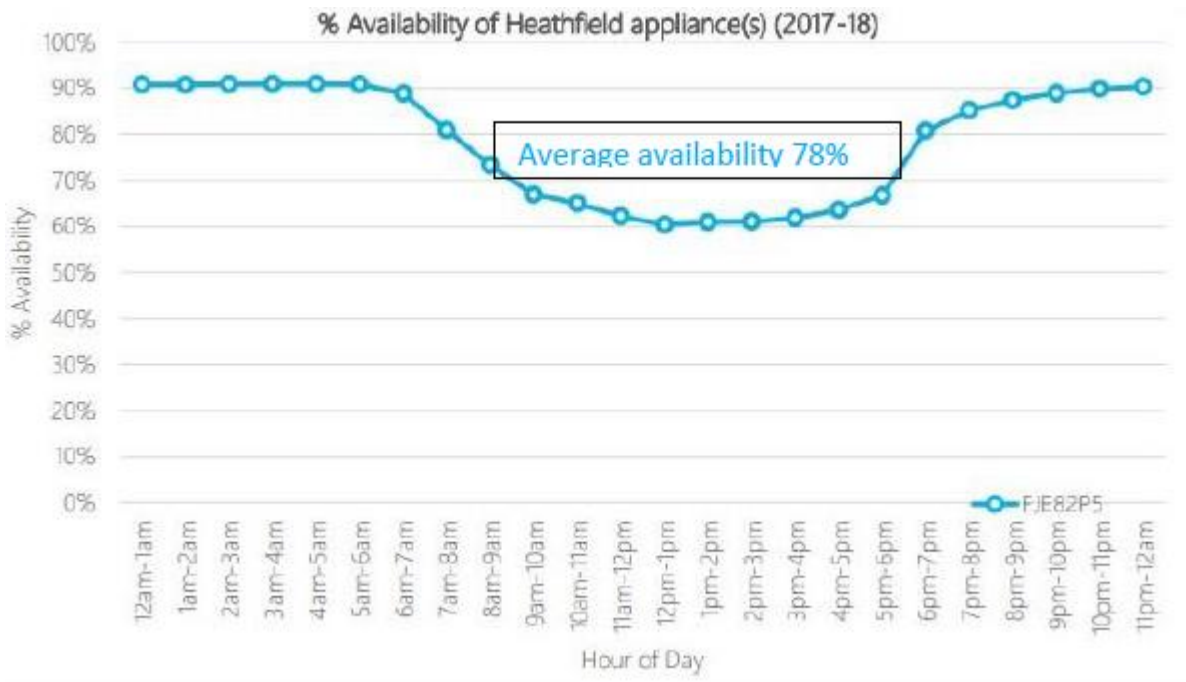
Red denotes availability of the fire engine that will be removed under the proposals.



### 8. Heathfield

Blue denotes current availability of one 'Maxicab' fire engine and the potential availability of a replacement standard fire engine under the proposals.

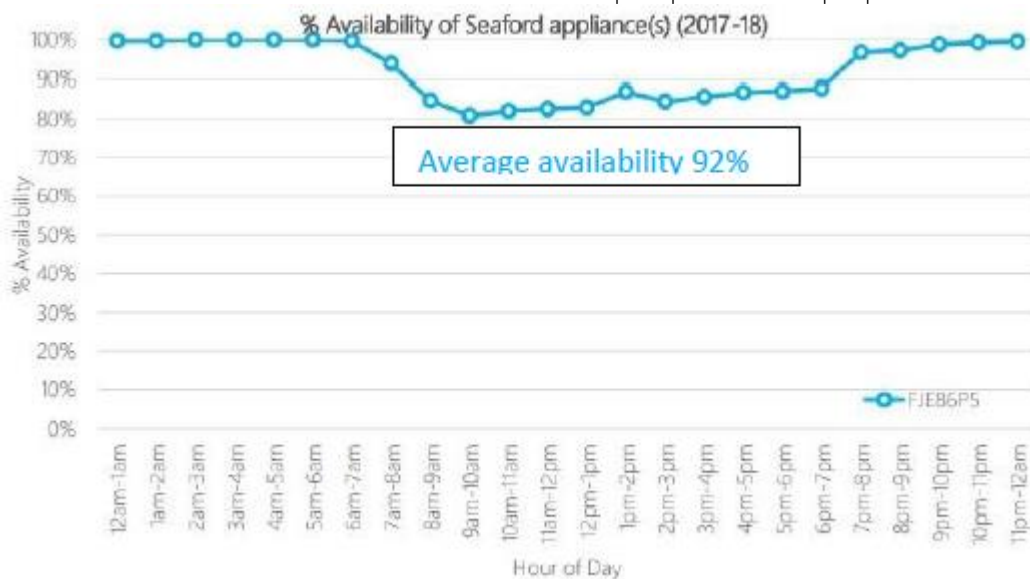
Note: Maxicab stations are deemed to be two pump stations as personnel form two crews via supporting staff in the station Landrover. This will be reduced to one pump under the proposals.



## 9. Seaford

Blue denotes current availability of one 'Maxicab' fire engine and the potential availability of a replacement standard fire engine under the proposals.

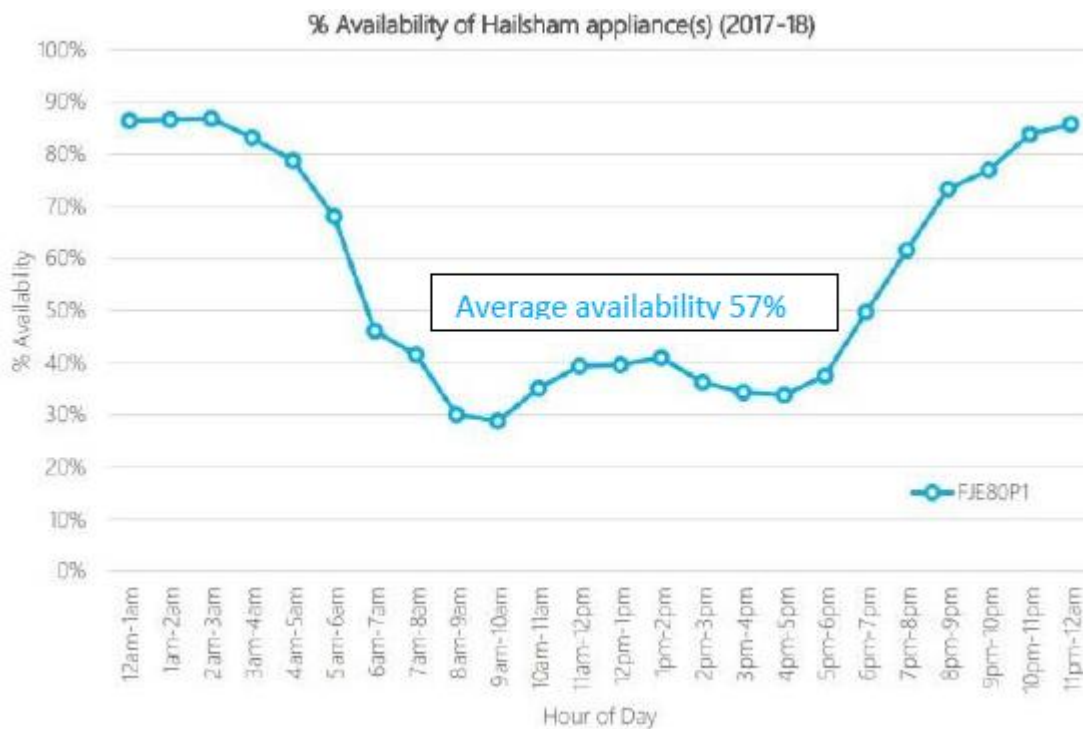
Note: Maxicab stations are deemed to be two pump stations as personnel form two crews via supporting staff in the station Landrover. This will be reduced to one pump under the proposals.



## 10. Hailsham

Blue denotes current availability of one fire engine which would remain and its potential availability under the proposals.





**Further reply:**

Dear Cllr Barnes, Cllr Galley, Cllr Theobald & Cllr Powell,

Many thanks for your replies,

I can confirm that I have contacted my MP Nus Ghani who has finally replied in a manner suggesting that central government has been very generous towards fire & rescue services missing the points I raised to her completely. However, the funding to which she refers is funding to support services in dealing with the Covid19 pandemic.

I fully understand, though cannot accept, that government funding for public services will never reach previous levels and that underfunded, understaffed and underperforming services are deemed as acceptable by central government to protect the tax paying public. I reiterate that I believe this consultation to be the most dangerous document ever produced by ESFRS management. It is sad to see that ESFRS are no longer engaging on social media following claims and counter claims of misinformation. Not that I use social media, but I can observe and find this disappointing given that the service utilised that medium to launch the consultation but, having been factually challenged, have ceased engagement.

Please see attached revised availability graph document as I mistakenly included Wadhurst as one of the Tier 2 stations for which I apologise.

Many thanks for your work on this matter which I appreciate will result in difficult decisions having to be made by you all.

Best regards

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Dear Sirs

I wish to object to the proposed cuts to the Crowborough Fire and Rescue Service. Our town is constantly growing, more and more houses are being built, therefore, more and more people will come to live here. How then, can it be safe to reduce our fire service by 50%? Its crazy! During the dry months there are so many forest fires. If our fire service is cut by 50%, who will deal with these fires?

People will die, pure and simple. I'm sure you don't want blood on your hands.

STOP THESE CUTS!!!!!!

And, as an after thought, I personally pay a ridiculous amount of council tax and I'm quite sure there won't be a reduction in that will there?!!

Perhaps, instead of the fire station cuts, you should cut some counsellors jobs instead?!!

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

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Please reconsider cuts to services.

The public needs their support

[REDACTED]

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Why are there going to be cuts in Newhaven/Seaford fire service, when in both towns there are more and more house's and flats being built including a another tall block on Newhaven Marina land, 400 and another 500 on the Highway area.

Come on cuts here are madness please think again, IF you value peoples lives.

[REDACTED]

**Similar response:**

Hi there

was just wondering Why there are proposed cuts in this area when there 400 flats/houses proposed at Newhaven Marina, another 500 or so up on the Highway ! let along more house possibly on the East Side. You have spent money on a new fire/police station and they cant even practice on there tower! crazy planning to say the least. No doubt that the old Police Station will be sold off for more flats/housing adding even more lives to protect with just one engine, relying on other towns units to help out ! What if the bridge is open ? it's rush hour ? it's hard enough to more through the traffic on a motorbike !

These cuts must no go ahead, if we value people lives,

[REDACTED]

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Dear Senior Management Team

I am opposed to any proposal of cuts to be made at Crowborough Fire Station and have concerns as to what is acceptable and how to maintain a fully functioning fire station.

I am assuming that CFS has been functioning at sufficient capacity and that the station has proved it's self time and time again and that you as a management body have maintained a high service of excellence for Crowborough at the most economic level necessary without compromise although in truth I would imagine there has been lots of compromise such is the animal.

But as my wife and I enter into our retirement it is a concern that this station might be considered for cuts when in the next year or so a minimum of 350 dwellings will have been built in the Crowborough & Jarvis Brook area which will have an immediate impact upon the requirement of this station and the men who are there.

I believe that this station will see an increase in its need to respond over the next few years and therefore to propose cuts now would be a catastrophe, of course if the station is already overmanned and has too many vehicles then it should be under consideration but I cannot believe this is the case and suggest your consideration should be to increase the facility to the correct level of service required when these dwelling are completed.

Then this begs the question as to the economic position of the station in the past, and although I can appreciate this is a very difficult juggling act for this management team, to be able to propose any reduction in the facility of this station now would suggest possibly a lack of economic efficiency in the past.

Please carefully reconsider any proposed cuts you might have due to the obvious increase in the town population and property as this is a vital service, of which you are only too aware, and incidents do not always arrive singularly.

I would like to thank you for your service gentlemen and appreciate the difficult tasks you have.

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Dear Sirs/Madam

I have decided to write to you, as I am completely dismayed and disappointed at your terrible decision to effectively close our Fire Stations in Seaford and Newhaven. You are culling our vital services when with the massive increases to the local population, you should be informing us that you are increasing the local service. I feel we get a really bad deal in this area for the taxes we pay and you should be protecting our local jobs not reducing them!. What work will there be for people moving to this area with all the new housing stock locally planned or for the public safety for the homes, our schools and businesses, which we pay for in taxes, when you plan 50% staff cuts to the Newhaven Station and want to down grade it to one fire engine. I read that the demand to Newhaven Fire Station has already increased by 12.5% and yet more new housing is being built in Newhaven, Seaford, Peacehaven and Telscombe Cliffs This is on top of an already terrible decision and waste of public money moving the Newhaven Station to a completely unsuitable building which already affects there effectiveness and training, while I see the old station being now used for storage!! This is a basic need for our public safety in this area and you are playing with people life's by cutting these vital services to our communities. Please as my representatives, can you reconsider this pathway you seem to be taking us down.

Yours faithfully  
  

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I have become aware that you have made the decision to remove funds from the Fire Services of Newhaven and Seaford, I am writing to ask why and where these funds will go. The Fire Service, as you know, does far more than put out fires. It saves those that are trapped in areas, it assists the police and the ambulance services. To axe 50 percent of Newhaven fire fighters is truly detrimental to the capability of the Newhaven Fire station, therefore jeopardising the lives of the thousands of residents.

So, I will ask my questions once more, with the hope that you will reconsider this rash and potentially lethal decision, why are you taking money from the emergency services, and where is the money that is so desperately needed by the Newhaven and Seaford fire services going?

Thanks,  
  

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Dear All

Today I have received a flyer through the door, saying that although calls to Newhaven and Seaford Fire Stations have increased by 12.5%, this vital, life saving service is being cut.

This is a completely reckless and irresponsible move. Why is this being done? Without even a police station or other appropriate facilities to support the infrastructure of the town, how can we even begin to function as a suitable place to live? Are people who live in Newhaven unworthy of receiving support from the emergency services? Or have 10 years of needless cuts from the Tory government made it necessary for these changes? As a resident of Newhaven, I have never heard of any such plans, but I gather that this decision was made on my behalf by various council members and others. I certainly do not approve.

This comes hard on the heels of a letter informing me that there are 70 odd more homes due to be built along Transit Road in Newhaven. The very heavy traffic along the A259, additional housing being built above Augustfields and in Peacehaven AND the extreme lack of parking in the area notwithstanding, how can it be right to reduce emergency services and yet increase the amount of residents squeezed into one small area?

All of you need to think a little harder about the town of Newhaven and how much its facilities have been reduced and residents have been pushed to the limits already. I think you need to try seeing it for the important entrance to the UK that it is. It has massive potential, and should not just be written off as a place for the poorer people in society. How can we grow as a town and as a community if we are forever just dumped upon?

I look forward to hearing from you

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs,

I would like to take this opportunity to register my disgust against the proposed cuts by the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service in reducing the cover at the Crowborough Fire Station.

I cannot believe that you will be able to maintain any type of service if you lose one fire engine, lose 50% of the workforce, and reduce the evening and weekend cover. It is a disgrace and can only end one way with a loss of property or worse a human life!

Please think again about this ludicrous suggestion.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Thank you for getting back to me so quickly.

I have to confess that I may have jumped the gun! I eventually went onto the ESFR website and read in rather more detail the proposals suggested. They all seemed to make sense, and rather more so than the flyer that was sent round.

I shall be a bit more diligent in future, but thanks for your comments as well. I feel much happier now.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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Questions in the survey are not put in such a way that people can argue for or against. For example, proposal 4 is comprised of 2 parts but the options for answering it are one or the other. Therefore one cannot say yes to one part and no to the other, or vice versa.

Further, proposals are put in 2 parts, so even if one disagrees with the first part, you still seek an answer for the second part that completely goes against one's opinion.

Attendance times:

An example - Originally, years ago, 2 pumps in 5 mins

Relaxed, 25 years ago, 1 pump in 5 mins and second in 8

Now, 1st pump in 10 mins

You now admit there will be a further reduced attendance in time

Weight of attack is further reduced by crewing.

Crew of 5 needed to fight an internal fire, but 4 is more the norm. Therefore the 2nd pump is needed straight away.

Can be argued that houses are better designed with fire precautions, safer materials, in mind, but conversely, more houses are open plan, ie, fire spreads quicker.

Flexible crewing pool, just because other Fire Services use it, does not mean it is acceptable. A Ff needs to learn his/her area and being in a pool makes that difficult somewhat.

Changing W/T Ffs on Day Crewed stations would not only delay attendance times, but also make it unreliable. Many On Call Ffs book off early in the morning to go to work. They may also be delayed booking back on after work. You already admit that sometimes low On Call Ff availability means some appliances are only available 10-50% of the time.

At present you can guarantee a Day Crewed pump because of a W/T crew responding.

Removing the 2nd appliance from stations means that the 1st crew to arrive at a fire are relying on a delayed 2nd crew. This means that if the 1st crew only comprises 4 Ffs, then how can they commit B.A. into a burning building?

A return of the 2nd pump in Bohemia Road FS is most welcome and shows that the Fire Authority got it wrong years ago by removing it. However it should not be achieved by reducing the status of The Ridge. The Aerial appliances should be primary crewed, not shared. I can just imagine a scenario where Ffs are sent back to the Station to fetch an Aerial Appliance as the next nearest was too far away, or unavailable.

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Dear Councillors

I am writing to you to complain about the Fire Service cuts that you are proposing.

The Fire Service is an emergency service and therefore caters for the unexpected and it is impossible to determine when they may be required. It is plainly absurd to remove the second fire appliance from Crowborough when it was less than a fortnight ago that the Station got calls to two incidents within minutes of each other. Under your proposals I understand that one of those incidents would have had a significantly longer response time had these cuts been implemented prior to those calls.

The north of the county houses Ashdown Forest a heathland that does on occasion catch fire, those fires will be significantly worse if response times to incidents increase as your own documentation states they will. The road network in the area is also poor, not assisted by the state of the road surface, and has an accident rate above the national average, response times to accidents will also increase, which is a significant impact particularly as the ambulance service regularly fail to hit response targets in the north of county.

Your consultation talks about increasing the number of retained Fire Officers which is all well and good but you already struggle to recruit retained Fire Officers and perhaps you would explain how you are going to correct this?

I would urge you to vote against these cuts to an emergency service. I have no doubt that in the event that lifes are lost due to these cuts the residents will be seeking to hold you to account.

Please confirm that you will be taking residents opinions in to account and voting against these cuts.

Yours faithfully

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Hello there,

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of Crowborough, East Sussex in the Wealden district. I would be interested to know exactly why you have voted in favour of cutting the fire service numbers and abilities in Crowborough and the surrounding areas. The fire service is an important part of the town, cutting the service would not only potentially lead to fatalities, it would lengthen the time taken for fire services to reach

Crowborough/surrounding areas in the event of a fire, or incident. I would just be curious to know why this has been deemed an acceptable thing to do, particularly with there being bigger issues currently,

I look forward to your response,  
[REDACTED]

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I am writing to you all to express my concern at the proposed fire service cuts, and the fact so many of you are still supporting this action.

Firstly the way this has been pushed through whilst the whole world let alone the counties involved are busy, life threatening pandemic is disgusting.

I reside in Crowborough and have done for 38 years. In this time I have seen many huge incidents for which the for services have been required, from big forest fires, major road traffic accidents, hotels burning to the ground and who can forget Marley Farm, many of these involved not just Crowborough fire service, but many of the surrounding stations you are proposing to cut.

These were massive incidents that occurred when our town was a lot less populated.

With all the new housing developments the council has pushed through with 100's and 100's of new houses being built and the risks of house fires and road traffic incidents increasing, it is decided that the services we rely on need to be cut? It's madness.

Delaying response times in such life saving situations is pure stupidity, if it was one of you or your family members trapped in a crushed car, leaking fuel, desperate to get out, not knowing if it could burst in to flames at any second, how would you feel knowing that it could take 10 minutes longer for the fire service to arrive? Maybe even up to 20 minutes longer depending on what other incidents have happened in the area? Would it give you comfort? How can you choose saving a few pounds over saving lives?

I am absolutely shocked this is even being considered, there are so many other areas money could be saved with in the council authority that don't include putting people's lives at risk.

Regards  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir / Madam

Having read the future proposals for our fire station left me speechless. With an ever increasing population I can well imagine with only 1 appliance remaining in Crowborough a property could well become a total loss as opposed to relatively minor damage when appliances have to come from Uckfield & Heathfield. Some 3 weeks ago I took my dog for a walk at Gylls Lap where the final damping down of a forest fire was being carried out. I saw a total of 6 fire appliances including 2 capable of operating off road from Heathfield. I understand that you were first notified of this fire at 1 am so surely if Crowborough is downsized the chances of you being able to attend in sufficient nos to control any future fire is going to be reduced with the inevitable result that any fire will spread a lot further than this one had

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I am horrified at the proposed cuts to our service for the following reasons:

1. This town increases in size almost daily, with hundreds of new houses built in the last 5 years, and continues to do so.
2. Ashdown forest is on our doorstep, with forest fires a serious threat to both the town and outlying properties.
3. The fire service also provides invaluable assistance with safety advice and help to the largely elderly population of the town.

To cut the number of engines and firefighters and reduce evening and weekend cover is to put many people in this town at serious risk.

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have just read about the proposed cuts to my local fire station Crowborough.

Firstly I can't believe this is taken place while the pandemic is still going on.

Crowborough is seeing more and more housing being built so to loose a fire engine seems ludicrous.

The first thing I think in a firefighters manual is to save life and this is needed usually at nighttime when deaths occur.

Let's not kid ourselves this is about money. If you want to save money why doesn't East Sussex and West Sussex fire services merge into one fire service. One headquarters, one training venue, one chief fire officer and senior posts can be cut to save salaries and pensions.

If the above happened all the frontline personnel and stations could be kept. I believe in London they done some cuts to high rise appliances going out all the time and looked what happened there Grenfell Tower burned down. So please leave front line serves alone.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Galley,

My wife and I are Crowborough residents and have been for over 40 years. We are very alarmed to have received reports that plans to make cuts to Crowborough Fire Station are being considered.

As you will be aware Crowborough is growing and is the focus for several surrounding villages, for schools etc., which are also growing so it seems a folly to reduce the Fire Service at such a time.

It seems that modern local government is increasing costs for a reduction in services, which may be necessary for non-life saving services, but surely not for those whose purpose is to deal with incidents which may easily result in fatalities and destruction of property.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Please add my name to the petition objecting in the strongest possible terms to the proposal to reduce severely the already diminished local fire and rescue service and to underline the impact this will have on Wadhurst residents' safety.

[REDACTED]

Have I got the correct people To register my strong feelings about this threat of closure? It is imperative that we keep a strong station for this area.

[REDACTED]

Please take this email as my objection to the downgrading of fire services in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove

**HASTINGS OLD TOWN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation

**Mark O'Brien**

**Deputy Chief Fire Officer**

Dear Mr O'Brien

HOTRA has always taken a strong and continuing interest in all public services provided locally. In May 2019 Julie King, Station Manager at Bohemia Road was the guest speaker at our agm attended by over 70 residents. Her contribution was clear, positive and well received. The only disappointment was the failure of ESFRS to recognise the special nature of the buildings, streets and twittens in the Old Town.

Several years ago there was a serious fire at Marine Parade when 7 houses and 5 businesses were destroyed. With a fire of this scale there would have been an internal report to help improve future performance. Despite requests that report has never been shared. The rebuilding took several years and the seat of the fire has never been rebuilt.

At that time members raised many questions especially around the resources available to fire crew. We worked closely with local management on a range of issues. Part of the upskilling resulted in a very good response to a fire in The Croft in a Georgian terrace with significant access problems.

HOTRA has been pressing for fire crews to have available a smaller size fire appliance as part of their range of kit. In particular we discovered that all Fire and Rescue services from Kent to Cornwall had invested in smaller appliances. This idea has been met constantly with resistance here in East Sussex. If this expenditure was justified across all of Southern England it would be interesting to know why ESFRS are ignoring this proposal. It is important that local responses can include this option as a tool available.

*To move on to the current consultation we are deliberately not using your survey format. This may be easier to manage and collate but it fails to give space to the deep concerns of local residents.*

We are opposed to much of what is proposed. Theresa May when Prime Minister announced that Austerity is over. This plan is a set of cuts with far reaching implications not just for Hastings but also for the rural areas.

1] The awful events of the Grenfell fire show that a major incident has to be responded to by 2 key elements –  
a) the number and training of fire crew;  
b) the availability of the right equipment.  
You make no reference to any lessons learned.

2] Fire crew – my experience of local fire crew over more than 20 years could not be better BUT there has to be enough and they must be properly equipped.

3] Fire engines – I do not believe that you have the right range of machines here in Hastings for your crews to respond most effectively. Apart from a smaller appliance available as a first response I am not aware what could be used on the tower blocks in Hastings.

4] Expanding building safety and prevention work – what a lovely idea. The Marine Parade fire was spread through the loft spaces. How will adjacent property owners achieve fire walls and other means ? The costs are larger than most can afford. Currently most prevention work comprises a 'chat' with no enforcement processes being used. Unless this is funded by the public purse it will not happen.

5] Response times – ESFRS always claim that they have responded within the guidelines. Can you let me have a copy of the policy that details what should happen from the 999 call to when the fire starts to be put out.

6] Reducing 999 calls – NHS cuts have resulted in ambulances parking outside hospitals before patients are admitted. A key part of the expectations held by the public is that a fire appliance will be dispatched immediately. They call – you respond. Simple tried and tested. Please think very carefully before changing.

7] Non emergency calls – whilst cat rescuing can be a source of amusement this type of call out usually generates positive publicity.



As part of the response to Covid-19, fire fighters are already taking on extra duties, such as assisting the ambulance service with their increased workload and delivering much needed PPE to NHS & other key workers. Now is not the time to try and implement disruptive changes, including further cuts, to our fire and rescue service.

The Labour Group of Councillors on Brighton & Hove City Council\* are calling upon East Sussex Fire Authority members to halt the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) consultation and any plan to implement the changes and cuts to fire and rescue services in East Sussex in contains until the Coronavirus crisis is over and the post-pandemic financial settlement for local government and the fire service is settled.

These are unprecedented circumstances, so we reiterate that this is not the time for such a major restructure of the local fire service, or for what many believe are cuts dressed up as 'risk management improvements'.

Furthermore, we share the concerns of the Fire Brigades Union that the loss of both equipment and crew contained in the proposals would lead to a reduction in crucial coverage in some areas of the county, and therefore increase the risk to public safety. We also believe the comprehensive list of safety concerns the Fire Brigades Union have raised warrant thorough consideration before continuing with the public consultation, let alone with implementation thereafter.

The Labour Group on the Fire Authority proposed a motion, supported by others, to halt the consultation but were unfortunately unsuccessful.

We ask the Fire Authority members to recognise that over 23,000 people have signed a petition in opposition to the proposed measures contained in the IRMP, and that local MPs Lloyd Russell-Moyle, Peter Kyle and Maria Caulfield have also asked for a pause in the process.

We now call again upon all Fire Authority members to vote against the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 and place a moratorium on any restructure until we fully understand the impact of Covid-19 on the fire service and the county.

In addition, we ask that any members of the public across Brighton & Hove and East Sussex who are outraged that further cuts to any of our essential services should be either planned or implemented during a time of national crisis – or at all - please email East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service as soon as possible to give them your views at: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)

*\*NB In accordance with the applicable laws, Cllrs Amanda Evans and Les Hamilton, being Members of the Fire Authority, were not party to this statement.*

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Dear Dawn and team,

I am taking this opportunity to write to you all regarding some of the proposals made in the ORR. I know you will all be overloaded with work regarding the COVID 19 Pandemic however this is something to digest and respond to when able.

As the lead instructor for the SWR team a lot of my spare time is spent trying to support this resource as best I can within the limitations of my role. I would love to have a more central role with more responsibilities and direction to further improve and develop the team but at present this does not seem possible.

Since the publication of the ORR I have been made aware from a variety of different sources that the perception that those in senior and middle management have adopted the view that the staff at Crowborough are "causing trouble", "refusing to play ball" and "full of troublemakers" to mention some of the variety of comments. I am also being told that part of the reason for moving the SWR team is due to those perceptions.

Could I firstly ask that you re-read my memo of 28<sup>th</sup> May 2017 (Copy Attached) where I have made some notes in red highlighting progression over the past 3 years.

### Team numbers:

At present we do indeed have a total of 7 people at Crowborough who are not part of the SWR team through choice. (This is due primarily to the way they feel they have been treated and lack of support whilst on the team and secondary due to some not being completely comfortable in fast flowing water).

We also have 4 members of staff who are working through their probationary periods but eager to be part of the team.

We have a total of 11 team members based at Crowborough at present however 4 of those have dual contracts and work over both whole-time and retained duty systems.

### Responding to calls:

Regardless of previous statistics weather does appear to be becoming more erratic. Between November 2019 and March 2020 inclusive the SWR team were able to provide a response to 21 calls and unable to respond to 2 calls due to lack of crews that we are aware of. Although the team have now been up and running for 10 years we still have many fundamental issues regarding mobilisation.

- a. East Sussex Fire Control (ESFC) regularly attempt to mobilise the wrong vehicles causing confusion and stress which in turn adds friction between those on the team and those not.
- b. As part of the ORR data on page 78 (Special appliance mobilisation over the past 9 years) it refers to 83T1 as 83T3 and on the centrally printed station numbers and call signs data sheet it refers to 83B1 as 83W1. This clearly demonstrates a misunderstanding across the service of the vehicle call signs we currently have.
- c. In-county response up until our Rigid Inflatable Boat (83B1) was defected and taken off the run by engineering would have been our Water Tender Ladder (83P4), 4X4 Land rover (83M1), 4 x 4 Unimog (83M2) and 83B1. As there is **no** single callsign for the Swift Water Rescue Team (Except when deployed as part of the National Resilience when it would be WC030) this creates constant confusion in ESFC regarding the correct vehicle mobilisation rarely ever taking place.
- d. Currently an in-county response would be 83P4 and 83M2. Out of county response during the period we are looking at (up until 83B1 was taken off the run) would have been 83 T1, 83M1 and 83B1. As you can see there is still confusion which is resulting in massively skewed figures being used to suggest to the fire authority that a SRT is not required in East Sussex.
- e. Although we now have a SWR vehicle which would allow crews to ride in one vehicle which would speed up mobilisation it is not a dedicated vehicle but doubles as a station van. It also cannot yet be used as a response vehicle as it has no main scheme radio, Satnav or Mobile Data Terminal fitted. We are still mobilising in 2 vehicles requiring 2 x Emergency Response Driver Training (ERDT) qualified drivers with 1 required as also having UNIMOG and off-road driving qualifications. A dedicated station van is also required to free up this response vehicle.
- f. Although work began in 2017 to re-write the water rescue manual note no further work has been actioned. Part of this project was to look at in-county response and crewing numbers required. If this work had continued we could now have a policy in place allowing us to respond to incidents in county with a minimum team of 4. This would make a significant difference to both the team availability, mobilisation issues as well as cost savings.

## Team kit and PPE:

Although the PPE we provide for water rescues is improving (particularly with the new level 2 dry suit and separate boots) there are still a number of nationally identified essential items missing that could compromise the safety of staff as follows:

**Level 2 Technicians:** Knife fitted to PFD for cutting away/self-rescue if snagged in lines. Yellow light or light stick attached to helmet. Blue light sticks for marking hazards.

**Level 3 Technicians:** Suitable thermal undergarments with flexibility to layer up or down depending on the tasks being completed. Dedicated summer and winter work gloves. Blue light sticks for marking hazards.

## Maintenance of Competence & Training:

I have recently been involved in instructing the level 2 water rescue refresher course based at Bewl water in Kent. For a number of years now the organisation has neglected to recognise that the level 2 training we are providing our staff is not fit for purpose and this has still not been addressed. As an organisation we provide drowning prevention advice to all members of our community which is the right thing to do however we are simultaneously neglecting our own staff and exposing them to unnecessary risks without providing suitable and sufficient training.

Our training does not meet the recommendations of DEFRA and although the guidance states we should be training in moving water to teach hydrology and self rescue techniques this is still not happening.

DEFRA states our basic level 2 water rescue technician course should be "a minimum of fourteen hours over a minimum of 2 days at a venue with suitable and appropriate hydrology features, up to class 2 water" and recertification course is required "every 3 years, of a minimum of twelve hours over a minimum of 2 days".

Currently our level 2 water recertification course consists of 3 hours at a still water venue every 3 years. This is clearly inadequate and I believe we are exposing our staff to unacceptable levels of risk.

SLT have been talking of developing a level 2+ category (which is not recognised by DEFRA) which will allow technicians to swim in still water. Although this is undoubtedly a step in the right direction we must firstly bring our training up to these nationally recognised levels before adding additional risk.

## ORR/IRMP Proposals:

Looking at the new proposed IRMP and the extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting notes dated 23<sup>rd</sup> April it would appear that the decision to remove a swift water rescue asset from East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service has already been decided without consultation. You note that "the data and analysis so far have demonstrated that we no longer need to maintain a swift water rescue team in its current guise and this capability will be withdrawn".

In response to this I have to disagree most strongly. Although there is no doubt that there are a lot of facts and figures within the ORR however the majority of the information is looking at sites of reservoirs, rivers (both primary, secondary and tertiary), ports, marshland and beaches. When we look at facts and figures there appears to be little correlation between these and your decisions made and in addition I believe these printed facts are flawed.

On page 39 of the station risk profile the figures and statements state that 83B1 and 83T1 have only been mobilised 5 times over the past 9 years. This is clearly referring to Out Of County response as part of the National Resilience Programme.

The following table taken from the ORR Report shows the number of times over the last 9 years that each special appliance has been mobilised to attend an incident. As you can see the figures below would suggest that 83B1 and 83T1 were only mobilised 5 times in the period .

Specialist Appliance Type	Station	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	5 Yr Ave.	% No Arrival
Aerial Ladder Platform	Hastings Bohemia Rd	215	224	254	217	228	181	181	184	156	186	219 (11.9%)
Aerial Ladder Platform	Preston Circus	398	430	414	386	418	341	308	334	318	344	264 (7.9%)
Aerial Ladder Platform	Eastbourne	199	138	173	121	113	3	33	15	35	40	163 (19.6%)
Animal Rescue Uni Mog	Crowborough	129	102	116	98	105	70	81	80	54	78	404 (48.4%)
Boat	Crowborough	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	1 (20.0%)
Command Support Unit	Bexhill	0	0	17	24	34	24	27	32	32	30	106 (55.8%)
Command Support Unit	Lewes	0	0	24	26	49	29	48	41	61	46	140 (50.4%)
Foam Tender	Newhaven	7	8	6	6	5	2	0	1	5	3	24 (60.0%)
General Purpose Lorry	Uckfield	13	17	22	13	14	14	11	11	13	13	41 (32.0%)
HVP Support Vehicle	Crowborough	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1 (100.0%)
HVP Support Vehicle	Hove	3	0	0	4	4	2	3	1	2	2	7 (36.8%)
Incident response unit	Eastbourne	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1 (20.0%)
L4T (4x4 with Hosereel)	Hastings The Ridge	51	36	58	22	26	20	27	18	27	24	51 (17.9%)
L4T (4x4 with Hosereel)	Wadhurst	42	30	19	10	9	5	5	4	4	5	39 (30.5%)
L4T (4x4 with Hosereel)	Heathfield	30	31	37	27	29	36	16	15	13	22	46 (19.7%)
L4T (4x4 with Hosereel)	Crowborough	150	132	137	107	120	79	92	85	63	88	457 (47.4%)
L4T (4x4 with Hosereel)	Seaford	100	83	67	63	93	59	22	27	19	44	71 (13.3%)
Maritime Response Team 1	Newhaven	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	2 (33.3%)
Maritime Response Team 2	Newhaven	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2 (66.7%)
Prime Mover	Newhaven	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prime Mover	Hove	5	1	0	16	13	4	7	1	6	6.2	22 (41.5%)
Rope Rescue Unit	Battle	35	27	30	41	36	16	31	28	42	31	169 (59.1%)
Rope Rescue Unit	Bexhill	15	7	2	8	3	1	7	7	9	5	29 (49.2%)
Swift Water Rescue Support Vehicle	Crowborough	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2 (50.0%)
Technical Rescue Unit	Battle	29	24	39	46	46	25	38	45	43	39	200 (59.7%)
Technical Rescue Unit	Lewes	46	34	37	52	49	27	48	52	57	47	191 (47.5%)
Water Carrier	Uckfield	16	18	25	15	20	18	16	12	17	17	45 (28.7%)

The figures below are taken from the Station Risk Profile Report again reporting the total

Number of calls for SRT being 5 over a 9 year period.

### Station appliance(s)

#### 83P1

- Turn-out time is 01:59 on station, and 05:20 on call. Both turnout times increased over time period.
- 15% reduction in mobilisations over 9 years.
- Mobilises 290 times per year – 68% in own area, 8% in Uckfield, 7% in Mayfield area, 4% OTB.
- Attends 5% more fires and 7% fewer false alarms than ESFRS.
- Mobilises to 34 critical incidents per year – 65% in own area, 11% in Uckfield, 8% in Forest Row area, 8% Mayfield.
- Attendance standard met 55% within 10mins, 84% within 15mins.
- 99.7% availability in 2017/18.

#### 83P4

- 54% reduction in mobilisations over 9 years.
- Average turnout time is 06:34.
- Mobilises 54 times per year - 73% in own area, 6% in Mayfield area, 4% in Uckfield, 3% OTB.
- Mobilises to 9 critical incidents per year – 70% in own area, 7% in Mayfield, 5% in Lewes area.
- Attendance standard met 83% of the time (100% critical).
- 62% availability in 2017/18. Low availability between 8am-6pm (43%).

### Standby moves

- 18 cover moves per year, upward trend, with large increase from 2015/16 onwards – 50% in Uckfield, 31% in Crowborough, 9% OTB.

### Special Appliances

#### 83M1 (Landrover L4T)

- 58% decline in mobilisations, average 88 mobs per year (2013-18), didn't arrive 47% of occasions. 29% of mobilisations OTB.

#### 83M1 (Animal Rescue Unit)

- 58% decline in mobilisations, average 78 mobs per year (2013-18), didn't arrive 48% of occasions. 32% of mobilisations OTB.

#### 83B1 (Swift Water Rescue Boat)

- 83B1 mobilised on 5 occasions during 9 years.

#### 83T1 (Swift Water Rescue Support Vehicle)

- 83T1 mobilised on 5 occasions during 9 years.

Below is a graph showing all animal rescues from water as detailed in Station 83 Fire Call Log Book shown in Blue and all mobilisations of Swift Water Rescue Team or Animal rescue team when miss-mobilised to rescue persons in water or unstable surfaces.

Total times SRT was mobilised in this period : **114**

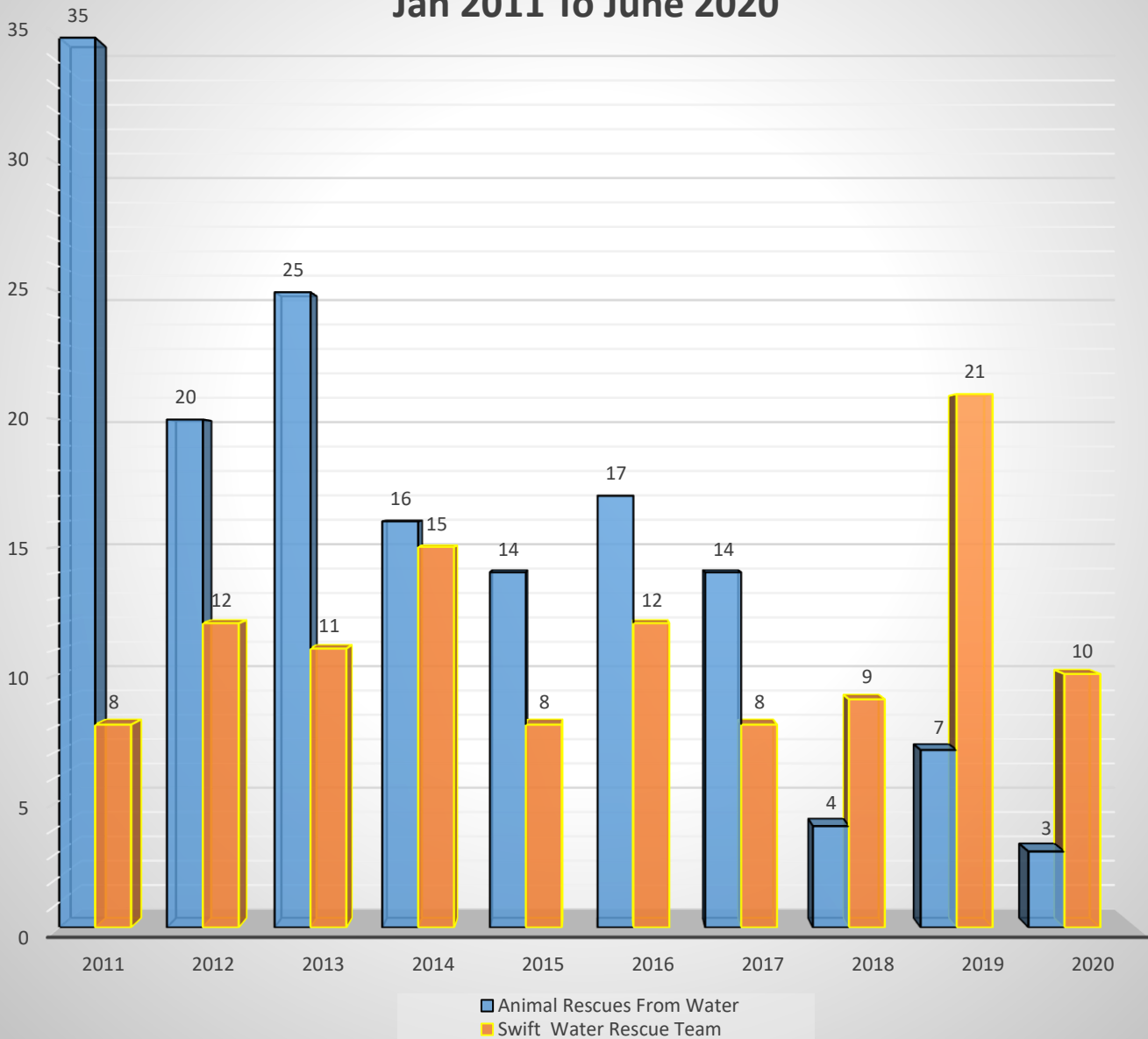
When compared to evidence collated in the Operational Response Review Main Report which states the Swift Water Rescue Team were mobilised 5 times in 9 years clearly shows an error in figures collated.

These figures only show the times that the Swift Water Rescue Team were mobilised and not any other incidents where mobilisation was not attempted due to team being booked Off The Run.

To ensure the safety of our crews we should also be vetting all animal rescue calls and sending some form of Swift Water Rescue Response when rescues are being carried out from deep moving water. This is the policy that Kent Fire & Rescue Service currently adopt to provide additional safety measures for their Animal Rescue Teams.

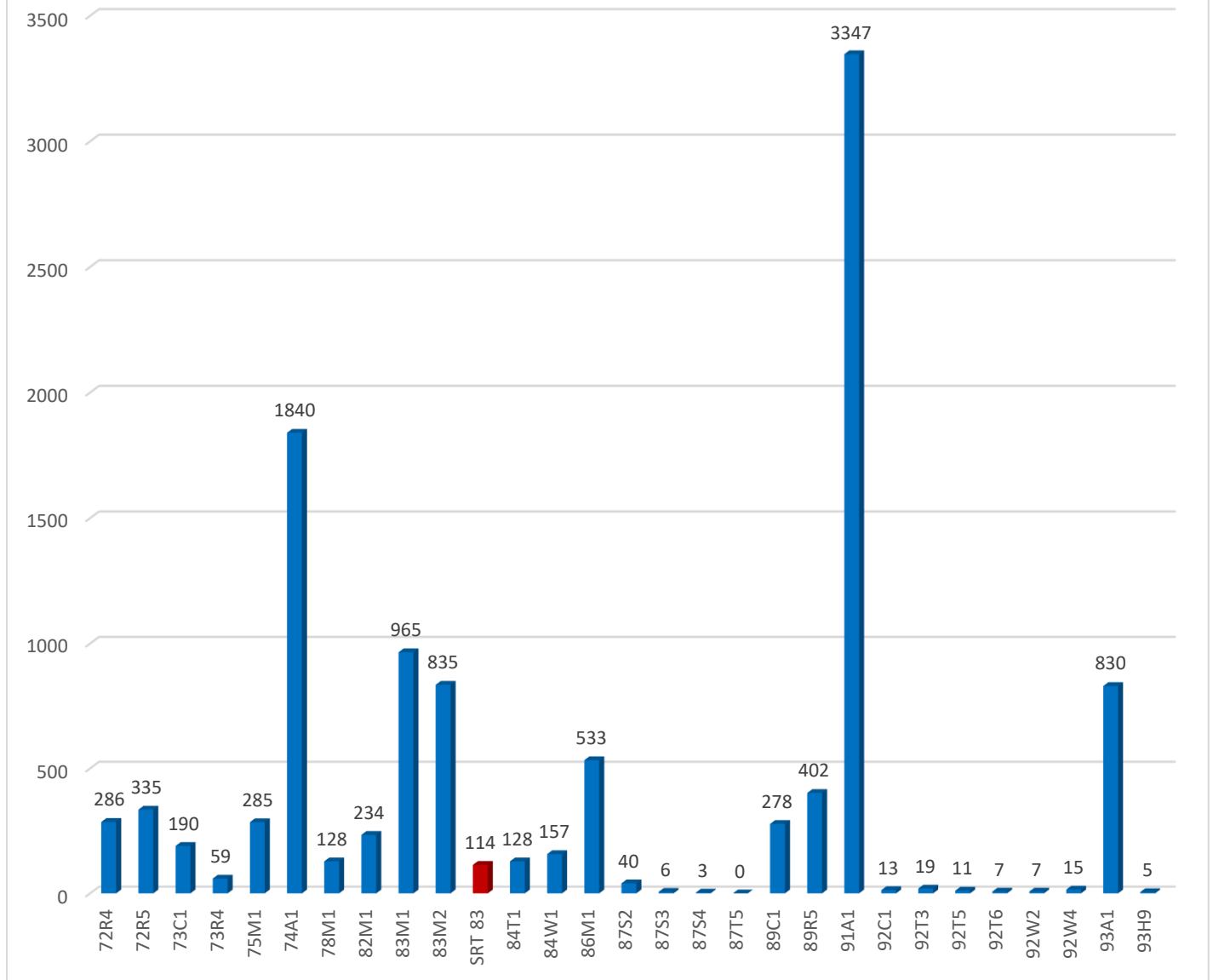
## ARV & Life Risk Incidents Involving Water, Mud & Unstable Surface.

Jan 2011 To June 2020



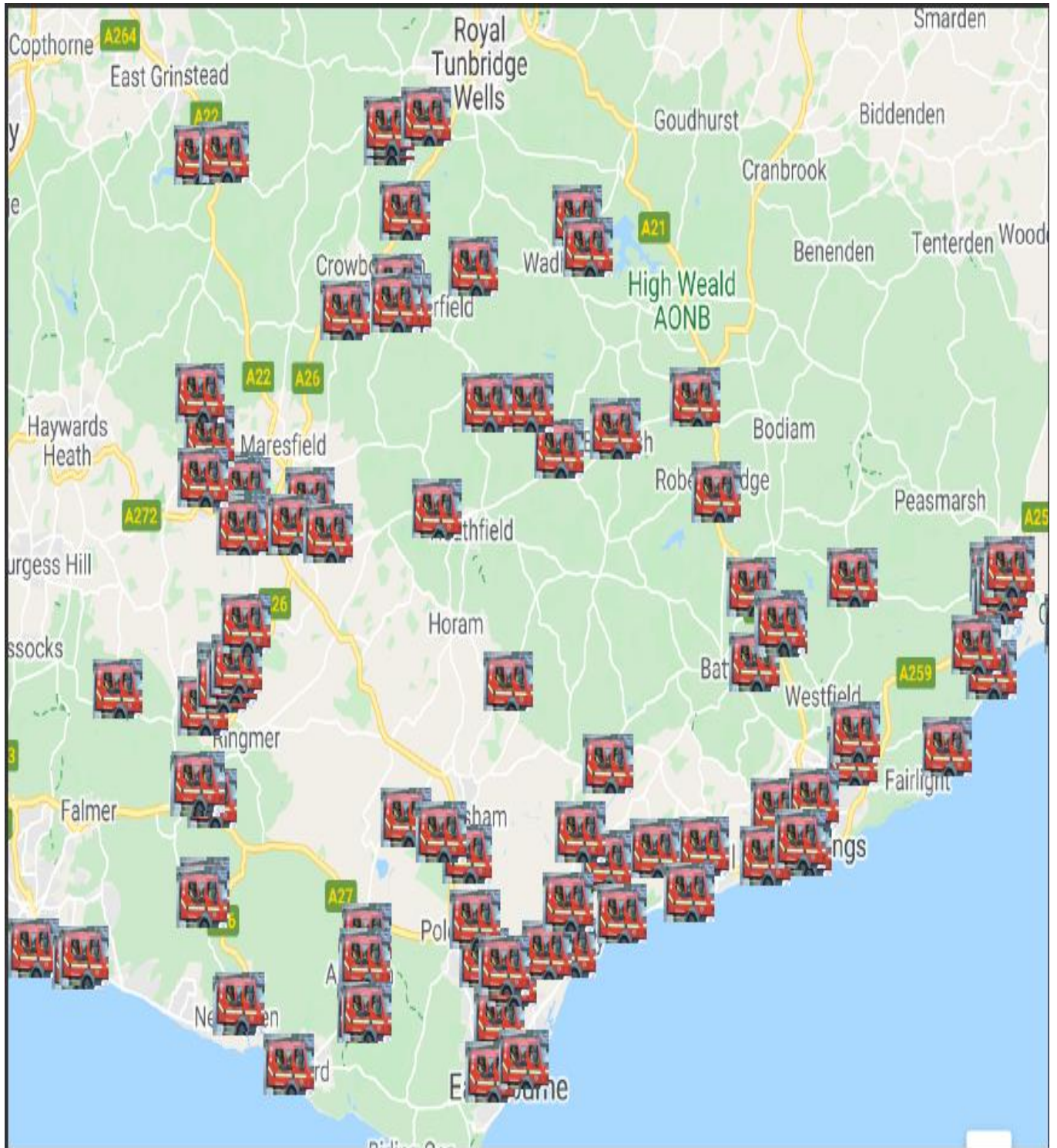
The following graph shows special appliances mobilised across the service over a 9 year period. Life risk incidents involving water, mud & unstable surface clearly marked in RED

## ESFRS Special Appliances Mobilisation Over 9 Year Period



# Life Risk Incidents Involving Water, Mud & Unstable Surface Incident locations 2011 – May 2020

A fairly even spread of calls across the entire county however this clearly shows a high number of calls in Wealden and surrounding areas.





Life Risk Incidents Involving Water, Mud & Unstable Surface 2011 – May 2020

Number	Date	Description
1	18/01/11	
2	18/01/11	
3	20/02/11	
4	04/04/11	
5	09/07/11	
6	02/08/11	
7	25/09/11	
8	30/10/11	
9	28/01/12	
10	13/03/12	
11	19/04/12	
12	20/04/12	
13	11/06/12	
14	14/07/12	
15	17/08/12	
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36	06/02/14	
37	14/02/14	
38	14/02/14	
39	05/03/14	
40	17/05/14	
41	21/05/14	
42	07/08/14	
43	02/09/14	
44	04/10/14	
45	03/11/14	
46	12/12/14	

47	01/01/15		
48	08/01/15		
49	23/04/15		
50	02/07/15		
51	31/07/15		
52	24/08/15		
53	22/09/15		
54	29/09/15		
55	10/01/16		
56	07/01/16		
57	08/02/16		
58	12/02/16		
59	17/03/16		
60	24/03/16		
61	28/03/16		
62	16/05/16		
63	22/06/16		
64	25/09/16		
65	08/11/16		
66	04/11/16		
67	02/02/17		
68	17/06/17		
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110	06/03/20	
111	06/06/20	
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113	03/05/20	
114	25/05/20	

**Recommendations:**

Currently our full team strength is set at 24 to ensure sufficient resilience to provide relief crews when required.

1. Split the existing team into 2 x smaller teams of 12+ with 1 based at Crowborough (North of the county) and 1 based on the coast (Lewes as recommended in the ORR).
2. Split the 2 x existing sets of kit between 2 sites, 1 set stowed on SWR van (once fitted with radio and MDT) and second set on TRU based at Lewes.
3. Current SWR instructors to train new team members in house to level 3 technician standards.
4. Assign a single call sign and response vehicle to mobilise in county to simplify mobilisation.
5. Allow myself with the assistance of the team leader ( [REDACTED] ) and other instructors to review and re-write our water rescue risk assessments and manual note to agree on better ways to utilise resources within East Sussex.

**This plan would provide the following:**

- i. Reduced costs of basic training (utilising the competent crew at Crowborough rather than starting again with the team)
- ii. Reduced costs of training new team members in Lewes by training new members in house rather than external training providers.
- iii. Provide resilience across the service.
- iv. Provide crews based at Crowborough to support, train and maintain competence of Animal Rescue Operatives.
- v. Maintain the wealth of knowledge and experience built up by instructors and technicians over 10 years.

This would provide best service to cover the whole county at minimum cost. We would keep our existing instructors and technicians and wealth of knowledge and experience at Crowborough whilst supporting the animal rescue team.

If insufficient crew members puts both teams off the run then sufficient numbers from both teams could be mobilised to form 1 team meeting at RV point or incident therefor increasing capability.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

**Conclusion:**

Over the past 10 years as a Fire and Rescue Service we have suffered reduced funding and cuts that has had a major effect on our service which has resulted in loss of whole time firefighters and reduced appliance mobilisations which in turn have affected RDS firefighters moral, competence, confidence and pay.

Call numbers have drastically reduced over the years partly through our prevention work in the community in the form of Home Safety Visits, business safety Visits and our education work with schools, youth groups and community groups however the biggest reduction in appliance mobilisations has clearly been caused by the following :

- i. Reducing Pre Determined Attendances (PDAs) to commercial and domestic fire alarms.
- ii. Call challenging at East Sussex Fire Control (ESFC) (asking home and business owners to check for signs of fire prior to mobilisation of appliances)
- iii. Administering a charge to neighbouring fire services when special appliances are requested.

I believe we are now at a point in our history where we have reduced the calls we attend and resources we send to incidents to an all-time low and would not be able to reduce this number any further without having an extreme detrimental effect on both firefighters and the public we serve.

We are experiencing major growth across the county with a house building frenzy to attempt to meet the needs of our residents. In Crowborough alone we have a number of major housing developments currently in progress.

Our population is ever increasing however our infrastructure is not, with roads and facilities becoming ever increasingly busy with demand outstripping supply.

Looking at our severe weather events over the past few years we can see that we experienced a peak in 2019 with 21 Swift Water Rescue team mobilisations and already in 2020 have been mobilised 10 times putting us on track to match our call numbers of 2019.

In my opinion our call numbers across the service can only go in one direction which is of course up.

ESFRS should be proud to provide the Swift Water Rescue Team as a national asset. Once replacement boat is on the run we should re-register our team as a national asset and be in a position to assist other brigades if required. When East Sussex next experiences major flooding we will also be relying on assistance from other brigades.

This research has been shared with the Consult mailbox as well as union and fire authority members.

I hope you feel these proposals are worthy of your full consideration,

Looking forward to your response,

Kind regards,

[Redacted signature block]

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With more homes being built in Newhaven it doesn't make sense reducing the fire service in Newhaven, and with arson in the area Peacehaven Cissbury Ave. Newhaven Elphick Rd and last night First Ave.. If the bridge is open and there is a fire in Seaford it will take longer for them to get there, So one fire engine and they are dealing with a fire in east of Newhaven Avis way the bridge is open and there's a fire in Newhaven Town centre ?

[Redacted]

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To Senior Management Team ESFRS

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to oppose the cuts to Crowborough Fire Station as well as to the whole of East Sussex.

I strongly object to the proposals for:-

The loss of one fire engine at Crowborough Fire Station.

The 50% loss of full time firefighters

The reduction in evening and weekend fire cover and longer response times.

My objection is on the following grounds:-

With several new housing developments underway in Crowborough the station will be serving a larger area and community. These cuts would put stresses on the current system, increasing the risk to the public at present, with the risk surely exacerbated by an increase in the community it serves in the near future.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature block]

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Dear Sirs,

Myself and my wife would like our names added to the petition to 'stop the cuts'

Your faithfully,

[Redacted signature block]

I was most concerned to hear of proposed further cuts to the capabilities, equipment and manpower of Wadhurst Fire Station.

The population of the village and surrounding area is increasing and is likely to carry on doing so for many years to come.

Given the geography of a rural location, reducing the capability at the local fire station to a hollowed out state makes no sense. It would mean relying increasingly on crews from surrounding areas as support. The response times involved could endanger lives, let alone thinking about the potential for increased damage to property.

For once, can the sensible decision be taken and the Wadhurst Fire Station status and capacity be left well alone.

yours

[Redacted signature]

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Dear All,

I am writing you to in respect of the cuts that are proposed at the fire stations in East Sussex.

I am in disbelief that anyone can justify risking lives to save costs, especially as a lot of the senior employed people making these decisions don't take the risks like the firefighters do on a daily basis and are on such high salaries. They should be ashamed of themselves. Dawn Whittaker for example. She is currently taking home £150k a year and supposedly we need to make cuts. Perhaps you should start with her! Her linkedIn page states the following:-

*Proud to serve the public and to assist in keeping our country safe*

What a joke!! If cuts need to be made she should definitely be the first to go.

I have experienced the terrifying situation of having a fire at my house. If the fire brigade hadn't arrived and put the fire out it could have been a terrible situation. I have 2 young children and it is hugely worrying that we could be left in a situation where we had no support or rescue. I also have a vulnerable 80 year old mother who lives on her own who could just as easily have an accident or leave something on that catches fire, she would have no hope of survival if these cuts are made.

How can anyone justify taking firefighters and fire engines away in East Sussex. The risks are too high. Every minute counts when there is a fire. Surely anyone making decisions like this would know that.

The integrated risk management plan / proposal that is out in the public domain is not explained to the general public. It like we are being blind sided and it's all a cover up to get away with this ludicrous idea of making cuts.

We are so lucky to have such a great support with our firefighters. They have stepped up all the way through the coronavirus situation, put themselves at risk to help everyone through this torrid time and on a daily basis and this is how they are being repaid.

I will be protesting against this in every way I can as it is completely unacceptable.

I look forward to your response.

[Redacted signature]

Similar response:

Dear All,

I am writing you to in respect of the cuts that are proposed at the fire stations in East Sussex.

How can anyone justify taking firefighters and fire engines away in East Sussex, this leaves no support for each other, let alone the timescales of getting there and what impact that would have. The risks are too high. You could have a road traffic accident, Ashdown forest fire and a house fire all at the same time. How would you prioritise that? Who's life who you choose to save? The pressure you would be putting in the firefighters before they have even arrived the scene would be immense. Don't you think they give enough by putting their lives in the line already?

The proposal of having retained firefighters in place of full time is ludicrous. How can retained firefighters expect the get through the crowborough cross traffic lights in rush hour in their own vehicles? its bad enough outside of those hours. In addition, there are also so many road closures that the moment which have been going on for extremely long periods of time, we are having to divert all the way round crowborough to get to the other side, I don't see this coming to an end anytime soon, bringing even longer response times. Every second counts when there is a fire, anyone making these decisions knows that.

How do you expect to hire retained fire fighters to live near to the fire station, restrict their lives so they are nearby when they are on call, when they may or may not be called. The additional time getting to the station means of the fire being much larger and harder to tackle, and putting their lives at risk even further as it's taken more time to attend. The worst part is that they are more likely to turn up to someone who, as they have been left longer, could be arriving to a death as they are too late. How can you ask people to do that? Certainly not an engaging, sought after role to be applying for that's for sure.

The integrated risk management plan / proposal that is out in the public domain is not explained to the general public. Its like we are being blind sided and it's all a cover up to get away with this ludicrous idea of making cuts.

I am in disbelief that anyone can justify risking lives to save costs, especially as a lot of the senior employed people making these decisions are on such high salaries and don't take the risks like the firefighters do on a daily basis. They should be ashamed of themselves. Dawn Whittaker for example. She is currently taking home £150k a year and supposedly we need to make cuts. Her linkedIn page states the following:-

*Proud to serve the public and to assist in keeping our country safe*

How can she have this as her opening statement when she is making these decisions? If cuts need to be made perhaps you should start with her.

I have experienced the terrifying situation of having a fire at my house. If the fire brigade hadn't arrived and put the fire out it would have been a completely different outcome. I have 2 young children and it is hugely worrying that we could be left in a situation where we have no support or rescue.

I also have a vulnerable 80 year old mother who lives on her own who could just as easily have an accident or leave something on that catches fire, she would have no hope of survival if these cuts are made.

We are so lucky to have such a great support with our firefighters. They have stepped up all the way through the coronavirus situation, put themselves at risk to help everyone through this torrid time (and on a daily basis) and this is how they are being repaid.

This proposal is completely unacceptable.

I look forward to your response.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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CUT BACKS OF FIRE FIGHTING SERVICES

I am writing to you with considerable concerns over the proposed cut backs of Fire Fighting Services in Newhaven, Peacehaven and Seaford. Given the dense population and numerous businesses and schools, et cetera it seems a dangerous thought!!!!

Lives and properties and businesses will be in a more vulnerable position. Given our recent challenges this seems yet another thing for us all to worry about.

PLEASE RECONSIDER!

Best wishes, [REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs

We would like to register our objection to the proposed cuts to local fire services.

These are dangerous proposals and put residents at a higher risk.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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I am astonished that there are proposals to reduce services at Crowborough Fire Station. Leaving aside the domestic requirements the Fire Services from Forest Row and Uckfield join forces with Crowborough to tackle serious fires that occur on the nearby Ashdown Forest. The loss of any response could spell disaster for our wildlife and recreation. Of course, both are important but during the Covid 19 lockdown the Forest has provided a vital resource for those wishing to exercise whilst having plenty of space for social distance. The Ashdown Forest also has a Nature Reserve which provides ideal conditions for some of our rare and protected species and it is doubtful whether some of these would ever return if fire destroyed their habitat.

I would ask that proposals to make cuts in these vital services are halted before our local area loses much more than the capability to tackle serious fires.

Regards

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Please add our names to the Petition against proposed cuts to our local fire service at Wadhurst.

Insanely shortsighted - now more than ever we need a fully coordinated and integrated service working at local level.

**Further reply:**

Thank you for taking the trouble to reply to our email, and for clarifying the situation. It was in response to the flyer we received that we had commented, but now that we can better understand the matter, we shall be referring to the official consultation document, which will enable us to obtain the full information.

With kind regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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I understand that this authority has an obligation too review the above mentioned services and you have told my mp maria Caulfield that this review is not a funded based review especially as maria has offered to go too central government and obtain extra funding therefore it can only be concluded that your recommendations are of a



funding nature ,these recommendations would clearly jeopardise the safety of residents covered by east sussex fire authority.

I urge you too postpone this review until such times as this pandemic persist ,once hopefully it has I recommend that you survey local residents,businesses,credit homes and nhs providers which in my opinion would provide you with a clearer understanding of what is required to service the area your authority covers as too me cutting tendoes personnel and massively reducing staffing levels will ultimately lead too a greater risk (danger) of residents businesses care homes hospitals factories and ofcourse incidents wether they be on highways or private property !

Too conclude I believe this review is in error and urge you too think again

Regards

[REDACTED]

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Hello,

I would like to say how disappointed I am that Fire Services are being cut to Crowborough. With a large and growing town it is essential we have the number of Fire Fighters and fire trucks available, especially as the Council are always considering even more housing.

We need these services not only for the residents, but also because of the Ashdown Forest being a potential fire hazard more than other areas and I like so many other long term Crowborough residents, urge the councillors to save money elsewhere with less life and death consequences as essential services. We have a very large active community here in Crowborough and the people are very vociferous on social media about this issue and some of them are very persistent about this.

Why not offer apprenticeships and part time work to train up new local people from the area and cut out all the petty officials and red tape to launch a new initiative in the town seeing as the area has so much community support and young families?

There is absolutely no reason to lessen services as there are plenty of people in Crowborough only too happy to enrol if it wasn't so ridiculously impossible to even be accepted into the training? Why make the services less when you have so many young and able bodied workers who would love to work locally for a career in the fire service, even part time, if the "red tape" petty officials didn't make it impossible? It would take one post on Facebook and you would get applications within minutes. There are plenty of retired fire chiefs who would only be too happy to help train up new people in the community. If Boris is going to announce Apprentices to kick off the economy shortly, why not let Crowborough be one of the first to try the training fire fighter initiative?

Please re consider the fire service cuts - surely there is another way you can save the costs without going straight for the fire trucks and services in such a large area as Crowborough which has way more surrounding villages to attend to than other towns.

Many thanks for listening.

Best regards.

[REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for taking the time to reply.

There is a protest outside the Fire Station today in Crowborough. This will inevitably lead to drawing wider public attention now to the proposals of the unpopular fire service cuts. I am sure someone at the protest will be bound

to upload any footage to social media which will then be picked up by BBC South Today or other local news outlets and before you know it, the issue is on the telly as part of the evening local news.

Drawing wider attention to an issue is usually what protests are for and I think it is a shame this proposal wasn't nipped in the bud and scrapped before people felt the need to protest publicly because their voices are not being heard. Who wants these cuts? No one I know. And no one I know knows anyone else that wants them either. I can't find one person who agrees with the cuts.

In answer to one of the councillors' replies on the fact that modern housing hardly catches fire these days, may I point out that Crowborough is not just modern housing but is in part made up of old traditional buildings, some public and some hard to access including some of the historical buildings in the High Street as well as the surrounding villages. May I also point out that the local community remember the Poundgate fire some ten years ago which involved 4 fire engines, when a row of old cottages caught fire spreading to the adjacent roofs of the other cottages of which there were three. An elderly bedridden man was trapped upstairs in the top floor who refused to leave one of the cottages, had to be rescued for his own safety, involving more fire fighting skills being called in as the fire was still blazing next door requiring even more back up.

The fire originally had two fire engines and rapidly needed a further two making four in total to tackle the fire and contain the blaze at the emergency scene. The man later died but not from the fire itself from which he was rescued, but from the "aftershock" as he was in his 90s and vulnerable, had been in this own house bedridden for over 20 years and was very upset to be moved at all in the confusion let alone in such dire circumstances.

This may "hardly ever happen" but has happened in living memory as far as the locals are concerned. If it did happen again who would be accountable if there weren't enough fire engines or firefighters on the scene in any unforeseen emergency? What would be the consequences if this resulted in loss of life? People will rightly assume any cuts were solely down to "putting costs over safety" as what other reason would anyone make cuts to emergency services?

This is the red line you cannot cross in most people's minds. You wouldn't hear the end of it and the very fact that this is now probably going to be in the public eye, is a disaster waiting to happen if it goes ahead in a number of ways. Why take a chance on emergency service cuts when the potential consequences of not having enough back up in a black swan emergency are so dire? I am unaware if the high rise Tower Block is still part of the Beacon School complex in Crowborough but I hope not.

My feedback on what I hear as a community volunteer in the area and having lived here since the 60s, would be to scrap the idea, even today. The timing of these proposals are also adding fuel to the already discontent mood and come across as a bit callous to be honest. People feel that they have got enough to deal with without being told their emergency services are being cut as well.

If you take away basic emergency services from people, especially in such a high council tax area, people will then start questioning whether it is right or not to even pay their council tax at all.

To say that people are now sounding like Peter Finch in the film "Network", is an understatement. This particular proposal has sparked outrage and one commenter raised this question and here are an example of some of the replies to give you an example of the mood.

**"Question. Who does not support the Fire Services having all they need?"**

Answers below.

"The same bunch of people who thought we didn't need masks as there are hardly any pandemics?"

"Someone who sells his last fire extinguisher on Ebay because it is a waste of space and never used?"

;"The Clowns to the Left of me or the Jokers to the Right?".

It goes on.

Unpopular proposals and decisions the public hate such as any suggestion towards the cutting of security and emergency services, especially in this climate, will only lead to drawing attention back to the bad decision makers themselves and even more pushback. Do we really need it to come to protest before this is listened to and scrapped?

Who is in charge of this out of control clattering train?

Best regards.

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I am utterly appalled at the decision to cut the fire services in Crowborough. This is nothing but ridiculous by way of the fact that we are so close to Ashdown Forest and all the hundreds of extra housing in the town. I have nothing but admiration for our firemen who will also be put under such pressure. Surely our present experiences make us more in need of all our key workers not less. We've been working hard to save lives not give them up to lack of fire protection

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Dear Sirs,

My wife and I were appalled to learn of proposals to reduce the cover afforded by the Fire Brigade at our local, Crowborough, station.

If cuts in any services are unavoidable, to cut the sharp end of life-saving services is the height of irresponsibility.

We strongly urge and request you to do all in your power to prevent the proposed cuts.

Yours,

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Ladies & Gentlemen

I strongly disapprove of any proposed cuts to the Crowborough Fire Station.

With increased housing planned for the Crowborough Area, and the close proximity of the Ashdown Forest, any cuts to the Fire Service seem totally ill conceived.

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I have just learnt of a proposed reduction in the emergency fire services, especially at Crowborough. I would strongly object to this happening as i live in a highly wooded area of East Sussex, close to Birchden Wood and Broadwater Forest, Groombridge, and would be concerned at the time it might take to respond if a fire occurred, possibly caused by campers or picnickers or even a discarded cigarette.

I urge you to reconsider and continue with the present cover.

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Dear Mr Barnes

we live in the Newhaven district and have been recently been made aware of intended cuts to the Newhaven Fire Department.

We want the council to know that neither our family nor the people in our neighbourhood support such cuts, in fact we think that it is abominable act on behalf of the council, one that puts people in grave danger.

We urge you to reconsider the cuts towards Newhaven Fire Department and perhaps avoid human casualties.

As we feel very strongly about this issue we intend to campaign for our Fire Department and any decision regarding these cuts will reflect on how we chose our next councillors.

Please support Newhaven Fire Department and refrain from executing your planned cuts.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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Dear Senior Management Team at ESFR

I am writing to ask you to protect Crowborough Fire Station from the proposed cuts. It is hard enough to live in Crowborough with no police force, ambulances which have to come from Paddock Wood it is really unfair and unkind to expect this community to manage without a fire services as well.

We need the fire service here in Crowborough. We are a large community and are ignored by the council on pretty much every level and it feels like no one at East Sussex County Council give two hoots about our community, whilst everyone is tucked up in Lewes. The fire service is important to us and protects us and our heritage of Ashdown Forest from fire. Quite apart from the other works they cover like RTAs. Please protect lives and don't allow these cuts to happen.

