Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service

Working towards 2020


Consultation Analysis Report
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flooding</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Proposals</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petitions</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFRS Fire Brigades Union Cuts Consultation Submission</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

In February 2015, Northumberland County Council (NCC) agreed its medium term financial plan which included a £500k revenue budget reduction for Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) in 2016/17. This follows £3m of revenue cuts to NFRS since 2010 which have included over 25 percent reduction in Principal Management posts, 20 percent reduction in Flexible Duty Officer posts, 30 percent reduction in wholetime firefighter posts from Assistant Chief Fire Officer to Firefighter and reductions of between 25 and 75 percent across all departments within the Service.

The Service has analysed the County’s risk profile to ensure that it can mitigate risk to the public through prevention and protection work and respond appropriately when needed.

Nationally and locally there has been a long term decreasing trend in the number of deaths, injuries and incidents attended by fire and rescue services. Over the last ten years, in Northumberland, the number of incidents attended by firefighters has been reduced by 42 percent, property fires have reduced by nearly half (47 percent), accidental house fires have reduced by a third (33 percent), and injuries from accidental house fires have more than halved (52 percent) with the majority of injuries being minor, e.g., smoke inhalation.

A review was undertaken that included:

- Assessment of incident risk across the County and in local station areas
- Assessment of the proposals against service response standards
- Strategic location of resources and stations
- Incidents most likely to result in injury or loss of life
- Assessment of lifestyle data from the index of multiple deprivation
- Use of national risk profiling (Fire Service Emergency Cover – FSEC) to assess proposed changes

The results of the review have informed proposals outlined in the consultation process.

A summary of proposals is detailed in Table 1.
### SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- Close Haydon Bridge Community Fire Station with Allendale, Haltwhistle and Hexham continuing to cover the area.

- Remove the retained fire appliance from West Hartford Community Fire Station. Keep the two wholetime fire appliances at West Hartford Community Fire Station.

- Change the 2nd fire appliance at Alnwick Community Fire Station to a smaller fire appliance.

- Change the fire appliances at Ponteland, Seahouses and Wooler to smaller fire appliances.

- No change to retained fire appliances at Allendale, Alnwick (1st fire appliance), Amble, Berwick, Belford, Bellingham, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Pegswood, Prudhoe and Rothbury. Holy Island appliance and garage remains unchanged.

- No change to wholetime (full time) at Pegswood and West Hartford or day staffing at Berwick and Hexham.

- Instigate new staffing policies to improve the response from the retained fire appliances across rural Northumberland, potentially improving response availability to 95 percent without the need to increase retained staffing.

- Increase collaboration with partner fire and rescue services and agencies.

- Continue to review staffing systems and management structures to determine whether further efficiencies can be realised without compromising service delivery standards.

- Remain committed to the recruitment of both wholetime and retained firefighters and welcome views on how our recruitment processes can be further improved.
CONSULTATION

The consultation process followed NCC advice and guidance, and the Government’s Code of Practice on consultation.

The consultation process commenced on 23 November 2015 and concluded on 15 February 2016. This involved on-line information and a questionnaire with alerts on the home page of www.northumberland.gov.uk from 23 November 2015. Hard copies were available at all meetings attended by NFRS.

Respondents were also offered the opportunity to comment on the proposals in writing or by e-mail.

Letters: Consultation Officer
Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service
West Hartford Headquarters & Community Fire Station
West Hartford Business Park
Cramlington NE23 3JP

E-mail: fireconsult@northumberland.gov.uk

Letters including consultation details were sent to stakeholders, including neighbouring emergency services, local authorities, NHS, Parish and Town Councils and to all NCC councillors with an invitation to meet with senior Fire Officers to discuss the proposals.

To encourage as many people as possible to take part in the consultation process the following additional communications were carried out:-

Six press releases were issued specifically to promote the consultation process. Details were covered in all local newspapers, some local radio stations as well as on BBC Look North, Tyne Tees Tonight and Made in Tyne and Wear. All press releases were placed on the Council’s website and social media channels. A news article was placed on the Council’s website, intranet and staff newsletter.

Three alerts on the Council’s Facebook alerts channel were posted to promote the consultation over the twelve week period.

