

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 1 JULY 2020
REPORT OF: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AUTHOR: GRAEME WORRALL

SUBJECT: INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-2024

Purpose of Report

1. To secure approval of the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024 (IRMP).

Recommended: That Members:

- [1] Note the contents of the report and appendices;
- [2] Approve the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024; and
- [3] Authorise the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive to make any final changes to the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024 prior to publication.

Background

2. Members approved the publication of the draft IRMP for consultation at the meeting of Fire Authority on 11 December 2019. An initial 13-week consultation was launched, originally due to close on 20 March 2020. The consultation was extended by a further five weeks until 24 April 2020 due to the publication of some supplementary information to support the consultation, which is explained in paragraph 83.
3. Members received an initial update at the Authority meeting of 12 February 2020. A further update was given to Members at the Planning Meeting on 10 June 2020.

Information

4. This report and appendices contain a significant amount of information. They cover the following: the consultation process; the feedback received from the consultation; summaries and conclusions which take account of the feedback; a revised IRMP and an independent review of the response proposals.

5. These are the Appendices to the report, with a brief description of what they contain:
- **Appendix 1: Draft IRMP 2020-2024 Consultation Feedback Report.**
This document provides a summary of the feedback received through the consultation process.
 - **Appendix 2: Consultation Feedback Report – Consultation Responses and Additional Resources.**
This document contains all of the feedback received during the consultation.
 - **Appendix 3: Review of Response Plans Following Consultation.**
This document has been created using some additional consultation materials that were published. It has been developed to explain how various options have been considered and why a particular option has been recommended.
 - **Appendix 4: Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024.**
This is the IRMP that has been updated as a result of the consultation.
 - **Appendix 5: Independent Review of Cheshire FRS Emergency Response Proposals 2020-2024.**
This document has been prepared by Greenstreet Berman. It provides assurance on the validity and reliability of the data and the methodology used to assess options in the development of the final response plan proposals.

Consultation Process

6. The consultation process involved engagement with: the public; staff and representative bodies; and with wider stakeholders. Further details are provided in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report. The report also outlines the way in which the consultation process was adapted to address the impact of the the Covid-19 pandemic.

7. The table below provides a summary of the various methods used to engage with consultees.

Group	Methods of engagement
Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey • 13 public roadshows across Cheshire • Features on the homepage of the Service’s website • Regular social media advertising • Use of online Alert and Firelink newsletters • Use of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre’s (CHAWREC) BAME resident consultation panel • Raising awareness amongst community and voluntary groups across Cheshire • Online and telephone focus groups • Two deliberative workshops • Press releases and coverage in third party social media channels.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey • Features on the homepage of the Service’s intranet • Articles in Service newsletters • Management conference and four staff conferences • Individual team visits by senior managers • Engaging with representative bodies through the JCNP process
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter/email out to key stakeholders encouraging comment on draft IRMP • Stakeholders contacted include local MPs, statutory partners, town and parish councils, and community groups. • Briefings to sub-regional partners and individual meetings with David Rutley MP, Esther McVey MP, Mike Amesbury MP, Macclesfield Town Council

8. In total 1,147 members of the public and 75 staff responded via the consultation survey. This was accompanied by feedback received through public focus groups, deliberative workshops and staff visits and conferences. 16 stakeholder or partner organisations responded.

Consultation Feedback

9. The following section provides a summary of the feedback received through the consultation process. Due to rounding, some percentages referenced in the report may not total 100%.

10. An overview of feedback is provided in Appendix 1. All responses are contained in a supplementary document to the consultation feedback report, which is included as Appendix 2 to this report.

Overall View of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service

11. The public survey asked consultees how strongly they valued Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service), their overall satisfaction with the Service's performance and whether they had been in contact with the Service over the past three years.
12. 97% of respondents stated that they valued the Service and 86% were satisfied with its overall performance. 50% of respondents had not had contact with the Service in the past three years. Only 8% of respondents came into contact with the Service via a fire incident or road traffic collision.

Expanding the Safe and Well Programme

13. The draft IRMP featured a proposal to revise the existing Safe and Well programme to include a focus on single adult and lone parent households.

Overview of Feedback

14. 91% of public and 81% of staff survey respondents agreed with the proposal to expand Safe and Well visits to single adult and lone parent households, compared to 2% of public and 13% of staff respondents who disagreed. Additional feedback indicated broad support and a recognition that vulnerability didn't just arise because of age.
15. Some comments stated that aspects of the Safe and Well visits should be the responsibility of partner agencies. Feedback from focus groups suggested incorporating young people living on their own for the first time and developing bespoke fire safety content for residents with learning disabilities.
16. Staff feedback recognised the benefit of a wider target audience but also highlighted the need for: accurate data; the right technology; staff training; and appropriate targets. Additionally staff felt there was a need to consider public expectations.
17. Feedback from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cheshire Constabulary, Warrington Borough Council and Disley Parish Council reinforced support for the proposal, which it was felt would further assist those most at risk within the community.

Conclusion

18. The expansion of the Safe and Well programme to incorporate single adult and lone parent households is considered appropriate. Consultation feedback will be used to identify additional improvements to the programme.

Developing a Strategic Road Safety Plan

19. The consultation asked which issues consultees felt should be included as a priority in a road safety plan to be developed with partner agencies.

Overview of Feedback

20. Several clear themes emerged when considering responses. Feedback from the public survey suggest that priorities should include:
 - Action on irresponsible parking to improve safety and access for emergency vehicles.
 - Improving road conditions such as fixing potholes, road repairs and ensuring road signage is clear to read.
 - More education on road safety.
 - Action around speeding.
21. Focus group work with young people suggested producing road safety campaign materials in formats that would appeal to younger drivers, rather than more traditional leaflets or posters.
22. Staff comments mirrored some of the focus areas above. A question was raised as to how greater emphasis on road safety would be factored into existing work and budgets. It was reiterated that road safety work is best delivered on a multi-agency basis.

Conclusion

23. Stakeholders who provided feedback were supportive of the proposal. Reducing the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on the roads was recognised as a key priority, as was the importance of working with partners to deliver improvements. It is appropriate to work with partners to develop and deliver a Strategic Road Safety Plan.

Reviewing the Risk Based Inspection Programme

24. The consultation asked consultees what they felt were the most important issues to take into account when reviewing the risk-based inspection programme of non-domestic properties.

Overview of Feedback

25. 52% of public responses highlighted the importance of regular inspections or increasing their frequency. A further 9% considered it important to focus on key public messaging e.g. through leaflets and posters and that inspection results need to be easy to understand and publicly available.
26. Staff feedback emphasised the importance of having sufficient staff with the required skills and knowledge; placing greater focus on timber framed construction and the importance of evacuation training and procedures in non-residential buildings.

Conclusion

27. The feedback will help inform the refinement of the risk based inspection plan; it will be considered by the project lead.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Safety Campaign

28. The consultation asked consultees for their views on what should be areas of focus in a safety campaign specific to HMO.

Overview of Feedback

29. Many responses felt there should be stricter controls on these properties (30% of comments) or more inspections to ensure compliance with legislation (29% of comments). Other feedback suggested increasing education for owners and occupiers or working with builders at the design phase of new build projects to improve safety at an early stage in the construction process.
30. Staff feedback highlighted the need to make owners of HMOs aware of their responsibilities (21% of comments) and educate occupiers on fire safety (15% of comments). Other feedback suggested producing more HMO-specific information, including materials in other languages.

Conclusion

31. The feedback will help inform the development of the HMO safety campaign; it will be considered by the project lead.

Replacing the Third Aerial Appliance with a High Reach Fire Engine

32. The draft IRMP contained a proposal to replace the third aerial appliance (and a fire engine) at Macclesfield with a High Reach Fire Engine (HRFE). A HRFE combines the attributes of a traditional fire engine with an extendable boom and spike which allows water to be applied from height and, where necessary, through materials such as roofs and walls in order to fight fires.

