



South Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue

WORKING FOR A SAFER
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Review of Wholetime Crewing

Proposals for changes to service delivery

October 2011

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Glossary

The following terms and abbreviations may be used in these business cases:

Term	Description
Appliance	Alternative name for a pump, or traditional fire engine
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
AVLS/Automatic Vehicle Location System	Computer system that enables us to send the nearest pump to an incident, not necessarily the one based in that station area
BA	Breathing Apparatus
CM	Crew Manager
CPC/Close Proximity Crewing	Alternative method of crewing a fire station, recommended in section 6
Dual contract	Full-time firefighter who also works as a retained firefighter in between his/her full-time shifts
FDR1	Fire affecting life or property
FF	Firefighter
Footprint	Area within which we can respond from a fire station within a certain time
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan - the document which must be produced by all English Fire & Rescue Services to show how they will get the right resources in the right place at the right time
Make up	When an incident commander calls for additional pumps or other resources to be sent to an incident
Output Area (OA)	An output area is a geographical area used for statistical purposes, as defined by the Office of National Statistics, containing an average of 300 residents.
PDA/Pre-determined attendance	Our minimum standard level of response for an incident of that type
Pump	A traditional 'fire engine'
RDS/retained	Part-time firefighters working the Retained Duty System (RDS)
Roving Pump	Fire engine additional to our core provision, to enable a fire crew to attend Training & Development Centre
RTC	Road traffic collision
Secondary fire	Smaller fire to an item of lower value (eg. bin, grass, rubbish)
SIU/Small Incident Unit	New vehicle to tackle smaller incidents, leaving pumps available for more serious incidents
Spate conditions	Extremely busy periods, such as during a drought or major flooding event
Special Service	Other emergency, such as a road traffic collision
Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)	An LSOA is made up of approximately 5 output areas, and is a geographical area of approximately 1500 residents and 400 households, as defined by the Office of National Statistics. The classification enables comparison of small area statistics.
Wholetime	Shift system enabling 24/7 crewing of fire stations by full-time firefighters in four watches
WM	Watch Manager

1. Summary of Proposals

At a glance

1.1 We are proposing to change our firefighter crewing system at up to six of our existing fire stations, initially at Lowedges, from the current wholetime system to a new Close Proximity Crewing (CPC) model. This will have no impact on our services to the public, or emergency response times and will save us £400,000 per station per year. We are publishing this business case for information only.

What are the current arrangements?

1.2 Our 17 full-time fire stations are all staffed by wholetime firefighters, 24/7. However, some of these stations attend many more incidents than others. Other UK fire services have introduced various different ways of providing full-time cover more efficiently at their less busy stations. We have studied the alternative options already being successfully used elsewhere to see if any of them would be suitable for any stations in South Yorkshire.

What are the proposed changes?

1.3 We have identified six full-time fire stations which respond to a low number of incidents and may be suitable for an alternative method of crewing. These are: Aston Park, Maltby, Rivelin, Thorne, Tankersley and Lowedges.

We have considered in detail three alternative options for crewing at these stations:

- Retained duty system (RDS) crewing – this would mean switching to a system entirely based on using part-time firefighters when they are available (see associated RDS review business case). We don't believe this provides enough fire cover for these station areas, based on their current risks and station profile. We don't recommend this option.
- Day crewing – this system would staff these stations with a full-time crew during the day, switching to RDS/part-time crewing at night. Again, we don't believe this provides enough fire cover for these station areas, based on their current risks and station profile. We don't recommend this option.
- Close proximity crewing (CPC) – this system entirely makes use of full-time fire crews, working four consecutive day shifts. During the night after each day shift, instead of going to their usual home, these firefighters would live in dedicated accommodation on, or adjacent to, the fire station. At night, they would be off duty but on call to attend emergencies. They would be paid an enhancement for the additional on-call commitment they provide. This system provides full-time, 24/7 cover from the fire station for significantly reduced costs and, for stations which attend a relatively low number of incidents, is considered suitable. We propose to introduce the CPC system at up to six existing stations – the first one is proposed to be Lowedges.

Why are these changes being proposed?

1.4 Using the CPC system at these stations will enable us to provide full-time, 24/7 fire cover to local communities but at a much-reduced cost. The stations identified are suitable because we know that the number of incidents they attend is relatively low – on average, less than nine incidents per four-day cycle, most of which are false alarms or small fires.

2. Background information

The financial situation

2.1 The Fire and Rescue Service, along with other public bodies, has an obligation to provide the best possible service, within the available budget. The Government's Spending Review has resulted in a reduction of grants to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) totalling £4.7m over the period from 2011-13. This is expected to be followed by further cuts to the budget over the following two years (2013/14 and 2014/15).

This is one of a number of associated business cases which were initiated to help SYFR to identify where the required savings could be achieved whilst endeavouring to maintain or improve, as far as possible, the quality and extent of frontline service provision.

Professional input and data analysis support

2.2. Our process of reviewing service provision has been led throughout by fire officers with many years' experience in the Fire & Rescue Service. Many of these officers grew up in South Yorkshire and have served here throughout their entire careers. These officers have used their extensive knowledge of their profession, and of the local area, to investigate potential changes which they believed were suitable for consideration in South Yorkshire.

In order to support this work, and identify the implications of these reviews, two computer software programmes have been used to test the theories put forward by these experienced officers. Dozens of scenarios have been modelled using the Government's Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) Toolkit, and Process Evolution's Analyser.

The FSEC uses a geographical information system and actual historical data relating to incidents attended over a five-year period. It calculates risk levels based on a relationship between response time and fatality rates for each type of incident we face.

Process Evolution's software simulates the location of stations and appliances to predict response options and their impact. This tool has been used to add a further dimension to the analysis and test the recommendations within this business case.

Through the modelling process we can predict what effect the implementation of any recommendations are likely to have upon the public in relation to risk and any impact on our ability to respond across the county.

Firefighter posts

2.3 It is intended to make all the changes proposed in these business cases through natural wastage, by not replacing firefighters as they retire. It is not intended to make any whole-time firefighter redundancies.

3. About This Review

3.1 SYFR regularly re-assesses the risks in the community to ensure we allocate our resources effectively, according to local needs. In our plans for 2008-11 we said we would look at alternative crewing models for our wholetime fire stations. We have carried out a review of staffing models used elsewhere in England, which may be suitable for SYFR.

3.2 Demand for our emergency fire and rescue service has reduced significantly over recent years:

South Yorkshire-wide	2003/04	2010/11	% reduction
999 calls (excluding duplicates)	32,000	16,595	48
Accidental dwelling fires*	1,004	665	34
Accidental dwelling fire deaths and injuries	155	56	64
Deliberate fires	15,463	5,266	66
Road traffic collisions attended	1,027	494	52
False alarms (faulty fire detection systems)	4,239 ⁺	1,957	54
Malicious false alarms	804 ⁺	99	88

*Fires in properties where people live – such as houses, flats and apartments

⁺Data from 2005/06

These reductions are primarily due to our community safety and targeted risk reduction work over recent years.

3.3 The alternative crewing methods we have studied from other Fire and Rescue Services clearly work best when applied to wholetime fire stations which are the base for one fire engine, where the number of emergency incidents is relatively low, and where overnight demand is less than daytime demand.

3.4 An alternative method of crewing would enable us to match our response more closely to current levels of demand, and to use our staff more effectively and efficiently. It would have the benefit of providing existing levels of fire cover at a reduced cost.

4. Crewing Options

4.1 From our research, we focused on three options which are outlined below with the potential benefits and drawbacks on each discussed, in addition to our current arrangements.

4.1.1 – Maintain Current Duty System

This option would maintain the current crewing arrangements at single-pump stations with wholetime crewing during the day and night. However it would not provide any efficiency savings, and is therefore not a viable option given the level of known and anticipated cuts to our budget.

4.1.2 – Implement a Retained Duty System (RDS)

RDS stations are staffed by firefighters whose main employment is with a non-service employer, or wholetime firefighters on 'dual contracts', who provide retained cover additional to their wholetime commitments. Retained staff provide a predetermined level of availability for emergency response, for which they receive a salary based on the number of hours of commitment and incident activity levels.

