



Press Release - 23 November 2023

REMOVAL OF FIRE COVER AT NIGHT IN NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH

Tristan Ashby, Chief Executive of the Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA) which represents firefighters in Warwickshire, has slammed plans to reduce night-time cover in Nuneaton and Bedworth by two thirds. This is the preferred option of Warwickshire County Council and the fire and rescue service which is launching a consultation on the proposal next month. It will undoubtedly result in redundancies for the borough's on-call or retained firefighters.

Tristan Ashby said:

'Currently Nuneaton and Bedworth Brough Council area is served by three fire engines during the night. Under Warwickshire County Council's preferred option which they agreed earlier this month, there will be no fire cover in Bedworth from 10 pm to 8 am, and just one engine available in Nuneaton. Currently there are two full-time engines in Nuneaton providing 24-hour cover, and the on-call station in Bedworth is fully crewed during the night hours – making three engines available. They will effectively remove two fire engines from the borough at night. The current on-call team at Bedworth who provide 100 per night-time cover will be disbanded, and probably made redundant.'

Tristan went on the say:

'The result of all these shenanigans will not only be a seriously worse situation for the people of the borough, but no discernible improvement in attendance times or finances. The fire and rescue service's own dubious figures indicate savings across Warwickshire are a measly £14,000, and attendances times will only fall by 17 seconds for the first engine and increase by 12 seconds for the second engine. Second engine availability is vital for dealing with persons reported fires.'

'The people of the borough are being subject to a 'three card trick' where proposals which will significantly reduce fire cover for no discernible benefit, are being hoisted on the public by an out of touch council and fire and rescue service. Council taxpayers will pay the same amount of money for a seriously reduced service which will increase danger to them and their families. We urge people to get in touch with their elected representatives to make their views known before these dangerous proposals go out for consultation and then rubber stamping by the county council.'

Message End

Note for Editors:

- Proposals were approved by the Warwickshire County Council Cabinet to launch a public consultation next month which will effectively close seven on-call stations turning them into so-called 'surge stations' to be used less than once a year.
- The future of all on-call firefighters currently employed is unclear, but they cannot remain on their current terms and conditions and redundancy is the likely option.
- In spite of these changes the saving of the preferred option is a meagre £14,000.
- There will be a 17 second saving in attendance times for the first fire engine, but a 12 second increase for the second engine. The FRSA doubts the statistical validity of the figures. Given the attendance time and financial savings are so small there can be little confidence in them.
- For Nuneaton and Bedworth, the current three fire engines available all night will be reduced to one during the hours between 10 pm and 8 am. Nights are particularly dangerous for fires as sleeping residents often do not notice the fire until it is too late which results in higher deaths, injuries and property damage.