Overview of Feedback

33. Of 1,087 public responses, a total of 56% agreed with the proposal. Of 75 staff that responded 59% agreed. 9% of the public and 27% of staff stated they disagreed. Additional comments received in support of the proposal highlighted the benefit of new technology and the capability of the HRFE to apply water from height.
34. Feedback from deliberative workshops was largely positive, emphasising the benefit of new technology and the positive impact on firefighter safety. Other comments raised concerns about the loss of a resource that was capable of rescuing people from height.
35. Some feedback, particularly from staff, queried where the optimal location in Cheshire would be for such a resource and if there was a plan for more of these vehicles in the future.
36. Responses from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Macclesfield Town Council and Disley Parish Council, all offered support for the proposal. The FBU was keen to establish how the Service would manage the reduced number of aerial appliances.
37. The key concerns were a loss of rescue capability and reduced resilience. There were a number of comments about where the HRFE should be located. Appendix 3 provides further information about the proposal and considers the concerns. Appendix 5 contains an independent review of the proposal.
38. To reflect consultation feedback and the conclusions reached in the independent review, the IRMP has been updated and now contains a commitment to review the use and location of the HRFE after 12 months. Any proposal to make changes as a result of that review would be subject to further consultation.

Conclusion

39. The consultation did not raise any unexpected issues. The issues that were raised have been considered and the replacement of the third aerial appliance (and fire engine) at Macclesfield with a HRFE is considered to be appropriate.

Introducing a Day Crewing Duty System at Wilmslow Fire Station

40. The draft IRMP contained a proposal to change the crewing arrangements at Wilmslow Fire Station from a Nucleus Duty System to a Day Crewing Duty System.

Overview of Feedback

41. Overall, 69% of public respondents agreed with the proposal compared to 5% who disagreed. When considering respondents who indicated that they lived locally to Wilmslow (SK9 postcode), support for the proposal increases to 80%.
42. 44% of free text comments about this proposal were supportive, believing that the proposal would resolve crewing issues associated with the on-call duty system at Wilmslow. A further 32% of comments suggested that Wilmslow should be crewed on a wholetime basis to meet local risks such as Manchester Airport.
43. Deliberative consultation highlighted that both land and accommodation are at a premium in the Wilmslow area and that this should be considered as part of the decision-making process to ensure the proposal is feasible. It was felt that a contingency option should be clarified in case land cannot be secured. Other comments included the need to ensure good fatigue management is embedded within day crewing operating practices and that current staff on station should be fully engaged as part of any redeployment process.
44. The majority, 72%, of staff responses supported the proposal, with 19% opposing. Comments recognised that the proposal made financial sense and would resolve staffing issues. Some consultees did query whether the station could instead be crewed on a wholetime basis.
45. Feedback from stakeholders was broadly supportive. The FBU offered qualified support for the proposal, while stating a preference for a fire engine crewed wholetime.
46. Key considerations arising from the consultation included whether a wholetime duty system would be more appropriate for the station and how risk is managed in relation to Manchester Airport. The feedback also highlighted the need to consider an alternative provision if the required land cannot be secured. Further information about the proposal and consideration of the issues identified during the consultation (and summarised above) is provided in Appendix 3. An independent review of the proposal is contained within Appendix 5
47. As a result of consultation feedback, the IRMP has been updated to provide further detail regarding land and a statement regarding alternative considerations should land availability impact on the feasibility of this proposal.

Conclusion

48. Introducing a Day Crewing duty system at Wilmslow Fire Station is considered appropriate when taking account of local risks and activity, while providing a resolution to ongoing issues regarding the management of overnight fire cover.

Relocating Ellesmere Port's Second Fire Engine

49. Consultees were asked for their opinion on the proposal to relocate the second fire engine at Ellesmere Port Fire Station to Powey Lane Fire Station. This would also see the move of the current Powey Lane fire engine back to Chester Fire Station. The outcome of this proposal would be to provide one fire engine at Ellesmere Port, one fire engine at Powey Lane and two fire engines in Chester.

