**SEAFORD TOWN COUNCIL**

**Response to Consultation by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service on ‘Planning for a Secure Future’**

The Consultation document has been forwarded to and considered by members of the Council and we would ask that the following points are taken into consideration :-

1**.**Overall the review should be more honest about the fact that one of the main purposes must be to make up a deficit in funding. This is only acknowledged indirectly in the final pages. However, the decision not to close any stations in East Sussex and Brighton is welcomed

2.It is noted that Seaford is reclassified from a maxi-cab station to an ordinary single engine. There is concern over the future effectiveness of the cover at Seaford particularly at a time when there is significant housing growth in the town and the town already has a high elderly demographic with limited mobility, many living in blocks of flats. Survey responses from previous years may not necessarily be relevant to the next 10 years when so much growth is envisaged

3.We should comment on the proposed changes at Newhaven as it is close enough to be considered a local station; we are fortunate in having two stations operating in a relatively small area.  However, the proposed removal of fulltime staff covering evenings and weekends at Newhaven and reliance instead on an unmanned station and on-call staff will inevitably affect emergency cover in both towns

4.The proximity of Newhaven to Seaford may have been taken into account in the review of staffing and general cover but it should be pointed out that a road accident blocking the A259 between the two towns would effectively prevent any assistance from Newhaven to any fire or other incident occurring in Seaford and vice versa

5.The additional flexibility generally in having a mobile pool of fire officers to supplement stations around the county may sound like a good idea but it may adversely affect officer morale which comes from attachment to a particular team or watch at a specific home station. Also, it is difficult to see how the proposed reduction of officers by 33 or 27, depending on which option is followed, can actually improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the county service.

6.Charging fees for attending false alarms may be appropriate in certain circumstances but proposing not to attend alarm calls from low risk commercial premises discriminates against small business and could have grave consequences for those businesses and their neighbours. As regards lift releases, any proposed delay in responding would be a concern but there would be support for charging in these cases

Geoff Johnson

Planning Officer

Seaford Town Council Friday 19th June 2020