

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 14 FEBRUARY 2017
REPORT OF: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AUTHOR: SIAN CORRIGAN

SUBJECT: INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN
2017-18 (IRMP 14)

Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks Members' approval to publish the Authority's annual action plan for 2017-18 (IRMP 14).

Recommended: That:

- [1] Members consider the feedback received from the consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-18 (IRMP 14);
- [2] subject to Members' comments and decisions, approval is given for publication of IRMP 14 by 31st March 2017; and
- [3] the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive be authorised to make any final changes to the draft IRMP 14 (including the addition of final performance and financial information).

Background

2. Members approved the draft IRMP 14 proposals for consultation at the Fire Authority meeting on 21st September 2016. This followed a number of inputs and discussions at Member Planning Days in July and September 2016.
3. A public, staff and stakeholder consultation was subsequently launched on 3rd October 2016 to run until 3rd January 2017 (13 weeks) in order to gather feedback on the Authority's proposals for 2017/18. For the first time the IRMP consultation also incorporated questions relating to the Public Satisfaction Survey. This had previously been undertaken separately.
4. The Consultation Institute was again engaged to provide an independent assessment of the consultation in order to ensure it met recognised standards of best practice.
5. Members have been provided with updates about progress of the consultation at both their November and January Planning Days.
6. The full consultation report has now been completed and an electronic copy circulated to Members, with hard copies available in the group rooms. A copy has also been made available on the Service's website and intranet. 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 consultation programme.

Consultation programme

7. The table below outlines the engagement methods used for each of the key groups consulted during the 13-week period.

Underpinning the entire approach was a survey, which posed 22 questions relating to the various proposals set out within the draft IRMP 14 and also more general questions in respect of public satisfaction.

Group	Methods of engagement
Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleven date consultation roadshow in major centres of population across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, 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+ to publicise roadshow dates and raise awareness of ways to get involved with the consultation. • Letters and surveys sent to members of the Service's Response consultation panel. • Engaging with local residents at various events held by community groups, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attendance at Chester Pride on Saturday 1st October 2016 ○ Attending the multi-faith open day at CHAWREC's Unity Centre on Saturday 5th November 2016 ○ Visiting the Mulberry Care Centre in Chester on Wednesday 26th October 2016. • Postal surveys sent to members of the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre's 276-strong consultation panel. • Emails raising awareness of the consultation sent to various black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) and disability groups, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vale Royal Disability Services ○ Cheshire Centre for Independent Living ○ Warrington Disability Partnership ○ Halton Disability Partnership ○ Macclesfield Eye Society ○ Deafness Support Network ○ Warrington Islamic Association ○ Warrington Ethnic Communities Association ○ Cheshire Asian and Minority Community Council ○ South Cheshire Multi Cultural Forum ○ Irish Community Care ○ Age UK Cheshire ○ Crewe Older People's Network

Group	Methods of engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Body Positive ○ Unique Transgender ○ Chester Pride committee
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seven '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 14 and talk to members of the Service's Management Team (SMT) ● Online survey accessible from the intranet homepage, together with a dedicated consultation intranet page which provided copies of the draft IRMP 14 and supporting documentation. ● Global emails to all staff and reminders in <i>The Green</i> (weekly staff bulletin). ● Meetings with Fire Brigades Union (FBU) representatives and regular meetings with trade union representatives through the Joint Consultation Negotiation Panel (JCNP) process.
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Email to over 200 key individuals, business groups and organisations on whom the IRMP proposals may have an impact, including neighbouring fire and rescue services, local partner agencies such as: NHS Trusts; Clinical Commissioning Groups; Cheshire Constabulary; Police and Crime Commissioner, and representative bodies. ● Copies of the draft Plan and summary to all Members of Parliament and Peers. ● Electronic copies of the summary draft Plan and summary to all unitary councillors and town/parish councils. ● Face to face briefings arranged for six Members of Parliament whose constituencies could be impacted by the proposals and briefings to council leaders and chief executives via existing sub-regional structures.

The consultation's reach

8. 632 members of the public completed the formal consultation survey. This provides a margin of error of plus or minus 4% at a 95% level of confidence.
9. Responses were received from all station areas, all age groups, 45% men and 55% women, 15% from those with a disability, 12% from black and ethnic minorities (BAME) and 12 responses from those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT).
10. 137 members of staff completed the survey but others shared their views via a series of internal roadshows and a management briefing.