There were 9 social media posts that reached more than 100,000 people, 29,900 via the Council’s Facebook channel, 10,300 via the Council’s alert channel and 60,700 via the Council’s Twitter account.

There have been 2,432 hits on the Fire and Rescue Service consultation webpage. A number of briefings were held, details are provided in Table 2.

Table 2 Schedule of Briefings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 November 2015</td>
<td>Corporate Leadership Team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 November 2015  NFRS Service Leadership Team

3 November 2015  Representative Bodies

4 November 2015  Labour Group

Non-aligned members

Liberal Democrats Group

Advance warning to press

Staff at all affected stations

Telephone call to Sure Start Centre Manager – Haydon Bridge

Telephone call Haydon Bridge Parish Council, with offer to brief

5 November 2015  Independent Group

Press Conference

Conservative Group

19 November 2015  Cabinet

Press release

20 November 2015  Internal routine notice for staff

Table 3 details all Parish and Town Councils that responded to consultation letters requesting that senior Fire Officers attend council meetings to present the proposals. Note, NFRS was not responsible for the issue of invitations to attend meetings that were not arranged or chaired by the Service or by NCC.

**Table 3  Schedule of Parish and Town Council Meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 December 2015</td>
<td>Cramlington Town Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 December 2015</td>
<td>Alnwick Town Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 December 2015</td>
<td>Wooler Parish Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 January 2016</td>
<td>Hexham Town Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 December 2015</td>
<td>Belford Parish Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) also accepted invitations to attend all four Area Committees as detailed in Table 4.

**Table 4** Schedule of Area Committee Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 January 2016</td>
<td>Area Committee North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 January 2016</td>
<td>Area Committee West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 January 2016</td>
<td>Area Committee South East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 January 2016</td>
<td>Area Committee Central</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CFO also attended the Communities and Local Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on January 27 2016 as part of the consultation process.

Two NCC public meetings were organised and are detailed in Table 5.

**Table 5** Schedule of Public Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 January 2016</td>
<td>Haydon Bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 January 2016</td>
<td>Cramlington</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These meetings were advertised in the local press (through both press releases and paid for advertising), on-line and posters were distributed in the two areas. Relevant Parish and Town Councils were notified of the Public Meetings.

Further meetings are detailed in Table 6.

**Table 6** Schedule of Additional Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 November 2015</td>
<td>Senior Management and FBU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 November 2015</td>
<td>Cllr Sharp (telephone call) and CFO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Senior Fire Officers arranged to meet with operational staff as detailed in Table 7.

**Table 7 Schedule of Emergency Response Staff Meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 November 2015</td>
<td>Alnwick&lt;br&gt;Haydon Bridge&lt;br&gt;Ponteland&lt;br&gt;Seahouses&lt;br&gt;West Hartford&lt;br&gt;Wooler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 November 2015</td>
<td>Alnwick&lt;br&gt;Haydon Bridge&lt;br&gt;Ponteland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 November 2015</td>
<td>Seahouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 November 2015</td>
<td>Haydon Bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 November 2015</td>
<td>Woofer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 November 2015</td>
<td>Alnwick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 November 2015</td>
<td>Seahouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 December 2015</td>
<td>Woofer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of the democratic process, post-consultation meetings were arranged as detailed in Table 8.
Table 8  Schedule of Post-Consultation Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 March 2016</td>
<td>Communities and Local Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (pre-scrutiny)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 March 2016</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANALYSIS**

**Methodology**

An on-line questionnaire was designed using both open and closed questions in order to generate both qualitative and quantitative data. A report was produced on 16 February 2016, the day after the consultation closed. Overall 84 respondents completed the questionnaire. Furthermore, an additional 76 pieces of correspondence were received and analysed. All written correspondence was responded to and this is an area of the process that has exceeded NCC expectations. In addition, where significant numbers of questions were raised during formal meetings, written responses were provided.

Analysis of closed questions that generate quantitative data is less complex than open questions rich in qualitative data. Therefore the methodology used identified clusters or groups of related comments received as part of the consultation process. This was applied to both on-line comments and correspondence received via e-mail and letter. For the purpose of this specific piece of analysis comments were analysed according to category and associated issues.

