

PRESS STATEMENT – 21 September 2009

RFU to oppose any proposal to close RDS Fire Stations in Warwickshire

Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service proposes to close **seven** Retained Duty System (RDS) fire stations and remove two additional RDS appliances on separate stations.

Retained Duty System (RDS) Fire Stations due for closure are Bedworth, Bidford, Brinklow, Fenny Compton, Kenilworth, Studley and Warwick. In addition crews based at Coleshill and Atherstone who also work the RDS will be removed.

Approximately 60 employees working the RDS would be made redundant under the plans. The proposals are included within the Service's aptly name 'Service Improvement Plan'.

Tony Morgan, RFU Vice-President said:

'The consultation process has already caused confusion, the very same documents which have informed this decision are presently unavailable, it beggars belief that on such an important issue vitally information has been withheld or is not easily accessible by those asked to make comment. We would urge members of the public and the relevant district and parish councillors to request and read these documents, namely:

- *Rising to the Challenge*
- *WFRS Business Case 2006/7*
- *Morphew Report*

We are alarmed at these proposals, for the most part, the impact on fire cover provided by our members, the RDS in general and the communities which they all proud to serve.

RDS personnel are just as capable of carrying out prevention, community education and emergency response as their Wholetime counterparts if provided with the appropriate investment in training and support of which at the present time there is little or no evidence.

If these proposals are, as suggested, a cost-cutting exercise, we would suggest that the focus should be on lesser cost-effective areas of the Service and question why, when stations are to be closed and Retained firefighters made redundant, that no reductions are proposed within support staff. Retained Fire Stations are the most cost effective provision of fire cover available in the UK, we are, in part, a pay as you go service whereby we are only paid when we respond to an incident.'

The RFU is currently reviewing all documentation used by Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service to justify their proposal along with other relevant paperwork. Once this process has been completed the RFU will provide a formal response as part of the consultation process.

Tony Morgan

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Message Ends

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