

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

ITEM: 3

MEETING OF DATE : FIRE AUTHORITY
REPORT OF AUTHOR : 10 FEBRUARY, 2016
: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
: TIM BEVINGTON, HEAD OF PLANNING, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

SUBJECT : INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN
2016-17 (IRMP13)

Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks Members' approval to publish the Authority's annual action plan for 2016-17 (IRMP13) following the conclusion of a formal 12 week consultation programme.
2. It includes a brief 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.
3. The final draft of IRMP13 has been circulated with the agenda and having been updated to take into account the significant legislative and other changes which have occurred recently at local, sub regional and national level. It also reflects issues raised during the consultation and considered by Members at the Planning Day on 15th January 2016 and at the Policy Committee on 27th January 2016. The latest draft 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 2016-17 (IRMP13).
- [2] Subject to Members' comments and decisions on the budget elsewhere on the agenda, approval is given for publication of IRMP13 by 31st March, 2016.
- [3] The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive be authorised to make any final drafting changes to the Plan, including final performance and financial information.

Background

4. At the Authority's meeting in December Members received an interim report which gave an update on progress against the IRMP13 consultation programme and highlighted the emerging themes from the comments received.

Since then a presentation on the key themes was made at the Planning Day on 16th January 2016 while a formal report on headline issues was considered by the Policy Committee meeting on 27th January 2016.

5. The full consultation report has now been completed and an electronic copy 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, for staff there have been both formal and informal opportunities to provide feedback, including 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"> • Providing a summary of the IRMP proposals within the Service's Annual Report, delivered to over 488,000 properties across Cheshire. • Six consultation roadshow in major centres of population across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington over the course of six weeks. • Online survey accessible from the homepage of www.cheshirefire.gov.uk and in hard copy on request. • Media coverage and alerts via Facebook, Twitter and Google+ while paid for advertising on social media channels was used for the first time to raise awareness of the consultation. • Postal surveys sent to members of the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre's consultation panel
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five 'leadership roadshows' held at various locations, giving station based staff in each of the Service's unitary areas the opportunity to listen to the proposals within the draft IRMP and talk to members of the Service Management Team. • Online survey accessible from the intranet homepage, together with a dedicated consultation intranet page which provided copies of the draft IRMP and supporting documentation. • Global emails to all staff, promotional screensaver, reminders in <i>The Green</i> (weekly staff bulletin), <i>Alert</i> (quarterly staff newsletter)

Group	Methods of engagement
	<p>and Core Brief (manager's bulletin to cascade key messages to staff).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with Fire Brigades Union (FBU) representatives and regular meetings with trade union representatives through the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Panel (JCNP) process.
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email to key individuals and organisations on whom the IRMP proposals may have an impact. • Copies of the draft Plan, summary and stakeholder newsletter to all Members of Parliament and Peers. • Electronic copies of the summary draft Plan and stakeholder newsletter to all unitary councillors and town/parish councils. • Briefing for leaders and chief executives of sub-regional partners

8. The community roadshows saw a total of 1,500 survey packs distributed, with 246 completed forms returned - a response rate of 16.4%, above the average for postal surveys returns of 10%.
9. As with other recent IRMP consultations, the opportunity was taken to promote key safety messages to the public. This year the Service's 'Dirty Grills Kill' and winter driving campaigns were highlighted with the packs including promotional items with safety messages for people to retain.

Outcomes

10. There were 424 responses received from the public consultation in total, which means that the Service can have a high degree of confidence that the responses are a genuine reflection of residents' views and within a +/- 4.75% margin of error.
11. Responses were received from across the whole of the Fire Authority area, however, as in other recent consultations, the breakdown by age shows that there was an over-representation from those aged over 65.
12. While the Service did not subject this year's consultation programme to formal assessment by the Consultation Institute, officers continue to adopt the organisation's principles and followed its best practice criteria throughout.

Consultation results

13. The quantitative survey comprised 14 questions about the Service in general and the proposals for 2016-17. The headline results include:

