

## **CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY**

**MEETING OF** : **FIRE AUTHORITY** **ITEM: 3**  
**DATE** : **12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY, 2014**  
**REPORT OF** : **CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**  
**AUTHOR** : **TIM BEVINGTON,**  
**HEAD OF PLANNING, PERFORMANCE and**  
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**SUBJECT** : **INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
**2014 - 15 (IRMP11)**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report seeks Members' approval to publish the Authority's annual action plan for 2014-15 (IRMP11) following the conclusion of a formal 12 week consultation programme.
2. It includes an overview of the consultation programme and a summary of the key issues highlighted in the full consultation report, electronic copies of which have been circulated to Members and also made available on the Service's website and Intranet. Hard copies of the report have also been made available in the group rooms.
3. The final draft of IRMP11 has been circulated with the agenda. It has been updated to reflect issues raised during the consultation and considered by Members at the planning day on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2014 and at the Policy Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> January. The latest plan also includes the most up to date performance and financial information.

### **Recommended:** That

- [1] Members consider the feedback received from the consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2014-15 (IRMP11).
- [2] Subject to Members' comments and decisions on the budget and the safety centre elsewhere on the agenda, approval is given for publication of IRMP11 by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014.
- [3] The Chief Fire Officer be authorised to make any final drafting changes to the publication, including updated performance information.

### **Background**

4. At the Authority's meeting in December Members received an interim report which gave an update on progress against the IRMP11 consultation programme and highlighted the emerging themes from the comments received.

Since then a presentation on the key themes was made to the planning day on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2014 while a report on the subsequent Member debate was considered by the Policy Committee meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

5. The full consultation report has now been completed and an electronic copy has been circulated to Members, with hard copies available in the group rooms. As in previous years, the full report details both the survey results and the feedback comments, as well as providing a comprehensive overview of all aspects of the programme. Clearly, in concentrating on the formal consultation programme the report does not cover the informal opportunities which staff and trade union representatives have had to influence and comment on the proposals contained within the draft IRMP11. These have included a management conference, station roadshows and meetings of the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Panel (JCNP).

## Consultation programme

6. The programme focused on a standard consultation survey highlighting key proposals in the draft IRMP with residents encouraged to respond using the printed copies distributed at the community roadshows or via the website. Staff and partners were urged to respond via the online survey available on both the Intranet and website.
7. The table below briefly summarises the main approaches taken to engage with the different groups:

Group	Methods of engagement
Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarising the IRMP proposals in the Authority's Annual Report, delivered to all 488,000 properties across Cheshire.</li> <li>• Nine consultation roadshows in major centres of population across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington over two months.</li> <li>• Online survey accessible from the homepage of <a href="http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk">www.cheshirefire.gov.uk</a> and in hard copy on request.</li> <li>• Media coverage and regular alerts via Facebook, Twitter and Google+ to publicise roadshow dates and raise awareness of ways to get involved with the consultation.</li> <li>• Letters and surveys sent to the Service's Response consultation panel and to Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre's consultation panel.</li> <li>• IRMP briefing packs and surveys for all cadet units.</li> </ul>

Group	Methods of engagement
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Leadership roadshows' held at various locations, giving station-based staff the opportunity to hear and discuss the proposals in the draft IRMP with CFO and senior managers</li> <li>• Departmental briefings by each Head of Department</li> <li>• Online survey linked to the Intranet homepage and a dedicated section with the plan and supporting documents</li> <li>• Global emails to all staff, promotional screensaver, reminders in <i>The Green</i> (weekly bulletin), <i>Alert</i> (quarterly newsletter) and Core Brief (managers' cascade bulletin)</li> <li>• Meetings with Fire Brigades Union (FBU) representatives.</li> </ul>
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email to over 250 key individuals and organisations including public, third and private sector stakeholders on whom the IRMP proposals may have an impact</li> <li>• All 11 Cheshire Members of Parliament were written to directly and provided with copies of the summary and full draft IRMP, while there were also meetings with those whose constituencies may be affected by the proposals. All Cheshire Members of the House of Lords were also contacted and encouraged to provide their views</li> <li>• Meetings with unitary authority leaders and chief executives</li> <li>• Briefings to key town/parish councils covering areas that may be affected</li> <li>• Meetings with the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable and the Chief Executive of the North West Ambulance Service.</li> </ul>

8. The nine community roadshows took place between 8<sup>th</sup> October and 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and just under 4,000 survey forms were distributed. They produced a response rate of 18.1 %, above the 10% average for postal surveys.
9. As with other recent IRMP consultations, the opportunity was taken to promote key safety messages to the public. Leaflets highlighting the Service's 'Dirty Grills Kill' cooking safety campaign were included in the survey packs while promotional mugs were distributed at key locations.

## Outcomes

10. The programme obtained substantial quantitative and qualitative feedback from residents, partners and staff, with a total of 582 members of the public, 133 members of staff and 17 partner organisations responding.
11. The figures mean that the Authority can be confident that the responses are an accurate reflection of public opinion, producing a confidence interval of +/- 5%.

12. While the Service did not subject this year's consultation programme to formal assessment by the Consultation Institute, officers adopted the organisation's principles and followed its best practice criteria throughout.

