

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



MEETING	Executive Committee
DATE OF MEETING	20 November 2013
OFFICER	Denis O'Driscoll, Head of Service Development
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Adrian Busby
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Review of catering provisions during emergency incidents
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The purpose of this report is to inform Members on the proposed changes to arrangements for feeding at fires policy and to seek approval for the Chief Fire Officer to commence formal redundancy consultation with affected staff.
ACTION	Information and Decision.
RECOMMENDATIONS	It is recommended that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the progress taken to date is noted; 2. approval be given for the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive to initiate consultation with the affected staff.
RISK MANAGEMENT	It is not anticipated that implementation of the preferred option would have any impact upon the corporate risk register or service risk assessments. Should the recommendation be adopted there will be improved facilities for feeding at all incidents thus improving staff morale. The nine support staff that crew the current canteen van are on part time and secondary employment contracts and a small redundancy package in line with service policy would ensure compliance with our HR policies and Equality and Diversity strategy. The existing hidden costs of the administration of these staff and the vehicle will generate additional savings.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	Current expenditure is £29,864 per annum of which staff costs account for £26,454 (over a 3 year average). The canteen van has attended an average of 15

	<p>incidents per year, over a three year period, resulting in average cost of £2k per incident.</p> <p>A report has been approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT) that contains all existing and anticipated costs associated with the canteen van and feeding at incidents.</p> <p>Some of the initial savings will be used to supplement appliances with the correct equipment and provisions for feeding at incidents.</p> <p>Adoption of the preferred recommendation would be at no additional cost and would be considered as on-going annual saving of approximately £25k by year 3 from the commencement date.</p>
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	The recommendations accord with the requirements of the Authority's current employment policies.
HEALTH AND SAFETY	The proposed recommendation will improve welfare arrangements for operational crews at incidents.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	<p>A PIA has been carried out in line with 'Managing Organisational Change' policy.</p> <p>Improved catering at incidents will in the longer term reduce time spent at incidents and will benefit all levels of staff.</p>
USE OF RESOURCES	<p>The preferred recommendation supports our service response objective:</p> <p><i>"When required to intervene and respond to fires and other incidents, we will ensure that we provide an effective and efficient operational response"</i></p> <p>Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) will follow service policy regarding placing staff at risk, along with formal consultation with representative bodies.</p> <p>The adoption of the preferred recommendation will require hot water heaters to be fitted as standard during the commissioning of new appliances. These heaters will require regular maintenance and will be factored into the medium term financial planning.</p> <p>Further detail is provided within Appendix A.</p> <p>Reducing the fleet by one vehicle will improve the carbon footprint of the service.</p>
PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS	<p>Background</p> <p>'Review of Canteen Van and Feeding at Fires' was submitted to SMT on 27 June 2013 and approved.</p>

APPENDICES	Appendix A – Update on proposed changes. Appendix B – Review of Canteen Van and Feeding at Fires. Appendix C – People Impact Assessment.
TIME REQUIRED	15 minutes.
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	Dean Elliott delliott@bucksfire.gov.uk 07747460667

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Update on proposed changes:

- A review of the current policy [OC 66 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT FEEDING AT FIRES] was completed in May 2013;
- The document 'Review of canteen van and feeding at fires' was submitted to SMT on 27th June 2013. This was approved with the following recommendations:

The canteen van service is phased out by the end of 2013;

A. An installation programme to provide all new appliances with water heaters and refreshment packs allowing for local feeding at fires for small scale incidents;

B. All appliances not fitted with water heaters to be stocked with self-heating food packs and dry provisions to provide light refreshments for crews prior to arrival of additional supplies;

C. Introduction of a policy similar to Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service (OFRS) utilising local purchase of refreshments via a high street supermarket chains and for Flexi-Duty Officers (FDO's) to carry procurement cards for purchases when a local supplier is unavailable;

D. Withdrawal from the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OFRS to provide over the border catering for large protracted incidents;

