



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

RETAINED REVIEW PROGRESS UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 15 July 2011

Purpose of Report:

To inform and update Members on the progress of the Retained Review.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In response to the growing issues affecting the resilience and sustainability of the retained duty system (RDS), Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, with the endorsement of the Fire Authority, commissioned an extensive independent review of the RDS within Nottinghamshire. The review took place over nine months during late 2008 and into 2009, with the final document being presented to Members on 31 July 2009 prior to formal publication.
- 1.2 The review contained 25 recommendations of how the Service may improve its recruitment, retention, development and engagement with its retained staff. The recommendations were prioritised as Immediate (year1), Intermediate (year 2) and strategic (year 3) actions.
- 1.3 This report provides detail on the progress made towards each of the recommendations, and provides further clarity regarding the rationale applied for those recommendations that require ongoing support.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Retained Review was undertaken by an independent advisor commissioned by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service with a remit to identify areas of current success, evaluate newly introduced initiatives and recommend prospective areas of activity.
- 2.2 The overall objective of the Review was to identify actions that would sustain the future delivery of a retained duty system within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. The review focused on six broad areas of concern:
 - RDS Recruitment and Attraction;
 - RDS Retention;
 - Emergency Response;
 - RDS Management and Integration;
 - RDS Training;
 - Community Fire Safety.
- 2.3 The conclusion of the review identified 25 recommendations, to be delivered over a three year period. Progress towards completion of the recommendations has been summarised as follows in terms of immediate, intermediate and strategic actions:
 - **Immediate** 13 recommendations, 9 completed, 4 outstanding
 - **Intermediate** 7 recommendations, 3 completed, 4 outstanding
 - **Strategic** 5 recommendations, 1 completed, 4 outstanding
 - **Overall** 25 recommendations, 13 completed, 12 outstanding

2.4 Immediate Recommendations

Notable areas of success have been:

- The creation of an intranet based virtual toolkit for use across the service with up to date recruitment information and resources (recommendation 1),
- Improved systems for management of RDS availability and monitoring of compliance against contractual obligations (recommendation 2),
- The increase in supervisory management positions at RDS stations allowing development opportunity for individuals to acquire and maintain competencies (recommendation 9),
- Regular meetings with RDS section heads involving senior managers and heads of departments to share information and discuss RDS specific issues (recommendation 17),
- Programmed quarterly station visits by flexi-duty Station Managers (recommendation 18).
- Ongoing support for the RDS sections has been improved with the re-introduction of a dedicated Station Manager role, and appointment of three District Support Watch Managers to assist RDS sections across a wide range of local needs (recommendation 19).

Areas that have been more challenging to deliver are in the Learning and Development category. This is due to the limited success in attracting personnel into the training environment, which has consequently affected capacity. This issue is being addressed as a priority to enable the peripatetic trainers to provide the appropriate training across the districts. The intended focus on flexibility of access and delivery in line with other e-learning and modular initiatives has yet to be realised (recommendation 21).

2.5 Intermediate Recommendations

Notable areas of success have been:

- Regional collaboration in the recruitment processes (recommendation 4),
- Dual Contract policy in place to provide guidance to staff and managers (recommendation 13),

The outstanding 4 recommendations are all in progress and scheduled to be completed on time (April 2012).

2.6 Strategic Recommendations

Although not scheduled for completion until 2013, the work undertaken as part of the Fire Cover Review provided a full risk profile of each ward to identify risks and determine if response options are appropriate (recommendation 10).

2.7 Related Factors Affecting Completion

Several factors have influenced how the Service has responded to, or had to amend some of its intended actions following the release of the RDS Review report.

The Part Time Workers – Less Favourable Conditions Regulations have placed a requirement on the Service to ensure equity across the duty systems. Any increase in cost has to be balanced against the return to the Service in terms of operational availability and service delivery.

Clarification has been received from Europe regarding the European Drivers Hours Regulations. Emergency Services are not exempt from these regulations and the implications for the Service has been reviewed and addressed. The outcome of these regulations has a direct impact upon recruitment and retention of RDS employees whose primary employment involves driving an 'in scope' vehicle.

The potential loss of the individual 'opt out' from the European Working Time Directive will severely impact upon the retained duty system. Our existing dual contactors who form one fifth of the RDS operational response capability would be limited to a maximum of six positive hours per week. An individual assessment of all other RDS employees would need to be undertaken to identify what additional capacity they may have to offer the Service above their primary employment hours. Further work is underway to explore the use of reduced contracts, and alternative crewing arrangements.