Data was also collected from meetings held throughout the consultation, notes and minutes were analysed to ensure that categories and issues are reflected within this analysis.
Results

Closed question responses from the on-line questionnaire:

Question 1: Have you read the full consultation document

- Yes (58) 78%
- No (16) 22%

Closed question responses from the on-line questionnaire:

Question 2: Have you attended a public or staff meeting where Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service gave a presentation on the proposed changes?

- Yes (26) 36%
- No (47) 64%

Closed question responses from the on-line questionnaire:

Question 3: Are you:

- A Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service employee? (3) 4%
- A ward, parish or town councillor? (8) 10%
- A member of the public? (66) 86%
Question 4: Could you please provide your postcode?

Of the 84 on-line respondents 64 provided a full or part postcode. Breakdown by area is provided in Table 9.

Table 9  Respondents by Postcode Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postcode Area</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cramlington</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haydon Bridge</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnwick</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blyth</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashington</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexham</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choppington</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedlington</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haltwhistle</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seahouses</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooler</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 5: What are your views on the closure of Haydon Bridge Community Fire Station?

Open question responses from the on-line questionnaire and correspondence:

685 (96 percent) of responses to this question were negative, with the remaining 30 (4 percent) of comments positive as detailed Pie Chart 1.

Pie Chart 1

![Pie Chart showing 96% negative, 4% positive, and 0% neutral responses to the question about the closure of Haydon Bridge Community Fire Station.]

Analysis of categories and associated issues relating to question 5 is presented in Bar Chart 1 (overleaf). Issues were analysed in terms of the number of people who commented and the number of times the issue was raised.

The greatest number of people submitted formal objections to the proposal to close Haydon Bridge Community Fire Station. This is followed by comments regarding resilience in the west area and risk to the public respectively.
Bar Chart 1  Proposal to close Haydon Bridge by number of people commented and number of times the issue was raised
Question 6: What are your views on the proposed removal of the retained fire appliance from West Hartford Fire Station?

Open question responses from the on-line questionnaire and correspondence:

109 (85 percent) of responses to this question were negative, 5 (4 percent) were neutral, with the remaining 14 (11 percent) of comments positive, as detailed Pie Chart 2.

Pie Chart 2

Analysis of categories and associated issues relating to question 6 is presented in Bar Chart 2 (overleaf). Issues were analysed in terms of the number of people who commented and the number of times the issue was raised.

The greatest number of people submitted formal objections to the proposal to remove the retained appliance from West Hartford Community Fire Station. This is followed by concerns regarding risk to the public and increase in response time respectively.
Bar Chart 2 Proposal to remove retained appliance from West Hartford by number of people commented and number of times the issue was raised

Question 6 - Proposal to remove Retained from West Hartford

No of times issue raised

No of people commented

Discrepancy in statistics
Interpretation of statistics
Historical data statistics
Resilience in West Area
Resilience through cross-border working
Climate Change
Flooding - increased demand
Profile of retained personnel
Alternative model of retained
Redundancy
Physical resources
Recruitment
Redeployment
Emergency Medical Response
Discrepancy in statistics
Capital/Revenue expenditure
Local Authority’s prioritisation
Central Government’s responsibility
Consultation timeframe
Discrepancy in projected savings
Lack of options
Consultation document
Consultation publicity
Management of consultation process
Data used in consultation process
Response times linked to Hexham’s
Increased response times
Alternative proposal - staffing
Alternative proposal - property
Alternative proposal - financial
Risk due to expansion of local area
Risk within local area
Risk to firefighters
Risk to NFRS’ reputation
Risk to planning
Risk to the public
Response time data
Incident data
Range of data
Miscellaneous
Value to the community
Value to the schools
Agreement with the proposal
Question 7: What are your views on introducing smaller appliances at strategic locations to increase the availability of the fire appliance for certain incidents?

Open question responses from the on-line questionnaire and correspondence:

When analysing all comments across all issues combined, 46 (70 percent) of responses to this question were negative, 3 (4 percent) were neutral, with the remaining 17 (26 percent) of comments positive, as detailed Pie Chart 3.

Pie Chart 3

Analysis of categories and associated issues relating to question 7 is presented in Bar Chart 3 (overleaf). Issues were analysed in terms of the number of people who commented and the number of times the issue was raised.