Please don't let ESCC take our fire services as well and please support our fire service.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs,

I have been reading the documentation regarding the proposed changes to the service.

The research seems very comprehensive, in fact one be led to believe that since it has revealed inconsistency due to the movement of tectonic plates, it has been unnecessarily exhaustive.

I have, however, not noted any great scrutiny of the changes in demand over previous years, or indeed a projection of how it may increase as housing increases. It seems unlikely this basic information would not have been accidentally ignored from such a granular analysis, and so the reader is led to believe it may have been deliberately omitted.

The documents also appear to omit any reference to those occasions when the full service is mobilised to attend significant events, how they may not receive the same level of attendance and the impact of this, and how secondary incidents are attended or impacted during these times, e.g. a major fire on the Ashdown Forest, or a tower block fire requiring all hands in Brighton.

Again, the reader is left assuming the absence of such critical analysis is driven by a desire not to point out that the planned cuts will leave the service less able to provide the necessary service in such situations.

Please revise the documents to include these elements so that they are a true reflection of the impact of the planned cuts.

I trust the tower block cladding removals are going well? I recall the fire service attendance to Glenfell was significant. If the fire service response to such an incident in Sussex were short of that needed, due to cuts, those proposing such cuts would be held accountable.

Many thanks

  
Crowborough resident

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Dear Councillor Barnes

I am writing in relation to the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) document that has been presented to the Fire Authority and is currently out for public consultation.

I feel that there are a number of problems with the proposals, the consultation process, and the way the proposals are being presented to the public and Fire Authority.

I agree with the Fire Brigades Union view that these proposals represent major cuts to frontline fire appliances and firefighter posts across the service.

In relation to the conduct of the Fire Authority during this period, I was disappointed to see the amendment not being passed that would have delayed the review of these proposals. It showed a disregard for the severity of the pandemic we are still faced with.

I would also dispute the allegations made on radio station Uckfield FM on 1 June by Councilor Roy Galley, who alleged that the Fire Brigades Union was spreading untruths. His statements in the public eye showed bias, and a misguided interpretation of the proposals.

Below are the main IRMP proposals as the service presents them (in their online leaflet) with my view on their positive and negative impacts. Please note, my responses are as a member of the public, but influenced by my knowledge of the current working systems as a serving operational firefighter.

**Proposal 1:**

*We plan to enhance our operational resilience by increasing our core number of fire engines available at the start of the day to 18.*

Firstly, there is a real problem with the first question in the consultation pack. It is leading as the only serious answer can be yes, more fire engines please. This is achieved primarily by:

Adding a pump to Hastings, whilst reducing evening and weekend cover of the second station in Hastings (The Ridge)

Introducing a tier system to try and guarantee three more retained stations have guaranteed availability (similar to Rye currently)

Introduction of a resilience watch, to fill crewing gaps

At the moment there are two fire engines and an ALP available 24/7 in Hastings, the proposals indicate it will be three and an ALP, however The Ridge would have a longer response time in evenings and weekends, and if the Bohemia Road 2nd fire engine goes out it leaves the ALP unavailable.

I view this as a downgrade to resources in Hastings, and the replacement of the current full proof system of crewing which guarantees appliance availability.

The document states it wants to put a dedicated second pump into Eastbourne too, alongside a new Aerial Appliance, following the same crewing model as Bohemia Road. The extra dedicated ALP in the county is an excellent proposal, but jump crewing it compromises the benefits of the extra fire engine.

I view this as a compromise on what could be a good proposal to have two fire engines and an ALP in Eastbourne, if all primary crewed. This would guarantee a speedy weight of response in a built up coastal town.

The service presents this as an improvement, but from what? At the moment there are a guaranteed 15 fire engines available for immediate response. In fact this number stated by the service (question 1 in the consultation) is misleading. It is 14 immediate response, ie. personnel on station responding to a fire call with a 1 minute turnout, and the 15th is Rye, whose crew would respond on alerters which is a 5 minute turnout from station.

So taking that into account we can decipher that the '18 immediate response fire engines' proposed (question 1 in the consultation) is also misleading. We would still have 14 immediate response, each day, but the remaining would be either 5 minute turnout (Seaford, Hailsham, Heathfield) or jump crewed so can not be viewed as immediately available (Hastings 2nd and Eastbourne 2nd), since a choice would need to be made between a fire engine and aerial appliance.

The statements made by the service also completely ignore and do not communicate clearly that on the weekend 6 of the 14 'guaranteed' fire engines would be crewed by on call staff with a 5 minute turnout, not immediate, or 1 minute on station turnout.

My final point on this element of the proposals, and it does extend to the rest too, is that the impact of the proposals are hard enough to decipher and communicate by someone who works in the system, let alone a member of the public with no prior understanding of the service structure.

#### **Proposal 2:**

***We are proposing to change staff contracts at our current Day-Crewed fire stations: Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield.***

Currently these stations guarantee 24/7 cover, the service have proposed this can still be achieved by utilising on call staff for evenings and weekends. I feel that whatever the new contracts and pay structures may be (nothing has been presented to current personnel) it would be incredibly difficult to recruit and maintain the number required, let alone achieve a balance between the skill sets and experience between the wholetime and on call contingents.

The service states that they would offer retained contracts to those working the new wholetime duty system. This would actually be a necessity in my view, since it takes 2-3 years to reach competence in role, a year to drive (following reaching competence) and the move of role from firefighter to Junior Officer is based on experience and personal drive to move up in position. The fact is some firefighters do not aspire to become junior officers, and the decision is not taken lightly by those lacking experience.

Also, the day crewed stations house most of the specials (rope rescue, technical rescue units, 4x4 vehicles) use of which are not part of basic training.

The current day crewed personnel are offered retained contracts, and many take them for the 4 day rest period from shift. The new proposals look to ask personnel to work monday to friday (or longer days 4 days per week) and give up their weekend and evenings. This is not a family friendly proposition, especially in light that their take home pay will be reduced significantly with the removal of housing allowance (so that they can respond at night currently from home) therefore in my view many staff will feel forced into taking up retained contracts to manage the shortfall in household income.

Aside from the above issues, and the associated firefighter posts lost, my main opposition to the duty system change on day crewed stations is that when there is an incident in my area, or my parents area (uckfield) of a saturday or sunday daytime, they will be waiting at least 5 minutes longer than they would now for a sufficient amount of fire appliances to make a safe intervention. My parents closest immediate response fire engine would be 20.5 miles away. With an aging population, and the inherent risk that more people need assistance to evacuate their homes, this proposed delay is in my view unacceptable.

#### **Proposal 3:**

*We are proposing to change the number of fire stations that have two fire engines based on them.*

The service presents these second fire engines as underused, but actually they have been historically under resourced. The mobilisation of the second appliances relies on the on call, or retained section personnel. The same people that the service expect to be able to guarantee cover for 7 fire appliances over evenings and weekends, and 4 around the clock.

I have no doubt in the dedication of on call staff, but their dedication is in the face of poor pay structures, and driven ultimately by their desire to support their communities. I feel that the pressures inherent in the proposals on on call staff would not be balanced with adequate remuneration. In principle, I do not see the proposals as family friendly, and for those people who currently give day cover at day crewed stations during the week (the hardest to achieve for most people) they would no longer be required at all.

#### **Proposal 4:**

*We are proposing to change the way we crew stations in Hastings and introduce an additional fire engine.*

Refer to my response to Proposal 1, but also please examine the fact that adding a fire engine to Bohemia Road station does not offset downgrading 4 of the 5 closest stations - Bexhill, Battle, The Ridge, Rye.

A colleague recently asked the service for a response to a question relating to The Ridge being down graded from shift to day crewed. How has the risk there changed to justify the downgrade? Why at some point it has been deemed that it should be a shift station, and that is no longer needed? The response given by the service said that 50% of the calls The Ridge attend are on Bohemia Road's ground. I hope you can see that this is not an answer, and alludes to the fact that the risk hasn't changed in a way that would warrant a downgrade. If this fact is to indicate that those 50% of calls could be picked up by the new 2nd appliance in Bohemia Road, this would only serve to reduce cover in Hastings at those times, since this would make the aerial appliance unavailable, and whatever standby move brought into Hastings would be from a surrounding station with less resources than before, leaving their area uncovered.

To reinforce the point that the proposals are too complicated for the public to decipher, the service have decided to submit information and statistics to reinforce their decisions, whilst making no relation to what resources are actually required at an incident, For example a small house fire requires at least 2 fire engines to make a safe intervention, larger premises 2-4, where there is life risk more still, and where 3 or more floors or the roof is involved the incident commander will understandably want the attendance of an aerial appliance. When faced with the prospect of requesting more resources, what will be chosen to send first, another fire engine, or the aerial appliance? I have heard from a senior manager that the 4 crew members could split and two bring the second fire engine and 2 bring the aerial... but the resources are not worth much without the adequate crew. I would also point out that the aerial appliance does not go alone, it has to go with a support pump (fire engine).

#### **Proposal 5:**

*We want to make changes to how we provide and crew specialist vehicles including aerial (high reach) appliances.*

To talk about Bohemia Road Hasting getting an additional fire engine requires you to also talk about aerial cover. The same crewing model is proposed for Eastbourne, whilst Preston Circus in Brighton would remain primary crewed.

The emphasis on Brighton staying primary crewed is due to the number of high rise premises there, but the aerial appliance is not only used for high rise. We have seen an increase in its use to assist the ambulance service, and it is invaluable at premises of all heights, but particularly those above 3 floors (the usual reach of the highest ladder on a fire engine (12.5m)).

Hastings has two main high rise premises (Four Courts and Kennedy Court as I remember) but the whole seafront and squares are made up of 4-6 story terraces, converted flats, HMO's, which all benefit greatly from the guaranteed attendance of aerials, as does Eastbourne seafront. I welcome the introduction of a new aerial appliance in Eastbourne, but despair that it would be crewed in a shared crewing model. At the times when a weight of response is required, alongside aerial cover, I fear that there would be compromises made.

#### Proposal 6:

*Our previous Integrated Risk Management Plans committed us to a number of proposals and programmes of work. Most have been completed however, there are some which were "on hold" until now.*

What this section actually covers is AFA's, bird rescue, and attendance to lifts rescues / release.

We could look at statistics how many AFAs turn out to be fires, but that is beside the point. If alarms are sounding at a premises, they should be able to expect that the fire service will attend and ensure things are ok. The owners and responsible people for business premises should be penalised if they do not have adequate keyholder or contact details in place to expedite a quick outcome when attending false alarms, but there should still be a response to the call.

A responsible person turning up to their building on fire is bad enough if there is no fire service attendance, but would be much worse and dangerous for the public if no mobilisations had been made at all.

My understanding of trapped animal rescue, mainly bird trapped in netting on buildings, has always been that it supports the other agencies such as the rspca and other local groups to save the animal, but also to mitigate the chances of them or a member of the public scaling building, leaning out of windows, using unsafe ladders etc and putting themselves at risk.

I would also point out that these jobs can be seen as good practical, non time critical practice for ladder pitches and aerial use outside of training scenarios.

I absolutely agree that building owners need to have proper provision to release people from stuck lifts in a timely manner, but to have a scenario where the trapped person has to rely on this is not fair on the public. People can become poorly very quickly when trapped, and the stress of such incidents can have a very detrimental effect on peoples mental health. There is no need to reduce the lift rescues the service attends, the public should always be able to count of the fire service attending when they need them.

Relating to cost savings, there is no need to make adjustments to these types of calls, what benefits that could be made will always be at the cost of someone falling when trying to rescue a bird, or entering a building which they shouldn't because the emphasis has been placed on them to assess the situation. I urge you to ask the the fire authority to ask the service to remove these proposals.

#### Proposal 7:

*We are proposing to make changes to the duty system that is operated at our six fire stations that are crewed 24/7 on the traditional four watch system.*



As someone who works the shift pattern, I am very worried about the impact it would have on my family life, and the relationships we build at work through the current watch systems.

The service teaches that a team approach to incidents is of upmost importance, the change to a flexible duty system would destroy the watch culture, and the team environments they facilitate.

I have particular worries that peoples mental heath will be affected by the proposed change, because managers will not be able to monitor their staff effectively over periods of time. Managers will not see over the course of 2 days and two nights (the current duty system) that person A is increasingly withdrawn, not sleeping, not interacting with colleagues in the same way... mental health issues will be missed and this will impact not only the firefighters who are experiencing difficulties, but also their families due to the shortfall in monitoring and opportunity for intervention.

There are no advantages to the proposed duty system relating to peoples wellbeing, their training, shift pattern stability, so If the move to flexible crewing is about saving money, I think it would be fair for the service to spell out what it saves, and the firefighters and union could support them in lobbying for more funding to cover the shortfall.

A final point on the proposals. The IRMP is supposed to be about what the risks are, and how the service would like to address them going forward. It has nothing to do with meeting a budget, or reducing costs (as outlined on page 61).

A go-to response by the service in relation to firefighter post cuts has been that many will be used to bolster the protection work already done by the service. MPs have come forward to say that they have not been asked for more funding to enable the service to deliver in these areas, and this route should be explored before cutting frontline posts.

As indicated at the start of this letter, I am very disappointed that the proposals have gone to consultation during the pandemic. As a member of the public living in East Sussex, I urge you to reject the proposals, and ask that they be reviewed in partnership with the workforce at a more appropriate time, when there will be a more clear view nationally for the role of the modern fire service.

Thank you for your attention, and I would appreciate a response to this letter.

Yours sincerely,



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Dear Sir

It has been brought to our attention that there is to be a downgrading of the services that Crowborough Fire Station is able to provide.

We fully appreciate that times of austerity are far from over and that there will no doubt be further cuts to public service budgets in the near future as a result of the financial consequences of current pandemic. What we find surprising is that a cut in staffing, and evening and weekend cover, is being considered for our local station, particularly with Crowborough being adjacent to the Ashdown Forest.

We know of instances of fires having to extinguished on the forest this year already, and we know, having been Crowborough residents for nearly 40 years, that this is a frequent occurrence every year. This surely makes it essential, and is more than adequate justification, for a high standard of cover to be maintained at our local fire station. If you add to this the increase in the number of housing developments in the town in recent years, and with more being planned, we are unable to see any justification for any reduction. Reducing the workforce in the

manner proposed will put an additional strain on already strained resources and lead to slower response times, with resources having to be drawn from further afield.

We therefore ask that our names be added to the growing number of concerned Crowborough residents asking you to reconsider the drastic cuts that are currently be proposed.

Yours

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I have just heard of the ridiculous plan to reduce the number of staff and engines at Crowborough Fire Station. With a population of 30,000 in Crowborough and surrounding districts, and given the new housing developments underway, there is a good case for increasing the service rather than reducing it! More people and property increases the risk, not reduces it.

I am beginning to wonder what services my ever increasing Council Tax actually provides. First we have cuts to the Police Force (no permanent presence in Crowborough) now it is the Fire Service.

It seems that saving money is more important than saving lives. I trust that common sense will prevail, and this absurd proposal will be dropped.

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Crowborough

Cllr Roy Galley,

I have been informed that it is intended to make significant cuts in Front-line Fire Services across East Sussex, including major reductions at the Crowborough Fire Station with a loss of one Fire Engine and a 50% loss of full-time Firefighters. We wish to strongly oppose these cuts which we believe will reduce protection in a wider-ranging area and could, in certain circumstances, endanger life because of extended reaction times.

Given the recent experiences following the cutbacks in Front-line Services in other areas of Government, it seems that this is not the time to be making changes in the Fire Service. East Sussex is a large area with extended distances which means that coverage can already take significant time. In addition the area includes the Ashdown Forest and a reduced Fire Service would pose a significant risk in the event of a Fire - an increasing possibility given climate change.

I accept that there is always a need for Government to review services for cost effectiveness, but in doing so the most important item remains Service to the Community and the plans outlined for East Sussex Fire Service do appear to include the easy saving - Front-line Services. One wonders how a similar 50% reduction in support staff for Councillors and the number of Councillors elected would be viewed by those involved because of the increased workload that would result.

This reduction in Fire Services must be abandoned.

Yours sincerely,

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Dear Councillor Lambert

I live in the County Division Seaford South.

I am concerned that the Consultation on Fire Service Provision is being rushed through when

A the essential proposal is incomplete as acknowledged by the Introduction to the Management Plan 2020 - 2025 that was before you and your colleagues in April

#### RECOMMENDATION iv

... note the intention to bring back a fully costed project implementation plan, and additional suite of detailed impact assessments, to the Fire Authority meeting in September this year (2020).

1.12

... Whilst these assessments indicate that there are no material barriers to the implementation of the proposals as currently outlined, it is recognised that there is significant further detailed analysis to be completed over the next few months in order to fully understand impacts and implications. Any material matters will be brought back to the Fire Authority in September as necessary, to help inform Fire Authority decision making.

B The country is absorbed in the Covid-19 situation. Not just Fire Service staff, but councillors and the very people the Authority seeks to consult

C One thing that the Covid-19 situation has clearly demonstrated is that the standards for disaster prevention in the UK and the track record of ignoring commissioned reports on preparedness is not fit for purpose. This at the very least questions whether the 2018 National Framework is fit for purpose as a basis for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Fire Service.

Thank goodness the periodic renewal did not come up last year so there is a chance to defer the new plan under the very real "once in a century" situation we now find ourselves in.

The Government made the renewal timetable and just like it has extended MOTs it can in these extraordinary times release East Sussex from the requirement to put in place a new plan now. To be realistic it would get the Authority off the hook as this plan is not mature enough to go out to consultation let alone be implemented.

Councillor Lambert, seize the opportunity in June, with your fellow councillors to defer this process, by all means allow the missing significant detail to be completed - but defer the decision until lessons have been learned from Covid-19 and we have more head space to address the issues.

The elections in May 2021 may seem a long way off - but Emergency Services will not be forgotten, nor the way that Councillors appear to have allowed themselves to be railroaded when they should have lifted their heads - looked around them and seen people were in no mood to be consulted on an incomplete plan. The administration, of course, will always seek to meet its goals, you councillors have the authority and the responsibility to not allow that institutional need to override the greater public good.

Please persuade your party colleagues and other Councillors to take this action. Two local MPs have already supported this deferral.

Yours etc

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Dear Sir/Madam

I write to object to the Fire Authority's proposals for a reduction in the cover provided by the fire station in Crowborough by removal of the second fire engine and changes to staffing arrangements.

The proposals are not justified by the evidence base which is both inaccurate and out of date for the following reasons:

In the Crowborough Station Risk Profile, the population estimate of 27,416 is a 2017 figure only with no projection of future population growth over a 5, 10, 15 or 20 year period.

In the Profile the demographic analysis is based on the 2011 Census which is nearly 10 years old.

The position taken in the Profile that there are no major large scale developments proposed in the area is clearly wrong as the map on page 44 is out of date as it only shows a site in Mayfield but not major sites in Crowborough such as Mead House (68 dwellings) or Walshes Road (160 dwellings).

Therefore the flawed evidence base does not justify the proposals to downgrade the Crowborough station and it is essential that an accurate up to date demographic analysis including future projections is undertaken before any decision is made about the future of the Crowborough station.

The failure to take into account the future demands on the Crowborough fire station with only a single fire engine available and changes to the staffing arrangements with reliance on support from other towns would put both lives and property at increased risk.

Regards

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I write in response to the request for feedback on the Planning for a Safer Future consultation.

I live in East Guldeford and have very real concerns about the plans to remove one appliance from Rye and to downgrade The Ridge.

At the perimeter of the county it already feels as if we are forgotten when it comes to fire (and police services). I note from the consultation document is heavily geared towards Brighton and Hove and services at this end of the county seem to be overlooked.

The reduction in Rye concerns me:

1. Response times: particularly for East Guldeford and Camber. We are already outside of response targets and if back up were needed it would take more than ½ an hour to get anywhere near here. There have been a number of fires in recent years out this way. Also, We live on a particularly dangerous part of the A259 and regularly see the fire services responding to events. The time between an accident and emergency services arriving can be excruciatingly long and these proposals would only make that worse.
2. High risk buildings: Rye itself is an historic town and the many ancient buildings are higher risk – The George Hotel Fire last year has had a real impact on the town both psychological and economic.
3. Additional risks from peaks in Camber's population especially in good weather. Cambers population can rise from a few thousand to thirty thousand in a day and holiday makers themselves seem to bring greater risk with them.

In this eternal quest to cut costs the value of safety and lives seems to be forgotten.

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I have received in the post today,(15th.June), a letter inviting me to take part in the public consultation.

Although the letter makes no mention of the closing date for comments, I understand it to be 19th June 2020, leaving just four days to obtain and study the plan and return it.

Further it is understood that the consultation was launched on 24th April 2020, seven weeks ago.  
Why has it taken seven weeks to inform the public?

I have also been giving information that the Fire Authority committee at their April meeting, voted against a proposal to delay to launch the consultation, in retrospect does this now appear to have been the wrong decision?

[REDACTED]  
Roy

Following our conversation on Friday I would be grateful if you would provide further information on some of the questions that arose from Wadhurst Parish Council meeting last Thursday

The meeting was addressed by Ben Ashton of the FBU

From the debate at WPC I am seeking more information on the following:-

1) The removal of the Land Rover - This was stated by FBU , and in a leaflet they have distributed, a a move that would decrease the level of safety in the parish.

Is my understanding correct that that the 2 appliance status of Wadhurst relates to the Maxi cab rather than the appliance and Land Rover

2) Are the details of the incidents to which the LR has been called out available and how many were in Wadhurst Parish rather than neighbouring parishes/towns

3) I am told the Wadhurst Fire Station is one of the less busy stations in terms of call out but FBU saying it is one of busiest- which is correct?

4) The proposed single appliance would mean that an appliance attending a house fire would need to wait for another appliance to attend before entering the property.

Is this correct and are their exceptions to the 2 appliance rule in emergencies.

5) The retention of the LR (in form on new Mercedes vehicle) would only cost £100 per week

6) The removal of the Foam equipment from Wadhurst was perceived as another reduction in services. Whilst the current equipment is outdated modern equipment is available so further information on the reasons for withdrawal sought.

Whilst there was a general discussion on the consultation on which I fed in the main aims for the proposals WPC were most concerned with the reduction in facilities at Wadhurst and understand their response to the consultation will be in relation to Wadhurst.

[REDACTED]  
Please save our Fire Station in Crowborough. Crowborough is growing so fast with planning for many more houses that it is vital we retain our Fire Station. They also have an annual electric blanket check which many people attend . They often find faulty blankets which are confiscated thus removing a potential fire risk. This is a very important service.

Yours Faithfully

[REDACTED]  
Dear Councillor Barnes,

I am writing to you as an operational firefighter with 10 years experience and knowledge of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) to express my concern over the proposed cuts put forward in the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020-2025. I am also a resident and taxpayer in Brighton and Hove.

The IRMP document states that the proposals will make the public safer by putting resources in the right place, at the right time for dealing with emergencies. This is misleading. The proposals amount to a severe reduction to the number of fire engines and fire cover across the county. This IRMP proposes to downgrade ten fire stations from two pumps to a single pump status. Proposed changes to duty systems and shift systems will see a significant reduction in the numbers of both whole time and on-call operational firefighters. Whilst there are plans to improve cover in some areas, these improvements will be temporal, and will be made by reducing fire cover at times when there is arguably more need. There is an understandable desire to put more resources into prevention and protection, but I urge you not to achieve this by diverting resources from operational response. Even with the best prevention and protection strategies, it will not be possible to prevent incidents occurring, and we must ensure we have enough resources to meet the risks we face for the safety of firefighters and the general public. Modelling presented in the IRMP suggests that ESFRS need 18 appliances to meet the expected level of activity. What is clear from the data is that this expectation applies regardless of the time of day, or day of the week. A reduction in cover at night time and the weekend to achieve better fire cover in the day during the week is not supported by the evidence.

Incidents in East Sussex are unfortunately on the rise, and with our population predicted to increase by a further 7% by 2029, this trend is unlikely to change. The statistics presented in the IRMP state that ESFRS attended an average of 9,123 incidents a year between 2013 and 2018. This disguises the trend that incidents are increasing and that firefighters in the county are responding to more and more incidents as our population and premises grow, our numbers of visitors increase and the volume of cars on our roads continues to rise. The facts speak for themselves – the Fire Statistics Data Tables prepared by the Home Office record that in 2014/15 ESFRS attended 8812 incidents; 2015/16 8950 incidents; 2016/17 9238 incidents; 2017/18 9524 incidents; 2018/19 9490 incidents; and incidents year ending Dec 2019 were at a high of 10,007. These figures clearly illustrate an increase in demand, a demand that is predicted to grow as modelling indicates ESFRS needs to increase operational fire cover from 14 to 18 appliances.

An appliance is only guaranteed if it is crewed with whole time firefighters. Even with proposed changes to on-call contracts, appliances cannot be guaranteed when crewed with Retained Duty System (RDS) staff. Availability may improve, but by the very nature of their arrangement, we must acknowledge that RDS colleagues have other primary commitments that will change. Cover that can be given by an individual one week will always be subject to change as, for example, people take on new jobs with different hours or locations, move house, or start families. At present ESFRS crew 14 fire engines and 2 aerial ladder platforms 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Whilst these proposals do aim to increase the number of appliances available during the day Mon-Fri, this improvement is at the expense of fire cover at night time and over the weekend. It is worth reflecting that the HMICFRS report published in December 2019 found that ESFRS was good (though not outstanding) in the following areas - responding to fires and other emergencies; responding to national risks; making the best use of resources; and making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future. In every other area inspected ESFRS was found to require improvement. In order to improve areas judged to be good, but not outstanding, the inspectorate recommended that "the service should improve the availability of its on-call fire engines to respond to incidents" as "it struggles to have as many fire engines available as it needs."

If these IRMP proposals are approved, fire cover and resilience will be significantly reduced the majority of the time. The proposals would reduce whole time cover at day crewed stations from 24hrs per day to either 10.5hrs or 8.5hrs per day Mon-Fri and 0hrs on the weekend. This would reduce the number of appliances crewed by whole time firefighters across the service from 18 fire engines to 8 fire engines plus 1 aerial ladder (or 6 plus 3 ALPs) outside of these weekday hours. The data does not support a reduction in cover and an increase to response times at night time and over the weekend. The data provided in the IRMP for incidents per year on

day-crewed stations by day of the week shows that on average, these stations attend 245 incidents per day. The data demonstrates that the day of the week has little bearing on the number of incidents occurring in these station areas – Thursdays are quietest with 237 incidents, and Saturdays are busiest with 256 incidents; Sundays 240; Mondays and Fridays 243; and Tuesdays and Wednesdays 249. The data proves that incidents are on average marginally more frequent on the weekend at 248. This does not support the proposal to reduce fire cover and increase response times at the weekend. This is further emphasised when looking at the data on critical incidents by day of the week in these areas – over the year, day crewed stations attended 17 critical incidents per day on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. This drops slightly to 15 on Fridays and 16 on Saturdays, before increasing to 20 critical incidents on Sundays. So incidents are likely to be more frequent on the weekend, and proportionally more of those incidents are likely to be critical in nature. Unfortunately, the Operational Response Review (ORR) findings report that over the last 3 years there have been an increase in the number of critical incidents per year, and that the proportion of incidents per year that have been critical has been rising for the last 5 years. Overall, 53% of critical incidents occurred within whole-time shift areas, 26% in day-crewed station areas and 21% in on-call station areas. A further indicator that reducing cover and increasing response times in the evenings and weekends in day crewed areas will present more risk to the public.

When examining the data presented in the ORR on total incidents by hour of day (Mon-Sun), the evidence shows that the number of incidents attended actually tends to increase throughout the day, peaking between 5pm and 8pm. It is also noticeable that ESFRS attend a similar number of incidents around 10am in the morning and around 10pm at night. These patterns have remained consistent over the period examined (2009/10 to 2017/18). It is also significant to note that over the nine years of data used, there was a greater reduction of incidents during the daytime compared to the night time. This suggests that as an organisation we do not have a proven or successful strategy for reducing incidents at night and that we will continue to receive a similar, or higher (as incidents overall are increasing), number of calls at night time. I can advise you from my own operational experience that these incidents are often more serious and frequently require more resources due to the added sleeping risk factor (people asleep are slower to respond and can be disorientated making them at higher risk of fire). There is no rationale for prioritising fire cover at the times proposed in the IRMP to the detriment of fire cover when it is equally as needed.

Having an understanding of how non-emergency cover moves are made is fundamental to understanding the potential significant impact of these proposals. As detailed in the ORR, standby moves have been increasing year-on-year over the past 9 years, and have accelerated over the past 3 years, so that ESFRS now undertake almost 200% more cover moves than 9 years ago. In addition to the number of incidents attended in 2015/16, ESFRS made 1086 standby moves; in 2017/18 ESFRS made 1556 standby moves; and in 2018/19 ESFRS made 2301 standby moves. This means that in 2018/19 ESFRS fire engines were mobilised 11,791 times, significantly more than the average of 9123 incidents quoted. These non-emergency moves are critical to providing the residents of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove with adequate fire cover and to ensure we meet, as far as possible, our attendance standards. There is clearly a causal link between number of incidents and number of standby moves. I would also suggest the reduction in 2016 of standard crewing on fire engines from 5 firefighters to 4 firefighters should not be overlooked. Incidents Commanders now need to request more fire engines at incidents to get the resources they need to implement safe systems of work because each fire engine now supplies a reduced number of personnel – more fire engines attending incidents also necessitates more non-emergency cover moves. These cover moves divert resources away from the typically lower risk areas in the county, usually depriving our more rural areas of their fire engines which are drawn into our towns and cities on standby. Non-emergency cover moves also frequently incur costs to the taxpayer as RDS staff need to be called in to provide the resilience the county needs away from their home station areas.

The significance of cutting seven 91P4 fire engines and the loss of cover and resilience these appliances provide to East Sussex residents should not be underestimated. At present, if the primary appliances or special appliances at Lewes, Uckfield, Crowborough, Newhaven, Bexhill or Battle are mobilised to an incident, under current ESFRS policy standby moves are not required if the 91P4 secondary appliances are available (the seventh station to be affected is Rye which is an on-call station). At four of these day-crewed stations, despite a decline in availability,

second appliances were available between 58% - 65% of the time in 2017/18 (significantly better cover than the statistic of 10-50% of the time presented in the public IRMP document). Whilst these 91P4 fire engines may attend some of the fewest numbers of incidents, these figures alone do not tell the whole story. Whenever these resources are available, residents in these towns get a faster two pump attendance and fire cover within 5 minutes if the primary appliance is unavailable (for example at an incident, crews needing to decontaminate, mechanical fault etc.) Furthermore, ESFRS is not required to make a standby move, thus maintaining cover on other station grounds that would otherwise be negatively impacted by a standby mobilisation. There have been some suggestions that these appliances are being relocated to provide better cover where risks are higher. This is not the case. The proposals are to remove these assets completely. I must emphasise that these appliances being put at risk really are unsung heroes, and that I am very concerned at the potential loss of resilience these 91P4 appliances provide.

In addition to downgrading the seven fire stations already discussed, the IRMP also proposes to downgrade three maxicab stations. These stations have a two pump status but are equipped with one maxicab appliance capable of transporting larger numbers of crew to an incident than an Extended Rescue Pump (ERP). The future design of appliances was discussed at a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting on 18/10/18. The minutes from this meeting evidence that SLT approved the recommendations that "Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst be provided with a standard ERP (Extended Rescue Pump) appliance when existing maxicab appliances become due for replacement as the current approach was not operating as originally intended. It was SLT's preferred option for this rather than to extend its life." Further, "maxicab appliances at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst are removed at end of life, an additional new Water Tender (WT) appliance to be provided as a second pump to accompany new ERPs." The incident data used in the ORR takes us up to the end of 2017/18 financial year. This data would have been available in October 2018 when the decision was made by SLT to replace the three maxicabs with two pumps – an ERP and WT at each station. With no new data, it is difficult to understand why a proposal has been put forward in the IRMP to downgrade these stations to single pump status when a decision had recently been made to reintroduce two pumps at these stations and maintain the station status as dual pump as the previous arrangement was "not operating as originally intended." I would suggest further interrogation of this proposition is required to understand the evidence base for this proposal.

The data used in the ESFRS analysis covers a period up to 2018, data for the 2018/19 tax year is not included. This is important because ESFRS made significant changes to the way appliances are mobilised across the county with the introduction of the 4i mobilising system in March 2018. This system uses intelligence to mobilise the quickest appliances to incidents, rather than send the primary and secondary appliances attached to particular "station grounds." The concept of station grounds is still retained for administrative purposes e.g. delivering Home Safety Visits, however the mobilising system now takes into account factors such as appliance location, whether an appliance is already mobile and available, and the length of time on-call staff will take to respond when deciding which appliances to send to an incident. This new system has altered the call profile of stations and it is disappointing there has not been an analysis of this new data to inform the current IRMP. This data would help us understand the implications of some of the proposed changes. I would recommend referring to the ESFRS report "Predicted quickest appliance to Road Junctions – 4i analysis headline notes" dated 15/11/2017. As you will see from the modelling, the introduction of 4i was expected to have a significant impact on whole time shift and day crewed stations. This is because when available for immediate response, these appliances would be quickest to some areas covered administratively by on-call appliances. The modelling also predicted that shift stations would travel further to incidents at night as being available from station would mean a quicker response time into day crewed areas than alerting for day crewed and on-call staff. Some of the headlines [sic]:

"Brighton will see some of the biggest changes ... Hove is the quickest appliance into West Sussex ... Roedean's area extends well into Newhaven's 'ground' when Newhaven provide an on-call response at 'night'... It is estimated that Eastbourne can extend its reach as quickest appliance into Polegate (Hailsham Station Area), and along A27 East & Westbound (Pevensey & Seaford Station areas) ... Day-time response from Lewes extends heavily into Barcombe's Station area ... At 'night-time', Newhaven extends its coverage into some of Seaford town ... During the 'day', Bexhill can move slightly into Bohemia Rd's area along A259, but at night, this is reversed.



Bohemia Rd also extends up into Battle/Broad Oak areas along A21 during retained hours ... At night time, Bohemia Road would be quickest to incidents to the north along A21 ... Uckfield station area extends its coverage into the north of Barcombe's station area. Hailsham's coverage reduced by Eastbourne, Lewes, Uckfield and Battle during the day."

All the modelling presented in November 2017 predicted that there would be noticeable changes to mobilisations in all areas historically covered by available on-call appliances. The IRMP states that the current changes proposed will have a "negligible impact" on attendance standards whilst acknowledging that "it would mean that we would take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend" in day crewed station areas. It is important to recognise that these proposals would not only mean an increase in response times at the weekend, but that provision of fire cover in the whole time shift areas will be affected. The modelling available tells us that appliances located at Brighton, Hove, Roedean, Eastbourne and Hastings are already travelling further to incidents at night, which reduces cover available in our highest risk areas. Day crewed primary appliances are already travelling further to incidents in the daytime. If these changes are introduced the impact on shift stations at the weekend will be very significant. Not only will these appliances start travelling into day crewed areas as there will be no immediate response from station, in all likelihood these shift appliances will also provide more cover to the neighbouring on-call areas currently being picked up by the day crewed stations. The significance of this impact should not be overlooked, especially in the Hastings area where there will be no immediate station response at Bexhill, Battle, Broad Oak and Rye. I would suggest requesting sight of the predictive modelling for first and second attendances were the 10 station downgrades to be approved. The modelling we have from November 2017 provides a strong indicator as to the real impact that will occur on both attendance times and particularly on fire cover more broadly across the county.

It would be welcome to have further information to help interpret the statistics in the ORR concerning appliance availability. The ORR states that the data presented is based on unavailability due to staffing. The trend identified is that the availability of 91P4 appliances has declined over the data period 2009-2018 by an average of 19.4%. It can be seen that at some stations, there has been a steady decline, for example Uckfield's 91P4 has dropped from a high of 90.9% availability in 2013/14 to 58% availability in 2017/18. At other stations availability has remained more consistent, for example Newhaven's availability has fluctuated between 78.8% and 64.9% over the whole period and has an average decline of -0.4%. The IRMP document states that "our on-call firefighters are currently paid a small retaining fee but the majority of their pay comes from attending emergency calls. There has been a significant reduction in the volume of calls they are asked to attend so on-call firefighters are asked to provide cover for long periods of time but with a much-reduced financial reward for doing so. Despite efforts to recruit and retain staff, this has led to problems finding enough on-call staff to keep fire engines available to respond."

It would be helpful for ESFRS to provide data for the same period (2009-2018) to inform us how many staff were transferred / migrated from on-call to whole time in each calendar year, and how many fixed term contracts were issued in each calendar year. I expect these figures will illustrate that there has been a direct correlation between; 1) the decision to reduce the whole time establishment by dropping standard crewing on appliances from 5 to 4 (leaving no capacity in the whole time system to provide cover for long term sickness or temporary promotions etc.); 2) the decision to use fixed term contracts and RDS transfers to cover deficiencies in the whole time establishment; 3) the reduction in resilience provided by on-call appliances; and 4) the inevitable reduction in mobilisations of these appliances perpetuating the cycle described in the IRMP. Far from being a *fait accompli*, I anticipate the data will illustrate that the problem of finding enough on-call staff to keep fire engines available to respond has been exacerbated by staffing strategies introduced to address the challenges created by previous cuts made to the establishment and to fire cover in the county. Cutting the ridership factor from around 12 to 0 created a crisis in crewing whole time appliances. Addressing this crisis by "robbing Peter to pay Paul" has significantly contributed to the lack in availability of 91P4 appliances – for example, many RDS staff are unable to provide the same on-call cover once they have been utilised to keep whole time appliances available. In some cases, where fixed term contracts have been used to cover deficiencies in day-crewed staffing, available RDS have had to cover the whole time shortages at night time by crewing the primary appliance as the crew members on fixed term contracts do not always live in the local area.

Despite messaging often to the contrary, it is not possible to remove resources from operational response without there being significant repercussions. In 2015 the Fire Authority agreed to the removal of one fire engine from Hove. Prior to this resource being cut, the City of Brighton and Hove had an establishment of 5 fire engines crewed with 24 firefighters available for immediate response all year round. We now have 4 fire engines crewed with 16 firefighters (with the loss of a fire engine and reduction in standard crewing). The ORR highlights that 91P4 (the second fire engine at Preston Circus) is the busiest appliance in the service to be mobilised to incidents – both in terms of ESFRS appliances, but also compared to Family Group Two whole time shift appliances. In 2017/18, 91P4 also made 18% of all standby cover moves undertaken by the service. This high number of mobilisations of course has an impact on other areas of the business – crews' ability to undertake training and the time to engage in community and prevention work is inevitably reduced. As a firefighter based at Preston Circus I would like to take the opportunity to remind you that the minimum number of appliances needed to fight a fire in a block of flats containing six floors or more is six fire engines, one aerial ladder platform and one control unit. Under these proposals during the day time Mon-Fri, this type of incident would take all the resources from Brighton, Hove, Roedean, Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford (as the guaranteed available appliances) with a further five appliances required for standby moves. At night time and over the weekend the impact of these cuts would be even more dramatic. All major developments in Brighton & Hove include the introduction of more high rise buildings – the Circus Street development, the Outer Harbour development, New England House expansion and the Preston Barracks development to name a few. Fires in high rise premises in Hastings and Eastbourne also need the same weight of response but have less resources to draw on locally, meaning a delay in the ability for firefighters to put in place our safe systems of work. The downgrading of ten fire stations from dual pump to single pump status will directly affect residents in these towns, and will also have an impact on fire cover across the whole county, especially when incidents occur such as high rise fires that need significant numbers of resources.

It is welcome that ESFRS have acknowledged that fire cover in Hastings does need to be improved to meet the risks in the east of the county. It is important to remember that prior to changes set out in the IRMP in 2015 and implemented in 15/16, Hastings had two whole time primary crewed fire engines that were supplemented by an on-call appliance at The Ridge that was removed from service. You may recall if you were a member of the Fire Authority at the time, the rationale set out by members for approving this decision was that savings made by removing the RDS appliance at The Ridge would be utilised to improve weekend cover at Battle. The new proposals plan to reverse the improvements made at Battle by reducing weekend cover and increasing attendance times. Statistics in the IRMP illustrate that on average 23% of the incidents attended by Battle occur in Hastings. If you examine the data in the ORR, you will see that overall, mobilisations from Battle have also increased year on year since the on-call appliance was removed from The Ridge. Introducing a second appliance at Bohemia Road is a welcome proposal. However, it is suggested this would be done in tandem with a reduction in cover at Battle and Bexhill (who attend 10% of their incidents in Hastings), and a downgrading of The Ridge from whole time to day crewed. This second appliance would also be dual crewed with the aerial, which attends on average 186 incidents per year. It is important to draw your attention to the statement in the IRMP that the negative impact on Bexhill's performance with the removal of 73P4 will be offset by the introduction of a second dual crewed appliance at Bohemia Road, suggesting this resource will be pulled out of Hastings to cover neighbouring areas because of the reduction in cover there. At night time, the two appliances at Bohemia Road would be supported by on-call appliances, which we know from the data cannot be guaranteed. As it is proposed to dual crew the additional appliance at Bohemia Road with an ALP, any incident requiring aerial cover would effectively reduce the immediate response available in Hastings to one fire engine. To make use of both fire engines, an aerial response would have to be provided by either Eastbourne or Brighton. A slower response from surrounding stations at night time and the weekend, an increased reliance on Bohemia Road to cover a much larger area, and the dual crewing of the second pump with an aerial does not represent an improvement in fire cover for Hastings.

It is welcome that ESFRS modelling supports the retention of 3 aerial ladder platforms in the county and that the Combined Rescue and Aerial Platform (ARP) will be replaced with a dedicated ALP and Extended Rescue Tender.

The IRMP implies that Eastbourne will be given an additional resource. This is not the case. Eastbourne currently has two fire appliances, one of which can be used as either a fire engine or an aerial. Replacing one combination vehicle with two vehicles that will perform the same functions with the same number of crew is not an increase in resourcing. I am concerned that a shared crewing model has effectively been introduced in Eastbourne without due process because of the failure of the combination vehicle to be able to provide dual functions simultaneously. It would be welcome to have more analysis of the data to understand whether this would be appropriate for Bohemia Road. The combined appliance went "on the run" in Eastbourne on 01/04/14. From the data presented in the IRMP we can see that between 09/10 and 13/14 aerial cover was provided by Eastbourne on average 110 times per year. Following the introduction of the combined appliance, which effectively brought in a shared crewing model, the average number of times Eastbourne provided aerial cover between 14/15 and 17/18 fell to 21.5 times per year. It would be helpful to have a better understanding of these figures and the potential impact on aerial response times with shared crewing models. The aerial isochrones map works on the presumption that all three aerial appliances are available. If they are no longer primary crewed, we know this will not be the case. There needs to be more information about how this change in provision would work. A significant fire in Hastings requiring aerial support could have to wait for an attendance from Brighton, a very significant delay, especially if life risk is involved.

A Scrutiny and Audit Report was delivered to the Fire Authority on 04/02/16 entitled "Aerial Rescue Pump – Implementation Review and future crewing arrangements". This report set out the findings of a review into the ARP that had been in service since 01/04/14. The report concluded that unless solutions were found, the safety systems built into the appliance meant that the dual functions could not be used simultaneously. Advice was given to the Fire Authority to consider reducing the crewing of the ARP from 6 firefighters to 4 firefighters (reducing the establishment by 8 posts). Members were advised that "this option maintains the savings proposals. However, whilst this would ensure the agreed savings could be delivered, the Fire Authority would need to accept that, in the longer term, the ARP could no longer then be used for dual functions simultaneously. The final crewing model would only support the ARP being used as a standard fire appliance or as an aerial appliance. It would provide an either or capability." Fire Authority Members were reminded that a risk in reducing the establishment was that "the availability of RDS stations surrounding Eastbourne, traditionally viewed as providing back-up in the event of a large or protracted incident in the town, is now limited, particularly during the day. Pevensey, Hailsham and (to a lesser extent) Seaford, struggle with day time availability and this will, therefore, mean that back-up for those larger incidents will take longer to arrive. Maintaining 10 firefighters across the two Eastbourne appliances, therefore, provides a degree of resilience in those cases where additional resources are required."

Taking into account the risks highlighted, the decision was made to effectively introduce dual crewing at Eastbourne by reducing the whole time establishment by 8 posts. It is worth revisiting the figures in the ORR because since that decision was taken, on-call appliance availability at these surrounding stations has continued to decline – in 2015/16 Pevensey was available 55.5% of the time dropping to 50.2% of the time by 2017/18; in 2015/16 Hailsham was available 88.5% of the time dropping to 56.8% of time by 2017/18; and in 2015/16 Seaford was available 94.8% of the time dropping to 92.4% of the time in 2017/18. The warning issued in February 2016 is even more critical today. Seaford, Hailsham, Heathfield and Rye have been identified as four stations where efforts will be focused on improving on-call cover. If achieved, this may go some way towards mitigating the risks identified by effectively dual crewing the second pump in Eastbourne with the aerial in 2016. However, we must remind ourselves that this proposal aims to reverse a decline in on-call availability. Whatever the reason for this decline, we must acknowledge that at present Hailsham and Pevensey are under-resourced to provide the resilience Eastbourne needs. As it takes a significant period to recruit and train competent on-call staff, it would perhaps be prudent to primary crew Eastbourne's two appliances and aerial ladder (when the ARP is replaced), at least until the Fire Authority can be satisfied that adequate support can be provided from surrounding stations to warrant re-visiting this proposal. I would suggest that a much more detailed examination of Hastings resourcing should be undertaken before any decision is made to reduce cover by dual crewing the aerial at Bohemia Road. This appliance is busier than the aerial appliance in Eastbourne and attends an average of 186 incidents per year. There will also be less support available from neighbouring stations if the changes to day crewing go ahead. These changes would put significant pressure on the two Bohemia Road appliances, especially at night and over

the weekend. The risk profile of Hastings and the relatively high number of aerial mobilisations for this station necessitates caution when considering any reduction to resilience.

The risks of dual crewing aerial appliances were highlighted recently with the large fire in Lancing at a scrap metal yard on 05/06/2020. An ALP was required to bring the fire under control, however West Sussex were unable to supply aerial cover because they dual crew their ALP at Worthing. The crews from Worthing had already been mobilised to the incident on fire engines necessitating East Sussex provide the aerial capacity (which includes a support pump) to our neighbouring county. This left Brighton & Hove and the west of East Sussex without aerial cover from 13:54 until 18:30. Having booked back into station, Brighton's ALP got called to life risk rescue at 18:45. Thankfully, on this occasion the Brighton ALP was back and available just in time.

The trends identified in the data evidence that incidents for ESFRS are on the rise, we continue to attend a significant proportion of incidents at night, we have had the least success at reducing incidents during the night, and there is no evidence to suggest that we attend less incidents on the weekend. The data in the ORR does not support changing our crewing model from one that provides consistent availability of appliances throughout the day and over the year, to one that increases fire cover during the day, but reduces cover at night and over the weekend. The reduction of our establishment from 33 fire engines (36 when including maxi cabs) to 26 will impact firefighters' ability to respond to emergencies across the county. These cuts will lead to increased response times and will negatively impact not only the public's safety, but also on that of firefighters. I strongly urge you to ask the service to provide additional data. It would be welcome to see evidence of the following:

- Data examining changes to mobilisation patterns following the introduction of 4i in March 2018
- Modelling to predict how a reduction in cover at night time and over the weekend will impact on first and second attendances
- Modelling to predict how a reduction in cover at night time and over the weekend will impact on those appliances available for immediate response
- Modelling to examine the impact of dual crewing aerial appliances in Eastbourne and Hastings
- Data illustrating the number of times a non-emergency cover move was not required due to the availability of a 91P4 appliance
- Data confirming the number of RDS transfers and fixed term contracts to compare against data on appliance availability

Finally, the proposals being consulted on were drafted prior to the Covid-19 public health crisis, and do not account for the new risks posed by this pandemic. There has clearly been a national shift in how the country understands the vital roles of key workers and emergency services. Whilst there have been no announcements about how this will be reflected in future budget decisions, it is clear that after years of austerity our fire service needs investment. It is encouraging there is cross-party consensus between our local MPs to secure additional funding for ESFRS from central government to prevent any further cuts to an already overstretched service. This extra funding could enable ESFRS to provide the 18 appliances needed to meet our expected level of activity, and could also enable further investment into prevention and protection. Many thanks for taking the time to read this submission. I would be happy to discuss further any of the points raised should that be helpful to you.

Yours sincerely,

Jake Kaye

FBU Branch Secretary, Preston Circus Fire Station

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To Whom it may concern.

██████████ I am a wholetime operational firefighter at Preston Circus fire station. I am writing to you all today to express my deep and profound concerns regarding the misleading and potentially catastrophic proposals set forth to you by my own service in the forthcoming IRMP.

Firstly, the Service has publicised that they are going to provide three more fire appliances (conventional fire engines) at the start of the day. This would raise the total from fifteen to eighteen. Whilst this sounds fantastic in principal, you are being misled. Omitted from this statement is the fact that two of these appliances are to share their crewing with the aerial ladder appliances at Hastings and Eastbourne.

This is a terrible and dangerous proposition for a number of reasons. Firstly it's important to note that the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) is a vital piece of equipment for dealing with all manner of incidents involving tall buildings. It can provide a significant weight of water attack on a fire externally, minimising risk to internal crews, and preventing fire spread. It also serves as an invaluable means of escape for casualties and indeed firefighters who may become trapped within a tall building involved in fire.

Sharing the crewing between this specialist appliance and a regular fire engine puts fire crews and specifically our Junior officers and watch commanders in a terrible position whereby they have to choose which type of appliance to send to a tall building. Sending the ALP renders the remaining fire engine useless due to insufficient crewing. As a result another fire engine will have to be mobilised from another station within the county. By the Service's own admission this will result in a delayed attendance.

The other option is to send a conventional fire engine in place of the ALP. Yes, this provides more firefighters quickly to the incident, however, once in attendance, the junior officers again in the terrible situation of potentially having to send firefighters into a highrise building to fight fire and conduct search and rescue operations without Aerial cover. This moral pressure to act without adequate resources is a burden which should never be placed on firefighters but one absolutely guaranteed by these IRMP proposals.

Meanwhile, one of the remaining two aerial appliances will be mobilised, once again causing life threatening delays, not to mention crews leaving their own city without aerial cover should another highrise fire break out on their station ground.

Imagine for a moment that your own building is involved in fire. Is delayed attendance acceptable. Is a throwaway line "slight delay" an adequate trade off? Should officers be placed in a position where they have to gamble with the lives of the public and their own crews due to insufficient resources? The answer is of course no. With the three year anniversary of the Grenfell disaster landing on the day I write this letter, I am immensely disappointed that this is even a point that needs to be made, not to mention the fact that my own service is knowingly putting the public at risk by attempting to mislead you.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the proposed changes to the wholetime shift pattern. Personally, I believe that the current pattern is one of the best elements of my Job. I and everyone I work with agree that this is the most efficient and family friendly way to keep a fire station crewed 24 hours a day. On hearing of these new proposed shift systems, a member of my watch said

"The shifts here have allowed me to raise my children"

The proposed solutions are ludicrous propositions concocted by people who do not work within the shift pattern. While not only creating difficult, potentially unworkable consequences for firefighters and their families, they also serve to destroy the watch system. Fire service watches not only work and train together, they eat, study and effectively live together. Experienced firefighters teach newer firefighters like myself. This is how strong and capable teams are made. This team approach and watch camaraderie is the bedrock of the fire service and contributes enormously to our effectiveness.

These two issues are by no means all of the dangerous and misleading elements of the IRMP, but I hope that I have made my position on them clear. It is my sincere hope that you consider these facts when rendering your decisions.

Regards.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir or Madam,

In response to your letter dated June 2020 and received on 15/6/2020, I feel it would have been fairer to the public to have sent them out at the launch of the consultation in April, you to give us a little more time to consider our responses more carefully as I understand the closing date for replies is 19/6/2020.

Having read the full document "Planning for a safer future" my feeling is that the whole exercise has been conducted during the Covid19 pandemic in the hope that we would all be too concerned with that, to worry about Fire cover in the North of the county to be of little interest. The document reads as though we in this area - North of Hailsham- never have cause to call on the ESFRS.

It appears the authors have never had any experience with the day manning or retained system, as they seem to expect that employers are going to just allow their employees to rush away at any time they are required, and can they afford to allow this? They also expect them to leave their families during the evening's, nights and at weekends, when there are likely to be family events etc. I notice all Fire Stations in this area are always advertising for retained firefighters. Can the service NOT keep those they do employ?

Please keep our local stations without further cuts in this area as we are NOT overly well served by the numbers already, and surely if any fire engines are cut we should receive a reduction in our ESFRS contribution via our Council Tax

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Thank you for the invitation to take part in the consultation with regard to the proposed changes to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Here are my reflections on your letter (June 2020) which I believe has also been sent to many reside in order to justify the changes you propose.

In my view, even on a cursory reading they are not convincing. In fact they had the opposite impact.

With your indulgence let us look at the content.

Many of the things you highlight should not be considered as '*...we will ...*' they should already be part of your ongoing, established. 'mission statement.' And there are some that venture into that of the 'Motherhood and Apple pie'

I would be interested in the criteria used to measure the sweeping and precise statements regarding percentile improvements in risk, which you then say is no more than '*...what we intend to do...*' And relate this with '*...we need to make some changes and redistribute our resources...*' in the light of the reduction in services at Crowborough; its population growth ; and particularly the risk assessment of the very adjacent environs of Ashdown forest ; with its increase in visitor numbers and the predicted climate changes leading to drier summers.

I am also at odds with your '*we will*' bullet points and what they actually tell me.

Lets look at them in order.

1. Fire stations. So they will remain open. With the growth in the East Sussex and its consequential increased funding one would expect nothing less. But for Crowborough residents and Ashdown forest, the changes will reduce the service and increase the potential risk

2. The resilience plan '*that aims to increase the number fire engines available at the start of the day*' Is just a nebula statement. It doesn't tell me what happens '*outside the start of the day*' or when that would be. I also note the operative word you use is '*aims*'

3. More appliances by 2025. '*If all proposals go ahead*' In other words its on your wish list.

4 to 7. Are just things that one would expect to be incorporated in any plan and in some respects should be up and running as basic elements of your organisation.

I make no comment on the '*enhanced contracts*' as this can only be a subjective opinion which is open to objective interpretation by those directly involved.

Finally you make the Cardinal error of potentially slagging off those who oppose the changes you propose, which is an insult to the many residents who have already signed up to voice their concerns.

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to add my voice to the many Crowborough residents who have been alarmed and dismayed by the proposal to reduce services at our local Fire Station. I understand that the Council proposes to dispense with one Fire Engine, cut 50% of full time Fire fighter jobs and reduce off peak fire cover.

Have any officers or members of East Sussex Council been to Crowborough recently? If so, you cannot fail to have seen the huge housing developments going on at sites such as Walshes Manor and Pine Grove.

We need at least as much if not more local cover to provide adequate facilities for what is a vastly increasing local population.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

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I am writing to express my concerns at the cuts which are being proposed by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service affecting the fire station at Crowborough.

Given that Crowborough is an expanding town it does not make any sense to me that the level of protection is being cut at this time. I know that the fire service also provides important cover for the Ashdown Forest which is invaluable in protecting our beautiful countryside. Their presence in Crowborough is a great reassurance to the local community.

I hope that this decision, which is in my view both irresponsible and incompetent, will be reconsidered in the light of public opinion.

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs,

I have tried to read and understand your risk assessment/consultation documents but it is far too deep for a normal person to digest!

However, initially I have one question for you which is: What is the total cost to date for the work involved with carrying out the risk assessment & consultation and how long has it taken to prepare and submit.

I look forward to hearing back from you as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

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I write to oppose the damaging and life threatening proposed changes to the East Sussex Fire Service.

At the very least and before any changes are made, there should a comprehensive and wide public consultation, ensuring that the view of all households are canvassed and decisions are based on public opinion and support.

Boris Johnson claims that austerity has ended. These proposals, if implemented, would demonstrate the reverse.

[REDACTED]

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Dear Cllr Roy Galley,

I am concerned to learn of the proposed cuts to the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and that this consultation is being rushed through whilst we are still in the midst of a public health crisis.

I am struggling to understand how, as has been suggested, the service can be 'safer' when the proposals are to cut the number of available fire response vehicles from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye, Uckfield, Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst fire stations. How can the necessary resources be in place if there is a reduction in the number of whole time firefighters by 30 and those on call by 60?

I am baffled that this claim is being made whilst the fire brigades own frontline staff are telling us that these cuts represent a clear and present danger to public safety. Are they lying to us?

I am sure you would have shown your appreciation for our front line staff during the recent public health emergency. However we cannot respond to the sorts of emergencies the fire service are called to with platitudes or rounds of applause. For this we need a properly funded fire service, with sufficient firefighters and fire response vehicles.

The coronavirus crisis should give us pause for thought when it comes to matters like this. The disaster of Grenfell should not be forgotten. The lesson is clear: public safety must take priority.

I urge you to pause the current consultation and reject any proposed cuts to our fire service.

Yours,

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Sir/Madam,

I would like to register my opposition to the cuts proposed.

I find the proposals morally reprehensible as well as dangerous, given the health and safety of local taxpayers.

Please reconsider and desist from this outrageous proposal.

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Please find below the Wealden District Council response to the 'Planning for a Safer Future' consultation.

The questions are taken from the response document.

Would you be so kind as to acknowledge receipt please.

Q1. To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?

**Strongly Agree**

Q2. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?

**Tend to Disagree**

The Uckfield area has and is likely to have increased numbers of dwellings over the coming years which is could increase risk. In addition the consultation document highlights the risk of road safety in the Wealden area. The Council therefore urges caution on the proposals to change the crewing system in the Crowborough and Uckfield areas in particular. We also note that changing the crewing system may mean longer response times during evenings and weekends.

Q3. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

- Option A (6 staff – 8.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 33 posts)
- Option B (7 staff – 10.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 27 posts)



Option B (7 staff – 10.5 hours of fire engine availability, with a reduction of 27 posts).

Q4. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

Neither Agree nor Disagree.

We think this is an operational decision to be assessed on risk and experience.

Q5. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?

Neither Agree nor Disagree.

We think this is an operational decision to be assessed on risk and experience.

Q6. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?

Don't Know

Hastings is not in the Wealden area and therefore we have no view on this proposal.

Q7. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?

Tend to Agree

Provided that ESFRS work with local businesses to ensure that they comply with fire regulatory standards, are made aware of these changes and that those businesses responsible for false alarms are informed and checks made to ensure that they service their alarm systems in accordance with guidance.

Q8. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?

Tend to Agree

Provided that any person(s) trapped are not in distress or any other immediate danger. This proposal must, as the document outlines, be accompanied by education of building owners about the importance of regular maintenance and servicing of lifts and having alternative rescue arrangements in place.

Q9. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?

Tend to Agree

The Council understand that such rescues are disproportionately expensive and tie up valuable resources. However ESFRS should be mindful of the distress that such issues can cause to some people and which may persuade some people to undertake high risk activities to facilitate a rescue.

Q10. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?

**Don't Know**

**These sites do not serve the Wealden area and therefore we have no view on this proposal.**

Q11. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

- Option A – 'Flexible Rostering Duty System' at all 5 fire stations.
- Option B – 'Group Crewing Duty System' at Preston Circus, Hove and Roedean only (the 3 City stations).
- Don't Know

**Don't Know**

**This is considered an operational decision.**

Q12. To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?

**Strongly Agree**

**Prevention is always better than cure and can be a better use of resources. However research and evaluation must be part of any prevention work to ensure that it is effective and is leading to less emergency calls to ESFRS or other emergency services. In addition some of the other proposals in this consultation rely on improved prevention work with local businesses in particular.**

Q13. Would you be willing to pay more in Council Tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?

**The Council considers that this question is for the Council Tax payers across the County to answer.**

Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?

**The Council considers that this question is for the Council Tax payers across the County to answer.**

Q15. In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?

**This is something the Council is reluctant to comment upon and is considered an operational decision.**

Q16. To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?

**Strongly Agree**

Q17. How did you hear about this consultation?

**By direct email.**

Q18. If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.

**The Council are keen to protect the communities within its boundaries and to work together with ESFRS to ensure they get the best service possible. The area is going to see significant housing and other developments in the**

coming years, particularly in the southern parts of the District. ESFRS must take this into account when deciding on the way forward and make any changes and proposals subject to regular review to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

Q19. Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account? If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?

The proposals in this consultation will have both positive and negative impacts on our communities. It is important that those communities are communicated with and any changes and the rationale behind them explained. It will be important to particularly highlight the positive impacts of the changes. We would encourage ESFRS to continue to positively engage with the Council's Planning Policy Team to ensure that they are aware of forthcoming housing and other development proposals, thereby continuing to offer the best service possible within their available resources.

Q20. Are you providing a PERSONAL RESPONSE, or one on behalf of an ORGANISATION?

#### ORGANISATION - Wealden District Council

I am wondering if this proposed cut is shortsighted. To save money now in the wake of debt from coronavirus must seem essential, yet shortly down the line reinstating a service when it proves necessary would no doubt incur more cost. Also, this virus precaution to save lives makes me think the government values people's lives. This action to cut a lifesaving service seems to throw that ideal out the window.

Please consider and reconsider before any painful cuts are made.

Dear Sirs

I call upon all Fire Authority members to vote against the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 and place a moratorium on any restructure until we fully understand the impact of Covid-19 on the fire service and the county.

Thankyou.

Just to inform you that the letter informing me of these proposals arrived today, 16/6/20. The closing date for public response is 20/6 - surely too soon for an effective perusal of your documents. I feel this is unreasonable if you genuinely want a considered and informed response from the public.

Sincerely

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am writing out of grave concern for the plan to impose cuts on the fire service in this time of national crisis, where public services are needed like never in our lifetimes.

As part of the response to Covid-19, fire fighters are already taking on extra duties, including assisting the ambulance service with their increased workload and delivering desperately needed PPE to NHS & other key workers. Now is not the time to try and implement disruptive changes, including further cuts, to our fire and rescue service.

I am calling upon East Sussex Fire Authority members to halt the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) consultation, and any changes and cuts to fire and rescue services in East Sussex, until the Coronavirus crisis is over and the post-pandemic financial settlement for local government and the fire service is settled.

In these unprecedented circumstances, this is no time for such a major restructure of the local fire service, or for cuts dressed up as 'risk management improvements'.

I share the concerns of the Fire Brigades Union that the loss of both equipment and crew contained in the proposals will lead to a reduction in crucial coverage in the county and increase the risk to public safety. The comprehensive list of safety concerns the Fire Brigades Union have raised warrant thorough consideration before continuing with the public consultation, and any final implementation.

Over 23,000 people have signed a petition in opposition to the proposed measures contained in the IRMP, and local MPs Lloyd Russell-Moyle, Peter Kyle and Maria Caulfield have asked for the process to pause.

I call upon all Fire Authority members to vote against the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 and place a moratorium on restructure until the impact of Covid-19 on the fire service and the county has been understood in terms of its needs and funding.

I hope the members of the Fire Authority will consider their public duty and vote against these cuts.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted signature]

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To whom it concerns,

Please halt your planned cuts to East Sussex Fire Service as it will put lives and livelihoods at risk.  
Kind regards,

[Redacted signature]

---

Please do not make cuts to the fire service in Sussex. It is a great service.

Thank you

[Redacted signature]

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To: Mr M. O'Brien,  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service  
Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2DZ

From: [Redacted]  
Date: 16 June 2020

### Planning for a Safer Future

Thank you for your letter, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and questionnaire. Your letter, dated May 2020, was delivered to my address on 12 May. You indicated that the consultation commenced on 24 April – so I received your letter 19 days after the start date for consultation. I could not get through to your office using the telephone number or the email address given in your letter. Eventually I managed to get through to someone who promised to send me a copy of the five- year plan. It arrived on 19 May (26 days after the start of the consultation: 28 days before the end). In other words, I (and possibly other householders in my area) had about half the time period allocated for consultation.

I have completed the questionnaire and sent it to Opinion Research Services. These comments are observations on the quality of the wording and numerical data in the Consultation document.

## Planning for a Safer Future Consultation

These are some personal observations on the quality of expression, and the presentation of relevant statistics in the report. It is questionable whether valid judgements can be made on the issues.

### PROPOSALS 1 and 3

My response is DON'T KNOW

(a) The figures given in the questionnaire and in the consultation document do not seem to relate to each other, and hence it is difficult to use them to make a judgement.

It is NOT clear how many fire engines you have now. On page 44 of PSF you state that there are 24 fire stations with at least one fire engine, and that 9 of these stations has a second engine. That suggests that there is a total of 33. In addition, there are 3 other stations that have a maxicab (each being equivalent to two fire engines). This suggests that the ESFRS has the equivalent of 36 fire engines.

(b) You state that the second fire engine at some stations is underutilised. Presumably, the untitled table of figures on page 45 is supposed to provide evidence to support this judgement for the underutilisation of the second fire engine.

This table is abysmally poor.

There is no title to it, so it is not clear what it is there for.

You have NOT included any figures or labels that enable an easy comparison of underutilisation in different stations. If you calculate the % of CRITICAL incidents for which the second fire engine was utilised, it ranges from 3.6% at Rye to 20.4% at Crowborough

(c) It is not clear what the bar graph on page 45 represents, because the axes are not labelled, nor is there a title.

(d) I assume that Proposal 1 can only be valid if Proposal 3 is accepted.

(e) In the questionnaire, on lines 9 and 10 of Proposal 1, and in the Consultation document the criteria do NOT include words like 'saving lives' and 'ensuring safety'. Instead, we have a lot of management-speak. Benefits to the community are defined solely in terms of numerical assessments. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, all % given have improved since the last data collection exercise. According to the consultation document the data 'proves' the value of 18-immediate-response fire engine. It does no such thing. It may support the idea of change – but that is not the same thing as 'proving' the need. Whoever wrote such claptrap has no idea of the meaning of the word 'proof'.

(f) The meaning of the question in this Proposal is ambiguous. An increase from 15 to 18 is clear, you then confuse the issue by referring to 6 further fire engines – why did you not say an increase from 21 to 24? What has happened to the 'maxicab' engines?

### PROPOSAL 2

With reference to the Consultation document, page 42, paragraph 3, I am not sure if the effect will be a concentration of experienced firefighters for day-only (Mon-Fri) and a concentration of less experienced (and those with less security of tenure, and thus, probably, less commitment) for all other times. Surely there should be some overlap in personnel so that accurate and up-to-date operational information can be passed on from one team to another.

In paragraph 4, you state that you may take 'slightly longer' to attend, and that this will have a negligible impact. Such an unquantified statement is unacceptable. If you want us to make a judgement, then we want some PRECISE comparative data.

This section of the consultation document and questionnaire are very poorly presented.

If I had wanted to deliberately confuse my audience, this is exactly how I would have done it – question 2b – OPTION 2A and 2B.

This deliberate obfuscation makes me deeply suspicious about the whole proposal.

NOWHERE have you explained how you arrive at a reduction of 33 posts or 27 posts.

NOWHERE have you provided sufficient information to indicate how much money is being saved, and what will be the knock-on effects on staff.

How dare you ask the public to adjudicate on two options when you do not provide any usable data on which those options are based?

#### **PROPOSAL 4**

(a) On page 46, line 2 of the consultation document, you refer to an 'immediate 24-hour response. What does this mean?

On the same page, in the section 'Benefits to the Community', you state that the area served by Bohemia Road station has a significantly higher risk profile than the area served by The Ridge station. Where is the data for this statement?

(b) You state that there is a strong correlation between deprivation and the number of fires that occur. Where are the data, or a graph?

(c) In the penultimate paragraph of this page, data would be very useful.

(d) In the last paragraph on this page, you mention '24 hour whole-term firefighters'. What does this mean?

(e) In the last paragraph, lines 2 and 3 are very confusingly expressed.

(f) On page 47, the table of figures is highly inaccurate. There is no explanation of what the table is designed to explain. The bar graph has eight bars, the first seven of which correspond to the first seven rows of figures in the table.

Very misleadingly, the last bar of the graph is headed 'critical incidents', whereas the last column of the table is headed 'All Hastings'. To add to the confusion, there are numerous errors in the calculations in the table, making it virtually useless.

This Proposal should be the easiest to approve, and yet you have contrived to make it impossible, because the 'supporting data' that you have provided is badly expressed with little or no relevant content.

#### **PROPOSAL 6**

5a I am not sure that describing 'false alarms' as being the same as the term 'unwanted fire signals' is wise. (Are there ever any fire signals that are wanted??) It seems to set a very dangerous precedent for some unknown person at the fire alarm call centre to decide that a fire alarm is 'unwanted'.

I appreciate that my comments could be interpreted as playing with words, and the issue could be resolved by a more appropriate use of words on your part.

My view is that it is MUCH more sensible for the authority to make a significant charge to the owner of the building for the accidental/unnecessary sounding of the fire alarm.

5b You have not provided data on Lift releases – merely that you have to do it 'regularly'. Of course, that could mean anything - once every day, once every week, or once every five years.

5c Trapped birds – agreed.

#### **PROPOSAL 7**

Page 53 (consultation document), paragraph 1, line 3 '.....resulting AND crewing.....' Is there a word missing?

Page 53, paragraph 2, lines 3 and 4 '.....improve how we.....' is not necessary.

Page 63, paragraph 2, line 5 What is meant by 'weight' of response?

It is not at all clear what the differences are – nor what are the advantages of Option B. It seems as though we are being directed to choose Option A!!

Q 6a on the questionnaire. You propose to change the crewing arrangements without giving clear reasons. You mention that both options will result in a net reduction of posts. Are these full-time or part-time posts?

#### **Building and Home Inspections**

So much depends on how effective they are. I can find no comment in the consultation document to help make a decision on this.

#### **ESFRS's Finances in the Future**

You wrote these comments before the financial implications of the pandemic were contemplated. Doubtless the vast amounts of public funding involved will have very serious knock-on effects on that available for supporting the fire-service. Any proposal that involved an increase in Council Tax to fund the fire service would probably be a non-starter for a very large proportion of the population, since it would involve unimaginable hardship, when the priorities are expenditure on food, medicine and keeping warm.

### ESFRS's Purpose and Commitments

The distinction between purpose and commitments is not at all clear. It might be helpful for you to indicate NOW how the actions that you will take in the next five years will demonstrate that you have fulfilled specific parts of your purpose and commitments. This will provide evidence that will enable Council Tax payers in 2025 to decide whether you have fulfilled your purpose and commitments.

By the way, the VALUES that you parade on page 10 of the consultation document – such as accountability and respect, are not borne out by the time delays that I mentioned on page 1 of this document.

### And finally.....

.....you have sections on such issues on Diversity and safety.