Overview of Feedback

50. When analysing responses by geographic location, there is considerable support for the proposal from those in the Chester area (a postcode analysis shows 84%), while there is a majority opposition from those within the Ellesmere Port area (a postcode analysis shows 57%). Of respondents who live nearest to Powey Lane, 74% of respondents agreed with the proposal compared to 16% who disagreed.
51. The public provided 313 additional comments. 165 comments stated the need for Chester to have two engines, which would be the net outcome of this proposal. Feedback highlighted the need to cover heritage risks within Chester and the larger population of the city compared to Ellesmere Port. Comments from some respondents stated they saw this proposal as a rebalancing of existing resources across Cheshire West and Chester.
52. There were 37 comments stating a preference to keep two engines at Ellesmere Port. Reasons given included the industrial risks in the area, specifically Stanlow Oil Refinery, as well as the growing population in the town.
53. Individual email responses were received from 12 residents. Of these, 11 supported the proposal as this would result in a second fire engine being returned to Chester and highlighted the increased population and heritage risks within the City. One further email supported the placement of two fire engines at Powey Lane given the ability of the station to support a wider geographic footprint.
54. 47% of staff surveyed agreed with the proposal compared with 32% who disagreed. Comments referred to the need to address COMAH risks within Ellesmere Port and, conversely, to ensure that heritage risks within Chester are sufficiently covered.
55. Some comments felt there was a risk of relying on Powey Lane as a second engine for Ellesmere Port, given the use of special appliances at the station as county-wide resources. Some staff questioned the practicalities of moving a fire engine across to Chester before the new station is completed. Others were concerned about relocating and the number of jobs that would be available at each station. They asked if the review of specialist resources, which could impact upon this question, could be brought forward.

56. Some were concerned about the current second fire engine response time in Chester, while others felt there was an imbalance of resources between Ellesmere Port and Chester. Others queried the need for Ellesmere Port Fire Station since Powey Lane covers the area within 10 minutes. It was also suggested that a second engine at Chester should be crewed on an on-call basis.
57. Several stakeholders provided a response in support of providing two fire engines in Chester, including Chris Matheson MP; Chester Retired Firefighters; Chester Racecourse; Chester Residents Associations Group and four Cheshire West and Chester councillors representing wards within Chester. Feedback highlighted heritage risks, the population size and density within Chester and the importance of the City as a visitor attraction to the wider economy. One councillor, while supporting the proposal, called for implementation to be delayed until more is known about the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.
58. Responses from the FBU and one Cheshire West and Chester councillor representing a ward within Ellesmere Port opposed the proposal. Reasons included the concentration of industrial premises around Ellesmere Port, as well as an ageing and growing local population. The FBU response called for an additional fire engine to be placed in Chester and funded through existing budgets, or if this wasn't possible to maintain two fire engines in Ellesmere Port and have two fire engines in Chester with Powey Lane becoming a hub for specialist appliances.
59. The Member of Parliament for Ellesmere Port and Neston, Justin Madders MP, created a petition calling for the retention of two fire engines at Ellesmere Port Fire Station. At the close of the consultation, the petition had secured 3,893 signatures. Further information will be supplied to Members. Signatories to the electronic version could provide a reason for their signature. These included:
- A desire to maintain current levels of resource within Ellesmere Port.
 - The forecast growth in population around Ellesmere Port and associated housing developments.
 - Industrial risk within the Ellesmere Port area, notably the oil refinery at Stanlow and nuclear facility at Capenhurst.
 - The proximity of the motorway network and its associated risk.
60. A significant amount of feedback was received about this proposal. The main issues that require consideration include:
- Addressing risk, such as population growth, housing and specific risks, e.g. Chester's heritage and the industry around Ellesmere Port.
 - Responding to an incident at COMAH sites e.g. Stanlow Oil Refinery.
 - The balance of resources across Cheshire West and Chester.
 - The use of Ellesmere Port's second fire engine for operational resilience.

- The impact on response times
- Aligning the timing of implementation to the completion of the new fire station in Chester.

61. Further information regarding the proposal and consideration of the above issues is provided in Appendix 3. An independent review of the proposal is contained within Appendix 5.
62. In response to consultation feedback, the IRMP has been updated with additional information on operational response to a major incident, alongside further detail in relation to the use of the second fire engine at Ellesmere Port for resilience purposes. Staff concerns will be considered by the project manager, including the feasibility of bringing forward the specialist resources review and ensuring that the moves align with completion of the new fire station in Chester.

