

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 27TH SEPTEMBER 2022
REPORT OF: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AUTHOR: MARK SHONE

SUBJECT: DRAFT COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN
2024-28

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out information about the draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-28, which Members are asked to approve before it is published for formal consultation with the public, staff and stakeholders. The proposed consultation process is also described.

Recommended:

- [1] That, subject to Members' comments, the draft CRMP 2024-28 be approved for formal consultation, with the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive authorised to make any final amendments prior to publication.

Background

2. The Authority is required to produce a CRMP (formerly called an Integrated Risk Management Plan or IRMP) at least every three years. This is required to identify risks facing the community and describe how the Authority intends to address those risks.
3. The CRMP must satisfy a number of requirements laid out in the Fire and Rescue Framework for England. The draft CRMP 2024-2028 has been produced, for consultation, in accordance with those requirements.

Information

Development and pre-consultation

4. The draft CRMP 2024-28, which is attached to this report as Appendix 1, is a consultation document that sets out a proposed strategy for the development of the Authority's prevention and protection activity and emergency response capability over the next four years. It has been developed using the Authority's longstanding Community Risk Management model, which involves assessing risk data from a wide range of sources and applying professional judgement to develop plans and strategies.

5. The proposals set out in the draft CRMP have also been informed by feedback from Members at a workshop on 7 July 2023 and at subsequent Member Planning Days in August and early September. In addition, the public and staff have been engaged through online surveys, and sessions run with the Staff Engagement Forum and two focus groups of operational staff. The views gathered are set out in detail in two documents: firstly, the Pre-Consultation Summary, which is attached to this report as Appendix 2; and secondly, the Free Text Comments, which will be sent to Members separately, published on the website and also available in Group Rooms on the day of the Fire Authority meeting.
6. Members agreed some guiding principles for the development of the draft CRMP. These were broadly endorsed by the public and staff during the pre-consultation. The principles are set out below:
 - Giving our colleagues and communities a meaningful say in the development of our Service.
 - Continuing to respond to incidents as quickly as we do now and where possible even quicker in the future.
 - Increasing the availability of fire engines, especially during daytime hours.
 - Enabling our staff to be more productive and effective, keeping our communities safe.
 - Strengthening our prevention and protection programmes to meet the needs of those most at risk.
 - Providing high quality, sustainable workplaces for our colleagues by continuing to modernise our buildings and facilities.
 - Continuing to promote our Service's safe, supportive and inclusive workplace culture.

Content

7. The format of the draft CRMP is similar to that of the current IRMP 2020-24. On pages 6 to 12 it provides an overview of Cheshire by local authority area and describes how Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service is structured. This includes an overview of each department and a map showing how emergency response is provided across the county.
8. Pages 15 to 27 describe a range of community risks categorised under the three broad themes of prevention, protection and response. Elements of road and water safety are also considered under the prevention section. Information is provided about how each risk is currently addressed and future activity that is proposed.

9. The principal risk relating to response (i.e. attending incidents, like fires and road traffic collisions) is concerned with maintaining sufficient fire cover (enough fire engines and firefighters). As part of the overall CRMP development, a fire cover review has been undertaken to look at ways of strengthening operational cover and resilience. The process for this review is explained on pages 28 to 30 before five response proposals are set out in detail.
10. The final sections of the draft CRMP describe how the Service proposes to develop the organisation over the next four years. This includes work around culture, people and continuous improvement. An overview of the Authority's funding arrangements and commentary about the overall affordability of the CRMP proposals is also provided.
11. The final published version of the CRMP in 2024 will not need to include as much information about how proposals were developed or details of how to take part in the public consultation.

Response proposals

12. The five proposals set out on pages 32 to 43 aim to provide more resilient fire cover, enable the Authority to undertake even more risk-reducing prevention and protection work in the community, and speed up response times to emergencies. They are as follows:
 - **Proposal 1: change the way we measure response times**, to better monitor the impact of proposals 2 to 4 and improvement in response times.
 - **Proposal 2: convert four on-call fire engines (Runcorn, Winsford, Northwich and Macclesfield) to full-time crewing during weekdays**, with the aim of improving resilience, response times and delivery of prevention and protection activity.
 - **Proposal 3: convert Knutsford's fire engine from on-call to day-crewing**, guaranteeing the availability of a fire engine 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
 - **Proposal 4: reorganise daytime fire cover in Warrington**, improving the spread of fire cover and prevention and protection activity across Birchwood and Stockton Heath.
 - **Proposal 5: strengthen the on-call system**, to make it more effective, rewarding for staff and more sustainable.

Consultation

13. It is proposed to continue the Authority's tried and tested approach of undertaking comprehensive consultation to ensure that the public, staff and

stakeholders are able to contribute their views and help to shape future plans. This also enables the organisation to promote key safety messages and raise general awareness of the Service's work.

14. It is proposed to run a 13-week consultation from 2 October 2023 until 2 January 2024, to take into account bank holidays around the Christmas period. As in previous years, a series of consultation roadshows will take place across all four local authority areas. Details of these events will be published on the Service's website once arrangements are confirmed. In addition, residents will be consulted at a range of other events across Cheshire, such as community group meetings.
15. Underpinning the consultation process will be an electronic survey, which will be used to gauge views on the risks and proposals set out in the draft CRMP. The main consultation document, a public summary and short videos will be available on a dedicated area of the Service's website. There will also be extensive use of the Service's social media channels, to encourage online feedback.
16. The approach to staff consultation will include face-to-face dialogue, with visits to individual watches and teams planned throughout the consultation period. This will be supported by online content available on the Service's intranet, including a staff survey.
17. Key external partners will be contacted directly and encouraged to provide comments. In addition, contact will be made with a range of community networks to encourage responses from under-represented groups.
18. Initial feedback from the consultation will be reported to Members at their meeting on 6 December 2023. A formal report on the outcomes of the consultation will be presented to the Authority at its meeting on 14 February 2024. At that meeting the Authority will be asked to finalise and approve the CRMP for 2024-28. It will also consider the budget for 2024-25.

Financial Implications

19. The package of proposals in the CRMP 2024-2028 will be essentially cost neutral. The small additional cost will be covered by savings from existing budgets.
20. The consultation and communications costs associated with the development of the CRMP will be met from one-off growth of £30,000, approved as part of the 2023/24 budget process.

Legal Implications

21. Publication of the CRMP 2024-28 in February 2024 will fulfil the Authority's statutory responsibility.
22. The Consultation Institute has been engaged to provide external assurance that the draft CRMP has been developed and consulted on in line with best

practice. The Institute will continue to monitor the consultation activities and provide feedback which should be reflected in the report to the Authority about the CRMP.

Equality and Diversity Implications

23. Equality impact assessments (EIAs) have been carried out on proposals 2 to 4; those with the greatest impact on staff. The EIAs are included as Appendix 3 to this report.

Environmental Implications

24. Opportunities to respond online will reduce the need for printed materials. Where they are required to support the consultation, they will be printed on recycled paper where possible.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

Appendix 1: Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28

Appendix 2: Draft CRMP Pre-consultation Report

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessments