

# CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF:** FIRE AUTHORITY  
**DATE:** 13 FEBRUARY 2019  
**REPORT OF:** CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
**AUTHOR:** GRAEME WORRALL

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**SUBJECT:** ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2019-2020 (IRMP 16)

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## Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks Members approval to publish the Authority's action plan for 2019-2020 (IRMP 16) following the conclusion of a 13-week consultation programme.
2. The report includes an overview of the consultation programme and a summary of the key issues highlighted within the full consultation report, copies of which have been circulated to Members and also made available to view online on the Authority's website.

## Recommended: That

- [1] Members consider the feedback received through the consultation on the draft annual action plan (IRMP 16);
- [2] Subject to Members' comments and decisions, approval is given for the publication of IRMP 16 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019; and
- [3] The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive be authorised to make any final drafting changes to the IRMP, including the addition of final performance and financial information.

## Background

3. Members approved the publication of the draft action plan 16 for consultation at the meeting of Fire Authority on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018.
4. A 13-week consultation programme was launched to gather comment on the draft plan amongst members of the public, staff and stakeholders. The programme ran from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 until 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
5. Members have been provided with an interim update on the progress of the consultation at the Fire Authority meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018, as well as a summary update at the Members Planning Day on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019 following the close of the consultation.

6. The full consultation report has now been completed, which has been circulated electronically to Members and hard copies have been made available prior to this meeting. In keeping with previous years, the full consultation report provides an overview of the consultation programme, details of the survey results; and full copies of written submissions by consultees.

## Information

7. The table below provides information on the consultation methods used during the course of the consultation programme:

Group	Methods of engagement
Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online survey</li> <li>• Eight public roadshows across Cheshire</li> <li>• Prominent features on the homepage of the Service's 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>• Media coverage</li> </ul>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online survey</li> <li>• Feature on the homepage of the Service's intranet</li> <li>• Articles in Service newsletters</li> <li>• Management conference</li> <li>• Over 70 visits by senior managers to individual teams</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, statutory partners, representative bodies, town and parish councils, and community groups.</li> </ul>

8. A total of 516 members of the public responded to the survey, a decrease on the 832 responses from last year's consultation. However, as an indicative guide the level of response provides for a margin of error of +/- 4.3% at a 95% level of confidence.
9. Consultation responses were received from across each of the four unitary authority areas; encompassing all age ranges from under 18s to over 75s and a near even split amongst male and female responses. 22% of respondents declared a disability, 18% of respondents were from a black or minority ethnic background and 15 responses were received from those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

## Results

10. The first section of the survey asked for general views on how they viewed the service. The results showed:
  - 92% of respondents valued the Service as a local service provider
  - 82% of respondents were satisfied with the overall performance of the Service
  - As with previous years, a significant proportion (53%) of respondents had not had any contact with the Service over the past three years. The most common route for coming into contact with the Service was via a Safe and Well visit (21% of respondents), while only 7% of respondents had come into contact with the Service as a result of a fire or road traffic collision.
  - 71% of respondents considered that the current level of precept represented value for money.
  - 70% of respondents indicated their overall support for the plans for 2019/2020 as laid out within the Action Plan. A further 19% were unsure and 11% were opposed.
11. The consultation sought to establish from respondents which activities the Service carries out were the most important; whether the Service should change or stop doing certain activities and whether there were any issues that the Service is not currently involved in which it should be.
12. Responses showed that the majority of consultees felt all of the Service's activities were important to a greater or lesser degree, with each of the activities listed being viewed as either 'Very Important' or 'Quite Important' by at least 80% of respondents.
13. When asked whether the Service should change or stop doing something, a number of comments understandably focused on the need to focus on front-line and core/statutory services.

14. When asked about what the Service does not currently get involved in, narrative comments indicated support for working with a wider range of groups and organisations within the community to promote awareness of fire safety; with some further comments highlighting the need to engage with young people. Other comments outlined support for the Service undertaking emergency medical response and broadening Safe and Well visits to include issues such as dementia awareness.
15. In relation to the proposed joint fire and police station on the current site of Crewe Fire Station, some narrative comments highlighted support for the concept; the need to consider the surrounding road network and traffic issue and the importance of the organisations maintaining their independence.
16. Consultees were also asked for their views regarding the proposed increase in precept of 2.99% for 2019/2020. 66% of respondents supported the proposal. 15% were unsure and 18% opposed.
17. Finally, the survey provided for respondents to outline any further comments they wished to make. Several of the comments provided referred to the need to focus investment on front-line activity, with other comments expressing support for a second fire engine in Chester. A full breakdown of public comments and written responses received via the consultation survey is included within the consultation report, which has been published separately and is publicly available on the Authority's website.

## **Staff and stakeholder consultation**

18. Staff consultation was centred on a programme of over 70 visits by senior managers to individual teams across the organisation during the consultation period, alongside an online survey which gathered 15 staff responses. Much of the feedback received forms part of a wider programme of staff engagement, details of which will be brought to Members separately. Comments provided within the online survey are included within the consultation report.
19. Feedback from staff highlighted concerns about targets for Safe and Well visits, particularly in relation to hard to reach residents, the review of the third aerial appliance; and support for a review of the Service's core values.
20. The approach taken to engage with stakeholders was to contact them directly and invite them to comment on the draft Plan. Stakeholders contacted included local authorities and councillors; town and parish councils, Members of Parliament and a range of community and voluntary groups.
21. A comprehensive response was received from the Fire Brigades Union, with other responses from Chris Matheson MP; Justin Madders MP; Mike Amesbury MP; Cheshire West and Chester Council; Chester Retired Firefighters and three Cheshire West and Chester Ward Councillors. Full responses from stakeholders are provided in the consultation report.

## **Consultation outcomes**

22. Following the consultation, the Plan has been updated. It provides further information relating to the outcome of the inspection of the Service by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

## **Financial Implications**

23. All elements of the consultation programme have been delivered using existing departmental budgets and staff. Printing costs for the final version of Plan and any summary versions for consultees will also be met from existing budgets using in-house print services.

## **Legal Implications**

24. Publication of the Action Plan by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 will fulfil the Authority's statutory responsibility.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

25. The consultation programme was developed to maximise involvement of local residents. Additional efforts were made to secure responses from diverse parts of the community. This included use of the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre's (CHAWREC) BAME Consultation Panel and raising awareness of the consultation amongst a range of community and voluntary groups.

## **Environmental Implications**

26. The Plan will primarily be published as an online document, thus saving paper. There will be a small print run to enable distribution to public libraries and to service additional ad-hoc requests for hard copy documents, which can be facilitated in-house.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**

**DRAFT INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019-2020, CONSULTATION  
REPORT – APPENDIX 1**

**INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019-2020 – APPENDIX 2**