E. A MOU is drawn up between BFRS and other services with a large catering provision such as local businesses, neighbouring brigades (subject to availability) for feeding at protracted incidents of 8-10 pumps plus;

- These recommendations will result in immediate savings and lead to annual savings of approximately £25,000 per annum in year 3.
- These recommendations may result in up to nine support staff employed on part time and secondary employment conditions being put at risk of redundancy. The People Impact Assessment (PIA) details the nature of these contracts. These members of staff have been informally consulted on two occasions (15 July & 5 August) with trade union representation present during the second meeting.
- September 2013 - Financial feasibility study completed by SM Dean Elliott and submitted to finance department.
- October 2013 - savings bid for 2014/15 – 2017/18 submitted by AM Denis O'Driscoll to the Business Transformation Board.
- Once approved by the Executive Committee the Chief Fire Officer will commence formal consultation for a period of 30 days.
- Policy documents covering this review and recommendations:
 - OC 70/12 Managing Organisational Change;
 - OC 70/13 Redundancy Policy & Procedure;
 - People Impact Assessment.

Review of Canteen Van and Feeding at Fires



By Station Manager Dean Elliott

May 2013

Review of Canteen Van and Feeding at Fires

This report has been requested to evaluate

- The existing cost of the provision of feeding at fires via the canteen van.
- To make recommendation(s) on feeding at fires in the future.

Background

The current policy [OC 66 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND EQUIPMENT FEEDING AT FIRES] details the procedures to be followed for the mobilisation of the Canteen Unit and for the provision of refreshments at incidents.

Canteen Unit

The Canteen Unit (call sign 21S8) is a Citroen Relay van converted specifically for the purpose of providing fire ground catering. It is currently located at Aylesbury Fire Station covering the areas of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. It is crewed by 10 personnel working a retained duty system (RDS) providing a 24/7 service.

The vehicle conversion provides a LPG gas cooker with 2 burners and a grill, a microwave, a LPG gas boiler, 2 small sinks, a refrigerator, stainless steel worktops and storage cupboards.

The equipment inventory comprises of 2 kettles, 2 large saucepans, a large teapot, 2 flasks, cutlery and crockery. A small First Aid box, CO detector, a Fire Blanket and a Fire Extinguisher is also provided.

Consumable supplies comprise of self-heating meals, biscuits, a range of hot and cold drinks and soup.

Mobilisation

The Canteen Unit will be mobilised to an incident where

- (a) There are circumstances in which the Incident Commander considers that the incident will be of a protracted nature and that refreshments are necessary. This will usually be where crews are anticipated to be committed at the incident for more than 3 hours.
- (b) There are 6 or more pumps committed to the incident, except:-
 - (i) Where the initial P.D.A. is 5 pumps or over.
 - (ii) Where the extra pumps are required for the purposes of water relay and for short term duration.

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- (c) There are circumstances where the Incident Commander considers that refreshments are needed for their crews (For example, where a crew(s) have been committed to a series of minor incidents, which have prevented the crew(s) from obtaining normal refreshments). Particular attention should be drawn to RDS personnel who may have missed their usual meal times.
- (d) Upon confirmation of a protracted incident such as a rail crash, commercial airline crash or a major incident which is likely to take some considerable time to return to normality.

For other incidents which do not fall into the above criteria but where refreshments are required, the Incident Commander will make arrangements with the nearest station with whole-time/day crewing personnel for drinks to be brought to the incident utilising the flasks kept on these stations. Reimbursement of costs can be obtained from station petty cash imprest account.

While planning the refreshment needs of the incident, the Incident Commander must also consider the welfare and relief of the Canteen Unit personnel. These must be arranged to ensure that they spend no more than a maximum of 8 hours at the incident and this period of relief should take into account weather conditions, work load and time of day, and be reduced accordingly.