2.8 The Impact of the Fire Cover Review

The Fire Cover Review (FCR) which was instigated following the public consultation exercise for the 2010 – 2013 IRMP, has potential implications for several of the recommendations in the RDS Review. Recommendations 8, 14, 15 & 16 all have interdependencies with the FCR. The option to investigate alternative crewing arrangements, contractual conditions of service and the use of shared facilities with neighbouring FRS all require strategic direction prior to further work being undertaken in terms of the RDS review.

A balance between Strategic direction regarding recruitment, and the business continuity of the Service has had to be applied in terms of RDS staffing arrangements. The establishment of each RDS section is being closely monitored and selected recruitment has been targeted to those areas with an operational necessity.

2.9 Ongoing Challenges

Many of the drivers for the RDS review contain societal and cultural issues that require long term initiatives to overcome. Recruitment and retention of RDS employees in some areas continues to prove difficult. Local and national surveys have returned similar results confirming the current requirement to provide extensive 'on call' cover is too onerous for most individuals.

Changes in demographics have reduced the number of shift based employees who traditionally formed the core of RDS sections. An increase in the transient workforce has also reduced the number of qualifying individuals that could be targeted for employment. Most employers operate a lean company structure, and are reluctant to release employees to undertake RDS duties during working hours.

Promotion and progression within the RDS sections have suffered since the introduction of a single policy for all operational staff. Factors such as the time to undertake an Assessment and Development Centre, robust selection testing and the ongoing Maintenance of Competency have all been cited as reasons for RDS employees not wishing to pursue promotion. Appliance availability has been affected as a direct result of insufficient supervisory managers available to take charge.

- 2.10 For ease of reference, and to provide specific detail on each of the recommendations, an updated RDS Review document has been attached to this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Further resource requirements may be required following the outcomes of the Fire Cover Review. These will be included in any future FCR implementation projects.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There are no equality implications arising from this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places a duty on the Authority to make provision for the securing of personnel to discharge its duties. RDS employees are a key element within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in the delivery of response, prevention and protection strategies.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Due to the reliance of RDS crewed appliances within the Authority's service delivery model, a failure to ensure RDS employees are available for operational response and trained to a competent standard would create a significant risk to the Service. Local and National resilience may also be compromised.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Members note the progress against the recommendations in the Retained Review; and
- 9.2 Request the Chief Fire Officer to provide future reports on the ongoing activities.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Recommendation 1

Immediate Action

A joint working group of key stakeholders and managers should be formulated to identify areas of the current recruitment process that can be streamlined to make it more efficient. A policy on RDS employment and recruitment is to be formulated, together with a procedural document which provides the necessary information and direction for all those involved within the process.

NFRS Response

A policy on the recruitment and progression of RDS staff will be developed, laying out clear responsibilities for Human Resources (HR), Retained Watch Managers, and the Learning and Development (L&D) function. This policy will be developed, and full consultation with those involved, ensuring any best practice activities, will be captured.

A single recruitment package for retained stations, which can be easily localised, will be developed to ensure consistency across the county, and to ensure that the Service's image is portrayed, and the benefits of retained firefighters to employers, are conveyed.

Annual timelines for recruitment will be agreed by key partners through the Training Steering Group, so that all concerned will know and accept the deadlines set.

Responsibility:

Lead: HR. Support: L&D and Finance, in conjunction with Response Retained Managers.

Deadline:

Completion and agreement by December 2010.

A virtual toolkit will be available on the intranet from October 2010 which will give RDS sections access to selection documents, posters etc for use in local recruitment campaigns. A timeline and process chart will be circulated to clarify the process. It is not considered necessary to formulate a specific RDS employment and recruitment policy.

Recommendation 1 Completed

Recommendation 2

Immediate Action

HR to introduce procedural guidance for any changes that are requested to contracts of employment of those on the RDS. This procedure should be auditable and include approval at both station and district level, with confirmation received within the HR department.

NFRS Response

In the first instance, a full audit will be undertaken which will establish what individuals' contractual arrangements are, against what their local arrangements might be. Any changes that have, or might be taking place, must be assessed in respect of provision of cover at each station. This will be done by the Retained Watch Managers in conjunction with the Retained Support Team and HR.

