LEICESTERSHIRE
FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

Planning Application – 11/00583/FUL
Compartment Fire Training Unit at Caterpillar, Desford.

Design Access Statement
Schedule 1 - Use

Supplementary Information

Use

It is the intention of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority (CFA) only to use the Compartment Fire Training Unit (CFTU) for the training of its own employees and not staff employed by other fire and rescue authorities. This provision is already contained in our licence with Caterpillar (U.K.) Ltd for the use their site. We are, however, prepared to provide a Unilateral Undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to this effect.

Burn Materials

The materials burnt within the CFTU are clean, dry white timbers only. The CFTU is lined with Oriented Strand Board (OSB) commonly known as Sterling Board in 8 x 4 feet cut sheets. This is our preferred material as although significantly more costly than standard chip board it is more environmentally friendly and also holds together when involved with fire, giving better burn qualities for instruction and little or no ash residue.

Number of Staff to be Trained

Our planning assumption has been that we have around 250 retained and 500 whole time fire-fighters that need training each year. About 50 of our retained are also wholetime fire-fighters (we call them 'dual contractors') and therefore likely to be trained with their wholetime colleagues.

We have reviewed these figures. Our current wholetime fire station based establishment is 403 and the retained establishment is 265. We also have 58 wholetime staff who are not based on station and who are either senior officers or who work in technical roles. Currently, 66 wholetime station based fire-fighters are also dual contractors. These figures exclude our Technical Rescue Team (which undertake non-fire fighting rescue work, for example, in collapsed buildings) whose establishment of 28 are dual contractors but without fire-fighting duties. As will be appreciated the actual number in post varies from month to month.

The nature of the training being undertaken in our first year of operation means that we are targeting station based wholetime and retained staff. This means 602 operational fire-fighters. However, non-station based operational and Technical Rescue staff may need to undergo training in the future. In addition, we need to provide training to new recruits to both the wholetime and the retained and for fire-fighters transferring into our service from other services. We estimate that this will require an additional 6 training days.

Staff are trained in groups of no larger than 10 fire-fighters. Due to the fact that some of our fire appliances have only 4 crew members a training session could comprise of 8 or 9 staff.

We do not envisage that our establishment of operational fire-fighters will rise in the foreseeable future. In fact, with the advent of the new Day Crewing Plus duty system that we are planning to introduce at some stations over the next 3 years the establishment is likely to reduce.

Potential and Actual Training Days

Our planning assumption has been that to accommodate our training needs we need 124 days available to us each year – 104 weekdays and 20 Saturdays. This should be contrasted with the 90 actual days that we believe will be needed to deliver the training. This is because planned sessions may have to be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions, absence of instructors or students or operational requirements. In addition, training sessions may be interrupted by operational requirements or other unforeseen circumstances. Of the planned sessions between the period 4th November 2010 and 16th August 2011 31 sessions were completed and 26 were cancelled (about 45%). It has to be remembered that the training is subject to our operational requirements which come first.

The number of training days we need depends on how many fire-fighters are available for a particular day. Our analysis of the best and worst case scenarios is:

Duty System	Numbers	No of days if 8 (Worst)	No of days if 9	No of days if 10 (Best)
Wholetime	403	50	45	40
Retained	265	33	29	27
Non-station	58	7	6	6
Technical	28	4	3	3

Rescue				
Trainees etc.	-	6	6	6
Total	754	100	89	82

This provides an average of 90 actual training days per year.

Of those 90 actual days ideally we would wish to burn on 20 Saturdays each year to accommodate the retained.

The retained consist of individuals that usually have primary employment with another employer and secondary employment with us. Employers agree to release their staff to attend operational incidents, but the on-going training that they do is carried out on dedicated training evenings. For full days training and exercises they have to utilize the weekends.

It may be that some employers would be prepared to release an employee for training during the week but experience tells us that primary employers are increasingly reluctant to do so. Similarly, some self-employed staff could attend but their customers require the services that they supply during the week. Therefore, we are restricted by the wishes of primary employers and customers.

It should be noted that this is not the only additional training the retained have to do. They have many other disciplines to work on such as Road Traffic Collisions refreshers and Procedural Breathing Apparatus refreshers at Loughborough. Therefore, the weekend slots are vital to us.

It is important that we have flexibility on the number of days that we can burn.

<u>Days, Times and Duration of Burns</u>

We would wish to continue to nominally train our wholetime staff on a Tuesday and a Thursday and our retained staff on a Saturday.

Similarly we would wish to continue to burn for a maximum of 45 minutes once between 12 noon and 1.30 pm and once between 2.30 pm and 4 pm.

We are currently restricted to one Saturday per month which is proving problematical for us.

We have offered not to burn in July and August to coincide with the summer school holidays to reduce the adverse impact on the local community. The result is that this

further restricts the number of Saturday burns available to us which we feel we do need to make up in the remaining months of the year.

We would ask that we be allowed to burn on 20 Saturdays per year but where we do so we would only burn:

1. On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday in the same week on 12 occasions; and,

2. On one weekday and the Saturday in the same week on the other 8 occasions.

Engagement with the Public

We wish to be as transparent as possible with the local community about our activities. We are particularly concerned that we should keep informed the nearest resident to the CFTU (the owner of Oak View, Peckleton Lane) of when we are going to burn and when we cancel a proposed burn. We have now set up an arrangement to do this.

We supply the training days to the Parish Council for display on their website and post these on our own website. We will continue to do this and use our best endeavours to provide the most up-to-date information we can.

Legal Obligations

We have an obligation to our staff under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure that they are adequately trained to fulfil their roles as fire-fighters. The provision of training at the CFTU assists us in fulfilling this obligation. Since 2000 18 fire-fighters have lost their lives in active duty with most of those attending compartment fires and wearing breathing apparatus equipment. This highlights the need for this unit.

Financial Considerations

The cost of sourcing training externally, for example, at the West Midlands Fire Service, which we have had to do previously, is £2,500 per class of 10 fire-fighters. There are also additional costs involved in transporting staff to the West Midlands. To train all our operational staff in this way would cost in excess of £170,000 per year.

Operational Resilience

If we are required to train our staff outside of Leicestershire it means that the staff and their appliances undertaking the training are unavailable for operational duties. We have available 30 fire engines to cover the whole of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland at any one time. In reality due to the varying availability of the retained the actual number available may be less than this. To then have a further two appliances unavailable because they are in the West Midlands reduces our resilience further. Whilst we have cross-border arrangements with our regional neighbouring fire services, these are subject to protocols and availability and we may be charged for the support provided.

Summary

In summary, we need a maximum 90 training days per year to service our current establishment if all operational staff require training.

In order to meet the training needs of our current retained establishment we need 20 Saturdays. If, however, the profile of the retained changes by a reduction in the number of dual contractors this requirement will increase. We accept that in those circumstances we would have to make alternative arrangements to train those additional retained fire-fighters.

We propose that the 90 days be spread over the months September to June and that of the 44 weeks in which burns may take place:

1. 24 weeks will have burns only on weekdays;

2. 12 weeks will have burns on 2 weekdays and a Saturday; and,

3. 8 weeks will have burns on a weekday and a Saturday.