

QUESTION SUPPLEMENTARY TO CHAIRMAN OF THE FA. JULY 24TH 2019

National guidance from DEFRA and the National Fire Chiefs Council, for Safety Boats, such as those in Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, (including the one in Councillor Rudd's own ward) recommends a minimum crew of 6 inc 2 Helmsmen. However, in Cheshire you crew the boats with just 5 inc 1 Helmsmen. Furthermore, until very recently crews were wearing safety helmets which were not suitable for a high speed rescue boat – they were more suitable for a canoe -, and they were wearing life jackets which were more than 10 years old and outside their shelf life warranty.

This is a further demonstration that the operational response model in Cheshire is flawed. The Fire Authority has consistently been under spending from its revenue budget to transfer funds to its building projects. Front line services have been cut by around 40 million pounds to pay for new fire stations. This has been a political choice.

The current course of action is considered to be legally flawed, morally flawed, ethically flawed, environmentally flawed and financially flawed.

Will the newly formed Fire Authority in its next Integrated Risk Management Plan put front line resources, to protect local communities, as its first priority and stop its strategy of cutting front line services to pay for unnecessary new fire stations?

Or will the New Fire Authority, as in the past, just nod through the binary option proposed by the Chief Fire Officer when he completes his 'whole of Service review'?

Finally I would ask you to remember that the Integrated Risk Management Plan is issued in the name of the Fire Authority and it will be your collective responsibility to account, in any court of law, for any failure in servicing the local electorate via your plan.