Your comments on diversity seem to include only ethnicity, but nothing on gender, age or sexual orientation.

Why??

You mention safety principles. These were written before the current pandemic exposed the high aspirations of NHS managers and government officials as little more than windy rhetoric – especially with respect to Personal Protective Equipment. In the light of the lethal consequences, we shall need a great deal more than a 20-word bullet point on this.

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We want to protest about the cuts proposed for the Fire Service. It's ridiculous they could cut a service of that importance.

Dear Sir

We wish to express our grave concern at the proposed cuts to Crowborough Fire Station.

As you are no doubt well aware Crowborough is the largest inland town in East Sussex and is still growing. Even now there is building work going on and many new houses are being built. In view of an ever enlarging population and our proximity to the Ashdown Forest - always a fire hazard - it seems illogical to be even thinking of making cuts to our Fire Service.

Our concern is widespread and we who live here are distinctly unhappy at the prospect of a reduced service when inevitably the service will be even more needed.

Dear Sirs,

I would like to add my voice to those campaigning against the reduction of Fire Station services in Crowborough, and East Sussex.

Like many services, it is obviously very hard to justify the continued expenses when perhaps there has not been a major fire, or a major road incident or a major civil or criminal issue. However, just ONE Fire, or incident which can not be dealt with, because of the proposed changes, and it will be seen to be nothing less than a short sighted scandal, provoked only by the short term desire to lower expenses. Other, less dangerous savings, must surely be more justifiable than the current proposals.

I implore you (All) to reject the proposals, and leave the level of service, **excellent service**, in fact, exactly how it is.

Respectfully yours, [REDACTED]

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Senior Management Team East Sussex Fire and Rescue

I am writing to you today to plead with you not to reduce the capacity and service at Crowborough fire station.

To be down sizing this fire station is crazy, Crowborough as a town is expanding there are large number of new homes being built all across the area and on surrounding land. More homes mean more chances of fires and the subsequent damage to property and lives. Why down size when the town is growing it makes no sense.

One of the main roads running through Crowborough and the surrounding area is the A26. This road has a very poor record for serious road accidents and a high number of them resulting in serious injury and even death. I have called the emergency services and have had the prompt deployment of fire and rescue to 2 incidents directly outside my house in recent years. One resulted in those injured having to be cut from the wreckage and airlifted to hospital. Also many of the roads around the Crowborough area are minor country roads and statistically more dangerous for road accidents. So why are you thinking of reducing the service at Crowborough Fire Station especially with increased road usage making the possibility of accidents higher.

Crowborough lies on the edge of Ashdown Forest a large expanse of heath & woodland due to our warming climate this area is getting dryer and dryer and the number of fires on the land are increasing. A large fire broke out a few weeks ago and was luckily brought under control by a number of engines including those from Crowborough. Reducing the service at Crowborough would mean more engines having to come from further away and putting additional strain on these areas.

Crowborough lies at the extremities of East Sussex and by this geographical location means that it is far away from other fire stations. Reduction in the service at Crowborough would result in longer response times for incidents in this area.

As I have stated in my previous points these incidents will increase due to the expansion of the town, increased road usage and environmental effects on the surrounding area.

To reduce the capacity at Crowborough fire station is ludicrous and will result in unknown but can be imagined terrible outcomes for this area.

I would urge you to reconsider this decision and to not put cost savings before saving lives.

Yours Sincerely  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I have tried to find information regarding the cuts in service which are scheduled for Newhaven Fire Service, but have drawn a blank.

I have received a letter from Maria Caulfield in which she states that the changes are not a funding issue. I'm assuming that there are other good reasons for the cuts and would be grateful if you could tell me where I can find that information.



Many thanks,

Further reply:

Thank you for your prompt response. I can now understand. You're optimising the service for the East Sussex. Some will "win", some will "lose" but overall the service will be better.

Regards,

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Colleagues

I'm slowly coming to the end of the campaign for "no cuts to our Fire & Rescue Service in East Sussex."

I have had a really wonderful time but I do wish that I could magic away the sense of hopelessness many Parish Councils (PC's) told me about as they face cuts, increase in response times and, sadly, more of the same incidents where people have passed away.

We can see where the resources will be reduced and having to explain that to a Parish Cllr or Clerk was difficult but necessary.

It should be highlighted the PC's as above were on the ball and stopped me from speaking as they unloaded their tales of not being listening to and needing someone to take their concerns seriously. It needed no prompt from me, as soon as they know I was talking about the fire service these issues were brought to my attention by the Clerk/Cllr in charge.

Do the Fire Authority know who these communities are?  
Do they know the name of the person they need to speak to?

If they don't then I have a legitimate question as to why they're cutting the fire service for these vulnerable folks.  
If they do know then why are they cutting?  
Why are they not engaging?

Cutting when there is no idea what it is being cut is reckless.

Its not within my remit to provide a response to these type of incidents but I help where I can.

I had cause to tune the radio on a few days ago.

On the radio programme I found it staggering the Fire Authority is now **accusing the Fire Brigades Union Secretary of East Sussex of lying**, this is a serious allegation, Cllr Galley is making an allegation to say the Secretary, Firefighter (FF) Parry, has lied in his role as a trade union official.

This is higgly-piggly hogwash.

FF Parry and his small team wouldn't know a lie if it bit them on the back side. The reason this is because they are firefighters, key workers who save life and limb, protecting property and I dare say have been working alongside our fantastic colleagues in the police and ambulance to keep people alive at very dangerous incidents.

I've gone through the consultation and what the Fire Brigades Union has put out in to the public domain is an accurate reflection of what the Fire Authority have proposed.

Cllr Galley is able to make his own mind up about that issue but he needs to withdraw that accusation now. FF Parry is not a liar, we need that on the record.

The 'Trust Independents' and Cllr Ben Cox appeared on Uckfield FM following Cllr Galley's outrageous attack on legal trade union work and representation and its to their credit, they were going crackers at his comments, it made me smile that the female constituents in our area have more facts than Cllr Galley.

They were outspoken and direct and I thought it was good that they were allowed to express their view.

They were scathing about Cllr Galley and quite right. We trust FF Parry over anyone else - he does the job.

I've heard one complaint about the cuts being opposed and that was from someone who didn't even run a PC.

Its quite clear to me the Fire Authority need three steps;

Meet with the Fire Brigades Union and political parties to resolves the cuts issue

Withdraw the accusation about the Fire Brigades Union Secretary for East Sussex, he's a colleague, not a criminal ...following that, the Chair and the Secretary need to engage to stop the cuts, come to an agreement for our community which does not sacrifice safety or jobs.

I look forward to your response Cllr Galley.

I hope FF Parry can meet with you but it might be you've burnt one thread to many on the bridge.

I've never known an allegation be presented in public like this, you chose the radio to try and smear a good man, **what is that about?** I've never known it be presented with zero evidence like it has been here. You have sullied the name of a good man, shame on you and shame on your politics.

The Fire & Rescue Authority should remedy this by deselecting you as Chair - **why would they want someone who attacked someone like FF Parry?**

I hope you get what you want Cllr Galley - God willing.

I look forward to your response.

Go raibh maith agat, do chara,

[REDACTED]

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To the Management Team

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write to advise you that we strongly oppose the proposed cuts. Our Local Fire Station is at Crowborough and we are indebted to their efforts when our house, in Rotherfield, suffered a major fire on [REDACTED]. Although we had to vacate our home for 6 months whilst repairs were carried out there is no doubt the work they performed minimised the overall damage to the property and its contents. We hate to think how much this level of service would be affected by the loss of a fire engine half of the full time Firefighters.

Please think again.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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I request that these proposed cuts are not carried through.

[REDACTED] NEWHAVEN.

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NEWHAVEN FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

It is very alarming that East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service should be considering cutting the number of Fire Engines and Personnel at Newhaven Fire Station.

Over recent times there has been a very significant increase in development within Newhaven and the surrounding area with much more development that may follow.

In recent times there has been the advent of the Waste Incinerator on the North Quay and now there is also the increased activity on the North Quay with the construction of the new concrete works.

The West Quay has seen the advent of the Rampion Wind Farm operation and now the Brett Aggregates Facility together with other commercial activities within the West Quay.

There is also the Port Access Road and Bridge which will pave the way for much greater industrialisation within Newhaven Harbour and the neighbouring land.

Much of this industrial development has been sanctioned by East Sussex County Council and taken together with the industrialisation proposals within the Lewes District Council Local Plan for the land adjacent to Newhaven Harbour and the Port Access Road it is totally counter intuitive to even consider cutting Newhaven Fire and Rescue Services.

There has also been very significant residential development within Newhaven and the surrounding area in recent years with much more residential development planned including the Newhaven Marina Development..

We have witnessed much over recent years of the 'Dump It On Newhaven' culture of both East Sussex County Council and Lewes District Council and for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to now even consider cutting Fire and Rescue Services within Newhaven and the surrounding area is totally unacceptable and would put local people, property and businesses at very significant risk..

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Seaford

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Dear Sir/Madam,

This email is sent on behalf of Chiddingly Parish Council as agreed at our (remote) full council meeting on the 16th of June 2020.

Chiddingly Parish Council wishes to object to the 'Planning for a Safer Future (IRMP 2020-25)' proposals. We have not written a report detailing our issues as Crowborough Town Council and Uckfield Town Council have already created reports which we as a Parish Council would like to fully endorse/support. From what we have seen of their minutes, these reports have already been shared with you, as well as public in their own domains. It made no sense to re-invent the wheel in this situation.

There is concern of massive oversight in the proposals specifically relating to non-fire related incidents ie RTCs and flooding, and also a lack of future planning for the vast amounts of new housing going up in East Sussex that could directly increase the amount of work that ESFRS will have.

If you have not yet received the documentation from Uckfield or Crowborough Town Council as referred to above, please do contact me and I will get this to you.

Please may we have a response to confirm receipt of this objection.

Kind Regards,  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Councillor Galley

I wrote to you on 13th May nearly three weeks ago about my concerns over the cuts to East Sussex Fire Service. I am disappointed that I have not received a response from you to my concerns. I hope that ignoring public concerns is not the approach you are taking when it comes to considering these cuts. Recently we had a large fire on Ashdown Forest, imagine how catastrophic the damage could have been had we had half the number of crew and friends engines to tackle this blaze. This would be the position we would have found ourselves in should these cuts go ahead. I hope you will do me the courtesy of responding to my concerns and look forward to hearing from you.

Cuts cost lives!

Yours sincerely  
[REDACTED]

**Further reply:**

Dear Councillor Roy,

Although it would have been straightforward for you to search out e-mails from 13th May and see my initial concerns as you were not able to do so please find them below:

*I am writing because I have recently become aware of the proposed cuts to the East Sussex fire service. As a resident of Crowborough I am very concerned about the fire services ability to function effectively and keep the public safe if we have a reduced number of fire crew and appliances in East Sussex. Do you support these changes? The implications of which will mean that fire cover is reduced and resilience lost. I am concerned that reductions of the sort proposed would mean that it would not be possible to cover all households in the county and that it would become a post code lottery as to whether a fire crew could attend an incident. I do not want the lives of my family and friends put at risk in this way and as a servant of the public neither should you. I am sure that the proposed cuts are just a cost cutting exercise and have not been proposed with the livelihoods of our firefighters or public safety in mind. I am further shocked by the back door method in which these changes are being proposed at a time when we are in lockdown and there can be no public meetings or discussion on the subject. Shame on those who have chosen this time, a time when we have never needed our front line workers more to try and implement such drastic cuts with blatant disregard for public safety. I sincerely hope you will see it as your public duty not to support these cuts.*

In response to your e-mail here are my concerns around the comments you made.

I am concerned that the consultation with the public is taking place during lockdown and therefore there can be no public meetings at which we could voice our concerns.

As you can see from my previous comments I am fully aware that Crowborough fire station is not going to be shut down however I am concerned that it will be rendered less resilient and ineffective by the proposed cuts. Whilst the second appliance may not be used frequently Crowborough is too remote and distanced from other stations for us to have to rely on back up from a crew travelling from another station in the event of an emergency.

My understanding of the proposed changes to shift patterns is that there will be a high reliance on on call crew which cannot be guaranteed and who are also notoriously difficult to recruit and retain. Currently you can rely on an appliance to be crewed for a full 168 hours a week under your proposals the crewing level would be only a guaranteed 42 hours a week. Do you really feel that this 75% reduction in guaranteed crewing hours is justifiable and also safe for the people of Crowborough.

is it justifiable to improve Fire Prevention at the expense of Front line appliances surely both are of equal importance.

I find your remark about housing somewhat crass. Did you really take into account the 900+ houses being built in the Crowborough area over the next few years. Even if modern housing contains fire spread better our resources

are going to be stretched to the limit and a better contained fire does not make it a safer fire for a firefighter. Also have you considered the large number of residents who do not live in a house built in the last decade and whose lives will be put at considerable risk by a reduced less efficient fire service.

A further two points that make Crowborough an especially challenging area for the Fire Service are the A26 which runs directly through the town This road is a notorious hot spot for car accidents. Would you want to wait an additional 20 minutes trapped in your car if the Crowborough crew were already on a call whilst another crew travelled from Kent or Uckfield?

The second point is our proximity to Ashdown Forest which with the increase in extreme weather becomes a tinderbox that could go up in flames at any moment.

I do hope that you will carefully considered all points being raised by concerned members of the public.

Cuts cost lives!

Yours sincerely

██████████

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Dear Fire Authority Members,

I am writing to you to convey my disappointment and concerns with the IRMP proposals that you have approved to go to public consultation.

I am a wholetime Crew Manager, who has served at Crowborough Fire Station for over █ years. I have lived in Crowborough for the majority of my life, so the fire cover to my town, affects me not only on a professional level, but also a personal level.

Firstly given the current pandemic, this consultation should never have gone forward, as no-one knows what the role of firefighters could be after COVID-19, given we have taken on many new roles to support the public and our fellow emergency service partners.

I have read numerous times that the proposals are not cuts, and that it is not about financial savings, but about efficiency, but less fire engines, means less efficiency.

I appreciate that potentially cover in Eastbourne and Hastings maybe slightly improved, but at the cost of aerial appliance cover.

With these proposals fire cover in the north of the county is going to be massively affected, especially in Crowborough and Uckfield.

Attendance times are going to increase, there is no arguing that fact. At Crowborough, the time it takes for an appliance to turn out from station could increase by 2-3 minutes during the night. At weekends, with no wholetime crew on station during the day, it could realistically take 10 minutes for an appliance to turn out from Crowborough. That could cost lives, that will be the difference between property saved, and property lost.

The idea of removing wholetime firefighters from day crewed stations at night and weekends is ludicrous, and I would like to explain why. Retained firefighters play a vital part across the fire service, but being a retained firefighter is a part time job, these firefighters have full time jobs, that naturally will always have to take priority. Put simply, you cannot rely on or guarantee retained fire cover. I would like to share some statistics with you that prove this. Going back to 2016 up to the end of April 2020, we have worked out when a fire engine at Crowborough would have been available between 5pm-9am without wholetime staff. In 2016 it would have only been available 18% of the time. In 2017 it was 12%, 2018 it was 8.7%, 2019 it was 1.37%, and for the first four months of this year, it would have been available just 2.48% of the time, if the proposals go ahead. The weekend statistics if the proposals are approved are just as worrying.

I expect the response to this will be that the service will implement a massive Retained recruitment. However this will also fail, due to several reasons. It takes years for a retained firefighter to be deemed competent in role. There is also specialist skills to gain such as driving, and becoming a Junior Officer, which very few actually want to do. The main reason why this system would fail is that almost all new retained firefighters join retained as a way in to wholetime, whether that be on fixed term contracts or migration within East Sussex, or joining neighbouring services. A few weeks ago, Kent Fire and Rescue service advertised for wholetime firefighters. Over 50% of Crowborough's Retained section all applied, and potentially, if they had all been successful, Crowborough would have lost over half of its retained section. This is not just a local issue, retention of Retained staff is a problem everywhere.

The proposed duty system for day crewed stations also has personal impacts to my colleagues and myself. Effectively half the staff will be forced to work somewhere they don't want to, whether that be in a non-operational role, or in the pool of firefighters that don't have an actual station, and are used to fill gaps. On top of the money I would lose, I would then have to pay travel costs to any of the shift stations, which are all about a 60 mile round trip from Crowborough.

The other half that are left at the day crewed stations, are then forced to work Monday to Friday, for far less money and on a system that is completely un-family friendly.

I have two young daughters, so if I have to work Monday-Friday, I won't ever be able to take my children to school, or pick them up. With the financial impact, I may be encouraged to take out a separate Retained contract, meaning I will have to work weekends and evenings. So my family life will pretty much cease to exist. This still wouldn't cover what I stand to lose not only in my monthly pay, but also the massive effect it would have on my pension. My other option is having to move my wife and daughters away from our families and friends to an area where property is cheaper, where their upbringing and education could be affected in a very negative way.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I urge you all to reject the proposals that have been put forward and send SLT back to the drawing board to find an IRMP that doesn't cut frontline staff, won't put lives at risk, supports the services core values, and doesn't have a negative effect on service delivery.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email by replying to me at [REDACTED]

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

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Dear Sirs

I do NOT support the cutting of fire-fighters being cut. Imagine if something happened at one of the political party conferences here one year and at the same time a fire in a village where Fire Trucks have to take time on narrow lanes to try and save property.

Or a fire in a block of purpose built flats or conversion in our squares and roads with their beautiful architecture. We need to be prepared.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

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Dear East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and Fire Authority Councillors.

Please accept this letter as our response to the proposals put forward in the Planning for a safer future as part of your IRMP, Proposal 3, to remove the second fire engines from on-call stations.

These proposals are extremely dangerous and will impact heavily on a critical lifesaving service. They will negatively impact public safety as well as firefighter safety and will also impede firefighter's ability to rescue and assist members of the public.

Rye Fire Station – Response.

In Rye, we have two fire engines. These have been here since 1989 when the new station opened. 31 years of service with two engines, which cover the risk profile of our area and over border risks. The risk profile data (Site-Specific Risk Information) shows that Rye has the highest proportion of Level 1 risk sites, as part of the areas total risks and represents 8% of all Level 1 SSRIs across the ESFRS area. Rye has a lower percentage of level 2 & 3 SSRI's compared to the average for ESFRS, however these risks are in an area of conservation and special scientific interest. Heritage is a key feature of Rye and must be protected for future generations.

The fire risks within the citadel are critical as the majority of buildings are terraced, and constructed from timber, open roof spaces allow uncontrolled fire spread and little in the way of fire prevention, other than smoke alarms. The fire station is situated within the town and can respond very quickly to fires, which showed with the George Hotel fire. Our first engine arrived within 11 minutes, followed by our second engine a few minutes later, providing a safe system of work to fight the fire.

The cuts have also been planned on the static population of Rye, but with a tourism and caravan park population which together can peak at 10,000 to 15,000 extra people to protect and the added risks created when Camber sands is busy, again peaking at another 20,000 extra people on our ground! Rye also has the highest number of water risks, rivers, lakes, sea and beaches in East Sussex.

Camber also is put at particular risk by removing the second engine from Rye. ESFRS state that the fire service should reach incidents within 15 minutes from on-call stations and many parts of Camber fall outside of our target time, even for Rye. When a critical fire in Camber occurs, crews will have to wait up to 25 minutes for the second engine to arrive if our second appliance is removed. This puts incredible pressure on the crew and Officer in charge of the first engine (RYE) to act without the support of the second engine, putting fire-fighters lives at risk or not rescuing members of the public. This should not be a choice any officer in charge needs to make.

Below is a quote from a Local Councillor (West Sussex) which sums up this point very well.

*"Some time ago now, the West Sussex Fire Authority forced through huge cuts to the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, despite massive opposition. The result? All reversed after a humiliating inspection found the service had been reduced to "inadequate". In fact, getting things back up to standard will undoubtedly have cost the council and the fire authority much more than having left it properly resourced in the first place".*

*"I cannot believe our next door neighbours in East Sussex could knowingly try and go down this route having seen what happened to us. The East Sussex councillors on their fire authority should have learnt from this whole sorry saga, which undoubtedly left our residents in greater risk.*

*My full support to many councillors in Brighton and Hove and wider East Sussex, set out in this report, who are fighting this - together with the East Sussex Fire Brigade Union who are making all the right points about why such cuts are a terrible decision. It will be a tragedy if they are ignored and it will also hit neighbouring areas such as West Sussex and Kent if the service's capacity in East Sussex is reduced and they cannot support larger fires and calls taking place here as well."*

The same adverse effects have been seen and felt in the Surrey Fire & Rescue Service after brutal cuts were enforced. Surrey Fire Service now has to rely on cross border support for many fires in areas which were deemed to be low risk? Support from London and West Sussex, which are both underfunded as it is!

We do not want to see these issues in East Sussex!

Question. Why are the Fire Authority cutting services?

The HMICFRS concluded that East Sussex's response to incidents was GOOD.

The risk assessment carried out by East Sussex FRS has been incredibly thorough and should be applauded. So why use this assessment to reduce the capability of the service under the guise of "Improvements" or "Safer Future"?

There is an opportunity here to really improve the service and although this will cause change to existing service structures, it should never reduce the capability of how effective the service operates.

Our example of how this could be achieved in Rye is this –

The proposals call for our second appliance to be removed, stating that it is not on the run often enough and does not attend many incidents.

Rye has the highest number of water courses, lakes, rivers, sea / beach risks in East Sussex, yet no capability to respond to any of these risks? Our area has seen the highest number of deaths through drowning over the past few years, both within inland water sources and camber sands beach.

Invest in water safety training within Rye and use the second appliance to manage this risk effectively. Having specialised equipment on the second appliance. This would increase staffing levels at Rye, make it more attractive to new recruits and also make retention of staff more manageable. Another benefit for staffing the second appliance sufficiently, would be to cover P1 when out on calls saving the service thousands of pounds each year on standby crews.

On data collected from the past 18 months, our second appliance with little or minimal staff managed to provide standby cover for P1 on 55 occasions and attend 26 incidents. (Turn out sheets for 33 Calls, some stood down before attending on scene)

If staffing levels were increased approximately, a further 100 standbys' to Rye could be avoided, saving the service thousands of pounds each year.

It would also have been able to attend incidents with P1 on approximately 16 additional occasions, saving vital time it takes for appliances from The Ridge or Bohemia Road to arrive.

The proposals also indicate that The Ridge will become Day Crewed and retained, On-Call at the weekends and at night.

This would exacerbate the difficulties with having appliances arrive in good time during these periods for incidents in rural parts of Rye and Camber. Having to wait for up to 30 minutes for a second appliance would definitely put firefighters lives at risk, having to deal with potentially critical incidents alone, no safe system of work, public pressure to act, moral pressure to act. The brutal truth is, IT WILL HAPPEN, at some point in the future. Now is the time to ensure this situation, when it arises, can be dealt with effectively, and firefighters can work knowing they have the support of their colleagues in the second appliance.

The firefighters, Crew Managers and Watch Manager at Rye are proud to serve their community. All dedicated to protecting the lives of everyone who lives or visits our historic town, beautiful countryside and beaches. The goodwill shown by everyone who works at Rye Station and commitment to keeping our pumps on the run is being eroded. Recruitment has been neglected over the past five years and it shows. Over 13 experienced firefighters have left the service with just 5 new recruits remaining on station, making a total staffing level of 13 on-call staff. (5 of which work wholtime at other stations which reduces their availability) making a net loss of 8 firefighters!

The qualifications held by the solely On-Call staff are insufficient to put a pump on the run, with only one ERD driver, one Lead BA wearer and no Junior Officers.

We need recruitment and training to replace the staff lost as this would be easily enough to keep the second appliance on the run and possibly effect a new branch of Water Safety, preventing drowning and saving lives!

More Road Safety events with the thousands of motorcyclists who visit Rye throughout the summer! More emergency care capabilities to assist our ambulance service when required.

This is the key to Rye's future, improvement of what we do, not cuts to our resources.

Giving the public true value for money and a service which can effect change and save lives.

You cannot do any of this with one Appliance.

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I trust you will not mind my emailing you regarding the above proposals a number of which concern me.

Firstly many of the assumptions are made using "sophisticated analytical tools where incidents of fire or flood might occur "I do not believe any such tools would have predicted the fire and its consequences my wife and I suffered [REDACTED]



Seven of the stations are to lose one fire fighting appliance. In the case of Crowborough that represents 50% of the fire fighting capacity of the station, if further appliances are required these will come from other stations many of which have also lost one of their engines. The consequences of all this are endless.

The report states that in the evening and weekends there will be "on call firefighters" i.e. Retained firefighters. In 3.1.7 the report admits that "there are challenges finding sufficient crew to keep fire appliances available to respond" Further there is an admission that there could be "slower response times"

However, Hastings Bohemia station is to get a second appliance "to make residents even safer" so much for the safety of Crowborough residents!

I am a Chartered Surveyor by profession 3.6.3.7 "non attendance at low risk commercial premises where there is a no sleeping risk" intrigues me. I managed a large ind/whse estate in Sussex where no one slept at night so no one could confirm whether there was a fire or not. I presume ESF&R would not attend. If this is the case then the sooner the Hampshire Act is implemented in Sussex the better.

These proposals are no more than a cost cutting exercise that will in my view leave ESF&R resembling the Police Service in the county.

Regards

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Dear Cllr Galley and Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker,

As a nearly fifty year resident of Crowborough and thirty year resident of Eridge Road (the A26) - I am astounded that anyone is proposing to cut fire services for Crowborough in particular, but in other rural fire stations as well. I have read the documents concerning the proposals and it seems to me that the exercise is one of cost cutting, rather than providing a proper or adequate service which we, the council tax payers, fund every year. I can understand the need for efficiency, but trimming emergency services to balance the books might look good on paper - until there is an emergency.

Rather than looking just at savings to be made, perhaps we should look at the downside that a reduced service will probably bring if fire stations are reduced to a single appliance.

In Crowborough we are fortunate that for speed of response the fire station is located on the main A26 trunk road. This road has an extremely bad accident record going back many years and if one appliance is called to a road accident and then there is a fire somewhere else at the same time, the only alternative will be to call on Uckfield - some ten minutes away, who might also be on a call. Tunbridge Wells might send an appliance to the fire, but if the A26 is blocked by the accident - what then? Maxi cabs will carry more crew, but you really need the flexibility of two appliances in the largest inland town in East Sussex that is so remote from the fire stations along the coast.

Then there is the proximity to the Ashdown Forest - often as dry as a bone and frequently subject to forest fires. One appliance only carries so much water, and although there is a bowser at Crowborough and a 4 X 4, a second large appliance with more water can be fighting the fire from the other side to stop the spread. There are no handy sources of water, no standpipes and few lakes on the high, dryer reaches which mostly catch fire. Another aspect which is often overlooked is the fact that Crowborough town sits at the second highest point in East Sussex at nearly 800ft, though the fire station serves the outlying district in each direction. All the roads to the town are steep, particularly so in the case of St Johns and in the winter there is often snow cover which can make them impassable. What if one appliance goes out on a shout and then gets trapped by abandoned vehicles? A second appliance will still be available to turn out to another emergency in the town, whereas calling another from Uckfield or Wadhurst is going to take significantly longer in bad weather - if it can even reach Crowborough.

As Crowborough is in a northern central location in the county, we should be increasing cover, not diminishing it - especially now that so many new housing estates have started to be built and more are planned.

From the information in your proposals:

- 99% of high-risk dwellings are covered - improved from the current 93%

- 93% of all incidents are within our attendance standards isochrones - improved from the current 81%
- 92% of all households are covered - improved from the current 80%
- 92% of our population is covered - improved from the current 75%
- 92% of our over 80s population are covered - improved from the current 75%.
- 92% of all households are covered - improved from the current 80%
- 92% of our population is covered - improved from the current 75%

If 92% of all households are covered and improved from the current 80% - Can you please explain how reducing the number of appliances by 50% will improve the situation in Crowborough from 80% to 92% coverage.

I am afraid that the sums simply do not add up. As a former teacher I look forward to seeing the working by which you have arrived at this answer.

Regards.

**Further reply:**

Dear Chris Fry,

Thank you for your response and the explanation regarding my concerns. However, I am still a bit unclear how these proposals benefit Crowborough in particular - as I and about 25,000 other people live here and which is the largest inland settlement in East Sussex and remote from the other large urban settlements along the coast.

It may well be that the proposed changes benefit East Sussex as a whole, but that is of no comfort to people in Crowborough who are effectively having their coverage reduced to satisfy an overall commitment.

You say: *Another of the Fire Authority's proposals is to remove the second fire engine at seven fire stations, of which Crowborough is one. However, coverage will be maintained at Crowborough because it will still have its main fire engine available 24/7.*

That might be the case by which you reassure people, but then another statement in regard to crewing gives the following response.

*We propose to introduce a 'Day Only' crewing model, maintaining a 24/7 response from these stations through a different crewing pattern. In this arrangement, full time firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Monday to Friday, with on-call firefighters providing cover in the evening and at weekends. The differences between the existing system and day-only is that day-only does not require the fulltime staff to provide additional on-call cover during the evening and weekends. This cover is provided by existing and newly recruited on-call staff (see Proposal 1). The evidence in our ORR demonstrates that this is an effective way to provide emergency cover on these stations based on community risk. The community would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend in these station areas.*

It will almost certainly take longer if we are to rely on the other (nearby) and only retained stations for backup. According to timings available on Google maps:

Forest Row to Crowborough - 21 mins. Wadhurst to Crowborough - 20 mins. Heathfield to Crowborough - 20 mins. Mayfield to Crowborough - 15 mins. And Uckfield to Crowborough - 15 mins, though presumably with the same crewing pattern for evenings and weekends.

Has any thought been given to how long it takes on our rural roads to get from one place to another - always assuming ideal driving conditions ?

In the whole (beautifully presented I have to say) document, the word minutes only appears six times and is only in relation to expected response times within expected guidelines of 10 to 15 mins. Add to this the response time for retained firefighters and the possibility of a road journey from another station in the event of the first appliance being called away somewhere else and the minutes add up.

Geographically and given the locations of the other nearby retained fire stations, Crowborough is well suited to be a properly manned rural hub in the north of the county as effectively it now is. To reduce capacity here to suit mathematical calculations based on the supposition that it will help East Sussex overall is not a practical solution.

I oppose these proposals most strongly.

Regards,

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*To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?*

Strongly disagree.

We strongly support the proposals to increase the number of 'immediate response' engines, as we can see that this would increase the coverage statistics. But this must not be achieved by reducing the total number of 'resilience' fire engines in East Sussex from 13 to just 6.

Under Proposal 3, Lewes and Newhaven fire stations would have just a single engine, so would be unable to provide a resilience engine if one were needed in Seaford. Therefore, in such an event, a resilience engine would need to come from a smaller station such as Barcombe. That would significantly increase the time required to get a resilience engine to Seaford, as well as leaving Barcombe without any engine at all. The increased delay resulting from the reduction in the total number of engines will lead to an unacceptable increase in the risk to households, businesses and firefighters.

*Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?*

Strongly disagree.

We strongly disagree with the proposals to reduce the number of permanent watches in Lewes and Newhaven from two to one and to replace the second watch with a 'flexible crewing pool' made up of on-call firefighters.

Even if it is possible to recruit and retain sufficient on-call / retained firefighters living within 5 minutes of the fire station (which is highly unlikely), having all evenings and weekends covered by a scratch crew who do not work together regularly will unacceptably increase the risk to households, businesses and firefighters.

Our many detailed concerns with this proposal include:

- The crew that provides evening, night and weekend cover are entirely different to the permanent crew, so will have limited experience operating the engine and equipment
- Recruiting and retaining these on-call / retained firefighters is extremely challenging (currently, Lewes has only managed to recruit and retain 3.5 'units' of retained staff; 12 would be required to cover the loss of the second watch):
  - The salary offered (£11k-13k/annum) would not be enough to attract people to do this as their only job; therefore they will have other work commitments which will affect their availability
  - Turnover of these staff is very high; most take it as a last resort but accept other, permanent jobs when they become available
  - The turnover is a particular problem as training firefighters in all of the necessary disciplines generally takes about 2 years

- Being all on call all evenings, nights and weekends is a very family -unfriendly arrangement.
- The on-call crew (who will have other jobs) will be a scratch crew with availability dictated by other work commitments; therefore assembling a crew with all of the right skills to crew an engine properly (driver, breathing-apparatus specialist, junior officer, etc) will be difficult with a high risk that not all staff will be properly skilled (risking both their lives and the lives of people caught in the fire)
- The crew will also have limited experience of working together and will not know each other's strengths and capabilities well, reducing the efficiency of the response and increasing the risk to residents/employees and firefighters
- There would be less emergency/contingency cover available when there are multiple calls (currently the other permanent firefighters can be called on when necessary as they do not have other jobs).

*Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?*

We strongly disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only', and do not support either of the alternative options proposed.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?*

Strongly disagree.

We strongly disagree with the proposals to remove the second fire engines from these seven stations. Removing seven fire engines from these fire stations will significantly increase call-out times, increase the risk fire engines not being available to attend an incident, and unacceptably increase the risk to households, businesses and firefighters.

In addition, climate change is expected to significantly increase wildfires and flooding in East Sussex (as evidenced by recent wildfires in Ashdown Forest and elsewhere). By their nature, these incidents require the attendance of many fire engines for long periods. Against that background, reducing the number of fire engines by nearly a third would be irresponsible.

Our many detailed concerns with this proposal include:

- For bigger incidents in Lewes and Newhaven two engines are deployed as a matter of course, providing additional equipment, resilience and flexibility; this would be lost if this proposal were implemented.
- If a second engine was needed it would need to be called from another station, which would very significantly increase call-out times and increase the risk to Lewes and Newhaven residents, businesses and fire fighters.
- With the net reduction of 10 fire engines (Lewes, Newhaven, Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Rye and Uckfield, plus the "maxi-cab" stations at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst), the risk that there is not another fire engine available at all also increases exponentially.
- Also with the net reduction of 10 fire engines, there is a far higher likelihood of the Lewes, Newhaven, Seaford and Barcombe primary engines being called out to fires in other areas, leaving the towns without any local fire service at all and increasing response times unacceptably.
- A recent wildfire in Ashdown Forest required 8 engines in attendance. If all of these second engines are removed, that would leave some fire stations (including some "core" stations) without any engine available in the event of a local fire.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?*

Strongly disagree.

The "maxi cab" fire engines allow two fire crews to attend an incident in a single fire engine. Removing this capability from Seaford and the other stations will reduce the effectiveness of the response, increase the time

required to respond to larger incidents and increase the likelihood that other fire engines will need to be called in from nearby fire stations.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?*

Don't know.

There is no direct impact of this change in Lewes District.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?*

Strongly disagree.

Although 96% of AFA (Automated Fire Alarm) alerts turn out to be false alarms, that means that 4% of the alarms are real incidents. In the dense commercial areas at the centre of Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford (where there are usually people living above the commercial premises and often other businesses immediately adjacent) the quicker response from responding to AFAs will sometimes be critical in avoiding loss of life or the spread of the fire to other businesses.

For example, in September 2012 a fire that started in Olives Yard quickly spread, engulfing 4 shops and 40 firefighters only narrowly avoided a nearby block of flats from also being destroyed.

The relatively small savings that might be achieved by not responding to AFAs could be very quickly dwarfed by the cost (in lives and property) of a fire that has longer to take hold.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?*

Neither agree nor disagree.

We agree with the principle that the building owners should resolve the issue when there is no risk or distress for the people who are trapped. But we question how often this will be possible without causing risk or distress to trapped occupants.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?*

Strongly disagree.

We understand that the Fire service normally only attend these incidents after it has been asked to by wildlife charities. This would normally be because there is no way to free the animals without the specialist equipment that the Fire Service have and/or because the animal is in considerable distress.

If the animals are not rescued by ESFRS there will be a much greater risk of the public / others trying to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves without suitable equipment, putting themselves at considerable risk.

*Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?*

Tend to disagree.

Although these proposals do not affect Lewes District directly, we have serious concerns about the replacement of permanent fire fighters with 'flexible' or 'scratch' crews for the reasons given in response to Proposal 2, above.

*Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?*

Don't know.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?*

Tend to agree.

We agree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety. But these must not come at the expense of front-line services.

*Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?*

Council tax contributions to the Fire Service are not reducing. The cuts are being proposed because of reductions / uncertainty in Government Grants. We therefore are firmly of the opinion that central Government must provide assurances that Fire Service grants will not be reduced, so that the Fire Service can make proper plans for the future without the need to make these dangerous cuts to front-line services.

The policy of cutting front-line services to the bone has clearly been shown as a mistake by the Covid-19 crisis and the inability of the NHS to respond adequately. These proposals should be reconsidered in the light of Covid-19. Furthermore, West Sussex FRS implemented similar changes 4-5 years ago. Their most recent inspection report rated it as one of the worst Fire Services in the country (inadequate in its protection of the public and looking after its staff; and requiring improvement in the way that it keeps people safe and secure and the way it uses its resources). It now requires £34m of investment to address the many failings identified by the inspection. Trying to make similar savings in East Sussex would therefore have a high risk of actually costing more in the medium term.

*To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?*

Agree.

We agree that ESFRS offers value for money currently. However, if implemented, these proposals would make draconian cuts in services while only saving £1.0m-£1.6m of savings by 2024/25. In that case we would not agree that ESFRS would offer value for money.

*In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?*

We would encourage ESFRS to look at ways to simplify its service and to reduce administration costs (e.g. reduce reporting and/or the use of highly-paid consultants).

*To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?*

Tend to agree.

We have no concerns with the current purpose and commitments of ESFRS.

*If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.*

As public bodies, ESFRS have a duty to take into account the impact of their decisions on human rights, under the Human Rights Act 1998, and also on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation). Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account? If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?

Hello ESFRS

I've been alerted by a local City Councillor that this Consultation is taking place and is about to close. I represent the 174 households of two 15 storey blocks in Brighton. I've read some of the FBU publicity about the IRMP proposals - and some of the ESFRS explanation of your case.

Our experience of the Veolia Fire of August 2019, against the background of Grenfell, has made for a heightening of awareness & a keener sense of vulnerability within this Community. (We were very grateful to the firefighters involved - and I appreciate the ongoing involvement of ESFRS in associated work - including participation in two Public Meetings).

In relation to High Rise Fire Safety, there can be poor communication between Residents, the Local Authority & ESFRS. As is human, risk awareness tends to dissipate over time : questions raised are left hanging - risks identified are highlighted, but actions often slow or stalled.

I'd make the following points :

1.

You refer to misinformation. I'd suggest the charge might be applied to each 'side'.

You refer to planning around the budget you might expect - and simultaneously say that you're 'not looking to cut'. If plans are built around an anticipated reduction in funding (2020-2025), it would be honest to make clear that the plan is partly conditioned by that 'requirement' to cut overall funding. I can understand that Resources can be 'freed' & reinvested : but when you say you weren't looking to cut but that 'some efficiency will be achieved' .... your words contribute to the opacity involved in analysing what is being referred to in relation to 'efficiency savings' ... 'cuts' ... risk ... and, critically, the assessment of effectiveness.

2.

I remain very concerned about the potential effectiveness of ESFRS in responding to High Rise fires. The speed & nature of any ESFRS response (ladder access & height, reliance on Fire Door delay), resident distrust of the Building Alarm strategy and 'Stay Put' - are some of the issues. In this context, I distrust the influence of 'efficiency' economies on the assessment of risk. I would urge ESFRS to take a stand against budget cuts : if you believe there is (literally) no possibility of avoiding budget reductions - then I would ask you to be honest with the public (& the FBU) about what would have been done with a budget that maintained its spending power. I assume that mutual respect and cooperation with the FBU will always be influential in impacting overall Fire Service effectiveness.

3. On two different ESFRS pages, the following statement and statistics were listed :-

**Our evidence shows these proposals will improve emergency cover:**

- 99% of high-risk dwellings are covered - improved from the current 93%
- 92% of all households are covered - improved from the current 80%
- 92% of our population is covered - improved from the current 75%
- 92% of our over 80s population are covered - improved from the current 75%.
- 92% of all households are covered - improved from the current 80%
- 92% of our population is covered - improved from the current 75%

The repetition must be an unfortunate proof-reading error.

The references in your evidence to current levels of emergency cover seem, on the face of it, both extraordinary and alarming. It would be interesting to go deeper into these figures and the quality of evidence they're based upon. With their experience and workforce knowledge, would the FBU have their own evidence-based view of these sets of figures?

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Nettleton & Dudeney Residents Association

### A one paragraph 'Addendum'

Hello again ESFRS

With my apologies for the omission, I forgot to include any reference to the effects on skilled crew & staffing overall following the IRMP. I've seen references to improved contracts for many part-time staff - but also to the possibility of 30 full time staff and 60 on-call staff being lost. I don't know whether the Consultation has any potential to influence staffing levels or any revised financial provision: I hope so. Given the recent contribution of the Fire Service during the lock-down for Covid-19, it seems shameful if Central Government & regional Fire Authorities proceed with the implementation of a plan that applies cuts in funding and brings about the loss of some of the very key workers we've been so reliant upon.

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Hello,

I have a very simple question.

How long is slightly longer in time? Please could you define in minutes.

This of course should be available to all public and not just reserved for those who have to email privately requesting this data.

It is in your consultation document after all which does not define it in anyway other than a generic term.

I look forward to a speedy response as promised in your social media platform.

[REDACTED]

### Further reply:

Thank you for this response but once again it is lacking the answer to the question how long is slightly longer in minutes?

Surely this can be answered as part of the IRMP?

I am of course fully conversant with the meaning of actual and perceived risk, interestingly a lot of incidents I attend incorrectly perceived risk has allowed actual risk to be realised. It seems to me there is an attempt to make the actual risk look less by using charts to show things such as when risks are realised. These of course can be misleading as just because a risk is only realised on a few occasions it doesn't mean it's any less of a danger. In fact it would indicate that the control measures currently in place are working.

Once again please if I could request the slightly longer in minutes. I would be disappointed if this cannot be made available.

Regards.

[REDACTED]



The plan proposes seven changes to current operations that will affect the Parish of Rye. We would make the following comments to the Chief Fire Officer as part of ESFRS's call for consultation.

### **1. Operational Resilience Plan (ORP)**

The new contract for retained staff does not appear to cover their training time, which is essential. Furthermore, it does not appear to consider why people look to become retained officers in addition to their full-time work. We would presume it is to give public service, learn skills and be of use to their community, rather than for financial incentive.

We understand that Rye retained staff have had to take leave from their full-time employment to train (often for 1-2 weeks) as firefighters, with little incentive to do so. We are concerned that not enough is being done to up-skill Rye firefighters.

We understand that ESFRS has lost nearly a quarter of its frontline staff in recent years. Furthermore, the average age of an ESFRS officer is 46 years. It is becoming more difficult to recruit in Rye, with a growing need for personnel during the day and at weekends. Rye's demographics are becoming older; fewer self-employed people work within five minutes of the station; employers are less happy to let staff go during the day; and cover eats into family and leisure time - especially at weekends. Recruitment for Rye should not be solely the responsibility of Rye Fire station but managed centrally. It takes considerable time to train full time and retained staff, and therefore ensuring their retention and development is critical.

We are concerned that a 'flexible crewing pool' could become over relied upon as opposed to a static one that builds local knowledge in each station, and is less resilient because it is being used everywhere and has no back up.

### **2. Changes to day-crewed duty stations**

The new contract gives staff longer to attend at some stations with a knock on effect at day crewed stations Monday to Friday office hours crewed but evenings, nights and weekends retained staffed only increasing attendance times at these stations, tier 3 stations and back up fire engines. Attendance at fires from Rye is in the 'middling' attendance times on the data mapping, which is due to the logistics of where the town is geographically and its road infrastructure. According to Mosaic data, there are a larger than average number of institutions outside the agreed attendance time, such as business and caravan parks, plus the number of water incidents, tourism, flooding, listed buildings, and heavy industry such as Tradbe (the only Tier 1 COMAH site in East Sussex). We understand that Eastern Rother and Camber is the second highest area in East Sussex to fall outside of the attendance standards and Eastern Rother. Camber and Rye are in the top 5% of the most deprived areas in Britain, which statistics prove are some of the most at risk due to fire related incidents..

### **3. Removal of second fire engines at day-crewed and on-call stations and reclassification of three "maxi-cab" stations**

A second appliance already exists at Rye, which services the community well and does not need replacing with a more modern machine, so there are only maintenance costs to consider for the foreseeable future.

Rye is strategically positioned to aid smaller village stations and taking away a second appliance reduces Rye's resilience. Removing the appliance puts more pressure on our closest stations to cover the town if the Rye appliance is already in use, thus reducing their availability in their own locale. Not having a second engine places more reliance on the surrounding stations and increases response time:

For a supporting fire engine to come to Rye from The Ridge in Hastings (10 miles) would take 19 minutes, and to Camber (14 miles) 26 minutes. The Ridge, at present, is crewed 24/7 365 days of the year, but it is recommended to be made day crewed (on station immediate response 08:30 - 18:30, night time on call with a delay of 4 minutes). Broad Oak is 12 minutes away (seven miles) plus the four minute mustering time, therefore 16 minutes to Rye. Broad Oak is a retained fire station and at present is not available at

times during the day under the new proposals a tier 3 station. Broad Oak would not have to be available, but could be given up to 30 mins to muster a crew.

All of the above could/will lead to a greater loss of property, injuries to the public and fire fighters and, potentially, more deaths.

By resourcing and tailoring training for Rye fire fighters, greater upskilling to operate and drive the second appliance plus ICS Level 1 incident command, means that there are more personnel at Rye available with more skills across the county, making it more resilient. It also saves money that they are on site and available, rather than bringing in firefighters from across the county to work in Rye, where currently trained staff are not always available due to a lack of suitably trained staff ( drivers and ICS level 1 incident commanders ). Local people are more likely to have local knowledge that could, potentially, save vital minutes in attendance time by understanding the roads and built environment in which they work.

#### **4. Changes to the resources in Hastings**

It is proposed the second appliance should be posted to Bohemia Road due to social statistics, however, these are mirrored, albeit to a smaller degree, in the Rye area. Camber, for example, is in the top 5% of deprivation in the UK. Therefore, if you are arguing for increased capacity for social reasons in Hastings, Rye and the surrounding area should retain a second appliance for the same reason. Furthermore, although Camber has a static population of around 800 residents, during the summer season (with its holiday and caravan parks plus day-trippers) it can host in excess of 15,000 to 30,000 people. This can lead to extended attendance times due to congestion on the roads. We know that caravans pose a high risk due to their construction and close proximity to each other, and they contain gas cylinders. Thus, having a second appliance to hand quickly is imperative.

At present, the second fire engine at Rye is only available 55% of the time, which we understand is due to the fact that insufficient numbers of officers are trained (drivers and ISC 1 Level commanders) and, therefore, it cannot be used when needed. Statistics, therefore, would show a much greater use if it were operational.

ESFRS's own policy of offering fire fighters at retained stations fixed term contracts at whole time shift stations is having a detrimental effect on crewing at Rye. With 3 at present on these contracts, all drivers and 2 ISC 1 commanders, there are fewer operational staff with the required qualifications available which means the 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine is less available at Rye.

Having this second fire engine available from Rye (averaging six minutes behind the first) is critical for the safety of the firefighters, giving an incident commander the required amount of personnel to be able to tackle a critical incident safely.

**We feel strongly that the second appliance should not be removed from our town.**

#### **5. Special vehicles – including aerials (high-reach vehicles)**

We are concerned that taking away the swift water response can only be detrimental to a coastal station such as Rye. Rye works with other agencies, such as Pett Level Independent Rescue, rendering humanitarian assistance to illegal immigration, which has seen increased activity in the past few months on our beaches.

With Rye's listed buildings, as we saw with the major fire at the George Hotel in the High Street last year, the town would benefit from a closer aerial ladder. Is there any guarantee that this will be come from Hastings and not Eastbourne if the changes to crewing are implemented increasing its attendance times?

#### **6. Review of previous IRMP proposals**

We note that a smaller vehicle has been dismissed, but we would be interested to learn if such a vehicle would be more beneficial to Rye to gain access to the medieval citadel, getting into holiday homes and manoeuvring

around nearby business parks, costs for a smaller vehicle against a full sized fire engine and potential savings, Devon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Warwickshire all have smaller fire engines in their fleets.

## 7. Changes to full-time staff duty systems.

We are aware that Rye relies on The Ridge for supporting fire engines. Reducing the Ridge to day crewed from full time shift crewed would mean extended attendance times if Rye was reduced to 1 fire engine. Back up to this area takes time because of the logistics. We are unable to rely on Kent crews crossing the border because they operate on a crew of just three firefighters at times, whereas East Sussex has a minimum crew of four. Transfer of equipment and working practices is not always possible between brigades. We, therefore, feel that such a change in systems from shift to day crewed at The Ridge fire station would be detrimental to the town of Rye and, furthermore, the villages and businesses it assists.

We also make the following observations:

- A. This document appears to look only at front line services for 'efficiency savings', but does not appear to consider savings in other areas, such as back office work. These proposals suggest the removal of specialist teams, vehicles and personnel rather than efficiencies elsewhere in the overall service.
- B. Following on, there is no reassurance that ESFRS is investing in 'future proof' IT systems that could save money in the longer term. We understand that the new mobilising system and control room once with West Sussex is due for replacement and the operation of this valuable service will be run by Surrey in the future. The current system has produced mixed results with many problems and breakdowns and we hope that lessons will be learnt from this before such a system is outsourced for ESFRS.
- C. We are concerned that, at a time of global upheaval, now is not the time to consider future plans based on the system that we knew. We feel it would be more advantageous to wait a few months to see what resources and responses are needed post this global pandemic so that they are more robust.

Councillor Rebekah Gilbert, Rye Deputy Mayor  
on behalf of Rye Town Council

*Note Rye Town Council is grateful to serving fire fighter, Councillor Shaun Rogers, who provided it with additional information.*

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I wish to complain to your intention to reduce further the fire services in Newhaven. Services need to be at the current levels to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Newhaven residents.

Good afternoon

Please could I make the following response, agreed by Withyham Parish Councillors and on behalf of Withyham Parish Council, to the ESFRS consultation:

***Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan - To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?***

Strongly Disagree

Due to reducing the number of 2nd Fire engines available at 10 stations (Bexhill, Battle, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye, Uckfield, Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst), i.e. a loss of 10 potentially available fire engines

***Proposal 2: Changes to Day-crewed Duty Stations - Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?***

Strongly disagree

Because the replacement of full time 'on station' crews with 'on call' crews at night and week-ends will lengthen response time and leave less experienced crews to deal with emergencies.

Neither A or B is acceptable.

*Proposal 3: Changing the Number of Fire Stations with Two Fire Engines - To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?*

Strongly disagree

Because although these fire engines may not respond to as many calls as the main fire engine, they provide continuing cover when the first engine is called away.

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?*

Strongly disagree

Because the Maxi-Cabs enable a single machine to take a full life-saving team to an incident.

*Proposal 4: Crewing and Fire Engine Changes at Hastings - To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?*

Strongly disagree

Disagree with the introduction of a day crew system at the Ridge.  
(Agree with a second engine being stationed at Bohemia Road.)

**Proposal 6: Demand Management**

**Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?**

Tend to Agree

*Lift releases To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?*

Tend to Agree

*Trapped birds To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?*

Tend to Agree

*Proposal 7: Changes to 4-Watch Duty System - Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?*

Strongly disagree

Because flexible rostering means that the crews will not know when they are off and when they are working beyond the 6 week rosta period, which means that family and childcare commitments will be impossible to plan ahead.

Option A and B are both rejected.

*Building and Home Inspections To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?*

Strongly agree

More staff should be employed to provide this valuable service, not by taking staff off the fire engines.

*ESFRS' Finances in the Future Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?*

Not Applicable – as we are a Parish Council we do not pay council tax

*To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?*

Tend to agree

*In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?*

We have no suggestions

*ESFRS' Purpose and Commitments To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?*

Strongly agree

*How did you hear about this consultation?*

ESFRS emails

*Further Comments If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.*

1) Withyham is a rural area in the north of the county with isolated farms, a large number of big houses and narrow lanes. The reduction in the number of fire appliances available is of great concern as other 2 engine fire stations in the area are also having their vehicle numbers reduced to 1. Should a major incident arise during the OC cover we are concerned at the ability of the stations in the area to cover such a situation. WPC opposes the proposed changes

2) By 'dual-crewing the Aerial Ladder Platforms at Eastbourne and Hastings this could potentially leave only 1 fully crewed ALP to cover the whole of East Sussex and this is potentially unsafe.

3) By switching from 'fully crewed' to 'day crewed' this would increase call out times at night and week-ends. These are not lower risk times and therefore danger to life and property would be increased.

4) No mention is made anywhere in the Risk Management Plan of consultation with, or information from the adjoining fire services of West Sussex, Kent and Surrey which are relied upon for assistance in major incidents. The capabilities and plans of these neighbouring fire services are vital to the safety of East Sussex residents in a major incident, so this must form part of the risk assessment.

5) There is no mention of how long it would take to get multiple engines to properties such as The Horder Centre Hospital or care homes where there will be many people needing specialist rescue. Getting rid of the second engine at Crowborough (and many other stations) will put these people at increased risk.

6) The Fire Service should be planning for a 'worst case scenario' not simply looking at historical data and planning the minimum number of engines and crews that could deal with past incidents.

Covid-19 should have taught us not to be complacent in planning for emergencies.

Debbie Siddle  
Clerk  
Withyham Parish Council

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Sir/Madam,

Whilst I wish to air my opinion reference the above, I have no desire to complete the online consultation questionnaire which I find 'loaded'. If I object to a proposal to change the crewing system from 'daily-crewed' to 'day-only', I certainly would not then wish to state a preference as to which form of on-call working I would prefer. I oppose such proposal in it's entirety, full stop !

I note your comments 'it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend in these station areas'. You state your analysis shows 'this represents a very small number of incidents & this proposal will therefore have a negligible impact on community risk, attendance standards & incident demand'. No guarantee can be given in this regard. Consequently this is not something I could support.

I would also oppose the proposal to remove the second fire engines from the seven listed Fire Stations. As for the rescue of trapped birds, whilst I accept this is not a priority, & should only be considered when resources allow, I consider that to abandon such activity completely, to be a callous act.

Kindly therefore, note my objections to the proposals.

Please also note this is a personal response, & I do not work for the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

Sincerely



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Dear Senior Management Team at ESFRS and Cllr Galley,

It is with great dismay that we learn of the proposed changes / cuts to the Crowborough Fire and Rescue Team, and would take this opportunity to ask you to seriously reconsider.

We believe this is not appropriate and will result in putting Crowborough residents and residents of the surrounding areas at a greater risk. There are many new housing developments going ahead in the immediate area already, increasing the population by several hundred. There will be other development proposals in the near future too. It seems ludicrous to even suggest reducing the full time crew and losing an engine at the fire station when the population is increasing. Longer response times would endanger the lives of all residents and is totally unacceptable when it could be prevented.

We also live close to the Ashdown Forest where unfortunately fires often occur and the brave souls from Crowborough Station are amongst those that attend. With a growing population, it is unfortunate that more 'accidents' of this nature will occur.

Road Safety is also an issue and although not directly the responsibility of the fire service, their attendance is greatly appreciated and needed. Again with the growing population that is already guaranteed with the new housing developments, road safety will be an even bigger issue.

The fire service is an important service and these cuts should not go ahead.

Yours sincerely



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It has come to my notice that Crowborough Fire Station is under threat of being halved both in a fire appliance and fire fighters.

We surely cannot allow this to happen.

At a time when there appears to be new properties going up all over Crowborough we will need both fire appliances and fire fighters more than ever.

If we were to lose one fire appliance and 50% of the fire fighters and we had a major fire in Crowborough how long would it take for other appliances to come up from Brighton or elsewhere.

By the time they got here the building would have been completely destroyed.

Why has Crowborough got to lose out again, you have taken away our police station, so we do not have any police patrolling Crowborough anymore, and now you want to reduce the fire cover to this town, and we will be expected to pay the same amount of council tax for less cover over both services.

Your Sincerely

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### East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Consultation – HBC submission

In responding to the consultation 'Planning for a Safer Future' we would wish to make the following points:

We recognise:

The challenges facing ESFRS to modernise, provide best value for public money but also to operate within an uncertain and ever tighter financial envelope. However:

We are extremely concerned about:

- The reduction in overall trained firefighter posts out of the whole ESFRS system.
- The move to a day-crewed system at the Ridge, in Hastings, meaning that the station moves from its immediate response to being only full time staffed between Monday – Friday and relying on on-call firefighters providing cover in the evening and at weekends. We are concerned that this will lead to a delay to major event responses where all three appliances are required or where there are concurrent emergencies in our town. We noted that the average attendance time in the Hastings Old Town area was 7.01 minutes (the average across the County and City was 8.12 minutes). The conclusion we must draw is that this will now be longer when serviced by the Ridge at weekends and evenings. As you will be aware our town has in recent times experienced a series of major fires involving empty buildings, including a huge conflagration in the Old Town. This is coupled with a changing climate where we are experiencing longer periods of drier weather, putting areas such as our country park at a greater risk.
- The ability to recruit and retain enough on-call firefighters to cover the move to day-crewing, especially if the new contracts are aligned only to periods where cover is needed at weekends/evenings. What would be the plan B if this was not achievable?
- The change proposed to the crewing of the "aerial ladder platform" (high-reach vehicle) at Bohemia Road to a shared crewing model – it is not clear if this is the same as a flexible crewing pool? The number of HMOs in Hastings always necessitates this facility to be available and staffed.
- Whilst you have explained the rationale for the timing of this consultation, our belief that this review and subsequent changes should not be made whilst all of your partners and community are dealing with a global pandemic. We would be happy to support your case to government for an extension so these matters can be appropriately debated within local communities.

We welcome:

- The focus on prevention, support to businesses and the evidence and risk-based targeting of resources. We would advocate that the fire and rescue services are funded at an appropriate level to avoid the need to choose between competing priorities from within the existing system. Despite the assertion that the changes are 'low risk' based on previous experience, in the context of the emergency work that ESFRS, low risk can always mean there is a threat to life if the service is not able to respond adequately.

- Introduction of an additional (second) fire engine at Bohemia Road, in the light of the higher risk profile of this part of our town, although we recognise that this is at the cost of provision in other parts of the town and the county, and to the number of overall firefighter posts in the ESFRS.

In response to demand management questions, we support the moves to direct limited resources into prevention, protection and training, with the following caveats:

- Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) – Whilst the 96% statistic offers a seemingly obvious direction for you, we would wish this to be well publicised with businesses together with clear criteria, particularly where lack of appropriate maintenance is an issue.
- Lift releases – we would not support a move to delay in responding to freeing people in distress when stuck in lifts. We would however be prepared to consider supporting the introduction of a fee for attending such calls, if it is clear that there are not adequate maintenance and support arrangements in place.

Jane Hartnell  
Managing Director  
Hastings Borough Council

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Dear ESFRS

The proposals 2 and 3 outlined in your Consultation on IRMP 2020-25, have a direct impact on our local fire station in Uckfield.


Proposal 2 reduces the immediate on-site wholetime crew, increasing response times.

Proposal 3 reduces the station to one single fire engine.

Each of these changes conclude with the comment that these reductions in capacity would have “negligible impact.”

Although I thought it was a very slick presentation, it does not seem accurate to entitle this “Planning for a Safer Future.” Surely you would accept that cuts (even those deemed to have negligible impact) can indeed cost lives. Would not “Planning for a Slightly Less Safe Future” have been more appropriate?

Yours sincerely



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**Planning for a safer future: Consultation by East Sussex Fire Authority**

1. I have an interest to declare in that my son is a serving firefighter with ESFRS. However, these comments are entirely on my own behalf as a concerned resident in East Sussex.

**General**

2. The proposals are presented as very positive ideas which appear to broach no objection. I do not think that this is a very fair way to present such an important issue. I can well imagine that many people who might look at these proposals will be ill placed to formulate a critical response. They will in fact have a major impact on our service and should have been presented with a carefully balanced analysis to enable consultees to offer balanced comments.



3. The document is longer and more complex than needed for a public consultation. A Q&A is a good idea in principle, but the term "leading questions" comes to mind. Who on earth is going to think that increasing the number of day appliances from 15 to 18 is not a good idea without seeing all the detailed implications?
4. Issuing this consultation document in the middle of the coronavirus crisis is highly inappropriate. On such an issue there really needs to be the possibility for some public meetings to air the proposals and answer questions that interested parties need clarifying in order to take an informed view.
5. I understand that a Government review of fire services is planned. It is therefore surprising that the fire authority should choose to pre-empt the upcoming review in the middle of a national crisis. It is true that Government reviews are, more often than not, a byword for finding the next cuts. However if this is meant to preempt Government cuts, it is likely to backfire, since the reduced staffing is likely to be taken as the baseline and further cuts. A career in government departments gave me plenty of examples of across the board cuts, which were blind to any savings previously achieved. We would then be left with an unsustainable service which has to give up all but the most basic of services.
6. Now that essential services in which workers risk their lives for others are very much in the public spotlight, we could well expect the Government review to have objectives other than the usual cost cutting exercise.
7. For the reasons mentioned above, I think that you should go back to the drawing board and either:
  - start this process again;
  - or at least postpone it until the government's intentions are known.

#### Increase in the number of day appliances from 15 to 18

8. This is poorly explained and, while positive in appearance, I understand that the increase in the number of appliances comes partly from the re-designation of some appliances and that not all may have immediate crews available. It also focuses on daytime cover and goes hand in hand with a reduction in nighttime and weekend cover.

#### Reducing the number of second fire engines at some stations

9. This removes local resilience and seems reckless. At a large house fire nearby a few years ago, I recall that at least 4 fire engines were present, therefore mobilising the first fire engines from all neighbouring fire stations. If an additional fire, or a traffic accident had happened in the area at the same time, under the proposals fire engines would have had to travel from Eastbourne or Brighton. The document mentions a small delay, but in that example I suggest the delay would have been at least half an hour, whereas, currently, a second local fire engine could be deployed.
10. There were large fires in the North of England last summer, which lasted weeks. Here we have the Ashdown forest and South Downs on our doorstep and the risk should be properly considered, since a local fire service with one appliance per station could be quickly overwhelmed. The current second engine gives some resilience, as was obviously considered necessary in former times. What has changed to justify such a reduction in the capacity of the service?

#### Changes at day crewed stations:

11. The proposed changes in shift patterns mean that night and weekend cover at these stations would be left entirely to on call fire fighters, thereby resulting in an initial delay. It is also dependent on recruiting a large number of on call firefighters, to replace the full time firefighters no longer working nights and weekends on the current shift pattern.
12. This is presented with a proposal to improve the retained pay of on call firefighters. This would of course be welcome, but I understand that it would be linked to increased contractual obligations that are likely to make it difficult to recruit the required numbers. Becoming an on call firefighter is a second job for people from all walks of life who wish to serve their community. They need sufficient flexibility to combine on call firefighting with their main job and their family commitments. Imposing more defined hours would make recruitment difficult and the improvement in the retained pay is unlikely to be sufficient to mitigate this.

### Changes at 2 days + 2 nights stations

13. The six week shift pattern proposed for stations retaining the 2 days + 2 nights shift pattern is poorly explained and it is not clear why it is necessary to make a change. If it is to require staff to attend different stations to cover in case of training or absences, surely the County is not so big that this couldn't be done on an ad-hoc and flexible basis, as I am sure happens currently. This system seems over complicated and will make it difficult for staff to plan their personal lives. It also could compromise the watch system where firefighters work as teams. This is obviously important in this type of work.

### Incidents which the fire service will no longer attend

14. Fire alarms:- while a good proportion of fire alarm calls may be false alarms, it seems to me there will be a serious delay in attending a real fire if the owner has to go and check the alarm first. This would lead to additional risks for the business, neighbouring properties and residents. Why not levy a charge for false alarms instead? It would be an incentive for businesses to keep their alarms in good functioning order, would be a source of income for improvements in the fire service and would eliminate the risks of responses being slowed
15. Trapped birds:- it is mentioned that the animal welfare societies do not have the means to rescue birds trapped in roof netting. Apart from the animal welfare implications of stopping such rescues, there is also a risk of members of the public attempting rescue themselves and having a serious accident as a result. I also understand that such incidents have a value as training exercises with high level appliances, without the pressure for firefighters of being in life threatening situations.

### **Pay**

16. The Prime Minister has talked about better showing our appreciation for health and care workers, including with better pay. I hope that will also apply to firefighters who risk their lives all year round and who are extremely underpaid both in absolute terms and in comparison with comparably skilled jobs.
17. Not only is the pay low, but there appears to be no sliding pay scale once fully trained, or pay progression linked with performance. This is a public service. May I ask how it compares with other public services like, for example, local authority staff or the police service? Do they not have pay progression of some kind?
18. There is also little incentive to seek promotion, since the pay differentials between grades is too minimal to reward responsibility. I believe this is detrimental to the service in the long run, with not enough firefighters climbing the ranks to become the leaders of the future service.

### **Cost and benefits**

19. Finally, I have only been able to find the slightest acknowledgement of the fact that a key driver behind this review is staff cost saving. Whether or not that is the case, it is still important to look at financial benefits and disbenefits of any proposals. For example:
- delaying reactions to alarms saves pointless call outs. On the other hand, the delay in responding to real incidents may ultimately cost lives and/or property;
  - not dealing with trapped birds saves resources, but there is a value to the countervailing training benefits and public safety in preventing members of the public putting themselves at risk to rescue birds.
20. These and all other aspects of the review can be measured and compared in money terms. This would provide a transparent presentation of the measures to enable interested parties to assess their value which is certainly not achieved by many pages of text expressed in qualitative terms.

Yours sincerely



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Dear Councillor Galley

Planning for a safer future: Consultation by East Sussex Fire Authority

Having discussed these proposals with a family member of the fire and rescue service, I wish to make representations against them because of their serious implications for the safety of our service, as well as the safety and welfare of its employees.

### General:

A general point is that the proposals are presented as all pros and no cons. This is improbable. They are worded to highlight each change as an improvement, without acknowledging any drawbacks to these changes. Yet they represents a root and branch upheaval of our local service, which deserve a balanced analysis for the public to consider.

In addition, the manner in which comments are invited is not equitable: the document is lengthy and complicated. It will have been tempting for consultees to rely on the summary on the right hand side, together with the Q&A which it is suggested is used to send comments. However this Q&A is worded in very **leading terms** under which only a favourable answer is possible and there is no space for additional comments until the very end (*e.g. the first question asks whether we are in favour of the number of day appliances increasing from 15 to 18. Of course we are, but the issue is not as straightforward as that, although this is not explained in the document*).

### Timing:

I object most strongly to the issue of this consultation document in the middle of the coronavirus crisis. This compromises the consultation process, because it makes it more difficult for the public to arrive at a proper understanding of the proposals and their implications: there can be no public meetings, no public decoding of the proposals. This is a one sided coin, with no opportunity for the union or staff to show the other side of the coin and thereby allow the public to take an informed view. Could this not be termed an abuse of procedure in the current circumstances? **I believe that this consultation should be postponed until such time as it can carried out in a transparent way.**

Furthermore, we are told that a Government review is imminent. It is therefore doubly surprising that the fire authority should choose to pre-empt the upcoming review in the middle of a national crisis. It is true that Government reviews are, more often than not, a byword for finding the next cuts. However if this is meant to preempt Government cuts, it is likely to backfire, since the reduced staffing is likely to be taken as the baseline and further cuts could well be requested. A career in government departments gave me plenty of examples of across the board cuts, which were blind to any savings previously achieved. We will then be left with an unsustainable service which has to give up all but the most basic of services.

In addition, we are now in a state of flux, with promises that essential services in which workers risk their lives for others will be better regarded and rewarded in the future and there is much talk of "building resilience" within these services. The Government review could therefore have changed objectives and this is not the time to conduct a cost cutting exercise.

### Increase in the number of day appliances from 15 to 18

This is poorly explained and, while positive in appearance, I understand that the increase in the number of appliances comes partly from the re-designation of some appliances and that not all may have immediate crews available. It also focuses on daytime cover and goes hand in hand with a reduction in nighttime and weekend cover.

### Reducing the number of second fire engines at some stations

This removes local resilience and seems reckless. At a large house fire nearby a few years ago, I recall that at least 4 fire engines were present, therefore mobilising the first fire engines from all neighbouring fire stations. If an additional fire, or a traffic accident had happened in the area at the same time, under the proposals fire engines would have had to travel from Eastbourne or Brighton. The document mentions a small delay, but in that example I suggest the delay would have been at least half an hour, whereas, currently, a second local fire engine could be deployed.

The current health crisis should inform thinking, showing as it does that disasters are unpredictable. There were large fires in the North of England last summer, which lasted weeks. Here we have the Ashdown forest and South

Downs on our doorstep and the risk should be properly considered, since a local fire service with one appliance per station could be quickly overwhelmed. The current second engine gives some resilience, as was obviously considered necessary in former times. What has changed to justify such a reduction in the capacity of the service?

### Changes at day crewed stations:

The proposed changes in shift patterns mean that night and weekend cover at these stations would be left entirely to on call fire fighters, thereby resulting in an initial delay. It is also dependent on recruiting a large number of on call firefighters, to replace the full time firefighters no longer working nights and weekends on the current shift pattern.

This is presented with a proposal to improve the retained pay of on call firefighters. This would of course be welcome, but I understand that it would be linked to increased contractual obligations that are likely to make it difficult to recruit the required numbers. Becoming an on call firefighter is a second job for people from all walks of life who wish to serve their community. They need sufficient flexibility to combine on call firefighting with their main job and their family commitments. Imposing more defined hours would make recruitment difficult and the improvement in the retained pay is unlikely to be sufficient to mitigate this.

### Changes at 2days + 2 nights stations

The six week shift pattern proposed for stations retaining the 2 days + 2 nights shift pattern is poorly explained and it is not clear why it is necessary to make a change. If it is to require staff to attend different stations to cover in case of training or absences, surely the County is not so big that this couldn't be done on an ad-hoc and flexible basis, as I am sure happens currently. This system seems over complicated and will make it difficult for staff to plan their personal lives. It also could compromise the watch system where firefighters work as teams. This is obviously important in this type of work.

### Incidents which the fire service will no longer attend

Fire alarms:- while a good proportion of fire alarm calls may be false alarms, it seems to me there will be a serious delay in attending a real fire if the owner has to go and check the alarm first, with additional risk to the business, neighbouring properties and residents. Why not levy a charge for false alarms instead? It would be an incentive for businesses to keep their alarms in good functioning order, would be a source of income for improvements in the fire service and would eliminate the risks of responses being slowed

Trapped birds:- it is mentioned that the animal welfare societies do not have the means to rescue birds trapped in roof netting. Apart from the animal welfare implications of stopping such rescues, there is also a risk of members of the public attempting rescue themselves and having a serious accident as a result. I also understand that such incidents have a value as training exercises with high level appliances, without the pressure for firefighters of being in life threatening situations.