As a single issue, agreement with the proposal received the most comments than any other single issue. This was followed by formal objections and increase in risk to the public respectively.
Bar Chart 3 Proposal to introduce smaller appliances by number of people commented and number of times the issue was raised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 7 - Smaller Appliances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No of times issue raised</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No of people commented</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No of times issue raised
No of people commented
Question 8: Do you agree or disagree with a change to the staffing policies which could increase the availability of fire appliances without the need to increase the number of retained firefighters?

Closed question responses from the on-line questionnaire:

| Agree (22) | 33% |
| Disagree (44) | 67% |

Open question responses from the on-line questionnaire and correspondence:

14 (78 percent) of responses to this question were negative, 2 (11 percent) were neutral, with the remaining 2 (11 percent) of comments positive, as detailed Pie Chart 4.

Pie Chart 4

Analysis of categories and associated issues relating to question 8 is presented in Bar Chart 4 (overleaf). Issues were analysed in terms of the number of people who commented and the number of times the issue was raised.

The greatest number of people raised comments regarding the consultation document. This is followed by concerns regarding physical resources and recruitment. However, the same number of people were in agreement with the proposal as were concerned regarding physical resources and recruitment.
Bar Chart 4  Proposal to change staffing policies by number of people commented and number of times the issue was raised
Question 9: Do you agree or disagree that we should increase our collaboration with partners to increase efficiency and reduce costs?

Closed question responses from the on-line questionnaire:

- Agree (56) 82%
- Disagree (12) 18%

Open question responses from the on-line questionnaire and correspondence:

2 (20 percent) of responses to this question were negative, 6 (60 percent) were neutral, with the remaining 2 (20 percent) of comments positive, as detailed Pie Chart 5.

Pie Chart 5

Analysis of categories and associated issues relating to question 9 is presented in Bar Chart 5 (overleaf). Issues were analysed in terms of the number of people who commented and the number of times the issue was raised.

Equal numbers of people were concerned about resilience or offered alternative proposals regarding staffing, property and financial resources.
Bar Chart 5 Proposal to collaborate with partners by number of people commented and number of times the issue was raised
Question 10: Do you agree or disagree that we should review our staffing structures and management structures to achieve further efficiencies without compromising service delivery?

Closed Question Responses from the on-line questionnaire:

| Agree (51) | 79% |
| Disagree (14) | 22% |

Open question responses from the on-line questionnaire and correspondence:

1 (14 percent) response to this question was negative and 6 (86 percent) were neutral as shown in Pie Chart 6.

Pie Chart 6

Analysis of categories and associated issues relating to question 10 is presented in Bar Chart 6 (overleaf). Issues were analysed in terms of the number of people who commented and the number of times the issue was raised.

All comments fell into the ‘Alternative Proposals’ category; with people offering alternative proposals relating to staffing and property resources.
Bar Chart 6  Proposal review staffing/management by number of people commented and number of times the issue was raised

Question 10 - Review of staffing/management structures

- Discrepancy in statistics
- Interpretation of statistics
- Historical data statistics
- Resilience in South East Area
- Resilience through cross-border working
- Climate Change
- Flooding - increased demand
- Profile of retained personnel
- Alternative model of retained
- Redundancy
- Recruitment
- Recruitment
- Disproportionate loss
- Disproportionate recruitment
- Recruitment
- Reduced numbers of retained
- Discrepancy in number of people commented
- No of times issue raised
- No of people commented
- Working Towards 2020 – Consultation Report

No of times issue raised
No of people commented
Flooding

A number of respondents raised the impact of Storm Desmond in the west of the county during December 2015 to January 2016. These flooding incidents were not included in the analysis work as the storm occurred after the consultation has begun.

Initial data analysis used two sampling periods; a five-year sample (October 2009 to September 2014) was used to establish trends and incident locations, and a two-year sample (October 2012 to September 2014) for performance analysis and demand profile. For the purposes of the consultation process, more current five-year incident data was also provided (fiscal years 2010/11 to 2014/15). It is standard statistical practice to use full year data when undertaking analysis.