Any agreed changes must be formally recorded and individual contracts amended. Moving forward, a procedure will be introduced whereby any amendments to cover arrangements by individuals will be assessed formally by Retained Watch Managers. Their recommendations will be sent through to the Retained Support Team for recommendation. Any amendments proposed will be forwarded to HR with appropriate amendments to individual contracts recorded and communicated.

* See also Recommendation 19

Responsibility:

Lead: Response. Support: HR in conjunction with Retained Watch Managers.

Deadline:

Completion and implementation by December 2010.

All RDS employees have been asked to complete a new certificate of availability which will sit on their personal record file. Any change to their hours of availability should be discussed in the first instance with their line manager, and a new certificate submitted for any agreed variances. The Point of Contact Station Manager should sign off all certificates.

In addition, a crystal report is being written to enable section heads to audit on a rolling basis compliance against contractual obligations.

Recommendation 2 completed, with the additional element anticipated within 2011.

Recommendation 3

Intermediate Action

There is a need for a review of the current and projected costs experienced by all departments for all aspects of RDS recruitment including production of publicity and advertising materials. A separate budget should be identified and formulated which will be administered and monitored by an SMT member. This would be included within the policy of the recruitment process, as identified within Recommendation 1.

NFRS Response

The Service allocates budgetary aspects of RDS recruitment and retention through different budget heads. It is accepted that there is a need to look at current and projected costs to ensure that the Service is making best use of the funds allocated through budget arrangements. Recommendation 1 refers to streamlining into a single approach in respect of process, literature and policy, however the current budget alignments are deemed adequate for NFRS purposes. The issue of potential virement would hopefully resolve the issues identified within the report.

By establishing a policy approach (as Recommendation 1) which all those involved in retained recruitment understand, the Service can then seek to diversify in respect of the recruitment pool. Specific budget allocation can then be arranged for bespoke project work which can hopefully identify 'new' areas of recruitment potential.

Responsibility:

Lead: HR. Support: Finance and Resources in conjunction with Response.

Deadline:

Full detail to be completed after the implementation of Recommendation 1. March 2012.

All recruitment information, literature and campaign documents has been loaded onto the intranet, removing the need for a centralised budget. A review of the Service's needs in terms of part time workers will be undertaken following the outcomes of the Fire Cover Review.

Recommendation 4

Intermediate Action

Investigate the possibility of sharing or using point of entry selection tests (POEST) within neighbouring authorities, which could offer a reduction of the time taken for each RDS applicant to be processed.

NFRS Response

The East Midlands region already has a successful and well-established approach to wholetime regional recruitment and the application of the POEST. This issue will be raised at the 'People Workstream' with a view to seeking whether there is an appetite for establishing a regional approach.

Responsibility:

Lead: HR. Support: L&D.

Deadline:

Feasibility to be fully explored by March 2012.

RDS Review project meeting. Decision that this activity is completed, as the web portal, and regional approach fulfils NFRS requirements. However, differences in the point of entry test within East Midlands Region preclude this activity.

Ongoing collaboration on aspects of the testing such as CRB checks undertaken by Derbyshire FRS.

Future options for RDS training may be explored to provide a greater degree of flexibility to demand for recruitment.

Recommendation 4 completed.

Recommendation 5

Intermediate Action

There needs to be improved engagement with employers within the county to communicate the benefits of having a member of their workforce on the RDS. The Territorial Army's SaBRE organisation could be employed as a model that has local and potential national benefits.

NFRS Response

The Service will task a lead officer with exploring this opportunity. Clearly a SaBRE approach will require funding, as would an annual event, plaques and any other recognition awards.

Through the normal planning process, and following a review by a lead officer, the Service will respond appropriately, ensuring the necessary infrastructure will be in place.

Responsibility:

Lead: Response. Support: HR in conjunction with Finance.

Deadline:

Review of options to be completed by March 2011. SaBRE approach or identified scheme to be in place by March 2012.

In light of the Fire Cover Review, aspects of recruitment and duty systems may be affected by the outcomes with subsequent impacts upon the RDS review itself. The recommendation would be cost prohibitive in the current climate for NFRS alone. The SaBRE scheme is a national initiative, and would need similar backing and funding to make this a feasible option.

Recommendation 5 – on hold pending FCR outcomes.