### Pay

While this is not mentioned in the document except in relation to the retainer for on call firefighters, I think the review that should be taking place is on pay. This comment is based solely on my own observation.

The Prime Minister has talked about better showing our appreciation for health and care workers, including with better pay. I hope that will also apply to firefighters who risk their lives all year round and who are extremely underpaid both in absolute terms and in comparison with comparably skilled jobs.

Not only is the pay low, but there appears to be no sliding pay scale once fully trained, or pay progression linked with performance. This is a public service. May I ask how it compares with other public services like, for example, local authority staff or the police service? Do they not have pay progression of some kind? While working in a particular Government Department, I also had a period when pay progression was suspended for a time. As a result my pension is nearly half that of my husband, who worked in a different Department where pay progression had been maintained. I therefore feel very strongly about this. Pay progression based on performance is a valuable and equitable incentive in any profession.

There is also little incentive to seek promotion, since the pay differentials between grades is too minimal to reward responsibility. I believe this is detrimental to the service in the long run, with not enough firefighters climbing the ranks to become the leaders of the future service.

There also seems to be inequalities in the fire service pension system, which I intend to write to you about separately.

May I ask how it compares with, for example, local authority staff or the police service? Do they not have pay progression of some kind? While working in a particular Government Department, I also had a period when pay progression was suspended. As a result my pension is nearly half that of my husband, who worked in a different Department where pay progression had been maintained. I therefore feel very strongly about this.

These and all other aspects of the review can be measured and compared in money terms. This would provide a transparent presentation of the measures to enable interested parties to assess their value which is certainly not achieved by many pages of text expressed in qualitative terms.

There is a lot of talk currently about "increasing resilience " in the NHS once the crisis is over. It seems to me the same should apply to the fire service. Instead these proposals pare it to the bone.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

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To Whom it May Concern

I have recently received a leaflet about the proposed changes to Crowborough Fire Station. I was hoping you'd be able to explain the reasons for reducing the staffing and fire cover provided by Crowborough Fire Station to the surrounding area?

Further to this, as a resident of Crowborough, I'd specifically like to know what you predict the effect on attendance times for first and second fire appliances will be, I'd like to know how pre-determined attendances to different incidents will be affected and I'd be interested to know the justification behind these changes.

As well intentioned as these changes to the organisation of East Sussex Fire and Rescue may be; I'm curious to know whether this is a strategic shuffle of fire appliances to redistribute necessary cover, or if this is a penny pinching exercise and you intend to plug holes left by cuts to whole time staff with retained firefighters?

I hope this email finds you well and I look forward to your response and a correspondence with you regarding this matter.

Kind regards

[Redacted signature]

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To whom this may concern

I would like to raise my objection to the proposed planned cuts to the Fire Service. This will put our Communities at risk.

Please keep me informed of any developments in this area.

Kind regards

[Redacted signature]

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Dear Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker

### **Re Proposed changes and cuts to our fire service**

Thank you for your letter dated June 2020 about the public consultation on the future proposals for East Sussex Fire and Rescue service.

We have read your document, that you suggest people study and although we find some of the document compelling, we have particular concerns about the fire stations in Uckfield end Crowborough.

We are geographically at the very northern end of the area that your service covers, and we strongly feel that both Uckfield and Crowborough should retain their current allocation of two fire engines plus the current staffing levels and shift patterns.

We do not feel that adequate account has been taken of the proposed expansion of housing in both Uckfield and Crowborough and the additional load this potentially will have on the fire service. In addition, fires often happen on Ashdown Forest which necessitate both the Crowborough and Uckfield fire engines attending. This is particular to our area of the County. Fire crews and appliances can be involved in fighting fires on Ashdown Forest for a considerable length of time and if there were only one appliance in each station this would leave our area very vulnerable.

The changes to the way staff are rostered and allocated in the stations also is of great concern and the response times to emergencies will be impeded by those changes.

If these proposals were to be implemented the Fire and Rescue service will lose experienced knowledgeable and highly skilled firefighters who will be difficult to replace. They also have an excellent knowledge of our locality and the particular issues within it. These proposals appeared to take no real cognisance of what knowledge and experience will be lost through these proposed changes.

Within the document there appears to be an implicit assumption that the central control location will be moved to one that covers a much greater geographical area. This raises enormous issues about the knowledge of those call handlers and the ability to direct locally based personal and appliances to the right place. We feel this is a money driven initiative rather than what is best for the service.

In fact, the basis of this document also appears to be an attempt to cut the budget while currently there is no requirement to do this. This seems short sighted and unnecessary.

We are also genuinely concerned that this consultation is happening while there is a national emergency to deal with a global pandemic and the current restrictions mean there are not adequate opportunities to attend meetings and discuss these proposals publicly.

We believe this consultation should be suspended until the national emergency is over and any consultation can happen in an appropriate, transparent and open way.

We support both Uckfield Town Council and Crowborough Town Council in their objections to these changes and would support their recommendations to you on the subject.

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As a member of Lewes Town Council, these are my responses to the consultation.

Lewes Town Council is making a corporate response, and this will be sent separately.

The implications to Lewes are contained within proposals 123 and 6.

### **Proposal 1**

#### Operational Resilience Plan

Changes to the service will mean that Lewes station will go from 2 appliances to 1.

It is not known how many "on-call" staff will be needed to guarantee 100% availability of one appliance. Without a full complement of staff, full cover cannot be guaranteed.

This also means that an incident somewhere else will take away that engine, leaving Lewes without capacity. I cannot accept that this is in the interests of Lewes residents.

### **Proposal 2\_**

#### Changes to Day Crewed Stations

The loss to Lewes of 6 wholtime jobs of fully trained firefighters cannot be balanced by replacing them with "on-call" staff.

- The crew that provides evening, night and weekend cover are entirely different to the permanent crew, so will have limited experience operating the engine and equipment.
- Recruiting these on-call / retained firefighters is extremely challenging, particularly in a reasonably prosperous town such as Lewes:
  - The salary offered (£11k-13k/annum) would not be enough to attract people to do this as their only job
  - Therefore, they will have other work commitments which could affect their availability
  - Turnover of these staff is very high; most take it as a last resort but accept other, permanent jobs (inside or outside the service) if they become available
  - The turnover is a particular problem as training firefighters in all of the necessary disciplines generally takes about 2 years (so if staff turnover more often than that there is never a fully-qualified crew)
  - Being all on call all evenings, nights and weekends is a very family- and friends-unfriendly arrangement (e.g. never being able to go to the pub or have a drink in the evening or at weekends) which few people would accept for the salary on offer
- By necessity, the on-call crew (who will have other jobs) will be very much a scratch crew with availability dictated by other work commitments; therefore assembling a crew with all of the right skills to crew an engine properly (driver, breathing-apparatus specialist, junior officer, etc) will be extremely complex with a high risk that not all staff will be properly skilled (risking their lives and the lives of people caught in the fire)
- The crew will also have limited experience of working together and will not know each other's strengths and capabilities well, reducing the efficiency of the response and increasing the risk to residents/employees and firefighters
- There would be less emergency/contingency cover available when there are multiple calls (e.g. when the Technical Response unit is out (currently the other permanent firefighters can be called on when necessary as they do not have other jobs).

**(Currently, Lewes has only managed to recruit and retain 3.5 'units' of retained staff (a 'unit' is someone on call 120 hours/week); 12 would be required to cover the loss of the second watch.)**

The replacement of trained full time firefighters with "flexible crewing pool" will increase stress and risk to them as the strength of working in established teams will be compromised.

I cannot agree that this change is in the interests either of the residents of the town, nor the firefighters resident here.

### **Proposal 3\_**

#### Second Fire Engines

For bigger incidents in Lewes , two engines are deployed as a matter of course. This provides additional equipment / resilience and flexibility, which would be lost if this proposal were implemented.

If a second engine was needed, it would need to be called from another station (assuming one is available) which would very significantly increase call-out times (increasing the risk to Lewes residents, businesses and fire fighters).

On the other side, if there was an incident elsewhere in East Sussex, Lewes would be far less likely to be able to provide an additional engine for fear of leaving the town unprotected.

A recent wildfire in Ashdown Forest required 8 engines in attendance. If this number of second engines are removed, that would leave some fire stations (including some "core" stations) without any engine available in the event of a local fire.

### **Proposal 6**

## Demand Management

Stop call out to Automatic Fire Alarms

1. Risk of fire spreading in high-density / old commercial areas in Lewes. Although 96% no fire, in 4% there is a fire and this could spread rapidly in dense areas such as Lewes. Increased risk of loss of life, especially in the flats above many of the town centre commercial properties.

Lift rescue stopped

2. Limited impact, but questionable whether this will make a great deal of difference as unlikely that the lift maintenance teams will respond within an acceptable timescale.

Stop rescuing trapped birds

3. Much greater risk of the public / others trying to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves, putting themselves at considerable risk.

Council tax contributions to the Fire Service are not reducing. The cuts are being proposed because of reductions / uncertainty in Government Grants. We therefore are firmly of the opinion that central Government must provide assurances that Fire Service grants will not be reduced, so that the Fire Service can make proper plans for the future without the need to make these dangerous cuts to front-line services.

Furthermore, -West Sussex FRS implemented similar changes 4-5 years ago. Their most recent inspection report rated it as one of the worst Fire Services in the country (inadequate in its protection of the public and looking after its staff; and requiring improvement in the way that it keeps people safe and secure and the way it uses its resources). It now requires £34m of investment to address the many failings identified by the inspection. Trying to make similar savings in East Sussex would therefore have a high risk of actually costing more in the medium term.

According to ESFRS risk profile for Lewes, incidences have increased 0.3% since 2009, and Lewes itself is rated as the 3rd busiest day crewed area within East Sussex. There are proportionally more fires and RTCs and twice the number of non-residential fires compared to figures within East Sussex.

Add to this the increasing potential for consequences of climate chaos: flooding and wildfires, and the increase in the size of the town both in residential and business property, it is very clear that reducing capacity of the service provided to the town is compromises safety to our residents and to the firefighters who live here and we cannot accept it.

  
  
Town Councillor, Priory Ward, Lewes

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Dear Sirs

Councillors have looked into this and they think prior to commenting it would be best to hear from East Sussex Fire and Rescue.

They say;

'This seems to be mainly about risk management, though it does mention cost savings a few times so they suspect its more of a driver than it indicates. That being said most stations have seen a 20-30% reduction in incidents so a reduction operational cost is possibly appropriate.

- On page 44 it states resources will be moved to where they are most needed.
- It also states 7 (Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield) will cease to be two engine station and become one, though it fails to state where those resources will be reallocated.
- 3 Stations (Seaford, Heathfield, and Wadhurst) already have one and are being reclassified instead of a maxi-cab to a single, it doesn't directly suggest this will decrease the number of firefighters at these stations but it doesn't explicitly say they will remain stationed there.



- There will also be an additional engine at Hastings.
- This means at most a reduction in 6 engines not 10, with a new aerial unit this would actually mean reducing 35 to 30 vehicles, given not all engines can respond now as there is a lack of crew this in itself doesn't seem so alarming.
- Any losses in available crews are a little less transparent, as lots of the proposals overlap, and it isn't clear if losses in one add to another, which could mean the proposed 30 vehicles aren't able to be used which may be worrying.

In all they feel this is a complex report with multiple overlapping proposals. Given this affects a public service, Councillors feel there is a need for a more transparent view of the impacts of the proposals in particular with the staffing levels. A simple existing and proposed - net loss/gain in hours and number of personnel would help greatly.

Alison Stevens  
Clerk to Berwick Parish Council

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We have been notified of a downgrading of Rye Fire Station to a single appliance, and I have examined the ESFRS consultation document which is titled "Planning for a Safer Future".

Rye has a densely packed centre, with most of the houses in the Citadel area being grade 2 listed or above. Many of the streets have houses which, because of their age have attics that communicate. As residents of the Citadel we have been concerned for years that any fire could thus rapidly spread sideways to involve multiple buildings, quite apart from most being of timber construction and therefore likely to burn fast.

The recent fire at "The George" Hotel is an example of how rapidly fire can take hold and cause substantial damage. To reduce the number of appliances stationed at Rye, not least as it covers extensive holiday camp accommodation at Camber and Dungeness power station, is a significant threat to the town. In the case of "The George" a long ladder appliance had to be called, and it took at least 20 minutes to arrive; with only one appliance in Rye, were there to be another fire like this the delay before others could be brought across will lead to loss of property and possibly loss of life.

I have noted the figures for the number of fires requiring only a single appliance. I do not agree that this fact justifies the proposal given the layout and historic importance of the town, which is more vulnerable than any of the other towns where the proposal has been made.

The Fire Brigades Union is concerned that the proposal is dangerous. So am I. Indeed I would go so far as to suggest it would be negligent, not least given the inappropriate title of the consultation so far as Rye is concerned.

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I have read the proposed suggested changes to the service and I am incredulous.

Once again the north of the county is to suffer with resources concentrated in the south.

This is highly questionable with the highly vulnerable Ashdown Forest seeing increasing traffic and visitors and the related fire risks.

As for the suggestion that a fire service can be run 9 to 6 is clearly a nonsense-try asking those who suffer a possible life threatening fire between the hours not covered!

The 50per cent cut in highly trained and skilled operatives in the growing town of Crowborough is a major concern and with the loss of related equipment raises the question of the meeting of legal levels of coverage and service levels.

Please reconsider these series of dangerous proposals which will put lives at risk and threaten people's livelihoods. Quite frankly one begins to wonder why we pay council tax....no local ambulance service, pot holes everywhere, road gullies remaining blocked after four years, etc etc. And now devastating proposals around the fire service.

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I have received your circular letter, dated June 2020. This paints a completely different picture to the proposed plan than I understood.

I am a resident of Crowborough and have been for more than 50 years, having seen it grow from a village of 9K to the largest inland town in the county of some 24K+. The growth continues with several hundred new properties under construction or in the advanced planning stage.

With this in mind. I cannot see the logic or common sense for our local fire station being reduced in man hours, one main vehicle and the amount of full time staff. To make matters worse, my understanding is that our nearest assistance - Uckfield - is to suffer the same cuts. To my mind, such action can only lead to unacceptable delays and greater risk of damage to property and even more seriously, loss of life.

I would respectfully urge you to reconsider this plan and at least maintain the status quo.

I thank you for the opportunity for me to make my feelings known and sincerely trust these and other like minded comments will and surely must be taken into account.

Respectively

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On the non emergency calls agree birds should not be rescued.

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Dear Sirs

### **ESFRS Consultation Proposals**

I am writing on behalf of the Parish Council, in response to the recent consultation you have published, entitled Planning for a Safer Future.

The Council is of course very supportive of ESFRS and the fantastic work done by its staff, and it recognises your limited resources. However the Council would like to put on record that it does not support your proposals to remove a second fire appliance from Battle and Bexhill, and to move to 'day only' at Battle and Bexhill.

Yours faithfully,  
Clerk to Crowhurst Parish Council

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Dear Sir/Madam

### **South Highton Parish Council response to the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Consultation 'Planning for a Safer Future'**

South Highton Parish Council considered this consultation at their meeting on 16th June 2020 and resolved to present the following comments to the consultation.

The Council has read the ESFRS Response 'Statement on consultation decision' dated 28th April regarding the decision to hold the consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic and expresses concern at this decision; the consultation must take into account what fire and rescue services should look like in the future – the pandemic, and its effect on fire and rescue services, must be taken into account within the consultation process and the Council hopes that this will be the case.

The Council is concerned at the following statement on page 42 of the consultation document regarding Proposal 2 – changes to day crewed duty stations “the community would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend in these station areas”. The Council, and many residents, feel that the proposed introduction of a ‘Day Only’ crewing model, with evenings and weekends being covered only by on-call firefighters, would lead to significantly increased response times and that any additional time taken to respond to an incident has the potential to put lives at risk.

Furthermore, the Council would like to raise the issue of increased traffic on our surrounding roads and how this would affect the proposals. Page 20 of the risk management plan notes that the population of East Sussex is set to increase by 55,000 by 2032 which will undoubtedly lead to increased traffic on our roads and increased households within our towns and villages. In recent months, the area has had significant development approved, particularly within the Newhaven port area, which will result in increased traffic on our roads. In addition, the recent closure of the Newhaven Port lorry holding area over the weekends has forced many large heavy-goods vehicles back onto our surrounding roads and the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a large influx of tourists to the South East coast. The Council, and residents, feel that now is not the time to be reducing available fire engines and crewed stations.

The Council could not find any reference within the proposals to deal with the Newhaven Swing Bridge opening. The swing bridge causes significant tail-backs and queues which are only set to increase with the new industrial developments in the area; with the removal of second fire engines at Newhaven, Seaford and Lewes, residents would like to be assured that there would be no delay in response if an incident occurred whilst the swing bridge was operational.

South Highton, and the local area, has seen increased flooding, particularly over the winter of 2019 and residents are again concerned that the removal of second fire engines at nearby stations could result in reduced capacity and response times to respond to flooding incidents.

Thank you for taking our concerns into account, we look forward to seeing them addressed during the consultation process.

Yours Sincerely

On behalf of South Highton Parish Council

Stephanie Mills

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Dear Senior Management Team of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

I am concerned to hear that there are plans to cut a fire engine and 50% loss of full-time fire fighters at Crowborough, plus a reduction in evening and weekend fire cover. I am concerned to hear this as are many others in Crowborough as we are concerned about the safety of this proposal. Can you please re-think it and explain how you think Crowborough and surrounding villages would be safely covered under such a proposal. Under such a proposal how would fire engines get to houses quickly enough in emergency situations? We are all very concerned about this.

Yours faithfully

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SEAFORD TOWN COUNCIL

**Response to Consultation by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service on ‘Planning for a Secure Future’**

The Consultation document has been forwarded to and considered by members of the Council and we would ask that the following points are taken into consideration :-

1. Overall the review should be more honest about the fact that one of the main purposes must be to make up a deficit in funding. This is only acknowledged indirectly in the final pages. However, the decision not to close any stations in East Sussex and Brighton is welcomed

2. It is noted that Seaford is reclassified from a maxi-cab station to an ordinary single engine. There is concern over the future effectiveness of the cover at Seaford particularly at a time when there is significant housing growth in the town and the town already has a high elderly demographic with limited mobility, many living in blocks of flats. Survey responses from previous years may not necessarily be relevant to the next 10 years when so much growth is envisaged

3. We should comment on the proposed changes at Newhaven as it is close enough to be considered a local station; we are fortunate in having two stations operating in a relatively small area. However, the proposed removal of fulltime staff covering evenings and weekends at Newhaven and reliance instead on an unmanned station and on-call staff will inevitably affect emergency cover in both towns

4. The proximity of Newhaven to Seaford may have been taken into account in the review of staffing and general cover but it should be pointed out that a road accident blocking the A259 between the two towns would effectively prevent any assistance from Newhaven to any fire or other incident occurring in Seaford and vice versa

5. The additional flexibility generally in having a mobile pool of fire officers to supplement stations around the county may sound like a good idea but it may adversely affect officer morale which comes from attachment to a particular team or watch at a specific home station. Also, it is difficult to see how the proposed reduction of officers by 33 or 27, depending on which option is followed, can actually improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the county service.

6. Charging fees for attending false alarms may be appropriate in certain circumstances but proposing not to attend alarm calls from low risk commercial premises discriminates against small business and could have grave consequences for those businesses and their neighbours. As regards lift releases, any proposed delay in responding would be a concern but there would be support for charging in these cases

Geoff Johnson  
Planning Officer  
Seaford Town Council

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We reference to receiving a leaflet regarding closure of certain fire stations in East Sussex,  
This is an absolute ludicrous idea with population alone in Crowborough.

There are new homes being built as we speak, we live next to Ashdown forest which has many fires and also road and traffic accidents.

How can this be a viable to the safety of the community to have a fire engine being called from a station that's miles away. More lives will be lost and disasters not being able to be dealt with as quickly.

I really hope for the sake of the community and jobs that will be jeopardised this does not happen especially in Crowborough as this is my home town.

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Response of Lewes District Council (LDC)

### Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan

#### Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?

#### LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ **Tend to disagree**/ Strongly disagree

The Council supports the proposal to increase the number of immediate response fire engines at the start of the day to 18. On its own, and as the *Planning for a Safer Future* consultation document mentions, these would have an impact on coverage overall.

However, under Proposal 3 - *We are proposing to change the number of fire stations that have two fire engines based on them*, Lewes and Newhaven fire stations for example, would have a single fire engine. These fire stations would be unable to provide a resilience fire engine if one were needed in Seaford. Therefore, in such an event, a resilience engine would need to come from a smaller station such as Barcombe. We are concerned that this might increase the time required for a resilience engine to travel to Seaford if needed, any may leave Barcombe without a fire engine for that period. The Council is concerned by the potential for heightened risks faced by households, businesses and firefighters that could result from increased delays arising from the reduction in the total number of fire engines.

## Proposal 2: Changes to Day-crewed Duty Stations

### Question

Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?

### LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ **Tend to disagree**/ Strongly disagree

The Council disagrees with the proposals to reduce the number of permanent watches in Lewes and Newhaven from two to one, and to replace the second watch with a flexible crewing pool made up of on-call firefighters.

### Question

Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

### LDC Response

Option A/ Option B

The Council disagrees with the proposal to change the crewing system from "day-crewed" to "day-only". Consequently, neither of the alternative options proposed are supported.

## Proposal 3: Changing the Number of Fire Stations with Two Fire Engines

### Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

### LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ **Tend to disagree**/ Strongly disagree

The Council disagrees with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from the seven fire stations.

Removing seven fire engines from these fire stations has the potential to significantly increase call-out times, increase the risk that fire engines will not be available to attend an incident, and increase the risk to households, businesses and firefighters.

In July 2019 Lewes District Council declared a climate emergency. Climate change is expected to increase wildfires and flooding in East Sussex. By their nature, these incidents require the attendance of many fire engines for long periods. A reduction in the number of fire engines, and by seven in total, may compromise the ability of ESFRS to respond to any such incidents.

### Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?

LDC Response

A concern is that by reducing the capability of Seaford fire station as well as other stations, this may decrease the effectiveness of any response, and has the potential to increase the time required to respond to larger incidents. This may also increase the likelihood that other fire engines will need to be called in from nearby fire stations.

**Proposal 4: Crewing and Fire Engine Changes at Hastings**

Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree/ **Don't know**  
There is no direct impact of this change on Lewes District.

**Proposal 6: Demand Management**

Question

Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs): To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ **Neither agree nor disagree**/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree  
The *Planning for a Safer Future* consultation document explains that on average, ESFRS attends 9,200 incidents each year. Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) account for 34% of all these calls, but 96% of the calls initially categorised as AFAs turn out to be false alarms.  
We remain concerned that in the dense commercial areas at the centre of Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford, where in many cases people are living above the commercial premises and often other businesses immediately adjacent, the ability to respond quickly to AFAs will be critical in avoiding loss of life or the spread of fire to other businesses.

Question

Lift releases: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ **Neither agree nor disagree**/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree  
The Council agrees with the principle that the building owners should resolve the issue when there is no risk or distress to the people who are trapped. However, there remain questions concerning how often this will be possible without causing risk or distress to trapped occupants.

Question

Trapped birds: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ **Neither agree nor disagree**/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree

It is the Council's understanding that the Fire Service normally only attends incidents involving trapped birds after it has been asked to do so by wildlife charities. This would normally be because there is no way to free the animals without the specialist equipment that the Fire Service has, and/or because the animal is in considerable distress.

The Council is aware of the many competing responsibilities of the Fire Service. However, if the animals are not rescued by ESFRS, there is potential for greater risk to the public and others in attempting to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves. Without the suitable equipment of the Fire Service, the public may place themselves at risk.

### Proposal 7: Changes to 4-Watch Duty System

#### Question

Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?

#### LDC Response

Strongly agree/ Tend to agree/ **Neither agree nor disagree**/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree

Although this proposal does not directly affect Lewes District, there are concerns about the replacement of permanent fire fighters with flexible and/or on-call crews.

#### Question

Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

#### LDC Response

Option A/ Option B

The Council disagrees with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements. Consequently, neither of the alternative options proposed are supported.

### Building and Home Inspections

#### Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?

#### LDC Response

Strongly agree/ **Tend to agree**/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree

The Council agrees that alongside existing services provided by ESFRS, more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and would offer more public assurance about fire safety.

### ESFRS' Finances in the Future

#### Question

Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?

#### LDC Response

Yes/ No/ Don't know

No comment.

#### Question

To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ **Tend to agree**/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree

The Council agrees that ESFRS currently offers value for money. However, the proposals as set out have the potential to compromise the overall ability of ESFRS to maintain its range of services and consequently, this may reduce the organisations' ability to provide value for money moving forwards.

Question

In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?

LDC Response

Some of the potential ways that organisations can look to make savings include simplifying services, or by sharing or multi-purposing office spaces to reduce administration costs, for example.

**ESFRS' Purpose and Commitments**

Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?

LDC Response

Strongly agree/ **Tend to agree**/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Tend to disagree/ Strongly disagree

The Council has no concerns with the current purpose and commitments of ESFRS.

If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.

No response.

Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account? If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?

No response.

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Dear Councillors,

I'm hoping that the residents of Seaford, Peacehaven, Telscombe Newhaven and surrounding villages can rely on you to oppose the proposal to reduce fire and rescue services in their areas.

To reduce the capacity (of both fire engines and staff) in Newhaven seems very short sighted to me. One fire engine to cover such a large area and population could be problematic, especially if the swing bridge was open and, therefore, the seaford crew were held up trying to assist if 2 appliances were deemed necessary.

Having spent so much money on the new fire station only a few years ago, it is difficult to comprehend why it is being proposed to half its capacity. Will the excess capacity be offered for community use. The whole concept of this building was so good in principle with 2 of the emergency services being housed in one building.

Unfortunately the police no longer use the building to anywhere near its full potential. Are the old police and fire stations ever going to be sold or developed for the benefit of Newhaven?

I look forward to receiving your reassurance that you will oppose these proposals.

Regards

[Redacted Signature]

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Dear Ms Hart

I would like to register with you my wholehearted opposition to any proposed Cuts to Rye Fire Station. I understand it is currently the 4th busiest on call in East Sussex.

Across East Sussex, the proposed cuts would see the loss of up to 30 full time posts and up to 60 retained fire fighter posts.



1 fire engine crewed with just 4 firefighters to cover approximately 106sq kilometers - in proximity of an airport, 2 major holiday camps in Camber, Dungeness nuclear power station and 1 upper-Tier Comah (Control of Major Accident Hazards) site.

When The George Hotel in Rye burned down last year, it took 8 fire crews to deal, promptly and effectively, with the blaze - and to ensure the entire High St didn't go up in flames as well. I still have pieces of molten lead that prove just how hot the fire was.

There have been 6+ incidents of arson in the Rye area over the last couple of years.

Hastings Pier burned down in 2010, as have Eastbourne and Brighton piers.

The East Sussex coastline between Hastings and Brighton/Hove has some extremely high buildings and tower blocks. One of which I saw in flames on Hastings seafront a few years ago.

The entire country benefited during the Covid 19 pandemic when the extra work by firefighters included helping to deliver health and other vital supplies; assembling Personal Protective Equipment; most crucially of all, assisting ambulance/emergency services including with deceased victims.

Just one lesson that the current Government, and local authorities, ought to have learned from the current Covid 19 pandemic is that Cutting already over-stretched Public Services has very serious Consequences.

I hope that you and your colleagues, in Parliament and local government, will be opposing these proposed cuts and thereby showing Rye and all Emergency services they have your full support for their crucial work.

It is Vital Work that we all have benefitted from.

Thank you for your time.

yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

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If Bexhill Fire station is not covered 24 hours a day how can this be safe? If there is a fire at night retained firefighter would have to be contacted and go to the fire station to man the appliance.

What is the maximum extra time involved by your proposals?

[Redacted Signature]

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To whom it may concern at the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Fire Authority,

Please find below a response to the 'Planning for a Safer Future' consultation from the Brighton and Hove City Council Green Group of Councillors.

The submission is put forward on behalf of all nineteen Green Councillors, who may also send on individual responses using the online form.

Our response reflects our concerns that the changes proposed, while perhaps not intended to have a detrimental impact on fire safety, could lead to a poorer service and have particularly negative impacts on Brighton and Hove. Our response is also informed by feedback from staff represented in the Fire Brigades Union, who we recognise as offering valuable insight into how work is delivered 'on the ground.' We also note that a public petition calling for a rejection of the proposals has amassed over 29,000 signatures at the time of writing – a sizeable public opposition.

We have been alarmed to read that the Medium Term Financial Plan suggests that the authority may need to make savings of between £0.7m and £3.6m by 2024/25. Though we appreciate that the Authority is under pressure to deliver a service that falls within more recent budget constraints, the 'savings' that are suggested in the proposals do, in our view, represent cuts to budgets that are already suffering the effects of underfunding across the past ten years. We recognise that the Government is reviewing how much is spent on public services such as the Fire and Rescue service, however we note that three MPs have spoken out against current proposals, with Green MP Caroline Lucas calling for increased funding to the service. Our group of Green Councillors also remain outspoken about cuts to public services, particularly our fire and rescue service, and we also refer you to public statements we have made in this regard.

While we are relieved to see that none of the city's fire stations will be closed as part of these savings, nonetheless, we are resolute in our view that the removal of secondary engines from surrounding towns will have an impact on the capacity of the service to respond to fires across the region and therefore in our city.

As a result, we have serious objections to the proposals which we urge you to consider. We hope the below serves as a useful general response from the group, and that the detail below will serve to augment any additional individual responses received through the online survey.

Sincerely,

Brighton and Hove Green Group of Councillors  
(As undersigned)

Councillor Steph Powell, Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty, Councillor Hannah Clare, Councillor Steve Davis, Councillor Lizzie Deane, Councillor Marianna Ebel, Councillor David Gibson, Councillor Amy Heley, Councillor Elaine Hills, Councillor Siriol Hugh-Jones, Councillor Leo Littman, Councillor Alex Phillips, Councillor Tom Druitt, Councillor Jamie Lloyd, Councillor Sarah Nield, Councillor Martin Osborne, Councillor Clare Rainey, Councillor Sue Shanks, Councillor Pete West

Response of Green Councillors on Brighton & Hove City Council:

## Proposal 1: Operational Resilience Plan

### 1.Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?

### Green Councillor Response

#### Tend to disagree

We have reviewed this question in line with **Proposal 3** "*We are proposing to change the number of fire stations that have two fire engines based on them.*"

The proposal to increase the fire engines at the start of the day from 15 to 18 does, in our view, not improve any fire cover in the Brighton and Hove area, as Brighton and Hove will still persist with 4 engines.

We are concerned that the secondary fire engine at Preston Circus (91P4) will be taken out of the city to cover neighbouring fire stations like Lewes and Newhaven. This is because Lewes and Newhaven fire stations would now have a single fire engine, and these stations would therefore be unable to provide a resilience fire engine if one were needed in central Brighton.

## Proposal 2: Changes to Day-crewed Duty Stations

### Question

2. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?

### Green Councillor Response

#### Tend to disagree

The changes to day crewing station will mean that they only provide day cover Mon – Fri. Our concern is therefore that the Preston Circus crew will go on calls further towards the Lewes area, due to the reduction in the immediate response provided by Lewes, most notably at night-time and weekends (when a good number of incidents tend to happen).

We are concerned that the same will also happen with Roedean, as they will be taken out of the city to cover Newhaven's ground at night-time and at weekends, due to them being on a 5-minute delay more of the time.

As far as we are aware, the current system of Watch crew works well. It ensures a current minimum of 10 staff on duty to get the vehicles out, and ensures that the staff are trained to get those vehicles out, i.e., an Incident Commander, a driver, and ideally 2 fire-fighters competent with breathing apparatus.

There is a danger that Managers will be in the office managing cover rather than out doing prevention and training work.

The system has worked very well since 1975. The FBU want to keep this system in place and we support them in this.

### Extra Question

3. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A: reduction of 33 posts or B reduction of 28 posts).

### Green Councillor Response

We support neither option so would prefer to opt for 'don't know' if possible.

## Proposal 3: Changing the Number of Fire Stations with Two Fire Engines

### Question

4. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

### Green Councillor Response

#### Strongly disagree

The removal of second fire engines will again see Preston Circus and Roedean taken out of the city more often and further afield to cover gaps left by the removal of other second fire engines. Roedean

will be "Newhaven's second fire engine" and first to attend at night and weekends. This will significantly increase the amount of time Roedean is unavailable to cover Brighton and Hove. Preston Circus will be covering a lot more of Lewes as a second fire engine.

This proposal also means there are less fire engines to back-up the city. It is worth pointing out that B&H needs a minimum of 6 fire engines for a high-rise fire. We only have 4 in Brighton and Hove, so we are always relying on neighbouring fire stations to support us, most notably Newhaven and Lewes, who are both set to have a fire engine cut.

The recent wildfire in the Ashdown Forest required 8 engines in attendance. If this number of second engines is removed, then that might leave some fire stations (including some "core" stations) without any engine available in the event of a local fire.

In 2019 Brighton & Hove City Council declared a climate emergency. It is expected that climate chaos will happen, and that we will see an increase in wildfires and flooding across East Sussex, including Brighton and Hove. We need all of our fire engines to remain as is.

### Extra Question

5. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?

### Green Councillor Response

**Disagree.** We are concerned that this refers to down-grading 10 fire stations from a dual-status to single-pump station.

We remain concerned that as a result Roedean's fire engine will be taken out more and more from the city, leaving the city vulnerable.

## Proposal 4: Crewing and Fire Engine Changes at Hastings

### 6. Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?

### Green Councillor Response

#### **Tend to disagree**

The Hastings proposals are a cause of concern for Hastings. However, with regard to Brighton and Hove, we are concerned this will mean there will be no guaranteed second Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) for Brighton to call upon. The Recent Pankhurst Avenue fire in Hanover & Elm Grove in Brighton required two ALPs.

## Proposal 5 – Changes to the provision of specialist vehicles, including aerial appliances.

The reduction of whole-time and retained staff on day-crewed stations and the removal of second fire engines means that there will be less staff to crew big incidents. If there is a large incident in Brighton and Hove and we need both fire engines and special vehicles to come, we question whether there will

be enough staff to crew all those vehicles. This in our view could lead to damaging delays in Brighton and Hove getting the back-up that it requires.

## Proposal 6: Demand Management

### 7. Question

Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs): To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?

#### Green Councillor Response

#### Tend to disagree

The *Planning for a Safer Future* consultation document explains that on average, ESFRS attends 9,200 incidents each year. Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) account for 34% of all these calls, but 96% of the calls initially categorised as AFAs turn out to be false alarms.

However we note from feedback that Fire-fighters believe that AFA's are never false alarms to start with, and that alarms go off for a reason. Irrespective, without checking, actual fires can be left to burn for longer periods of time, needing more resources to put them out once they are called.

### 8. Question

Lift releases: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?

#### Green Councillor Response

#### Strongly disagree

We are deeply concerned that this proposal is being made without regard to what other services may or not be available. While we recognise that the Fire Service could be better supported by more appropriate corporate management of lifts, it remains that the fire service have the equipment and expertise to deal with incidences of people trapped in lifts. There is also a high degree of trust in the fire service as a responder to these incidences. Lift maintenance teams may not respond in an acceptable timescale.

Crucially, we note from feedback that Fire-fighters believe that lift rescues are vital for fire-fighters to attend as not only does it mean they can maintain a core humanitarian service to the people of Brighton and Hove, it also gives them a chance to keep familiarity with high-rise buildings in the city if there was a fire. We stand with this comment, particularly following the tragic Grenfell fire.

### 9. Question

Trapped birds: To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?

Green Councillor Response

**Strongly disagree**

If animals are not rescued by ESFRS, there is potential for greater risk to the public in attempting to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves.

Fire fighters say that bird rescues are a good way of fire-fighters doing real-life training with the ALP, and that it stops the public putting themselves in danger, leading the fire service in turn to be in the position of rescuing them.

Furthermore it remains the case that while not the fault of the fire authority, animal charities do not have the funding, equipment or necessary training to (in some cases) scale buildings or deal with this safely and appropriately. Should that support be forthcoming this proposal could perhaps be reviewed. However in present circumstances it feels unhelpful that the fire service would be asked to step back from assisting with this kind of work, given the considerable expertise and public trust in the service, as well as the training required.

## Proposal 7: Changes to 4-Watch Duty System

Question

10. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?

Green Councillor Response

**Strongly disagree**

We are concerned that both options A and B could have a negative impact on Brighton and Hove. Flexi-rostering has been flagged as presenting accessibility issues with regard to being 'family-friendly' and could be detrimental to both male and female fire-fighters with childcare. This needs to be addressed and recognised.

Option A also means some crews will never work/ train with the same crew. It is the case that individuals may be less effective on incidents due to unfamiliarity with the team and in contrast with team-building, such conditions can also affect morale, perhaps unnecessarily.

Option B takes 4 fire fighters out of Brighton and Hove and reduces the Watch strength at Hove and Roedean to 5. Our concern is that when leave is rostered this will leave both stations always crewing at the minimum. This in our view is unacceptable as it means when they are sent to house fires they will not have the safe amount of crew on the scene to rescue people or put out fires, until the second fire engine arrives. As above, the arrival of the second fire engine could also be delayed owing to the impact of other proposals in this document.

### 11. Question

Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

#### Green Councillor Response

Option A/ Option B

We would prefer to state 'don't know,' as we agree with neither and feel other options than those prescribed need to be explored, in consultation with the service crews.

## Building and Home Inspections

### 12. Question

To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?

#### Green Councillor Response

Tend to agree/

More building and home inspections and visits is a positive way to reduce risk and would offer more public assurance about fire safety.

We note the National Fire Chiefs Council's statement that:

"...[these interventions] has resulted in a reduction of risk and a dramatic drop in demand for fire and rescue services, and consequent reductions in the number of deaths and injuries from accidental fires in the home."

As the service is under pressure to 'make savings,' prevention is better than cure, in this regard.

## ESFRS' Finances in the Future

### 13. Question

Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?

#### Green Councillor Response

Yes/ No/ Don't know

### 14. Question

To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?

## Green Councillor Response

**Strongly agree/**

Surveys tell us that firefighters are viewed as one of the most trusted professions – across the globe. The level of public trust and engagement with the service cannot be underestimated. The service in this regard goes beyond ‘value for money,’ and we also believe it is vital that the approach to changes to the Fire Service are not only viewed through a ‘monetary’ lens. Indeed, to continue to strengthen our communities, adopt new, innovative practices and support hard working fire crews, we need stronger investment from central government, to deliver a better service – not further savings. We would urge the Fire Authority to continue to take an active role in asserting the human value (not only ‘value for money’ aspect) of the Fire Service and to consider further lobbying for this.

### 15. Question

**In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?**

## Green Councillor Response

The advent of Covid-19 has necessitated changes to ways of working which has in some cases reduced the need for permanent office space – where some staff in clerical roles are working from home, the service may wish to consult with them on their needs with regard to office space.

Recruiting staff on permanent contracts would also offer better terms and conditions for staff, improving retention but also reducing recruitment costs overall.

Energy efficient buildings, and exploring the possibility of support for building repairs in line with this, may also represent an opportunity for cost-savings and improving carbon emissions. Refurbishments of existing space may also offer positive opportunities in future for cost savings.

Expertise could also be shared with other authorities – rather than the current practice, which appears to necessitate paying for consultants.

Further lobbying for funding and advocacy on behalf of our local fire service would also be a welcome approach.

## **ESFRS' Purpose and Commitments**

### 16. Question

**To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?**

## Green Councillor Response

**Tend to agree/**

Once again, we note that the Fire Service is held in high esteem by our communities, and we strongly welcome the focus on prevention.

If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.



We remain concerned that the length of this consultation and the detail of proposals involved will have put off many members of the public from responding, and would urge the Authority to consider if this could be simplified in future.

**Are there any positive or negative impacts from ESFRS that you believe should be taken into account? If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?**

No response.

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Cllr Roy Galley

Chair East Sussex Fire Authority

and

All members of the Fire Authority and Crowborough and Uckfield Town Council Mayors

### Don't hide bad news in a time of Crisis - Harvard Business Review – May 2020

Having read your article, submitted to the Fairwarp Echo, I was more than a little surprised how unspecific it was in outlining the implications of the proposed cuts put forward for consultation. It also did not specify who was being consulted; there was no suggestion local residents should, or, are expected to respond or by when. It was also unclear as to why the Fire Service were proposing these cuts; presumably they are having to respond to the limitations of the budget allocated by you, the Fire Authority. To imply you are responding to their demands is a flagrant misrepresentation of the truth.

How our nation responds to the Covid 19 crisis, will define the legacy we leave for the generations who follow us. What we have learnt above everything during the Covid 19 pandemic is that our key workers are in fact key to the well-being of our whole population, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. The lack of planning that engulfed Care Homes is systematic of concentrating resources in the wrong areas.

***Question No 1 - How many firefighters does it take to evacuate the average size Nursing Home in the short space of time before a fire in any of the ageing buildings, modified for use as a care home, is uncontrollably alight?***

(Fires in Nursing/ Care Homes are most likely to be at night, when staffing levels in the home and in the Fire Service are at their lowest).

We live in changing, challenging, times. East Sussex's climate is one of those changes and it contains one of the largest heathland areas in the country, prone to wildfires; the extent of similar fires across the globe has been dramatic over the past twelve months. You will have no doubt read your copy of 'Ashdown Forest Living' where it warns

'the wildfire danger on Ashdown Forest is extreme. Particularly dry antecedent conditions mean ignitions are likely, resulting in fires that will be difficult to control.'

East Sussex Council, of which you are a member, have had responsibility for the Forest and its inhabitants, both wildlife and human, since 1974 with a controlling number of seats on the Board of Conservators.

*Question No 2 - As part of your consultation process, have all residents of the Ashdown Forest been specifically informed that the reduction in Fire appliances at both Crowborough and Uckfield increases the risk to their property and themselves?*

(This will undoubtedly affect their insurance premiums. They need to know this.)

I presume the damage of wildfires getting out of control due to a reduction in resources and manpower and the subsequent damage to property and wildlife is considered a risk worth taking.

Wildfire is not the only climatic 'disaster' that could affect this area. Changes in rainfall patterns, increases the chances of flooding in many areas in the county; particularly areas normally covered by Crowborough and Uckfield.

*Question No 3 - Why has the Fire Authority not fought for improved budgets for the Fire and Rescue Service in the same way as the Police and Crime Commissioner has, when the underfunding of their service is totally obvious to anyone with an insight of the inadequate and outdated equipment being used.*

Although 3 or 4 new appliances are being sought, these are not replacing the appliances being withdrawn but replacing old and outdated equipment elsewhere.

*Question No 4 Where stations are being reduced to a single appliance, what backup is available should that one and only appliance be involved in an incident on its way to an emergency.*

An appliance can be stood down from an emergency response due to a number of different protocols.

*Question No 5 - Are the Members of the Fire Authority aware that the decision they are proposing is most likely to result in the demise of the Fire and Rescue Service as we have known it.*

Why? Until now Retained Firefighters have supported Day Stations out of hours; the perception that there will be sufficient good will amongst firefighters, both full-time and retained, to provide a safe level of cover out of hours is dangerously ill conceived.

Your deceptive reference to the number of false calls suggests a change in response times; this can increase the chances of a fatality or fatalities. I cannot understand the logic, if the one and only appliance sent from Crowborough or Uckfield should be at the farthest point of its outreach and another call comes in, the consequences are serious, providing the correct risk assessment has been undertaken.

*Question No 6 - If Crowborough are on an animal rescue on the south coast, or in Kent, is there sufficient man power left on station to man the remaining appliance?*

Or

*Question No 7 - If there should be a barn fire, at night, containing animals which appliances would you suggest sending?*

Having celebrated VE Day, it was after this that there was a re-evaluation, by the British public as to what was important in life and it wasn't economic thrift. It was recognition that public service was even more important and public services needed to be funded appropriately. After years of underfunding and poor decision making by East

Sussex Fire Authority , for which you take ultimate responsibility, the Service is now totally ill equipped for its next major challenge, whether it be another hotel fire at the wrong time of day or a major forest wildfire or too many serious incidents at the same time.

The timing of this consultation can only be attributed to a desire to push through an unpopular and reckless proposal at a time when most peoples' attention and concern has been a world wide pandemic. To take a decision with such huge implications for the safety of the local population when no one, including most of the Fire authority's members, has any idea what kind of society will result from these unprecedented times, is foolhardy and irresponsible. This country is a very different one that went into this pandemic and is different still to the one before events in America and around a number of cities in this country. It is therefore a very different one to that when these proposals were first written, to blindly follow the same line of thinking would show a complete lack of understanding of the community you purport to represent.

I have today received in the post a letter, apparently instigated by the Fire and Rescue Service themselves, which purports to respond to claims that do not present all the facts! Nor does the letter! Like all the communications supporting your proposals and encouraging taking part in the consultation it give no date as to when the consultation ends; in fact in the ESFRS letter it could be mistakenly thought that the public has until September when the Fire Authority meets. On this basis alone, a legal challenge would be successful on these grounds alone.

The offer of enhanced contracts to retained fire-fighters is an interesting preconception. When the Service will most need them, is when those community fire stations, downgraded to 'business hours', will become reliant on those already having completed a days work and willing to give up their weekends and disregard family duties! What kind of enhanced contract is that?

Improved emergency cover, statistics, by concentrating cover in highly populated areas, the majority of rural areas will have increased response times and lower levels of cover. Nowhere have I seen this implication of the redistribution of resources outlined. I presume you are fully aware of how a similar redistribution of resources in the ambulance service has gone so terribly wrong.

I hope you have found time, to read this letter but also, to respond positively to the issues raised within it.

Yours sincerely



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Dear Mr Galley

I have read ESFRS IRMP and as you are the Chairman of the Fire Authority, I would like to raise some concerns I have with these proposals.

Proposal 1, it states you are proposing to enhance the operational resilience of ESFRS, by increasing the number of core fire engines available at the start of each day to 18.

Will these 18 fire engines remain available all day everyday after the start of the day (unless they are at an incident of course), or will the service allow this figure to drop to below 18 fire engines after the start of each day as it progresses, thus not increasing the operational resilience at all??

Proposal 2, Changes to Day Crewed Stations, the current day crewed rota system allows all staff who work this shift system to provide on call hours at evenings and weekends. By changing this shift system to just day crewed, means these individuals do not have to give on call cover at night or weekends. The service will have to recruit and retain a lot more new on call firefighters to keep these stations available during these periods. You will notice

around the UK Fire and Rescue Service that they already struggle to recruit and retain on call staff do you not envisage this a problem?

Proposal 3, Changing The Number of Fire Stations With 2 Fire Engines On Them. I heard you're interview on Uckfield FM saying you will only be reducing the number of fire engines in ESFRS by 5 and not 10 like the FBU have stated. I realise when being interviewed mistakes are sometimes made, after all we are only human. Could you correct your mistake as you are proposing getting rid of second fire engines at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Uckfield and Rye, I make that 7 fire engines. You must also be aware as Chairman of the Fire Authority that Wadhurst, Seaford and Heathfield Fire Stations are currently classified as 2 fire engine stations. The actual physical second fire engine at these stations has already been taken away and replaced at these with a maxi cab fire engine, this type of fire engine carries more firefighters, but the station is still classified as a 2 fire engine station. So if you downgrade and replace a maxi cab fire engine with a normal fire engine you have in effect reclassified this station as a one fire engine station, in effect on paper removing 3 fire engines worth of crew. So hypothetically speaking the FBU are right, you are proposing to downgrade 10 2 fire engine stations to one fire engine as you are also proposing to cut the hybrid maxi cab fire Enugu was to a standard fire engine.

As the ESFRS Fire Authority Chairman you will/should be aware that for an Incident Commander to initially put a safe system of work in place to deal with a dwelling fire (not high rise that takes more crew) in the initial stages, there is a task analysis that says you need 7 firefighters to do this. If your proposals go through you will need 2 fire engines to initially attend this type of incident to allow an incident commander to put this safe system of work in place.

ESFRS generally ride with 4 firefighters on a fire engine. The City fire stations are quite fortunate the second fire engine turns up fairly quickly as support, but in the more rural areas (as in your constituency), it is a longer wait for a second fire engine to turn up, so by getting rid of second fire engines, which add resilience to support incidents, you are making them wait longer to put that safe system of work in place, thus compromising firefighter and public safety.

Proposal 4, Changing The Way Hastings Stations are Crewed. Whilst I think it is fantastic an additional immediate response fire engine is being put into Bohemia Road Hastings, because the risk is greater, as it is a more deprived area, by making The Ridge Fire Station a day crewed station, at evenings and weekends, due to the turnout time for on call staff and the way the 4i mobilising system works, that second fire engine at Bohemia Rd will pick up most of the calls on The Ridge fire ground, as it will be the quickest and nearest fire engine at night and weekends, this ties up this fire engine dealing with The Ridge firecalls removing it from the fire ground with the greater risk. This will also be the same if you share crew this second appliance with an aerial appliance. If the aerial gets a call the crew from this second fire engine will crew the aerial appliance, making the second appliance unavailable. My point is that over the last nine years as stated in your proposals Bohemia Road has the most life risk fire incidents. ESFRS initially sends 3 fire engines to a fire incident where persons are involved, or trapped by fire, by share crewing the second appliance with the aerial appliance, you are either leaving the aerial appliance unavailable if all 3 Hastings fire engines are required, or if the aerial appliance is required at the persons involved fire incident, then the second fire engine at Bohemia Rd becomes unavailable. So if you need 3 fire engines to initially deal with a fire incident that involves people you are adding to the response times for vehicles to attend especially at evenings and weekends when The Ridge turnout time will be increased by at least 5 minutes, thus increasing the risk.

Proposal 5, Changing how you provide and Crew Special appliances. I see you are proposing to primary crew the aerial appliance in the City of Brighton and Hove, but are proposing to share crew the aerial appliance capability at Hastings and Eastbourne. I have already highlighted concerns regarding share crewing aerial appliances at Hastings above I would also like you to realise that ESFRS is quite unique, its high rise risk is quite high, something like 6th in the country outside London for the population of high rise buildings. So I believe share crewing the aerial capability at Hastings and Eastbourne increases risk to the public and compromises firefighter safety. When

there is a fire and an aerial appliance needs to be used, it needs to be got to work as soon as possible for a rescue and is no good turning up later to a fire as it's access to where it needs to pitch will get compromised.

Also the ESFRS Hierarchy of Working at Height states an aerial appliance should be considered first, as it provides a stable working platform and should be considered before working off fire service ladders.

I should also point out that if the aerial appliance that is primary crewed in Brighton is unavailable due to mechanical issues, the aerial appliance from Hastings or Eastbourne gets sent across to cover the greater risk in The City. So if proposals go ahead to share crew the aerial appliances at Hastings and Eastbourne and they are sent to the City to provide a primary crewed aerial capability, this will then not only remove the aerial cover from Hastings or Eastbourne, but also make the second fire engine at these stations unavailable, so you are increasing the risk in these areas. Aerial appliances in ESFRS, certainly over the last year, are being used more and more as we work collaboratively with SeCamb, to assist in the removal of patients so keeping aerials primary crewed throughout ESFRS is vitally important.

Proposal 6, Other IRMP decisions whilst I agree rescuing birds takes up a lot of fire service resources, ESFRS should still respond to a life risk where individuals are stuck in lifts and they should also provide a full response to commercial fire alarms at night, which like all fire alarms should be treated as a fire until confirmed otherwise by the Fire and Rescue Service, after all ESFRS are not just there to save lives, but we also have a duty to save saveable property. Perhaps Central Government should ask for funding from Insurance companies to pay for the services of the fire and rescue service to keep their insurance payouts to a minimum.

All in all, I believe this IRMP is not about reducing risk, but about how to make savings which will increase risk.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

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Dear Dawn

As we continue to work closely together in order to provide the best possible services to the communities of Sussex, we welcome and support your evidence led approach in compiling the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020 –2025 for consultation. As a key partner agency it is imperative that we always strive to improve the services that we offer, as we work closely together protecting the public and saving lives. Through our joint response to road traffic collisions, fire investigations or managing major incidents, the principles underpinned through the JESIP approach of collaborative working having never been more important. We know through our own Force Management Statement (FMS) process that understanding your operational demand can only help shape and inform your response to managing risk and highlighting opportunities in order to deliver a better service to the public and partners.

Thank you for sharing your approach in producing your IRMP and on behalf of Sussex Police we look forward to continuing working closely with you.

Kind regards  
Jo Shiner  
Chief Constable  
Sussex Police

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### Planning for a Safer Future Survey

That is for you to decide. The people are not experts in fire safety and therefore cannot comment in any useful fashion, however I hope this is not a prelude to asking for more money on the precept. The people, especially the poorer people, are fed up with being milked by all Government led departments whether at local or national level.

The national average wage is £26,000 and the average Council Tax takes 9% of that wage or 4.5% if two people are living and working from the same house which is patently an abuse by Local Government. We need to find a better system that keeps costs down and reduces Council Tax demands. The ultimate pressure must be upon reducing Council Tax.

So I would ask you to consider not only how you can improve the fire service as is your wont, but also how you can reduce the cost of implementing it in the interests of the people. Little effort appears to be made by local Councils that waste vast sums of money. An example might well be the payment of a parish clerk that should be a voluntary position perhaps carrying some prestige rather than a salary.

Thank you.

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## Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025

### Proposals Affecting Crowborough Fire Station

#### Proposal 1

##### Operational Resilience Plan

#### ***To Provide 18 Immediate Response Fire Engines***

I have concerns that 10 of these are on RDS stations and so they cannot surely be classed as 'immediate'. In your own words, "they will take slightly longer to attend".

#### ***Proposal 1a – Flexible Crewing Pool***

This multi-skilled suggested workforce will not be good for the workers. Turning up every day to not know where you may be working to provide cover, working with individuals you have never worked with before cannot be good for the way the Service is used to providing an efficient workforce. We are used to a Team approach in everything we do, how can this be achieved with this system?

#### ***Proposal 1b - New Contracts where required which are aligned to periods where cover is needed to maintain Fire Engine availability.***

It is assumed RDS are going to sign up to these contracts, in fact in the FAQ's form that the Service has issued it stated they may not have to sign up to them at all. How will the availability improve as a result? I do not disagree that the RDS system needs to be reviewed but if they do not sign up to it and are still employed what happens then?

#### Proposal 2

##### Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

The crewing models the Service have suggested are going to slow response to the whole of Wealden that unfortunately is a fact of which you acknowledge. This is the same for Crowborough, Uckfield, Bexhill, Newhaven, Lewes and Battle as well that will have similar systems. One of the crewing models you suggest, Option A is for the wholetime staff to be on station five days a week 8.5 hours, this may be from 0900-1730 in the daytime, then the remainder covered by our Retained colleagues at night time and at weekends. This will not only lead to a reduction in cover for an extra 2 hours in the day (currently we work 0830-1830 daytime) but will lead to this same reduction at the weekends. What you fail to include is that the wholetime Firefighters generally live closer to the station as a result of previous recruitment and having to live 5 minutes from station. This means that at night they are generally quicker to respond as the time frame for retained staff has been increased due to difficulties in recruiting. Currently your statistics will reflect this as the wholetime are shown in them, if they are lost in these periods the time to turn a Fire Engine out will drastically increase. In fact through my stations own research we have found that in the evening if we were to go to the suggested model in the proposals the availability for just one appliance is the following:

2016 – 18%

2017 – 12%

2018 – 8.7%  
2019 – 1.37%  
2020 – First 4 months this year 2.48%

And for the weekend is:

2016 – 56%  
2017 – 20%  
2018 – 13.6%  
2019 – 0.96%  
2020 – First 4 months this year 8.82%

Granted the weekend is better during 2016, but cover has drastically reduced. These are figures that you will not have as your system cannot be setup to account for the loss of the wholetime personnel who are currently already being paid and support the more favourable statistics that the Service show in the IRMP. The numbers shown above will have to go a long way to make up to the 100% availability in the evenings and weekends that are currently provided for one appliance. And with Crowborough having twice the amount of houses built in the next three years than it has had in the last nine this could be devastating.

*Wealden Planning figures – 450 homes 2011-19, 938 homes 2020-23/24. With the collapse of the Wealden local plan this could be more.*

Some staff on day-crewed stations have had 5 shift changes in the last 17 years, how does this affect their family and mental health which the Service are so keen to acknowledge is high on their priorities (as they state on page 57 of the proposals in terms of introducing 'Champions')?

In addition the IRMP states *"This option results in a net reduction of 33 posts providing the opportunity to reinvest highly trained and skilled staff into the service-wide flexible crewing pool, training, prevention and protection teams"*. I believe that the Government nationally have issued an additional £20 million in funding for us to complete more fire inspection and enforcement and as a result of our HMI recent report this is needed. But I would say that we have been cut over the years as well so it is probably underfunded from what we have lost and as a result had to remove. I would however have concerns about the Service trying to take some resources from our response to provide more for the inspection work. Strangely enough in the HMI report ESFRS scored well on the resources and being generally in the correct places and response to incidents being good. However what ESFRS are currently suggesting is more taking away from one that is performing well to give to another, how many years before we realise this is a mistake?

Option B is similar in terms of cover although gives the extra 2 hours back in the daytime, but still reduces the weekend.

### Proposal 3

#### Removal of Second Fire Engine at various stations around the County

The third proposal on your plan is to lose the second Fire Engine at Crowborough as well as many other stations. Although this resource is not used as much as some other appliances in the County it is there when the first Fire Appliance goes out to cover the residents of the town and the surrounding areas so is a vital resource that we should not remove if we can avoid it. This provides a quick backup to life saving incidents such as RTC's and house fires. This is particularly relevant for Crowborough being so far to the north of the County. This unfortunately would not really be a statistic that the Service would record as it would mainly (although not solely) be when they are called to another station ground, using 83P1 as an example that could be Wadhurst, Heathfield, Forest Row or even over the border to places like Tunbridge Wells. I have found out statistics and already this year Crowborough have attended 43.5% of other stations calls. As stated above being so far north of the County and the retained stations sometimes being unavailable this is what it is sometimes needed for. In addition this area can be very isolated leaving Crew and Watch Managers in a very different position than our colleagues on

the coast at incidents, waiting a lot longer for a second appliance to assist.

### Proposal 5

#### Changes to how Specialist vehicles are crewed including aerial appliances.

I believe that at this time it would be irresponsible to not 'primary crew' the aerial appliances in East Sussex. We do not know yet the outcome of the Phase 2 Grenfell Report and so I feel this should be at the very least known prior to making decisions to reduce the crewing of these vital resources, especially in areas such as Hastings and Eastbourne.

Removing the Swift Water capability altogether when we know that global warming is affecting drastic weather fluctuations is moving in the wrong direction. We should be keeping these at least as they are and then if necessary increasing the capability when the evidence is gathered on further periods of weather variation. In the 2017-20 IRMP it stated that we have a '*significant length of coast as well as numerous inland rivers, lakes and reservoirs*'. "*We are also involved in a number of rescues and unfortunately body recoveries every year*" - A number that has not changed that much I believe but your statistics in the ORR are under representing such incidents, this may be due to recording data for those but the local stations that have this team have records that more accurately record when water has been involved and the team required.

The reduction in off-road capability can surely not even be considered, especially after incidents like the recent forest fires which are rectified in the whole by utilising the 4x4 capabilities we have. The fact we have to call other services in for much of the recently attended ones shows that we are under-resourced if anything.

A recent fire on the forest involved seven 4x4 vehicles, including all our 5 Land Rovers and 2 Mercedes off road vehicles from West Sussex. That is not including the amount of standby moves and appliances that were called on as a result. Surrey has similar area to us, but the Service has the use of 3 Mercedes Unimog's and 10 x Land Rovers all fitted for Wildfire capability. We have under half of this and it is looking at being reduced by removing Wadhurst's capability which is often Crowborough's first back-up. I understand you need to look at where they are allocated but please do not reduce to the point that we are greatly overstretched and relying too much on other Services for 'mutual-aid'.

#### Additional Comments:

[REDACTED] based at Crowborough station, I have lived and worked in the town for [REDACTED] years, in total I have over 20 years' experience in being a Firefighter. I love my town and the community I serve and am proud to be part of that. I have built my life around this lovely area of Wealden. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. As stated already the shift pattern I work has changed 5 times in the last 17 years, all these times I have had to make adjustments to my family life as a result, it then ends up coming full circle to the pattern we told you that works or very similar to that. Unfortunately this as you can imagine leads to unnecessary stress and anxiety of which I am sure you are aware. I know the Service has to change sometimes and as you can see from the above comments I have done so, but please from this feedback listen to us, your staff. We can find ways to help save and improve (I have many ideas!). I hope you take these comments on board and if further feedback or clarity is required on some of my comments please do not hesitate to contact me.

[REDACTED]  
Crowborough Fire Station

#### **Similar response sent to Cllr Dowling:**

Dear Mr Dowling,

I write to you as I am sure many of my colleagues have over the past few weeks regarding the proposed decisions in East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's IRMP. These decisions are going to impact our community in a big way. I





decision if you want further clarification on the station personnel's views? Obviously social distancing etiquette being followed, or I would be more than willing to setup a Facetime / Webex meeting if you prefer.

Yours Faithfully

  
FBU Health and Safety Representative  
Crowborough Fire Station

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I have responded via the on-line consultation but also wanted to add some concerns as a direct comment.

I have great sympathy with the situation that East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service finds itself in, with the service having to save £12 million over a 5 year period and an annual loss of 7.5% in grant funding from central government.

I realise that this exercise is about looking where available resources should be deployed including elsewhere in the County – but I cannot believe that these number of reductions would be considered if the government had not put the Fire and Rescue Service in this impossible situation.

I specifically wanted to raise the situation with Lewes fire station. I strongly oppose the reduction of one fire engine and although I can see that under the plans, there would still be 24/7 cover from Lewes, the document does accept there would be some reduction in capacity due to both this and a reduction in full time firefighters.

Without a second appliance, the logical consequence is that incidents will need to wait for an appliance from another station to arrive at some points in the week. Page 42 of the IRMP accepts that “it would mean we may take slightly longer to attend during the daytime at the weekend”.

I also think that two other factors have emerged since the data was collated that fed into the IRMP:

1. Climate change. 2020 has been one of the driest May months in the South East since records began - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/891286/South\\_East\\_England\\_Water\\_Situation\\_Report\\_May\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/891286/South_East_England_Water_Situation_Report_May_2020.pdf).

There are already well documented cases of ESFRS having to attend forest fires on Ashdown Forest across 16 and 17 May 2020, other areas near to my ward include Chailey Common (fire broke out on May 13th) - and there are other areas of open countryside - for example Ditchling Common - nearby. Page 18 recognises the record breaking hot summer of 2018 but I believe further work is needed to fully understand the impact of climate change on our area and any extra demands that will be placed on our fire service as a result.

2. Impact of Covid 19. For example, many more people are now working from home, and I believe further study of what this could mean in terms of fire risk - appliances being overloaded for example - should be undertaken before making any final judgements on the firefighting resources needed.

As I stated earlier, I recognise that the IRMP is a legal requirement and that the Minister of State required Fire Authorities to continue with their IRMP consultations despite the Coronavirus outbreak.

In James Brokenshire's letter to Fire Authorities dated 23rd April, he stated that while authorities could delay the publication of their consultations, this would not protect them from the Secretary of State making an intervention against an FRA who failed to have due regard for the framework. I appreciate this has left the ESFRS in a position where they have had to pursue the consultation on the IRMP while in the middle of the Coronavirus outbreak and before the impact is known.

The Government should instead be lobbied to relax this requirement to meet the requirements of the framework at this time and to reverse funding cuts to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, so that changes to fire stations such as Lewes would not be necessary. I also challenge the MPs for East Sussex to lobby the Government to secure these changes.

Cllr Rob Banks

Plumpton, East Chiltington, Streat and St John Without

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Carry on it will come home to roost. Disgraceful

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Dear Madam or Sir

**Re: East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).**

We would make the following observations on the ESFRS IRMP.

The town of Rye is amongst the jewels of this country; the Citadel, the old part of the town, contains many timber buildings, and must be considered as a potential risk on that basis. The recent fire that destroyed much of the George Hotel was attended by eight engines.

Furthermore, in the context of the Rye station, the IRMP identifies Camber as a potential problem because of its housing stock, a problem which is exacerbated particularly in the summer months by the numbers of tourists who flock there, making access difficult at times.

Because of these factors we would not recommend any reduction of service at the Rye station.

Similar arguments apply to The Ridge, Hastings station, which affords a significant time-saving, probably at least ten minutes on the Bohemia Road station in reaching incidents in the villages between Hastings and Rye – we would particularly cite Fairlight and Pett, where the roads are not good and frequently prone to accidents. On that basis we would not recommend any reduction of service at The Ridge station.

Yours faithfully

Stewart Rayment

Hastings & Rye Liberal Democrats

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Dear East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

I refer to the consultation on the Planning for a Safer Future consultation.

My interests stems from being a member of the Lewes Conservation Area Advisory Group (LCAAG) and also being a member of the Friends of Lewes (FoL) executive committee.

I am conscious that Lewes has a significant number of historic buildings and two conservation areas with a large number of listed buildings, including Grade 1 category buildings. Many of the buildings within the town are timber framed, including newer developments such as the Printworks in St Nicholas Lane. Significant areas of the town such as Cliffe High Street, High Street, Market Street, Southover High Street, East Street, South Street and elsewhere have no fire breaks, and/or contain open roof areas to the buildings. Consequently, there is an inherent risk that any fire within such buildings will be able to spread very quickly along streets. Clearly, recent fires, such as that at the former Intersport building and Harveys shop in Cliffe High Street may have had a different outcome to a much wider number of buildings, with a potential loss of life, if the arrival of the fire service had been longer. Malling House itself was only saved with the prompt and ready availability of experienced fire fighters and two fire appliances.

I have had a look at the changes proposed and whilst I left a message to be called back, no one has phoned and therefore I am making my comments on the basis of my understanding of the document. Because of the technical language used and the way the document is written I have to say it is not easy for the layman to readily understand, or grasp the implications of the changes. Overall I think the changes will have a negative impact on the fire service ability to deliver the current level of service and the specific changes will reduce the amount of fire cover within the town of Lewes and should be resisted.

The loss of one fire appliance from Lewes will have detrimental consequences for the town. This will mean an immediate back up appliance is not available and no appliance is available if there is either a second incident in the town or the first appliance is required to support an emergency in a nearby town. This change is unacceptable.

If I have understood it properly it is also proposed to change the crewing arrangements in the evening and weekends, when the risk of a significant fire emergency is seemingly greatest. At these times it appears that reliance is to be placed on less experienced firefighters who will be unable to respond as quickly as the day crew.

I cannot see that these changes meet the obligations on public authorities under section 61 of the Environment Act 1995 to conserve the heritage of the area.

I therefore wish to oppose these aspects of the proposals.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Yours sincerely



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Dear Sir / Madam,

I write to you with my views on the proposed IRMP for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The main theme of this IRMP is to reduce the number of fire fighters and firefighting equipment including fire engines throughout the county but particular impact will be felt at day crewed stations.

With the removal of second appliances from a number of day crewed stations the fire services ability to provide a timely and effective response will be reduced. Though it is acknowledged that the availability of a fire engine crewed by 'on-call' firefighters is largely down to the availability of crew, that lack of availability should not be used as reasoning for the removal. Stating that you currently send appliances in from other towns is merely conceding that you cannot provide a timely and fully effective response from the home station. It seems somewhat ignored that the 'on-call' fire fighter system is having trouble maintaining suitable crewing and has done for many years. In the longer term a well-trained and effective on call system could provide the much needed savings while maintaining the level of protection required. I do not see the RNLI which is a charity have trouble with retention and crewing, have any studies been carried out to examine whether the fire service could adopt or learn lessons from other voluntary groups or the RNLI?

Once the 'on call' element that largely crew second appliances is lost it will be very difficult to reinstate it later. On a similar note many day crewed stations are set within local authorities that have increased planning approvals for development of housing. Although I accept that the risk of a fire in new developments is probably low it is still in overall increase in risk in comparison to the previous status quo. It should also be considered that the chances of other incidents occurring that require fire and rescue will increase due to an increase in population and traffic movements. I feel as addressing these prospects as 'low risk' hides the fact that there is an overall increase in risk. The need to ensure Eastbourne has effective equipment to tackle high rise incidents is of great importance and I concur that the need to have an Aerial Ladder Platform similar to Hastings is required. However, I note up until approximately 10 years ago Eastbourne did have one of these. It was replaced by a hybrid appliance. Needless to

say after the devastating impact of Grenfell, minds are focussed on ensuring the fire service has the equipment it requires. However, was the hybrid brought in to cut costs in relation to replacement equipment and crewing? The hybrid seems to have had a very short service life in comparison to the nearly 20 years of the ALP at Hastings. I hope that this IRMP does not result in the loss of skills, resilience and equipment that will later need to be reversed as seems to be the case with the ladder platform at Eastbourne. Particularly with personnel and skill sets, these are very hard to regain once they are lost.

With regard to full time firefighter crewing I see some levels of contradiction. Although I accept that the number of calls has gone down, the IRMP states that full time crews are sent to assist crews at neighbouring stations where second appliances are not available. Yet the risk is low enough to reduce the full time on site crewing of the stations. This reduction will mean an increase in attendance time which will ultimately affect victims and the crew at the scene initially. This extended attendance time is already an issue if the appliance is coming from another town, nevermind the additional time for arrival on station for crews to kit up and leave the station. The downgrading of the Ridge is also a point that reinforces points of concern. With 2 stations in Hastings The Ridge also serves areas outside of Hastings such as Guestling and the ground towards Rye. Whereas I believe it to be prudent to establish a second appliance at Bohemia Road, I find it concerning that Hastings Old Town (which I believe is covered by the Ridge) will have a delayed turn out at night. The Old Town is of such concern by way of the nature of construction and the 'back to back' manner of the layout. Hastings has approximately 930 listed buildings and many of them will be left with a delayed response which I do not believe fully appreciates the risk in the area.

I am also conscious that the reduced hours will delay response during the evening rush hour.

In summary the current arrangement of day crewed stations serves a purpose that is suitable for the largely increasing risk around them. Full-time firefighters provide a response and that response can be reinforced in a timely and cost effective manner with the use of on call firefighters.

I feel that the document is mis-leading citing low risk, lack of availability of second appliances (which is hiding a separate issue) and is not sustainable in the long term.

Moreover many of the recommendations I foresee as requiring reversal at a later date.

I trust my views will be taken into consideration when the authority makes a final decision.

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

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### Telephone conversations – summary responses

In response to flyer through door. [REDACTED] would like to record her opposition to Crowborough Fire Station being under threat. She has received a leaflet and she wants to make sure her voice is heard. She is opposed to the cuts and very grateful for the times we have assisted her in the past. Once, when we were responding to an incorrectly fitted smoke alarm by a third party and once when we assisted the ambulance to get into her house after she had suffered a stroke. She wanted to place on record her thanks for the times we have helped her.