Nonetheless, it was agreed that flooding during December 2015 to January 2016 would be included in the consultation analysis report.

As all comments relating to flooding were in response to the proposed closure of Haydon Bridge Community Fire Station, incidents attended by Haydon Bridge retained fire appliance between December 1 2015 – January 6 2016 are detailed in Table 10.

Table 10  Breakdown of Incidents Attended by Haydon Bridge December 2015 – January 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Chimney</th>
<th>Flooding Related</th>
<th>RTC</th>
<th>False Alarms due to Apparatus</th>
<th>Malicious False Alarms</th>
<th>False Alarms Due to Good Intent</th>
<th>Total Incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*January</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Details of incidents attended by Haydon Bridge retained fire appliance, by station ground between December 1 2015 – January 6 2016

Table 11  Incidents attended by Haydon Bridge by Station Ground December 2015 – January 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Allendale</th>
<th>Haltwhistle</th>
<th>Haydon Bridge</th>
<th>Hexham</th>
<th>Prudhoe</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*January</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From a total of 157 respondents who provided comments (both online and written correspondence), 40 people commented on flooding, 117 people did not comment on flooding. All 40 comments are in response to the proposed closure of Haydon Bridge and all comments are negative.

Pie Chart 7 illustrates the number of people who commented/did not comment on flooding by percentage.
Questions asked during consultation

A significant proportion of correspondence included questions that respondents wanted answers to before they could make an informed judgement on the proposals.

Analysis of categories and associated issues relating to questions raised is presented in Bar Chart 7 (overleaf). Issues were analysed in terms of the number of people who commented and the number of times the issue was raised.

The greatest number of people raised questions regarding resilience in the west of the county. This is followed by questions regarding discrepancies in the projected savings and local authority prioritisation.
Bar Chart 7  Questions asked by number of people commented and number of times the issue was raised
ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS

During public meetings held on 21 and 27 January 2016, members of the public expressed the opinion that the responsibility for identifying alternative proposals lay with Northumberland County Council with advice from Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Officers. However, a small number of alternative proposals were submitted via the on-line questionnaire and within correspondence. These alternative proposals include:

- Utilise flood gates at Hexham, which would negate the requirement to re-locate Hexham Community Fire Station.
  Response: The move of Hexham Community Fire Station from Tyne Mills to a site at Hexham General Hospital has already been subject to a full public consultation and planning process. This has not formed part of the current consultation.

- Introduction of smaller fire engine engines which cost 15 – 20 percent less to most retained fire stations.
  Response: The introduction of smaller appliances already forms part of the current consultation and will be fully evaluated. Their potential introduction to other RDS stations would be as part of future fleet replacement programmes.

- Re-examine management staffing.
  Response: This already forms part of the current consultation.

- Review all the back office services.
  Response: All departments have already been reviewed and have sustained cuts of between 25 – 75 per cent.

- Introduce a smaller fire engine at Haydon Bridge.
  Response: This would not achieve the required revenue savings.

- Introduce the smaller appliances at Berwick/Hexham rather than Alnwick.
  Response: Proposals were based on robust analysis and professional judgement.

- Train wholetime firefighters in-house (as with retained) in order to save future costs.
  Response: All options would be investigated to ensure that any future wholetime recruitment was effective, efficient and provided value for money to the Northumberland taxpayer.

- Close Young Firefighters Association branches.
  Response: This would realise minimal cost savings but have a detrimental impact on NFRS community safety activity.

- Make savings by not moving County Hall to the new site in Ashington.
  Response: This has not formed part of the current NFRS consultation as the move of County Hall to Ashington is not linked to the NFRS savings requirement for 2016/17.

- Close Ponteland Community Fire Station rather than Haydon Bridge.
  Response: The proposal to consider the closure of Haydon Bridge was based upon a detailed analysis of incident and operational activity across all RDS stations in Northumberland which included Ponteland.
- Put cuts on hold until a decision is made with regard to the Police and Crime Commissioner role.
  Response: The cuts are required for the year 2016/17 as agreed by Full Council in February 2015.

- Combine Fire and Rescue Service/Police Control Room.
  Response: The savings are required for the year 2016/17 as agreed by Full Council in February 2015.

