

# CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF:** CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY  
**DATE:** 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2018  
**REPORT OF:** CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
**AUTHOR:** GRAEME WORRALL

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**SUBJECT:** INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018-19 (IRMP 15) – ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

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## Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks Members' approval to publish the Authority's annual action plan for 2018-19 (IRMP 15) following the conclusion of a formal 13 week consultation programme.
2. The report 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.
3. The latest draft of the annual action plan (IRMP 15) has been circulated with the agenda having been updated to reflect issues raised during the consultation and considered by Members at the Planning Day on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018. It is also attached as an appendix to this report.

## Recommended: That

- [1] Members consider the feedback received from the consultation on the annual action plan for 2018-19 (IRMP 15);
- [2] subject to Members' comments and decisions approval is given for publication of the annual action plan (IRMP 15) by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2018; and
- [3] the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive be authorised to make any final drafting changes to the annual action plan (IRMP 15), including the addition of final performance and financial information.

## Background

4. Members agreed the draft annual action plan (IRMP 15) proposals for consultation at the Fire Authority meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017.
5. A public, staff and stakeholder consultation was launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 to run until 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 (13 weeks) in order to gather feedback on the Authority's proposals for 2018/19.

6. Members have been provided with updates about the progress of the consultation at the meeting of Cheshire Fire Authority on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and at their Planning Day on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
7. The full consultation report has now been completed and an electronic copy circulated to Members, with hard copies available prior to this meeting. 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.

## Information

8. 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 questions relating to the various proposals set out within the draft annual action plan (IRMP 15).

Group	Methods of engagement
Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online survey</li> <li>• Ten public roadshows across Cheshire</li> <li>• Prominent features on the homepage service website</li> <li>• Regular social media advertising</li> <li>• Use of online Alert and Firelink newsletters</li> <li>• Use of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre's (CHAWREC) BME resident consultation panel</li> <li>• Attending CHAWREC International Open Day</li> <li>• Raising awareness amongst community and voluntary groups</li> <li>• Contacting colleges</li> <li>• Press release and media coverage</li> </ul>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online survey</li> <li>• Feature on the homepage of the service intranet</li> <li>• Email reminders</li> <li>• Articles and reminders in Service newsletters</li> <li>• Management conference</li> <li>• Eleven staff roadshow briefing sessions</li> </ul>
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter/email out to key stakeholders encouraging comment on draft Plan</li> <li>• Stakeholders contacted include local MPs, Peers, statutory partners, representative bodies, town and parish councils</li> <li>• Briefings on request to Audlem Parish Council, Crewe Town Council and Wilmslow Town Council</li> <li>• Distribution of information to fire safety managers of local industrial premises</li> </ul>

9. A total of 832 members of the public completed the formal consultation survey, compared to 632 in the previous year. This response level provides a margin of error of plus or minus 3.44% at a 95% level of confidence.
10. Responses to the consultation were received from across Cheshire, encompassed all age groups from under 18s to over 75s and were virtually equally split between male and female respondents. 17% of respondents declared a disability; 16% identified as Black and Ethnic Minorities (BAME) and there were 29 responses from those identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT).
11. 124 members of staff completed the survey during the consultation period, compared to 132 in the previous year. It should be noted that views were also received directly through a series of eleven staff roadshows held between October and December, as well as at a briefing for managers in October.

## Results

12. The first part of the survey asked for more general views on how they viewed the Service. The results showed:
  - 85% of residents stated that they valued Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service as a local service provider.
  - 70% of the public were satisfied with the Service's overall performance.
  - As with previous years, a significant (44%) portion of respondents had not had any contact with the Service over the past three years. The most frequent routes of coming into contact with the Service was through community work such as station open days (19%) or Safe and Well visits (16%).
13. The following section of the survey focussed on the various proposals as contained within the draft annual action plan (IRMP 15) and are summarised below. It is important to note that in late December, the Government announced additional flexibility for local authorities regarding the Council Tax precept. Therefore, a secondary consultation specifically asking for views on proposing to increase the Authority's precept by 2.99% was held between January and February 2018. The outcome of this consultation is reported separately prior to the setting of the budget for 2018/19.
  - 65% of residents and 73% of staff supported the proposal to increase the Authority's precept by 1.99% in 2018/19.
  - 59% of residents and 67% of staff indicated that they would not consider having a sprinkler system installed in their home, against 41% and 33% respectively who would consider installing a sprinkler system. Narrative comments indicated that the most common concerns related to the perceived cost or disruption of installing a system; the risk of accidental

activation or the sense that existing safety measures in place were adequate.

- 75% of public respondents and 65% of staff would support the rolling out of a cardiac response scheme across the Service area.

14. The survey also asked for views regarding proposals to review the crewing arrangements at Penketh and Wilmslow fire stations and the third aerial appliance at Macclesfield; the potential development of new, replacement stations at Chester, Crewe, Ellesmere Port and Warrington, as well as any other comments. A summary of the comments received by question is detailed below:

### **Penketh Fire Station**

15. Responses from both residents (138 comments) and staff (26 comments) indicated a wish to preserve the existing wholetime duty system on the station. Staff comments also recommended that any review consider the wider resilience provided by the station alongside the number of incidents attended and that staff welfare is considered through the course of any review.