- **Satisfaction** - The vast majority of residents (98.3%) value Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service as a local service provider
- **IRMP 13** – 78.1% of residents and 60.3% of staff support the overall plans set out in the draft annual action plan with 5.2% of the public and 30.9% of staff opposed.
- **Council Tax** – 65.2% of residents would support the Fire Authority increasing its council tax level by 1.99% - this level of support has increased consistently by 10% in each of the last three years. Staff support was 66.7%
- **Contact** – 57.3% of public respondents have had no contact with the Service over the past three years, 24.2% had come into contact through a Home Safety Assessment (HSA) and 11.6% had visited a station open day. Only 3.5% were as a result of a fire or road traffic collision.
- **Blue Light Collaboration** – 70.4% of the public support the proposal to join up some support services with 20.6% not sure and 9% against. There is less backing for the plan to share Headquarters, however, with 38.4% in support, 35.4% not sure and 26.3% opposing. Staff responses show that 60.3% supported sharing some support functions with 27.4% opposing, while 50.7% back the joint HQ plan with 35.6% against.
- **Expanding Home Safety Assessments to incorporate basic health checks** – 78.4% of public support this, 12.2% are unsure and 9.5% oppose. The survey also sought views on which extra checks were felt most appropriate with preventing slips, trips and falls (89.4%) and help staying warm in winter (89.1%) the most favoured options, followed by smoking cessation (76.2%), help for those recently discharged from hospital (74.2%) and dementia awareness (72.7%). Staff responses saw 61.8% in favour and 30.9% against, while the order of favoured activities largely matched the public's.
- **Pilot programme to respond to cardiac incidents with North West Ambulance Service** – strong public support with 76.1% in favour, 16.6% not sure and 7.3% opposing. Staff response results were similar with 77.9% in favour, 11.8% not sure and 10.3% opposing.

14. In addition to completing the survey questions, many public respondents also took time to give more detailed views with over 380 additional comments received - full details are in the final consultation report. While these comments covered a wide range of issues, the key theme was collaboration. Most supported the proposals as a way improving efficiency but wanted assurances that the Service maintaining its own brand, identity and level of service to the public.

15. There was general support for the proposals from three parish and town councils who responded directly to the consultation – Antrobus, Crewe and Neston, although the need for the Service to protect its own identity in any collaboration was again highlighted. The local councils also raised a number of other fire-related issues in their areas which are being responded to directly.
16. As highlighted to Members previously, the number of staff responses was relatively low with 75 surveys completed, although this is in line with last year's response of 78. Clearly many staff have already given their views on the headline proposals affecting emergency response services, while the recent staff survey was used extensively to give feedback on a wide range of issues with 939 comments received in total.
17. No formal responses were received from the representative bodies, however, the secretary of the Cheshire Fire Brigades Union gave a presentation to the Member Planning Day on 15th January 2016. In it he acknowledged that the union's key issues and concerns centred on issues initially proposed in earlier IRMPs. He stressed the need to ensure appropriate training for staff involved in delivering the proposed 'safe and well' visits and added that they would want to engage in detail on the upcoming emergency response review.

Consultation evaluation

18. In line with best practice, all major Service consultations are reviewed to examine any lessons which can be learned to improve future engagement. Issues highlighted this time include the increased potential for joint consultation with partners as part of ongoing collaboration discussions. In addition, the piloting of targeted social media advertising this year has highlighted opportunities to enhance the major emergency response consultation later this year.

Publication of IRMP13

19. The copy of the IRMP circulated with the agenda has been updated in a number of areas to reflect outcomes from the consultation and recent changes to national and sub-regional policies and programmes. These include the Government's response to its consultation on enabling closer working between emergency services and the formal transfer of fire and rescue services under the responsibility of the Home Office.
20. The latest Medium Term Financial Plan in the document assumes the Authority has agreed to increase its Council Tax precept by 1.99% - clearly this is subject to the budget decisions made by Members at today's meeting.
21. Corporate and unitary performance information has also been added to the publication, with the figures based on data as at 31st December, 2015 projected to the end of the financial year.
22. All performance and financial figures will be updated with the latest available information just prior to final publication in March and will be signed off by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive. Similarly, the timetable for the

completion of the Authority's programme to build new fire stations will also need to be updated just before printing.

Financial implications

23. All elements of the IRMP13 consultation programme have been delivered through the use of existing departmental budgets and staff. Printing costs for the final version of IRMP13 and any summary versions distributed to consultees can also be met from within existing publication budgets.

Legal implications

24. Publication of the final IRMP for 2016-17 by March 31st 2016 will fulfil the Authority's statutory responsibilities.

Equality & Diversity

25. The consultation programme was developed to maximise opportunities to involve local residents by reflecting issues highlighted in the impact assessment for the Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy. This included varying the days, times and venues for the roadshows and providing opportunities for minority community groups to give their views.
26. The final consultation report includes a breakdown of the results from the IRMP13 consultation so that the Authority can consider the impact of any differences by characteristic.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:
Making Cheshire Safer – Integrated Risk Management Plan 2016-17 (IRMP13)**

Integrated Risk Management Plan 2016-17 – Report on public, staff and partner consultation