



**PFCC**  
**POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME**  
**COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX**

## Decision Sheet

### Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority Decision Report

Please ensure all sections below are completed

<b>Report reference number:</b> <del>xxx/2017</del> 012/18 <i>(Please contact Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for a reference number)</i>
<b>Government security classification .</b>
<b>Title of report:</b> Disposition of Aerial Ladder Platforms
<b>Area of County/Stakeholders affected:</b> Essex wide, this is an extant decision by Essex Fire Authority.
<b>Report by :</b> Dave Bill, Director of Prevention, Protection and Response <b>Date of report:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2017 <b>Enquiries to:</b> Dave Bill, Director of Prevention, Protection and Response

**1. Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to present to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) the information which had previously been considered by Essex Fire Authority (EFA) when they determined on 2 November 2016 to "approve the reduction in the number of Aerial Ladder Platforms from five to four" and "approve the disposal of the surplus Aerial Ladder Platform".

In doing so, it provides an opportunity for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to support the extant decision of the former Fire Authority or to determine an alternative.

**2. Recommendations**

The PFCC is asked to consider the previous papers provided to the EFA and review the decision of a reduction of Aerial Ladder Platforms from five to four and dispose of the surplus Aerial Ladder Platform in light of the incident at Grenfell Tower.

### 3. Benefits and Costs of Proposal

The benefits and costs can be found in Appendix One, EFA/122/16, page four of five, under financial implications. In addition, the Service has agreed a price of £120k with Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service.

### 4. Background and proposal

Since 2014 the Service has changed both the use and the method in which the Aerial Ladder Platforms are delivered to an incident. Papers provided to Essex Fire Authority can be found in Appendix One EFA/122/16 and Two EFA/031/14. These papers provide detail on type and number of incidents that Aerial Ladder Platforms attend.

Appendix Two approved the removal of Aerial Ladder Platforms from pre-determined attendances (due to the high number of false alarms) and the move to the current crewing arrangements<sup>1</sup>. Appendix one sought approval to move from five to four Aerial Ladder Platforms. Further to the detail in this paper an update to current statistics can be found in Tables below; -

Tables – ALP Mobilisations 2016 and 2017

<b>Chelmsford ALP</b>		
	2016	2017
False Alarm	--	--
Fire	10	8
Special Service	9	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>

<b>Colchester ALP</b>		
	2016	2017
False Alarm	--	--
Fire	12	8
Special Service	13	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>

<b>Grays ALP</b>		
	2016	2017
False Alarm	--	1
Fire	9	7
Special Service	2	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>

<b>Harlow Central ALP</b>		
	2016	2017
False Alarm	1	--
Fire	2	1
Special Service	5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>Southend ALP</b>		
	2016	2017
False Alarm	--	1
Fire	6	8
Special Service	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>