### **Wilmslow Fire Station**

16. Narrative comments from 116 residents state that the station should operate under a wholetime duty system, with 50 respondents highlighting their concerns over arrangements to ensure the availability of the fire engine at night-time. There were also comments which conveyed the view that current arrangements were satisfactory or that the station could be operated on an on-call duty system. 26 staff comments mirror preferences for returning the station to a wholetime duty system, with some additional references highlighting concern over the use of measures to ensure the availability of on-call firefighters overnight.

### **Third aerial appliance**

17. Comments received from both public (162 comments) and staff (36 comments) expressed a desire to maintain the third aerial appliance. Additional feedback from members of the public queried the response time to an incident from the two remaining aerial appliances should the third appliance be removed. Some commentary asked whether the appliance could be housed in an alternative, more central location.

### **Station replacement programme**

18. Nearly a quarter (105) of public comments within this section stated that these locations should have or maintain two wholetime fire engines (specific reference was made to Crewe and Ellesmere Port). Other public comments referenced the need to consider premises' access to the road network; both for staff and for responding to incidents. Staff comments highlight a desire to be involved in the design and layout of stations; that new premises should be both efficient and eco-friendly and that provision is made for sufficient welfare facilities such as changing pods. More generally, a theme emerging from both public and staff

comments questioned whether this capital money could instead be used on revenue - primarily frontline staffing - budgets.

### **Other comments**

19. The end of the survey asked respondents to provide any other comments that they wished to make. 37% of comments from the public referred to either the review of the duty system for the second pumps at Crewe and Ellesmere Port, or fire cover within Chester. Further public feedback questioned the Authority's spending priorities and expressed the opinion that savings reductions have fallen predominantly on frontline staff. Staff comments alluded to the continued requirement to make savings; the proposed expansion of responding to cardiac arrests and the effect on emergency cover of changes introduced through the Emergency Response Programme approved by the Authority in 2013.
20. A full breakdown of comments received is contained within the full consultation report. This will also refer to any written response received from members of the public.

### **Stakeholders**

21. The approach taken to stakeholders was to contact key stakeholders and invite written responses commenting on the draft annual action plan (IRMP 15). Key stakeholders contacted included statutory partners, Cheshire Members of Parliament, unitary councillors, town and parish councils and neighbouring fire and rescue services. A full list of stakeholders contacted is provided within the consultation report.
22. Stakeholders were also provided with a briefing on request, which was delivered by officers. Briefings were provided to Audlem Parish Council, Crewe Town Council and Wilmslow Town Council.
23. Written responses were received from eleven stakeholders during the consultation window, as well as a further two responses received after the close of the consultation.
24. A comprehensive response was provided by the Fire Brigades Union, with other responses from West Cheshire Trades Union Council, Crewe and Nantwich Constituency Labour Party (CLP), Weaver Vale CLP, Crewe Town Council and Chester Retired Firefighters. Responses were also received from Christleton Parish Council; Neston Town Council; Alsager Town Council; Warrington Borough Council; Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (FRS); Merseyside FRS, and Staffordshire FRS.
25. Copies of stakeholder responses can be found in the full consultation report. The response from Cheshire Fire Brigades Union (FBU) was circulated to Members. The FBU was also invited to the Members planning day in January 2018 where their representatives provided further comments on the draft annual action plan (IRMP 15).

## **Consultation outcomes**

26. Following the close of the consultation, the draft IRMP has been updated to reflect the additional flexibility regarding the precept, the subsequent impact on medium term financial planning and the resulting savings requirement to 2020/21. Regarding the proposed reviews of crewing arrangements at Penketh and Wilmslow fire stations, the draft annual action plan (IRMP 15) states that scoping work will commence during 2018/19, however outcomes will be presented to Members at a future date alongside a wider programme of emergency response proposals.

## **Financial Implications**

27. All elements of the annual action plan (IRMP 15) consultation programme have been delivered through the use of existing departmental budgets and staff. Printing costs for the final version of the annual action plan (IRMP 15) and any summary versions distributed to consultees will also be met from within existing publication budgets.

## **Legal Implications**

28. Publication of the final annual action plan (IRMP 15) for 2018-19 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 will fulfil the Authority's statutory responsibility.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

29. The consultation programme was developed to maximise opportunities to involve local residents. Additional effort was made to encourage responses from a diverse section of the community. This included the use of the CHAWREC (Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race Equality Centre) Response Panel and raising awareness of the consultation amongst a number of community and voluntary groups.

## **Environmental Implications**

30. Efforts will be made to ensure that the annual action plan (IRMP 15) is printed on responsibly sourced paper and that digital distribution is considered alongside paper copies.

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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

**Making Cheshire Safer – Annual Action Plan 2018-19 (IRMP15)**

**Annual Action Plan 2018-19 (IRMP 15) – Report on public, staff and partner consultation.**