Recommendation 6

Immediate Action

District-based officers to visit employers to say 'thank you', particularly after a protracted incident or series of incidents. The Strategic Management Team, in association with the Fire Authority, to arrange an annual reception, with district managers inviting local employers.

NFRS Response

This will be addressed along with the elements of Recommendation 5. A protocol for officers will be developed and an annual event will form part of the SaBRE-style recognition.

Responsibility:

Lead: HR. Support: Response and Finance.

Deadline:

Implementation by March 2011.

The cost / benefit of individual visits would be inefficient, and the expected outcome could be delivered in an alternative manner. Targeted media events following large or protracted incidents will achieve a wider audience both recognising current employers, and highlighting the importance of supporting RDS sections within specific communities.

Recommendation 6 – awaiting agreement from CMB.

Recommendation 7

Immediate Action

Provide employers with some form of visible recognition (eg: wall plaque, certificates) to publicise their commitment to the RDS. More effective use of the local media to highlight the link between employers and NFRS.

NFRS Response

This, along with Recommendations 5 and 6, will be incorporated into the SaBRE-type approach. We will explore how best to provide recognition and how we can profile those who support us to encourage further engagement.

Responsibility:

Lead: HR. Support: Communications and Response.

Deadline:

Implementation by December 2010.

A sample set of wall certificates has been produced for consideration. However, in light of the Fire Cover Review, it was considered insensitive to circulate to existing employers until the full ramifications of the review have been assessed.

Recommendation 7 – on hold pending FCR outcomes.

Recommendation 8

Strategic Action

A consultation exercise should be initiated with neighbouring fire and rescue services to determine if there are any advantages in joint or shared RDS facilities to provide cover near adjoining boundaries.

NFRS Response

Within the lifetime of the future NFRS Plan (2010-2013), we will consult with our regional partners about potential opportunities to improve engagement around the county boundaries, which may include the sharing of facilities. Any outcomes could then be considered within the next NFRS Plan (2013-2016).

Responsibility:

Lead: Corporate Services.

Deadline:

To complete feasibility by March 2013.

This activity is part of the Fire Cover Review. A decision as to the future direction will be made once the outcomes of the review have been assessed.

Recommendation 8 – pending outcomes of FCR.

Recommendation 9

Immediate Action

Increase the provision at RDS stations by creating an additional Crew Manager position in exchange of one Firefighter post.

NFRS Response

NFRS will explore the costs immediately and try to establish a budget to support this proposal. It is recognised that this will create additional development opportunities for retained staff and also encourage progression through the ITOP/ADC processes. The post could be used as a rotation opportunity to expose and develop any number of candidates, which will improve succession planning within retained units. It will also help to improve availability in those areas where supervisory managers have been in short supply due to shift patterns and work routines.

Responsibility:

Lead: HR. Support: Finance and Response.

Deadline:

Full assessment and costs, with a view to implementation by December 2010.

The establishment on RDS sections has been re-aligned to reflect this recommendation. A fourth Crew Manager position has been made available for development of firefighters who have been allocated a development plan following attendance at an ADC. Existing sections that had four substantive Crew Managers have now been reduced by natural means.

Recommendation 9 completed.

Recommendation 10

Strategic Action

A full risk profile analysis for each ward within each station ground area to be undertaken, to identify the potential risks and assess if existing response options are adequate.

NFRS Response

This will be integrated within any response evaluation arising out of the current IRMP work being undertaken.

Responsibility:

Lead: Corporate Services in conjunction with Response.

Deadline:

Full evaluation by March 2013.

FCR 2010 has now provided its risk mapping analysis and will look to build in specific risk across the City and County in future and seek for this approach to now be adopted mainstream.

Recommendation 10 completed.

Recommendation 11

Immediate Action

A policy and procedure needs to be put in place which enables 'Duty GMs' to be made aware of the emergency response resources available within NFRS, and initiate appropriate action to maintain fire cover where necessary.

NFRS Response

NFRS needs to address this issue and the wider role of the Duty GM. At present, much of the decision-making process rests with the GM (Control) and the Control managers. The onset and delivery of the RCC will see Control requesting local decisions through an agreed protocol. It is therefore prudent for NFRS to establish a procedure that can be taken across following the cross-over to RCC in the future.

Responsibility: Lead: Response.

Deadline: To be implemented at the earliest opportunity, with a review undertaken by March 2010 and then 12-monthly.