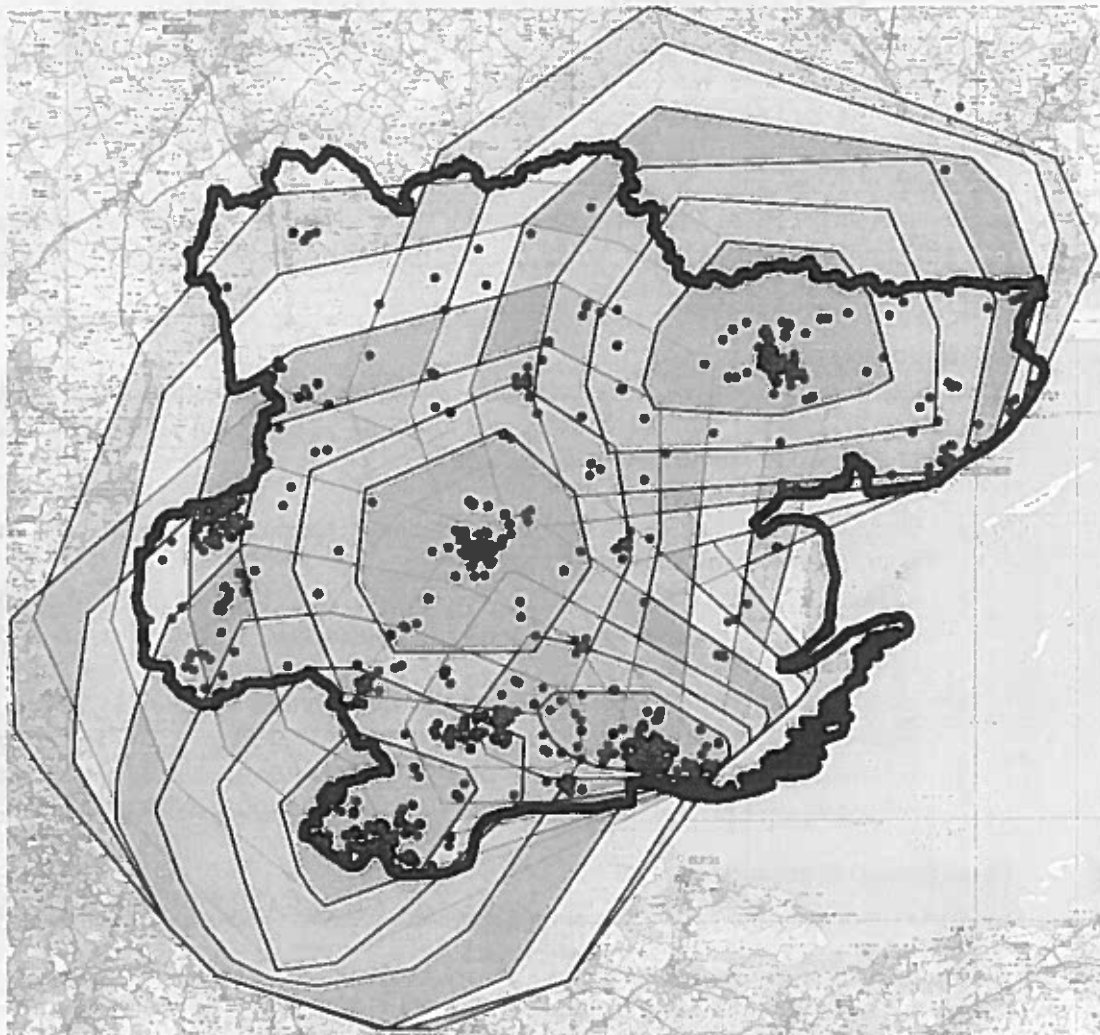
### Response Standards

There are no agreed national response standards for Aerial Ladder Platforms. It should be noted that as part of the Authority's 2020 Programme, response standards were identified which the Authority would use for its Specialist appliances and it was agreed that for Aerial Ladder Platforms this would be 40 minutes. The chart on page 3 provides

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<sup>1</sup> This paper approved moving to 12 on each watch, following the recent Dispute Resolution with the Fire Brigades Union, from 2020 onwards the budgeted establishment will be 13.

information on where the location of the incidents have been since from 2010 to 2016 and the percentage of incidents (in 5 minute segments) reached if Harlow Aerial Ladder Platform was removed from service.



Travel time in minutes	% of incidents reached
10	63.23%
15	18.14%
20	4.94%
25	11.54%
30	1.00%
35	1.05%
35+	0.11%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Grenfell Tower

On the 14 June 2017 a fire started in Grenfell Tower, a 24-storey high rise block in West London. Tragically it led to 71 deaths and over 70 injuries. The Grenfell Tower inquiry held its first hearing on 14 September 2017. Currently the understanding is that the fire started on the fourth floor with the rapid growth of the fire is thought to have been accelerated by the building's exterior cladding.

An independent review of building regulations and fire safety is in progress. Following the incident, the operational response to the incident has been scrutinised, with the Service's ability nationally to mobilise Aerial Ladder Platforms and the impact of the effectiveness on firefighting

leading to the question, should the Aerial Ladder Platform attend operational incidents earlier? Though this question is a matter for the inquiry, the following elements are worthy of consideration; -

- In Essex, Aerial Ladder Platforms have not formed part of an initial response to operational incidents since 2014 (EFA/031/14 refers) based on the number of times the Aerial ladder Platforms were actually used.
- Practically, Aerial Ladder Platform's tend to be able to reach to only the first 7-8 floors of High Rise blocks
- The siting of Appliances is notoriously difficult at High Rise buildings (due to parking), in particular Aerial Ladder Platforms due to the large footprint required to site them.
- The effectiveness in using the Aerial Ladder Platforms as a water tower is questionable (see risks, building design below)

**5. Strategic Priorities**

When responding to emergency incidents, the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan states (page 17) that the Service will focus its operational planning to a number of elements and those key to this decision are:

- Provide resources to safely and effectively respond to operational incidents in accordance with its response standards.
- Identify and assess foreseeable operational risk, then develop resilient planning processes, with other agencies where appropriate, in order to respond to those risks safely and effectively.
- Ensure that the Service maintains an appropriate level of available resources based upon the level and type of risk, in order to deliver a resilient service.
- Continually improve and advance operational response through learning from incidents and providing assurance on effective response arrangements.

**6. Operational Implications**

Operational implications are set out in Appendix One EFA/122/16 and Two EFA/031/14.

**7. Financial Implications**

Financial implications can be found in Appendix One, EFA/122/16; Page 4

**8. Legal Implications**

Legal implications are set out in Appendix One EFA/122/16, Page 4.

**9. Staffing and other resource implications**

There will be no reductions in staff as a result of this decision.

Aerial Ladder Platforms are quite resource intensive so far as regular training is required in order to ensure that crews are skilled in the operation of the Aerial Ladder Platform. Further details on the decision on current crewing arrangements can be found in Appendix Two, EFA/031/14, Page 6.

**10. Equality and Diversity implications**

None specific to this decision.

**11. Risks**

There is a potential reputational risk to the Fire and Rescue Authority and Service, following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower earlier this year, whereby those viewing the incidents saw the Aerial Ladder Platforms being used will perceive themselves being more at risk from fire in a high rise block. With the Aerial Ladder Platform being moved from Harlow, initially reassurance within this area will be required. Operationally, the risk is

minimal due the likelihood that Aerial Ladder Platforms are required and the Service still has significant cover with four Aerial Ladder Platforms for the County of Essex.