Conclusion

63. The relocation of the second fire engine from Ellesmere Port to Powey Lane Fire Station (and Powey Lane's fire engine to Chester, making Chester a fire station with two fire engines) is appropriate and the best use of resources in Cheshire.

Expanding our response to road traffic collisions

64. The draft IRMP contained a proposal to expand our response to road traffic collisions. This would involve placing RRRU at each primary on-call fire station, including replacing the two existing RRRU at Sandbach and Holmes Chapel Fire Stations.

Overview of Feedback

65. 79% of public respondents agreed with the proposal, with 8% disagreeing. 29% of additional comments expressed support for the proposal, with a further 11% highlighting the benefit of a quicker response time to road traffic collisions (RTCs). Key concerns related to ensuring sufficient risk assessments were in place and the risk to firefighters as a crew of two.
66. 60% of staff survey respondents agreed with the proposal compared to 25% who disagreed. Feedback highlighted general support due to improvements in response times and enabling on-call firefighters to attend more incidents, which would lead to improved retention of staff. Some suggested that the role of RRRU could be expanded to include attendance at cardiac incidents, gaining entry and small fires.

67. Some comments questioned the risk to firefighters staffing the RRRU and how introducing one of these appliances to an on-call fire station would then affect the availability of the fire engine on station.
68. Stakeholder responses were broadly supportive of this proposal, highlighting the beneficial impact this could have on improving road safety. In its submission, the FBU outlined its opposition to the proposal, citing concerns over the risk to firefighter safety when attending motorway incidents using RRRU.
69. Consultation feedback centred on ensuring that those operating RRRU are safe and how the vehicles are used to respond to certain types of incident. To reflect this, the IRMP has been updated to provide reassurance regarding safety and the role of RRRU in providing emergency response. Further information regarding the proposal and consideration of the feedback is provided in Appendix 3. Appendix 5 provides an independent review of the proposal.

Conclusion

70. The expansion of the RRRU fleet would help to improve response to RTCs and should proceed. RRRU could respond to a wider range of incidents in the future. They would provide on-call firefighters with more opportunities to respond to emergencies, thus helping with recruitment and retention of on-call staff.

Review of Water Rescue and Response

71. The draft IRMP sought views on the review of water incident response and rescue provision across Cheshire. Feedback received through the staff survey and conferences supported a review and recognised an increase in flooding incidents. Some comments suggested various models of water response capability, type and distribution across fire stations. Some comments called for an increase in swift water capacity within the Cheshire East area.
72. Consultation with focus groups considered water from a safety perspective. Feedback suggested that open or fast moving water would present challenges to many individuals, particularly if that person had a disability. It was highlighted that more young people are not opting to swim regularly. Feedback suggests there could be benefit in targeted prevention activity focused on learning to swim and the risk of flooding or entering open/fast-moving water.

Conclusion

73. The review of water response should proceed. The project manager will consider the feedback received through the consultation and will establish a staff working group to develop the future response model.

Developing a Wildfire Capability

74. Staff were asked for their views on the development of a capability to respond to wildfire. Feedback most frequently highlighted the need for dedicated equipment, as some elements of personal equipment felt unsuitable for the conditions presented at such incidents. Location of resources was referenced as a key consideration, with respondents highlighting the risk of incidents around Macclesfield, bordering the Peak District and the Staffordshire Moorlands. A staff working group has already started and has recommended specific equipment, vehicles and locations for wildfire resources.

Conclusion

75. There is a need to develop specialist capability. Feedback received through the consultation process will be considered by the project manager and working group who are undertaking a programme of work to develop and implement this proposal.

Review of Specialist Appliances

76. The draft IRMP sought views on the review of the Authority's specialist appliances. Comments reflected the need to consider the type and distribution of specialist appliances. Some suggested more of a spread of vehicles across Cheshire rather than in hubs, which would also ease the training requirement for personnel on particular stations. Other concerns highlighted that some vehicles, such as rope or animal rescue units, often travel long distances to incidents. It was felt that investment in a water carrier would be beneficial, though some responses questioned how often this would be used and where it would be located.

