

SUPPORTING INFORMATION/COMMENTS

LOCAL SOLUTION – BIDFORD/STRATFORD AREA

BIDFORD FIRE STATION

Community Interaction

Bidford fire station is too good an asset for the local community and WFRS to lose.

The fire station is at the heart of the community and its firefighters, young firefighters and lay instructors are involved with numerous community projects and events (as recognised by Peter Morphew) including:

- Home Fire Safety campaigns over a number of years
- Key stage 1 and key stage 2 talks to all schools in the area
- Nursery schools talks
- Interaction with other youth organisations ie badgers, brownies etc
- Involvement with Bidford Youth projects
- Christmas lights and tree's events
- Charity and community events throughout the year

Youth Engagement

In addition to the above Bidford host's a very successful YFA unit. The firefighters provide role models to the youth of the area and encourage a positive contribution to society. Without its firefighters and an appliance this role model opportunity would be lost – the RDS and YFA operate as a team at Bidford.

Availability and response

Bidford firefighters had their busiest year ever in 2008. The Bidford crew have a wide range of experience – a commodity that cannot be gained quickly by a newly established or recruited crew. The crew respond quickly and provide a 5 minute response to the immediate population of Bidford. This, along with the RDS firefighter's community safety work, has kept injuries to the public and damage to property to a minimum. Even an extra 5 mins would mean 10% more fatalities in fire, 33% more RTC fatalities and 33% more damage by fire (DNV).

Station profile

The statistics show the need for fire & rescue cover to be located in Bidford.

Incidents by station ground show Bidford are responding to more incidents in their area than surrounding stations – so why remove cover from the need?

The station ground incorporates 4,027 dwellings, numerous industrial area's, a large local employer in Salford Priors (and scene of a number of incidents), the rivers Avon and Arrow, A46 trunk road, 3 homes for the disabled, 5 old peoples/nursing homes, an airfield, a COMAH LPG site, hotels and boarding houses, 4 schools, listed buildings, thatch buildings, farms etc

Strategic location. This is very subjective. The plan puts all the eggs in one basket. The 'local solution' leaves the 3 existing RDS stations at Bidford, Alcester and Studley – each providing a 5 minute response to its community. That's fair, sensible and strategic fire & rescue cover that provides true resilience. Bidford is strategically located to cover its area of varied risks and support the Stratford and Alcester areas and that of greater Warwickshire. The station can also support Worcestershire providing the quickest attendance to a number of its villages.

Expanded use

Bidford fire station was built with expansion in mind. Area was left to provide for an immediate second appliance bay of good proportions. This could enable WFRS to locate a special appliance of its choice at the station, knowing that crewing is unlikely to be a problem. For an estimated £50k this bay could, for instance, accommodate the Water Carrier currently 'jump crewed' at Leamington. Alcester, whilst having a spare bay, has little height in its bay making it unsuitable for most special appliances – in particular the Hose Layer indicated for that station in the proposals. There is capital budget available for an expansion of Bidford. Land to the rear also has the permission of WCC for fire service use. This could be further bays and/or a training facility. These options to expand are cheaply available – a commodity not so readily available at any other RDS station in Stratford District.

STRATFORD FIRE STATION

Our proposal is to locate the proposed wholetime crew at Stratford rather than at Alcester (if WFRS are adamant an extra wholetime crew is required in South Warwickshire). This could also be tied to a move of fire station in Stratford. Both of these options have a number of advantages over the current plan.

A SECOND WHOLETIME PUMP AT STRATFORD - ADVANTAGES.