Where an incident is scaled down the two flasks from the Canteen Unit can be filled with hot drinks and left at the incident for crew's consumption at a later time.

Other catering provisions within service

Eight of our twenty nine appliances now have drinking water heaters installed and carry stocks of hot drinks and hot food provisions capable of supplying their own crews with adequate refreshments for small scale incidents. The Control unit is also fitted with a similar device. The installation cost for these heaters is approximately £1100 per vehicle.

The first heaters were installed during the red fleet replacement programme in 2010/11. The purpose of installing the water heaters was to reduce the need for mobilising the canteen unit at smaller protracted incidents. Current provisions costs are allocated to the equipment budget at a cost of approximately £1300 per annum.

This programme is currently under review however it is anticipated that any new appliances will have the drinking water heaters installed as standard.

Existing cost of service

Cost of provision of canteen van service: (appendix A - UCACV) includes a breakdown of costs.

YEAR	COST
2010/2011	£ 28,584
2011/2012	£ 30,254
2012/2013	£ 26,762
AVERAGE COST	£ 28,253

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Vehicle Cost: (appendix B – UTHHA) includes breakdown of costs.

YEAR	TOTAL
2010/2011	£ 1577.43
2011/2012	£ 2041.01
2012/2013	£ 1214.06
AVERAGE COST	£1610.83

These figures do not include the costs of Catering equipment depreciation and maintenance, the provision of a Tomtom and upgrades, the Airwave Radio or Torch, map books e.t.c

OVER 90% OF COST OF SERVICE PER ANNUM IS ON STAFF

Income generation: Over the border provision (included in appendix A – UCACV).

BFRS has an existing collaborative agreement with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue (OFRS) to provide a feeding at fires service to them on request (based on similar principles to BFRS mobilising procedures), the costs incurred are reimbursed annually. OFRS have also introduced arrangements to feed their staff through local purchase via an agreement with Sainsbury's and by issuing procurement cards to FDO's and therefore it is anticipated over the border mobilisations will reduce.

The income from over the border attendances over the last three years is as follows:

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
£598	£406	£2,392

Mobilisations: The total number of incidents attended by the canteen unit over the last 3 years is as follows:

JC21S8	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Average
BFRS	17	13	3	11
OFRS	4	4	4	4
TOTAL	21	17	7	15

TOTAL AVERAGE COST PER INCIDENT ATTENDED £1,991

Conclusion

BFRS Policy on reliefs at fires indicates that crews should (ideally) be on the fire ground for no longer than 4 hours without a break. The canteen unit is utilised at large incidents to supplement the rotation of crews and assist with refreshments should recognised meal breaks be interrupted. With the introduction of appliances carrying their own provisions and having the facility to make hot

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drinks and snacks and the reduction of large incidents requiring a canteen unit the service is becoming increasingly more expensive to provide based on cost per call analysis.

The vehicle itself is in good condition for its age (1999 – 14 years) with less than average mileage (19,000) and maintenance costs are satisfactory. However the lifespan of this vehicle must be taken into consideration and it is reasonable to anticipate that it is likely come to the end of its working life within the next 3 years. Should a new vehicle be sourced as a replacement on current market rates it is likely to cost in the region of £40-50k including conversion.

Recommendations

1. The canteen van service is phased out over the remaining life span of the current vehicle;
2. An installation programme to provide all new appliances with water heaters and refreshment packs allowing for local feeding at fires for small scale incidents;
3. Introduction of a policy similar to OFRS utilising local purchase of refreshments via a high street supermarket chain and for FDO's to carry procurement cards for purchases when a local supplier is unavailable;
4. Withdrawal from the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OFRS to provide over the border catering for large protracted incidents;
5. A MOU is drawn up between BFRS and other services with a large catering provision such as local businesses, neighbouring brigades (Bedfordshire FRS) for feeding at protracted incidents of 8-10 pumps plus;
6. Estimated savings on current data is approx. **£30,000 pa**