

SECTION 41 MEMBER BRIEFING



MARCH 2017

Please find below information from your
Section 41 Member representative on South
Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Cllr Pat Haith



Fire Authority approves Council Tax precept rise

The fire service's governing Fire Authority has decided to increase its portion of Council Tax by 1.97% next year, following its budget setting meeting on Monday (13 February).

The decision by members to increase the fire service's share of Council Tax will raise an additional £441,000 in annual funding for the fire service.

Current indications are that SYFR will lose £2 million in its Government funding in 2017/18, when compared with 2016/17.

Cllr Alan Atkin, Vice Chair of the Authority, said: "We are absolutely committed to providing the best possible fire and rescue service to the people of South Yorkshire. That is why we are asking people to pay just a few pence a week more for their fire service. I understand the economic hardship being felt by households. However, this small increase helps us to balance the fire service's budget and protect its assets in the long term."



Did you know you can watch all Authority meetings LIVE?

All Fire Authority meetings are open to the public and are broadcast live on the internet. Visit www.southyorks.gov.uk. You can also view previous meetings.

Whilst viewing the meeting you can contribute comments and debate proceedings with other viewers via CovertLive or Twitter.

Follow the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority on Twitter

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Fire service seeks views from the public on how it delivers its work

The fire service is calling on people in South Yorkshire to have their say on how it plans to deliver its work to local people between now and 2020.

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue does not propose making any further reductions in fire station or fire engine numbers **in plans presented to the service's governing Fire Authority** on Monday (13 February), despite having lost more than £14 million from its annual budget since 2010.

But its proposals do include making more of its firefighters available in the day when crews are busiest, changing its prevention work to focus on those most at risk and proactively exploring collaboration opportunities with other emergency services.

Key changes outlined in the service's Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-20 include:

- **Changing the staffing of the second fire engine at Sheffield's Central fire station** so that it is available all of the time in the day, but 'on call' at night.
- **Adding two additional fire engines at two fire stations in South Yorkshire**, which would also be available all of the time in the day, but 'on call' at night.
- Continuing to offer fire prevention guidance to all, but **prioritising its free Home Safety Checks service for those who the service believes are at the greatest risk of fire.**
- **Finding further ways of working more closely with the police and ambulance services**, as a new law now makes it a requirement for all emergency services to do.

The plans also consider how the fire service intends to respond to Government's efforts to reform the fire service nationally, including requirements to provide a more flexible and diverse workforce.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Martin Blunden, said: "Our vision for the lifetime of this plan is to provide the best possible service to the people of South Yorkshire within the resources which are available to us.

“We are not proposing any further significant changes to our core 999 service, beyond those outlined in previous plans. But the proposals we have outlined in this plan do explain how we intend to develop our service to become more efficient in what we do and make the biggest possible difference to those most at risk of fire.

“These are draft proposals and we really want to gather views from the public on the plans we have put forward.”

Members of the public can share their views on the plans between now and 27 March. Once the consultation period has ended and feedback has been considered, Fire Authority members will make the final decision on the proposals.

People can share their views via an online survey, in writing or at a series of community roadshow events. To have your say, [complete the survey here](#)

Housing providers given extra time to bid for fire service sprinkler funding

South Yorkshire housing providers are being given extra time to access fire service funding to support the installation of sprinklers in high-risk homes.

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue (SYFR) attends dozens of serious house fires every year in social housing and sheltered accommodation.

To help tackle the problem and increase the number of sprinkler systems fitted across the county, earlier this year SYFR launched a £1 million fund to encourage more housing providers to install them in buildings lived in by those residents most at risk from fire.

Head of prevention and protection Steve Helps, said: “We’re pleased that several organisations have already come forward to take advantage of this scheme, but we have also listened to feedback from other potential partners who have requested more time to scope and research appropriate funding bids.

“Sprinklers are a cost effective way of making homes safer - they stop fires from spreading, put them out quickly and save lives. We are especially concerned about those people who are most at risk of fire such as those with mobility or mental health problems or people with dementia who may not know how to react, or be able to react quickly enough, if they hear a smoke alarm.”

The installation of sprinkler systems in new build homes is now mandatory in Wales and SYFR is actively promoting the use of this type of protection in all types of buildings to build resilience and safety into local communities.

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority’s sprinkler fund is open to any social or private housing provider. It will part fund those projects which demonstrate the best value and innovation in protecting the most vulnerable people possible from fire. It forms part of the Stronger Safer Communities Reserve, with money set aside from the Authority’s reserves.

For more information on how to submit a funding bid contact bfsadmin@syfire.gov.uk



Fire service calls on loved ones to help protect older people from fire

A campaign to protect older people from fire is being launched in South Yorkshire, after shock new figures reveal more than half of the county's recent fire deaths involved people over the age of 60.

