



Contact

Should you wish to contact us about the proposals

Having read this information you should be better informed about what this proposal will mean for you. We would now like you to give us your views on the fire improvement plan. You can do so in writing to the address below.

**Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service
Improvement Plan Consultation
Service Headquarters
Warwick Street
Leamington Spa
CV32 5LH**

Or alternatively by e-mail to: fireandrescue@warwickshire.gov.uk

Please note the consultation period will last for no less than 12 weeks. Your response will be used to further inform the improvement plan and develop our next Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2010 -2013.

For further information regarding the services provided by Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service please visit our website at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fireandrescue

Consultation

Bidford Fire Station

As Chief Fire Officer of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, I value your views on the changes proposed within the improvement plan.



I understand that you may be concerned about the proposals. However the circumstances we face are difficult and some of what we are recommending you might be pleased to hear and some less so, but you can be assured that these proposals will result in a more efficient and effective fire and rescue service.

This leaflet sets out the rationale for the proposals in your area and outlines all of the steps set out in the improvement plan. The proposals aim to improve our resources in ways that help us to protect the safety of our communities and firefighters.

The test for Warwickshire is that if we are to improve our service and re-use our resources in ways that help us to protect our communities and firefighters better, hard decisions have to be made.

I hope that after reading the information provided, you will understand that nothing proposed will jeopardise the safety of our communities or the safety of our firefighters.

I would be grateful if you would take a few minutes to read this leaflet and answer the consultation questions. Your views are appreciated and will be considered during this consultation period.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Paul Fuller'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Paul Fuller
Chief Fire Officer

What are we proposing?

An effective fire and rescue service does not stand still and there have been significant changes in the way we deliver services both locally and nationally over the last few years.

It is our aim to be an effective and resilient fire and rescue service that increases the safety of our firefighters and ensures the safety of our communities.

We have proposed eight steps in our consultation document outlining key projects aimed at improving our capacity by identifying the things we need to do more of and the things we can do less of in order to do them. Below are the proposals that we need your help to develop further to provide a fitter, stronger fire and rescue service.

1. We need to introduce a fifth watch crewing system by centralisation of training and sickness cover to enable flexible crewing to match the demands on the service.
2. Following a review of current stations, their turnout areas and calls they attend, a 12 station response model is proposed, linked to a flexible system of duty. Seven stations could then be transferred for community use by the council and its public service partners (including use, for example, by Young Firefighters, Anti Social Fire Intervention Teams where there is a demand, for other fire safety purposes and wider use by the community).
3. We want to significantly increase the number of home fire safety checks through the use of both operational firefighters and external agencies to ensure that all sectors of our most at risk communities are targeted.
4. We need to double the Hot Fires and Incident Command System training on an annual basis for all operational staff to increase the safety of our firefighters.
5. We need to reduce sickness absence and improve health and fitness.
6. We need to buy a second boat unit to enhance the response to flooding covering the south of Warwickshire.
7. We would like to invest in a Road Traffic Collision (RTC) unit instead of sending major fire appliances to busy roads and motorways.
8. We would like to invest in Small Fires Units / Targeted Response Vehicles to deal with small fires and anti-social behaviour.

Why are we doing this?

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service is committed to providing a high level of emergency cover across the county, whilst ensuring that our resources are managed effectively.

In 2004, the government decided that fire and rescue services should change the way that they operate with greater emphasis on intervention (the fire service attending fires) to prevention with education in schools and youth programmes such as the Young Firefighters Association. Since that time a number of reports including the government's paper on 'Rising to the Challenge', the Peter Morpew report and the government's Comprehensive Area Assessment have all made recommendations that we must provide value for money. With the Audit Commission stating that "it needs to move forward and deliver better value for money through more efficient and effective service delivery and use of resources."

The consultation we are currently undertaking forms part of that development to ensure that Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service can provide a more effective and efficient fire and rescue service making it a fitter and stronger fire and rescue service.

We are inviting people to:

- learn more about what we are proposing and why, to help residents to make informed decisions when responding to the consultation
- have their say
- provide specific feedback on each of the steps of the plan
- make suggestions in addition to, or replace the steps of this plan that achieve the same outcomes or better



Why Bidford Fire Station?

Bidford Fire Station is a retained station made up of retained duty system (RDS) personnel. In addition to providing part time cover as a member of a fire crew, officers often have full time jobs with other employers. The RDS firefighters respond to a bleeper system and so have to drop what they are doing and respond to the call. This clearly takes time, but despite this some crews can be on the road in a matter of minutes. However, it does mean that there is a time delay of five minutes in which RDS firefighters must present themselves for duty.

A wholetime station has firefighters on duty 24 hours a day, every day of the year and they can respond to a call immediately without delay. In the case of Bidford, crews from Stratford which is 'wholetime' regularly respond to incidents in Bidford and the surrounding areas to either provide support to the Bidford crews or attend incidents when they are unavailable.

In addition to support from Stratford, Bidford also borders Hereford and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service with whom we have a section 13/16 Fire Services Act 2004 Mutual Assistance agreement for cross border assistance.

In 2008/09, Bidford attended 256 incidents. Of those 120 were false alarm calls, 32 were small fires and 24 were road traffic collisions (RTC). Under the new proposals false fire alarms will be dealt with through a

robust challenge and response system and small fires and RTCs will be dealt with by the creation of small fires and RTC response teams.

In the last year there were a few occasions when Bidford Fire Station was off the run (crews not available for duty). This means that although you may drive past the station, it has been unavailable to respond to emergency incidents.

It currently costs in the region of £110,000 to fund Bidford Fire Station. By maintaining operational response from neighbouring stations, Alcester and Stratford, this will enable the service to re-invest this resource into the introduction of a second boat unit at Stratford Fire Station, the development of a Small Fires/Community Fire Safety Unit for the South of the County and the upgrade of Alcester Fire Station to wholetime.

Community safety teams will still operate in your area, as will our community education and the technical fire safety teams. Fire engines will also be in and around the area dealing with a range of activities aimed at making communities safer.

These proposals have not been made lightly and are being professionally driven based upon many years of fire and rescue experience. You can be assured that all of the proposals aim to make Warwickshire a fitter, stronger, fire and rescue service.