Within South Yorkshire it costs on average £100,000 to staff an RDS station per year – less than one-tenth of the cost of staffing a single-pump wholetime station. Implementing an RDS system at single-pump stations would increase response times to incidents, as there is an additional turnout time for RDS personnel to attend the station. Given the volume of calls that single-pump stations attend are almost double those of our existing RDS stations, this is not a preferred option as emergency response would be negatively impacted.

4.1.3 – Implement a Day Crewing Duty System

Day crewed stations are staffed by personnel who provide cover from the station in a wholetime capacity during the day. In the evening and through the night, fire cover is provided by retained firefighters, as in 4.1.2 above. In order to respond in an appropriate period of time during the retained periods of duty, staff are required to live within a specified distance from the station.

Savings are generated from the reduced wholetime provision required by implementing this option, as a result of stand-by arrangements/call-out during the evening. This option provides significant savings compared to the current system, and the same emergency response during the day, with slower response times at night.

4.1.4 – Implement Close Proximity Crewing (CPC)

On the CPC system, during the day the station is staffed by wholetime firefighters as per a standard wholetime station. On the night shift the station is crewed by wholetime firefighters, staying on or adjacent to the station. They are off duty but on-call to attend emergencies, and receive an enhancement for the additional on-call commitment they provide.

Emergency response times are maintained to the same standard by providing accommodation on, or in close proximity to, the station. Flexible working arrangements are available for staff through self-rostering, who will work an average of 42 hours per week.

The staff costs for Day Crewed and Close Proximity stations are comparable, but one of the advantages of Close Proximity crewing is that night time response times are unaffected. It provides the same service as the current wholetime system but at a much reduced cost. There are capital costs associated with the CPC option, as accommodation would need to be provided.

4.2 Recommended Option

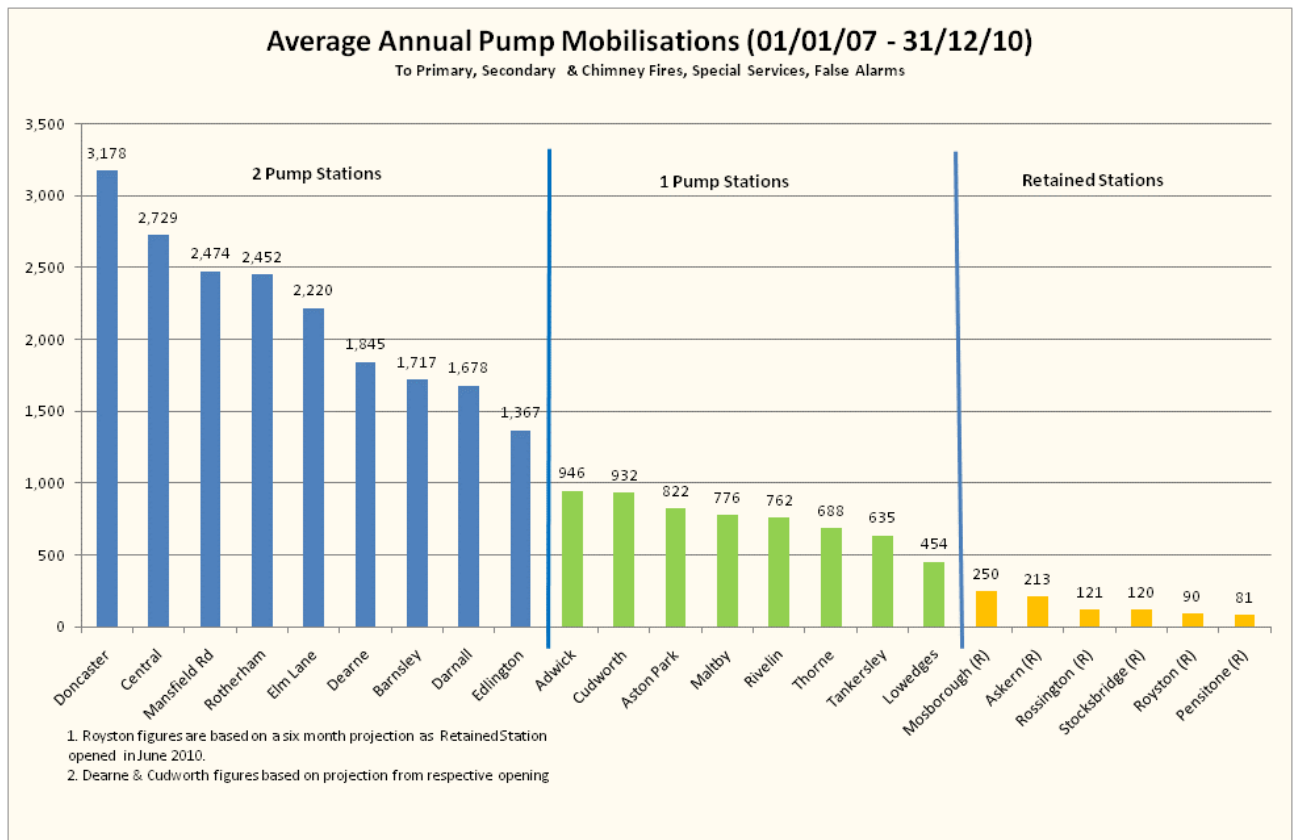
Option 4, Close Proximity Crewing, is recommended to be implemented on single-pump wholetime stations with lower incident levels as it provides exactly the same standard of fire cover with savings of around £400,000 per station, per year.

