

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Authority**
Creating the Safest Community



INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

(IRMP)

2021 - 2024

Frequently Asked Questions

PROPOSAL 1

QUESTION What has changed at West Denton Fire Station / area since the second fire engine was removed a couple of years ago? Has there been an increase in incidents or in the risk in this area to justify re-introducing the 2nd fire engine?

ANSWER We continually monitor risk across the Tyne and Wear area and publish this via our Community Risk Profile. Following years of austerity and through sound financial management we are in a position to reinvest in TWFRS.

Based on the previous 3 years of incident data and risk and demand it was identified that West Denton Fire Station was the best location for this additional resource to increase speed and weight of response across the TWFRS area.

It is also our busiest one pump fire station across the whole of Tyne and Wear. West Denton Fire Station also hosts our Incident Command Vehicle which is currently dual staffed. Reintroducing the second fire engine is based on incident data, operational effectiveness and efficiency. This additional fire engine will provide resilience across the whole of the Tyne and Wear area, when our incident command appliance is required to support large incidents.

PROPOSAL 2

QUESTION How often are the Ariel Ladder Platforms (ALPs) used, and is there any evidence of incidents where both the ALP and primary fire engine at the same station were required at the same time?

ANSWER Since 2015/16 - 2019/20 TWFRS ALPs have attended 366 incidents and, due to the current staffing model, this would have meant that for each of these attendances there would have been a fire engine made unavailable in order for the ALP to attend the incident.

Shared learning from National Major Incidents, and the opportunity to reinvest in TWFRS, supports this proposal. By implementing this proposal an additional fire engine will be available to attend if required in addition to the ALP.

A recent example of the challenges that can arise with the existing model is that during a recent fire in a scrap yard, the requirement for an ALP to attend reduced the fire engine availability temporarily which had an impact on the available resources.

QUESTION Are the two remaining ALPs going to be located close to high rise buildings?

ANSWER We have 3 fully trained ALP stations across the TWFRS area of which we are proposing to primary staff ALPs at 2 of these locations.

Considering the compact geography of the Tyne and Wear area, we will position the ALPs to ensure they are available to attend high rise incidents in good time without impacting on other fire engines having to book unavailable.

PROPOSAL 3

QUESTION What are the response times for fire engines from neighbouring stations to get into Birtley's area at night?

ANSWER If all proposals are implemented, and Birtley Community Fire Station was staffed 0800-2000 hrs, response times for the most serious incidents such as fires in property and road traffic accidents (Level 1 and 2 incidents) across the Service would be as follows;

- The first fire engine response time would increase by 1 second for both risk Levels 1 & 2
- The second fire engine response time for Level 1 incidents would reduce by 3 seconds
- The second fire engine response time for risk Level 2 incidents would reduce by 2 seconds

What this means is that if an emergency call was received, the first attending fire engine would on average arrive 1 second slower than currently the case, however, the supporting fire engines would be up to 3 seconds quicker in attending which is a positive outcome.

QUESTION Why is it being proposed to close the station at night when the majority of fires and deaths from fire happen then?

ANSWER Across Tyne and Wear, and specifically in relation to the Birtley area, comprehensive incident data and evidence was analysed and presented to Fire Authority to support this proposal. This data clearly highlights that the majority of fire deaths in this area do not happen at night.

Detailed analysis of our incident data shows that, during the previous 12 years, TWFRS has unfortunately seen 28 fatalities from accidental dwelling fires across the whole Service area. Of the 28 fatalities, 15 occurred between the hours of 0800-2000 and 13 between 2000-0800; one fatality occurred in the Birtley area which was referred to the Coroner's court due to the circumstances around the incident. TWFRS recorded zero accidental dwelling fire deaths last year (2020/21).

QUESTION Why is the proposal for Birtley fire station not the same as for Rainton Bridge – e.g. 2-2-4 shift pattern? And Vice versa?

ANSWER The proposals for Birtley Community Fire Station and Rainton Bridge Community Fire Station are different as they are based on previous incident data and understanding of risk and demand in each area.

Rainton Bridge is geographically located on the extremity of the TWFRS area and the additional support and resources have a greater travel distance and therefore time to arrive.

All data used to inform this proposal has been published on our website for transparency. It is clear from the data and evidence that fire engine cover around the Birtley area has a response time that is well below the national average times (by minutes).

This proposal ensures that 24/7/365 cover will continue in the Birtley area, as it does across all of Tyne and Wear.

The presence of a fire engine in any town or village, or indeed the absence of one, does not detract from the fact that there is an extremely effective and well timed response from TWFRS to all areas of our Service even in those where a fire engine is not physically located.

The response times for TWFRS are in many cases the fastest in the country by a considerable margin. This proposal does not negatively affect that and safety is, and will always remain our top priority.

QUESTION Why can't Birtley fire station be staffed as an On-Call / Retained basis at night?

ANSWER To operate an On-Call / Retained Duty System during the night at this station, retained staff would need to live within 5 minutes of the station to enable them to respond. This 5 minutes would be in addition to the mobilisation and response time.

Due to the geographic locations of the surrounding fire stations, and based on incident data, there would always be a faster response time from a neighbouring station than using an On-Call response.

Therefore fire cover would almost always arrive from neighbouring fire stations rather than an On-Call fire engine at Birtley.

QUESTION There was a concern posted on social media that this proposal would result in people “dying in their beds”.

ANSWER This concern is simply not founded and there is no evidence to suggest that this proposal will increase the risk of fire deaths.

Evidence shows that the speed and number of fire engines that will attend incidents in the Birtley area confirms we have a very effective and timely response to emergencies in the Birtley, and the whole of Tyne and Wear area.