

# ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

## Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



MEETING

AGENDA ITEM

**Policy and Strategy Committee**

**7**

MEETING DATE

REPORT NUMBER

2 November 2016

**EFA/122/16**

SUBJECT

Aerial Ladder Platforms

REPORT BY

ACFO Prevention, Protection and Response Dave Bill

PRESENTED BY

ACFO Prevention, Protection and Response Dave Bill

### **SUMMARY**

This paper sets out, and seeks support for, proposals on the future direction of the Service's Aerial Ladder Platforms.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members of the Policy and Strategy Committee are asked to; -

1. Note the contents of the report;
2. Approve the reduction in the number of aerial ladder platforms from five to four; and
3. Approve the disposal of the surplus aerial ladder platform.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2009 the Service introduced five new Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs) to the Service, with the implementation completed in December 2010. The ALPs are currently located at Colchester, Chelmsford, Grays, Harlow and Southend.

The Work at Height Regulations (2005) that came into force on 6 April 2005 specifies minimum safety and health requirements for the use of equipment for work at height. The Regulations specify duties on employers, the self-employed and any person that controls the work of others. They apply to all work at height where there is a risk that a fall could cause personal injury and there is no exemption for emergency services.

The need for an Aerial Ladder Platforms at an operational incident is not in doubt, not only from a compliance stand-point for Working at Height regulations but also for the

operational advantages the appliance offers which cannot be replicated through other means. These are:

- Access to heights above the reach of the 135 ladder (14.1 metres) to a maximum of 30m to effect rescues or provide personnel access.
- Ability to apply large quantities of water onto a fire from above a building (water tower).
- Provision of an access platform in order that operational crews can work at height safely and comply with Working at Height regulations.
- Provision of a viewing platform for observation at height.

The tables below show the operational calls by ALPs since 2011. As is often the case with specialist appliances, they attend relatively few calls. Figures have notably reduced since 2015 when the ALPs were removed from pre-determined attendances<sup>1</sup> (they now only respond at the request of the Officer-in-charge) and the way in which they were crewed changed over the following 18 months due to the removal of the Services Rescue Tenders. This was done as part of the successful implementation of the Heavy Duty Rescue Pumps at seven locations throughout Essex.

Table One – ALP attendances from 2011 to 2016

Colchester ALP	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 <sup>2</sup>
False Alarm	1	4	8	2	1	0
Fire	20	15	19	18	14	9
Special Service	9	10	9	6	9	13
Total	30	29	36	26	24	22

Southend ALP	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
False Alarm Total	23	19	36	32	0	0
Fire Total	44	34	30	25	6	5
Special Service	14	15	14	13	9	4
Total	81	68	80	70	15	9

Chelmsford ALP	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
False Alarm Total	7	8	12	6	2	0
Fire Total	33	25	13	28	13	5
Special Service	11	13	10	13	5	9
Total	51	46	35	47	20	14

<sup>1</sup> EFA/031/14

<sup>2</sup> Please note 2016 figures are up until October 2016

Grays ALP	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016*
False Alarm Total	11	9	31	16	2	-
Fire Total	26	22	32	25	12	-
Special Service Total	11	6	7	11	7	-
Total	48	37	70	52	21	-

\*figures from 2016 not available

Harlow ALP	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
False Alarm	4	2	22	18	1	1
Fire Total	10	13	13	8	5	1
Special Service Total	3	5	2	4	5	4
Total	17	20	37	30	11	6

ALPs offer a safe working platform for Firefighters and provide an element to Firefighting that cannot be replicated by other equipment. Its use as a water tower is synonymous with larger fire incidents, often used in pairs to contain fire spread in large buildings. However, as can be seen from the Tables, the busiest ALP was mobilised on average twice a month in 2015. The ALPs, as is often the case with specialist appliances, are mainly used as an additional control measure once the initial 'dynamic' nature of operational response has been brought under control. Its main use in rescue is the removal of casualties from areas that are difficult to access. This can only be done once the casualty is stabilised.

### **The Recommended Way Forward**

As part of the Service's 2020 Programme, the Service is reviewing all of its specialist appliances to ensure that they are deployed at locations that provide effective cover throughout Essex, but also considers the training requirements needed for that equipment/Appliance (which can often be considerable, which is the case with the ALPs).

The utilisation of ALPs does not support the retention of five of these specialist appliances and it is proposed that the number of these appliances is reduced to four across the County. The surplus ALP would then be allocated for disposal. We have identified an opportunity to work closely with another Service in the region in disposing of an ALP and thus the purchasing Service not having the additional costs of purchasing a new ALP. The locations for the remaining four ALPs, until further work can be completed on the Service's longer term plan, will be at Chelmsford, Colchester, Grays and Southend.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The Strategic Assessment of Risk document has been considered with the potential and on-going development of Essex, and has not identified additional risk to the Service so far as the Working from Height regulations are concerned.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The existing Aerial Ladder platforms were purchased in 2009 at a cost of £484k per vehicle. They have a book value of £288k at 31 March 2016. By reducing the number of vehicles the Service will save on the maintenance costs, estimated to be £12k per vehicle per annum, and on the maintenance training for crews.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Fire and Rescue National Framework (2012; P7) states: -

*'The priorities in this Framework are for fire and rescue authorities to:*

*'identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately'*

Whilst acknowledging that instances in which the ALP attend are infrequent, the Service has an obligation to plan and respond to these incidents. The retention of four vehicles is considered to be sufficient to meet the requirement.

## **USE OF RESOURCES**

In still maintaining four ALPs the Service will have strong resilience across the County for the type of incident in which the ALPs are used.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None directly with this report.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

None directly with this report.

<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985</b>	
<b>List of appendices attached to this paper: Appendix One</b>	
<b>List of background documents (not attached):</b>	
Proper Officer:	Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Prevention, Protection and Response
Contact Officer:	Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Dave Bill Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, Kelvedon Park, London Road, Rivenhall, Witham CM8 3HB Tel: 01376 576000 E-mail: <a href="mailto:dave.bill@essex-fire.gov.uk">dave.bill@essex-fire.gov.uk</a>