The current shift arrangements maintain current levels of fire cover but do not produce any savings. Moving to an RDS system produces financial savings but has a negative effect on fire cover. Moving to a Day Crewing system produces similar levels of savings to Close Proximity Crewing but has a negative impact on night time fire cover. Moving to a retained duty system saves more money but has a more negative effect on fire cover.

Should it not be possible to implement Close Proximity Crewing for any reason, due to the Government budget cuts it would instead be necessary to reconsider the day crewing or retained duty system options.

5. Potentially Suitable Locations

5.1 As stated earlier, Close Proximity Crewing is suitable for wholetime stations with lower levels of incidents. It is therefore important to consider which stations could be suitable for alternative crewing. The table below shows the average number of incidents attended per year across every station in SYFR.



5.2 It can be seen that the stations with the lowest numbers of mobilisations are those illustrated in yellow, which already operate on the retained duty system. In contrast, all multi-pump wholetime stations are shown to have mobilised to many incidents, with average annual mobilisations being between 1,367 and 3,178 times.

5.3 In the middle, in green, sit our eight single-pump, wholetime stations. Annual averages show that Adwick mobilised to an average of 946 incidents per year. Based on annual projections, Cudworth will mobilise to approximately 932 incidents per year. Given the level of incidents attended for these two stations, and the geographical area covered by them, a move from the current arrangements would currently be less desirable at these stations.

5.4 The six wholetime stations which respond to, on average, between 454 and 822 incidents per year (Aston Park, Maltby, Rivelin, Thorne, Tankersley and Lowedges) may be potentially suitable for an alternative crewing system. These stations attend, on average between 1.25 and 2.25 incidents per 24-hour period (5 to 9 incidents per four-day 'tour of duty'), many of which are false alarms or small fires. Lowedges mobilises to 30% fewer incidents than any other single-pump wholetime station in South Yorkshire.

6. About These Stations

Aston Park

6.1 This is a full-time station located on the southern extremes of Rotherham district, close to the main A57 trunk road and with easy access to the M1 motorway at junction 31. The station is in a good state of repair. There are no other stations within close proximity.

- The station was built in 1995
- It services the following Local Authority ward areas: All Wales, Anston & Woodsetts, and Holderness wards; around half Dinnington, Rother Vale and Beighton wards; part Woodhouse ward; small part Mosborough ward
- The station covers an area of approximately 98.68 square kilometres
- It covers a population of approximately 64,000
- There are approximately 1,415 commercial properties in the station area
- Station resources – one rescue pump

In common with the incident reductions which have been experienced across South Yorkshire since the development of modern community fire safety and targeted risk reduction initiatives, the number of emergencies experienced in the Aston Park station area has reduced significantly since 2003:

Aston Park area	2003/04	2010/11	% reduction
Accidental dwelling fires*	25	21	9
Deliberate fires	463	242	48
Road traffic collisions attended	56	34	39
False alarms (faulty fire detection systems)	55 ⁺	36	35
False alarms malicious	24 ⁺	2	92

*Fires in properties where people live – such as houses, flats and apartments

⁺Data from 2005/06

Lowedges

6.2 This is a full-time station located on the southern extremes of Sheffield district. The station is in a good state of repair.

