

# Essex Fire Authority

## Report to the Constituent Authorities 9 February 2011

### 1. BUDGET 2011-12

We approved the revenue and capital budget 2011-12.

	2010/11	2011/12
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	£75,027k	<b>£75,365k</b>
Increase from 2010/11		£338k
Precept	£42,629k	£42,892k
Band D Council Tax	£66.42	<b>£66.42</b>
Increase from 2010/11		<b>0.00%</b>

1. A net expenditure budget of £75.365m;
2. A precept of £42.892m;
3. A Band D council tax of £66.42 (the same as 2010/11)
4. The bands of Council Tax are shown in the following table.

Council Tax Band	2010/11	2011/12
A	£44.28	£44.28
B	£51.66	£51.66
C	£59.04	£59.04
D	£66.42	£66.42
E	£81.18	£81.18
F	£95.94	£95.94
G	£110.70	£110.70
H	£132.84	£132.84

5. Capital expenditure budget (net) of £13.990m in 2011/12.

## **2. FIRE COVER REVIEW – OUTLINE PROPOSAL**

We approved changes that need to be made to our front line services for years one and two of the four year period of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

As part of the strategy to ensure a balanced budget over the four years from 2011/12 to 2014/15 we agreed a recruitment freeze for wholetime firefighters. As a result, during the first two years of this Spending Review Period the Authority will have a managed reduction in wholetime firefighter posts by 40. It is expected that the reduction can be achieved through natural attrition over the next two years without compulsory retirements or redundancies.

This proposed approach, in addition to delivering no redundancies or forced retirements, also delivers change without fire station closures and potentially without any reduction in front line fire appliances.

The changes in our operational service delivery are set out below:

### **Recruitment Freeze**

No further recruitment until further notice (possibly for the whole of the Comprehensive Spending Review period) all shortages due to personnel leaving the Service will be filled by using the extra personnel that we have following the changes to crewing arrangements that are set out below.

### **Canvey Fire Station**

The crewing arrangements at Canvey fire station will change from one wholetime crewed fire appliance and one retained duty system crewed fire appliance to two retained duty system crewed fire appliances.

The existing wholetime personnel currently posted to Canvey will be redeployed to other fire stations and posts.

### **Two Pump Wholetime Fire Stations**

The Service will change its crewing standards on all of its wholetime two pump fire stations to reflect the same standards of crewing which are used in most other fire and rescue services. To this end all two pump wholetime fire stations will have 48 personnel. This change will still provide sufficient resilience to enable station and watch commanders to cover annual leave, training and other absences and at the same time maintain our current optimum fire appliance crewing levels which remain at 5 crew on the first fire appliance and 4 crew on the second fire appliance. This change will release 16 wholetime firefighter posts. It is important to note that some stations are already at or near this level of personnel. Where stations do still have extra personnel these personnel will be redeployed to other fire stations and posts as they become available.

- Orsett Fire Station
- Clacton Fire Station
- Loughton Fire Station
- Rayleigh Weir Fire Station

### **Brentwood Fire Station**

The crewing arrangements will change from two wholetime fire appliances to one wholetime and one retained duty system fire appliance. This change will release in the region of 24 wholetime posts. Existing personnel that are above what is needed following the change will be redeployed to other fire stations and posts as they become available.

### **Day Crewing System**

The day crewing system will be replaced by a new system based around the Low Level Activity and Risk crewing system (see below). Further work will be completed on the details of this system however, it is anticipated that this new system will reduce the total number of wholetime posts by approximately 8. The proposed changes will enable the Authority to achieve capital receipts from the sale of housing associated with the current day crewing system. Specific proposals to achieve the sale of these properties will be undertaken in a sympathetic manner which will include consultation with those affected and will be brought forward to the Authority during 2011, including proposals for existing tenants to purchase the Service's day crewed housing. The fire stations where these changes will take place are listed below:

- Waltham Abbey Fire Station
- Dovercourt Fire Station
- South Woodham Ferrers Fire Station
- Great Baddow Fire Station

### **Low Level Activity and Risk (LLAR) crewing system**

The LLAR system is a relatively new approach to providing fire cover that has been successfully implemented in Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. LLAR presents numerous benefits mainly arising from flexible use of resources whilst at the same time realising minor financial savings. Indications from those services employing this crewing system are that it has been effective and well received.

The development and implementation of this new crewing system will be carried out in a sympathetic and consultative manner and as such the finite detail of the new system will be the subject of a separate report to the Fire Authority, for its consideration and approval, during 2011. Notwithstanding this, listed below is a brief summary of the potential benefits that this new crewing system will deliver:

- Substantially improve positive hour availability.
- Improvement on Community Safety performance by having more time available to engage partnership working and projects.
- Bespoke personal shift pattern adjusted (with notice) to cover absence, ensuring standard or minimum crewing.
- Self rostering, therefore flexible rota days allow for family friendly working conditions such as child care and work/life balance.
- Autonomous station management.
- No overtime or costs associated with stand bys.
- Minimum overtime payments for bank holidays.
- Will secure efficiency savings when measured against both the current day crewing system and the wholetime shift system.

### **Great Dunmow Fire Station**

To ensure that the Service is using its resources effectively it continually reviews the ever changing risk within the County and how this may impact on where we need our resources. Professional judgement and significant data analysis assess if and how we can safely move some resources from areas of less risk to areas of increased risk.

There has been continuous and significant development in the north west of the County over many years but very little change has been made to our capability in this area. However, the impact of this expansion has increased to the point that there is now a

need for the Service to take action to enhance its service delivery capability (Fire Prevention, Fire Protection, Response and Operational Assurance) in the Uttlesford area.

Accordingly the changes detailed in this report, in addition to making the savings that are necessary for the first two years of the Comprehensive Spending Review period, will also enable the Authority to provide extra resources into the Uttlesford area to meet the ever increasing demands that this expansion is placing on the Service.

It is therefore the Authority's intention to change the current crewing system of Great Dunmow fire station from wholly retained duty system personnel to a mixture of wholetime and retained duty system personnel. The wholetime posts will be resourced from the changes already mentioned above.

The outcome of all the changes will mean that there will be no wholetime redundancies, no compulsory retirements, the same number of fire stations that we have now (50) and the potential to maintain the same number of front line fire appliances (75).

**Councillor Anthony Hedley**  
**Chairman**