The severity being affected by an ALP not being in attendance is also minimal. Building regulations set out the Fire safety requirements for the design of buildings, further details can be found in the document 'Approved Document B, Fire Safety, Volume 2'. In essence, building design for high rise (flats) is based on the assumption that there is no reliance on external rescue, firefighters will invariably work inside and, on that basis, they require special access facilities i.e. equipped with internal fire mains, sufficient means of access for firefighting personnel for search and rescue and to fight fire. The provision of these facilities is protected by stipulations on ensuring the integrity of the building by stopping fire spread for set periods of time through building materials (e.g. fire doors) and standards used. In summary, the buildings are deliberately designed to provide internal means of escape and for internal firefighting and rescue.

Also, the Service has a current risk based inspection programme for its Technical Fire Safety work. All 10 plus storey residential high rise are scheduled for an audit once every 12 months, 5 – 9 storey premises audits are conducted on a risk based approach, but will be at least every 5 years. All were audited following the Grenfell Towers incident. In addition to this the Service responds immediately to notification of issues in building as an 'alleged fire risk', for example on notification from a tenant that a fire door onto a stairwell is broken, and continually works with 'responsible persons' in order to encourage good house-keeping at High Rise locations. These sites are also known to local crews who, as part of their risk awareness for their station ground, hold information on the site, and make regular visits to ensure that information is correct and the crews are aware of the site. Our Community Safety staff are also available to educate and work with residents to provide reassurance.

**12. Governance Boards**  
Not applicable

**13. Background papers**  
Appendix One - EFA/122/16 – Policy and Strategy Paper 'Aerial Ladder Platforms' (2/11/16)

Appendix Two - EFA/031/14 – Policy and Strategy Paper 'Proposals on the future direction for the Authority's Rescue Tender Special Appliances and alterations to the crewing arrangements for the Aerial Ladder Platforms' (7/5/14)

## Decision Process

### Step 1A - Chief Fire Officer Comments

(The Chief Fire Officer is asked in their capacity as the Head of Paid Service to comment on the proposal.)

I have considered all of the information presented in relation to the decision that the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner is being asked to consider in relation to the disposition of Aerial ladder Platforms, including the correspondence from the Fire Brigade Union dated 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

One point that should be clarified, which is not covered in the decision sheet or its appendices, is the likely financial implications of a decision not to dispose of a surplus Aerial Ladder Platform to Norfolk FRS. At the time these ALP's were procured in 2008, the unit cost was circa £500k which was considered a very competitive price given that six ALP's were being procured at the same time. All ALP manufacturers are based outside of the UK, principally Europe, and given the current situation with UK Sterling and the Euro it is highly likely that the unit cost will be circa £600k plus the costs of running a European tender exercise. There will therefore be a £600k+ burden placed upon the UK taxpayer should a decision be taken not to reduce the number of Aerial Ladder Platforms in Essex and dispose of the surplus ALP to Norfolk.

The second financial implication that should be considered is the annual cost of returning to primary crewing of three Aerial Ladder Platforms as suggested by the Fire Brigades Union. To achieve this would require a minimum of 24 and a maximum of 36 additional firefighter posts at an annual cost of between £1m and £1.5m.

In summary and having considered the information presented in support of this decision and the implications of recent events but specifically the tragic incident at Grenfell Tower, I have not been persuaded that the previous decisions of the Essex Fire Authority are unstable or need to be reviewed.

Sign .....  ..... Date ..... 25/1/2018 .....  
The signature is a cursive handwritten name, likely 'Adam Fobley', written in black ink over a dotted line.

### Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies

(The Chief Fire Officer is to set out the consultation that has been undertaken with the representative bodies)

There has been regular engagement, particularly with the Fire Brigades Union on each stage of the proposed changes to Aerial Ladder Platforms and which at times has involved a protracted local Trade Dispute. Director prevention Protection and Response has regularly engaged FBU representatives on the development of this document.

The most recent correspondence from the FBU is attached.

**Step 2 - Statutory Officer Review**

The report will be reviewed by the Essex Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority's ("the Commissioner") Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer prior to review and sign off by the Commissioner or their Deputy.

Monitoring Officer

Sign: *[Signature]*

Print: S. Hancock

Chief Financial Officer

Sign: *[Signature]*

Print: CHARLES K. LATTIN

22/2/18

**Step 3 - Publication**

Is the report for publication?

YES  NO

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (state 'none' if applicable)

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If the report is not for publication, the Monitoring Officer will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

**Step 4 - Redaction**

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

- 1. Of Decision Sheet YES/NO
- 2. Of Appendix YES/NO

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

.....  
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.....  
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Date redaction carried out: .....

If redaction is required, the Chief Financial Officer or the Monitoring Officer are to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign: .....  
Print: .....  
Date signed: .....

**Step 5 - Decision by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner**

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: *J Alexander*  
Print: *JANE GARDNER - DEPUTY POLICE FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER*  
Date signed: *26.02.2018*

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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.....  
.....  
.....

Sign: .....  
Print: .....  
Date signed: .....