- The station was built in 1965
- It services the following Local Authority ward areas: all of Dore & Totley, Beauchief & Greenhill and Graves Park wards; most of Gleadless Valley ward; around half of Ecclesall ward; part of Nether Edge ward; a small part of Birley and Arbourthorne wards
- The station covers an area of approximately 46 square kilometres
- It covers a population of approximately 108,000
- There are approximately 954 commercial properties in the station area
- Station resources – one rescue pump

In common with the incident reductions which have been experienced across South Yorkshire since the development of modern community fire safety and targeted risk reduction initiatives, the number of emergencies experienced in the Lowedges station area has reduced significantly since 2003:

In the Lowedges area, the reductions are as follows:

Lowedges area	2003/04	2010/11	% reduction
Accidental dwelling fires*	57	28	51
Deliberate fires	419	143	66
Road traffic collisions attended	29	16	45
False alarms (faulty fire detection systems)	85 ⁺	38	55
False alarms malicious	13 ⁺	0	100

*Fires in properties where people live – such as houses, flats and apartments

⁺Data from 2005/06

Maltby

6.3 This is a full-time station located on the eastern extremes of Rotherham district, with easy access to the M18 motorway at Junction 1. The station is in a good state of repair.

- The station was built in 1957
- It services the following Local Authority ward areas: All Maltby and Hellaby wards; most of Wickersley ward; around half of Sitwell and Dinnington wards; part of Valley, Silverwood, Rother Vale and Torne Valley wards
- The station covers an area of approximately 104.45 square kilometres
- It covers a population of approximately 54,000
- There are approximately 1,169 commercial properties in the station area
- Station resources – one rescue pump

In common with the incident reductions which have been experienced across South Yorkshire since the development of modern community fire safety and targeted risk reduction initiatives, the number of emergencies experienced in the Maltby station area has reduced significantly since 2003:

Maltby area	2003/04	2010/11	% reduction
Accidental dwelling fires*	33	21	36
Deliberate fires	335	221	34
Road traffic collisions attended	71	30	58
False alarms (faulty fire detection systems)	100 ⁺	31	69
False alarms malicious	21 ⁺	3	86

*Fires in properties where people live – such as houses, flats and apartments

⁺Data from 2005/06

Rivelin

6.4 This is a full-time station located to the north-west of Sheffield city centre. The station is in a good state of repair.

- The station was built in 1969
- It services the following Local Authority ward areas: Most of Stannington, Fulwood, Hillsborough, Walkley and Crookes wards; part of Stocksbridge & Upper Don and Ecclesall wards; small part of Southey, Burngreave and Broomhill wards
- The station covers an area of approximately 91.39 square kilometres
- It covers a population of approximately 76,000
- There are approximately 1,651 commercial properties in the station area
- Station resources – one rescue pump

In common with the incident reductions which have been experienced across South Yorkshire since the development of modern community fire safety and targeted risk reduction initiatives, the number of emergencies experienced in the Rivelin station area has reduced significantly since 2003:

Rivelin area	2003/04	2010/11	% reduction
Accidental dwelling fires*	46	33	28
Deliberate fires	264	125	53
Road traffic collisions attended	29	13	55
False alarms (faulty fire detection systems)	139 ⁺	45	68
False alarms malicious	14 ⁺	3	79

*Fires in properties where people live – such as houses, flats and apartments

⁺Data from 2005/06

Tankersley

6.5 This is a full-time station located in the extreme south-west of the Barnsley district, close to the border with Sheffield. This station is strategically located close to main arterial routes and the M1 motorway at junction 36. The station is relatively new and in a good state of repair.