- Review Automatic Fire Alarm attendance policy could save money.
  Response: The policy has already been reviewed and is currently being implemented. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of automatic fire alarm actuations attended.

- Remove several vehicles from West Hartford.
  Response: NFRS fleet is constantly monitored and reviewed in order to ensure value for money.

- Add £1.00 to everyone paying Council Tax and deduct £1.00 from anyone receiving benefits.
  Response: NFRS is unable to comment on Council Tax and benefits.

- Use the money allocated for the new station at Hexham.
  Response: Money for the new station at Hexham comes from Capital budget, the £500k savings are to be realised from Revenue budget.

- Sell empty land on west end of Hexham.
  Response: Money for the new station at Hexham comes from Capital budget, the £500k savings are to be realised from Revenue budget.

- Nucleus manning (sic) at wholetime stations.
  Response: Nucleus staffing was considered and found not to be cost effective.

- Wait until Hexham Community Fire Station has moved to the new site before closing Haydon Bridge.
  Response: Should the decision be taken to close Haydon Bridge, this proposal will be fully considered for the operational, resilience and efficiency implications.

At both the public meetings and in correspondence from members of the public there was a suggestion to make savings elsewhere in the County Council rather than Fire and Rescue Service.
PETITIONS

The petitions protocol states:

‘Petitions responding to other consultation processes initiated by the County Council will be reported to the Committee responsible for making a decision on the matter in question and will be considered alongside the other letters of representation and correspondence received. In this way, petitions feed into the established consultation processes. If a petition is received after a consultation has closed but before the issue in question has gone to the Committee, it should be accepted as another response. Consultation petitions will not automatically require a response to be produced for an Area Committee or Petitions Committee. If a request is made for one of these Committees to discuss a consultation petition due to exceptional circumstances, this decision will be at the discretion of the respective Committee Chair’.

It is therefore appropriate for petitions received as part of this consultation process to be considered alongside other letters of representation and correspondence received.

On 12 January 2016, at Area Committee West, the Consultation Officer was handed a petition of 2,544 signatures for the attention of Northumberland County Council. Signatures signed to the following statement:

‘We the undersigned are horrified at reports in the press regarding the loss of Fire and Rescue Services from Haydon Bridge fire station. We are deeply concerned by the implication for residents of Haydon Bridge and the surrounding area covered by our fire station.’

On 12 February 2016 an additional 149 signatures were added against the above statement and forwarded from Cllr Sharp to Democratic Services giving a total of 2,693 signatures.

On 23 April 2016 the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) formally delivered a petition of 7,108 signatures to Deputy Leader of Northumberland County Council Cllr Ledger. Subsequently, The Consultation Officer received a further 80 signatures bringing the total to 7,188. Signatures were in support of the following statement:

‘We the undersigned are totally opposed to the proposals set out for consultation by Northumberland County to implement further devastating cuts on Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service. These cuts follow on from over a decade of cuts and efficiency savings sustained and implemented by the Service in an attempt to meet the Government budgetary constraints and the austerity agenda.

The proposals will mean;

- The removal of West Hartford’s on-call fire engine
- The loss of 24 fire-fighter posts
- The closure of Haydon Bridge Fire Station and the loss of their fire engine
- The removal of two fire engines and reduction in response ability through the down-sizing of further appliances and reduction in crew sizes responding to incidents will place the public of and visitors to Northumberland, together with the firefighters that work to protect our communities at greater risk.'
We call on the County Council to reverse their proposals and fight for appropriate funding mechanisms from Central Government for the fire service that properly reflects the needs of the communities and Service.’

Northumberland Fire Brigades Union Cuts Consultation Submission

February 2016

Senior managers have engaged with the FBU throughout the consultation process, meeting dates are detailed in Table 5.

A lengthy response document was submitted by Northumberland Fire Brigades Union to the Consultation Officer and is available from FBU officials on request.

The submission covers four key themes:-

- Closure of Haydon Bridge Fire Station
- The Removal of West Hartford R.D.S Fire Appliance and Crew
- Phased Response in Northumberland
- Procurement and use of smaller Appliances

Subject to the decision of the County Council, Senior Managers are committed to continuing to engage with FBU Officials throughout the implementation process.