Conclusion

77. The review of special appliances should take place. The project manager will consider all of the feedback and will set up a staff working group to develop the best model to operate these resources.

Overall Opinion on the Draft IRMP

78. A total of 83% of public survey respondents and 68% of staff expressed support for the IRMP overall, compared to 3% of the public 11% of staff who opposed it. A further 14% of public respondents and 20% of staff indicated that they neither supported nor opposed the draft Plan or did not know.
79. Consultees were able to provide any further comments. Key themes include stating support for the draft IRMP overall (38 comments) or expressing a wish for a second fire engine at Chester (21 comments). Analysis of all 152 comments is contained within Appendix 1.

Independent Support

Independent Assessment of the Consultation

80. The IRMP is a key document, which can have a significant impact. It contains aspects that are relatively complex and not easy to explain. The Consultation Institute is an independent body that promotes good practice in consultation.
81. The Institute was contracted to assess the consultation under its Quality Assurance programme, in order to give reassurance that the consultation process and documentation meets recognised standards of practice.
82. To meet good practice, additional elements and consultation materials formed part of this consultation programme. This included developing a consultation mandate, equality impact assessments and a frequently asked questions section on the website.
83. The Institute also recommended the publication of additional supporting documentation to assist individuals in providing considered opinion. The documents contained an assessment of the various options considered for the emergency response proposals as part of the Whole Service Review, as well as the rationale behind deciding to consult on the subsequent proposal.
84. The Institute also facilitated two deliberative workshops, in which members of the public were informed about how various options were assessed to develop the response plans that were subject to consultation.
85. Assessment work is still underway with officers expecting the consultation to be rated as achieving good practice. Additional skills and knowledge acquired through this assessment process will be applied to future consultations.

Independent Review of the Response Proposals

86. Greenstreet Berman are specialist consultants in risk analysis who have undertaken previous work with the Authority (and other fire authorities), and central government. For the draft IRMP, the company provided an independent review of each of the response plans to assist the Authority in its decision making process.
87. The review aims to provide assurance on the validity and reliability of the data and methodology used by the Service to assess options in the development of the final emergency response consultation proposals. The review of Greenstreet Berman is included as Appendix 5 to this report.

Financial Implications

88. At its meeting on 12 February 2020, the Authority approved the 2020/21 Capital Strategy. This Strategy included several items relating to the draft IRMP that were approved in principle, subject to the outcome of the IRMP consultation.

89. The following list shows the scheme details and in approving the IRMP Members would approve these figures.

Scheme	£000
RRRU	520
Wildfire Capability - enhanced RRRU	25
Wildfire Capability - All Terrain Vehicle and Trailer	55
Water carrier / Water Bowser	140
Total	740

90. Other activities will require additional funding, but these will need to be brought back to the Fire Authority prior to implementation.
91. £20k was budgeted for the commissioning of the independent review by Greenstreet Berman. £18k funded the Quality Assurance undertaken by the Consultation Institute, while consultation materials were funded through existing resource budgets.

Legal Implications

92. The National Framework for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England requires the Fire Authority to have an IRMP and the requirements within the Framework have been taken into account in preparing the IRMP.

Equality and Diversity Implications

93. Consultation activity was undertaken to provide an opportunity for a range of diverse groups across the community to take part, with further detail provided within the consultation feedback report. Equality Impact Assessments were also developed to support the consultation. These will be reviewed as the proposals are implemented.

Environmental Implications

94. Some proposals within the draft IRMP relate to the response to environmental incidents, including the development of a wildfire capability and review of water provision.

**CONTACT: NAOMI THOMAS, GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PLANNING
MANAGER
TEL [01606] 868804**

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1: Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024 Consultation Feedback Report

Appendix 2: Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024 Consultation Feedback Report: Consultation Responses and Additional Resources

Appendix 3: Review of Response Plans Following Consultation

Appendix 4: Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024

Appendix 5: Independent Review of Cheshire FRS 2020-24 IRMP – Greenstreet Berman