Since 2009, 42 people died in accidental house fires in South Yorkshire. Of these, 22 (53%) were aged 60 or over.

Of the last ten fatalities, six involved residents aged 60 or over and two involved people in their 50s. Several of the victims were living alone and only half had a working smoke alarm installed.

The statistics are reflected nationally and demonstrate why South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue is focussing its work to prevent fires on those who are most at risk.

Steve Helps, head of prevention and protection, said: "We have known for many years that isolated, older people are significantly more likely to die in house fires. But we also know that some older people can be hard to reach by traditional methods of engaging them around fire safety.

"That's why we are calling on relatives, friends and neighbours to help us, help them by looking out for some common fire hazards, helping them test their smoke alarms and referring them to us if they need further support."

The fire service says that taking just five minutes to carry out some simple checks the next time you see an older relative or friend could prevent a fire and help your loved one to stay in their own home safely, for longer.

As part of the campaign, a [video](#) is being released which explains some simple things people can do to help. They include:

- Test their smoke alarms- some older people may find it difficult to reach their alarms to test them regularly.
- Check electrics are safe- look out for frayed wiring or overloaded sockets
- Make sure escape routes are clear

Firefighters attend over 350 medical emergencies in ambulance service partnership

South Yorkshire firefighters attended hundreds of medical emergencies last year, under the county's first Emergency First Responder (EFR) scheme.

The scheme is a joint initiative between South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue (SYFR) and Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust (YAS) which sees firefighters called out to certain life-threatening incidents at the same time as an ambulance.

On-call firefighters from Rossington, Stocksbridge and Dearne fire stations were sent to 358 medical emergencies in 2016, including cardiac arrests and incidents stating chest pains and breathing difficulties. At other incidents, firefighters have provided support and made the patient comfortable until the ambulance service arrived on scene.

Training for firefighters who are part of the scheme includes basic life support, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and oxygen therapy. They are equipped with a kit which includes oxygen and an automated external defibrillator to help patients in a medical emergency such as a heart attack, collapse or breathing difficulties.

An EFR is dispatched at the same time as an ambulance and does not replace the usual emergency medical response from YAS. However, their location within the local community could mean they are nearer to the scene in those first critical minutes of a medical emergency, delivering life-saving care until an ambulance arrives.

They also support and complement other volunteer community first responder schemes within South Yorkshire, ensuring the level of medical provision to local communities is supplemented.

Emergency First Responders are only available for dispatch when staffing levels at their fire station allow and the scheme does not impact fire cover.

Tony Carlin, Head of Emergency Response, said: "Just over a year into this scheme going live, our firefighters are already showing the incredible value they can add to their communities and the role we can play as a fire service in enhancing the work of our emergency service partners and volunteer community first responders.

"Our role as a fire service will always be to protect our communities and reach and save those who are in danger as quickly as possible. A new statutory duty has made it a requirement for us to work more closely with our blue light partners, and this scheme is a perfect example of how we are already doing that."



Change to staffing of second fire engine at Rotherham confirmed

The staffing of the second fire engine at Rotherham fire station will change next month, as one of the final changes approved by councillors four years ago is implemented.

The second fire engine at the site on Fitzwilliam Road will remain permanently available in the day, but become 'on call' at night by the end of March.

The decision to make the change was approved by South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue's governing Fire Authority in 2013.

It was reaffirmed in an **efficiency plan** approved by the Government last year, where the service outlined proposals to make more of its fire engines available in the daytime when firefighters are busiest responding to emergencies, carrying out safety work or training.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Martin Blunden, said: "We have faced big cuts to our funding, but have repeatedly committed to providing the best possible service to the people of South Yorkshire within the resources which are available to us.

"This change is one of the last changes agreed four years ago. The second fire engine is not being taken away, but will become 'on call' at night and, as with all our fire stations, our 999 response service will continue to be supported by crews from other, nearby stations.

"We will soon be talking to the public about how we plan to deliver our services beyond 2017 and will look forward to listening to their views on how we plan to develop our work to keep people safe."

The fire service has lost £14 million in its Government funding since 2010 and is likely to lose a further £2 million between now and 2020.

Changes to the second fire engines at Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster fire stations were approved in something called an **Integrated Risk Management Plan (2013-17)**, following consultation with the public and other stakeholders.

A similar, draft plan for how the fire service will deliver its service to local people beyond 2017 will be considered by Fire Authority members in February before members of the public are invited to share their views.

The plans to be presented will not propose any further reductions in fire station or fire engine numbers, but will consider changes to the fire service's work to prevent emergencies and a new legal duty to collaborate with the police and ambulance services. The fire service will also commit to using its existing resources as effectively and as efficiently as possible.