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"I don't think it is fair to lose the Fire Station at Newhaven. At 82, it is a worrying point that they will be coming from Brighton. It is a disgusting decision."

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[REDACTED] has received a leaflet which tells her to contact her local MP regarding the IRMP – she would like to make the following points

- She doesn't agree with cutting the service; Would like to know where the Services will come from with cuts to Newhaven and Seaford; How far are you going to cut the Service; She thinks the cuts are quite drastic – the leaflet says it will affect weekends and night times as they are being cut.
- (On being asked if the leaflet was from anyone in particular) She was unable to find anything but she has assumed it has come from Newhaven Fire Station. It appears the leaflet has caused her some anxiety, she does not have access to the intranet.

- ESFRS contacted her back. She was very concerned to receive a flyer telling her as a Seaford resident that ESFRS were getting rid of 10 fire engines and their Firefighters.
  - She as reassured that the proposals would not be published if they weren't safe or feasible. The purpose of the IRMP proposals were explained and that ESFRS were not shutting any Fire Stations and any posts liberated would be reinvested into prevention and protection.
  - ██████████ understood the concept of prevention being preferable to picking up the pieces after a fire or other emergency.
  - ██████████ felt far happier after the chat and although she didn't want to go through each proposal, she was happy to agree with them in general."
- 
- 

"It is wrong. We are cross in Seaford that everything is being cut, we are a big town and need a fire service. Also Not happy that you can only respond on line. A lot of people do not have access."

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Main concerns were that we were removing a fire engine and reducing the staff. She had got her information from a flyer posted through her letterbox. After explaining the CFA proposals would not close any Stations and that they do not plan any redundancies ██████████ felt more assured with them but recognised the closing date is this Friday.

We explained the proposal to remove 7 fire engines that were low activity and this was partly due to the successes in fire prevention etc. as well as the reinvestment of staff from response to prevention, protection etc.

██████████ re-confirmed she was far more assured that the proposals made sense.

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"I am against the cuts, I agree with Fire Brigade it is all wrong."

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"I think for a big town like Seaford, the cuts seem very drastic and concern me."

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"They have given us a lot in Newhaven that we don't want (eg housing) and not a lot of what we do want. They are taking away part of the Fire Service which is needed and I do not agree with it."

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██████████, who does not use the internet or email, would like to state his support for the proposals."

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'Hello, I'm just ringing to say I'm against all these cuts in the fire station'.

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Against cuts to Newhaven FS; Strange thing to do when the Peacehaven community is growing in size; Building houses as fast as they can in the area. No access to internet, extremely worried.

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"Concerned about proposed cuts; Population in the area is becoming greater, amount in the community is going up; Proposed cuts there will be less cover for life and property; How are the cuts justified; If there is a large incident and appliances from all surrounding areas are being used the cover in the area will be completely depleted and there will be no cover for life and property rescue. He is an ex retained firefighter from Newhaven and is extremely concerned and anxious about the proposals.

ESFRS called back to confirm we had received his comments and answer his concerns. He was pleased to talk through the various proposals. Further to below:

I'm very concerned; it seems a drastic decision. With the increase in calls and population and property, these cuts are going to be drastic; You only need a major incident or two and FRS cover is stripped bare – what would happen to Newhaven, who would cover it if the second fire engine wasn't there; Increased response times are going to increase risk to a dangerous level"

**End Telephone responses**

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# COUNTRY CARERS

Tilling Green Community Centre  
Mason Road  
Rye  
East Sussex  
TN31 7BE

Tel: : 01797 223329  
Mob : 07960 063658 (24hr)  
Fax : 01797 223242  
Email : jayne@country-carers.co.uk

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Sally-Ann Hart,

I am writing to you as the Owner/Manager/Carer of Country Carers Ltd, a domiciliary care business based in rye covering the local rural area of Fairlight, Pett, Camber, Northiam, Beckley, Brede and furthermore, with regards to the cuts to the local fire stations. We have had many of our Service Users rely on the local fire stations and I believe we can all agree what a fantastic job they do, so why is it that they are putting a proposal forward that is going to make this job harder for these firefighters and putting lives at risk.

These firefighters put their lives at risk on a daily basis to serve their local community and these cuts that have been proposed are only going to make that a higher risk. Do you believe that is fair?

Stated by the leader of the fire service herself that there will be "slightly longer" response times, is this practicable?

If a member of the local community is calling the fire service, they are doing so because they are in need of help, do you think that it is right that those in need of help at a distressing time for them should have to wait for a "slightly longer" response?

Why can no one clarify how long "slightly longer" is and that it is in fact putting the local community at further risk, those that have faith in the fire service and yourself as a leader to keep them safe.

As based in Rye I would like to raise the concerns that I believe I can speak for, on behalf of the majority of the community, regarding the cuts and changes that we are facing in Rye. The proposal is for them to lose their 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine, this means that they will have to wait for a 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine to come from further afield. If the 1 fire engine from Rye is called out to an incident in the local area such as Camber is it fair that these firefighters on that fire engine are going to be put at a high risk in having to wait for a 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine to arrive as the nearest will be from Kent, who have different policies to East Sussex and can't work in conjunction fully. This would result in a 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine having to come from Hastings.

Also to add to the previous point the service is making further cuts to The Ridge, making them a day crewed station and on a retained system at night and weekends resulting in a longer response times from themselves as the 2<sup>nd</sup> fire engine to attend a call Rye are already at ( I would calculate this as at least a 25 minute response time) is this fair for the firefighters at the call already from Rye to be waiting this amount of time to carry out their jobs safely and effectively effecting those that are in need of help. Those that pay their

council tax for this service, because with these cuts I believe there is not going to be a reduction in the council tax costs. So, people of the local community are expected to carry on paying a cost for a local fire service that is no longer going to be the same and is going to be reduced yet their costs are not.

Please remember that these are a fire and rescue service, I ethicize the word rescue because they are not just related to fire and attend many different incidents across the community, another question I believe the community will have as I do, is that will this result in them not being able to attend all different incidents due to cuts? Putting further risk to the community.

This community voted for yourself to be a leader and to have trust in you to keep them safe and to do the best for them, letting these cuts go ahead, do you believe that this is what you are doing? Because I am sure the majority of this community believe that these cuts are only going to put their lives at risk when they really need help.

Thank you for taking your time to read this and I look forward to receiving your response

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Graham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jayne Graham  
Company Director  
Country Carers Ltd.



tel 01273 582620

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service  
East Sussex Headquarters  
Lewes  
East Sussex.

For the attention of Councillor Roy Galley

Dear Mr Galley.

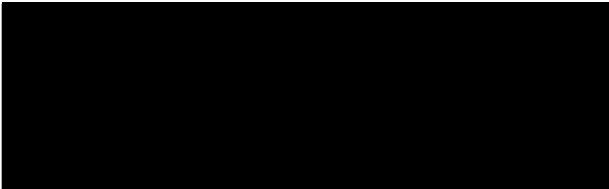
We write to state how horrified we are to read of all the cuts that are proposed to our East Sussex Fire brigade,

I read in the Argus of your proposals which make no common sense whatsoever.

Leaving Newhaven (our local station) with one engine and crew as day cover and a part time crew out of hours must not happen.

Looking at the size of Peacehaven. Telscombe Cliffs. East Saltdean, Newhaven and possibly Piddinghoe and Rodmell the population must be in excess of 60,000. Newhaven and surrounding roads are at times very busy. I also understand that Roedean is to be down graded to one appliance which means that will not always be available, at peak times traffic would certainly slow its arrival to any call out

I would very much like to attend your council meeting on this proposal and suggest that this should be an open public meeting. I very much hope that common sense prevails at this time and no cuts are made to what is a sensible and adequate provision of staff and appliances for East Sussex.





8th June 2020

Senior Management Team  
East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service  
Headquarters  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

Dear Sir/Madam

CROWBOROUGH FIRE STATION

I am writing in response to a leaflet received regarding proposed cuts to Crowborough Fire Station, namely loss of one Fire Engine, 50% Loss of full time Firefighters and a reduction in evening and weekend fire cover which will result in longer response times.

I am very concerned to hear of these proposed changes as I am fearful that lives will be put at risk not having the level of protection we currently have and pay for.


As we are all very well aware, fire spreads very quickly and the quicker an engine can get to where it is needed the better the outcome, and if a Fire Engine has to come from further afield, the more valuable time will be lost getting to its required destination.

Crowborough is one of the largest, if not the largest inland town in the South East and still growing very rapidly. I would consider the town needs a fully functioning Fire Service for its town and surrounding area, especially with the Ashdown Forest very close which has forest fires on a very regular basis especially over the summer months.

I received a letter from you in May headed 'Planning for a Safer Future'. I cannot see that Crowborough will have a safer future if these proposed cuts go ahead.

I oppose these cuts and hope that the matter will be reconsidered and if cuts are needed, they be found somewhere else, and we continue to have the level of protection all day, every day that we currently have.

Yours faithfully



---



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Market.15

13 May 2020

**Mrs Nursat Ghani MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1 0AA**

**Dear Member of Parliament for Wealden**

**Saving Lives and Maintaining all Fire Services at Crowborough Fire Station**

**Please save the fire service in Crowborough which is about to suffer savage cuts by removing round the clock cover and cutting one of the two fire engines stationed in Crowborough.**

**This is a massive blow for fire safety in Crowborough which may lead to lives lost and property damage. Crowborough, as you know, is a growing town with many housing estate with young people. This is a considerable fire risk and firemen have already lost their lives saving family and friends.**

**There is no logical excuse for cutting our fire service back and leaving us vulnerable in these very worrying times. What is the matter with this Government if they think that cutting public services will lead to a healthier and happier society? They seem to be hell bent on destroying all the public services so carefully built up over decades.**

**Please fight to save our Fire Service and keep Crowborough safe. Stop cutting public services and leaving us vulnerable.**

**Yours sincerely**



**Copy to:**

**The Chief Fire Officer  
Crowborough Fire Station  
Beacon Road  
Crowborough  
East Sussex**

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir

I have had notice that  
There is a proposal that  
Crowbough Fire station will lose  
50% of its firefighters and one  
fire engine.

This seems to be very irresponsible  
as there are many fires on the  
forest and car crashes on the  
road to Crowbough. I feel this  
is putting lives at risk.

As the fire station's response  
will be extended, with people  
losing also I live in a wooden  
bungalow. If I have a fire

I would like a fast response.

As I am sure you would

if you have caught fire.

Please think again it not all  
about money yours sincerely  
[REDACTED] Saving lives



**East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service**  
 Headquarters  
 Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DZ  
 Telephone: 0303 999 1000  
 E-mail: [enquiries@esfrs.org](mailto:enquiries@esfrs.org)  
 Web: [www.esfrs.org](http://www.esfrs.org)

**In the case of emergency please dial 999**

2025 4841



Our Ref: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)

May 2020

Dear Householder,

**Planning for a Safer Future**

East Sussex Fire Authority is consulting on its five year plan and would like your help in planning for the future so we can make the right decisions.

We want to make sure we put our resources in the right place, at the right time to deal with emergencies and help prevent them in the first place.

Our proposals include:

- Crewing – we’ve looked at the shift patterns worked by our firefighters ✓
- Fire engines – we’ve looked at the type and number of fire engines we have ✓
- Expanding the building safety and prevention work we do in communities ✓
- Reducing 999 calls – we’ve looked at how we can engage with the community and with businesses ✓
- Non-emergency calls – we’ve looked at whether we should still go to some kinds of calls, such as bird rescues, where no human life is at risk ?

You can find out more and give us your views at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture)

Paper copies can be requested by emailing [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or writing to:

**Planning for a Safer Future**  
 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HQ  
 Church Lane  
 Lewes  
 BN7 2DZ

The survey is open for eight weeks from 24 April 2020. The findings of the consultation will be considered at a Fire Authority meeting in September.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or by calling 0303 999 1000.

Yours sincerely,

Mark O'Brien  
 Deputy Chief Fire Officer

*Thank you for earlier, sorry not on E, mail  
 Had a "Fire engine" put in some time ago  
 NOT needed to use it. THANK YOU*





**East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service**  
 Headquarters  
 Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DZ  
 Telephone: 0303 999 1000  
 E-mail: enquiries@esfrs.org  
 Web: www.esfrs.org

**In the case of emergency please dial 999**

2025 4024



Our Ref: consult@esfrs.org

May 2020

Dear Householder,

**Planning for a Safer Future**

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We want to make sure we put our resources in the right place, at the right time to deal with emergencies and help prevent them in the first place.

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- Reducing 999 calls – we’ve looked at how we can engage with the community and with businesses
- Non-emergency calls – we’ve looked at whether we should still go to some kinds of calls, such as bird rescues, where no human life is at risk

*Birds - cats can look after themselves - Dogs down a cliff could well be an exception.*

You can find out more and give us your views at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture)

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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or by calling 0303 999 1000.

Yours sincerely,

Mark O'Brien  
 Deputy Chief Fire Officer



2 June 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have been an operational fire fighter in East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service for [REDACTED] years. I felt compelled to write to you to try and enlighten you as to the distorted manner in which East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is publicising their plans for the up and coming IRMP. I am disappointed that the questions being put to the public are very leading and appear designed to solicit answers that are supportive of the plans rather than gauge true public opinion.

I can't go through every inaccuracy of the proposals in this letter as it would continue for longer than you have time to read it, and so I have picked out a few points to acquaint you with the reality of the consequences of these plans.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service have stated that they are going to provide an extra three fire appliances across the service at the start of the day raising it from fifteen to eighteen. The plans at Eastbourne are to replace a combined pump and aerial appliance with a dedicated pump and aerial, but to only have enough crew to ride one or the other. This is the same as the current situation as the combined vehicle can't perform both functions at the same time. There are no plans to improve fire cover and crewing in Eastbourne. The reality of this plan is that if the aerial ladder platform stations (Eastbourne and Hastings) get an emergency call to a fire in a tall building, (four floors and above), then the officer in charge will have to make a decision to either take the aerial ladder platform or the fire appliance. If the aerial ladder platform is chosen then this will render the fire appliance useless as there would not be sufficient crew to crew it. A fire appliance from another station will then need to be mobilised causing a delay in mobilisation, a delay in attendance to the incident and possibly a delay in fire fighting actions due to restrictions on fire fighters at the incident denying safe systems of work to be carried out due to the amount of firefighters in attendance. The consequences of these delays surely does not need to be documented here. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service say themselves that due to the potential new dispersal of fire appliances throughout East Sussex that we make take "slightly longer". This statement is unhelpful. Firefighters and the public need to know how long is "slightly longer". If you were suffocating in a burning building unable to get out, or trapped in a car by the steering wheel crushing your chest would you be happy with "slightly longer"? The firefighters aren't comfortable with this proposal and this weak clarification as to how much longer it will take to arrive at the scene. The quicker Firefighters can get to work, the safer the situation can be for them, and the more successful and positive outcomes they will witness. "Slightly

longer” could be translated to “slightly deader” whether that applies to fire fighters who will be morally pushed to go beyond safe working practises or members of the public who need the Firefighters help urgently.

The second point that needs clarifying is the change to the shift pattern. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service state that they want to “introduce a more family friendly work pattern”. I am a mother of two school aged children. The shifts as they stand are arguably the most family friendly solution for providing 24 hour cover at a fire station, please leave them alone! East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service propose to change this to what I consider an unworkable system if you have a young family. It gives us parents six weeks to sort adhoc childcare out. Impossible. Child care providers are not flexible. They want money in advance and set days per week throughout the year. Anyone who states differently has never tried to secure childcare. The partners of the firefighters are employed too and do not work on such “flexible” systems and therefore will struggle to cover the shortfalls of child care. To apply this system shows that there has been little consideration given to the employees of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. I for one would have to consider my future in the Fire Service should this proposal go ahead. I would be forced out of a career that I have worked hard for and love. It would not only be women that would be affected by this as a lot of firefighters are primary carers, but it would most definitely discourage women in the from looking at East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service for a career in the future which is a real shame as this has always been encouraged in the past. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has always boasted about the family friendliness of the way we work and this proposal quashes that in an instant.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has a mantra - Pride, Accountability, Integrity, Respect. I am proud that generations of my family have served the public of East Sussex as firefighters and that I have continued this tradition with [REDACTED] years service at Preston Circus. To maintain my integrity and because of the accountability I feel to my colleagues and the people we are here to protect, I have felt compelled to write to you directly to express my concerns about these plans.

I hope I have given you a clearer more honest account of what these proposals would really mean if they were to go ahead.

Thank you for your time in reading this, I look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]



# OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED CUTS TO EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE AND BATTLE COMMUNITY FIRE STATION

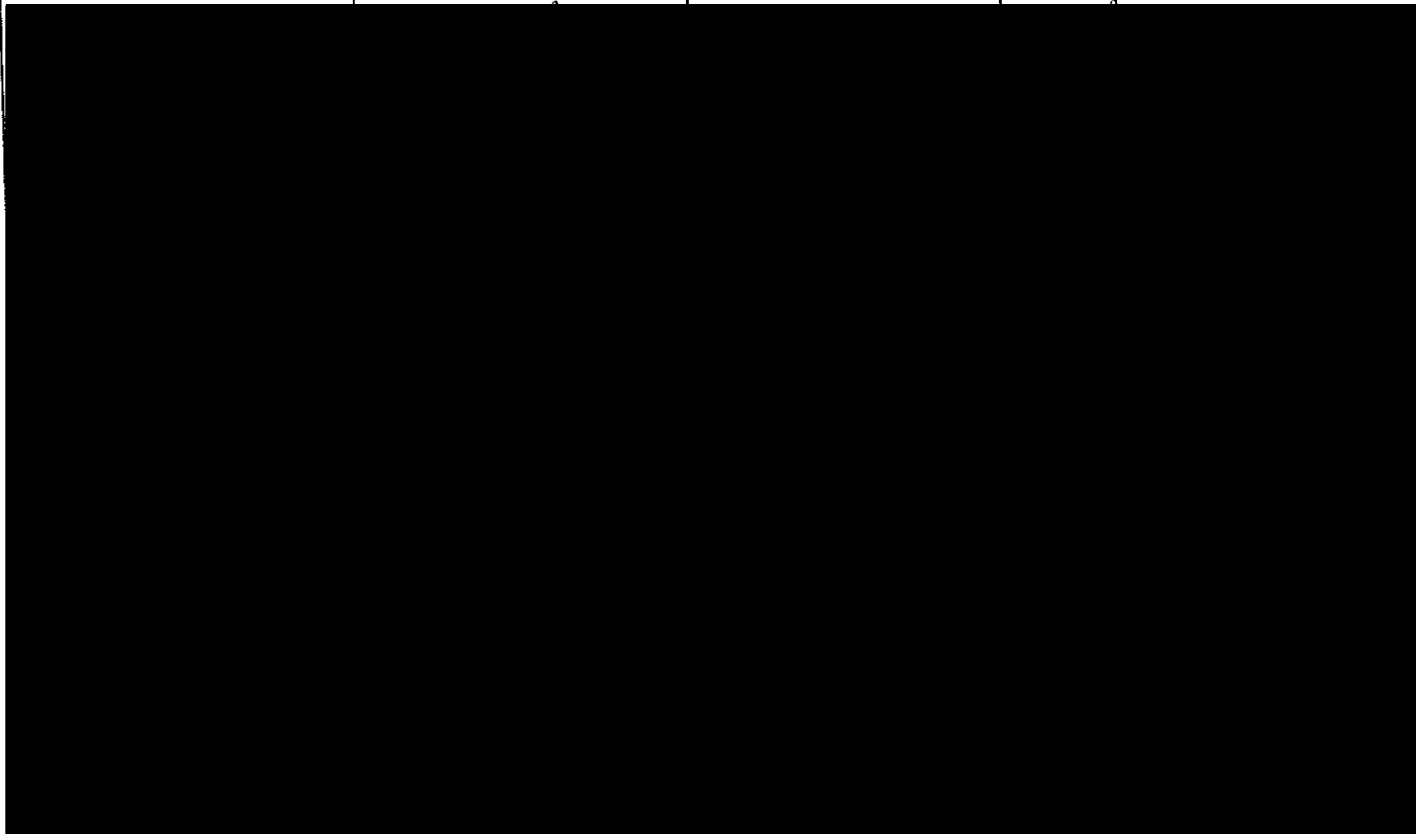
St Martins Sheltered Housing, St Martins, Battle, TN33 0DR

15 JUN 2020

Counsellor Huw Merriman

We, the residents of St Martins, after reviewing the information given in the public consultation, strongly disagree with the proposals put forward by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

We are unable to access the internet as a group of residents and many of us do not have email accounts.

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	SIGNATURE
			

Contact



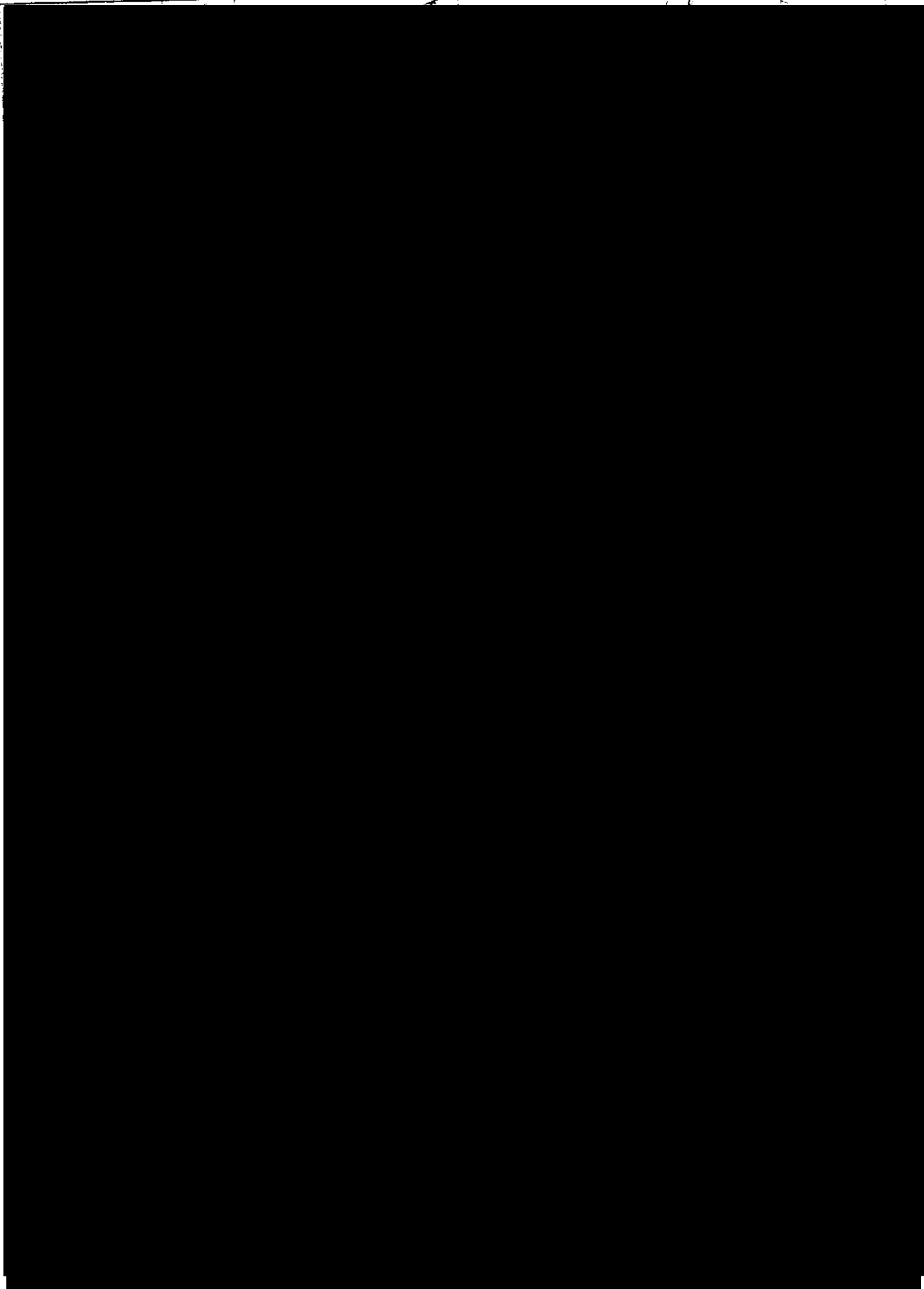
29 May 2020

**NAME**

**ADDRESS**

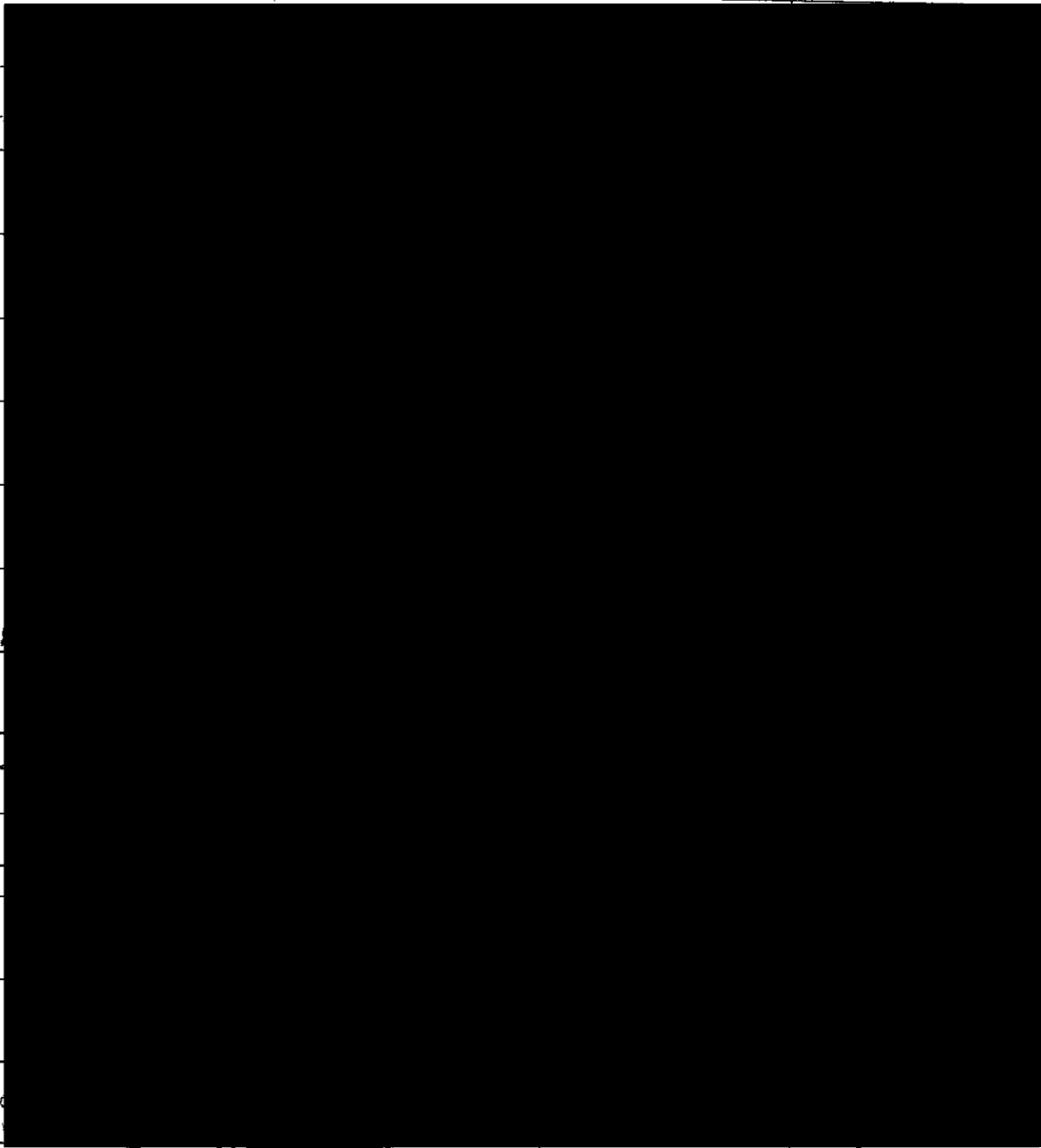
**TELEPHONE**

**SIGNATURE**



01

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	SIGNATURE
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cc  
40

*[Handwritten signature]*

*[Handwritten mark]*


# FAIRLIGHT PARISH COUNCIL

*Clerk to the Council: Pauline Collins*

Planning for a Safer Future  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HQ  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
BN7 2DZ

29<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Sirs

## **Re: Planning for the Future**

I am writing on behalf of Fairlight Parish Council in response to your consultation on this matter.

The primary effect of this proposal on our parish relates to the changes to our local fire station on The Ridge in Hastings.

As we understand it this station is currently crewed 24 hours a day while under your proposals it would revert to day crewed, meaning that in the evening, night and early morning firefighters would have to travel from home before setting out to an incident or alternatively a crew from Bohemia Road would have to respond.

The distance from The Ridge to the centre of Fairlight is 2.7 miles compared to 5.3 miles from Bohemia Road.

Inevitably, whichever station was able to respond first it would take longer to reach Fairlight than it does at present.

In the 2011 census it was found that Fairlight had 42.6% of residents over the age of 65 against a national average of 16% meaning that in the event of a fire or other incident they would be likely to be more in need of third-party assistance than in many places.

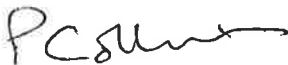
There are also a large number of timber framed properties in Fairlight and so speed is of the essence if a Fire Appliance is required.

A further factor is the narrow lanes between Ore and Fairlight. There have been many instances of lorries and buses being unable to pass each other particularly on Fairlight Road in the vicinity of Hastings Country Park causing further potential for delay.

In the last year there has been a fatal fire in the village as well as a fatal car accident. The longer the delay in attending such incidents in future the greater the risk to life.

Fairlight Parish Council considers that the planned change at The Ridge is unacceptable and is wholly opposed to it.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PC Collins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mrs Pauline Collins  
Parish Clerk/RFO

Dear Cllr Roy Galley and Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker

It is with some concern that we read the proposals for a reduction in the cover provided by the Fire Service in Crowborough. The Crowborough and District Chamber of Commerce is strongly against the proposed removal of the second fire engine and changes to staff contracts at our local station.

Reliance on what the demand has been in the past in order to make decisions of this nature bears no relation to what might happen in the future. Your consultation document fails to take into account the impact of the significant extra housing currently going into both Crowborough and Uckfield, which will obviously increase the likelihood of incidents happening. The analysis that has been undertaken is clearly out of date. For example, in the Crowborough Station Risk Profile, the population estimate of 27,416 is a 2017 figure with no projection of future population growth over an appropriate plan period. The demographic analysis is based on the 2011 Census which is nearly 10 years old. The position taken in the documentation that there are no major large scale developments allocated in the area is clearly wrong, the map on page 44 of the profile is out of date as it only shows a site in Mayfield but not sites at Mead House or Walshes Road in Crowborough. Therefore this flawed evidence base alone cannot justify the proposal to downgrade the Crowborough station.

The inability to adequately respond to an emergency because of a delay caused by waiting for an additional appliance to arrive from another location will inevitably put both lives and property at increased risk. In our opinion the best case scenario for a back up engine to arrive from Uckfield, assuming that it is available at the time, would be at least 20 minutes.

Crowborough's location on the extremes of the county presents extra challenges, so the Chamber considers it will not be sufficiently covered by a single engine and that a reliance on support from other towns would be devastating should a major incident occur.

With the climate shifting towards seemingly prolonged dry periods there will likely be a rise in the frequency of fires on Ashdown Forest. Previous incidents have required more than one engine to respond, this would also be significantly impacted by the changes.

These objections, in conjunction with the suggested changes to the crewing model, make the proposals unacceptable to the Chamber and we believe will leave East Sussex Fire & Rescue unable to provide the level of service required in Crowborough.

Regards

Jeremy Woolger

President & Chairman  
Crowborough & District Chamber of Commerce



# RESPONSE TO ESFRS INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP)

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Effects on Crowborough and  
North Wealden

**Cllr. Peter Bucklitsch**

Phone: 07887 998033

Email: [Cllr.Peter.Bucklitsch@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Peter.Bucklitsch@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk)



# Background

## Crowborough Fire Station

As I live next door to the Fire Station (FS) I called in to get information on the IRMP. I met with two Station Officers. Rather than ask for their views, I elected to interview them on what I knew about the IRMP and to get their reactions to aspects that I saw as important.

The first question was whether the Crowborough machines were used solely in Crowborough. It was established that they supported the other FSs in North Wealden; Forest Row, Wadhurst, Mayfield and Heathfield, all solely Retained Firefighter stations. Often these were unable to respond due to staff shortages.

They explained that the IRMP was derived from the data in the Operational Response Reviews that are available for each station in the ESFRS. It was also explained that a driver for the IRMP was the HMI report that approved the operational responses but raised concerns about the educational side of ESFRS, home visits and commercial inspections.

I was informed that the control of the service in North Wealden was delivered from Haywards Heath, shortly to be moved to a location in Surrey, and that crews and machines were regularly used across the East and West Sussex boundaries, with Forest Row working with Crawley and supporting East Grinstead on a regular basis. Crowborough FS also worked regularly with Uckfield FS.

Key issues derived from the interview:

Crowborough did not just work in Crowborough but was the full-time core that supported the part-time stations nearby when staff shortages put them "off the run".

The proposals would have a severe effect on the earnings of the surviving full-time staff.

The effect of the proposed cuts would have an adverse impact on the morale of all staff, both full-time and Retained.

Removal of one fire engine would have an adverse effect on the ability of ESFRS to support other stations in the local area

## Research into IRMP

### Station Risk Profiles

Following my interview with the Crowborough FS personnel I accessed the Station Risk Profiles (SRP) for Crowborough and Forest Row. These profiles are full of statistical information mainly relevant to each individual FS, but in fact should be read in conjunction with each other.

#### Crowborough

The Crowborough SRP confirmed the information extracted in the interview. Page 4 of the SRP - Pump 83P1 was mobilized to other stations in critical incidents 35% of the time. I note that the figures do not add up as "Mobilises to 34 critical incidents per year - 65% in own area, 11% in Uckfield, 8% in Forest Row area, 8% Mayfield" totals 92%. The many interactions with Wadhurst FS do not appear in these statistics.

The reserve 83P4 Mobilises 54 times per year - 73% in own area, 6% in Mayfield area, 4% in Uckfield, 3% OTB. - Mobilises to 9 critical incidents per year - 70% in own area, 7% in Mayfield, 5% in Lewes area. Again, the figures do not add up to 100%.

This lack of attention to mathematical accuracy is continued in the SRP with page 6 - Crowborough is the largest inland town in East Sussex with a population of around 20,000, conflicting with page 3 - 27,416 residents within Crowborough station area. I believe that with the raft of new developments piling into Crowborough following the disastrous collapse of the Wealden Local

Plan a further 2000 or more people will reside in Crowborough, which would bring the population close to that of Tunbridge Wells.

### Forest Row SRP

The use of arcane language in this summary e.g. Isochrone, is unhelpful and indicates a wish to confuse rather than explain.

The headline summary - p3 - states that Operational cover is provided by one on-call fire engine. The origin of this is not made immediately clear until page 4 where 35% of 2nd pump attendances were by OTB appliance, 22% 85P1, 15% 84P1 and 14% by 83P1 (Crowborough). And:- Neighbouring FRS attend 10% of all incidents in Forest Row (West Sussex 9%, and Kent 1%).

Clearly the interaction between stations is complex and is driven by availability and need that is controlled by Haywards Heath.

## Effect of the Proposals

The issue for the residents of Wealden, in part represented by Crowborough Town Council, is summed up in the IRMP:

**Prevention** – This is about reducing the risk to our communities through education and engagement, the delivery of Home Safety Visits and through directing our resources to those identified at highest risk.

**Protection** – This is about reducing the risk to our communities by ensuring that premises covered under fire safety legislation, mainly businesses, are operating safely and within the law.

**Response** – This is about responding to fires, road traffic collisions, rescues, flooding and other emergencies efficiently and effectively.

The HMI report highlighted issues with Prevention and Protection, while approving of response. The IRMP is a response to that, but it is entirely wrong-headed to fatally degrade the response in order to deliver Prevention and Protection.

Ultimately, when we dial 999, we expect a fire engine, not a man with a clipboard to advise how we could have avoided the call.

The IRMP states that:

Phase Two of the (Grenfell) inquiry is now underway and our local plan will be reviewed and updated to capture any further actions that will need to be undertaken. P34

A major issue coming out of this enquiry is the reliance on statistically derived responses, which the LFB has found to be wholly inadequate, resulting in many needless deaths. This IRMP is following in this path of error by justifying frontline cuts on unsubstantiated data statistics.

The core of the IRMP is that changes to current staffing arrangements can resolve both current problems and future requirements. A policy based on unproven assumptions is not sustainable for an organization that is at the forefront of life saving emergency response.

Assumption 1: the new contract will be acceptable to the existing staff.

Assumption 2: the new contract will stem the loss of Retained personnel

Assumption 3: the new contract will stimulate recruitment of Retained personnel

Assumption 4: the surviving full-time staff will accept the pay cut and remain

The admission on Page 41 of the report indicates that these assumptions are unlikely to prove true.

Despite efforts to recruit and retain staff, this has led to problems finding enough on-call staff to keep fire engines available to respond.

The proposals are for a draconian change of working practices. Some have been tried in East Grinstead, with the result that this FS is "off the run" all too frequently. From the response of the staff I met, these changes are not acceptable.

Cllr Galley has stated in public that this is not about cost cutting. This approach is difficult to believe. The question is why is the frontline is being so drastically cut back? The table below (from the ESFRS web site) shows the headline budget items, with an estimated expenditure split between the core objectives of the Fire Service and the general overhead costs.

	£ '000	Sharp end	Non essential
Training	£2,318	£2,318	
Resources/Treasurer	£6,951		£6,951
Planning & improvement	£1,139		£1,139
HR & OD	£911	£456	£456
Safer communities	£18,271	£18,271	
Operational support	£3,581		£3,581
Corporate	£4,969		£4,969
	£38,140	£21,045	£17,096

Of the budget of £38 million nearly half appears to be spent on non-essential services. The section on staff is instructive.

Our staff are our most important assets. We have a wide range of professionals working in the Service, not just our firefighters but technical specialists, qualified inspectors, community safety practitioners, control room operators, analysts, IT experts, health and safety and HR advisers, communication specialists, accountants and more. The ORR presents us with an opportunity to reshape the way we deliver services to best meet the risks in the community, as a number of our proposals mean changes to crewing and duty systems and result in different or further training needs

It would seem from the above list that there are many activities that have grown around the core requirement, specifically, a Fire and Rescue Service. The obvious ones have been underlined.

This is a matter for the authority, however, and the focus of this response has to be the safety of the people of Wealden and Crowborough in particular.

## Rejection of the ESFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan

These proposals are unacceptable as they are based on unsustainable assumptions rather than hard facts, they are based on a dubious use of statistical data, and in my opinion would rip out the heart of the professional core of North Wealden Fire and Rescue services with considerable adverse effects on the quality of life of Crowborough residents and the wider area of North Wealden.

The surrounding villages would be vulnerable with the loss of the core full-time professionals in Crowborough, and the IRMP has failed to provide a Plan B if the recruitment solutions fail.

The Ashdown Forest would be vulnerable to large-scale fires particularly if this hot weather continues to be the norm.

The loss of one Fire engine together with the high incident of RTAs means that more adverse outcomes would be experienced by the residents of Wealden.

Contrary to the claim of efficiency without impinging operational effectiveness the most cursory glance at the data in the Station Risk Profiles contradicts that claim.

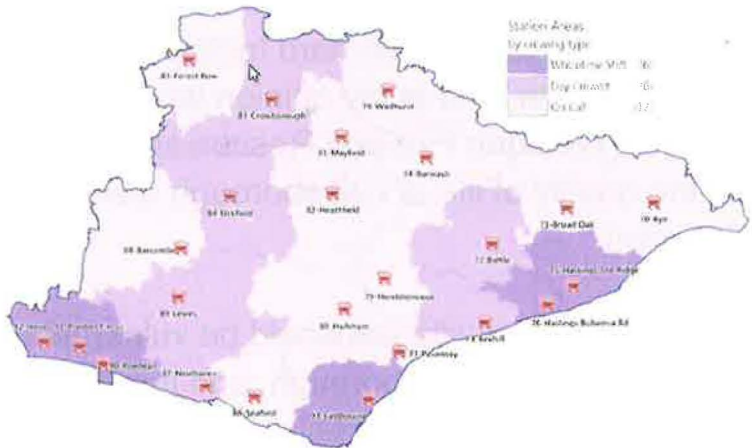
## Current shift patterns



### Some key information...

–24 fire stations,  
currently staffed in 3  
main ways:

- ‘Wholetime shift’: crewed 24/7, 365 days per year by full-time firefighters
- ‘Day-crewed’: firefighters are on-station during the daytime only (typically between 08:30 and 18:30). Outside these times, firefighters attend incidents by responding to an alert
- ‘On-call’: firefighters must live or work within 5 minutes of the fire station and are contracted to provide a certain amount of availability per week. They respond to an alert when an emergency call is received



Letter to Cllr Bucklitsch, Crowborough Town Council from CFO Dawn Whittaker

CC; Caroline Miles, CTC Clerk

Date 12 June 2020

## **Your Response to ESFRS IRMP document**

Cllr Bucklitsch

I write in response to a document that has been passed to us on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, authored by yourself, identifying yourself as a town councillor and subsequently sent directly to me by the clerk to the Town Council on the afternoon of the 12<sup>th</sup> of June

I have also copied in the Clerk to the Town Council and would request that she distributes this response to other town council members.

I must add at the outset that is extremely disappointing that an elected representative has chosen to write such a document without seeking to clarify the facts and accuracy of its content with the service prior to wider circulation.

I will respond to your document by page, as it is littered with inaccuracy and accusation and misrepresentation, which I am obligated to address on behalf of the Fire Authority Members.

### **Cover – Page 1**

You title the document “Response to ESFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan” – this may appear pedantic, but the IRMP is actually a statutory document of the East Sussex Fire Authority

### **Page 2**

You outline the background to your document, stating you met with two Station Officers, we understand in fact you spoke to two of the local firefighters, not two officers.

You state that the “Crowborough machines” – we assume you refer to the Fire Engines, support other FS (assumed Fire Stations) in North Wealden. In actual fact all our appliances are required to cover any area in our jurisdiction, but also across borders as part of the S13/16 agreements in the Fire and Rescue Services Act. It is however not about supporting other Fire Mtations, it is rather more focused on nearest, available appliance.

It is incorrect to say that the IRMP is derived solely from the data in the ORR – the Response Review dealt principally with response to emergencies, but the IRMP also contains information and consideration from a much wider set of sources including the Governments sector reform plan, the independent HMICFRS report, the Hackitt recommendations, as well as reference to the Authorities financial plans amongst other sources. All of which is stated in the IRMP document

It is incorrect to state that the driver for the IRMP was the HMICFRS report. The IRMP is a statutory requirement that focuses on risk and resources to deliver all elements of the authorities statutory functions, of course it will have due regard to the Independent Inspectorate report, but it is not the driver – it is the statutory functions that are.

In para 6 - You state that “Crowborough is the full-time core” .Crowborough is not crewed full time. It is currently a day crewed station, which means it has a response from on station in the day time hours – but has an “off station” response in the evenings. You also refer to our



“on-call” stations as part time, that is a misleading – our “On-call” firefighters provide cover that runs over half our stations over 24/7. They do have periods off the run, like all stations, but some of those stations you name actually have better availability than the second appliance in Crowborough.

### **Page 3**

I am unclear on the basis of your conclusion that morale of all staff would be impacted by the proposals, as I understand it you have spoken to 2 of our 800 plus staff. I assume therefore it is your opinion.

I am also unclear of how you can conclude that the removal of one fire engine will impact on other stations, given the data analysis on which the recommendations are based on 9 years of incident analysis and with deep professional understanding of our sector.

3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph – perhaps it is worth clarifying that the highest number of mobilisations from Crowborough station are actually onto another day crewed station – Uckfield, this is clear in the report and so it would have seemed logical for you to assess that station profile.

Para 4 and 5 – in referencing the number of mobilisations on page 4 of the station profile, you state they do not add up – that is because it is in the summary and does not reflect all mobilisations – if you look at page 34 the full list is there. Similar point in para for the second appliance

Para 6 – you suggest that there is mathematical inaccuracy, there is not, as explained above the page 4 is a statistical presentation of some mobilisations. I am afraid the error is yours in terms of interpretation of statistical presentation, which I would add was prepared by experienced analysts.

You state there is a conflict in the presentation of population data – there is not the population for Crowborough as a town is different to the population covered by the station area. They are two different figures.

### **Page 4**

The 2018 population statistic for Tunbridge Wells is 72, 041, so not at all comparable to Crowborough statistically and a misleading fact.

The station profiles are technical documents and do indeed contain a lot of information and technical language. In future we could provide a glossary to assist people.

Para 4 – Need is not driven by the Control and mobilising centre in Haywards Heath, our control room operators respond to demand and incident requirement to mobilise the nearest available appliance, at times this means the appliance may even come from West Sussex or Kent as set out the primary legislation s13/16.

Para 7 – I refer you back to the comment about the HMICFRS report made previously, but the second statement demonstrates a complete lack of knowledge or understanding of the fact that the Authority have 3 areas of statutory and absolutely have to balance resources available to deliver them, It is also important to understand that responding well to emergencies that create life risk is frankly too late – we will save more lives by preventing incidents, protection of the vulnerable and ensuring buildings are safe and this has been demonstrated nationally with a 50% reduction in deaths and injuries from fires as a result of investing more in these two areas. Had you chosen to engage with the service before writing that statement, the evidence would have illustrated this.

The final statement on this page is derogatory and emotive, it is frankly ridiculous to suggest that we, as a professional emergency service, are suggesting to send “a man with a clipboard” to a 999 call – again a misrepresentation of facts.

#### **Page 5**

The first two paragraphs are a misrepresentation of facts and given that ESFRS have two professional officers advising the national work groups on Building Fire safety, I would venture to suggest they may have a more in depth understanding of the issues and complexity of the built environment and to clarify all our data goes through statistical verification and is also qualified with the Home Office. It is ill advised for a lay person to make such claims without checking their own facts.

The assumptions you suggest are made without knowledge of the negotiation with the representative bodies, without knowledge of the pay protection policies and without knowledge of the revised contracts on offer – they are your assumptions

The final paragraph refers to changes made in East Grinstead (a West Sussex Fire Station). However the IRMP team have actually assessed different working practices in many different Fire and Rescue Services around the UK and analysed impacts, so once again this document shows a complete lack of qualified research in reaching any conclusions

#### **Page 6**

Whilst you might disbelieve Cllr Galley as Fire Authority Chairman, he is much better qualified and advised and is correct. The Fire authority have no interest, nor gain in cost cutting, rather they have a statutory duty to fulfil to ensure that the resources at their disposal are placed where the risk is and where it will have the greatest impact – take for a moment the proposal to reallocate an additional appliance and full time crews into Hastings town centre – the area that has the highest number of critical fire incidents in the whole of East Sussex, which only has one appliance – this needs addressing and in fact is no different to the provision of other key services – health, schools etc. are all provided across the county where they are actually needed.

The table you present and state “is from the ESFRS website” has been altered to suit your purposes and apart from being totally disingenuous is actually a falsehood. The headings “sharp End” and “non-essential” are your words and your conclusion is totally flawed – if you perhaps were better informed you would understand that the “non-essential services” include our fleet engineers, (that service the fire engines) Health and safety advisers, fitness advisers, operational policy team, accountants and many other key staff to ensure our firefighters are safe and the regulatory duties are delivered. They are in no way “non-essential”...they are in fact part of the Fire and Rescue Service.

Your final paragraph of this page would be served well by ensuring you present a factual and accurate document, rather than one built on limited understanding and poor research and analysis. Our Fire Service is full of professionals who have dedicated their lives and careers to the protection of the public and the focus of our daily professional lives is keeping people safe.

#### **Page 7**

The proposals presented are based on sound analysis of 9 years of incident data and a rich analysis of vulnerability and growth in the county, our data is validated by two external bodies, the Home Office and the Inspectorate. We use national data analysis software available to the sector and data sets from Health, the local authorities and other credible sources, which is the foundation of the IRMP.

Paragraph 2 – All proposals will have fully work business contingency and implementation plans prior to implementation – so the statement is misleading

Para 3 – An emotive and unsubstantiated statement, The vulnerability of any area to large scale fires has more to do with the weather and public behaviour and you do not have the knowledge to assess fire probability and behaviour in the same way as the technical and professional IRMP team do, several of them having spent their careers on the “sharp end”.

Para 4 – the removal of one fire appliance will in fact have minimal impact on the risk. It is correct to say that Wealden has a high rate of Road Traffic Collisions and indeed it's a fundamental reason why we have invested more in schemes like “Safe Drive, Stay Alive”, Safety in Action, Speed watch, Road watch and schemes through the Road Safety Partnership – all these prevention schemes are a critical part of reducing the number of accidents on our roads, but the number will not reduce if we just use a response strategy that gets us there after the accident has occurred, the Authority must have a balanced strategy.

Your final paragraph suggesting a “cursory glance” at the Station risk profiles is revealing – our professional IRMP team have spent nearly a year analysing 9 years of incident data, third party data, and demographic information in order to produce these profiles.

Your final page of the document shows the current crewing models of our 24 stations, 12 of them are on-call stations, 6 Day crewed and 6 Wholetime. In case your analysis has missed this fact, there are on-call stations that attend more incidents and have higher risk profiles than Crowborough and that is a matter the Fire Authority has to consider.

I am aware Councillor that you took part in the service stakeholder consultation that was run by ORS and I am awaiting a transcript of the meeting, which was being recorded to ascertain the facts, but at this point I have had complaints from staff that were supporting the event that the tone of your comments were antagonistic from the outset, stating that the figures were misleading, the proposals nonsensical asking for an apology from the staff and further stating that they were demeaning themselves. At this time these are unsubstantiated complaints, but should the transcripts and information from ORS validate these allegations, I can't allow my staff to be subjected to such comments from someone in public office without recourse, our Fire Authority members act in accordance with Core values and always treat staff and officers with courtesy and frankly I would hope and expect that to be the same expectation in other local authorities.

Yours etc

CROWBOROUGH



TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices • Pine Grove • Crowborough • East Sussex TN6 1DH  
Telephone 01892 652907 • VAT No: 210 4938 90

FAO:

Cllr Roy Galley, The Chairman of East Sussex Fire Authority  
Dawn Whittaker, Chief fire officer and Chief executive for East Sussex Fire  
and Rescue Service

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

Dear Cllr Galley and Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker,

At the Full Council meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> May the Town Council resolved that I write to you to express its unhappiness with the proposals suggested in the recent consultation document for the Fire service in Crowborough.

My Council is vehemently opposed to the changes proposed to staff contracts and the removal of the second fire engine at Crowborough Fire Station.

Inadequate account has been taken of the extra housing that Crowborough and Uckfield will have to take over the coming years and there is no clear information in the consultation document on the impact of local facilities should these proposals go ahead.

The document states that fatalities on Wealden roads is high. The Council is aware that the A26 has a poor record when it comes to road traffic incidents. This, together with the increasing amount of forest fires on the Ashdown Forest should be taken into account when looking at the proposed changes to the service provided for Crowborough.

The proposals include the increased employment of retained fire fighters who will be at the fore of weekend and evening call outs. Retained firefighters are notoriously difficult to recruit due, in part, to the maximum amount of time required to report to the fire station for duty and the willingness of employers prepared to lose staff at a moment's notice.

Crowborough sits on the extremity of East Sussex and as such is too far away from any other fire station. The loss of a second fire engine and the proposed changes to the crewing model will affect the time taken to attend an emergency in Crowborough. It is not acceptable to the Council, that as a result of the introduction of these changes, it will take longer to attend fires or traffic incidences in Crowborough.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter either by email to:  
[clerk@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk) or by letter to the address above.

Your Sincerely,  
Caroline Miles.

Caroline Miles.  
Town Clerk.  
Crowborough Town Council.

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service  
“Planning for a Safer Future”  
Consultation Response

By email: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)

Mistral  
Shepherds Way  
Fairlight  
E Sussex  
TN35 4BB

Tel 01424-814178  
[cllr.andrew.mier@rother.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.andrew.mier@rother.gov.uk)

4 June 2020

## **Planning for a Safer Future: Consultation Response**

I am Rother District Councillor for Southern Rother Ward. My Ward consists of the villages of Fairlight, Guestling, Icklesham and Pett. I have one particular concern about the present proposals.

It is proposed that The Ridge should be staffed at night by retained firefighters instead of full-time firefighters as at present. It is already a ten minute drive from The Ridge to Fairlight Cove. Timings to the other villages will be similar. The additional time required to call out retained staff will add significantly to response times, which must already be at the margins of acceptability.

The need for good response times to the villages is increased by the high average age of the residents and their vulnerability. For example in Fairlight 42% of the population is aged over 65 compared with just 16% for England and Wales<sup>1</sup>. There are also many narrow lanes and timber properties in the Ward.

I request that you let me have the existing night response times (from receipt of a 999 call) to each of the four villages and the estimated response times should the station be staffed by retained firefighters.

I am unconvinced by the safety of this particular proposal and note that in the 2012 review Fairlight Parish Council raised similar concerns.

Please treat this letter as a response to the consultation.

Best wishes,



Cllr Andrew Mier

cc. Clerks to Fairlight, Guestling, Icklesham and Pett Parish Councils

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<sup>1</sup> East Sussex in Figures 2011 census

# Wealden Green Party

Cherry Gardens Farm Groombridge  
Tunbridge Wells Kent TN3 9NY

Ms Dawn Whittaker  
Chief Fire Officer, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Dawn Whittaker,

We are writing to express our concern with regard to the recent consultation process that the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) has undertaken.

We consider that the format and many of the questions in the consultation has been designed to hide the true nature of the consultation, which is little more than a cost saving exercise, and will result in a degraded service, and in some instances is close to negligent.

The first question asks if respondents agree that the Service should change from 15 immediately available fire engines to 18 engines.

What it doesn't ask is;

Do you agree with reducing the number of fire engines available at 10 stations from 2 engines to 1 engine?

ie a loss of 10 potentially available engines.

These fire engines are not called out to fires as often as the main engines, but they are available to provide cover when the main engine is called out, which is the whole point of having a spare machine.

Also, the question about changing from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' is touted as an improvement, but in fact this change would lengthen response times at week-ends and in the night, and leave less experienced crews to deal with emergencies.

Changes to the '4 watch duty system', which has stood the test of time, to a 'flexible rostering system' will mean that working conditions are worsened for families, who will find it impossible to plan ahead for child care and schooling commitments.

The 'dual-crewing' of the Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALP) at Eastbourne and Hastings could potentially leave only 1 fully crewed ALP to cover the whole of East Sussex, which would be unsafe.

Switching from 'fully crewed' to 'day crewed' regimes at several stations would increase call out times at night and week-ends. These are not lower risk times and therefore danger to life and property would be increased.

No mention is made anywhere in the Risk Management Plan of consultation with, or information from the adjoining fire services of West Sussex, Kent and Surrey which are relied upon for assistance in major incidents.

The capabilities and plans of these neighbouring fire services are vital to the safety of East Sussex residents in a major incident, so this must form part of the risk assessment.

There is no mention either of the time it would take to get multiple engines to properties such as hospitals or care homes where there will be many people needing specialist rescue. Getting rid of the second engine at Crowborough (and many other stations) will put these people at increased risk.

The Fire Service should be planning for a 'worst case scenario' not simply looking at historical data and planning the minimum number of engines and crews that could deal with past incidents.

Covid-19 should have taught us all not to be complacent in planning for emergencies.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Keith Obbard



Cllr Patricia Patterson-Vanegas

Copies to;  
Roy Galley, Chair East Sussex Fire Authority  
Nus Ghani MP for Wealden





15-Jun-20

Dear Mr O'Brien,

Re: 5 year plan – Planning for a safer future

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your 5-year plan.

I have looked at your survey, but my comments don't easily fit into your proforma, on which largely I feel rather unqualified to give an opinion, though I fully appreciate and understand what a wonderful service you provide.

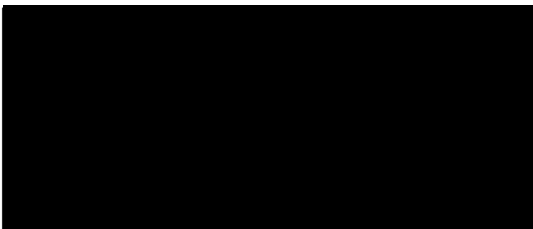
My main comments are as follows follows:

1. I would not welcome any diminution of service in Uckfield. I live in a very old house, one of the oldest in Uckfield. It is timber framed and by modern fire standards is probably not the most fire secure. The thought of a fire engine not being able to reach us because there is no immediate service in Uckfield, particularly at night is of concern.
2. We are an animal loving country and one of our intrinsic values is that we like to protect both our pets and all forms of wild life. We are well served in particularly by WRAS - Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service, RSPCA and other animal charities, but in some instances they have to rely on your help.
3. I can imagine a situation where there is a trapped animal or bird and the owner or concerned member of the public trying to rescue the animal themselves. I would certainly do that and I would also try to reach a stranded animal or bird on a roof or in a chimney. I think I am not alone. I am well aware of the risk of using ladders and climbing unsafe structures. I am 75 years of age, but I simply could not leave the animal to perish. I think I am not alone.

I understand that there are periods of inactivity when crews are on standby and could not these periods be used to carry out animal rescues, which are not usually urgent. Even if these periods are reduced by re-organisation, the crews would not always be in demand for fire emergencies.

Do please reconsider this aspect of your plan. It is important to our national traditions and character.

Yours sincerely,



P.S. I do not expect a personal reply.

# TELSCOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN CLERK & RFO: MRS STELLA NEWMAN, PSLCC



TELSCOMBE CIVIC CENTRE  
360 SOUTH COAST ROAD  
TELSCOMBE CLIFFS  
EAST SUSSEX  
BN10 7ES

TELEPHONE: (01273) 589777

10<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dawn Whittaker, Chief fire Officer & Chief Executive  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HQ  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
BN7 2DZ

Dear Mrs Whittaker

Re: Planning for a Safer Future Consultation

I am writing to give you the views of our Council on the proposed draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020 – 2025 consultation.

We are strongly against the proposals for the Newhaven Fire Station on the following grounds.

We feel they will have a detrimental impact on this critical public service. The supposed more efficient use of resources and reducing costs will come at a cost of risking the lives of local people. The consultation admits that there will be a slower response time at weekends which is totally unacceptable and presents a danger to the public. The A259 South Coast Road is heavily congested and by implementing a retained service during weekends, this could impact on the response time for firefighters to attend the Fire Station.

The proposed changes to employment contracts are unfair to the firefighters who risk their lives by providing an invaluable service.

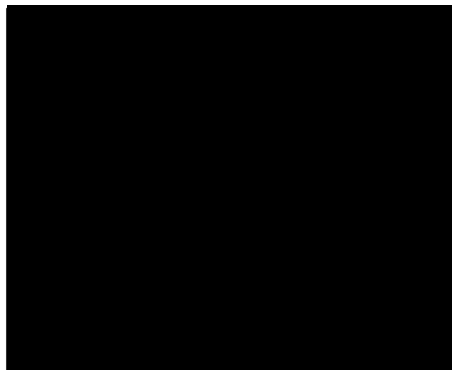
There is an increase in the population and a lot of local development which necessitates a retained crew to respond quickly to emergencies. Newhaven ferry port requires specifically trained local firefighters in water fires on hand.

We are extremely concerned that it is not the right time to proceed with a consultation. No one knows what the shape of the future will be post this pandemic and we request that the consultation be suspended until it is clear what resources the fire service will need.

I finish by reiterating the Council's objections to the proposals and ask that you take these into consideration. Please can you acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Yours faithfully

Stella Newman  
Town Clerk & RFO  
Telscombe Town Council



Dear Councillor Dowling

I am writing to you as a member of the fire Authority to discuss the IRMP that ESFRS are aiming to implement , I am a serving full time Firefighter at Crowborough Fire Station [REDACTED] , I hope to point out the negative impact of its suggestions on the service and the communities they serve and to share how it will personally affect me and my colleagues.

When HMICFRS inspected the service they found a number of issues that required improvement including the requirement for an new IRMP , one of the things we are doing well as stated in the report is “ ESFRS are good at responding to fires and other emergencies” if the IRMP is voted through then I’m afraid even the this will be negatively affected.

Speaking as someone who works the current day crewed system I can say that it currently works well and provides good cover for the community and some resilience to support incidents on neighbouring stations grounds , if the IRMP is implemented I am certain this will not be the case , by taking away the full time element on day manned stations at night and weekends there is a huge emphasis on on-call ( retained staff ) to provide cover, Historical data proves that the recruitment and retention of on-call staff has always been an issue ( locally and nationally ) , It is not a robust enough system to guarantee an appliance 24hrs a day , 7 days a week, indeed we know here at Crowborough and have data available to show that without Wholetime crews there would

have been no fire appliance available for many days and nights to deal with any incidents that arose.

Furthermore at weekends having no fulltime crew on station will massively increase any attendance times for incidents , how this can be seen as an improvement is beyond me , in an emergency such as a fire or RTC seconds count.

With slower attendance times of up to 30 minutes being suggested for the likes of Stations in Wadhurst and Mayfield and the removal of a an appliance from Crowborough , it looks as if a service that was deemed good will be anything but , in fact it leaves the north of the county looking very under-resourced and far less capable of responding to the communities it is supposed to be protecting.

On a personal level it will have a huge impact , If it is implemented I may of course have to leave Crowborough fire station ( along with 4 or 5 others deemed not required ) , If I remain I shall be forced to work less family friendly hours spending more time on station , I shall of course receive less pay as I will not be required to be on call or live in the area ( as currently required, currently I receive an allowance for doing so )all of this could have potentially devastating and unsettling affect's on myself and family potentially forcing us into leaving the town I have served and called home for a long period of time.

In my mind this IRMP is a step in the wrong direction it is hugely reliant on proven unreliable work systems and if implemented I strongly believe the community will be less well served and at more risk from harm , There are alternatives that could be considered that would still have large cost savings without detriment to the ability to respond efficiently to incidents.

As an overriding note to all of this I feel it is also almost incomprehensible to be undertaking this during a pandemic , at a time when keyworkers are being asked to help out in new and evolving ways

and with no clear end in sight to the situation , ESFRS and the Fire Authority are pushing ahead with this causing even more stress to a workforce concerned about there own and families safety , it can be postponed and reviewed in exceptional circumstances and should be until we are through this crisis and fully understand its ramifications going forward.

I look forward to hearing your response.

Yours Faithfully





**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

**COUNCILLOR STEVE BELL CBE  
Leader of the Conservative Group**

Room G84  
Hove Town Hall  
Norton Road  
Hove BN3 3BQ

9 June 2020

Cllr Roy Galley  
Chairman - East Sussex Fire Service  
Fairplace Farm  
Chelwood Gate Road  
Nutley  
East Sussex TN22 3HE

Dear Cllr Galley,

**RE: 'Planning for a Safer future Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-25'  
consultation**

As Leader of the Conservative Group of Councillors at Brighton and Hove City Council I am writing to advise you of a motion that was put forward and passed at our Group meeting yesterday in relation to the above consultation proposal.

Our Group noted that the above IRMP would involve the loss of 5 frontline firefighters in the City of Brighton & Hove.

Following a full discussion of the matter with involvement from all 13 Group members the following motion was passed by the Conservative Group:

**To inform our two representatives on East Sussex Fire Authority – Cllr Carol Theobald and Cllr Garry Peltzer-Dunn – that we as a Group are against the loss, through deployment, redundancy or otherwise, of firefighters on the front line in Brighton & Hove.**

I would appreciate a response to this letter, which I can share with our Group at our next meeting on 15 June 2020.

Yours sincerely,

**COUNCILLOR STEVE BELL CBE  
Leader of the Conservative Group**

cc Conservative Group at Brighton & Hove City Council.

Telephone: (01273) 291288  
Email: [steve.bell@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:steve.bell@brighton-hove.gov.uk)  
Conservative Member for Woodingdean Ward



8<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Cllr Galley and Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker

**Re: Planning for a Safer Future Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 Consultation**

I am writing on behalf of Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council to express their strong objection to the proposals being made in your Planning for a Safer Future consultation.

We have serious concerns over the information in the consultation document and the accompanying documentation. The figures relating to callouts are already 2 years out of date and do not include the figures for all callouts just for incidents and therefore do not give the true picture.

The firemen at Heathfield Fire Station have attended a number of large fires over the last year including the Claremont Hotel in Eastbourne, the Ashdown Forest fire in May this year and recently a fire at Isenhurst which we understand was attended by firefighters from Heathfield, Wadhurst, Uckfield and Seaford. At all of these fires there would have been a number of appliances in attendance and at the Ashdown Forest fire 6 appliances and 4 Land Rovers were on site. By proposing to reduce the number of vehicles within East Sussex this would have a serious impact should there be a major fire and fire stations would not be able to provide the cover for those stations attending the fire.

By reducing the number of vehicles and staff at local fire stations it will create further delays in the response time for attending incidents. In Heathfield we are already below the target for the attendance standard and for critical incidents within daytime attendance standard only 85.3% is achieved. Whilst we understand the delays caused by having an on-call system at Heathfield, we will be impacted by changes to other areas such as Uckfield where it is planning to move it to an on-call crew at weekends during the day. If Uckfield needed to cover our station or attend a fire in our area you are further increasing the response time. By reducing the number of fire engines in rural areas they are less likely to be able to cover other stations that are already on a call and won't be able to respond to so many call-outs. We would be especially impacted by the proposals that are being made for Battle, Crowborough and Uckfield fire stations, however any reduction in engines can ultimately affect the whole of East Sussex.

In your document you advise that proposals are centred on public and firefighter safety however we cannot see how this can be the case, when due to the cutbacks you are proposing, that people's lives will be put at a greater risk.

Of the 4 Commitments you made in the document we would like to raise discrepancies over three of these:

- Delivering high performing services – you have admitted in the document that it will take slightly longer to get to an incident, surely this will result in the service not performing as well;
- Have a safe and valued workforce – it is difficult to see how the workforce feel valued with the cuts that are being proposed. You also state that you commit to ensuring that your workforce is provided with the right equipment, surely by reducing the number of vehicles you are reducing the amount of equipment available to them.
- Make effective use of our resources – we can't see how your productivity can be improved when the number of vehicles and staff are being reduced and some stations are being changed to i.e. be on-call at weekends.

In other places in the document you mention about wanting to reduce the risk, the likelihood and the consequence for all those who may be affected by an incident, again we cannot see how this can be done by reducing the number of vehicles and staff. We do however applaud your efforts in wanting to educate people in order to prevent fires occurring.

In the document it acknowledges the increase in population due to an increased number of dwellings, a large number of which will be in the Wealden area, putting more pressure on our firefighters. Wealden is also recognised as having a high number of RTAs which unfortunately will only increase with more housing, again putting more pressure on our firefighters.

It is extremely disappointing that this consultation came out during the Coronavirus pandemic when a number of people are in lockdown and public meetings cannot be held. During this time ESFRS personnel have had extra pressure put on them due to the increased tasks they have needed to perform during the pandemic.

Although the moving of the Call Centre is not part of the consultation it is mentioned by ESFRS in their documentation. Whilst we understand the cost savings in moving the Call Centre so that it is shared with other counties, we are concerned that you then lose the local knowledge which is imperative for locating incidents and could further delay the time in attending an incident.

The Parish Council is disappointed that you don't give a definition of how long you anticipate 'slightly longer' to get to a fire would take. You also mention about a 'negligible impact', again there is no definition of what this would be.

Heathfield Fire Station is a core station and we are in a rural area which creates challenges that firefighters in a city would not come across. Although the population is smaller we are spaced out over a large area and our residents lives are as important as those in a densely populated city. We therefore feel that we shouldn't suffer from cuts that would adversely impact on our residents.

The Parish Council feel that the consultation ignores the impact of the proposals being put forward and the risk of life that is increased to both members of the public and firefighters by these cuts. We ask that you withdraw the cuts that you are proposing to ensure that there won't be any increased delay in attending incidents, or a reduction in available vehicles especially in rural areas.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter to the Clerk at [clerk@hwpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@hwpc.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

Helen Johnson

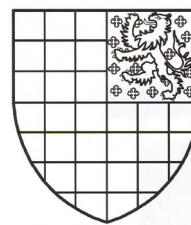
Clerk to Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council



Town Hall  
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✉ [townclerk@lewes-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@lewes-tc.gov.uk)  
[www.lewes-tc.gov.uk](http://www.lewes-tc.gov.uk)



**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

Rt Hon James Brokenshire, MP  
Minister of State for Security  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

*by email to [james.brokenshire.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:james.brokenshire.mp@parliament.uk)*

19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Mr Brokenshire,

**Proposed cuts to services – East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service**

I write on behalf of Lewes Town Council, following its consideration of proposals arising from the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) exercise conducted by East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

Council has formally resolved to request that you halt the cuts in the central government grant to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services (ESFRS). Reduction in this grant means ESFRS are facing an annual total loss of 7.5% in direct funding. This has resulted in ESFRS having to save over £12 million in the period 2020-25 compared with their current five-year budget.

This reduction in the direct grant, alongside a lack of secure ongoing funding, has deeply compromised the Fire Authority in its ability to effectively plan for the future; at the same time as the Authority is also facing a need to move resources to meet identified risks as required by HMICFRS. Government funding in only one-off payments does nothing to address the medium-term funding risk and uncertainty to the Fire Authority and its provision of emergency services in Lewes and more widely across East Sussex. The Council is particularly concerned at the proposed loss of one fire tender and six firefighters in Lewes town, and that the proposal to replace full-time positions with part-time, on-call staff is unlikely to meet the needs of the town and surrounding area. Councillors are dismayed that there is no consideration given to either the increase in size of Lewes Town, or to the prospect of increasing effects of climate change.

Maria Caulfield (Cons), MP for Lewes, is opposed to these cuts. She has publicly promised constituents that she will approach you and will lobby to obtain additional funding on behalf of ESFRS and perhaps a restoration of the grant to current levels. Elected Councillors wish to add their voices to the demand that funding is restored and that cuts to the central grant to ESFRS are reversed.

We understand that the IRMP is a legal requirement for Fire Authorities and that you, as Minister of State for Security, required Fire Authorities to continue with their IRMP consultations despite the Coronavirus outbreak. In your letter to Fire Authorities of 23<sup>rd</sup> April, you state that while authorities could delay the publication of their consultations, this would not protect them from the Secretary of State making an intervention against an FRA who failed to have due regard for the framework. This has left our FRA in a position where they have had to pursue the consultation in the middle of an emergency, which has caused concern and consternation among local residents and councillors.