1. Guaranteed 2nd pump availability. The current RDS appliance is unavailable for large amounts of the time, providing between 15-25% availability. 35P2 as it stands COSTS the service money in that the appliance sits, kitted up with expensive equipment and personnel costs, unable to be used. In 4 Months it has turned out just 5 times. This has implications for the RDS crew in terms of competence and morale as they were only required to operate equipment at one of these calls. Low availability means cover moves have to be made that have financial implications, especially where RDS crews are used.
2. Currently the wholetime appliance at Stratford is confined to the Stratford town area due to the RDS non-availability. The appliance is not allowed to venture into the outer parts of its station ground without a cover move being made into Stratford town. This seriously limits CFS work in rural areas. 35P2 becoming wholetime would give greater resilience to Stratford District (South Warwickshire) allowing a crew to be deployed to support HFSC's, schools, O17's, 7.2d visits, safety initiatives, partnership working etc whilst still being available to respond to emergencies. Some of this work in rural areas is currently hard to achieve by Stratford's ART.
3. 35P2 as a wholetime resource would provide resilience to support the proposed boat as well as the HVPU. The station would mirror Rugby and be able to respond to water incidents immediately providing its own safety crew with no reliance on 'call back' arrangements. A boat at Alcester would not be able to do this. This plan would provide 45 wholetime firefighters trained in boats and HVPU at Stratford against the current 34 wholetime/RDS trained in the HVPU.
4. An additional wholetime crew at Stratford (using figures from the proposed plan) would see 45 wholetime firefighters at Stratford as opposed to 50 between Alcester and Stratford in the current plan achieving a wage bill saving of some £150,000. This could buy the boat, pay for training and (along with 35 RDS savings) keep Bidford open, possibly with a special appliance such as the water carrier, with

its high availability to support the area giving true resilience. The RDS units of cover at 35 would be re-allocated to enhance 31,36,37,38.

5. 35P2 as a wholetime appliance would provide a resource able to provide immediate response to give supporting cover to all of South Warwickshire for incidents or cover moves at no additional cost. Currently every-time the wholetime appliance (35P1) moves an appliance has to cover. This is often an RDS appliance. This costs the service money. Some 46% of Alcester's call outs are cover moves to Stratford.
6. There is potential for further cost saving options - one of having 10 wholetime firefighters covering 35P2 split into 2 watch's working 2 blocks of 4 12 hour day shifts covering 0700-1900 with RDS covering 1900-0700. A second option is 5 wholetime firefighters working 42 hours covering weekdays only. For this the retained would need to be more available than now and the station would need to remain where it is. However, RDS recruitment is traditionally difficult in Stratford.
7. Capital expenditure designated for the Alcester upgrade could be used to improve accommodation at Stratford, make the existing bays double to allow for the boat, HVP, Double Hose box and 2 pumps. An extra bay could also be constructed at Bidford for the water carrier (or other such vehicle).

MOVE STRATFORD FIRE STATION – ADVANTAGES

In conjunction with 'the local solution' plan a move of Stratford Fire/Ambulance station could be considered.

1. The fire/ambulance station site, along with the former precision antenna site and Stratford football club site could make a considerable building plot for developers. Being a 'brown field' site objections would not be so difficult to overcome. The developer could then be required to provide a state of the art fire/ambulance station at the Bishopton roundabout site on the A46/A3400.
2. This proposed station, built to accommodate all the vehicles WFRS requires, would be built with all the modern advances in ecological, environmentally friendly power saving features, meeting Government and WCC targets. An example to other FRS.

3. This location provides a speedy response onto the A46 trunk road to access the M40 quickly via Longbridge. A far quicker response into Warwick/Leamington could be achieved to support those areas. The A3400 gives immediate access north towards Henley and the M40/42 and south down the Birmingham Road to the town centre and Clopton Bridge for attendances 'south of the river'*
4. A purpose built community room could be provided to support local events and community groups and deliver CFS events. It could provide the CFS hub for Stratford District.
5. The new station could provide enhanced training facilities, including a carbonaceous unit and hot-house BA facility, giving a location central to a number of RDS fire stations that could access the facilities on drill nights to enhance training opportunities. The training area could encompass an interceptor facility to allow foam training and a RTC compound. WFRS could consider moving training school activities to this location, thus freeing the Bedworth site for development (helping to fund this new site along with the Stratford development).
6. The new station, nearer to Henley, could provide a kick start to the forming of a Young Firefighter unit to serve Stratford/Henley where no unit has existed to date.
7. There are excellent travel facilities to the proposed location with the park & ride site and buses, A roads, nearby cycle way, bus route from Stratford to Henley and proposed Stratford Parkway railway station.

*Note

Attendances to Welford-on-Avon and Long Marston from Stratford would be increased. However, prior to Stratford becoming wholetime these villages were in Bidford's turnout area and Bidford currently provide the second pump attendance to these villages. Stratford and Bidford attendance times are equal to this area at present so a return to Bidford's area of these villages would ensure the current level of first response, with the new Stratford station providing second and third pumps.