11. Formal written responses were received from eight stakeholders. In addition feedback was taken into account from the face to face briefings with six MPs, the council leaders and chief executives via sub-regional meetings.

Consultation results (public and staff)

The following provides a summary of the responses received from both staff and the public from the IRMP 14 consultation:

12. **Overall satisfaction with the Service:** 99% of the public valued Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service as a local service provider and 92% were satisfied with the overall performance of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.
13. **Value for money:** 80% of the public agreed that Cheshire Fire Authority represented value for money based on the existing level of precept.
14. **IRMP Overall:** 79% of the public and 49% of staff agreed overall with the proposals as set out in the draft IRMP 14, while 4% of public and 28% of staff disagreed.
15. **Council Tax increase:** 66% of the public and 58% of staff agreed with the proposed increase in the precept of 1.99%. 12% of the public and 21% of staff disagreed with this proposal.

A further 298 public additional comments were also submitted regarding increasing the precept. The vast majority of these comments were in support of the increase. Of the 53 comments raising concerns, some highlighted the impact of tax rises on fixed incomes; others were concerned about what they perceived as continuing cuts in front line services.

16. **Hydraulic Platform Review:** 19% of the public and 30% of staff agreed with the proposed move from three to two hydraulic platforms across the Service; compared to 36% of the public and 42% of staff who disagreed with the proposal.

The comments from both staff and public opposed to the reduction in the number of hydraulic platforms focused on three main concerns: response times for the two remaining hydraulic platforms traveling into areas of Cheshire East; the impact the change might have on the Service's ability to deal with incidents in some high rise properties; and concerns over resilience should one hydraulic platform be unavailable.

17. **Review of Staffing Arrangements:** 41% of public and 36% of staff agreed with the proposed review of staffing systems at Birchwood, Macclesfield, Penketh and Wilmslow fire stations. 10% of the public and 38% of staff disagreed with this.

135 additional comments were made by the public. 42 respondents stated objections to any reduction in service and 18 also felt that more detail on a review was needed before they could offer a firm view. 13 respondents

supported a review and seven felt that this was a matter that should be left to professional judgment.

38 additional comments were left by staff, 10 of which supported a process of review. Nine staff questioned the timing of reviewing Penketh before the availability of incident data and seven stated that operational cover shouldn't be reduced as a result of any review.

18. **Additional Engine at Crewe and Ellesmere Port Fire Stations:** 75% of the public and 45% of staff agreed with the proposed introduction of additional day-staffed engines at Crewe and Ellesmere Port fire stations. 4% of the public and 31% staff disagreed.

The public were supportive of additional resources but some raised concerns over a perceived lack of fire cover in the evening and at weekends.

It is also worth noting that this question did cause some confusion as the second fire engine at both stations has not yet made the transition to on-call as planned. Therefore, some staff questioned whether this was indeed 'an additional' resource. Staff expressed concern over on-call availability and a potential reduced resilience or a reduction in service in Cheshire East.

This proposal did generate debate in the Crewe community about the planned change of the second fire engine to on-call. Although this was out of the scope of this consultation reference to it has been included in the full consultation report (Members have already approved the change at the Fire Authority meeting in February 2013).

19. **Expansion of the Cardiac Response Pilot:** 89% of the public and 82% of staff agreed with rolling out the cardiac response pilot. Only 4% of the public and 9% of staff disagreed.

There was strong and growing support (compared to the 2015 consultation) from both public and staff for this initiative.

20. **Redeveloping Operational Training:** 65% of the public and 70% of staff agreed with plans to redevelop operational training at the Service's Winsford Headquarters, with 3% public and 13% of staff disagreeing.

There was significant support for this proposal from both the public and staff.

21. **Automatic Fire Alarm Policy:** 68% of the public and 45% of staff agreed with the proposal to introduce a new Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) policy. 3% of the public and 19% of staff disagreed.

In terms of the public comments relating to this question most were supportive of the proposal. While 11 out of 25 staff comments expressed a desire to continue with the current response to AFAs.

22. **Sprinklers in Schools:** 96% of the public and 92% of staff agreed with the Service's campaign to ensure that requirements for sprinkler systems in schools remain in place. Only 1% of the public and 4% of staff disagreed.