A procedure has been agreed with Fire Control to notify the Duty Group Manager of any three RDS appliances unavailable within a district, or where there are appliances unavailable across district boundaries that may impact upon fire cover provision. An electronic map showing the three districts has been installed within Fire Control, receiving 60 second updates from the Retained Electronic Availability System.

Recommendation 11 completed.

Recommendation 12

Immediate Action

An 'impact assessment' should be carried out to evaluate the effect employing Dual Contractors has had on maintaining appliance availability, and to establish a maximum number that can be utilised and employed to sustain resilience of the FRS. A robust audit system of retained availability would support this.

NFRS Response

This work has already commenced as part of the business continuity and retained migration programmes. The assessment will be delivered ahead of schedule, as the Service acknowledges that this is a significant risk.

The Service will also undertake a review of whether or not Dual Contracts have improved retained availability, and put in place a system to regularly monitor this issue.

Responsibility:

Lead: Corporate Services. Support: Finance, HR and Response.

Deadline:

Immediate, with a full process for monitoring to be in place by March 2011.

The Service has implemented maximum numbers for Dual Contractors on each RDS section. A procedural issue has been addressed to ensure the availability of RDS appliances is not unduly compromised by movement of personnel arising from the bi-annual transfer window.

An impact assessment into employing Dual Contractors has not returned any significant benefits or negative impacts in terms of appliance availability. However, there are still numerous stations that prove very difficult to recruit into, making comparison of availability statistics very difficult.

Recommendation 12 completed. Ongoing monitoring of fire cover availability will continue.

Recommendation 13

Intermediate Action

Contract conditions for those operating on Dual Contracts need harmonising, to ensure consistency of commitment and the initiation of an 'impact assessment' with regard to an individual's RDS availability when staff changes, movement of personnel and promotions are proposed or made.

NFRS Response

This will be done in conjunction with Recommendation 12. A review will encompass all elements of Dual Contracts to ensure both the employees and the Service are receiving maximum support and benefit. A review of Dual Contracts and their impact in respect of promotions will take place.

Responsibility:

Lead: HR.

Deadline:

Immediate commencement with a view to completion by March 2011, with ongoing mechanisms put in place.

A policy for those operating on the dual contact system is in place. However, this is currently under review to ensure compliance with legislation is not breached.

Recommendation 13 completed.

Recommendation 14

Strategic Action

Evaluate the possibility of introducing a Variable Crewing System to utilise both WDS and RDS personnel as a possible means of providing future emergency response.

NFRS Response

This aspect will be explored as we assess the potential implications of demographic changes through our IRMP process. The issue of potential changes to the Working Time Directive is seen as a key driver to review current and future arrangements. The model provided gives us an excellent example of options that may be available to the Service, as do other ones in current usage throughout the UK. The self-rostering system will also present opportunities for both our staff, and the Service as a whole, to improve retained appliance availability in areas where the Service continues to struggle with recruitment.

Responsibility:

Lead: Corporate Services. Support: Response, HR and Finance.

Deadline:

Work to be undertaken within the IRMP process initially, with more defined outcomes by March 2013.

Recommendation 14 – pending outcomes of FCR.

Recommendation 15

Strategic Action

Explore the possibility of the introduction of 'part-time' contracts and identify the areas of activity where this could be employed that would produce the most effective use of this form of employment.

NFRS Response

This work will form part of the response to Recommendation 15. We will continue to review our cover arrangements in relation to retained availability, operational cover and the competencies of individuals. Initial work will be undertaken as stated in Recommendation 13, and alternative contractual arrangements explored.

Responsibility:

Lead: Corporate Services. Support: HR, Finance and Response.

Deadline:

Commencement in 2010, with a view to on-going monitoring and any proposed amendments by March 2013.

Recommendation 15 – pending outcomes of FCR.

Recommendation 16

Immediate Action

Consider undertaking a demographic analysis for each fire station area to identify potential candidates who may be eligible for employment on the RDS.

NFRS Response

This analysis will be factored into the next three-year plan which will ensure that the Service remains aware of key employers within its retained areas. The Retained Liaison Team and the local Watch Managers will be key to this information-gathering process. There will also be a link to the proposals within Recommendation 5, where the concept of employer recognition and an employers' evening is developed. Prospective links within these communities can then be explored.

Responsibility:

Lead: Response. Support: HR.

Deadline:

To be completed by March 2013.

Recommendation 16 – pending outcomes of FCR.

Recommendation 17

Immediate Action

To reduce the feeling of a 'them and us' perceived culture, senior management within the Service should take a more pro-active role in leading on activities such as the Retained Watch Manager meetings.

NFRS Response

Currently the Service has a quarterly meeting the Retained Watch Managers/Crew Managers, which is facilitated at PO level and attended at least once annually by the CFO. The Service will look to review how this operates and explore whether a more inclusive programme, which includes an interface with district officers, would be more beneficial. The Service will seek to ensure the maximum outcome from such meetings and also use it as an additional conduit for the dissemination of valuable information to the retained.

Responsibility:

Lead: Response.

Deadline:

Implementation by March 2010.

Senior Officers regularly attend the RDS quarterly meeting, along with other heads of sections to disseminate information. Retained Support Station Manager chairs these meetings, with the Area Manager of Response attending.

Recommendation 17 completed.

Recommendation 18

Immediate Action

District-based managers need to increase their awareness and understanding of the RDS and become more engaged, to energise and motivate the workforce. There should be an annual plan of visits to RDS sections by 'flexi' Station Managers.

NFRS Response

Even greater understanding and interface by district Officers with RDS staff is essential if the Service is to move forward. NFRS will look at the best way of ensuring that district officers meet and engage with retained personnel on a regular basis. The Service is in the process of implementing peripatetic trainers with a view to improving the support offered to retained on their regular training nights. The additional presence of district officers with line management responsibility along with the Retained Liaison Manager and support staff will serve to improve this.

Responsibility:

Lead: Response.

Deadline:

March 2010.

Station Managers have undertaken a program of RDS section visits during 2010/2011. Feedback from Officers and section Watch Managers is being assessed to inform the basis and format of future visits.

Recommendation 18 completed.

Recommendation 19

Immediate Action

Complete a document review of the recent RSO pilot scheme, including the removal of the RDS Station Manager, and identify what is required to sustain and support the RDS section of the FRS for the future.

NFRS Response

A decision has already been taken to reinstate the Station Manager role as Retained Support Manager, and the infrastructure to support this is being explored. A full examination of the needs, demands and expectations will be considered and this issue will be progressed as a matter of urgency.

Responsibility:

Lead: Strategic Management Team. Support: Corporate Management Board.

Deadline:

Completion and implementation by March 2010.

A support structure for the RDS is now in place consisting one Station Manager, two Retained Support Officers (part time) and three District Support Watch Managers.

Recommendation 19 completed.

Recommendation 20

Intermediate Action

To assist Watch and Crew Managers in the completion of administrative tasks. Consider employing part-time personnel to undertake that role at each RDS station or groups of stations.

NFRS Response

This is a valid point and one which the Service accepts needs review. The current time allocated for retained training is affected by an increased level of administrative work. Either by providing new contracts or by varying existing ones by consent, NFRS will explore all of the potential opportunities available to provide support.

A full business case on options will be developed and considered by the Corporate Management Board to ensure that this issue is addressed.

Responsibility:

Lead: Response. Support: HR and Finance.

Deadline:

Review and options to be completed by March 2011.

Investigation is underway to examine the time and frequency that RDS personnel spend undertaking specific activities. This research should inform future requirements for RDS support at section level. An activity recording system has been developed and is in testing. Roll out planned for May / June 2011.

Recommendation 20 – in progress.

Recommendation 21

Immediate Action

There needs to be more flexibility in training provision by SDC. To maintain competency levels of RDS personnel, comprehensive weekend and/or weekday training sessions to be introduced or offered at selected stations on a programmed basis.

NFRS Response

NFRS has already acknowledged this issue and has begun to address any shortfalls through the introduction of peripatetic trainers.

This approach is in its infancy, although we will look to develop it so as to meet the requirements of all of our staff, including retained personnel.

Responsibility:

Lead: HR. Support: L&D, Finance and Response.

Deadline:

The current approach to introduce peripatetic trainers is on-going and subject to review. It is hoped that all issues arising will be identified and processes put in place by March 2011.

The introduction of Peripatetic trainers has been successful in terms of the ability to respond to, and support RDS sections. The numbers of trainers has not reached expected levels and this can cause issues for SDC in responding to the needs of the Service to cater for RDS recruitment and ongoing training.

RDS Watch Managers have been asked to consider the wider implication of training as a whole, and work more closely with their peers to ensure training courses are filled to capacity, and share opportunities between sections to invite others to participate.

