

REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 16 AUGUST 2004

REPORT ON: THE FUTURE OF FIRE SERVICE CONTROL ROOMS IN SCOTLAND

REPORT BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (FINANCE)

REPORT NO: 593-2004

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek the Committee's views on the independent report published by the Scottish Executive on the future of Fire Service Control Rooms in Scotland.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Committee are requested to respond to the Scottish Executive that the City Council would wish to see the retention of the current 8 Fire Service Control Rooms in Scotland for the reasons given in this report.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications for the Council.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

None.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

None.

6 BACKGROUND

6.1 At the request of HM Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland, a review of Fire Service Control Room arrangements in Scotland has been undertaken by Mott MacDonald Consultants.

The Scottish Executive have now posted the Mott MacDonald report on their website for consultation and COSLA are also seeking comments from local authorities and fire brigades on the report.

6.2 After considering the current environment in which the Fire Control Rooms operate and researching UK and International case studies, the consultants identified a number of options. They concluded and recommended that the Scottish Executive should rationalise the present 8 Fire Service Control Rooms (1 for each Brigade area) to either one, two or three Fire Control Rooms covering the whole of Scotland.

6.3 The main reasons for the Consultants' recommendations were that these options would facilitate cross-border operations, improve control rooms skills, improve the ability to handle

surge demands through having a larger number of staff and resources and would generate savings in cost.

- 6.4 However, the report did acknowledge that there would be negative aspects to any proposal that moves away from the current 8 Fire Service Control Rooms.

The report identified the following negative aspects:

- The concept of the control room as the "heart" of a brigade would be lost.
- The involvement/participation of the control room when supporting an incident at a local operational level may be reduced.
- A reduction in the local knowledge from the control room.

- 6.5 The officers are of the opinion that the current Control Room of the Tayside Fire Brigade has proved highly effective. On the basis that the negative aspects of moving away from the current control room operation referred to in 6.4 above will not improve public safety, it would be the officers' opinion that the status quo of each Brigade having its own control room would be the best option.

7 **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive and Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) have been consulted on the content of this report.

8 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Future of the Fire Service Control Rooms in Scotland by Mott MacDonald, commissioned by the Scottish Executive.

DAVID K DORWARD
DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (FINANCE)

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