

# CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF:** CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY  
**DATE:** 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2017  
**REPORT OF:** CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
**AUTHOR:** GRAEME WORRALL

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**SUBJECT:** DRAFT INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT  
PLAN 2018-19 (IRMP 15) – INITIAL FEEDBACK

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## Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with initial feedback on the consultation programme that is being carried out into the Authority's draft Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2018-19 (IRMP 15).

## Recommended: That

- [1] Members note the interim feedback on the consultation programme for the draft 2018-19 Integrated Risk Management Plan.

## Background

2. At the meeting of the Authority in September 2017, Members gave their approval for a 12 week consultation programme on the Authority's draft IRMP 15. That programme runs until 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 and information contained in this report is based on views and comments received up to 20<sup>th</sup> November.
3. The consultation programme involves the holding of a number of public roadshow style events, direct contact with a range of local partner organisations and stakeholders and conduct of a programme of internal consultation events for staff. Taking into account the programme of roadshows and other methods of consultation, it is expected that the final response level will be sufficient to provide a significant degree of confidence in the results of around +/- 5%.
4. This report briefly highlights the progress of the consultation and some of the themes from the feedback so far, with the final report containing details of responses due to be presented to the Fire Authority meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

## Consultation Progress

5. A total of ten public roadshows have been held across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington, with 2,500 consultation packs distributed to residents. In addition to the roadshows, extensive use has been made of the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service website and social media channels, including the use of paid-for social media advertising to raise awareness of the consultation.

6. Staff have contacted pastoral tutors at colleges across Cheshire to encourage them to raise awareness of the consultation amongst their students and place information on the consultation on their internal communication channels. In addition, information has been sent to the Service's own cadet units to raise awareness amongst young people already in contact with the organisation.
7. Members of staff have also utilised the Cheshire Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre's (CHAWREC) consultation panel for black and minority ethnic (BME) residents. Responses from members of this panel are expected to be returned later in December.
8. At the time of writing 275 responses had been received from members of the public, broadly in line with response rates at the same stage of previous consultations. It should be noted that any figures highlighted in this report are indicative only at this stage as responses are still being received.
9. Letters and emails raising awareness of the consultation and encouraging responses have been sent to key stakeholders including:
  - Members of Parliament and Peers;
  - Statutory partners and local authority leaders, chief executives and councillors;
  - Town and parish councils;
  - Members of the Youth Parliament;
  - Local business, commercial and industrial representatives;
  - A range of voluntary, faith and community groups across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.
10. A programme of 12 internal staff roadshows have been held to provide an update on the draft IRMP as well as to cascade the headline results from the recent staff engagement survey. Additionally, information on the consultation was provided at a management conference on 4<sup>th</sup> October and a separate conference for on-call managers on 9<sup>th</sup> October. Information regarding the consultation has been communicated internally through email, the Service intranet and staff newsletters.
11. At the time of writing, approximately 100 members of staff have responded to the consultation on the draft IRMP. This has also been complemented by feedback received through the various staff roadshow events. This is a significant increase compared to the response rate of 49 members of staff at the same stage during last year's consultation.

## **Initial Results**

12. The initial feedback continues to show the high regard in which the Service is held by residents, with 94% saying they value the organisation as a provider of local services. As with last year's survey, these views continue to be shaped largely by perception with 52% of respondents saying they had not had any contact with the Service in the past three years – in 2016 the figure was 55%.

13. Of those who had been in contact with the Service, having a Safe and Well visit was the most likely route (16%), followed by attending a station open day (15%). 9% of respondents came into contact with the Service as a result of a fire or road traffic collision.
14. Overall satisfaction with the performance of the Service stood at 80%, with a further 12% stating they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
15. Public support for the Authority's proposal to increase its Council Tax precept by 1.99% remains strong, with 71% in favour. This compares to 66% last year and 65% the year before that. 10% of residents who responded were opposed to the increase, with 15% neither supporting nor opposing an increase
16. To gain further insight into public perceptions of sprinkler systems, this year's consultation asked whether respondents would consider having a system fitted in their home. 63% of respondents said that they would not consider having a sprinkler system installed. Comments received highlight some concerns around accidental activation of sprinklers and a feeling that existing measures, such as smoke alarms or fire extinguishers, offered sufficient protection.
17. The potential expansion of the cardiac response programme is also covered in the consultation, with 87% of public respondents supporting this proposal compared to 8% who oppose. A further 6% are unsure.
18. This year's consultation asked for comments regarding proposals to review the crewing arrangements at Wilmslow and Penketh fire stations, as well as the provision of the third aerial appliance. A brief summary of comments received appear below:
  - **Penketh Fire Station:** Several comments indicated the preference to maintain the existing crewing arrangement at Penketh Fire Station.
  - **Wilmslow Fire Station:** Commentary provided referenced the support provided by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and the perception that the on-call model at Wilmslow was not effective, particularly at night. Other comments highlighted the growth of Wilmslow and surrounding areas as a factor in their preference for increased fire cover.
  - **Third aerial appliance:** The majority of comments indicated a preference to retain the use of a third aerial appliance. A small number of comments questioned whether a third aerial appliance could be placed in an alternative location.
19. The consultation also asked for views on potential replacement fire stations at Chester, Crewe, Ellesmere Port and Warrington. Some commented on the potential benefits of sharing space with other emergency services as well as the need to consider public access or traffic congestion. A summary of comments received for each location appear below:
  - **Chester:** One respondent felt that given the heritage risk, a fire station needed to be within close proximity of the city centre.
  - **Crewe:** The majority of comments received relating to Crewe concerned a preference for maintaining two wholetime fire engines at the station. One

respondent felt that the current site was in the optimum location though the building was in need of upgrading. Another respondent felt that a fire station in Crewe should be near to the town centre.

- **Ellesmere Port:** Views received expressed a desire to keep the site of a replacement station in the current or an equally central location. Several comments were made about the need to maintain two wholetime fire engines in Ellesmere Port.
- **Warrington:** Two comments highlighted that the current site on Winwick Road can be subject to heavy traffic congestion.

## **Financial Implications**

20. The consultation programme and associated promotion and publicity has been delivered through the use of existing departmental budgets and staff from the joint police/fire corporate communications team.

## **Legal Implications**

21. Publication of the final IRMP for 2018-19 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 will fulfil the Authority's statutory responsibility.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

22. 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 and all corporate consultations include monitoring questions so that analysis can identify potential differences between respondents' views according to age, sex, location, etc.

## **Environmental Implications**

23. None.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**