Recommendation 21 – in progress.

Recommendation 22

Immediate Action

All RDS personnel should take the opportunity to train together, irrespective of the contractual conditions under which they are employed.

NFRS Response

This recommendation is accepted and shall be addressed in the context of the response to Recommendation 21. NFRS will seek to maximise its options, involving the concept of peripatetic trainers and the availability of scheduled retained training.

Responsibility:

Lead: L&D. Support: Finance and Response.

Deadline:

To be addressed within Recommendation 21 and completed by March 2011.

Dual Contractors have been instructed to attend 50% of their available drill periods. This is being revisited as part of the Dual Contract policy review to specify they attend only primary drill periods. This approach is to ensure team training can take place, and also maintain budgetary management.

Recommendation 22 completed.

Recommendation 23

Intermediate Action

The existing CPD recording process to be reviewed and, in due course, replaced with a system that is directly linked to training records. The system should be capable of being completed easily by individuals, monitored by supervisory managers and producing the necessary regular reports for district managers to assist in future training development.

NFRS Response

There are two elements involved that the Service is addressing. The process for submitting for a CPD payment is defined by the NJC guidance, and NFRS protocols operate within this guidance. Retained who wish to submit for more than the standard 25% payment, must submit on the nationally-agreed form and format.

There is also a requirement for all staff to provide a maintenance of competence portfolio. This is linked to PDR and CPD processes and can be identified by retained as 'bureaucratic' because of the time required to record evidence.

Both elements are key aspects of obtaining evidence from individuals and, in conjunction with the PDR process, for identifying future training needs.

The Service is already in the process of project planning a new HR system which will encompass some element of a training database. Additionally, the Service has given the go-ahead for an L&D system which will be able to provide and monitor an individual's awareness and understanding of specific issues, such as SOPs, technical data etc.

It is part of the Service's ethos to address these issues as one, and the on-going work will seek to remove much of the administrative aspects of recording individual activities and provide a more robust database for the Service.

Responsibility:

Lead: HR. Support: IT, L&D, Finance and Response.

Deadline:

It is hoped that this work will be completed within the lifetime of the next three-year plan.
March 2013.

Currently being investigated by L&D with a view to introduce LearnPro for recording of competencies.

Recommendation 23 – in progress.

Recommendation 24

Immediate Action

Re-assess the budget calculation and how it is allocated for community fire safety activities for RDS stations, and ensure that targets are achievable within the identified provision.

NFRS Response

NFRS will seek to do this as a matter of priority to ensure that correct funding is allocated to deliver the service to the community. Retained firefighters are an essential element of the delivery of community safety. However, it has been identified by Retained Watch Managers that the demands are significant, regardless of available funding. A more defined approach will be developed under the principles of best value.

Responsibility:

Lead: Finance. Support: Response and Risk Reduction.

Deadline:

Outline proposals to be developed and concluded by March 2010.

The budget for 2010/11 was set at £100,000 for RDS CFS activities. Review of this was undertaken and further reduction identified for 2011/12.

District GM's given responsibility for overseeing activities, and identifying the best means to deliver service requirements.

Recommendation 24 completed.

Recommendation 25

Intermediate Action

Complete a review and audit, jointly with a cost benefit analysis, on the operational procedure for HSCs. The review to concentrate on the workload impact it has upon station activities and to explore other ways of working and how partnership opportunities, particularly with local authorities and agencies, could be utilised.

NFRS Response

This will be done in conjunction with the response to Recommendation 24. The Service will seek to review how it delivers HSCs in retained areas, and the impact that this has on current staff and the associated budgets. All options will be explored, including other agencies, commissioning and partnership working.

Responsibility:

Lead: Finance. Support: Response, Risk Reduction.

Deadline:

Initial work to be concluded by March 2010, with a view to implementation by March 2011.

The vulnerable person's policy is currently being consulted upon, and will address some of the issues raised.

Two HSC operatives were employed in 2010 to undertake activities within RDS station areas. A cost benefit assessment for the first nine months of their employment has shown equal numbers of visits undertaken in comparison to the thirteen stand alone RDS sections for the same period.

A cost per visit has been calculated at approximately £26. This compares favourably to a crew attending with varying costs dependant upon crew numbers, ranging from four to six personnel (average cost £69.39). No comparison of on costs was included, as these would be the same for both options.

Recommendation 25 – in progress.