- The station was built in 1994
- It services the following Local Authority ward areas: All of Rockingham ward; most of Keppel, Hoyland Milton and West Ecclesfield wards; around half of Wombwell, Hooper and East Ecclesfield wards; part of Penistone East and Worsbrough wards; small part of Stairfoot ward
- The station covers an area of approximately 67.09 square kilometres
- It covers a population of approximately 52,800
- There are approximately 1,632 commercial properties in the station area
- Station resources – one rescue pump, countywide Operational Support Unit

In common with the incident reductions which have been experienced across South Yorkshire since the development of modern community fire safety and targeted risk reduction initiatives, the number of emergencies experienced in the Tankersley station area has reduced significantly since 2003:

Tankersley area	2003/04	2010/11	% reduction
Accidental dwelling fires*	27	19	30
Deliberate fires	515	157	70
Road traffic collisions attended	48	30	38
False alarms (faulty fire detection systems)	56 ⁺	40	29
False alarms malicious	8 ⁺	0	100

*Fires in properties where people live – such as houses, flats and apartments

⁺Data from 2005/06

Thorne

6.6 This is a full-time station located on the eastern extremes of Doncaster district. The station is in a good state of repair.

- The station was built in 1964
- It services the following Local Authority ward areas: All of Thorne and Hatfield wards; most of Stainforth & Moorends ward; around half of Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall & Barnby Dun ward
- The station covers an area of approximately 160.46 square kilometres
- It covers a population of approximately 45,000
- There are approximately 1,024 commercial properties in the station area
- Station resources – one rescue pump

In common with the incident reductions which have been experienced across South Yorkshire since the development of modern community fire safety and targeted risk reduction initiatives, the number of emergencies experienced in the Thorne station area has reduced significantly since 2003:

In the Thorne area, the reductions are as follows:

Thorne area	2003/04	2010/11	% reduction
Accidental dwelling fires*	38	23	39
Deliberate fires	513	245	52
Road traffic collisions attended	45	18	60
False alarms (faulty fire detection systems)	115	23	80
False alarms malicious	28	7	75

*Fires in properties where people live – such as houses, flats and apartments

†Data from 2005/06

7. Suitability For Close Proximity Crewing

7.1 Earlier sections have stated that Close Proximity Crewing is suitable for wholetime stations which attend fewer incidents compared to others. Another important consideration is the number and severity of night-time incidents. This is because the crews will have worked a full day shift and will need to rest where possible during evening and night time periods, responding only on an 'on-call' basis.

7.2 The table below shows that each of these stations attended between 40 and 46% of their incidents between the hours of 8pm and 8am during the four years from 2007-10. The average actual number of night time incidents they attend ranges from 206 per year at Lowedges (roughly one every two nights) to 359 per year at Aston Park (roughly one per night). These figures include false alarms and minor (secondary) grass/bin/rubbish fires.

	Mobilisations between 2000 hrs and 0800 hrs (2007-2010 inclusive)						Total	%
	Own Station Area		Other Station Area		Overall			
	Total	Av Per Year	Total	Av Per Year	Total	Av Per Year	Av Per Year	% Night time
Aston Park	1026	257	408	102	1434	359	822	43.7
Maltby	947	237	328	82	1275	319	776	41.1
Rivelin	856	214	477	119	1333	333	762	43.7
Thorne	1044	261	77	19	1121	280	688	40.7
Tankersley	743	186	360	90	1103	276	635	43.5
Lowedges	724	181	100	25	824	206	454	45.4

Mobilisations to Chimney Fire, False Alarm Apparatus, False Alarm Good Intent, False Alarm Malicious, FDR1 Fire, Secondary Fire, Spec Serv Emergency, Spec Serv Non Emerg. **Excludes over the border incidents**

7.3 As part of this business case, it is intended that all minor night time incidents, such as small, secondary fires, in CPC station areas, would be attended by other wholetime fire crews, or a new Small Incidents Unit. This will enable Close Proximity Crews to rest at night where possible. CPC crews would only be mobilised to life risk type incidents (incidents that may be *likely* to involve a significant threat to life, property or the environment). Other crews would be mobilised to incidents that do not threaten life or property, when the speed of response is less critical.