Finally, given that our town and District are to be substantially impacted by the Government's cuts in the central grant, Councillors ask for assurances from you that not only will you review the restoration of the level of grant to ESFRS, but also that you will rule out any further cuts to our essential fire and rescue services.

Yours sincerely



Steve Brigden  
Town Clerk

**Policy Advice Team**

Bucks Horn Oak  
Nr Farnham  
Hampshire GU10 4LS

Tel 0300 067 4445

Mobile 07884 235 688

[rob.gazzard@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:rob.gazzard@forestrycommission.gov.uk)

Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

[dawn.whittaker@esfrs.org](mailto:dawn.whittaker@esfrs.org)

[Consult@esfrs.org](mailto:Consult@esfrs.org)

20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Dawn

**FORESTRY COMMISSIONS RESPONSE TO FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES  
INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION**

**SUMMARY**

Forestry Commission is responding in request for views on the East Sussex FRS Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation. This is made on behalf of South East & London Area Team, Forest Services and East and East England Forest District, Forestry England.

**BACKGROUND**

Forestry Commission regulates and incentivise both public and private woodlands using legislation such as the Forestry Act and Forestry Environmental Impact Assessment (1999) regulations and has a number of agencies to achieve its goals via Forest Services. Forestry Commission is England's largest landowner, with the nation's forests managed the agency Forestry England and its Forest Districts. Forest Research is an

agency focus on a wide aspect of forestry, covering social, economic and environment including climate change.

Whilst there are number of wildfires occur in forestry, the greatest area burnt is in open areas such as lowland heath, grassland and arable habitats. However the adjacency of open areas to forestry means that we take a landscape view of wildfire risk.

Forestry Commission is the only organisation to have actions to adapt to wildfire in the governments National Adaptation Plan, published in July 2018. In light of this we commissioned Prof. Andrew Moffat to review the IRMPs of Fire and Rescue Services in the South East of England, an area highlighted in the government's Climate Change Risk Assessment to see the largest increase in wildfire risk, to look at present mitigation and adaptation measures to wildfire against the risk of climate change.

The review built upon the work of Julia McMorrow of University of Manchester on how wildfire quantitatively addressed wildfire in Community Risk Registers and IRMPs at the national level. Prof Moffat's review looked at how our local emergency planning qualitatively addresses wildfire risk, to understand how wildfire adaptation and contingency planning was being undertaken, how effective it was implemented in strategic documents and to provide recommendations for the future. The points raised by Prof Moffat were also raised in two Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology publications in 2019, the first on 'Climate Change and Wildfire in the UK' and 'Evaluation of UK Natural Hazards'.

## **FRS DUTIES IN RESPECT OF WILDFIRE**

### **Wildfire leads for local level**

As the Home Office are the Lead Government Organisation (LGO) for severe wildfire as defined in the National Risk Assessment, therefore Fire and Rescue Services lead at the local level.

Relevant legislation and guidance in respect of wildfire; prevention, assessment, planning and advice, fire safety and fire response as well as mitigation and adaptation to climate change:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 for wildfire
- IRMP Guidance for Wildfire
- Civil Contingency Act 2004
- Climate Change Act 2008
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

## **SUGGESTED OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Definition of wildfire used by Fire and Rescue Services**

The definition used by National Operational Guidance Programme (NOGP) provides the following challenges:

- Two of the five criteria cannot be measured using the Incident Recording System, thus there is a risk of under reporting of wildfire incidents.
- Failure to record smaller wildfire incidents, such as ignitions, will have a significant impact on masking trends, especially risking underestimation the impacts of future extreme weather linked to climate change.

Forestry Commission's analysis of wildfires points out in 2010 /11 to 2011/12 the impact of dry and warm springs<sup>1</sup>. It is highly likely there is large increase of number, area burnt and duration due to the prolonged dry and hot spring and summers, heat waves and low rainfall. This illustrates the episodic cycle of wildfire incidents in-between years of increased rainfall and cold, which increase vegetation fuel loading.

As the Forestry Commission also uses Scottish Government's definition of wildfire (Wildfire Operations Guidance), the basis of the NOGP definition, we would therefore suggest a clear definition between smaller and larger wildfire incidents could be used to address the problem.

This is used successfully in the Forestry Commission's statistical analysis of wildfire incident in England using Fire and Rescue Service's data.

The benefits of this include:

- That the Incident Recording System will provide all the data required and thus ensure there is no risk of under reporting of incidents attended by Fire and Rescue Services.
- Ensure the fire and land management sector use the same definition providing clarity to local community, business and environment at the local and national level, especially when working on evidence for Community Risk Registers and IRMPs.
- We can better assess the trends of wildfire incidents as we experience more extreme weather, to improve our mitigation and adaptation planning to climate change.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forestry-commission-england-wildfire-statistics-for-england-2009-10-to-2016-17>

- Improve emergency planning to incidents such as the Swinley Forest Fire in 2011, Royal Berkshire FRS largest recorded incident since Windsor Castle Fire, which started from one of four fires which would be excluded by the criteria currently used by Hampshire and IOW FRS.

### **Partnership working at a landscape scale level**

Given that the areas most affected by wildfires are on open habitats, such as lowland heath, grasslands and arable, we would encourage East Sussex FRS to work with the following partners:

- Natural England, the regulator for open habitats in England.
- National Park Authorities, as wildfires are predicted to increase by 30 to 50% by 2080 in National Parks.
- Other large landowners such as National Trust, Ministry of Defence etc.
- Land representative organisations such as National Farmers' Union, Countryside and Built Landowner Association and environmental Non-Government Organisations.
- A focus on prevention in existing groups, such as South East England Wildfire Group.

### **Requested outputs from IRMP**

Within the IRMP or its supporting document, and as part of Fire and Rescue Service statutory duties for fire safety and to 'assess, plan and advise', we would like to see the following information for general public, landowners, Local Planning Authorities and National Parks (both as Local Planning Authorities) and forestry and environmental regulators:

- Clear list and/or map/s of wildfire risk in the Fire and Rescue Service area, to provide evidence base to help target increasing building wildfire resilience today and in the future (by 2040, 2060 and 2080 linked to government climate change adaptation planning).
- How FRS engage on wildfire mitigation and adaptation with land owners in terms of government land management incentives, such as Countryside Stewardship and regulation, such as Forestry Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for deforestation.

- How land management regulators will be effectively engaged in Community Risk Registers to ensure short, medium and long-term mitigation and adaptation to wildfire will be achieved, including how improve wildfire risk analysis.
- Advice, assessment and planning on building wildfire resilience, such as providing advice to land managers on wildfire risk and future impact on climate change.
- FRS policy on wildfire mitigation and adaptation and how this is reported in terms of the Climate Change Act.
- How wildfire risk should be addressed by Local Planning Authority Local Plans and development applications in terms of relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Improving the interoperability between Fire and Rescue Services and land management organisations who work at the landscape scale.

Mindful of Prof Andrew Moffat's review we suggest the need for a consistent format with other Fire and Rescue Services, using a national approach to set standards across the land management and fire sectors. This will be critical for landowners who have property across adjacent county borders as well as national land management agency's.

Yours sincerely

Rob Gazzard  
Advisor, Technical Guidance, Contingency Planning and Wildfire  
Forestry Commission



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

26 May 2020

Dear Fire Authority Member,

We are writing regarding the latest plans East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020 –2025 which is currently being consulted on across the county. After discussions with the Chief Fire Officer, local firefighters and residents we have concluded that it is not the right time to proceed with such a major restructure of the local service.

We are not satisfied with the urgency of this review and believe that while fire fighters have taken on the extra duties during the COVID crisis that it is unfair them, as key workers, to be having these structure changes force on them.

We are also particularly concerned about the cuts and loss in service by 50% capacity in Lewes and Newhaven which help support the east of Brighton, with regards to the move from full-time to ‘retained’ firefighting on the weekends. We are also concerned that the figures for demand are based on historic cases which have since be superseded by more recent, higher callout figures which are not being taken into consideration.

No one knows what the future shape of local government, including fire and police services, will look like after this pandemic and so we think it is premature also to be making determinations that may need to change again in 12 months’ time.

We are happy to continue the discussion about any changes in a cross-party way but believe that these changes should not be taking place now.

As such we would call on you all to vote against the proposal and place a moratorium on any wholesale changes until we better understand the impact of COVID on East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service as well as the wider community.

Yours Sincerely,

Lloyd Russell Moyle MP  
Brighton, Kemptown and Peacehaven  
Labour and Cooperative Party

[lloyd.russellmoyle.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:lloyd.russellmoyle.mp@parliament.uk)

*Fire Stations: Roedean*

Maria Caulfield MP  
Lewes  
Conservative Party

[maria.caulfield.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:maria.caulfield.mp@parliament.uk)

*Lewes, Newhaven, Seaford and Barcombe*



# UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, Civic Centre  
Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1AE

Tel: (01825) 762774 Fax: (01825) 765757

e-mail: [townclerk@uckfieldtc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@uckfieldtc.gov.uk)

[www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk](http://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk)

**Town Clerk – Holly Goring**

East Sussex Fire Authority

5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear East Sussex Fire Authority,

I write on behalf of Uckfield Town Council in my capacity as Town Clerk, in response to the public consultation document "Planning for a Safer Future."

Uckfield Town Council considered the contents of the draft document at their meeting of General Purposes Committee on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. After much discussion, they RESOLVED to provide the following response:

*"Uckfield Town Council urgently and forcefully calls upon the East Sussex Fire Authority, to immediately drop all and any proposed amendments to the Fire Service in our county. This council believes that the proposed cuts will put the town and its villages at risk and in danger. The council wholeheartedly disagrees with the cuts and will push back at East Sussex County Council on the proposal. And to our best endeavours fight to keep the high standards and first rate fire service that the people of Uckfield deserve."*

*As a result of passing this proposal, Uckfield Town Council will,*

- (i) Demand that any public consultation be suspended until it can be given proper consideration (post Covid-19);*
- (ii) Ensure that consideration is given to the new large-scale housing developments and subsequent population increase in this area in the next 5-10 years;*
- (iii) Demand a comprehensive risk assessment of the impact of the cuts to all South East fire and rescue services, and in dealing with capacity for East Sussex;*
- (iv) Ask for modelling of common fire risks in Wealden such as bush fires on the Ashdown Forest and the effects to capacity on Uckfield's Fire station;*
- (v) Demand a full explanation from East Sussex Fire Authority on the proposed cuts."*



One of our Town Councillors also wished to raise a number of additional questions which I hope you will consider, in particular the lack of detail with regard to some of the statistics and information shared within the document. In a number of places, the content appears vague:

- What are group 1,2,3 stations? Where is this set out in the document?
- Page 18 – you briefly reference forest fires. This needs to be elaborated on further to reflect the impact of climate change on weather now and in future years;
- Page 35 – you reference ‘refining how you allocate your resources to protection activity’ – do you not do this already?
- Page 40 – you reference the increase in appliances to 18 at the start of the day, but don’t advise us what the existing figure is now? Is it the 15 above? Not clear.
- Page 41 – you reference a much reduced financial reward, how big is the reduction?
- Page 42 – you state that response times may take longer from these stations - how much longer?
- Page 43 – reduce six posts (33 to 27) – are these redundancies?
- How often are both engines on call out in Uckfield across the year?

We would be grateful for a response to our questions and for the consultation to be halted based on the points made in this letter.

Yours sincerely



Holly Goring  
Town Clerk



2043 4139

Mark O'Brien

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

Headquarters

Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DZ

Telephone: 0303 999 1000

E-mail: enquiries@esfrs.org

Web: www.esfrs.org

In the case of emergency please dial 999

Our Ref: consult@esfrs.org

21. June 2020

Dear Householder,

We are writing to you to explain a series of proposals for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and to invite you to take part in our public consultation.

Improving public safety and reducing the number and severity of incidents is at the heart of everything we do.

In our "**Planning for a Safer Future – Integrated Risk Management Plan**" we have identified the many and varied risks across our service area - past, present and future. We have then planned to deliver a fire and rescue service that reduces or mitigates those risks in the most effective way.

It has become clear that we need to make some changes and redistribute our resources so that they are in the right place, at the right time to deal with emergencies and help prevent them in the first place through engagement and regulation.

This five year plan sets out what we intend to do to meet the level of risk and demand we have identified.

Our proposals will mean improved emergency cover:

- 99% of high-risk dwellings - up from 93%
- 92% of all households – up from 80%
- 92% of our population – up from 75%

In order to make these improvements, we want to make some changes to the way we run our fire and rescue service. The changes will enable us to reallocate our resources more effectively against the risk profile and response standards.

#### We will....

- Keep all our 24 community fire stations open and operational
- Introduce a new "operational resilience plan" which aims to increase the minimum number of fire engines available at the start of the day from 15 in our current policies to 18
- Have a total of 27 fire engines and 3 high-reach appliances (aerial ladder platforms) by 2025 if all proposals go ahead – this includes increasing our response provision in Hastings from 2 to 3 fire engines, and replacing one "combined rescue platform" in Eastbourne with two separate vehicles
- Always mobilise the nearest, quickest available crew, fire engines and other resources to an incident
- Invest in prevention work, such as home safety visits and educational programmes
- Invest in protection work, such as business fire safety and high rise safety
- Proactively target areas where the risk of incidents is highest
- Offer enhanced contracts to our on call (part-time) firefighters so we better match their availability to when we most need them

P10.

There have been some claims about the proposals which the Service believe do not present all the facts accurately, and so we would urge you to read the background information for yourself so that you can give us your views.

No decisions have been made on the proposals set out in Planning for a Safer Future.

The best way for you to get your voice heard is to go online and take part in the consultation at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture) or to call 0800 3247 005.

The Fire Authority meets in September to review the findings of the consultation, and to discuss and agree the next steps.

Yours sincerely,



Mark O'Brien  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your letter. Having carefully studied the proposals I have already completed the online consultation form. However, I feel that it is appropriate to express my views more personally. In doing so, I sincerely hope that this consultation is not a means to fool the public into believing that the proposed reorganisation/cuts are to be the topic of discussion, rather than as a means to ram through a done deal, dictated to you by Central/Local Government.

My particular concerns relate to the proposed reduction in status and availability at the Cowborough station. You make reference to the retention of all community fire stations, but you seem hesitant to emphasise the effective down-grading of several locations, at the expense of beefing up others - a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

As if I need reminding you, Cowborough is the largest inland town in East Sussex, it regularly supports colleagues in Kent (Canbridge Hills - since they closed Roothall), it is seeing exponential housing growth, we are the effective custodians of Ashdown Forest, and we have the A26 trunk road, a favourite haunt of boy racers and the scene of several serious accidents in recent years. Whilst we may be - in relevant terms - classified as an affluent area, I cannot square the notion that we should be asked to foot the bill for other locations, simply because you have been asked to curb your budget in order to suit political chicanery. By all means tinker with staff ratios if you can demonstrate some positive benefit but please do not leave us reliant on Canbridge Hills or Uckfield, where the time delay could make the difference between life or death.



**East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service**

Headquarters  
Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DZ

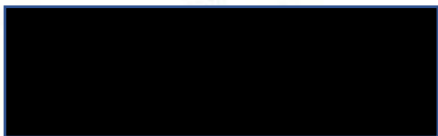
Telephone: 0303 999 1000

E-mail: [enquiries@esfrs.org](mailto:enquiries@esfrs.org)

Web: [www.esfrs.org](http://www.esfrs.org)

In the case of emergency please dial 999

2020 1 008



Our Ref: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)

May 2020

Dear Householder,

**Planning for a Safer Future**

East Sussex Fire Authority is consulting on its five year plan and would like your help in planning for the future so we can make the right decisions.

We want to make sure we put our resources in the right place, at the right time to deal with emergencies and help prevent them in the first place.

Our proposals include:

- Crewing – we've looked at the shift patterns worked by our firefighters
- Fire engines – we've looked at the type and number of fire engines we have
- Expanding the building safety and prevention work we do in communities
- Reducing 999 calls – we've looked at how we can engage with the community and with businesses
- Non-emergency calls – we've looked at whether we should still go to some kinds of calls, such as bird rescues, where no human life is at risk

*Very Ambiguous*

You can find out more and give us your views at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture)

*Difficulty accessing your Web site.*

Paper copies can be requested by emailing [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or writing to:

Planning for a Safer Future  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HQ  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
BN7 2DZ

*Do NOT agree to any cuts in the Fire Service in Battle or Area's. New Houses being built all over Battle we need our fire service. Not thought out very well!*

The survey is open for eight weeks from 24 April 2020. The findings of the consultation will be considered at a Fire Authority meeting in September.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or by calling 0303 999 1000.

Yours sincerely,

Mark O'Brien  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer



2021 1816

**East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service**  
Headquarters  
Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2DZ  
Telephone: 0303 999 1000  
E-mail: [enquiries@esfrs.org](mailto:enquiries@esfrs.org)  
Web: [www.esfrs.org](http://www.esfrs.org)  
In the case of emergency please dial 999

Our Ref: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)

May 2020

NT

10

Dear Householder,

#### Planning for a Safer Future

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You can find out more and give us your views at [www.esfrs.org/saferfuture](http://www.esfrs.org/saferfuture)

Paper copies can be requested by emailing [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or writing to:

**Planning for a Safer Future**  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HQ  
Church Lane  
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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org) or by calling 0303 999 1000.

Yours sincerely,

Mark O'Brien  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Sorry Virus has made me  
cynical

If you're a Royal or a Coleb  
or big house  hooray  
we'll hoses the  
firefighters

If you a pleb - get your ~~hose~~  
pipe connected + a few buckets  
water, we'll be there eventually  
if your house has burnt down

call us to say not needed.

p.s. if your parrot has fled up a  
nearby tree, you're on your own  
your house is gone but rescue  
your own Parrot

XXX

15th May 2020

Dear Mr O'Brien,

Thank you for your interesting letter  
of MAY 2020.

For many years I lived opposite the  
Fire Station in South Road, Wickham, so I  
could always see how busy the staff were with  
various challenges on a daily basis.

My neighbour used to visit them  
OFTEN because she regularly lost her handbag,  
her keys and her sense of direction. Always  
they helped her.

Many of us have watched while your  
men pulled a dog out of the drain or a cat  
from a tree. What would animal lovers  
do without you.

I saw your men negotiate a large horse  
out of a sliver ditch. It took all afternoon. I  
saw them save a sheep with baby lamb from  
the river. They have captured many poikilified  
deers from traps.

Then there are the BIRDS, all of  
which are in decline, with several on the "RED  
ALERT LIST." The R.S.P.B. does not seem to thank  
you enough in their regular magazine "NATURE'S  
HOME" for all the work you do saving  
them from being trapped on poles, roofs, aerials.  
If you do not save them - who will?

Your people attend many traffic

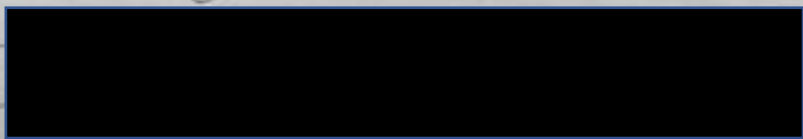
2.

accidents and when my friend fell off his bike and knocked himself out — Fire and Rescue was first on the scene.

If, in the future, the Fire & Rescue Service decides not to rescue any more animals and birds, then there will be many sad times. We will lose many birds.

Please send me a paper-copy of your title page: "Planning for a Safer Future."

Many thanks,  
All good luck,  
Sincerely.





Could you tell me if we moved to the flexible crewing system on wholetime stations as per the IRMP proposal, as there will be in effect no watches and just a station leader, what would happen to the current Watch Managers would they be demoted back down to Crew Manager and pay protected, or would they be moved into other Watch Manager roles within the service??

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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IRMP briefing – Forest Row 1/6/2020

[REDACTED]

Issues for feeding back

- There was a significant difference between the number of calls used in the station profile when compared against the records that were kept on station. Acknowledgment that data cleansing has taken place however this was not felt to have accounted for the difference. Without having all the data available it was not possible to know which calls had been removed from the data and therefore why.
- What is the rationale in removing the second nearest 4x4 to Ashdown Forest? Access to large parts of the forest is only possible with the 4x4s and getting the resources there quickly will ultimately reduce the total resources needed to extinguish a wildfire.
- Global climate change is making natural disasters of flooding and wildfires more frequent and more severe. These proposals do not address these emerging risks.
- Many on-call staff feel that they are providing a service to their local community. Frequent standbys for prolonged periods at other locations not only removes the provision from the local area but impacts significantly on home life. Many on-call are likely to leave the service if the majority of activity that they are asked to provide are standbys. There was a prediction that the proposals would lead to this situation occurring.
- How will Seaford be able to crew the HVP, an off-road vehicle and their pump? Wadhurst would be a better location for the off-road vehicle and be readily available for incidents on Ashdown Forest.
- If second appliances are removed, minimum crewing should be 5 not 4 to allow for the safe implementation of many core activities such as pitching the 12m ladder, stage 1 BA, and RTC persons trapped incidents.

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[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Chris, Mark Matthews and I have just spent the morning with one of the Watch's at Crowborough discussing the Operational Response Review proposals.

The Watch provided a very informative presentation – attached – and from discussions with the Team, could I please ask for any background information that you may have on the following 3 points, which have been raised as questions from the Crew.

## 1 – Call figures

The Service has presented Crowborough’s risk profile detailing that between April 2013 & March 2018 there have been 1,505 mobilisations to Incidents by a Crowborough appliance. From the work that the local teams have undertaken, they have produced the following statistics which vary significantly from those produced by the Service.

*Could you please confirm if the Service figures include:*

1. *cross border working*
2. *Standbys*
3. *Specialist Water Rescue calls*
4. *Animal Rescue Calls*
5. *Specialist Land rover calls*

There is disparity of 1000 calls which is of obvious significance to the team here and we would therefore welcome your advice on how the statistics are calculated.

### **PUBLISHED FIGURES –**

#### **Crowborough Station Risk profile**

83P1 is mobilised, on average, 290 times per year and 68 % to its own station area.

83P4 is mobilised, on average, 54 times per year and 73% to its own station area.

Between April 2013 & March 2018 there have been 1,505 mobilisations to Incidents by a Crowborough appliance.

### **LOCALLY RECORDED FIGURES**

#### **Station 83 Call numbers (from Station logs)**

2013	424 Total calls
2014	443 Total calls <b>Real average 431</b>
2015	377 Total calls
2016	385 Total calls
2017	441 Total calls
2018	435 Total calls

**Total number 2,505**

(2019 470 Total calls)

## 2 – Performance impact

Chris, please could you give some clarity around the figures listed in the table below? We are unclear as to how the On Station response improves by 0.04% as a DO Station bearing in mind the turn out times are not improved during the daytime. *Please could you advise how these figures are calculated?*

	On-station response	On-call response
All 6 DC stations as Day-Only	0.40%	0.20%
Battle as DO station	0.01%	0.00%
Bexhill as DO Station	-0.08%	0.39%
Crowborough as DO Station	0.04%	-0.09%
Lewes as DO Station	0.04%	-0.03%
Newhaven as DO Station	-0.24%	0.16%
Uckfield as DO Station	0.07%	-0.19%

[Redacted]

With kindest regards and thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Boss

As the IRMP process moved into Stage four on Thursday, we were hoping to arrange a meeting with yourselves to discuss the proposals of the IRMP.

We have all seen the You Tube presentations, that are available to the general public but it would be good to speak to someone, from the ORR Team.

We were hoping that now the process has been given CFA approval for consultation, we could be told of any plans that you have on the table. Again we have all seen the generic plans but now that we are at this stage, it would be good to have a bit more detail.

Obviously, in these current times, it would need to be carried out "virtually".

Thanks

Regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Good Afternoon

As per the proposals in East Sussex IRMP, I understand that The Ridge Fire Station will be day crewed Monday to Friday, then be covered by on call firefighters in the evenings and weekends.

(1) Could you tell me how and why the risk in The Ridges fire ground changes on weekend days and evenings, to enable ESFRS to increase the response time by covering this period using on call firefighters??

(2) I also understand there is a whole time 2nd appliance going into Hastings Bohemia Road. This is excellent as I understand the risk in this area has been discovered to be greater following this IRMP and annual assessment of risk.

(3) Due to the 4i mobilising system picking nearest and quickest fire appliances, won't this 2nd wholetime fire appliance from Bohemia Road pick up all The Ridges fire calls first??

(4) Won't this leave a greater risk at Bohemia Road as the calls for The Ridge take away that 2nd fire appliance for Bohemia Road??

(5) How Bohemia Road will jump crew the aerial appliance when their 2nd appliance is out??

(6) And finally what happens if both fire appliances for Bohemia Road are attending incidents who covers the aerial capability at this station?? (This question would also apply to Eastbourne if they jump crew their aerial)

Kind Regards

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Greetings,

I'd like to know the total average number of two pump incidents in Bexhill, battle and Hastings areas over the last few years please.

With my experience from working in Fire control I would estimate that the proposed 2<sup>nd</sup> appliance for Hastings Bohemia road will form part of the PDA for all two pump calls into these areas and beyond should P4s be removed.

I would also hazard a guess that at night two appliances from Bohemia Road would be mobilised to the Ridge fireground ahead of the Ridge fire station should the proposal for The Ridge to move to a daycrewed model. Any one pump calls in the Eastern group that leave a station requiring a standby move will also inevitably mean 76P2/P4 would be moved.

Has any modelling been done to predict the total number of mobilisations predicted for station 76?

My concern is that as much as on paper an additional pump in that area is a good thing, coupled with the removal of surrounding pumps it will be extensively used to the point where the proposed dual crewed 76A1 will frequently be unable to mobilise, or at best be waiting for one of the Hastings pumps to return to station to crew. There is also the likelihood that the two Hastings pumps are mobilised as a standard Two pump PDA, an incident commander requires an ALP and despite one sitting in Hastings would have to wait for one to come from elsewhere.

I know other services dual crew ALPs but most, if not all of the stations that I'm aware that use this model have RDS resilience at the same station to backfill appliances and at least drive, or even crew the ALP.

Has the service calculated the potential attendance times of an ALP in the Hastings area should 76A1 not be able to attend.

I look forward to your response,

Thanks and kind regards,

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Hello All

Now we are in the public consultation period is there any chance that anybody in a management role could explain to us what the actual proposals are for the Day crewed duty system.

This would include proposals on how the on-call firefighters would be deployed.

We have no meat on the bones to the vague proposals put forward to the fire authority.

How will your proposals work, we cannot see how you can make it work with no On-call availability now.

We wait to hear from you as a station

Hi,

Please could you provide answers for the following questions regarding the IRMP?:

1. The IRMP states the new proposed fire engine for Bohemia Road will be available for 24/7 response, how is this possible under the shared crewing model? Is it not only available when the alp is not at an incident?
2. Will this new fire engine be quicker to The Ridge fire station at night than the day crewed staff there? If so, will that mean more calls for that appliance and even less availability of the alp there?
3. How will cover at The Ridge be maintained at night when there are members of the duty watch off sick?
4. Fires in the open: How will we cope with the increased number and likelihood of fires in the open like forest fires with less appliances and 4x4's? Crowborough could currently mobilise 2 appliances and a 4x4 to a fire on Ashdown Forest yet if these proposals go through they could only mobilise 1 of these appliances and the next nearest 4x4 is also proposed to be removed?
5. Can you explain how the orr plans to reduce standby moves? If the second appliances are removed from DC stations, as soon as the remaining appliance from these stations, or the station special(s), go out for the pre determined time a standby appliance will be required. This must vastly increase required standby moves and because the DC stations will only be one appliance these 6 stations will no longer be useable for standby moves because they would automatically need backfilling? At the moment, providing the second appliance is available at these stations, the first appliance can fulfil standby moves but without these second appliances this resilience will be taken away.
6. Proposal 1 includes 6 RDS stations be allowed a longer turn out time for resilience purposes. Could this principle be applied to all current rds stations/appliances?
7. How do you calculate the proposals to be a total net loss of 5 fire engines?
8. How many fire engines does Wadhurst currently have? The IRMP says it is classified as a two fire engine station yet CFO said it has only one fire engine?

9. How does the service propose to have no RDS redundancies? For example, Crowborough has 14 RDS firefighters, if there was only 1 appliance there and the remaining 6/7 DC WT staff all also took RDS contracts that would be 20/21 firefighters for one appliance?
10. When will the service release the details of proposal 7 option A? How can staff consult on this proposal without knowing the full details of which type of flexible rostering is being proposed?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

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Hi Consult

Please could you take the time to answer the below questions that have been requested by Blue Watch Eastbourne following their IRMP Managers Update which took place this afternoon.

1. How has the change to the flexible rostering duty system been assessed to be 'more a family friendly work pattern'?
2. To what extent has the impact of flexible rostering on dual contract staff been considered?
3. How will flexible rostering not have a negative impact on teamwork and crew familiarity when crews will rotate on such a frequent basis, working with different people constantly?

Many thanks.

Kind regards

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Good Afternoon,

Could I ask if there is a criteria on who specifically will be liberated from posts at the proposed stations if that is the direction it IRMP goes, for example if someone at a proposed station is already qualified within the mentioned areas of training/protection will they be more likely given notice that they are to be liberated and reassigned to the training or protection teams.

Alternatively if not is there a budget for the cost of retraining those liberated and if that is the case will there be a minimum time frame they have to hold that post?

Kind Regards

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### *Questions and Point raised during IRMP Input:*

- \*The IRMP Presentation contains significant inaccuracies and inconsistencies which are misleading
  - \*Why is the IRMP going ahead with a Public Consultation during a period of lockdown with no public meetings allowed to go ahead for the foreseeable future? This will lead to a very small level of engagement with public and a total lack of opportunity for questions and challenges to be heard and answered.
  - \* Does the call analysis that the process is based on take into account how frequently ESFRS go across borders into WSFRS, SFRS, and KFRS?
  - \* The process is based on “projected budgets” but uses 18 month old data and so does not take into account the extra work that is being undertaken supporting SECAMB. This area of work is also part of a National discussion so is likely to continue in some form, therefore should have been captured in the calls analysis.
  - \* IRMP based on “Projected budgets” but additional work-streams being negotiated on not included in forecasts.
  - \*The slide titled **“Our Five Year Plan – outcomes”** Eastbourne listed as having a dedicated Ariel Appliance and in fact this promoted as a “bonus” of the proposals. It is not a **“dedicated”** appliance if it is not primary crewed. If one pump is already committed to a different incident then the ALP would be either unavailable due to crewing or deployed without a dedicated support pump from the same station.
  - \* On the slide titled **“Changes to Crewing on day-crewed stations”**. Claim of 14 Daytime Appliances Available. Only Monday – Friday due to changes to duty system. Evening Cover of 8 appliances is again misleading. Drops to 6 straight away in the event of Ariel’s being required due to jump crewing.
  - \* The “Very low impact” statements are again misleading and incorrect due to above.
  - \* The slide titled **“Removal of second appliances”** The data used to justify the removal of 2<sup>nd</sup> Pumps at Day Crewed stations is again misleading. If the appliance is on the run then it avoids the need to mobilise standby pumps from WT stations which reduces costs and erosion of Fire Cover in the City.
  - \* The proposed changes to Crewing Models don’t leave enough FF’s for our own task analysis. Fire Service task Analysis states that for a single occupancy domestic house fire with one casualty needing rescue via internal stairs, 11 Firefighters are required as a minimum. The different Crewing Model options that were discussed during the presentation for the jump crewing of ariel appliances mean that you will either get:
    - \* 4x ff’s on an appliance + 2x ff’s on 2<sup>nd</sup> appliance, this assumes there are sufficient drivers in order to driver 2 x appliances + the ALP.
    - \* 4x ff’s on an appliance + 2x ff’s in the station van, this is hazardous as the station van is unable to proceed on blue lights and will therefore be more likely to try and “catch up” en-route increasing the likelihood of an accident. Both of the above Crewing models lead to 6x Firefighters in attendance at a domestic house fire. This is obviously less than our own task analysis. With the additional resources coming from further afield due to the removal of many 2<sup>nd</sup> appliances, this in turn will place even more moral pressure on OIC’s to rapid deploy in the early stages of an incident.
  - \* The slide titled **“Previous IRMP Decisions”** Lift Incidents, We would challenge the claim that a third of all lift incidents involve no persons, who is calling us in that case? ESFRS is 6<sup>th</sup> in the Country for High Buildings therefore large demand for lift assistance. How does ESFRS compare Nationally with buildings with lifts in?
  - \* Also on the slide titled **“Previous IRMP Decisions”** The Ridge change of duty system. Evening and Weekends the Ridge is covered by retained crews. This adds a predicted 5 mins to response + attendance time. Dynamic mobilising would therefore mobilise from Bohemia Road to large areas of The Ridges Fireground which would have an impact on Ariel cover in Hastings. This does not appear to have been considered?
  - \* Where are the Risk Assessments on how the changes to Duty Systems and Crewing Models impact FF Safety?
  - \* With such significant changes being proposed, why has there not been an Officer and Green book review to reflect changes?
- 
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Gd Morning

I've been stopped several times in the streets of Hove & Brighton and asked the following. Please can you provide some guidance, as I wouldn't want to be accused of giving the whole story

Why are certain tweets being blanked out or deleted on the various East Sussex tweeter feeds? (I'm unable to answer)

Several people have asked this question. How much longer is longer for a fire engine to arrive- if I dial 999 in an emergency how long are you going to take? And they got no answer or were told to read the IRMP (which doesn't give a time )

You (i.e the fire service put out information the other week, that certain parties weren't telling the whole story.) Who is this and what have they said that's not factual or correct ?

Why does your IRMP/ Plan not make sense –its written in such a way that both a lawyer and baker have said they don't understand what certain parts mean and I was asked separately ? and they've also both asked How long is longer? With no reply

I was also asked how many fire engines where in the city? And when I asked where they lived in the event of incident and they said a block of flats, so when I told them we send 6 fire engines as PDA to a block of flats (they asked what PDA meant, so I told them ) and they were shocked that a city as Big as Brighton & Hove only had 4 fire engines but needs 6 for a block of flats and the figures don't add up- so perhaps you could tell me how I answer that .

I also explain that we send 3 fire engines to a confirmed house fire and 2 to a car crash and they said the numbers didn't again add up.( so how am I meant to answer this) They were concerned as it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Grenfell Towers.

I also got asked about the big fire in Lancing / & the hotel In Eastbourne the other day and asked if we went, So people in B'ton and Hove are aware of the news.

One person said they saw Sky news and the Mp's from B'ton on TV talking about the cuts, but no- where in the letter they received or anything they've read talks about cuts- but it was clearly mentioned on the TV, and in the House of Commons.

One person was told to go away and read the IRMP- he told me he's got 2 degrees, one in English & one in engineering and it didn't make sense to them.

So how are staff meant to answer these questions honestly ?

I look forward to hearing from you

Regards

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Good morning

Could I please ask the following:

- From the presentation, there appears to be a heavy reliance on retained crews to fill the gaps with evenings and weekends. Working on station, I am aware that current recruitment of RDS can be challenging. What would the financial impact be on the service for recruitment and training of the additional RDS crews. Does the service have capacity in terms of staff and premises for the training of the additional crews needed? If not, what would the additional financial implications be for providing?

Thank you very much, with very best wishes

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Hi

I work at Lewes there is not enough retained personnel to guarantee a pump at night or weekends. This is why the second pump is hardly ever on the run. They have just one driver and no J.O's, so until that changes the new system cannot work. It would take quite some time to recruit and train at least a couple more drivers and at least a couple of J.O, to be able to do the new system. Will the Service press ahead or wait until sufficient crew are available. Management must be aware of this, what time scale do they think they can make the new system work.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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Good Afternoon,

In the IRMP You are proposing to have 18 fire engines available at the start of each shift before demand.

Can you guarantee these 18 fire engines will remain available all day unless they are on a call and will not be taken off the run due to lack of crewing??

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The following questions were raised during the briefing, can they please be included in the FAQ if not already covered:

- Have local councils/authorities been consulted about future housing developments, proposed changes to built environments, infrastructure etc.
- How many hours will the new Day only contracts be and how does this compare to the current DC.
- Will those moving from DC to Day only contracts be financially impacted and if so how.
- If crewing is being reduced at affected DC stations what number of personnel will they be reduced to.
- What is the purpose of the crewing pool.
- The figure quoted for the crewing pool is 8 – this seems very low, how was this figure arrived at.
- Is the proposal to replace the Aerial appliances with one standard model still being considered or will a crew still need to accompany an aerial if it moves to another station.

Thanks

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]  
hoping to consult with [REDACTED] Hove this evening and I know they will ask me on Group crewing models , under this option is there a decision on how many JO's would be based at the single pump station in the City? There is a thought process that there would be a reduction across watches from 6 to 5 at the single stations under this proposals, would the reduction in watch establishment be a firefighter or a Junior officer Level?

Sorry I know it's in the weeds but these are the kind of concerns that are being raised?  
Secondly when do we expect the changes to the shift options to take place if the agreement is to move forward with a or b?

Are you able to share the proposed timings over the next five years for the DC stations to move to DODS if agreed ?

Does the Ridge going daycrewed mean that under 41 the station ground at 75 would in fact mean that 76 appliances would be called to respond to any calls , thus leaving 75 to only attend 3 pump calls in in the Hastings Area or provide the standby as a Pump that is available under the cluster Cover?

All the best guys and thank you so much for all your support?

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]  
Many thanks for getting back to me. I have a few further queries following on from your response so hopefully these can be answered as well, I will number these according to the number of my original question where appropriate:

1. My question related to the wording in the IRMP for the new appliance at Bohemia Road. How can the new appliance be claimed to be available 24/7 if it doesn't have a dedicated crew? I appreciate the policy on how it will be crewed is yet to be written but if the crew for the appliance are committed to a call on an alternative appliance how will the new appliance remain available?
2. What is the predicted time it would take an appliance from Bohemia Road to attend a call at The Ridge Fire Station at night? What is the turnout time for a retained appliance at night? If the appliance from Bohemia Road will get to The Ridge fire station quicker than the appliance from The Ridge could turn out then the appliance from Bohemia Road will be quicker to all calls that The Ridge would attend at night. This would also have a detrimental effect on the availability of the ALP at Bohemia Road.
7. The IRMP states that Wadhurst, Seaford and Heathfield are currently classed as two fire engine stations. The IRMP proposes to change this so those stations will be classed as one fire engine stations. This is a reduction of one fire engine at each of the 3 stations so increases the total reduction to 10. Why are these 3 fire engines not included in the reduction figures released by ESFRS?

Swift Water Rescue – What is the services plan for response concerning incidents involving swift water rescues? As far as I can see, all other specialisms and associated appliances are mentioned within the IRMP but the SWR team isn't mentioned? Is it being removed? Is it being moved to an alternative station while keeping the same capabilities? Is it being moved to an alternative station while increasing the teams capabilities? Is it being moved to an alternative station while reducing the teams capabilities? Why isn't it mentioned in the IRMP?

Crowborough is a rapidly growing town with many new houses currently under construction and in the planning phase, there will be a minimum of 938 new houses built by 2023/24 which is double the amount of the last 9 years combined. Can you explain how these new houses won't automatically increase the risk in this area?

Kind regards

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As I'm sure your fully aware the Landrover at Crowborough is being taken away for repairs, the disappointing decision has been made to take the landrover from Wadhurst and place into Crowborough. Firstly I think it is the wrong decision to do so, the Landrover at the Ridge would be a more sensible option as it is switched crewed by a wholetime crew and would be less available, both Heathfield and Wadhurst have response times of around 25 mins into Hastings, not that matters as there are no response times for specials which I have been reminded of many times in responses from previous emails. The second point is that if we are in a position with only 4 landrovers across the Service we would be in a position of only having 3 now, again this has highlighted the importance of having 5 landrovers. Could this be forwarded on to Consult for consideration.

Kind regards

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[REDACTED]

Been reading ORR (sorry) got a couple of questions below;

- Whilst you breakdown housing type in our area, is there a National bench mark, so we can see how we compare to the national data sets with regards to building type and population density?
- Is there any National comparisons available with regards to building height i.e. number of high-rise dwellings?

I did some of this work a couple of decades ago after the Palmeria Avenue Fire and we had some of the highest HMO (buildings converted to flats) densities in Europe, even greater than London at that time.

Obviously these questions are following the datasets made available through the NFCC Protection Board, which line us up with Metropolitan Services rather than our Family Group 2, this goes someway to explaining our higher than average AFAs, Lift Rescues and being coastal animal rescues.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] sorry one more question, there is an absence of any information around officer attendance at incidents, surely this is a key part of our response to emergency incidents (including specialisms and specialist response), is there a reason for the absence of any data?

Many thanks

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Hello

Question 1

Will On Call staff be utilised to crew specials such as the Water Carrier throughout the weekdays?

Question 2

Will the service maintain current employment of On Call Staff to be available during the day to crew mixed crew pumps anywhere in the county?

Many thanks

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Issues for feeding back

- Special appliances at on-call stations rely on trained personnel from that station. If that special appliance is then deployed, that station then goes off the run.
  - Will there ever be a point where on-call will be used for resilience pool at other on-call or day only duty stations?
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Dear Consult

I would like to raise the issue of the Landrover being removed from Wadhurst. I have looked through the "The Plan" that is available on the ESFRS website which the public are asked to read before taking part in the survey.

There is no mention of the removal of the Landrover from Wadhurst in The Plan, the survey also has no reference or question relating to this either.

The only place I could find any referral to the Landrover at Wadhurst is that it is removed from the map and not listed on the specials.

There is no information on the Landrover removal in the short videos on Proposal 3 & 5, again there is no information when referred to page 46 & 50 of the IRMP Document

How can there be an informed/consulted decision on this important issue of an appliance being removed from the front line when it is not clear to see and appears to be covered over.

What are the deciding factors regarding the removal of this special, and why have they not been communicated in the consultation.

Regards

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Hi,

Quick question, I understand the survey on the IRMP closes on 19/6. I know people who have only just received a letter from ESFRS. Am I right in understanding the public can continue to write in with their views to this mailbox after the 19/6? There is obviously a large amount of data for people to digest and think about.

Thanks,

■





# WADHURST FIRE STATION



# IRMP/ ORR RESPONSE

- Part 1 – Land Rover
- Part 2 – Maxi cab policy
- Part 3 – CAFs 1.7 Foam

# LAND ROVER

- 78MI – set to be removed from service

# CURRENT 4X4 VEHICLES

- Crowborough
- Heathfield
- The Ridge (Shared crewed)
- Seaford
- Wadhurst

# PROPOSED 4X4 VEHICLES

- Crowborough (Shared Crewed)
- Heathfield
- The Ridge (Shared crewed)
- Seaford

# STATIONS WITH TRAINED STAFF FOR OFF-ROAD DRIVING

- Crowborough - Wholetime numbers to be halved
- Heathfield
- The Ridge - Wholetime numbers to halved
- Seaford
- Wadhurst - For now

# WILDFIRE PDA

- 5 x Fire engines
  - 2 x Land Rovers
  - 1 x Water Bowser + support pump
  - 1 x CSU
  - 2 x Level 2
  - 1 x Level 3
- 
- Where will resources come from under new IRMP?

EAST SUSSEX

WEST SUSSEX

SURREY

- East Sussex size - 1,792 Km<sup>2</sup> - Land Rovers = 5, proposed drop to 4!
- West Sussex – 1,991 km<sup>2</sup> – Off road vehicles = 10 x 4x4, 1 x 6x6 – Total 11
- Surrey - 1,663 Km<sup>2</sup> – Off road vehicles = 10 x 4x4 fire fighting – 16 x Land Rovers MRV = 26 in total

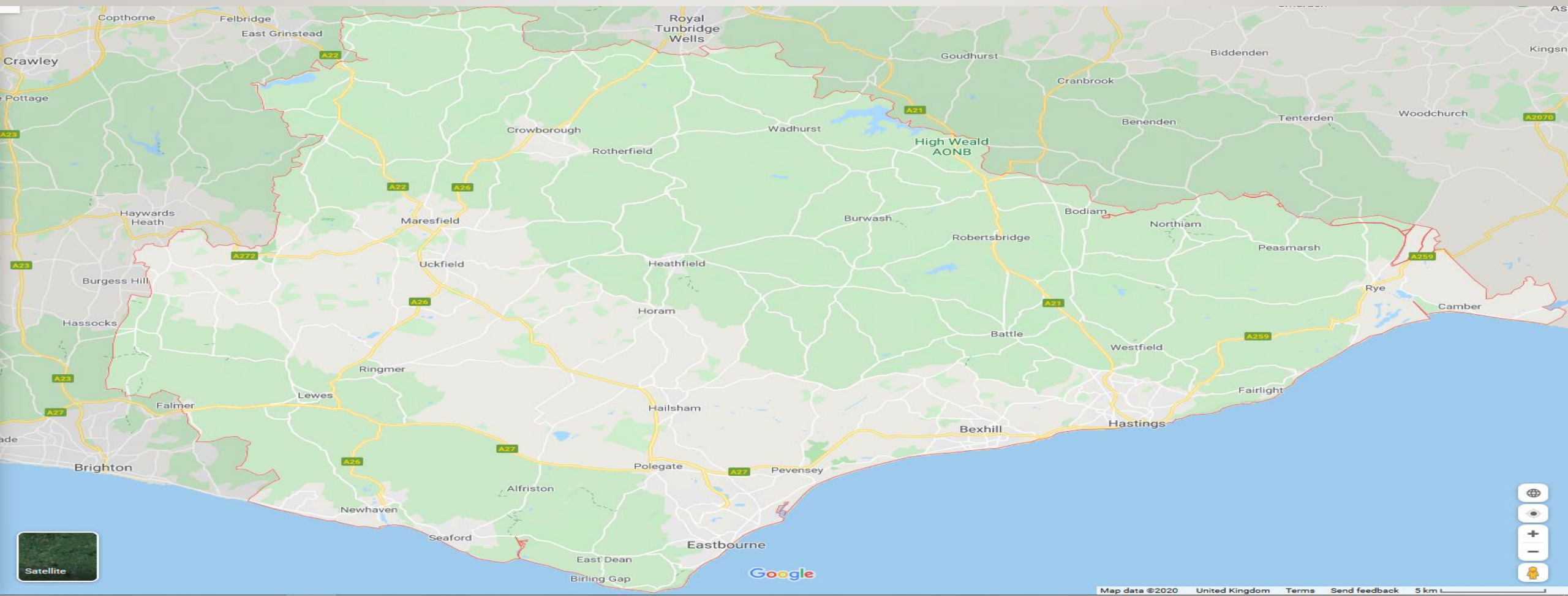
# WADHURST LAND ROVER RIGHT PLACE?

- Wadhurst fire station sits close to the A21, A26 and A22.
- This means Wadhurst can support incidents in its area, Ashdown Forest, Hastings, Eastbourne and Brighton.
- 4i Maps Wadhurst incorrectly out of Wadhurst onto these road, so it does not always send the quickest Land Rover crew and negatively effects Wadhurst



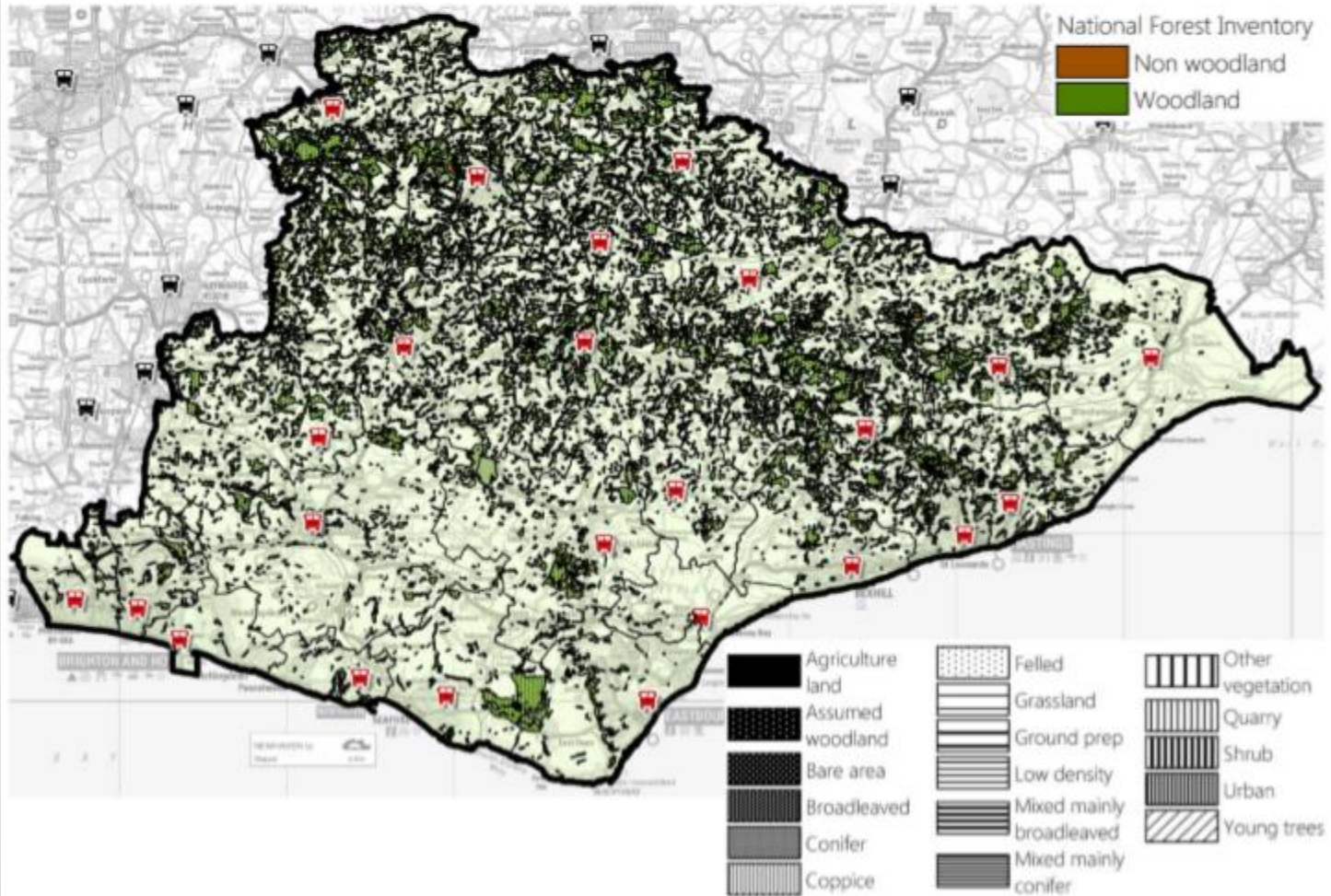
# WADHURST LAND ROVER RIGHT PLACE?

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East Sussex and the South Downs contains vast areas of land that would be at risk of wild fire, including: woodland (The Weald, Ashdown Forest), farmland, grassland, dry valleys and chalk downlands. Many of these areas are of special conservation and scientific importance. It can be seen from the map just how wooded the service area is, particularly to the north and east of the station area, with the south and east been given to the chalk downlands within the South Downs National Park.

National Forest Inventory by Type



WADHURST  
LAND ROVER  
RIGHT PLACE?

# WADHURST LAND ROVER RIGHT PLACE?



# WADHURST LAND ROVER

- ESFRS IRMP Sates a 90% reduction in calls outs for 78MI. Stats end in 2017/18
  - \*18/19 = 125% increase in mobilisations
  - \*19/20 = 50% increase in mobilisations
  - \*\*20/21 = Already achieved same amount of calls
- 
- \* compared to 2017/18
  - \*Year starts April 1st

# CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS

- Wildfires larger than 25 hectares. 2011 – 2017 = less than 100. In 2018 there were 75, and in 2019 there were 137!
- 2019 - Had the most wildfires ever recorded in the UK
- 2020 – Sunniest Spring on record, driest May on record

## **Fireproofing the future**

So what does this mean? There's no need to panic – yet. [Guillermo Rein](#) is Professor of Fire Science at Imperial College London. “The UK doesn't really have a wildfire problem, it has wildfire issues,” he tells National Geographic. “Nothing compared to the Mediterranean, California, Australia or Indonesia.” But this is a situation that could change – with the stresses of global warming fanning the flames. Milder and wetter winters will boost plant growth, while summer heatwaves will dry out potential fuel, making it more flammable.

“Wildfires are moving north,” Rein adds. “[Northern France](#), Germany, Netherlands and Scandinavia are all seeing them. In a matter of years the UK will be ill prepared to handle wildfires. It must consider what it might need in the future, and learn from neighbours like France, Spain and Portugal.”

# WILDFIRE INCIDENTS

- Currently Wadhurst has an experienced wild fire / forest fire fighting team
- We have worked extensively with Crowborough and Heathfield on the forest and the forest rangers
- We have the skill set on station to continue further training and support surround stations with training or on incidents, resulting in incidents being dealt with quickly and effectively

## OTHER INCIDENTS

- Wadhurst Land Rover has been used for incidents in the Snow, assisting Kent fire and rescue on a car fire. Wadhurst Land Rover was the only vehicle that could get to the incident, assisted by the appliance
- Assisting the ambulance in the snow
- Flooding

# OTHER INCIDENTS

- The introduction of the new Mercedes Sprinter 4x4 vehicle gives the service an opportunity to re think the role of the 4x4 vehicle at Wadhurst
- Primarily still an off road fire fighting vehicle
- Potential to carry evac pro + and basket stretchers to assist incidents in the north of the county i.e. rescues of people off road, this can help keep vital resources like ALPs / TRUs in their base locations.
- Continue to assist incidents in the Snow and adverse weather i.e flooding



# MAXI CAB POLICY

- Due to be removed from service, resulting in Wadhurst being downgraded from a two appliance status to a one appliance status

## TWO VEHICLE RESPONSE FROM WADHURST

- If Wadhurst keeps a second vehicle in the form of a Mercedes sprinter, then we would still have the facility to respond in the same way to two pump calls in Wadhurst. We would be able to crew 78P5 first leading to a faster response. Then we could use the Mercedes sprinter to drive the remaining crew to the incident. This would be in the same way we use the Land Rover to drive the remaining crew to an incident now under the maxi cab policy.

# KEEPING A TWO VEHICLE RESPONSE

- Remote location at Wadhurst
- Speeds up 78P5 response time
- More fire fighters quicker on scene to RTC/ House fires in Wadhurst
- Improves fire fighter safety
- Improves public safety as we are able to do more in a quicker time, instead of having to wait for a second appliance to attend Wadhurst.

## CAFS 1.7

- Due to be removed from Wadhurst

## CAFS 1.7

- Wadhurst fire ground under the new IRMP will be the only station ground not bordered by either a Tier 1 or 2 station. It is also not bordered by a CAFs 1.7 appliance.
- Removal of CAFs from Wadhurst leaves a large gap in the north of the county
- It means contrary to the previous foam strategy, you will not have one of the two attending appliances having foam onboard in the Wadhurst area
- With Wadhurst being Tier 3 and used for standbys and reliefs more often, you will have the facility to replace a foam appliance with a foam appliance when making standby moves around the county, if Wadhurst keeps foam

# SUMMARY

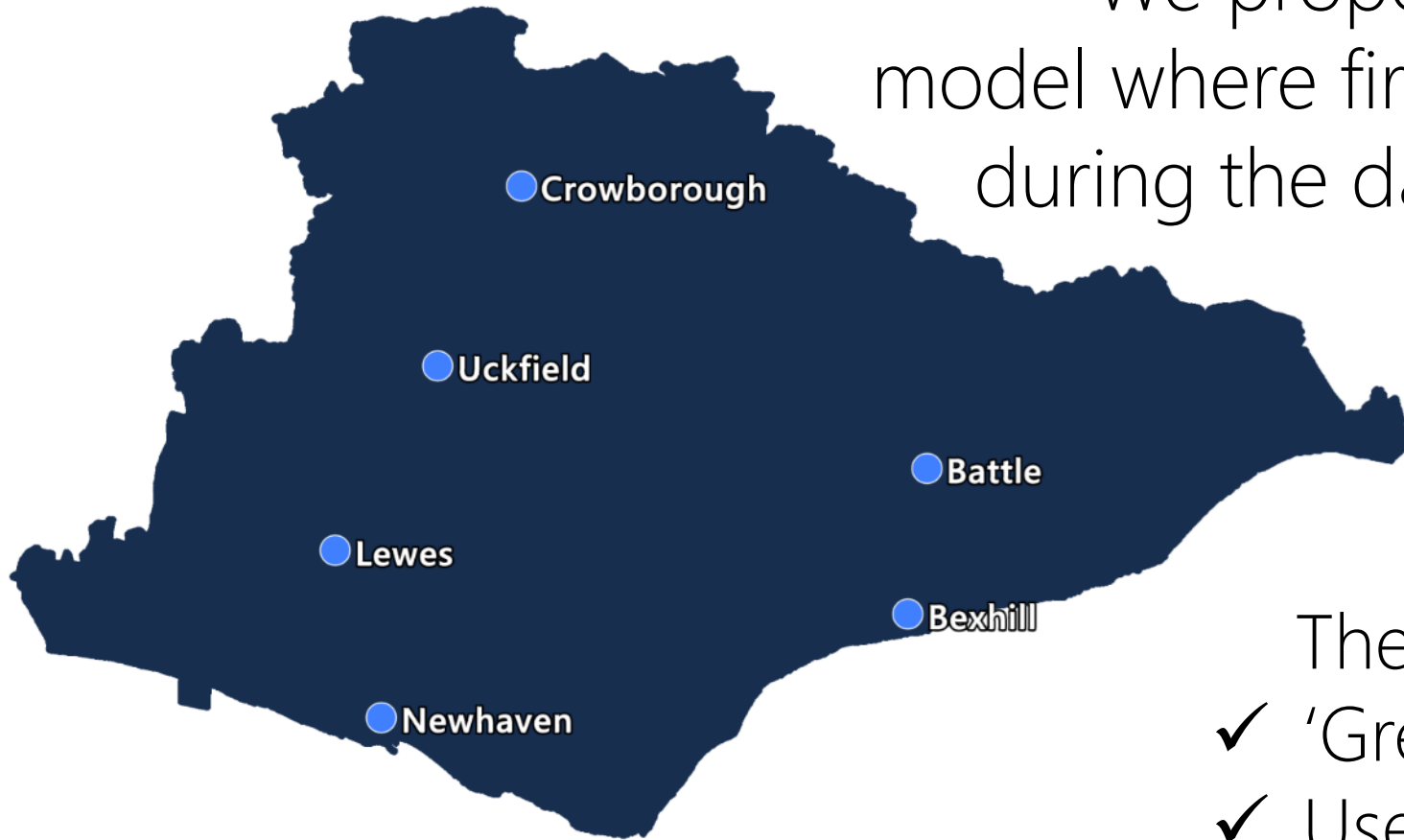
- Wadhurst Land Rover is in the right place to serve Wadhurst and the rest of the county
- It calls are increasing, not decreasing
- Wadhurst already has the infrastructure in place i.e. two bays
- Climate change will put more pressure on ESFRS
- Keeping a two vehicle response at Wadhurst improves public and fire firefighter safety in Wadhurst
- Keeping CAFs 1.7 improves fire fighter and public safety and allows the service to have a wider range of options when deploying 78P5 as a standby or relief pump

Crowborough Fire Station  
IRMP Briefing – Presentation / concerns

# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

We want to change how we crew our 6 day-crewed stations:

We propose to introduce a **'Day Only'** model where firefighters would be on-station during the daytime Mon-Fri, but on-call in the evening and weekends.



- The Day Only Duty System is:
- ✓ 'Grey Book' compliant (42hr week)
  - ✓ Used across UK FRSs
  - ✓ Staff not required to live in area.

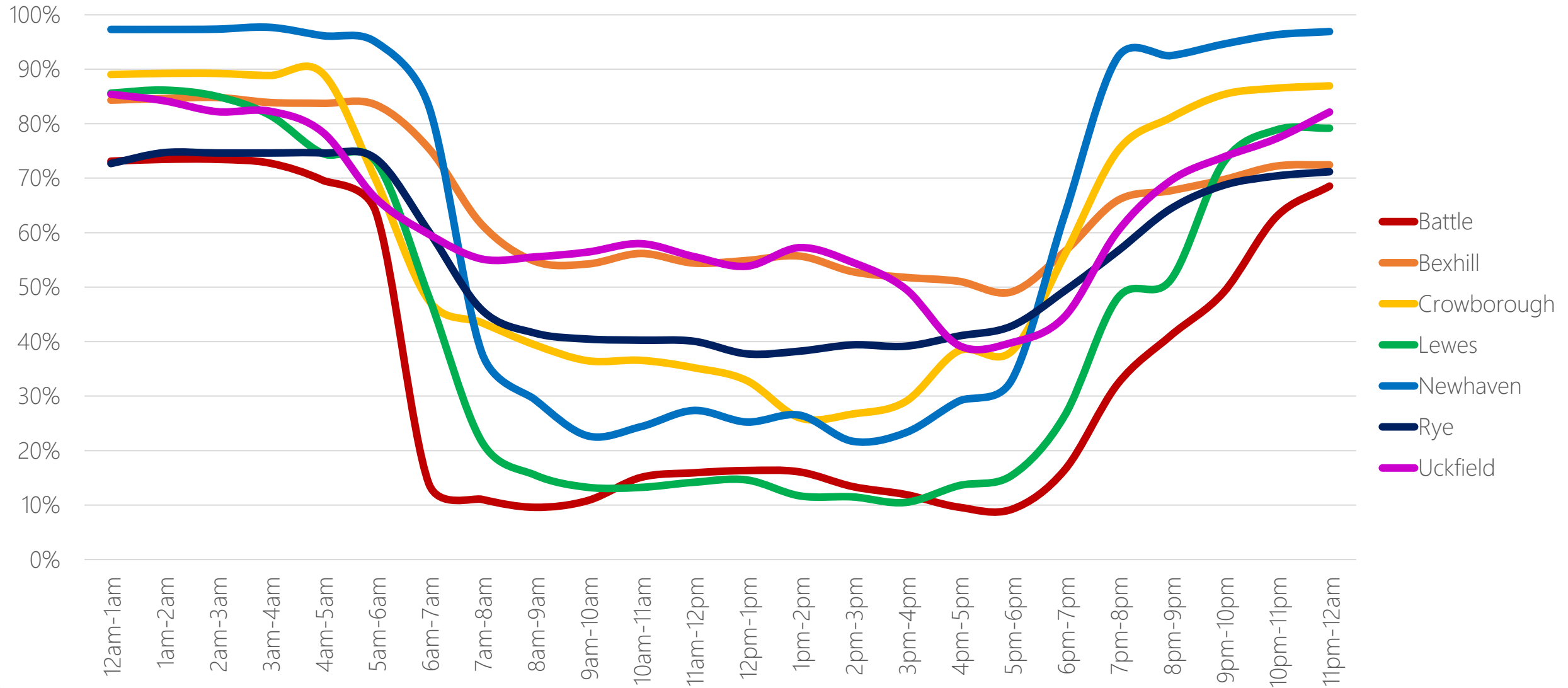


# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

- Day only duty system.
- RDS to provide 83P1 evenings and weekends.
- Introduce new contracts for RDS, improve availability.

# Appliance availability 2017/18

## % availability by hour of day (weekday)

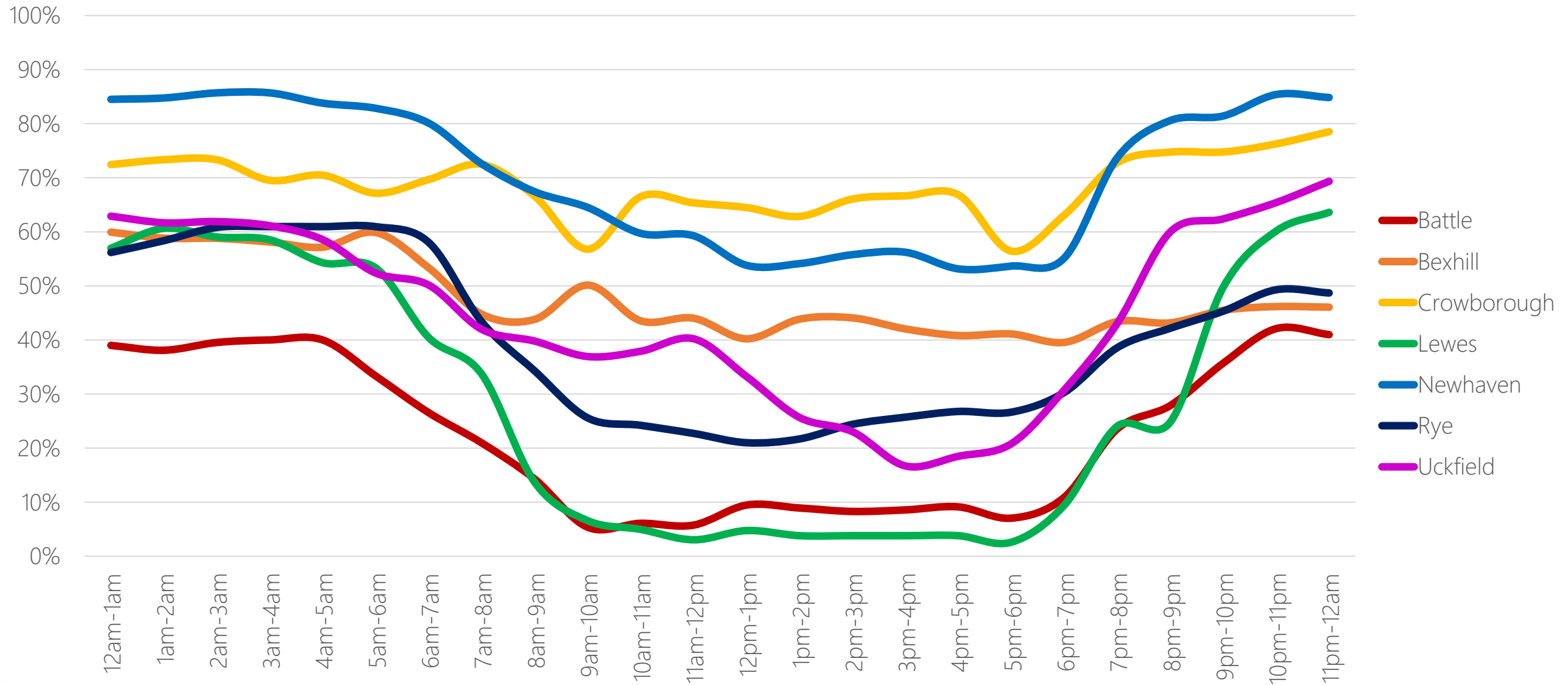


# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

- **Evening availability to provide one appliance in Crowborough with no Wholetime Staff**
- The figures given are percentages of the time one appliance would be available during the evening in the given year.
- 
- **2016**    **18%**            on = 66 nights    off = 300 nights
- **2017**    **12%**            on = 44 nights    off = 321 nights
- **2018**    **8.7%**            on = 32 nights    off = 333 nights
- **2019**    **1.37%**            on = 5 nights     off = 360 nights
- **2020**    **2.48%** (for the first four months of the year).    On = 3 nights    off = 118 nights

# Appliance availability 2017/18

## % availability by hour of day (weekend)



# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

- **Weekend availability to provide one appliance in Crowborough with no Wholetime Staff**
- The figures given are percentages of the time one appliance would be available at the weekend in the given year.
- 
- **2016**    **56%**        on = 58 days        off = 46 days
- **2017**    **20%**        on = 21 days        off = 84 days
- **2018**    **13.6%**       on = 14 days        off = 89 days
- **2019**    **0.96%**       on = 1 day         off = 103 days
- **2020**    **8.82%** (for the first four months of the year)    on = 3 days    off = 31 days

# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

## **Crowborough Station Risk profile**

- 83P1 is mobilised, on average, 290 times per year and 68 % to its own station area.
- 83P4 is mobilised, on average, 54 times per year and 73% to its own station area.
- Between April 2013 & March 2018 there have been **1,505** mobilisations to Incidents by a Crowborough appliance.

# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

## Station 83 Call numbers (from Station logs)

2013	424 Total calls	
2014	443 Total calls	<b>Real average 431</b>
2015	377 Total calls	
2016	385 Total calls	
2017	441 Total calls	
2018	435 Total calls	
<b>Total number</b>	<b>2,505</b>	
(2019	470 Total calls)	

# Weekend statistics

## 5 years data (2013/18) – Crowborough DC to DO weekend impact

FJE83P1 mobilised								
Hour	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
12am-1am	2	4	4	5	8	3	6	32
1am-2am	3	2	0	2	3	2	8	20
2am-3am	4	2	5	1	6	4	4	26
3am-4am	3	5	1	2	5	4	6	26
4am-5am	4	3	2	3	4	1	1	18
5am-6am	6	4	4	3	1	3	0	21
6am-7am	6	4	7	4	2	2	4	29
7am-8am	9	5	4	8	3	6	5	40
8am-9am	10	10	13	13	14	8	4	72
9am-10am	9	10	18	19	13	9	10	88
10am-11am	12	12	11	10	15	10	11	81
11am-12pm	10	9	10	16	10	11	12	78
12pm-1pm	9	17	8	8	13	12	13	80
1pm-2pm	14	16	13	9	12	15	18	97
2pm-3pm	14	14	7	16	7	15	19	92
3pm-4pm	13	11	12	10	13	11	12	82
4pm-5pm	13	20	20	9	13	13	22	110
5pm-6pm	12	12	17	16	21	15	9	102
6pm-7pm	8	21	12	15	12	13	15	96
7pm-8pm	13	13	12	12	9	10	5	74
8pm-9pm	11	10	8	9	5	8	7	58
9pm-10pm	5	5	8	7	5	7	5	42
10pm-11pm	6	2	8	4	4	9	11	44
11pm-12am	6	4	7	5	6	9	4	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>1,449</b>

Station area incident occurred in:	Fire		Special Service		False Alarm	Total
	Critical	Non-critical	Critical	Non-critical		
Barcombe	0	1	0	0	0	1
Crowborough	2	43	13	28	64	150
Forest Row	0	6	3	0	5	14
Hailsham	0	0	1	0	0	1
Heathfield	0	0	0	1	0	1
Mayfield	0	10	1	7	7	25
Uckfield	0	6	0	4	6	16
Wadhurst	0	7	0	2	11	20
Outside ESFRS	0	0	0	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>230</b>

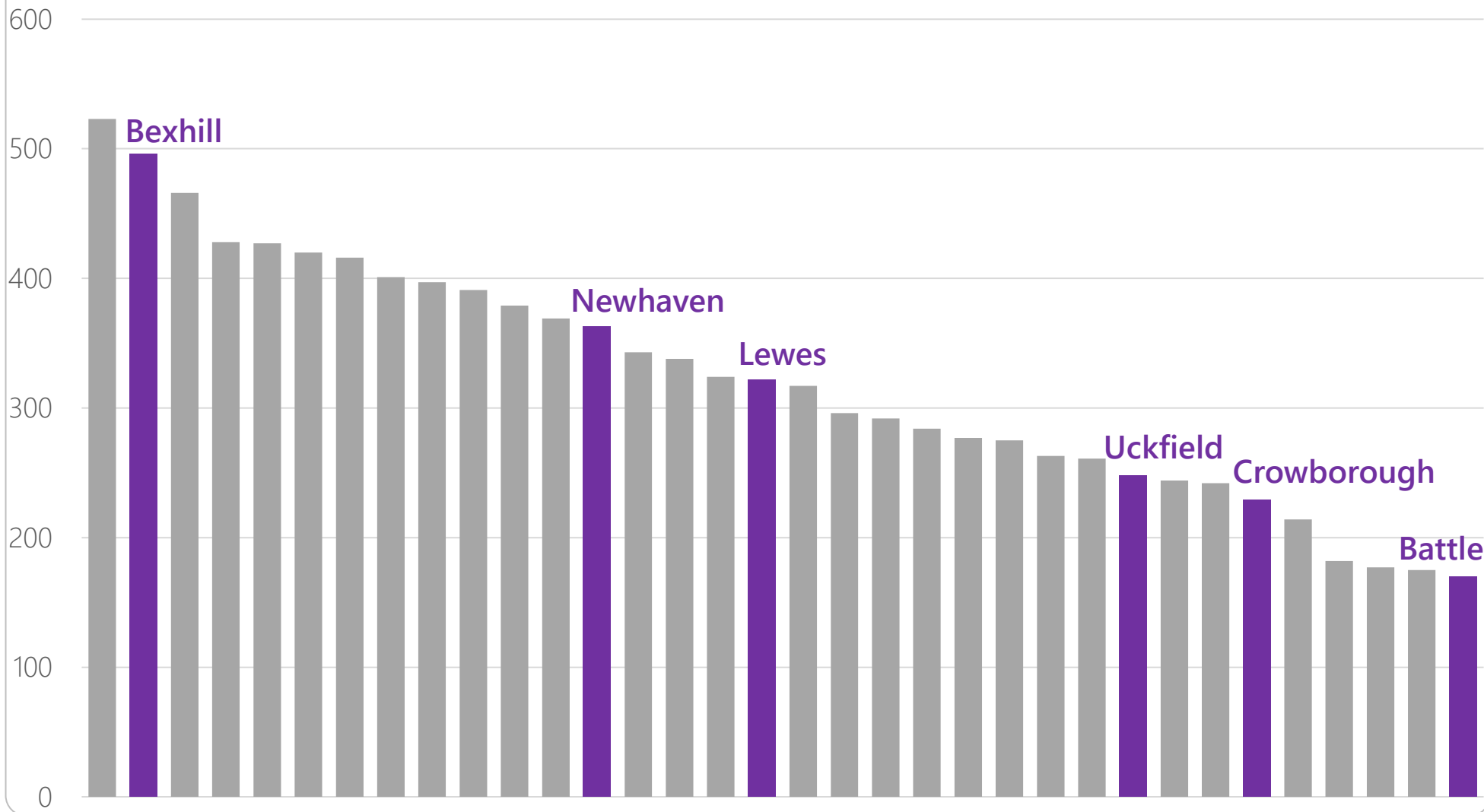




# Comparisons with FG2 day-crewed appliance activity

## Incidents attended by day-crewed appliances

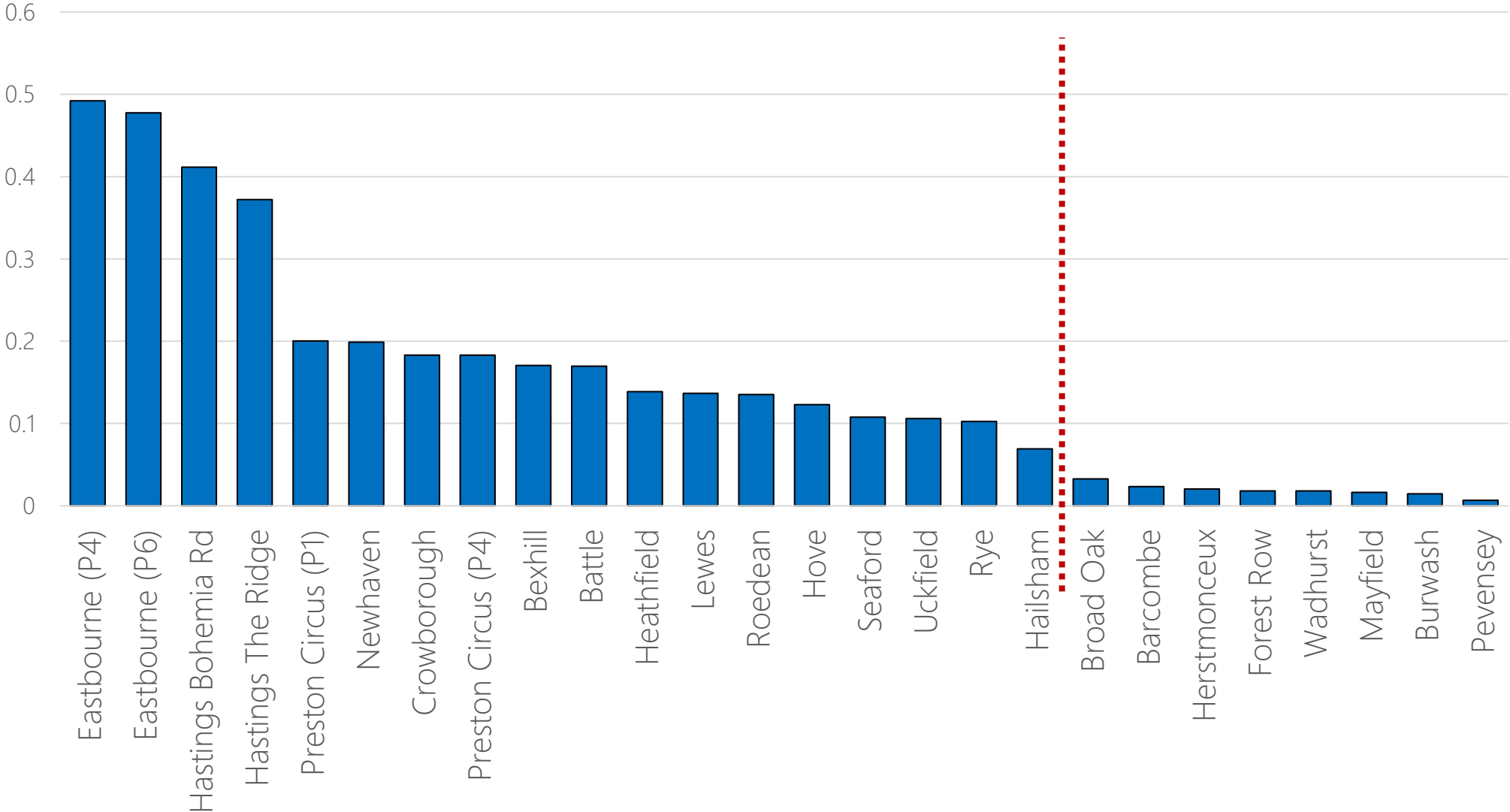
9 months (April 2018 - Dec 2018)



- Large variation in activity.
- Battle sitting as the quietest day-crewed station, Bexhill one of the busiest.
- Median number of attendances is 320 incidents; Lewes is the closest, having attended 322 incidents.

# Which/why 18 appliances

## Community risk impact of each fire station's removal



Risk impact from 19<sup>th</sup> appliance drops by >50%

# Performance impact

Performance impact compared with base case

- Negligible impact on attendance standards (less than .5% increase in performance)
- Offset against other review areas

	On-station response	On-call response
All 6 DC stations as Day-Only	0.40%	0.20%
Battle as DO station	0.01%	0.00%
Bexhill as DO Station	-0.08%	0.39%
Crowborough as DO Station	0.04%	-0.09%
Lewes as DO Station	0.04%	-0.03%
Newhaven as DO Station	-0.24%	0.16%
Uckfield as DO Station	0.07%	-0.19%

# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

- Increased attendance times evenings and weekends(15mins) further increased at Stn 83 due to location of Wholetime personnel.
- Difficult to recruit RDS, 5 min attendance time has been stretched, extra road risk.
- No guaranteed evening, weekend cover, heavy reliance on contracts, recruitment.
- RDS work group Transient.
- North of the county, unique area, very Isolated.
- Large area covered- Mayfield, Forest Row, Wadhurst, Heathfield.
- Special appliance availability evenings /weekends, Training.

# Changes to crewing on day-crewed stations

## **Crowborough Station Risk profile**

“There is no major large scale developments allocated in area”.

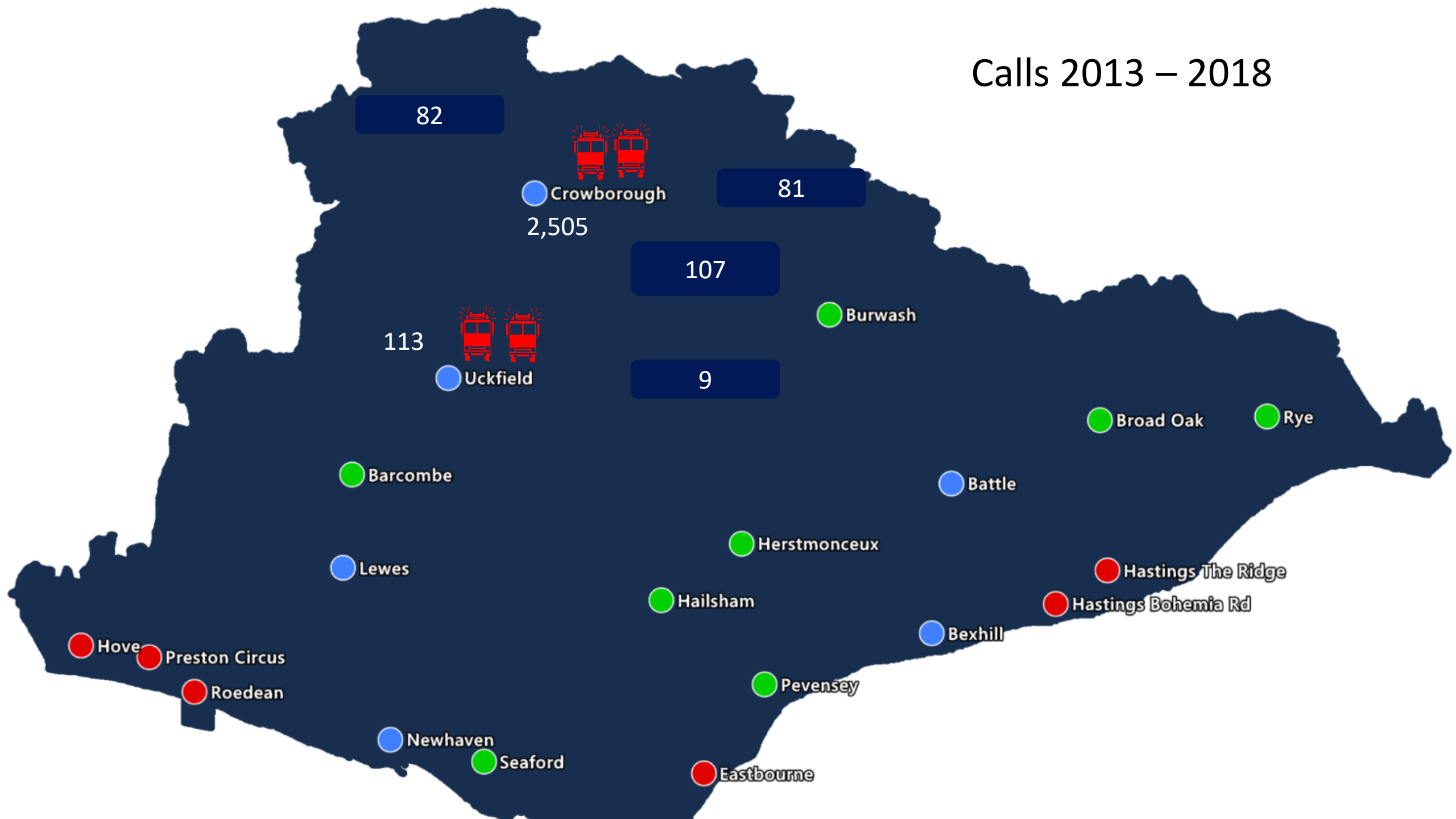
### **Wealden planning figures for Crowborough.**

- 450 in last nine years.
- 938 in next three years, may increase.

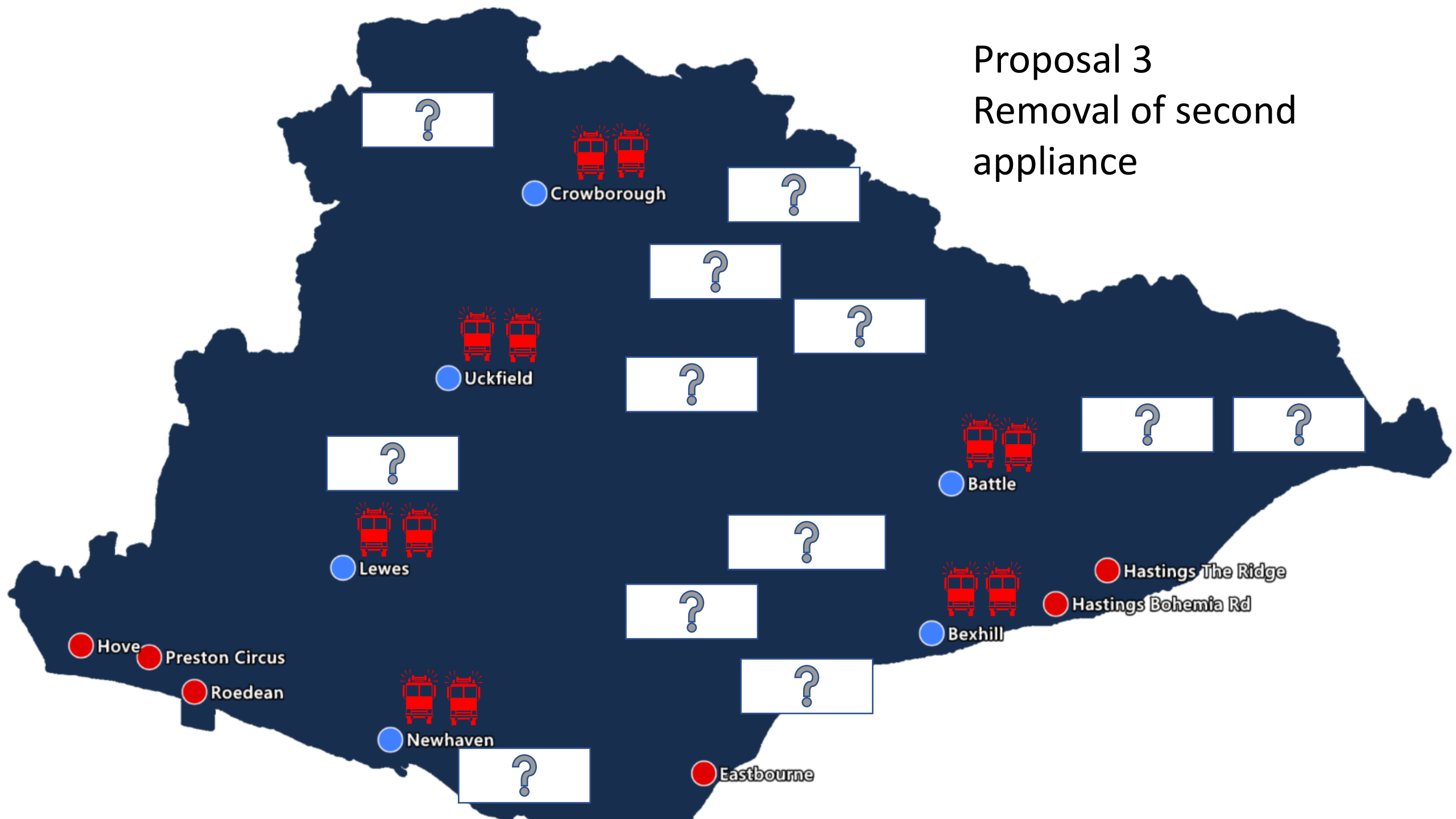
### **Cllr Peter Bucklitsch**

“Due to the disastrous collapse of the Wealden Local Plan a further 2000 or more people will reside in Crowborough, which would bring the population close to that of Tunbridge Wells”.

# Calls 2013 – 2018



# Proposal 3 Removal of second appliance





# Removal of second appliance

- Station Risk profile states 2017/18 83P4 Mobilised 54 times.
- 2020 83P1 mobilised to 195 calls, 85 other Stn ground, 43%.
- 31.76% 83P4 available with RDS, 31.76% with WT & RDS. 36.47% not available.
- Surrounded by group 3 Stations, Kent to North.
- Proportionally twice as many RTC's in area than ESFRS average.
- Long wait for second appliance, decision making, experience, training.
- Unlike coastal Stations no wholetime support nearby, Uckfield?
- With turnout times increasing this is severely reducing the ability to provide public with definitive care within the golden hour.
- Persons reported, prevent rapid escalation, commit Ba teams ?

# IRMP 2020 - 2025

## People

- 6 Wholetime posts. Sufficient savings, redundancies ?
- Flexible Crewing pool, training, prevention and protection ?
  - Demotivated staff.
- Impact on individuals and families. Anxiety- Financial- Pension.
- Day crewed more part of community, passionate, committed 96hrs
- Less effective service for residents of Crowborough.

## IRMP Meeting – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

1. Why are we only using data up to the end of 2018?

- Government Stats show ESFRS at 7% increase in 2019. 87 at 12% increase.
- Future Proofing – calls increasing.

2. Where is the computer modelling to show how long 'slightly longer' looks like with regard to waiting for a 2<sup>nd</sup> appliance attendance, from the nearest surrounding stations, at any area of our station ground?

Why hasn't this been done?

Local traffic infrastructure will have significant impact on attendance at critical times of day, i.e. Bridge, one way system, rush hour, dual carriageway at The Drove, etc.

3. Local RDS/On Call ff's do not always make attendance to station within 5 mins. What are ESFRS planning to do to significantly improve this?

- Historic hiring of personnel outside of 5 min turnout.
- Physical traffic/parking problems for reasons listed above.

4. RDS/On call recruitment has historically been a difficult issue, why do you think you can find the on call personnel that we have been looking for, for the last 25 years?

- Current flexibility is one of biggest pluses for being RDS.
- Takes 2 years to become fully competent. Then longer for JO/Driver/Specialisms

5. Station Risk profile will dramatically alter during the term of this IRMP. Why is our ability to respond locally being halved?

- Industrial/Commercial expansion.
- Port Expansion
- Significant Housing Developments

6. By your own statistics, Stn 87 is 'bucking the trend', i.e. greater call volume, densest conurbation outside B&H and Hastings, some of highest risk demographic. How are you justifying a pump removal and reducing weekend cover?

- 54% Households are average to V.High risk demographic.

7. Slide 5 on SRP states 'Low residential Growth of 102 dwellings'. There are significantly more developments being planned and built already, where did you get the figure from?

- Further Augustfields developments, 90+, 300+ Court Farm Road, 300+ at Parker Pen, 100+ at Quarry.

8. If a WT (whole Time) person takes an On call contract, will they be expected to fulfil all WT hours on station if they have been out on their ON call contract during the night previous?
  - Currently WT DC ( day Crewed) get time for time after midnight.
  - ESFRS criticised by HMI for numbers of WT – RDS staff.
  - Supposed greater consideration given to staff health and welfare, how?
9. IRMP statistics show Newhaven's busy daytime period is a Saturday. Why then is weekend daytime cover being removed?
  - Statistics from Jan 2019 to date, show an even greater increase in call volumes during weekend daytime hours, @30% of all calls.
10. On call document states that you will still need On call staff during weekday daytimes. Why?
11. If proposals go ahead, will mobilising the Control Unit or the Operational Support Unit during on call hours, mean 87P1 goes off the run?
12. Pool of floating firefighters. Where will they be based? Kit? Transportation? Hours? Contracts? Pay enhancement?
13. Which other FRS' have you modelled your proposals on, i.e. Day Manning, On-call, Floating Pool?
14. Where will all the people being axed from DC stations go? What if they aren't need in the pool? What if not suited to BS?
15. What is the scheduled plan of rollout for the changes of DC to DM?
16. Will On call staff be expected to be outposted to maintain cover if pool firefighters all committed?

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) have called a public consultation on their proposals to implement changes to the service. The proposals and the consultation response form can be found online. It closes on the 19th June.

Changes to service provision in Lewes will be considerable and therefore I propose that a statement from Lewes Town Council is appropriate.

Background:

Risk Profile of Lewes Fire Station:

Incidents have increased by 0.3% since 2009 – only other areas to increase are neighbouring station areas – Newhaven & Seaford.

- There are 324 incidents per year within Lewes station area; 3<sup>rd</sup> busiest day-crewed area.
- Spike in fire incidents in November (bonfire celebrations).
- 57% of incidents during the day.
- 7% of incidents outside attendance standards isochrones.
- Proportionally more fires and RTCs in area and fewer False Alarms compared to ESFRS. Twice the proportion of non-residential fires.
- 27 critical life-risk incidents per year.
- 8.4% incidents have life risk, higher than ESFRS average (5.2%).
- 65% critical incidents during day.
- Lewes area one of highest for numbers of injuries and rescues.
- Attendance times, on average, slightly slower than other day-crewed station areas.
- 4 minute delay between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> appliance – 2 minutes quicker than other day-crewed areas for RTC incidents.

The impacts of the changes to Lewes are mainly contained within Proposals 1, 2, 3 and 6.

#### Current situation:

Lewes is a “core station” served by a Day Crew.

This means that there are always 2 vehicles available (when one is sent out to an incident, a second is brought in from a nearby “non-core station” to maintain “core cover”)

A Day Crew: 2 watches of six firefighters work 42 hours/week to provide on-site cover from 08.30-18:30 Monday to Friday and the second group of firefighters (who

all live within 5 minutes of the station) are on call throughout the nights and at weekends.

## **Proposal 1**

### Operational Resilience Plan

“Increase core engines available at start of day from 15 to 18.” ( across east Sussex) However, this is achieved just by making three existing “non-core” stations into “core” stations (where an engine from a different station is brought in if the first engine is unavailable).

Overall, the ORP looks like a better arrangement, as it seems to increase cover. However, it does this by spreading the service more thinly over most of the area covered:

Changes to the service will mean that Lewes station will be down-graded to a “non-core” station which means that an incident in Seaford will take away a vehicle, leaving Lewes with a diminished capacity.

## **Proposal 2**

### Changes to Day Crewed Stations

Changes to staffing will reduce the firefighting complement to 6 experienced full timers backed up by a “flexible crewing pool”.

## **Proposal 3**

### Second Fire Engines

Lewes would lose its second fire engine

## **Proposal 6**

### Demand Management

Three strands of service will be removed.

1. Response to Automatic Fire Alarms
- 2 Lift Rescue
3. Removal of trapped birds

Motion:

I propose that the following statement is sent immediately, and arrives with ESFRS before the consultation closes.

Lewes Town Council has considered the implications for changes to service provision from ESFRS to the residents and firefighters who live in the town.

The implications to Lewes are contained within proposals 123 and 6.

### **Proposal 1**

#### Operational Resilience Plan

Changes to the service will mean that Lewes station will go from 2 appliances to 1. It is not known how many “on-call” staff will be needed to guarantee 100% availability of one appliance. Without a full complement of staff, full cover cannot be guaranteed.

This also means that an incident somewhere else will take away that engine, leaving Lewes without capacity. We cannot accept that this is in the interests of Lewes residents.

### **Proposal 2**

#### Changes to Day Crewed Stations

The loss to Lewes of 6 wholetime jobs of fully trained firefighters cannot be balanced by replacing them with “on-call “staff:

- The crew that provides evening, night and weekend cover are entirely different to the permanent crew, so will have limited experience operating the engine and equipment.
- Recruiting these on-call / retained firefighters is extremely challenging, particularly in a reasonably prosperous town such as Lewes:
  - o The salary offered (£11k-13k/annum) would not be enough to attract people to do this as their only job
  - o Therefore, they will have other work commitments which could affect their availability
  - o Turnover of these staff is very high; most take it as a last resort but accept other, permanent jobs (inside or outside the service) if they become available

- The turnover is a particular problem as training firefighters in all of the necessary disciplines generally takes about 2 years (so if staff turnover more often than that there is never a fully-qualified crew)
  - Being all on call all evenings, nights and weekends is a very family- and friends-unfriendly arrangement (e.g. never being able to go to the pub or have a drink in the evening or at weekends) which few people would accept for the salary on offer
- By necessity, the on-call crew (who will have other jobs) will be very much a scratch crew with availability dictated by other work commitments; therefore assembling a crew with all of the right skills to crew an engine properly (driver, breathing-apparatus specialist, junior officer, etc) will be extremely complex with a high risk that not all staff will be properly skilled (risking their lives and the lives of people caught in the fire)
  - The crew will also have limited experience of working together and will not know each other's strengths and capabilities well, reducing the efficiency of the response and increasing the risk to residents/employees and firefighters
  - There would be less emergency/contingency cover available when there are multiple calls (e.g. when the Technical Response unit is out (currently the other permanent firefighters can be called on when necessary as they do not have other jobs).

**(Currently, Lewes has only managed to recruit and retain 3.5 'units' of retained staff (a 'unit' is someone on call 120 hours/week); 12 would be required to cover the loss of the second watch.)**

The replacement of trained full time firefighters with "flexible crewing pool" will increase stress and risk to them as the strength of working in established teams will be compromised.

We cannot agree that this change is in the interests either of the residents of the town, nor the firefighters resident here.

### **Proposal 3**

#### Second Fire Engines

For bigger incidents in Lewes, two engines are deployed as a matter of course. This provides additional equipment / resilience and flexibility, which would be lost if this proposal were implemented.

If a second engine was needed, it would need to be called from another station (assuming one is available) which would very significantly increase call-out times (increasing the risk to Lewes residents, businesses and fire fighters).

On the other side, if there was an incident elsewhere in East Sussex, Lewes would be far less likely to be able to provide an additional engine for fear of leaving the town unprotected.

A recent wildfire in Ashdown Forest required 8 engines in attendance. If this number of second engines are removed, that would leave some fire stations (including some "core" stations) without any engine available in the event of a local fire.



## **Proposal 6**

### Demand Management

Stop call out to Automatic Fire Alarms

1. Risk of fire spreading in high-density / old commercial areas in Lewes. Although 96% no fire, in 4% there is a fire and this could spread rapidly in dense areas such as Lewes. Increased risk of loss of life, especially in the flats above many of the town centre commercial properties.

Lift rescue stopped

2. Limited impact, but questionable whether this will make a great deal of difference as unlikely that the lift maintenance teams will respond within an acceptable timescale.

Stop rescuing trapped birds

3. Much greater risk of the public / others trying to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves, putting themselves at considerable risk.

Council tax contributions to the Fire Service are not reducing. The cuts are being proposed because of reductions / uncertainty in Government Grants. We therefore are firmly of the opinion that central Government must provide assurances that Fire Service grants will not be reduced, so that the Fire Service can make proper plans for the future without the need to make these dangerous cuts to front-line services.

Furthermore, -West Sussex FRS implemented similar changes 4-5 years ago. Their most recent inspection report rated it as one of the worst Fire Services in the country (inadequate in its protection of the public and looking after its staff; and requiring improvement in the way that it keeps people safe and secure and the way it uses its resources). It now requires £34m of investment to address the many failings identified by the inspection. Trying to make similar savings in East Sussex would therefore have a high risk of actually costing more in the medium term.

According to ESFRS risk profile for Lewes, incidences have increased 0.3% since 2009, and Lewes itself is rated as the 3rd busiest day crewed area within East Sussex. There are proportionally more fires and RTCs and twice the number of non-residential fires compared to figures within East Sussex.

Steve Oakman, Lewes firefighter, said "Figures covering January 2018 to May 2020 showed that if the proposal to change the current shift system was in place then,

the first appliance at Lewes would be available for response by “on-call” staff for less than 10% of the time”

Add to this the increasing potential for consequences of climate chaos: flooding and wildfires, and the increase in the size of the town both in residential and business property, it is very clear that reducing capacity of the service provided to the town is compromises safety to our residents and to the firefighters who live here and we cannot accept it.

# Wadhurst Parish Council

The Pavilion, Sparrow's Green Recreation Ground, South View Road, Wadhurst, East Sussex  
TN5 6TW

Email: [clerk@wadhurst-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wadhurst-pc.gov.uk) Telephone: 07375 062428

19 June 2020

FAO: Cllr Roy Galley, Chair, East Sussex Fire Authority  
Dawn Whittaker, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Dear Cllr Galley and Ms Whittaker,

## RE: Wadhurst Parish council oppose cuts to Wadhurst Fire Station Appliances and Personnel

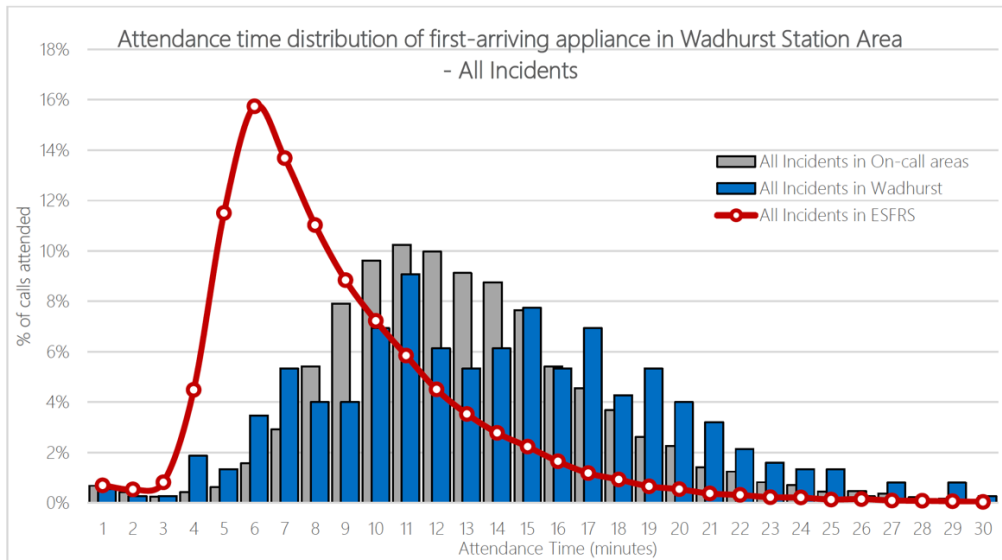
Wadhurst Parish council voted at a full council meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> June to strongly oppose the cuts to Wadhurst Fire Station proposed in the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Integrated risk management plan 2020-2025 consultation document.

The proposals envisage cutting our fire station from a two-appliance status to a one-appliance status by cutting the firefighting Land rover and reducing our "on call" firefighters from eighteen to twelve.

This will mean a reduction in Wadhurst from two appliances and eleven fire fighters attending to just one appliance and five fire fighters attending. This already on top of a reduction from the thirteen firefighters and two appliances available in 2017.

So, in three years the Wadhurst service will have been cut from two appliances and thirteen firefighters attending to one appliance and five firefighters attending; this is a huge reduction and puts lives at risk.

The main aim of the Fire service is to save lives and, in this regard, the time taken to attend a call-out matters significantly. Minutes matter. Wadhurst's attendance times **are already longer** than ESFRS averages (both for full time manned stations and on-call stations) and these attendance times can only be made longer by the proposed changes.



Even allowing for its rural nature, and comparing against the national averages for 'significantly rural fire services', Wadhurst's response times are also **already much longer**. (The natural averages are 8m 52 seconds (fires ) and 10m59seconds (Road Vehicles) (*source ESFRS*))

Wadhurst can therefore ill-afford to lose further personnel and appliances making these response times even longer.

Wadhurst has a higher proportion of elderly and a higher proportion of children than the ESFRS area average. It is rural and in places accessibility is difficult.

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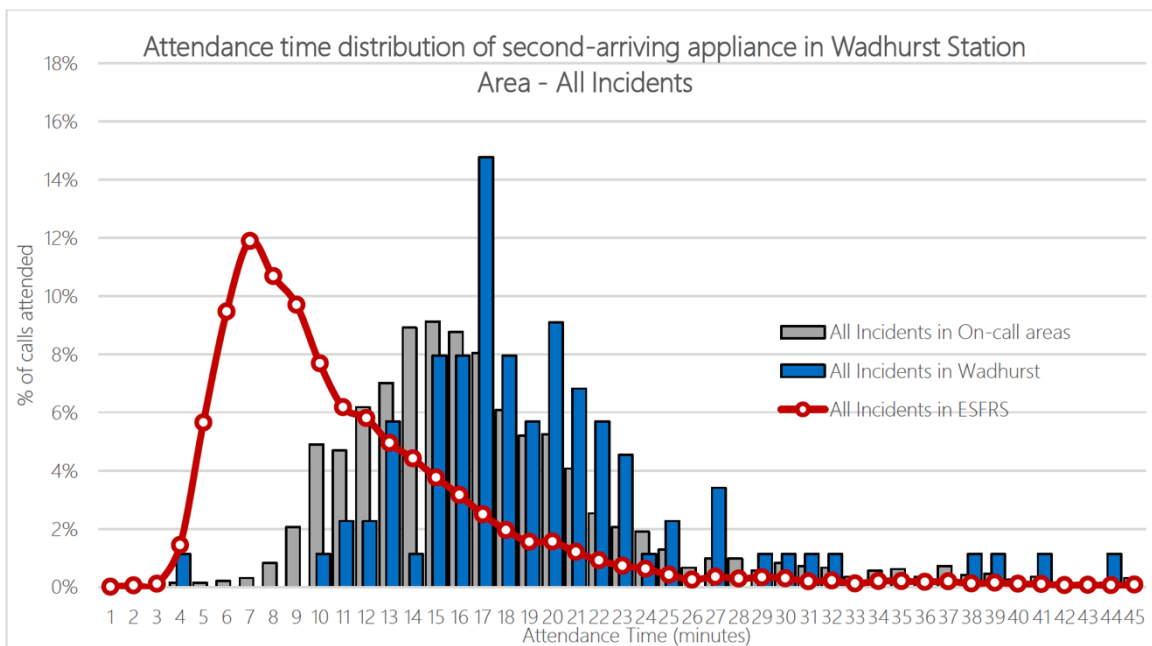
Wadhurst has a hospital, five schools, three nursing homes and numerous assisted living premises. These will all be detrimentally affected by the inability to quickly turn out two appliances.

It is our understanding that, due to operational procedures, a second appliance will need to be at the scene of any fire before fire crews can enter the building in Breathing Apparatus (BA). ESFRS figures and fire-ground experience show that second appliance arrival times, in the Wadhurst area, are, on average, around **17 minutes** but can be much longer. This is TOO late and this is the situation at present, any cuts will only serve to exacerbate this problem.

Wadhurst sits on the border of Kent and East Sussex relying on over-the-border cooperation from Kent. ESFRS and Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) operate different BA procedures, the two services cannot work side by side in BA. The pre-determined attendance for a house fire in Frant would involve an appliance from Tunbridge Wells and one from Wadhurst plus one more ESFRS appliance. In this instance no BA commitment can be made until the **THIRD** appliance arrives. The same situation exists in other parts of Wadhurst Fire station's area such as Ticehurst ( Priory Hospital).

If the existing Land Rover (second appliance) is removed from Wadhurst it effectively removes Wadhurst firefighters ability to carry out their primary duty of saving lives from fire; no human being can survive in a fire for this amount of time. Minutes matter and lives will be put at risk.

Wadhurst already has the third highest number of fire related injuries (out of twenty-four comparison "on call" areas) and these proposed cuts will only increase fire related injury risk.



Wadhurst fire station also covers the largest inland body of water in south-east England which is used for leisure activities and is largely inaccessible by road. The loss of the fire-fighting Land Rover will lead to a lack of off-road capability and make accessing Bewl Water, rural properties and forest fires more difficult in what is a largely rural location.

The fire brigade in Wadhurst is made up of retained fire fighters. Retained fire fighters are notoriously difficult to recruit due, in part, to the limited amount of time they have in which to report to the fire station when called for duty and the willingness of employers prepared to lose staff at a moment's notice so that they can attend an emergency call-out.

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This has led to difficulties in recruitment that will not be helped by the further reduction in watch strength and may further reduce appliance availability which is already down to 51% (see below: source: Wadhurst Station Risk profile)

FJE78P5's availability has decreased significantly in the 9 year period, its almost available as half as much in 2017/18 as it was in 2009/10 – a decrease of 47%.

## Appliance Availability

Callsign	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
FJE78P5	97.7	96.0	95.6	87.4	85.6	75.8	79.6	61.9	51.5

In addition, the timing of the consultation, during the coronavirus pandemic, is the wrong time for this process, as peoples' focus is rightly elsewhere, and not enough time has been allowed for communities to respond to proposals that will have a huge impact upon them. Such proposals should be subject to maximum community engagement and scrutiny. It is also not the right time for a restructuring of an emergency service.

It is also a disappointing way to treat frontline services personnel at this time, given the extra demands that have been placed upon them during the pandemic.

In conclusion, we strongly oppose these cuts to our fire service in Wadhurst. It is clear they will increase the risk to lives in Wadhurst and so we request that the proposals to cut the firefighting Land Rover and the number of fire-fighters are dropped.

Yours sincerely



Amanda Barlow

Clerk

Wadhurst Parish Council

Cc: [consult@esfrs.org](mailto:consult@esfrs.org)



**Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross,  
Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas**

16<sup>th</sup> June 2020

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service,  
Headquarters,  
Church Lane,  
Lewes,  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

Dear Cllr Galley and Chief Fire Officer Dawn Whittaker,

### **PLANNING FOR A SAFER FUTURE CONSULATION - RESPONSE**

At its meeting on the 26th May the Rotherfield Parish Council resolved that we write to you to say that the Council is very worried about the proposals suggested in the recent consultation document for the fire and rescue service in Crowborough.

The Council is vehemently opposed both to the changes proposed to staff contracts and the removal of the second fire engine from Crowborough Fire Station, because it believes that they will result in an increase in response times for incidents in Rotherfield and, therefore, increase the risk of serious injury, death and damage to property.

The proposed changes do not allow sufficiently for the fact that a large number of new houses are likely to be built in Crowborough, Uckfield and their surrounding areas, which means that this is not the time to reduce the amount of cover available in those towns.

Your document notes that the number of fatalities on Wealden roads is high. The Council is aware that the A26 has a poor record when it comes to road traffic incidents. This, together with the increasing amount of forest fires on the Ashdown Forest should be taken into account when looking at the proposed changes to the service provided for Crowborough and its surrounding villages.

The proposals include the increased employment of retained fire fighters on whom weekend and evening call outs will be totally dependent. Retained firefighters are notoriously difficult to recruit due, in part, to the maximum amount of time required to report to the fire station for duty and the willingness of employers to lose staff at a moment's notice.

Rotherfield is on the extremity of East Sussex and its road access is poor. The loss of the second fire engine at Crowborough and the proposed changes to the crewing model will affect the time taken to attend an emergency in Rotherfield.

Yours sincerely,



Trevor Thorpe

Trevor Thorpe  
Clerk to Rotherfield Parish Council

Clerk: Trevor Thorpe, 82 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BJ

Tel: 01892 664245. Email: [clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk)

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Pett Parish Council  
Island Cottage  
Swan Street  
Wittersham  
Kent  
TN30 7PH

17<sup>st</sup> June 2020

Councillor Roy Galley  
Chairman, East Sussex Fire Authority  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters  
Church Lane  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

Dear Councillor Galley

***Proposed Changes to East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service***

Further to your invitation to complete your "East Sussex Fire Authority – Planning for a Safer Future Consultation", Pett Parish Council have discussed how to reply and feel that the document fails to address questions specific to our rural location.

Pett & Pett Level are situated equidistant between the fire stations of Rye and The Ridge in Hastings. It is our understanding that should an incident occur within our Parish, it would be The Ridge fire station that would be responsible for the first action to attend, with Bohemia Road Hastings and Rye providing additional cover.

As things stand at present, The Ridge is fully manned 24 hours a day with additional cover provided by retained firefighters, Bohemia Road is also fully manned and has a specialist crew required to operate the aerial platform and Rye fire station is a wholly retain firefighter station with two fire appliances.

It is our understanding that the proposal you are seeking consultation on would:

- reduce the manning at The Ridge so that it was only manned by full-time firefighters during the day and wholly manned by retained firefighters at night;
- halve the number of fire appliances and associated retained firefighters at Rye fire station;
- completely remove the specialist aerial platform crew at Bohemia Road;
- reduce the number of fire appliances across the county by 10 and reduce the number of both full time and retained firefighters by 30 and 60 respectively.

Bearing your proposals in mind, please can you provide full explanations to the following questions:

1. What is the reason for these cuts?
2. Your document says that as a result of your plans, it "may" take slightly longer for the fire service to attend emergencies. How much is "slightly longer"? How do you quantify the potential loss of life that may be caused by this "slightly longer" period? Are the members of the East Sussex Fire Authority prepared to be held both morally and maybe fiscally responsible for the potential loss of life resulting from these changes?
3. Although this does not directly affect this Parish, with the Aerial Ladder Platform at Bohemia Road remaining, but no longer being primary crewed, how can there be a guaranteed availability for response?
4. What is the reason for cutting the emergency response side of the Fire Service to invest in additional protective duties? Surely these additional protective duties can be obtained without losing frontline firefighters?
5. With its proximity to a chemical facility, airport, nuclear power station and other industrial facilities, how can downgrading Rye fire station from two fire appliances to one be considered as any other than a retrograde step?
6. Please can you explain how moving the cover at The Ridge fire station from 24/7 immediate response to day cover immediate response only and "on call" cover at night is improving the service?

We look forward to receiving the full explanations to our questions so that we, as elected representatives of the people of Pett & Pett Level, can pass them on to the residents of our Parish.

Yours sincerely,



Dr David Penfold  
Chairman, Pett Parish Council

cc.

Clr Galley by email <cllr.roy.galley@eastsussex.gov.uk>

Members of East Sussex Fire Authority by email

cllr.keith.glazier@eastsussex.gov.uk

cllr.andrew.mier@rother.gov.uk

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# Templated Responses



There were 152 responses received via the following webpage:

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/say-no-to-cuts-in-our-fire-rescue-service-in-east-sussex>

This page was sponsored by Lewes District Green Party and Wealden Green Party and allowed anyone to send a pre-prepared, templated response that 'addresses all the proposed cuts to the fire service in detail'. Although there was the capability for each response to be amended or changed, the responses were identical, save for a few which included some comments in the 'other comments' section and which has been picked up by Opinion Research Service's analytical report.

The 'blurb' on the above webpage highlighted the 'main points' of the draft IRMP but only focussed on certain proposals and therefore did not give a balanced overview of the proposals.

ESFRS sought advice from The Consultation Institute regarding the best way in which to record these responses. Their guidance was:

*With regards to how they are recorded, different bodies have differing opinions but the Institute's view is that each submission has to be assumed as an individual response but that the nature of the submission and seeming templated response (with no evidence that information has been read) should also be recorded and discussed in the final report.*

A copy of the templated response is below:

### **Consultation response: Planning for a Safer Future**

To whom it may concern:

Please find below my responses to the consultation questions regarding your "Planning for a Safer Future" proposals.

1. To what extent do you agree/disagree with ESFRS increasing the number of immediate response fire engines it has available at the start of the day from 15 to 18, in addition to a further 6 fire engines?

Strongly disagree. I support the proposals to increase the number of 'immediate response' engines. But this must not be achieved by reducing the total number of 'resilience' fire engines as this would significantly increase risk across the whole of East Sussex.

2. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield in order to staff a 'flexible crewing pool' and invest in training and prevention and protection teams?

Strongly disagree. On-call fire fighters are extremely hard to recruit, retain and train; relying on this unproven model to provide all evening and weekend cover is dangerous. And having all evening and weekend cover provided by a scratch crew who do not work and train together all the time would present an unacceptable risk to households, businesses and fire fighters.

3. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only' at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, and Uckfield, if the crewing change is agreed by ESFRS, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

I strongly disagree with the proposal to change the crewing system from 'day-crewed' to 'day-only', and therefore do not support either of the alternative options proposed.

4. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to remove the second fire engines from Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield Fire Stations?

Strongly disagree. Removing second fire engines from seven fire stations will significantly increase call-out times, increase the risk that fire engines are not available to attend an incident, and unacceptably increase the risk to households, businesses and firefighters.

5. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-classify the three "maxi-cab" stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst as single fire engine stations?

Strongly disagree. Removing the "maxi cab" capability from Seaford and the other stations will reduce the effectiveness of the response, increase the time required to respond to larger incidents and increase the likelihood that fire engines will need to be called in from nearby fire stations, leaving them without cover.

6. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge and a second 24/7 fire engine at Bohemia Road?

No opinion.

7. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer automatically attend calls to AFAs in low-risk commercial premises?

Strongly disagree. In the dense commercial areas at the centre of Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford (where buildings are often constructed of timber, other business next door, and often flats above) the quicker response from responding to AFAs is critical in avoiding loss of life and the spread of the fire to other businesses.

8. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should consider delaying its response to release people from lifts to give building owners (who are responsible for broken lifts) time to resolve the issue in the first instance?

No opinion.

9. To what extent do you agree/disagree that ESFRS should no longer attend calls to birds trapped in netting?

Strongly disagree. If the animals/birds are not rescued by ESFRS there will be a much greater risk of the public / others trying to rescue trapped or dying animals and birds themselves without suitable equipment, putting themselves at considerable risk.

10. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to change crewing arrangements at the following ESFRS fire stations: Bohemia Road (Hastings), Eastbourne, Hove, Preston Circus (Brighton) and Roedean (Brighton)?

Strongly disagree. Replacing permanent fire fighters with 'flexible' or 'scratch' crews increases risk unacceptably for the reasons given in response to Proposal 2, above.

11. Whether or not you agree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements at the 5 ESFRS fire stations listed above, if the crewing arrangements are changed, which of the two options (A or B) do you prefer?

I strongly disagree with the proposal to change the crewing arrangements, and therefore do not support either of the alternative options proposed.

12. To what extent do you agree/disagree that more building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety?

Tend to agree. More building and home inspections and visits would be a positive way to reduce risk and offer more public assurance about fire safety. But these must not come at the expense of front-line services.

13. Would you be willing to pay more in council tax for your local fire and rescue service next year (2021/22)?

The cuts are being proposed because of reductions / uncertainty in Government Grants. Central Government must provide assurances that Fire Service grants will not be reduced, so that the Fire Service can make proper plans for the future without the need to make these dangerous cuts to front-line services.

The policy of cutting front-line services has been shown to be a mistake by the Covid-19 crisis and the inability of the NHS to respond adequately; these proposals must therefore be reconsidered in the light of Covid-19.

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service offers value for money?

Agree. ESFRS offers value for money currently. However, if implemented, these proposals would make such severe cuts in services that ESFRS would no longer offer value for money.

15. In what ways do you think that ESFRS could make savings and be more efficient in the future?

ESFRS should be properly funded by central government.

16. To what extent do you agree/disagree that the purpose and commitments of ESFRS are appropriate?

Tend to agree.

17. If you have any further comments you would like to make about any of the proposals in the consultation, please write below.



# Trade Union responses







19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Mark O'Brien DCFO  
ESFRS HQ  
Malling House  
Church lane  
Lewes

## FOA Response to ESFRS IRMP Proposals

Dear Mark

I am writing to you on behalf of FOA to provide a consultation response on the current ESFRS IRMP proposals. As always FOA will seek to support a way forward in a positive and constructive manner, and to ensure that our members are fully engaged in consultation. There appears to be understated communication within the proposals these being the proportionality of balance across areas that are financially driven, demand driven or risk driven.

It is clear that the Service wishes to re-allocate resources to match risk and demand for Prevention, Protection and Response activities which is seen as a considered and sensible approach that is broadly supported. FOA do however seek assurances from ESFRS that any efficiency savings that are realised as part of these proposals are completely reinvested into the Service and these are recorded and communicated in a transparent format for all stakeholder to be reassured.

Although the broad principle is supported you will understand there are some areas of concern from our members that we would wish to raise at this early juncture.

The approach to data gathering to identify trends and station risk profiling is sound and shows a promising and welcome approach to the planning of resources. That said, there is significant cause for concern across our membership, that being we believe ESFRS has seen a marked change to demand in the last 18 months. For example, Newhaven Fire Station has been identified via the IRMP process to have an average of 333 incidents per year. In 2019, Newhaven were mobilised on 712 occasions (this does however include stand-by at other stations) and has already exceeded 300 calls this year. Whilst we understand the research that has been carried out utilised 9 years of data, it did in fact stop in 2018 and FOA would recommend the use of the latest and most recent call data to be included and taken into consideration for future planning.

The seven areas of change.

The ambition of the Operational Resilience Plan for 18 immediate response appliances to be available is clearly directly linked to the changes to the current Day-Crewed stations and the future robustness of cover provided by On-Call Firefighters. FOA concern is that we would wish to see the Service demonstrate robustness, recruitment strategy and retention strategy of the On-Call duty system, before any Day Crew station could be considered to move towards a Day-Only Duty System.

The changes to the Day Crew stations and removal of the second appliances also raises cause for concern. Although there are some recognisable benefits of a Day Only Duty System (DODS), the fact that a firefighter will not be required to live in the area and it may

be more family friendly which in turn may encourage recruitment of under-represented groups in our communities, the impact on firefighter safety and operational response to reasonably foreseeable incidents could well outweigh the benefits of DODS. In particular the impact of routine planned crewing 4 firefighters on an appliance and the dynamic pressures associated by these restrictions raise concerns to the adoption of more frequent rapid deployment procedures and therefore reduced safe systems of work for life threatening calls, this whilst waiting for a second appliance to arrive from further afield are likely to be critical to the proposals.

It is the considered view of FOA that the proposed DODS will impact on the availability of specialist appliances at nights and weekends. In particular those requiring enhanced level of training and qualification such as the Technical Rescue unit and the Rope Rescue unit as, in our collective experience as officers in this Service, it is highly unlikely the On-Call colleagues will have the availability and capacity with primary employment demands as well as their secondary FRS contractual demands to train and provide these current response services. Although it can be said that assurance is there with Kent FRS having a USAR team and West Sussex FRS having Technical Rescue, ESFRS cannot base its own IRMP on other Services provision. This would then see a reduction in ESFRS specialist response and weaken our Service provision. This might be acceptable if a wider tripartite agreement were made to combine the collective resources and specialist provision across West Sussex, Surrey and East Sussex.

Currently there are 14 Wholetime appliances available, 6 second appliances on Day Crewed stations and 12 On Call stations of which four (Rye, Hailsham, Heathfield & Seaford) are clearly critical for Response Services. Surely if the Services' management of On-Call contracts, recruitment and retention processes were more robust, which in turn would provide adequate cover on the current Day Crew Stations alone, sufficient cover will be available. Therefore the reason to change the Day Crew duty system or remove the second appliances is questionable and the focus would be to improve the recruitment of on call staff which has been long proven as a more efficient system

The changes to the resources in Hastings has been a long standing issue and subject to previous review and clearly needs addressing to reduce the risk in the area. The previous attempt to move the wholetime appliance from the Ridge to Bohemia Road was not supported despite the risk data providing the evidence, it was in fact not favourable and took significant political support to influence the outcome rather than being a purely operational matter.

It is difficult to understand why your proposal support the reduction to a Day crewed model which would not only be unique across the service under the changes proposed to DODS, it would be unique and reliant on wholetime staff only and no on call which is not a proven system within ESFRS and may have a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of the firefighters at that single location without additional support. It would suggest that your decision behind this proposal is based on the rationale of financial savings to release posts rather than focus on creating a safe and workable solution for Hastings. Perhaps there is potential to review the wider Hastings/Rother area to provide a more balanced response model. We also see a potential concern with the 4i dynamic mobilising system that will in essence be mobilising the Bohemia Road appliances away from the risk areas to support calls in the north and western regions of the town during the evenings when DC staff would be at home. We would like to see further analysis and information that has led to you proposing this stand-alone system.

The provision of Aerial Appliances is currently adequate and the proposal to dual crew appliances and aerials at Hastings and Eastbourne is a difficult one. It is appreciated that many Services have moved to this model, however that may be due to the demographical

and geographical locations of other resources in which ESFRS faces challenges. It is the professional opinion of many past Chief Officers in this Service that the crewing of the aerial appliances should remain dedicated and that should not be ignored.

The reversal of previous IRMP decisions in relation to smaller appliances is supported, however a review of different types of appliances, in particular on day crew stations may well be a step forward to address the station risk profiles.

The proposed changes to the shift system should be supported if efficiencies are identified that are directly reinvested into Prevention and Protection services as long as crewing and training are fully supported. There are reservations around the proposal of a 'crewing pool' due to training, inclusivity, welfare provision and lone working, as you would expect FOA would request a full risk and equality impact assessment of the proposal.

This IRMP is a massive undertaking and FOA recognise the hard work that has been completed by those managers involved, however the consultation process has been hindered by current circumstances and has made consultation difficult at best. FOA do not feel that this has enabled constructive debate and alternative proposals to be put forward. A delay or an improved engagement process that involved those who have been instrumental in the design and development of the proposals would be more helpful for all stakeholders to be advised, informed and engaged with so that the Service could reach a satisfactory outcome via a meaningful consultation process and a final set of refined plans the FOA could whole heartedly seek to support.

In conclusion, the new principles of design around the ORR within the IRMP process is supported however some of the current proposals remain underdeveloped or fully understood to enable agreement.

FOA suggest the following:

1. Provide an effective engagement process to collectively seek stakeholder alternative solutions to the difficulties facing East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.
2. Produce an IRMP that looks at Response Services which are focussed on individual station and area specific aligned to the station risk profile as opposed to a blanket approach of removing second appliances.
3. Improve On-Call availability by better contract, recruitment and retention management to assure the future viability of on call system to enable change proposals
4. Ensure any efficiencies identified are reinvested and show a transparent, auditable transfer of resources into Prevention, Protection and Response services, if financial savings are required, then the Service wide expenditure review should be undertaken. This would include the exploration of resilient and robust collaborative working arrangements with other Blue light Services, partners and agencies, seeking to secure funding for such arrangements to allow an 'invest to save' approach for the Service.

I look forward to our next consultation meeting to discuss these matters further.

Yours Faithfully

Tony McCord



## Fire & Rescue Services Association (FRSA) Response

Dear Fire Authority and SLT,

Please see the fire Rescue Services Association (FRSA) Response to the IRMP 2020-2025

FRSA is open to change and improvement and will work with the service to find better ways of working but while ESFRS has separate meeting for Consultation and Negotiation with Unions (FBU) it is hard to believe ESFRS is being open and honest with all members of its staff.

There are a number of areas in which ESFRS have failed their On-call firefighters.

There has been a lack of recruitment from the community of East Sussex Brighton & Hove to wholetime and On-call positions, which has forced on-call firefighters to leave the service and join other services.

ESFRS has chosen to use Fixed term contracts to fill Wholetime shortfalls, which has had a devastating effect on On-call stations and appliances and, again, has forced On-call firefighters to leave the service. It has also had a devastating effect on firefighters carrying out fixed term contracts, as they have been used and then dropped when not needed. Again, this has caused a number of them to leave the service.

ESFRS has chosen to use migration during recruitment, which has also reduced On-call firefighters, as a large number leave the On-call once wholetime.

ESFRS has chosen to allow firefighters to move to day-crewed stations in their final year, which has resulted in On-call firefighters leaving the service, as a consequence of these firefighters taking spaces.

ESFRS has chosen to remove the 6th seat on fire appliances, which has made On-call firefighters leave.

Your service has, for too long, been held hostage by the FBU (Fire Brigade Union) and managers need to manage without fear of the FBU.

Your service has let wholetime firefighters take up On-call contracts and also take up Watch Manger & Crew Manager positions at these station without any processes. This has caused On-call firefighter to leave.

### Proposal 1

Operational Resilience Plan

You want Introduce new contractual arrangements for on-call firefighters to enhance their availability

What are these new contracts? No one knows.

We have been told the service is looking at Humberside FRS and Surrey FRS. How can you say this when you don't even know what the contracts look like? Just paying someone more money does not mean they can cover the hours needed. The hours required have been a problem for years and years, because On-call firefighters have to work and spend time with their family during the hours you want them to be available. Even in large numbers, it cannot be achieved. This has been proven over a number of years.

### Proposal 2 Day-crewed Stations

We are proposing to change staff contracts

FRSA is against the change to Day-crewed stations.

- On-call firefighters cannot crew appliances nights and weekends alone.
- On-call firefighters cannot safely be trained on all appliances on these stations, as proven in the Home Office report.
- Longer response times to any resident or business at weekends and some hours during the week is a backward step in serving our community.
- Due to the lack of people wanting to join the on-call service, a number of stations have increased the areas in which On-call staff can live, so the statement that, "Firefighters will live within 5 mins..." is not correct.
- Having wholtime firefighters at Day-crewed stations 24/7 is essential for ensuring all appliances have the correctly trained and available staff when required, when other On-call stations bordering their area are not available.
- "...May take slightly longer in a fire or any emergency..." is utterly unacceptable.

### Proposal 3

#### Remove Second Fire engines & Maxi-Cabs

Due to the reasons we have stated in our these 2nd fire engines have not been available.

Maxi Cabs have not been Maxi cabs for years,

### Proposal 4

#### Hastings

We do not agree with these proposed changes.

You already have two fire engines in Hastings (Ridge & Hastings), 24/7, with an aerial ladder platform 24/7. We do not see the need to change it.

Making the Ridge Day-crewed in line with other Day-crewed stations does not make sense, as you have already said you want to change them?????

By changing the Ridge too day-crewed it will decrease the support to other stations and its own community

### Proposal 5

#### Aerial ladder Platforms

A dedicated crew must be maintained as outside London we have the most risk regarding high rise building and the increase in NHS and other incidents where the platform is needed is increasing. If it proved its needed in Brighton and you want to keep it the same way as now. Then why not Hastings and Eastbourne.

#### Crowborough

In the Proposals swift water rescue has been removed from Crowborough. while we think the water rescue team could be removed from Crowborough but a requirement of Swift water rescue trained staff should be maintain at this station due to the risks to staff while carrying out animal rescue in or around water.

We also believe that a swift water rescue team should still be available in East Sussex B&H due to the future flooding risks and firefighter safety if your asking staff to work in water you need to be able to rescue them if needed and we feel it would be best based at Lewes & Battle on the proposed TRU & RRV

### Battle

In the proposals we also see that the Rope Rescue Vehicle from Battle has been removed. The rope rescue team is one team based over two stations NOT two teams. While we agree the team could reduce too one 4x4 vehicle we do not agree to the rope rescue team reducing to half a team as it has been proven time and time again rope rescue must be based over two stations Battle & Bexhill. If the 4x4 is to go the rope rescue equipment needs to be on the proposed RRV at battle. This is due the increased number of NHS incidents where rope rescue and TRU/RRV has be needed together.

### Wadhurst

4X4 Vehicle has been removed in the proposals. I'm sure we don't have to remind you of resent incidents on the Forrest this vehicle is needed at Wadhurst.

## **Proposal 6**

### Demand Management

- Automatic fire alarms
- Lift rescues
- Birds in netting

These incidents should be attended as you never know when these incidents can become life risks. But ESFRS should start charging like other fire services

## **Proposal 7**

### Changes to Crewing Model

Whatever the crewing Wholetime firefighters need to be available 24/7 at all Shift Stations and Day-Crewed Stations.

We strongly disagree with wholetime weekday daytime only at day crewed stations for the reasons above.

The fire Rescue Services Association committee  
East Sussex B&H







Joseph Weir Regional Secretary  
South East Region  
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05 May 2020

Dear Cllr Dowling

### **Proposed Fire and Rescue Service Cuts: Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) East Sussex**

I write in relation to the current East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) that you are being asked to consider.

The proposals contained within the IRMP will, if approved, result in:

- A cut of 10 fire engines across East Sussex
- A cut to crews for aerial ladder capability
- A cut of up to 30 Wholetime firefighter posts and up to 60 Retained firefighter posts
- The downgrading of The Ridge Fire Station in Hastings
- A reduced response from Bexhill, Battle, Newhaven, Uckfield, Crowborough and Lewes
- The removal of the Swift Water Rescue Team with no immediate replacement
- Changing the response to automatic fire alarm calls

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) are calling for an immediate halt to the proposed cuts to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) or at the very least a moratorium on the proposed cuts which would consequentially require a suspension of the current IRMP. The call for a halt to the cuts to ESFRS has become more urgent in light of the current Covid-19 crisis.

The Covid-19 crisis has proven beyond any doubt something that all those working within the fire and rescue service, either on the front line or politically, have always known which is the value of the emergency services at a time of local and national crisis.

As I am sure you are aware firefighters have stepped forward to support and supplement the government's national response to Covid-19 by undertaking additional Covid-19 related specific duties, these extra duties are undertaken in addition to a firefighter's day to day roles and responsibilities.

Nationally, and locally, firefighters are undertaking a whole host of extra work including:

- Ambulance Service assistance: Ambulance Driving and Patient/Ambulance personnel support



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- Vulnerable persons – delivery of essential items
- COVID-19 – Mass casualty (Movement of bodies)
- Face Fitting for masks to be used by NHS and clinical care staff working with Covid-19 patients
- Delivery of PPE and other medical supplies to NHS and care facilities
- Assisting in taking samples for Covid-19 antigen testing
- Driving ambulance transport not on blue-lights to outpatient appointments or to receive urgent care
- Driver instruction by FRS driver trainers: training for non-FRS personnel to drive ambulances
- The assembly of single use face shields for the NHS and care work front line staff
- Packing/Repacking food supplies for vulnerable people
- Known or suspected Covid-19 Patients: transfer to and from Nightingale hospitals under emergency response (blue light) or through non-emergency patient transfer (not on blue lights)
- Non-Covid-19 Patients: Transfer to and from Nightingale hospitals under emergency response (blue light) or through non-emergency patient transfer (not on blue lights) – this includes recovering and recuperating patients no longer infected with Covid 19.

It simply cannot be the case that firefighters are rewarded for their dedication, commitment and desire to help their local communities, when stepping forward and voluntarily undertaking the additional responsibilities above in response to the national call for Covid-19 assistance, to be thanked for this with cuts to their jobs and by cuts to the ESFRS emergency response provision.

In addition, there is near-universal acknowledgement (formal or informal) that preparedness for pandemic human disease and other risk identified on the national risk register since 2008 in the fire service and in other parts of the public sector has been less than sufficient. It would therefore not be logical to introduce reductions in fire service cover before any non-pressurised assessment of the gaps in capability are undertaken.

There are also further additional workloads arising post-Grenfell coupled with a backlog of that work resulting from the lockdown.

At this point nobody knows the long-term effects or consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic or indeed the government's future emergency response planning proposals, therefore any decision resulting in cuts to ESFRS should be halted.



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In summary, it cannot be denied that the Covid-19 crisis will significantly change future national and local emergency response planning. Until the crisis is over it would be unwise to make any decision in relation to the reduction of the current fire cover provision to the communities of East Sussex.

The Fire Brigades Union strongly urge you to support our call for an immediate halt to any further cuts or at the very least support our call for a moratorium on cuts until the national picture on funding (post Covid-19) becomes clearer.

I hope that you are able to discuss this letter with your political and fire service colleagues. If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters "JW" in a cursive style.



Joseph Weir  
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Electronically Signed





# The Fire Brigades Union response to *'Planning for a Safer Future' - Public Consultation*

## **1. Forward**

This is the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) response to the public consultation exercise titled 'Planning for a Safer Future', that commenced on 24th April 2020.

It must not be assumed by East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) to form part of the consultation and negotiation rights set out in *The Pay and Conditions Agreement 2003 and The National Joint Council for local authority fire and rescue services - Scheme of Conditions of Service Sixth Edition (updated 2009)*, known commonly as '*The Grey Book*'.

East Sussex Fire Authority has embarked on public consultation. Public consultation has been tested in law, which has established fundamental propositions which are known as the '*Gunning Principles*'. The '*Gunning Principles*' are the founding legal principles applicable to public consultation in the UK. They were first laid down in 1985 by Mr Stephen Sedley QC and have stood the test of time in successive court judgements, making them applicable to all public consultations that take place in the UK.

The FBU are of the opinion that ESFA consultation process fails these principles due to the following facts;

- The reasons for the proposals are not true. The proposals state they are '*centered on public and firefighter safety which aim to deliver our service in a more flexible and efficient way*'. The true reason for the proposals



however is cost driven. ESFA state '***we have modelled a range of scenarios and these suggest that we may need to make new savings of between £0.7m and £3.6m by 2024/25***'. This cost driven IRMP is further evidenced by statements such as '***The changes can be made over the next five years without the need for compulsory redundancies, because of natural turnover and retirements.***' This makes it clear that there is an intention to reduce the number of firefighters across the County.

- Those being consulted with are not supplied with sufficient explanation regarding the consequences of the proposals to allow intelligent consideration and response. Statements such as '***We may take slightly longer to attend on evenings and weekends***' and '***this proposal will therefore have a negligible impact***' does not give suitable detail for members of the public to make an informed decision or allow intelligent consideration.

Not only have ESFA failed to satisfy the above principles, they have also taken the decision to publicly consult on proposals during the Covid-19 health crisis. The report dated 23rd April 2020 titled Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020 – 2025 stated '***It is the view of the Chief Fire Officer that, notwithstanding the current situation, public and stakeholder consultation should continue.***'

The FBU are fully aware that there is a legal requirement to have in place a suitable and sufficient IRMP, however the FBU do not hold the opinion that this legal requirement forces the ESFA to conduct the public consultation during the Covid-19 pandemic. The FBU believes it is vital that important service decisions which have public and firefighter safety implications are open to proper public scrutiny. It is not appropriate for ESFA, as recommended by the Chief Fire Officer, to push through the process without the opportunity for maximum engagement and external scrutiny.

On the 23rd April 2020, the Secretary of State, Rt Hn James Brokenshire MP, wrote to all Chief Fire Officers, FRA Chairs as well as the National Fire Chiefs Council stating that '***we wanted to make clear that, if a service's annual assurance statement and/or IRMP are due to be prepared and published in the coming months, we***



*understand there may be a delay in the publication during the current circumstances*'. (See Appendix A)

The statement by the Secretary of State appears to draw into question the narrative that ESFA must consult during the Covid-19 pandemic. Senior Officers and Fire Authority members have often quoted the false narrative stating to the public '***duties set out in the national framework for the FRA have NOT been revoked nationally due to the current crisis and that the current IRMP cannot be extended nor reviewed.***'

Due to the evidence presented above it would appear there are suitable grounds to challenge the legality and legitimacy of the public consultation process.

## **2. FBU Response to IRMP Proposals**

### **Proposal 1 - Operational Response Review**

The FBU support a proposal to work to increase the number of appliances that are guaranteed to be available. However, the proposal states that '***our new Operational Resilience Plan (ORP) will plan for: 18 immediate-response fire engines***' this is misleading for the public. Only an appliance crewed by on-duty wholetime firefighters guarantees an immediate response. Alerting on-call firefighters is not deemed as an immediate response, ESFRS current modelling attributes a 5 minute delay to an on-call response when modelled against on-duty wholetime response. The immediate response under the proposal therefore remains the same under this proposal during weekdays, but it reduces significantly at weekends. Currently, all day-crewed stations are crewed at the weekend with wholetime firefighters, the IRMP proposes to remove this cover at the weekends and replace it with firefighters who are on-call, and therefore on a 5 minute delay for response.

Improving appliance availability must seek to improve availability no matter the time or day of the week. The data produced by ESFRS does not support a reduction in cover



or an increase to response times at night time and over the weekend. ESFRS data demonstrates that the day of the week has little bearing on the number of incidents occurring in these station areas – Thursdays are quietest with 237 incidents, and Saturdays are busiest with 256 incidents; Sundays 240; Mondays and Fridays 243; and Tuesdays and Wednesdays 249. The data proves that incidents are on average marginally more frequent on the weekend at 248. This does not support the proposal to reduce fire cover and increase response times at the weekend. This is further emphasised when looking at the data on critical incidents by day of the week in these areas – over the year, day crewed stations attended 17 critical incidents per day on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. This drops slightly to 15 on Fridays and 16 on Saturdays, before increasing to 20 critical incidents on Sundays. So incidents are likely to be more frequent on the weekend, and proportionally more of those incidents are likely to be critical in nature. Unfortunately, the Operational Response Review (ORR) findings report that over the last 3 years there have been an increase in the number of critical incidents per year, and that the proportion of incidents per year that have been critical has been rising for the last 5 years. Overall, 53% of critical incidents occurred within whole-time shift areas, 26% in day-crewed station areas and 21% in on-call station areas. A further indicator that reducing cover and increasing response times in the evenings and weekends in day crewed areas will present more risk to the public.

The data also shows that the number of incidents attended actually tends to increase throughout the day, peaking between 5pm and 8pm. It is also noticeable that ESFRS attend a similar number of incidents around 10am in the morning and around 10pm at night. These patterns have remained consistent over the period examined for the data set (2009/10 to 2017/18). It is also significant to note that over the nine years of data used, there was a greater reduction of incidents during the daytime compared to the night time. This suggests that as an organisation we do not have a proven or successful strategy for reducing incidents at night and that we will continue to receive a similar, or higher (as incidents overall are increasing), number of calls at night time.





### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 1**

- **Support work to increase appliance availability.**
- **Improving appliance availability must seek to improve availability no matter the time or day of the week.**

### **Proposal 2 - Changes to Day Crewed Stations**

As evidenced as part of the response to Proposal 1 (above) changing the crewing model for day crewed stations to a day only Monday to Friday model will significantly impact public safety at the weekends and evenings.

As detailed in Proposal 1 response, the data produced by ESFRS does not support a reduction in cover or an increase to response times at night time and over the weekend. ESFRS data demonstrates that the day of the week has little bearing on the number of incidents occurring in these station areas.

The FBU have also concluded due to available modelling that appliances located at Brighton, Hove, Roedean, Eastbourne and Hastings are already travelling further to incidents at night than in the past, which in turn reduces fire cover available in our highest risk areas. Day crewed primary appliances are also travelling further to incidents in the daytime. If these this proposal is introduced the impact on shift stations at the weekend will be very significant. Not only will these appliances start travelling into day crewed areas as there will be no immediate response from station, modelling shows these shift appliances will also provide more cover to the neighbouring on-call areas currently being picked up by the day crewed stations.

This will have significant impacts on not only the day crewed and on-call station communities, but also the highest risk areas in the Towns and Cities.



### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 2**

- **Reject proposals 2A and 2B due to negative impact on fire cover at weekends and evenings.**
- **Maintain Day Crewed duty system as supported by ESFRS own data.**

### **Proposal 3 - Change the Number of Fire Stations that have Two Appliances**

This proposal seeks to impact; Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye and Uckfield; along with the three “maxi-cab” stations of Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst. The three ‘maxi-cab’ stations currently have two appliance status and were due to have second appliances reinstated once the ‘maxi-cab’ appliances reached end of life. This is evidenced in SLT minutes from 2018. (See appendix B).

ESFRS state that the public would still have a 24/7 response from these stations but it would mean that, if a second fire engine was required at an incident, it would come from a different fire station. This will have a negative impact on both public and firefighter safety. For firefighters work to agreed safe systems of work that require a certain number of firefighters to be in attendance at an incident before they can make rescues or extinguish fire.

A single occupancy dwelling fire with a casualty in need of rescue requires a minimum of 10 firefighters to enable a safe system of work to be implemented. The numbers of firefighters required are calculated through a ‘task analysis’ of roles. (See appendix C).

Removing the second appliances from these stations would severely hamper firefighters ability to make rescues, extinguish fires and save lives at the most life critical incidents.

The data suggests that availability of some of the second appliances at these stations is low. What the data fails to show are the historic reasons why, therefore only giving part of the picture. Successive Senior Management teams within ESFRS have failed to recruit and retain on-call firefighters, they have also taken policy decisions that have been detrimental to on-call availability such over utilisation of fixed term contracts and



failing to run wholetime recruitment processes. But rather choosing to run far cheaper migration/transfer process from on-call to wholetime duty systems. These decisions have severely impacted on-call availability at these stations and across the Service. It is these decisions that have led to the low availability. The low availability is a product of poor and inadequate planning at a Senior Management level. The historic decisions need to be reviewed rather than appliances removed.

These stations often provide resilience when larger incidents occur, they also provide resilience to the busier Towns and City when the primary appliance is mobilised into those areas. For example a high rise incident requires a minimum of 6 fire appliances and an aerial appliance in the initial stages to enable a safe system of work. These resources are mobilised from surrounding areas, as stations within Hastings and the City (majority of high-rise risk) do not have enough fire appliances to deal with high-rise incidents. Removing these second appliances would then leave the local communities without any fire cover for potentially, long periods of time.

Government Risk Data from a post Grenfell project shows that ESFRS has the highest number of buildings over 18m in the South of England outside of London.

East Sussex has approximately 358 buildings over 18m and ranks 5th highest in England for numbers of buildings of this type. East Sussex risk profile from buildings over 18m is more akin to a metropolitan service. This has been reflected in the recent funding grant of £510,235.71 made up of funding from Fire Protection Board Funding and Protection Uplift Funding. (See appendix D).

### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 3**

- **Seek to review and address historic policy decision and planning failures.**
- **Seek to recruit and retain on-call firefighters to improve availability at these stations.**
- **Cease use of fixed term contracts to fill gaps in wholetime deficiencies.**
- **Commit to running external wholetime recruitment processes.**
- **Use funding to improve building safety and protecting in the built environment across the County for the life cycle of the proposed IRMP.**



## **Proposal 4 - Changes to Hastings Fire Stations**

This proposal states that ESFRS are proposing to change the way we crew stations in Hastings and introduce an additional fire engine – The FBU consider this a false narrative, as the statement and information provided does not suitably inform those being consulted as to the negative impacts to the community.

Both Bohemia Road and The Ridge Community Fire Stations currently each have one fire engine on an immediate 24-hour response. Bohemia Road also has one Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) available 24-hours a day on immediate response that serves the whole of East Sussex and beyond.

ESFRS data shows that **Hastings as an area has the highest number of life risk fire incidents in the County**. Incident data also shows the ALP at Bohemia Road is the most utilised ALP in East Sussex. Hastings, as a town has the highest child poverty rate in the South East\* and in 2018 Government data showed that it has the eighth highest rate (per 100,000 of population) of deaths relating to drugs in England and Wales. Hastings now outranks the City of Brighton & Hove as the drug death capital of East Sussex. As evidenced above, Hastings is a high risk area due to the high levels of vulnerability of residents and social deprivation, any reduction in fire cover in the opinion of the FBU will cost lives.

### ***ESFRS state they want to:***

- ***Introduce a day-crewed system at The Ridge in Hastings, which would maintain a 24/7 response through a different crewing arrangement.***
- ***Introduce a second (additional) fire engine at Bohemia Road which will also provide an immediate 24/7 response***
- ***Change the crewing of the “aerial ladder platform” (high-reach vehicle) at Bohemia Road to a shared crewing model.***

The introduction of a day-crewed system at The Ridge Fire Station will result in a reduced response at night (between the hours of 1830-0830). This reduced/delayed (ESFRS mobilising system attributes a five minute delay for day crewed response



between 18.30-08.30) will impact those who live in the north and eastern areas of the town and the more rural areas that The Ridge Fire Station currently responds to (Guestling, Fairlight, Pett, Icklesham as examples). At present, The Ridge also provides a vital immediate response 24 hours a day to other neighbouring Fire Stations – Bohemia Road, Broad Oak and Rye.

Broad Oak and Rye are 'On-Call' stations which therefore are not immediate response, but have a 5 minute mobilisation delay attributed to them.

With the Ridge being available for immediate response 24 hours a day mitigates the impact of the on-call response in those rural areas and ensures suitable speed and weight of resources to enable implementation of safe systems of work for life critical incidents. (See appendix C for task analysis for required numbers of firefighters for single occupancy dwelling fire with a casualty in need of rescue).

The FBU supports the proposed addition of a second fire appliance at Bohemia Road Fire Station. This proposal is supported by the risk data of the area.

This proposal is **NOT** supported by the FBU should it be at the detriment of a primary crewed, immediately available Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP).

The shared crewing model does **NOT** guarantee the availability of the ALP.

The proposal seeks to share crew the ALP with the second appliance at Bohemia Road, should that second appliance be committed to an operational incident, the ALP will be unavailable for operational response. This is due to the fact that the shared crewing model requires firefighters to crew **EITHER** the second fire engine **OR** the Aerial Ladder Platform.

The FBU has carried out research into the impacts of the shared crewing proposal. The FBU can confirm the following;



- ***ESFRS have confirmed that the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road (76P2) would form part of the predetermined attendance (PDA) for all two pump calls in the surrounding areas - Hastings, St Leonards, Ore, Battle, Bexhill.***
- ***ESFRS mobilising system 4i mobilises on the nearest and quickest concept – the proposed two appliances at Bohemia Road (76P1, 76P2) would therefore likely be mobilised to areas at night that The Ridge Fire Station would have historically covered. It is also likely, that the s***
- ***The proposed second fire engine at Bohemia Road (76P2) would be utilised to cover deficiencies at other stations (standby moves) to maintain the 18 appliances proposed by ESFRS in the IRMP.***
- ***Modelling for the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road shows that it is predicted to attend over 300 more incidents. This would see incidents attended increase from approximately 1300 to 1600 per annum, an increase of about 23%.***

It is clearly apparent that the proposal of having a second appliance that is 'shared crewed' with the Aerial Ladder Platform will have a very significant negative impact for the residents in Hastings and neighbouring Towns and villages. A second fire appliance at Bohemia Road on a shared crewing model would result in a severe lack of availability of the ALP. This would result in a very dangerous game of luck for residents as to whether or not the ALP would be available to rescue them should they be in need.

The ALP at Hastings does not only serve the Town of Hastings, but also provides aerial cover to the whole of the east of the County. The nearest second primary crewed Aerial Ladder Platform is at Preston Circus Fire Station in Brighton.

The FBU believe, that without a primary crewed immediate response Aerial Ladder Platform available at Hastings – several recent high-profile incidents would have had a very different outcome.



As previously stated in this response, East Sussex has more high-rise properties than anywhere else in the South of England outside of London. The risk profile of East Sussex evidences the requirement for a primary crewed ALP at Hastings.

The Aerial Ladder platform is not only vital in fire scenarios. Due to the increased demand on the Fire and Rescue Service to provide assistance to the ambulance service, where extrication is required in tall buildings and high-rise properties, the ALP has recently (within last 12 months) been added to the predetermined attendance for all 'assistance to paramedic calls' where a casualty is located above the ground floor and who is in need of removal to hospital. The ALP enables a safe system of work to be put in place that protects both the casualty and also firefighters carrying out the extrication. Prior to the addition of the ALP to the predetermined attendance to 'assistant to paramedic' calls ESFRS reported a large increase in injuries to firefighters undertaking this new work. These injuries have now reduced due to the utilisation of the ALP.

UK Fire Services that have historically 'share crewed' ALP's have learnt the lessons from the Grenfell disaster 3 years ago and are seeking to reverse the 'shared crewed' model in favour of 'primary crewing' ALP's.

#### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 4**

- **Additional second appliance at Bohemia Road would be supported if Aerial Ladder Platform remains 'Primary Crewed'**
- **Commit to Primary Crewing ALP at Bohemia Road**



## **Proposal 5 – Changes to providing and crewing specialist vehicles including aerial appliances**

### **Proposal 5 -Aerial Appliance Response**

The FBU do not support the proposed shared crewing model for Aerial Ladder Platforms. The shared crewing model does **NOT** guarantee the availability of an ALP.

The reality of shared crewing of ALP's is that the crew are not available to crew the appliance if they are committed to an operational incident. They would not be available to crew the ALP if they are undertaking community safety work such as prevention and protection work due to them crewing the fire appliance to undertake such work. This is due to the fact that the shared crewing model requires firefighters to crew **EITHER** the second fire engine **OR** the Aerial Ladder Platform.

The FBU has carried out research into the impacts of the shared crewing proposal in relation to shared crewing the ALP in the Hastings area. The FBU can confirm the following;

- ESFRS have confirmed that the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road (76P2) would form part of the predetermined attendance (PDA) for all two pump calls in the surrounding areas - Hastings, St Leonards, Ore, Battle, Bexhill.
- ESFRS mobilising system 4i mobilises on the nearest and quickest concept – the proposed two appliances at Bohemia Road (76P1, 76P2) would therefore likely be mobilised to areas at night that The Ridge Fire Station, the second Fire engines at both Bexhill and Battle Fire Stations would have historically covered.
- The proposed second fire engine at Bohemia Road (76P2) would be utilised to cover deficiencies at other stations (standby moves) to maintain the 18 appliances proposed by ESFRS in the IRMP.
- Modelling for the proposed second appliance at Bohemia Road shows that it is predicted to attend over 300 more incidents. This would see incidents attended increase from 1300 to 1600 per annum, an increase of about 23%.





It is clearly apparent that the proposal of having a second appliance that is 'shared crewed' with the Aerial Ladder Platform will have a very significant negative impact for the residents in Hastings and neighbouring Towns and villages. A second fire appliance at Bohemia Road on a shared crewing model would result in a severe lack of availability of the ALP.

Shared crewing of ALP's results in the public being at the mercy of luck as to whether or not the ALP would be available to rescue them should they be in need.

The ALP's provide aerial cover to the whole of the County.

The FBU believes that without a primary crewed immediate response Aerial Ladder Platforms then several high-profile incidents would have had a very different outcome in recent years.

As previously stated in this response, East Sussex has more high-rise properties than anywhere else in the South of England outside of London. The risk profile of East Sussex evidences the requirement for a primary crewed ALP at Hastings.

The Aerial Ladder platform is not only vital in fire scenarios. Due to the increased demand on the Fire and Rescue Service to provide assistance to the ambulance service, where extrication is required in tall buildings and high-rise properties, the ALP has recently (within last 12 months) been added to the predetermined attendance for all '**assistance to paramedic calls**' where a casualty is located above the ground floor and who is in need of removal to hospital. The ALP enables a safe system of work to be put in place that protects both the casualty and also firefighters carrying out the extrication. Prior to the addition of the ALP to the predetermined attendance to 'assistant to paramedic' calls ESFRS reported a large increase in injuries to firefighters undertaking this new work. These injuries have now reduced due to the utilisation of the ALP.

UK Fire Services that have historically 'share crewed' ALP's have learnt the lessons from the Grenfell disaster 3 years ago and are seeking to reverse the 'shared crewed' model in favour of 'primary crewing' ALP's.



## **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 5 - Aerial Appliances**

- **Maintain Primary Crewed Aerial Ladder Platforms for public and firefighter safety.**

### **Proposal 5 - Specialist Vehicle Response**

The FBU are concerned that ESFRS have chosen to consult the public on specialist vehicles including location, numbers and type of both vehicles and teams without suitably assessing all the impacts that may occur from changes to such vehicles and crews.

The IRMP states '***We will use our risk profile within this five-year period to identify the most appropriate equipment and vehicle(s) we need to address the risk.***'

The above statement clearly shows a lack of planning prior to the consultation process and is requesting the public give opinion in the lack of any data or planning assumptions. The Service failed to make any recommendations or back up the proposal with incident data. The public are unable to make an informed decision in relation to location, numbers and type of vehicles and teams.

The FBU are of the opinion that this proposal should not be part of the IRMP. ESFRS have stated that '***more work needs to be done in relations to specialist vehicles and teams***'.

The FBU are however deeply concerned, that despite not informing the public, that the current 4x4 provision within East Sussex shall be reduced from having 5 off road vehicles to having 4 off road vehicles. Wadhurst Fire Station under this proposal shall cease to have a 4x4 off road capability.

East Sussex have Rope Rescue capabilities and swift water capabilities. However, the future of these teams, vehicles and equipment are not addressed in the proposals. The FBU does note worryingly that the Swift Water Team no longer appears to be part of ESFRS's capabilities in the future. The data that has been referenced to support the narrative that ESFRS does not require a swift water response due to the very low



mobilisation of the team. The data referenced by the report does sit at odds with the data held locally at Crowborough. All mobilisations are logged and recorded for the Swift Water Team. That data shows that the team have been mobilised **114 times** during the period referenced in Operational Response Review. This data clearly shows a need for the Swift Water Team both as a local and national asset.

### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 5 - Specialist Appliances**

- **Carry out further assessment of impacts on the community before any changes to specialist appliances are suggested.**
- **Seek to address disparity regarding data in the ORR and local data, in relation to specialist appliances.**
- **Maintain 4x4 capability at Wadhurst.**
- **Maintain Swift Water capability within East Sussex.**

### **Proposal 6 - Previous IRMP Decisions**

#### **Proposal 6 (1) - Smaller Fire Appliances**

The FBU long held the opinion that the decision to seek to introduce smaller fire appliances was not backed by evidence. That such an introduction would negatively impact the Services ability to respond and safely deal with emergencies.

The FBU welcome the proposal to reverse or not to continue with this planned introduction. Also, welcomed is the proposal not to move forward with a move to a 3 tier approach to Fire Appliances.

### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 6 - Smaller Fire Appliances**

- **Support proposal to no longer proceed with introduction of smaller Fire Appliances**



### **Proposal 6 (2) - Demand Management**

The proposal makes the statement that '***We are aiming to manage demand for our services in three operational areas to reduce the number of unnecessary mobilisations which impact on our other work, businesses and commerce. These changes will release capacity into prevention, protection and training.***'

The FBU are of the opinion that the Service have not suitably addressed the risks or the impacts when looking to whether to continue to attend calls relating to Automatic Fire Alarm Activations, Persons Stuck/Trapped in Lifts and Trapped Birds.

The Service appears to ignore the fact that at every attendance, irrespective of incident type or whether an attendance at an Automatic Fire Alarm activation turns out to be a false alarm, there is an opportunity for the Service and its firefighters to interact with the community they serve. ESFRS should be making every contact with the public count. Every time an appliance is mobilised it has the potential to also deliver a fire safety message, to review Site Specific Risk Information for the premises or carry out other fire safety work.

Therefore, we do not view these incident types as a burden on resources but rather as opportunities to carry out engagement work, use equipment in an operational environment, enhance knowledge of the built environment and improve both firefighter and public safety.

### **Proposal 6 (3) - Trapped Birds**

The FBU are of the opinion that should the Service seek to cease attending incidents relating to trapped birds then members of the public or our partner agencies shall put themselves at greater risk by trying to free trapped birds without suitable equipment. These calls could then often become more critical with persons in need of rescue. The Service data shows that these incident types are low in call numbers, but by ceasing to attend the impact to wildlife, public and partner agencies would be severe.



### **FBU Recommendation - Trapped Birds**

- **Continue to attend incidents involving trapped birds.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations to undertake engagement work with responsible persons, partner agencies and public.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations to carry out reviews of SSRI's and carry out community safety work.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations post incident as familiarisation/training to further enhance firefighter knowledge and safety in the built environment.**

### **Proposal 6 (4) - Automatic Fire Alarm Activations**

The FBU do not support the current weight of attendance to Automatic Fire Alarm activations, when the policy was originally brought in by ESFRS the FBU challenged the decision and we continue to not support the decision. For clarity, the FBU are of the opinion that the full PDA (predetermined attendance) should be sent to alarm activations for the potential incident type ie fire.

The FBU obviously supports work that seeks to work with premises to reduce false alarms, however when an emergency response is mobilised then it should be the full incident PDA to enable a safe system of work to be put in place.

### **FBU Recommendation - Automatic Fire Alarm Activations**

- **Continue to attend all Automatic Fire Alarm Activations.**
- **Seek to work with premises which have a high number of activations through engagement work.**
- **Seek to send incident predetermined attendance for incident type ie fire rather than reduce it for AFA activations.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations to undertake engagement work with responsible persons, carry out reviews of SSRI data.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations post incident as familiarisation/training to further enhance firefighter knowledge and safety in the built environment.**



### **Proposal 6 (5) - Lift Releases**

The FBU are of the opinion that the current policy of responding to lift incidents should continue. The current task analysis also appears suitable as there are currently no technological solutions that would allow numbers to be reduced. However, we do acknowledge that work can be done to potentially reduce the numbers of these incident types. That work should include working with premises that have a high number of incidents relating to their lift equipment. However, not attending is not a suitable or safe option.

### **FBU Recommendation - Lift Releases**

- **Continue to attend lift releases.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations to undertake engagement work with responsible persons, carry out reviews of SSRI data.**
- **Utilise these mobilisations post incident as familiarisation/training to further enhance firefighter knowledge and safety in the built environment.**

### **Proposal 7 - Changes to 24/7 Traditional 4 Watch Shift Duty System**

The FBU do not support proposals that seek to introduce a flexible or self-rostering duty system at the 5 wholetime shift fire stations.

The FBU do not agree the proposals shall improve training, reliance on overtime or be deemed as more family friendly than the current shift pattern.

The FBU having consulted with our membership and sectional representatives can state that our members see this proposal as negatively impacting their work life balance. The Women's Section and LGBT+ Section state our members believe that having a regular shift pattern, where leave days are regular and in a progressive manner is more family-friendly than a work pattern where shifts are organised six weeks in advance in a flexible/self-rostering pattern.



A higher proportion of women than men have child care and caring responsibilities. LGBT+ carers can in particular find it difficult to organise culturally appropriate respite care. This proposal would more negatively impact women and LGBT+ carers.

This proposal seeks to remove the Watch based structure at Wholetime Shift Stations. The watch based system is not only more family friendly for those working it, it also provides a far safer team approach at emergency situations. Research into critical incident management and working within emergency situations clearly shows that the team approach whereby those members of the team work and train regularly with each other creates a far safer environment. Creates a quicker and safer decision making process which improves public and firefighter safety. Removing this watch based system would negatively impact both public and firefighter safety. It removes the ability for those in command at the initial stages of an emergency incident to be suitably cognisant of the abilities, strengths and weakness of those they are commanding. That leads to poor decision making, slower decision making, risk aversion and therefore worse outcomes for casualties.

The FBU have been working closely with ESFRS management to enhance training on station and are pleased with the work thus far. All this work has been predicated on the team/watch training model, as it provides the safest and most efficient training mechanism for imparting and retaining knowledge and skills.

The FBU have witnessed the introduction of similar 'self-rostering' duty systems with little success in a few brigades. The FBU has also seen a rise in the use of overtime to maintain operational availability of appliances in Services where these duty systems have been introduced.

Local disputes have arisen out of these changes as they have proven very unpopular with the FBU and their members due to the negative impacts.

Proposal 7B seeks to reduce the number of firefighters in the City, this will lead to more travel between stations increasing the overtime budget. It will also likely need more overtime shifts to be worked by firefighters to ensure appliance availability across the City. This will have a knock on negative impact on Service budgets. This proposal



would reduce the budget in relation to base wages, but increase the overtime budget negating any savings made.

### **FBU Recommendations on Proposal 7**

- **Reject Proposal 7A to ensure current 2,2,4 watch based system across all 24/7 shift stations**
- **Reject Proposal 7B and maintain current establishment strength across the City fire stations.**

### **3. FBU Statement on Equality and Inclusion of IRMP Process and Proposals**

The IRMP Consultation document opens with a statement regarding the service's equality and inclusion commitment. ESFRS ***'strives to achieve equality of access, equality of impact and equality of outcome for the services we provide'*** and that ***this is achieved by staff carrying out 'people impact assessments.'*** The FBU are concerned that the Impact Assessment identifies a potential negative impact under disability and gender. The FBU would expect that the proposals would at the very least have a neutral impact or better still a positive impact especially given the HMICFRS Inspection Report published in December 2019 which found that ***'East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement in promoting the right values and culture'***; that ***'the service requires improvement in ensuring fairness and promoting diversity'***; and that ***'the service needs to ensure activities aimed at diversifying the workforce are effective.'***

The FBU are disappointed that ESFA have chosen to consult on proposals that seek to have a negative impact under disability and gender (staff and public). ESFA own impact assessment has found that the proposals shall have a negative bearing on disabled persons (staff and public), carers of disabled persons, those with neuro-diverse conditions, and female primary carers. Therefore, the FBU would expect ESFA to review any such proposals prior to voting in September 2020 to ensure the impacts are positive for both staff and public.

The HMICFRS Report also found that ***'the extent to which the service looks after its people requires improvement.'*** Given that the people / equality impact





assessment has identified that these IRMP proposals will negatively impact disabled persons, carers of disabled persons and female primary carers, the FBU recommend ESFA apply the '**family test**' to any proposed changes. The test ensures that policy makers recognise and make explicit the potential impacts on family relationships in the process of developing and agreeing new policy. The government states that policy makers should think about family impacts in a similar way to how they consider impacts on equality as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty, considering impacts at each stage of the process.

Prior to approving any changes in shift or duty pattern, the Fire Authority should apply the '**family test**' to the proposed change. The FBU considers, having consulted with our membership, the Women's Section and LGBT+ Section, that having a regular shift pattern, rather than a flexible or self-rostering shift pattern, is more family-friendly.

Any proposal to change duty systems to a flexible or self-rostering style pattern would introduce uncertainty for firefighters around work patterns and work commitments. It is already challenging for operational staff to make child care arrangements due to working both day and night shifts. The same applies to carers. If firefighters are only able to plan with certainty six weeks ahead these challenges would certainly increase. A higher proportion of women than men have child care and caring responsibilities. LGBT+ carers can in particular find it difficult to organise culturally appropriate respite care. The proposed changes to duty systems would potentially compound these issues further.

The HMICFRS stated that "***the service has a workforce planning group, but no workforce plan'. It needs to develop one so that it is clear about its long-term workforce needs.***" Under the Fire & Rescue National Framework for England it is clear that a priority for fire and rescue authorities is to develop and maintain a workforce that is diverse. A fire service should '***continuously improve the diversity of the workforce to ensure it represents the community it serves.***' The requirement to diversify the workforce should form part of the workforce plan when it is developed.



The IRMP Consultation declares that ESFRS has reviewed diversity within our workforce and that we want our workforce to be more reflective of society at all levels in the organisation. The Service acknowledges that having a range of perspectives, cultures and experiences brings a greater understanding to our organisation, which contributes to decision making. ESFRS accepts that we know our workforce does not reflect the communities that we serve in terms of diversity and gender.

These facts are reiterated in the HMICFRS report published in December 2019 which highlighted that whilst 50.9% of the population in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove are female, only 5.6% of ESFRS firefighters are women; and whilst 6.4% of the county's population (11% in Brighton & Hove) identifies as black, Asian and minority ethnic, only 3.3% of ESFRS firefighters identify as BAME. It was disappointing that the HMICFRS did not examine the numbers of firefighters identifying as LGBT+ (a point that has been raised with the Inspectorate). What we do know is that Brighton & Hove has the largest proportion of LGBT+ residents in the UK with around 10% of the population identifying as LGBT+. Yet despite this sizeable population, we know from our service network that only around 3.2 % of ESFRS firefighters identify as LGBT+.

The FBU represents firefighters across all duty systems and ranks, including those who identify as female and LGBT+. Fire Authority members should not seek to introduce duty patterns that will be less attractive to under-represented groups.



### **Closing statement**

Please be assured, our intention as the East Sussex FBU Brigade Officials has always been clear.

We are proactive and supportive in our approach to maintaining positive dialogue with ESFRS. The FBU have been in regular formal consultation with the service since the start of the IRMP and during the public consultation process and will continue to do so.

The FBU have expressed vehemently our desire to work with the service to find alternative proposals that satisfy the concerns raised by our members and the public in whom we all serve.

Whilst we consider the current proposals to not suitably mitigate the risks posed by fire and other emergencies to the public, firefighters and business owners in East Sussex, the FBU have welcomed the Services recent commitment to address our concerns and we await to hear back formally.

Brigade Secretary - Eliot Parry

Brigade Chair - Simon Herbert

Brigade Organiser - Jake Kaye

Ends.



Home Office

Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP  
Minister of State for Security

2 Marsham Street, London  
SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/home-office)

Roy Wilsher, Chair, National Fire Chiefs Council

Cllr Ian Stephens, Chair, Fire Services Management Committee

CC: All Chief Fire Officers

FRA Chairs and PFCCs

BY EMAIL ONLY

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

## **FURTHER SUPPORT TO FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES DURING COVID-19**

I am writing further to my recent letter supporting the work that is being done nationally to tackle Covid 19 and to outline a number of ways in which Government is seeking to further support local services in this challenging period.

First, I wanted to introduce Lord Stephen Greenhalgh, who has been appointed recently as a joint Minister of State with responsibility for Fire in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office. We are both delighted that our responsibilities cover the fire service. This essential and much-loved public service has a proud record in keeping people of this country safe, never more so than during the current Covid-19 emergency.

We are grateful to all those working in the fire and rescue sector to ensure that essential functions are maintained and that the sector can support partner agencies as we tackle the crisis at hand. We welcome the agreement which NFCC has reached with employers and unions to allow firefighters to provide support to the ambulance service, to coroners and to the vulnerable, and we want to thank fire fighters and staff for their incredible service and the often challenging roles they are stepping up to volunteer for. Our officials are working closely with the National Fire Chiefs Council to ensure that services have everything they need to carry out their critical role and to keep people safe.

We have also asked our officials to identify those areas where we can temporarily reduce burdens on fire and rescue services and fire and rescue authorities, so you are all able to focus on the issue at hand. We have listened carefully to the issues that have been raised, and this letter sets out the measures on which we are currently working.

[Requirements regarding FRA meetings](#)

We have worked with MHCLG and legislated so that the requirement for Annual Council meetings, including those for FRAs, to take place has been removed – and that, while essential council meetings should continue, these are able to take place remotely for a temporary period.

### National framework, annual assurance statements and IRMPs

Whilst FRAs must continue to have due regard to the National Framework, we appreciate that fire and rescue services need to focus on maintaining essential services and supporting the wider COVID-19 effort. For this reason, we wanted to make clear that, if a service's annual assurance statement and/or IRMP are due to be prepared and published in the coming months, we understand there may be a delay in the publication during the current circumstances, however any risk could be mitigated by taking such action as you are able to during this period. We should be clear, however, that this does not mean that the Secretary of State would not take intervention action against an FRA for failing to have due regard to the framework during this period.

The Secretary of State is also due to make the biennial report to Parliament in July on the extent to which FRAs are acting in accordance with the national framework. Previously, when preparing this report, we have contacted all FRAs asking for confirmation of compliance. We are confident that we will not need to do that this time, providing that all FRAs have published their previous annual statements of assurance, IRMPs and financial plans, and it is clear that they have been agreed by the FRA or the elected responsible member.

### Personal Protective Equipment

We are working closely with the National Fire Chiefs' Council to ensure that Fire and Rescue Services have the PPE they need to carry out their duties. The NFCC has done excellent work in this regard, has a supply chain in place and is monitoring stocks nationally to ensure that supplies are distributed where they are needed. We will continue to work extremely closely to ensure services receive the equipment they need, when they need it, in order to carry out their jobs safely.

### Testing

Our top priority for testing is patients in hospital, to inform their clinical diagnosis, followed by NHS and social care workers having to self-isolate because either they, or a member of their household, have symptoms. We now have the capacity to give every person in these categories a test who needs one. As a next step, we now have the capacity to start to test other frontline workers in England who are having to self-isolate because either they, or a member of their household, have symptoms. This includes firefighters. Like with NHS and social care workers, we want to find out if they have the virus – and, if they don't, they might be able to return to their important work.

### Retired firefighters

Firefighter pensions and policy officials are continuing to work closely with HM Treasury officials and the National Fire Chiefs Council to build a case for re-engaging retired firefighters in England. The measures being considered would

enable the re-employment of retired key workers to maintain an effective emergency response alongside the work agreed to contribute to the government's key priorities.

#### On-call fire fighters

We have worked with HMRC and they have now issued new guidance to employers and employees to ensure retained staff are not ruled ineligible for the COVID-19 loss of earnings benefit due to their secondary on-call firefighter contract of employment. The FRS is playing a critical role during this unprecedented time and all staff should be able to access the Government support available.

#### Driver licencing

We have worked with DfT to relax the requirement to provide a medical report as part of the renewal of driver licences. The temporary relaxation will now ensure that those who are fit to drive can continue their crucial role, and services can continue keep fire appliances on the road.

This work is moving at pace and our officials will provide an update when we have clarity on any outstanding issues. We would ask you to let our officials know, working through the NFCC, should other similar issues arise.

**Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP**

**Security Minister**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Brokenshire', written in a cursive style.

**RT HON JAMES BROKESHIRE  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR SECURITY**

**NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**  
**MINUTES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2018**

**Present:** Dawn Whittaker, Chief Fire Officer  
 Mark O'Brien, Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
 Mark Andrews, Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
 Mark Matthews, Assistant Director of Safer Communities  
 Duncan Savage, Assistant Director of Resources/Treasurer  
 Liz Ridley, Assistant Director of Planning & Improvement  
 Hannah Scott-Youldon, Assistant Director of Training & Assurance  
 Richard Fowler, Assistant Director of Operational Support & Resilience  
 Elizabeth Curtis, Communications & Marketing Manager  
 Sue Stanton, Personal Assistant

**Apologies:** Angela Packebusch, HR Manager

		<b>Action</b>
<b>200/18</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Meeting held 18 October 2018</b></p> <p>The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2018 were approved as an accurate record following a few minor amendments.</p>	
<b>201/18</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p><u>167/18 Brexit Implications</u> ACFO had recently circulated a briefing document which he felt would be a helpful reference for future SLT visits. The document works on plans for a no-deal Brexit and the SRF implications of this locally. ESFRS plans were also being progressed and ACFO would provide further updates accordingly.</p> <p><u>186/18 E-recruitment</u> ADoT&amp;A advised that further work would need to take place which would be centred on the process not the system. It was anticipated that this would be scoped out by the end of March then brought back to SLT, with full implementation and a budget update, early in the following financial year 2019/20. The same process would be applied for the appraisals system.</p>	<b>ADoT&amp;A Mar 19</b>
<b>202/18</b>	<p><b>Action Points from Matrix</b></p> <p><u>198/17a Maritime Team (MIRG)</u> ADoOSR noted that the outstanding issue with regards to the training option had yet to be resolved, so advised that more time was required before further recommendations were brought back to SLT. CFO requested that ADoOSR follow this up with Paul Evans and reflect the outcome into the report.</p> <p><u>10/18 Provision of Safer Business Training</u> ACFO and ADoR/T had held a productive meeting with James Harris, ESCC regarding economic development and were currently awaiting a response on the suggested way forward. It was noted that Business Safety had recruited 3 FTC Co-ordinators and ACFO commented on the latest delivery statistics noting that it had gathered a positive momentum and was content on how this is being delivered in the meantime. The Business Strategy would be brought back to SLT in due course. Action complete.</p> <p><u>117/18 Collaboration Framework</u> ADoT&amp;A confirmed that a draft document had been shared with SLT for their comments, noting that a second case study would be included before it was finalised and brought back to the next</p>	<b>ADoOSR Nov 18</b>

	<p>meeting for SLT to consider ahead it being taken to the Fire Authority meeting on 6 December 2018.</p> <p><u>182/18 Review of Fleet and Equipment Capital Scheme</u> A further revised report had been brought to SLT following Ops Committee and would be discussed in more detail under agenda item 14. Action complete.</p>	<p><b>ADoT&amp;A Nov 18</b></p>
<p><b>203/18</b></p>	<p><b>Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring 2018/19</b></p> <p>ADoR/T reported on issues arising from the monitoring of the 2018/19 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme as at 30 September 2018.</p> <p>At this half way stage in the financial year this report is on an exception basis and addresses those areas where there are clear issues or risks. The Revenue Budget is projected to overspend by £577,000 and there are significant risks in addition to this. The primary cause of the forecast overspend is an overspend of £599,000 (3.3%) on the Safer Communities budget as a result of operating above the agreed establishment in order to cover long term absences. SLT met to consider the options open to it to manage this overspend, some of those options are discussed in this report.</p> <p>The report also identifies a number of potential risks which may impact on the budget position. The primary risk is the uncertainty about the cost of the SCC project and the impact of the decision by West Sussex CC to serve notice on the joint service prior to the end of the Section 16 Agreement under which this Authority provides mobilisation services. Initial provision against this risk has been made by drawing down £625,000 from General Balances and use of the Corporate Contingency.</p> <p>The overall Capital Programme is projected to be £13,000 over budget, whilst the current year's Capital Programme is projected to underspend by £87,000.</p> <p>ADoR/T focused on the current overspend areas and provided an overview so that SLT could take a view on these risk areas. CMM queried the advertising figures, which would be picked up within the Communication and Consultation Strategy. The main areas of non-pay spend and vacancy management were discussed. CFO reminded SLT that overarching principle decisions needed to be made, rather than focussing on the detail, noting that the messaging was very important.</p> <p>SLT identified a number of options to be explored to manage the forecast revenue overspend and agreed the following actions:</p> <p><b>Non Pay Spend – Corporate</b> The high level impact analysis showed that the main elements of planned spend was supporting key business objectives. In other areas, underspends were already offsetting overspends. SLT agreed to put in place restrictions on attendance at conferences for all staff and Members and agreed to remind managers to ensure that all spend was appropriate and limited to non-essential spend where possible.</p> <p><b>Non Pay Spend – Safer Communities</b> A separate analysis has identified opportunities to deliver managed underspend on a range of non-pay areas without material impact on service delivery and a target of £50,000 has been agreed.</p> <p><b>Vacancy Management</b> – HR has been asked to analyse the current level of vacancies and consider whether a system could be put in place.</p>	<p><b>CMM Nov 18</b></p>



	<p><b>Management of the Operational Establishment</b> – measures should be put in place alongside the implementation of the Service Delivery Review to accelerate the reduction in number of FTC’s in Safer Communities. Further work is required to assess the potential reduction in spend, but an initial target of £50,000 was agreed.</p> <p><b>Bringing forward future savings</b> - £80,000 of savings have been identified to fund changes to the HR structure in 2019/20 but these are currently offsetting overspends elsewhere in the services budget.</p> <p><b>Reserves</b> – Given that c £100,000 of the budget pressure results from a higher than budgeted Grey Book pay award, it is recommended that this amount is drawn down from General Balances. This currently stands at £2.517m</p> <p><b>Capital Expenditure funded from the Revenue Account (CERA)</b> – There are a number of options available to the Authority to fund the planned spend. The reduction over this and the next financial year of £1,025,000 in capital expenditure will provide the flexibility to reduce the planned CERA without impacting on the use of reserve. This flexibility could be used to address the projected Revenue Budget overspend, should other measures not be sufficient.</p> <p><b>Summary</b> – to reduce the projected Revenue Budget overspend of £577,000. The financial impact of these agreed actions is estimated to be £250,000. SLT will continue to proactively review the budget position <b>with the aim of achieving a balanced position at year end.</b></p> <p>SLT agreed the variation to the Capital Programme as listed above, by reducing the overall budget in 2018/19 by £2,029,000 and increasing the budget for 2019/20 by £1,004,000, and noted the risks to and the projected Revenue Budget overspend.</p> <p>SLT also noted the action proposed to manage the overspend, the risks to and the projected underspend in the current year’s Capital Programme, use of reserves, shortfall in savings taken in 2018/19, and the current year investments, and options being considered to manage the forecast overspend.</p>	
204/18	<p><b>Call Over</b></p> <p>The following reports were not called over, and therefore all recommendations contained within them were agreed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provision of Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer &amp; Legal Services</li> </ul>	
205/18	<p><b>PPE – Call off Contract</b></p> <p>ADoR/T sought approval for the future scale of issue of PPE and to sign a Call off Contract with Bristol Uniforms Ltd for the provision of PPE commencing 28 November 2019 and for SLT to endorse the preferred option 2 of PPE to be supplied to East Sussex Operational Staff within the Framework Contract.</p> <p>ACFO advised that this had been taken to Ops Committee on 27 September 2018, where it had been agreed to take option 2, noting that further analysis was needed regarding the allocation of PPE. Contaminations management was also proposed at the Health Safety Wellbeing Committee on 17 October</p>	

	<p>2018 and Workplace Safety Reps, which was also unanimously supported.</p> <p>SLT agreed to sign the Call off Contract with Bristol Uniforms for the preferred option of PPE to be provided to Operational Staff and endorsed the selected option and agreed that the saving of £90,000 (on the current position) in the 2020/21 budget be built into the MTFP.</p>	<p><b>ADoR/T Nov 18</b></p>
<p><b>206/18</b></p>	<p><b>Installation of vehicle-based camera systems to coincide with the telemetry roll out</b></p> <p>This report proposes the introduction of a vehicle-based camera systems to the East Sussex FRS Fleet by way of a 360 degree system across the heavy fleet and a forward and a rear facing camera to the light fleet. This is in line with the ITF Collaboration Programme work.</p> <p>ESFRS currently has no vehicle-based camera systems fitted to its operational fleet other than a one camera system which is fitted to the driver training vehicle for training purposes. This proposal will see vehicle-based CCTV cameras fitted to all of the ESFRS fleet completed during the rollout of vehicle-based telemetry.</p> <p>This paper introduces the ITF Business Case which ESFRS has had full involvement in. ESFRS has acted as the technical lead on behalf of 3F, working directly with the ITF Programme Manager throughout this vehicle-based camera process.</p> <p>ADoR/T highlighted the need to consider the application of IT Security Policies and that we currently do not have the ability to manage large volumes of digital images. There was potential for further reductions in the estimated insurance cost as a result of implementing CCTV which was being clarified. There was also a potential cost from telent for roll out/ongoing support.</p> <p>SLT agreed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the installation of new vehicle-based camera systems.</li> <li>2. the proposal for ITF to fund the full camera cost, including parts and labour, from a proportion of the Fire Transformation Grant.</li> <li>3. fit 360 degree cameras to the heavy fleet, with forward and rear facing cameras to the light fleet, including specials and all cars</li> <li>4. the asset transfer of supplied goods from the Emergency Services Collaboration Project (ESCP) to East Sussex Fire Authority.</li> <li>5. that ADoR/T would review the potential savings from the Fleet Insurance Cover based on the camera installation specification.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>207/18</b></p>	<p><b>Water Rescue Strategy</b></p> <p>ADoOSR informed SLT of proposals to amend the current provision of water rescue equipment on appliances across the Service area; and to consider options for the future provision of Swift Water Rescue capability.</p> <p>ACFO provided an introduction noting that this report incorporated the principle decisions, which had already been taken to the Ops Committee. Of</p>	

the 3 separate reports taken to that meeting, Swift Water Rescue and Water Response had been brought to SLT for further discussion. The report set out community risk and previous water rescue incidents and the current level of provision and training. SLT considered the various proposals and supported the retention of a SWR Team and the proposal for it to be re-located at Lewes. It was accepted that it was important to ensure an adequate level of capability was maintained at Crowborough because of animal rescue, but not SWR.

On behalf of the FBU Reps, ACFO wished to share their comments with SLT, which had been raised at the recent Ops Committee.

1. Timings around Ops Review and IRMP – SLT’s view was that where there is a clear business view, this would not be delayed as this decision could stand alone.
2. Availability of Lewes – SLT have committed to look at this detail and would consider options around availability.
3. Was 5-years’ worth of data a sufficient timeframe to base the information on - SLT had considered future developments of housing and North Street Quarter and clarified that 3-years of data is considered robust in terms of decisions.
4. Have ESFRS considered the Environmental Agency with regards to risks/floods - SLT confirmed that this formed part of National Risk Register and would be considered within the Business Continuity Plan through an SRF multi-agency approach to flooding risk, but this supported a move to Lewes.
5. Has the general approach to methodology to risk been discussed at Workplace Safety Reps – The management of risk had been based on historic data in the past, but ESFRS were now looking at Inland Water Risk Guidance supported by ROSPA. Also, general workplace risk considerations are not the same as the overarching risk profile considerations required for strategic disposition of resources.

SLT discussed the reporting and analysis of full attendance at water, mud and flooding incidents beyond those incidents current mobilised to, which demonstrated that the current module 2 had adequately dealt with those incidents and could be enhanced further to DEFRA equipment and capability. ACFO indicated that it was an important discussion with some challenging decisions, as we were in essence currently over provisioned, but overall, this solution would improve the water safety cover across the county. SLT agreed in principle that the Ops Committee would take a further look at the impacts and implementation.

SLT discussed the wider Water Response at Level 2 across the service, noting the importance of clear language and communications. SLT considered the specific stations and incidents over the county and considered reducing training for water awareness from module 2 to module 1 in some areas to match risk profile.

SLT agreed that some water rescue equipment be withdrawn from some stations.

SLT agreed that in the future, staff on those stations be trained to Module 1 of the DEFRA Flood Rescue Module standards.

SLT agreed that the Swift Water Rescue capability is transferred to Lewes in the future.

SLT approved that the 70P4 appliance at Rye be additionally equipped with

	two 3m rescue paths, but noted that this would be dealt with at Ops Committee.	
<b>208/18</b>	<p><b>Provision of Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer and Legal Services</b></p> <p>SLT considered the arrangements for the provision of legal services and MO support from 1 April 2019.</p> <p>The legal services agreement between East Sussex Fire Authority and Brighton &amp; Hove City Council (B&amp;HCC) expires on 31 March 2019. As the Fire Authority is responsible for the appointment of the Monitoring &amp; Deputy Monitoring Officer, this paper outlines the current position, and recommends a course of action which suits business need and secures best value.</p> <p>SLT noted the recommendations proposed to the Fire Authority as detailed within the report.</p>	
<b>209/18</b>	<p><b>Corporate Risk Register Review Quarter 2 2018/19</b></p> <p>ADoR/T reported on the latest quarterly review of Corporate Risk.</p> <p>This report discusses the provisional Quarter 2 position and gives SLT the opportunity to debate the risk register before a report is submitted to Panel. It was agreed by the Scrutiny and Audit Panel to use the new Corporate Risk Report created at the Risk workshop in May 2018.</p> <p>DCFO queried the Mitigations and Actions in Appendix B and requested further clarity, clearer wording and the inclusion of implementation dates. It was agreed that a general update on all the wording would be made, and SLT would send through any specific comments by the following day, so that a revised version could be taken to the Scrutiny &amp; Audit Panel on 1 November 2018.</p> <p>SLT reviewed and noted the Risk Management Mitigation Plans, subject to these amendments and updates.</p>	
<b>210/18</b>	<p><b>Future Design of Fire Appliances</b></p> <p>ADoOSR outlined proposed changes to our fleet strategy, specifically to the size, design and distribution of fire appliances in the future, ensuring that they are fit for purpose, whilst providing an economic and efficient solution to address risk.</p> <p>Following a further review, ADOSR has now completed research and provided further clarity to the original proposals and proposed Service-wide strategy for the deployment of different fire appliances. These further proposals are inextricably linked to the size, design and distribution of fire appliances and must therefore be considered in parallel.</p> <p>CFO reminded SLT of the need for principle decisions to explore new fleet, not to make any pre-determination of location. ADOSR recommended that SLT commit to a 3-tier approach at this stage but that the process of where to allocate vehicles could be dealt with at Ops Committee and in line with the Operational Cover Review. There was a discussion over maxi-cab appliances regarding their expected replacement and future location.</p>	

	<p>On behalf of the FBU Reps, ACFO again wished to share their comments with SLT, which had been raised at the recent Ops Committee. The main concern was why ESFRS were not considering this as part of IRMP, when this is a long term strategy, and were not making decisions about particular locations. Fleet Strategy is mentioned within the IRMP Strategy (p.19) and has also been discussed in SLT workplace visits in 2018. Also, SLT must ensure the future Fleet Strategy is deliverable as part of wider capital strategy.</p> <p>SLT approved the recommendations that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A three-tier approach be adopted to fire appliance design.</li> <li>2. The proposed distribution of new appliances be taken to Ops Committee after the Fire Cover Review.</li> <li>3. Specification and equipment fit consultations for MRPs (12 tonne GLM<sup>1</sup>) would be carried out.</li> <li>4. Smaller water tenders (8 tonne GLM) be specified in place of the current P4 appliances and that one such appliance should be built to test the concept for ESFRS.</li> <li>5. The Maxicab vehicle at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst be provided with a standard ERP appliance when existing maxicab appliances become due for replacement as the current approach was not operating as originally intended. It was SLT's preferred option for this rather than to extend its life.</li> <li>6. Subject to recommendation 5 above being agreed, maxicab appliances at Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst are removed at end of life, an additional new Water Tender appliance be provided as a second pump to accompany new ERPs.</li> <li>7. The 91P4 and 93P4 appliances be fully upgraded to ERP status.</li> <li>8. The service life of all ERPs, MRPs and new smaller Water Tenders to be kept under review by the Engineering Services Department.</li> <li>9. The distribution of pumping appliances (ERPs) carrying 1:7 foam systems with Class A, Class B or Class B-AR foam concentrate would have an impact onto Estates. It was agreed that this operational decision could be made at Ops Committee.</li> <li>10. All older foam making equipment should be decommissioned and removed from service. It was agreed that this operational decision could be made at Ops Committee.</li> </ol>	
211/18	<p><b>Efficiency Strategy Update</b></p> <p>ADoR/T advised on the progress in developing the Authority's Efficiency Strategy and on the delivery of the Efficiency Plan agreed with the Home Office.</p> <p>This report provides a progress summary against all of the activities identified within the scope of the Efficiency Strategy and the financial implications including potential efficiencies where those are clear. Good progress is being made but the work is still at a relatively early stage and this is reflected in the level of efficiencies identified so far. Further work is required to identify and deliver a greater return on investment and specifically an increase in the level of cashable efficiencies delivered.</p>	

	<p>As the MTFP indicates, we need to be in a position to react to the new funding position for 2020/21 and have in place as a minimum sufficient cashable savings to balance the budget that year and in the subsequent three years.</p> <p>Work on a new IRMP will commence in the autumn of 2018 and that this will include an operational response review. This will assess the level of resource required to meet changing risk in the communities we serve.</p> <p>ADoR/T provided a financial overview and summary which excluded FireWatch as SLT had commissioned further work on benefits realisation. The progress update would be revised ahead of the Panel meeting on 1 November 2018.</p> <p>SLT recommended the progress update on the Authority's published Efficiency Plan and noted the progress on delivering the Efficiency Strategy.</p>	
212/18	<p><b>Programme Management Office Update</b></p> <p>ADoP&amp;I provided an update to SLT about the PMO function and implementation and outlined the action needed by ADs to mitigate against risks as noted in the summary.</p> <p>This report provides an overview of the key products delivered in the last month by the PMO as well as the planned deliverables and the current key risks to delivery. SLT noted this progress and acknowledged its role in mitigating against risks 2, 3.</p> <p>ADoP&amp;I outlined the current issues within Section 4 which included recruitment, reporting, project roles and responsibilities, skill and Project Management capability. CFO also shared her thoughts, and CMM also gave the suggestion of peer to peer support.</p> <p>SLT considered the progress made by the PMO while acknowledging the limitations (of resource, skill in the organisation, etc.) and the risks to project management delivery and PMO effective operation.</p> <p>SLT approved taking an active role in mitigating against risk 2 and 3 and support the PMO via comms and active management.</p>	
213/18	<p><b>Diversity by Design Proposal</b></p> <p>CFO provided a verbal update on this proposal, following further conversations with Simon Fanshawe. These proposals underpinned our People Strategy and CFO suggested consideration of a new model for recruitment and retentions in a specific area of our organisation.</p> <p>There was a discussion around professional services, regarding how to make these jobs more attractive to potential future candidates. ADoT&amp;A/ADoSC and ADoR/T agreed to meet with Simon in order to have an initial discussion around this proposal. ADoT&amp;A would also engage the I&amp;D Manager for Inclusion purposes as appropriate. Consideration would also be made to funding and procurement with the expected outcome planned for the New Year. CFO would send an introductory email to Simon Fanshawe.</p>	<p><b>CFO Nov 18</b></p>

214/18	<p><b>Corporate Plan Progress Monitoring Quarter 2 2018/19</b></p> <p>The Corporate Plan progress monitoring report has been developed to demonstrate progress against the Service's Corporate Plan 2018/19. This report contains information on the progress made on the key actions up to the end of Quarter 2 2018/19.</p> <p>There are currently 51 agreed actions being undertaken to progress the Service's Corporate Plan. The 2018/19 Q2 monitoring report indicates that 44 of the actions are on track, 7 are not on target.</p> <p>This report would also be discussed with Cllr Galley at the Chairman's Briefing on 30 October 2018. DCFO made a few minor comments over progress and consistency throughout the report. ADoP&amp;I offered support for those wishing to review and update their profile areas.</p> <p>SLT reviewed the Corporate Plan 2018/19 Quarter 2 monitoring report and identified where further information/clarification on progress was required before it is presented at Scrutiny &amp; Audit Panel on 1 November 2018.</p>	
215/18	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><u>Councillor Stuart Earl</u> CFO had received a notification that Cllr Stuart Earl had sadly passed away earlier this morning following a short illness. CFO offered our condolences to his family and Rother District Council accordingly.</p> <p><u>Lewes Fire Station</u> CFO provided a brief update following the recent meeting with Estates and colleagues from Lewes District Council regarding the current plans for the North Street Quarter development and Lewes Fire Station. Further proposals were being progressed and another meeting would be arranged shortly.</p> <p><u>NFCC Prevention, Protection &amp; Health Conference 2018</u> CFO had attended day 1 and ACFO had attended day 2 of the recent event in Birmingham and key messages were shared accordingly. ESFRS were fully supporting this national work.</p> <p><u>CFA Conference 2018</u> DCFO attended with the Chairman and Vice-Chair. Cllr John Barnes has put himself forward to join the Chair group on funding.</p> <p><u>Jane Thomas Away Day</u> ADoT&amp;A asked SLT for their comments and thoughts since they had last met with Jane and whether SLT wished to hold an away day in the New Year.</p> <p><u>SEACAMB</u> ADoOSR provided a short update and confirmed that Matt England now wished for ESFRS to support and respond to falls. It was noted that there would need to be an MoU, and clinical governance and consultation put in place.</p>	
216/18	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 15 November 2018</p>	

### Equipment

Main Pump x 2, BA Entry Control Board complete, Breathing Apparatus x 6, Hose lines x 2, Standpipe key and Bar, Hose 70mm as required Hydrant to Pump, Hose - pump to incident and controlled branch x 2, Incident Ground Radio comms x 4, Spare BA Cylinders x 4, Breaking in gear, PPV, Appliance lighting and handlamps, Small gear and Turning Over Tools, Resuscitator and First Aid equipment.

## 6. Fires in Buildings

### Multi Occupancy (Low Rise): Fire Scenario B

Firefighting and initial entry on ground floor. Fire confined to flat/unit of origin. Signs and indicators of flashover/backdraught.

#### Sequence of Tasks and Activities

1	Initial information gathering	1 x IC
2	Incident ground liaison & dynamic risk assessment	1 x IC
3	Crew briefing	1 x IC
4	Incident command	1 x IC
5	Assess rear of property	1 x FF
6	Provision of hose reel	2 x FF
7	Identify hydrant and provide water from hydrant to pump	1 x FF
8	Provision of 45mm hose and controlled branch	2 x FF
9	Gaining entry to premises with breaking in gear	1 x FF
10	Silence alarm	1 x FF
11	External ventilation of property	1 x FF
12	Provision of hose reel to ventilation area	1 x FF
13	Isolation of services	1 x FF
14	Provision of lighting	1 x FF
15	Pump operation, high/low pressure tank supply & command support	1 x FF
16	BA Entry Control	1 x FF
17	Firefighting, 2 Firefighters hose line, BA	2 x FF
18	Firefighting, 2 Firefighters, 45mm hose line with controlled branch as covering jet for internal team. BA	2 x FF
19	Cover ventilation outlet with hose reel	1 x FF
20	Position PPV	2 x FF
21	Ventilation of premises. Fire compartment. 2BA	2 x FF
22	Damping down & turning over. 2 hose reels, 2BA	2 x FF
23	Replenish water	1 x FF
24	Incident ground servicing BA	4 x FF
25	Make up of equipment	4 x FF
26	Fire report/investigation details	1 x IC
27	Debrief	All
28	Post Fire Community Fire Safety Activity	3 x FF
	Shaded area indicates simultaneous actions these are safety critical requirements.	1 x IC 7 x FF

### Equipment

Main Pump, BA Entry Control Board complete, Breathing Apparatus x 4, Hose reel x 2, Standpipe key and Bar, Hose 70mm as required Hydrant to Pump, Hose 45mm pump to incident and controlled branch, Incident Ground Radio comms x 2, Spare BA Cylinders x 4, Breaking in gear, PPV, Lighting and Portable Lighting, Small gear and Turning over tools.





Home Office

Lord Greenhalgh  
Minister of State for Building Safety,  
Fire and Communities at  
Ministry of Housing, Communities &  
Local Government and Home Office

To all Fire and Rescue Authority  
Chairs and Police, Fire and Crime  
Commissioners

2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/home-office)

29<sup>th</sup> April 2020

I am writing to provide you with further information on the £20 million grant funding that will be made available to support protection work. Of this, £4m will be provided to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and £16m directly to fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in 2020/21 to drive improvement in fire and rescue services (FRSs) across the country.

This is an unprecedented surge in protection funding and should enable FRSs to have the technical expertise required to fulfil this function and ensure fire protection officers have the skills they need. This funding is from two grants: (i) £10 million Fire Protection Board funding from MHCLG focused on ensuring fire safety in high-rise residential buildings over 18m and (ii) £10 million Protection Uplift funding from the Home Office to bolster work targeting other higher risk buildings.

On high-rise residential buildings, the NFCC established the Fire Protection Board last summer, initially to facilitate a building risk review exercise to ensure that the interim measures in place in ACM-clad high-rise residential buildings awaiting remediation are appropriate and allow for safe continued occupation. I am delighted that this work has been completed, with all buildings either having been visited and deemed safe, remediation having taken place, or, in a minority of cases, continual monitoring being put in place by the local FRS with building owners to manage and maintain the interim measures, and continually assess the risks.

This work is now expanding to all high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres and to support this, the Government will provide £6 million of funding to local FRAs. The funding allocations will be based upon the number of high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres within each FRA area, and used to deliver the wider building risk review programme. To ensure its benefit, each FRA (with the exception of the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly FRAs) will receive a minimum of £60,000, which is roughly equivalent to the costs associated with one inspection officer. The allocations are available in the accompanying Fire Protection Board Grant table. With the focus on high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres, the Government is keen that other high-risk buildings receive appropriate attention. To support FRSs in

their protection work ensuring the safety of other high-risk buildings, a further £10m will be distributed among FRAs in England. Allocations for this funding have been determined by the number of high-risk buildings within each FRA area. The funding is to be used to support the improvement in protection work and its delivery in line with locally agreed integrated risk management plans and risk-based inspection programmes. The allocations are available in the accompanying Protection Uplift Grant table.

The two FRAs not receiving the funds directly, Isle of Wight and Isles of Scilly, will still be able to access additional funding where required for protection work. Owing to the collaborative working relationship already in place between the Hampshire and Isle of Wight FRAs ahead of the formal merging in April 2021, the funds to be allocated to the latter will be provided to the former to reduce administrative burdens in delivering the money. The calculations for each fund would provide the Isles of Scilly FRA with minimal funding, the distribution of which would result in a disproportionate level of administration. The Isles of Scilly FRA will therefore be able to access funding through Cornwall FRA.

Home Office officials will be in touch in due course to formally confirm funding through a grant agreement.



**Lord Greenhalgh**  
**Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities at**  
**Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Home Office**

## Distribution to FRAs of Fire Protection Board and Protection Uplift funding

FRA	Fire Protection Board Funding (£6m)	Protection Uplift Funding (£10m)	Total
Avon	£166,137.93	£368,894.14	£535,032.07
Bedfordshire	£60,000.00	£101,452.34	£161,452.34
Berkshire	£60,000.00	£64,898.52	£124,898.52
Buckinghamshire	£60,000.00	£123,549.85	£183,549.85
Cambridgeshire	£60,000.00	£114,617.91	£174,617.91
Cheshire	£60,000.00	£117,457.54	£177,457.54
Cleveland	£60,000.00	£41,716.79	£101,716.79
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	£60,000.00	£56,792.66	£116,792.66
Cumbria	£60,000.00	£79,199.94	£139,199.94
Derbyshire	£60,000.00	£72,849.49	£132,849.49
Devon & Somerset	£60,000.00	£256,909.34	£316,909.34
Dorset & Wiltshire	£109,835.37	£228,926.05	£338,761.42
Durham	£60,000.00	£49,254.72	£109,254.72
East Sussex	£195,810.90	£314,424.81	£510,235.71
Essex	£104,889.87	£212,714.32	£317,604.19
Gloucestershire	£60,000.00	£79,819.50	£139,819.50
Greater London	£2,316,286.98	£3,201,608.78	£5,517,895.76
Greater Manchester	£251,733.03	£164,956.86	£416,689.89
Hampshire & Isle of Wight	£125,052.28	£271,468.91	£396,521.19
Hereford and Worcester	£60,000.00	£121,639.55	£181,639.55
Hertfordshire	£60,000.00	£101,245.82	£161,245.82
Humberside	£60,000.00	£114,824.43	£174,824.43
Kent	£60,000.00	£382,008.08	£442,008.08
Lancashire	£60,000.00	£250,300.74	£310,300.74
Leicestershire	£60,000.00	£221,439.74	£281,439.74
Lincolnshire	£60,000.00	£91,436.18	£151,436.18
Merseyside	£135,323.69	£388,873.83	£524,198.52
Norfolk	£60,000.00	£142,962.61	£202,962.62
North Yorkshire	£60,000.00	£256,238.15	£316,238.15
Northamptonshire	£60,000.00	£61,852.37	£121,852.37
Northumberland	£60,000.00	£21,529.58	£81,529.58
Nottinghamshire	£60,000.00	£92,004.10	£152,004.10
Oxfordshire	£60,000.00	£272,036.84	£332,036.84
Shropshire	£60,000.00	£40,735.82	£100,735.82
South Yorkshire	£126,193.54	£184,782.66	£310,976.20
Staffordshire	£60,000.00	£55,760.06	£115,760.06
Suffolk	£60,000.00	£79,406.46	£139,406.46
Surrey	£60,000.00	£157,160.78	£217,160.78
Tyne and Wear	£145,975.52	£156,592.85	£302,568.37
Warwickshire	£60,000.00	£128,454.67	£188,454.67
West Midlands	£263,906.56	£309,519.99	£573,426.55
West Sussex	£60,000.00	£111,571.76	£171,571.76
West Yorkshire	£198,854.28	£336,109.28	£534,963.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>£5,999,999.95</b>	<b>£9,999,999.82</b>	<b>£15,999,999.77</b>



# Post-consultation responses



Dear Sir/Madam,

I'm hoping that you can be persuaded to keep Crowborough Fire Station just as it is with full staff and equipment.

Some years ago I had a fire in my kitchen caused by a chip pan. The local crew were here in minutes and tackled the blaze as well as comforting me. I haven't cooked chips since.

Apart from that, I'm worried about a greater threat. Due to climate change forest fires are on the increase. I've worried for some time about a fire engulfing the Ashdown Forest and if the flames could reach my house. Due to a prevailing South Westerly wind the sparks could reach here and all the surrounding properties which have mature trees in their gardens. I think you should think very seriously about the devastation that could be caused.

Yours sincerely,

██████████

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I think it is outrageous that you are cutting back the Service; I have concerns regarding increased times getting to fires as I have had two in the past. I have concerns regarding a prompt attendance to car accidents. There are many car accidents and house fires in Mark Cross and surrounding areas and I do not agree to the cuts for Wadhurst Station.

I have no internet access.

██████████

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Good afternoon

With apologies for the late submission of our comments. Battle Town Council would like to express its strong objection to the changes proposed for Battle Fire Station.

Kind regards  
Clerk to Battle Town Council

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Dear East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

I am writing to you as a Crowborough resident with my concerns regarding the proposed cuts to equipment and FireFighter numbers at our Crowborough Fire Station. I have been a resident in Crowborough since 1964 and for the past 30 years resided alongside three dedicated Firefighters.

I have grave concerns regarding the loss of one fire engine together with a 50% reduction in full time Firefighters. Taking into account the rapidly growing population of Crowborough with new estates springing up and continual in filling - narrow roads and even narrower access to properties - these cuts must be detrimental to Crowborough and the neighbouring villages.

Our Firefighters not only tackle buildings/house fires, but attend the fires on The Ashdown Forest, as well as attending and rescuing people trapped in vehicles bearing in mind the numerous accidents on the Tunbridge Wells to Uckfield main A26 arterial road as well as on the narrow country lanes in the Crowborough environs. Should cuts also be made to Uckfield Fire Station this will have a further detrimental affect to the safety of the people and properties of both towns.

The reduction in evenings and weekend fire cover at our Fire Station at the weekends before 9am and after 5pm, will only be part time cover from staff living outside Crowborough and will surely cost lives.

I, along with other residents, am grateful for the support of our Crowborough Firefighters in attending our properties, accessing safety problems and fitting approved fire alarms and feel the contribution we make to East Sussex County Council is, at the present time, well spent.

I appreciate the difficulties in balancing budgets but feel that should these cuts be made the result will be detrimental to the people of Crowborough and surrounding district.

I sincerely request careful consideration to these concerns be considered when decisions are finally made.  
Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

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Thank you for inviting me to look at your proposals.  
I think they should be adopted.

[REDACTED]

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I would like to thank you for all you do for the community, I 'm 95 and unable to take part in any meetings or consultations.

[REDACTED]

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In response to letter received. "Absolutely everything we (ESFRS) have proposed is fine by me"

[REDACTED]

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Hello

I received your letter a little over a week ago and have today gone to your website to complete the survey only to find that it closed on Friday. I also see that it was opened in April, so I am very surprised that your letter was sent so long after this allowing just a short window of time to both study the proposals and complete the survey.

In the circumstances, I would appreciate your comments and also an extension to the deadline so that I may complete the survey.

Thank you.

Regards

[REDACTED]

**Second email sent:**

I am having to forward my email below as I received a very dismissive auto response to this. I am sure you are familiar with this.

I look forward to hearing from you.



**Further reply:**

Dear Chris

Thank you so much for your email and for giving me an opportunity to let you know my views. Looking at each proposal in turn my comments are as follows:

1. Strongly agree
2. Strongly agree with a) looking the best to me
3. Strongly agree with both a) and b)
4. Strongly agree
5. Strongly agree with a) b) and c)
6. Strongly agree and I favour option a)
7. Strongly agree
8. Yes I would be willing to pay more than 3% provided it is not too much above this
9. I think that ESFRS appear to offer value for money and I am impressed that all of the proposals are geared to saving money without any detrimental effect on the service, and in some cases an actual improvement
10. Strongly agree

I hope you will find my comments helpful.

Thanks again.

Kind Regards

██████████

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20/6/20

DEPUTY C F O  
E.S.X FIRE + RESCUE SERVICE  
LEWES

Sir,

Congratulations on the well thought out proposals for the future of the Service.

I doubt if the general public will be able to improve on your thoughts.

One not mentioned problem. Finance. Do you think you will be able to carry through your proposals in total? That brings doubts to my mind.

May I ask you to prepare estimated full costs in time for the September Meeting, which providing I am still not confined to hospital I should like to attend.

HUW MERRIMAN MP  
(Bexhill and Battle)



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Mark O'Brien  
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service  
HQ Church Lane  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2DZ

Our Ref: HM16210  
26 June 2020

Dear Deputy Chief Fire Officer O'Brien,

**Re: Planning for a Safer Future - Consultation on Fire Authority's Future Plans**

Thank you for providing the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. I apologise for my late reply; it has taken some time to collate concerns from constituents, local firefighters, a local FBU representative amongst my other work priorities.

I very much welcomed the meeting we had at the start of the consultation process in which you set out the background to the consultation and explained the recommendations the IRMP contains.

My first concern about this consultation is with regards to its timing. Whilst I note your reasons for not wishing to delay the consultation i.e. the pressing need for an up to date IRMP for ESRFS, I do think that the pandemic situation should have led to a pause in process for two key reasons:

1. The ability for the public and stakeholders to fully consider and respond to the proposals within your timescales
2. The role of the ESRFS has been expanded during COVID-19 to cope with the national emergency

With regards to point 1 above, I know that my workload and that of my small team has quadrupled during COVID-19. It has therefore been challenging for me to study the proposals and seek further information about the impact of them from interested parties. It is especially important that I was able to do so as 3 of the fire stations and staff impacted by the review are within my constituency of Bexhill and Battle – Bexhill, Battle and Heathfield. I am sure that many other stakeholders would have had faced

similar challenges so I am not confident that the consultation will result in the number or quality of responses it would have received under normal circumstances.

With regards to point 2 above, I know that ESFA has regularly examined ESFRS to ensure that it efficiently and effectively meets its responsibilities in responding to incidents and it has continued to expand its work on education and prevention. More recently ESFRS has played an active and critical role in the response to COVID-19. This has presented the service with a unique opportunity to examine whether any of its recent COVID-related work is likely to lead to new responsibilities or work which the service would like to continue and will therefore need resourcing. My view is that it would be that sensible to pause and reflect on the changes this may bring and incorporate the outcome in the IRMP. On this point, the new proposals which will lead to the cut of 30 wholtime firefighters. If we experience another national crisis like COVID-19 would ESFRS have the staffing capacity to support the Local Resilience Forum as it has done so this year under the new proposals? What resilience against unanticipated events have you built in to the new IRMP?

The safety of my constituents is paramount to me, as I know it is to ESFA. I am therefore concerned about the proposal to reduce the number of fire engines at Bexhill Fire Station from two to one and to change the crewing model from 'day crewed' from 08.30 to 18.30 7 days per week to 5 days per week leaving the weekends and evenings 'on-call' I understand that ESFRS data does not demonstrate that there are less incidents on weekends, in fact, Saturdays are the busiest days according to ESFRS data. The consultation document states that on evenings and weekends "it may take slightly longer to get to you." Could you please quantify "slightly longer" in minutes so we are clear what the delay in response time would be for my constituents?

My concern is based on the demographic profile of Bexhill which has a high proportion of vulnerable residents unable to self-rescue: 9% of the population is aged 80-89 and 3% aged over 90. There are more retired people in Bexhill, 24% of the population compared to the average of 15% in the rest of the ESFRS area and the general health is poorer (likely to be related to age).

Local firefighters inform me that whilst Bexhill station attended 519 incidents in 2017/18, this figure does not include the incidents the station has attended in neighbouring towns and villages or the number of standby moves to support another fire station. Bexhill Fire Station's own records show that they were actually mobilised 949 times in 2019. Whilst I fully agree with the IRMP's proposal to increase the number of fire engines at Hastings Bohemia Road in order to better manage the higher risks identified in the town, I am not currently convinced that removing an engine from Bexhill is the best option.

This brings me to a further concern regarding the proposed resourcing of Hastings Bohemia Road Fire Station. I understand that the crewing model for Hastings Bohemia Road, allows for one fire engine and one Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) to attend a local incident. Additional fire engine support for a major incident is currently provided by neighbouring stations, often Bexhill. However, the IRMP proposal to locate two fire engines at Hastings fire station retains the current crewing numbers. I believe this will mean that if two fire engines are required to attend an incident, the ALP could not also be crewed. The next nearest ALP would have to be sent from Brighton. The reason



this is a concern is because East Sussex ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in the country for high rise residential buildings over 18 metres, with 358 buildings. Following Grenfell, other fire and rescue services in England with a high proportion of high-rise properties are primary crewing Aerial Ladder platforms rather than share crewing them as the IRMP proposes. I know ESFRS has received additional government funding totalling £510,235.71. This was announced on 29 April by a letter to MPs from Lord Greenhalgh, Minister for State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities at Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Home Office. This was formed of two grants aimed at ensuring fire safety in high rise buildings over 18m. I would be grateful for your comments on how these grants will be utilised to protect my residents, many of who are elderly, who live in high-rise buildings and who could not self-rescue.

I understand that the IRMP proposals will require a renegotiation of contract for on-call (RDS) fire fighters at Heathfield, Seaford, Hailsham and Rye fire stations as their terms and conditions will need to change in order to meet the proposed crewing models. Currently Heathfield is considered to be a two-engine station as they have a maxi-cab fire engine which can take additional crew members. I note from our meeting that you want to re-classify the maxi-cab vehicles as one fire engine. This would mean that in the future Heathfield fire station will be considered to have one fire engine and therefore a reduction in cover. In order to balance this your proposals for a new shared crewing model will increase the fire engines available from 15 -18. Could you please provide further detail on how this will benefit the residents of Heathfield and the surrounding villages. Also, as this proposal relies on new contract for on-call fire fighters, could you please advise whether you anticipate any difficulties in the negotiation process and whether there have been any formal or informal discussions with RDS staff or the FBU on this matter? I am aware from my visits to the fire stations in my constituency that recruiting retained fire-fighters is challenging. Therefore, do you anticipate that the new contracts will attract more people to this role? If not, is there a risk that you will not have enough staff to fill the posts and provide the cover that is needed?

I would welcome your comments on the issues I have raised. I have also enclosed a petition from some of my constituents who are concerned about the proposals which was delivered to my office.

Yours sincerely,

Huw Merriman  
Member of Parliament for Bexhill and Battle