There was extremely strong support from both staff and the public for this proposal.

Stakeholder feedback

23. Responses, including those from local authorities and neighbouring fire and rescue services in Staffordshire and Shropshire, primarily expressed agreement with the Plan overall. Comments highlighted the benefits of using a risk-based methodology in which to direct and evaluate activity and supported collaborating with other local partners to improve outcomes for local people. Support was also expressed for the proposed expansion of the cardiac response trial. A response from Antrobus Parish Council highlighted the importance of the availability of sufficient fire hydrants in rural areas.
24. A consultation response was submitted by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) which made six recommendations to the Authority. Specifically in relation to the proposals within this consultation, there were objections to the proposed removal of the third hydraulic platform and the introduction of the third fire engine at Crewe and Ellesmere Port – with a preference for these stations to maintain two wholetime fire engines. There were also wider points regarding call handling, response times, the staffing of wholetime appliances, operational equipment and welfare. The FBU attended the Members' Planning Day in January 2017 to present their response.
25. A response was also received from West Cheshire Trades Union Council which supported the position of the FBU.

Consultation outcomes

26. As a result of feedback received during the consultation process the following changes are being proposed for IRMP 14:
27. **Review of Staffing Arrangements Wilmslow:** In light of feedback received during the consultation period, the Authority will undertake a further review of the suitability and sustainability of the current duty system at Wilmslow Fire Station.
28. **Review of Staffing Arrangements Penketh:** The draft IRMP 14 proposed the introduction of the nucleus duty system in Penketh, similar to that which operates at Wilmslow, Birchwood and Macclesfield. However, in light of the feedback received the Authority proposes to reconsider this proposal in 2018/19. Any future proposal will be subject to a further period of consultation.
29. **Hydraulic Platform Review:** The draft IRMP 14 proposed a reduction from 3 to 2 hydraulic platforms (or aerial appliances). In light of feedback a hydraulic platform will be maintained at Macclesfield until the Service assesses the impact of the move of the hydraulic platform from Stockton Heath to Lymm. It is

considered appropriate to review this proposal again in 2018/19. Any future proposal will be subject to a further period of consultation.

30. **Crewe and Ellesmere Port:** In 2013 the Fire Authority approved the first Emergency Response Programme which set out a series of proposals to be implemented over a number of years. This included proposals to change the duty system on the second fire engines at Crewe and Ellesmere Port from wholetime to on-call. The draft IRMP 14 for 2017-18 included plans to introduce an additional resource during the day, at both stations, to support the transition to the on-call crewing arrangements of the second fire engines. The Fire Authority will still work towards implementing these on-call crewing arrangements but will continue to monitor the levels of operational activity, on-call availability and progress around the recruitment of on-call firefighters, with a commitment to review the proposal if it is not deemed to be achievable and sustainable.

Publication of IRMP 14

31. A copy of the updated draft IRMP 14 has been circulated with the agenda. Once approved it will be sent to be printed. Copies will then be distributed to Members, staff and key stakeholders.
32. 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.
33. Corporate and unitary performance information has also been added to the publication, with the figures based on data as at 31st December 2016 projected to the end of the financial year.
34. 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

35. All elements of the IRMP 14 consultation programme have been delivered through the use of existing departmental budgets and staff. Printing costs for the final version of IRMP14 and any summary versions distributed to consultees can also be met from within existing publication budgets.

Legal implications

36. Publication of the final IRMP 14 for 2017-18 by March 31st 2017 will fulfil the Authority's statutory responsibilities.

Equality and Diversity implications

37. 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.
38. Additional effort was made to encourage responses from a diverse section of the community. This included attendance at Chester Pride to maximise engagement from local LGBT communities, attendance at a number of BAME groups in the Crewe area and the use of the CHAWREC (Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race Equality Centre) Response Panel.
39. The final consultation report includes a breakdown of the results from the IRMP 14 consultation so that the Authority can consider the impact of any differences by characteristic.

Environmental implications.

40. Efforts will be made to ensure that the IRMP 14 is printed on responsibly sourced paper and that digital distribution is considered alongside paper.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

**Making Cheshire Safer – Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-18
(IRMP 14)**

Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-18 – Report on public, staff and partner consultation.