7.4 The table below shows the number of life risk type incidents attended at night time by each of these stations from 2007-10. It shows that the average number of night time life risk incidents ranged from 28 per year (roughly one per fortnight) at Thorne to 52 per year (one per week) at Rivelin.

	Life Risk Mobilisations between 2000hrs and 0800 hrs					
	Own Station Area		Other station Area		Overall	
	Total	Av Per Year	Total	Av Per Year	Total	Av Per Year
Rivelin	102	26	105	26	207	52
Tankersley	102	26	90	23	192	48
Aston Park	101	25	79	20	180	45
Maltby	101	25	63	16	164	41
Lowedges	100	25	26	7	126	32
Thorne	94	24	18	5	112	28

LIFE RISK = All Primary Dwelling Fires & RTCs

7.5 Based on this information, it can be reasonably expected that Close Proximity Crews at any of these stations will have sufficient night time rest to enable them to fulfil their duties. On average, they can expect to be required to attend a life-risk incident at night roughly once in every seven nights (Rivelin) to once in every 14 nights (Thorne).

8. Recommendation

The introduction of Close Proximity Crewing at selected wholetime stations with lower activity levels would provide a number of benefits, including:

- Maintenance of current response times with no reduction in operational cover
- Allocation of appropriate resources to identified risks at times of known activity
- Demonstration of the Service's commitment to providing the best possible service to our communities in the most efficient way
- Introduction of a self-sustaining crewing mechanism reducing the instances of overtime payment
- Continued community prevention activities – the community fire safety and targeted risk reduction work which has been directly responsible for the reduction in fires across South Yorkshire since 2003 would continue in its entirety

Taking into account both night time life risk incident data and overall incident levels, it is recommended that Close Proximity Crewing is progressed at Lowedges in the first instance in 2013, and then at up to all five of the stations named below. The second station to change crewing system is intended to be in 2014:

- 1) Tankersley
- 2) Thorne
- 3) Rivelin
- 4) Aston Park
- 5) Maltby

*Note that in a separate business case it is also proposed to open a new CPC station in the Birley area.

9. Overall Community Impact

This proposal would have no impact on local communities since we would continue to provide the same level of service through permanently having firefighters available at or adjacent to the fire station. If it was not possible to implement Close Proximity Crewing, and instead had to reconsider day crewing or the retained duty system, a negative impact on emergency response times would result.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment covering all of these related business cases has been produced and is available to download by visiting www.syfire.gov.uk. This business case is for information, not consultation, since there is no impact for the public. Among staff, the opportunity to apply to work the Close Proximity Crewing system will be equally available to all relevant staff.

11. Organisational Implications

These proposals will contribute towards some of the financial savings necessary due to the Government budget cuts, whilst to maintaining the quality and extent of frontline service provision.

This proposal enables us to provide exactly the same level of service to local communities at a saving of around of around £400,000 per station, per year, largely due to the removal of at least 14 firefighter posts from each station. The initial capital expenditure is expected to be around £165,000 per station.

Close proximity crewing is dependent upon having living accommodation available on, or adjacent to, the fire stations involved to ensure there is no impact on emergency response times. There will therefore be initial start-up costs at each CPC station. At Lowedges, the first station proposed to move to the CPC system in 2013, it is planned to construct a purpose-built accommodation block on the existing fire station.

All relevant staff will be eligible to apply to work the CPC system but no one will be forced to work it – applications will be encouraged on a voluntary basis.

Close proximity crewing also depends on having enough staff volunteers to work the system. If it is not possible to introduce Close Proximity Crewing, due to the Government budget cuts it would instead be necessary to reconsider the day crewing or retained duty system options.

Q and As

1. What will the impact be on the local community and their fire cover?

None – they will still have a full-time emergency response provided from their local fire station, 24/7.

2. What will the impact be on firefighters?

Firefighters would volunteer to work the CPC system if it fits in with their lifestyle. Those who successfully apply for a post will be paid an enhanced rate to compensate for the additional commitment. We have already received expressions of interest in working this duty system. Existing firefighters at the stations where CPC is implemented who do not want to work the duty system will be redeployed to another station.