## Consultation results

13. The quantitative survey comprised 11 questions about the Service in general and the proposals for 2014-15. The headline results include:
- **Satisfaction** - The vast majority of residents (98%) and stakeholders (90%) value Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service as a local service provider or partner organisation
  - **IRMP 11** - 75.3% of residents, 46.4% of staff and 50% of stakeholders support the overall plans set out in the draft annual action plan for 2014-15
  - **Council Tax** - 45.8% of residents, 62.4% of staff and 27.3% of stakeholders would support the Fire Authority increasing its council tax level by 1.99%
  - **Smoke alarm campaign** - there was overwhelming support for the Service's campaign to make it a requirement for private landlords to install smoke detectors in their properties
  - **Automatic fire alarms** - the majority of residents (68.5%) supported the new policy of not attending Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) during office hours unless there is a phone call confirming a fire – with the exception of premises such as hospitals. There were similar levels of support (48.1%) and opposition (43.5%) to the proposal from staff.
14. The two issues which attracted most controversy concerned the proposed Safety Centre and the project to offer a paid for home safety assessment service to low risk households.
15. The first issue is the subject of a separate report and business case to this meeting. In the IRMP survey respondents were asked: *'Do you support plans for the Fire Authority to build a new interactive safety centre in Cheshire specifically for young people?'* There was strong public support with 76.5% in favour, 15.5% not sure and 8% opposing, however, from staff there was greater opposition (44.3%) than support (38.2%), with 17.5% not sure. There was strong support from partners for the proposal.
16. The proposal to offer a paid for home safety assessment service to low risk households was the only aspect of the survey where there was greater public opposition (43.1%) than support (28.9%). In addition to the opposition, there was also concern expressed about the possible charges, with 31 per cent saying there shouldn't be a charge at all and the same amount opting for the lowest proposed price. There was also more staff opposition (49.7%) than support (39.7%) while 53.4% said there shouldn't be any charge for the service.
17. In addition to the quantitative results, the survey also provided the opportunity for respondents to add any particular comments they had. A fifth of the public

took the opportunity to respond with the main themes relating to the community safety proposals and projects. Nearly 50% of staff who responded added detailed comments and their key themes related to ongoing issues from the emergency response review and changes to shift and crewing arrangements.

18. Full details of all comments received are included within the final consultation report circulated to Members electronically.

### **Consultation with representative bodies**

19. The IRMP 11 proposals have been the subject of both formal and informal discussions between senior management and representative bodies. Members have also received a copy of the formal response from the local branch of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) which branch officials expanded on at the planning day on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2014. As Members are aware, the main issues raised are around ongoing issues to do with crewing levels and shift changes rather than specific proposals within IRMP11. The formal FBU response is included within the full consultation report.
20. While informal discussions have been held with representatives from both Unison and the Fire Officers' Association, no formal responses have been received.

### **Consultation evaluation**

21. In line with best practice and internal audit recommendations, all major Service consultations are reviewed to examine any lessons which can be learned to improve future engagement.
22. As a result of last year's evaluation, the ongoing assessment of both feedback and monitoring data again proved valuable in assessing the need for any potential changes during this programme. The full consultation report includes a specific section which reviews the effectiveness of the programme.

### **Publication of IRMP11**

23. The copy of the IRMP circulated with the agenda has been updated in a number of areas from the original draft version which was approved by the Authority for consultation. This is to reflect the outcomes of discussions at senior management and Member planning days and to balance the outcomes of consultation feedback against the Authority's future budget.
24. As this updated version had to be circulated in advance of key decisions due to be made at today's meeting, it includes a number of assumptions. In particular, the medium term financial plan is the version based on the Authority taking the Council Tax Freeze Grant, while it has also been assumed that the safety centre project is accepted. Clearly these sections will be updated after the meeting to reflect the Authority's final recommendations.
25. The summary on page 21 has also been updated to reflect the latest position on a number of draft projects. This includes the progress on the smoke alarm

campaign and the outcomes of an evaluation of the former Redsands Children's Centre in Willaston, Crewe which highlighted that it does not currently meet the Service's risk and operational criteria for a new fire station.

26. Corporate and unitary performance information has also been added to the publication, with the figures based on data as at 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2012 projected to the end of the financial year. These figures will be updated with the latest available information prior to final publication and will be signed off by the Chief Fire Officer.
27. The annual plan focuses on the 2014-15 financial year, however, an indicative three year timetable is included to provide an overview of the implementation of the emergency response programme .

### **Financial implications**

28. All elements of the IRMP11 consultation programme have been delivered through the use of existing departmental budgets and staff. Printing costs for the final version of IRMP11 and any summary versions distributed to consultees can also be met from within existing publication budgets.

### **Legal implications**

29. Publication of the final IRMP for 2014-15 by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2014 will fulfil the Authority's statutory responsibilities.

### **Equality & Diversity**

30. The consultation programme was developed to maximise opportunities to involve local communities and picked up issues highlighted in the impact assessment for the corporate consultation and engagement strategy. The initial responses were analysed at the mid point review to see if changes needed to be made to consultation scope and approach. In addition, a dedicated workshop session was held with representatives from the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Equality Council (CHAWREC).
31. The full report includes full details of the equality monitoring information received and shows no significant variations or issues.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:  
Making Cheshire Safer – Integrated Risk Management Plan 2014-15 (IRMP11)**

**Integrated Risk Management Plan 2014-15 – Report on public, staff and partner consultation**