

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 12 DECEMBER 2018
REPORT OF: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AUTHOR: GRAEME WORRALL

SUBJECT: DRAFT INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT
PLAN 2019-20 (IRMP 16) – INITIAL FEEDBACK

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with initial feedback on the consultation programme which is being carried out into 'Making Cheshire Safer' - the Authority's draft annual action plan for 2019-20 (IRMP16).

Recommended: That

- [1] Members note the interim feedback on the consultation programme for the draft 2019-2020 Integrated Risk Management Plan.

Background

2. At the meeting of the Authority on 19th September 2018, Members gave their approval for a consultation programme on the Authority's annual action plan for 2019-2020 (IRMP 16). That programme runs until 4th January 2019 and information contained in this report is based on views and comments received up to 30th November.
3. The consultation programme involves holding a number of public roadshow style events, directly contacting a range of local partner organisations and stakeholders and conducting 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 consultation report containing full details of responses due to be presented to the Fire Authority meeting on 13th February 2019.

Consultation Progress

5. A total of eight public roadshows have been held across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington, with 2,000 consultation packs distributed to residents. In addition to the roadshows, 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 to encourage them to raise awareness of the consultation amongst their students and place information on the consultation within 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.
10. The approach to staff consultation has been redesigned this year, with members of the service management team undertaking visits to individual teams to talk about the IRMP. Information regarding the consultation has also been communicated internally through email, the Service intranet and staff newsletters.
11. At the time of writing, 15 members of staff have responded to the consultation on the draft IRMP via an online survey. However, this has been complemented by feedback received through over fifty meetings with individual teams from departments across the organisation. Feedback from these visits has been wide ranging, encompassing both IRMP related topics and a number of other issues. Feedback and the resulting action plan regarding the wider issues will be presented separately to Members at a future date.

Initial Results

12. The initial feedback continues to show the high regard in which the Service is held by residents, with 95% saying they value the organisation as a provider of local services. As with previous surveys, these views continue to be shaped largely by perception with 56% of respondents saying they had not had any contact with the Service in the past three years – in 2017 the figure was 52%.

13. Of those who had been in contact, having a Safe and Well visit was the most likely route (22%), followed by attending a station open day (10%). Of the responses received thus far, only 3% of respondents came into contact with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service as a result of a fire or road traffic collision.
14. Overall satisfaction with the performance of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service stood at 88%, with a further 7% stating they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
15. 80% of respondents felt that the Authority's current level of precept represented value for money, with 12% disagreeing. 76% of the public indicated support for the Authority's proposal to increase its Council Tax precept by 2.99% in 2019/2020, with 12% opposed to this and 12% unsure.
16. The survey asked residents to indicate the importance they place on a number of functions that are undertaken by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service. In all of the functions listed, a clear majority of respondents felt that it was important for the Service to carry out those activities. There were three areas where over 10% of respondents disagreed; educating people on road safety (22%), rescuing trapped animals (19%) and working with young people to prevent fires and anti-social behaviour (11%).
17. Residents were also asked whether in their opinion there were any activities that the Service should either change or stop doing or if there are any issues that the Service is not currently involved in that they believe it should be. Some responses indicated that the organisation should focus on core firefighting activities and that some aspects of prevention work should be left with other agencies. Other comments suggested that the Service should be responding to medical emergencies and incorporating dementia awareness into prevention work in the community.
18. There were some comments about the planned joint fire and police facility on the Crewe Fire Station site. These included: congestion on the road network surrounding the site; provision of staff parking; and adequacy of access to and egress from the facility.
19. At the time of writing, overall support amongst the public for the draft Plan stood at 75%, with 6% of respondents opposing the plan and a further 19% unsure.

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 2019-2020 by 31st March 2019 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: DRAFT INTERGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT 2019-2020 CONSULTATION REPORT CONSIDERED BY THE FIRE AUTHORITY ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2018 – MINUTE 4 REFERS