

## Review of Strategic Integrated Risk Management Planning

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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### 1 Purpose of Report

This report summarises the benefits the Fire Authority has been able to achieve through the introduction of Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP).

### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of this report; and
- b) Consider making a recommendation to the Fire Authority that the IRMP Members Working Group should continue to drive improvement in the Service through their work in this important area.

### 3 Background

In June 2008, Communities and Local Government (CLG) published a draft report on the findings from a study commissioned to look at how effectively Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) across England have implemented Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) since its introduction in 2004. Although it is still only in draft form, one of the main conclusions appears to be that, because IRMP is still a relatively new process, it is not possible to quantitatively prove there is a relationship, at the national level, between the performance of FRSs (in terms of fire, fatality and injury reductions) and their implementation of IRMP. With Shropshire now having completed the work detailed in its first IRMP Strategic Plan, this is an appropriate time for the Authority to take stock of the benefit it has accrued locally since IRMP's inception.

The Fire Authority's stated strategic IRMP priorities have been:

1. To undertake a Fire Cover Review of the county's response resources;
2. To increase Community Fire Safety (CFS) activity in the more rural areas of Shropshire; and
3. To drive improvement in the Retained Duty System (RDS), to ensure its long term viability.

This report summarises the IRMP work the Fire Authority has undertaken since it published its first IRMP Action Plan in April 2004.

#### **4 The first year – 2004/05**

IRMP Action Plan 2004/05 included the following activities:

- 01/2004 – Completing the community safety risk assessments
- 02/2004 – Changes to the AFA mobilising response policy
- 03/2004 – Changes to the crewing of special appliances
- 04/2004 – Introduction of XL Cabs

The risk assessment work (01/2004) made significant use of the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) tools and was one of a number of building blocks that needed to be put in place before the Authority could review its existing Fire Cover arrangements. As such, whilst there are no direct benefits from these underpinning activities, this work did help to ensure the Authority's future proposals would be based upon a firm statistical footing.

The changes initially proposed to the service's response to automatic fire alarms (AFAs, 02/2004), were changed following feedback obtained from the consultation process. Government research has shown that Shropshire's AFA policy is the most cost effective policy used by any of the English FRSS<sup>1</sup>. Those changes have resulted in:

- More than 1,600 fewer appliance journeys, under emergency response conditions, across the county;
- £61,000 reduction in RDS turnout fees; and
- A saving of more than 5,400 wholtime hours, providing additional time for CFS, training and contingency planning activities. This equates to the work of one additional firefighter per year, or approximately £120,000 worth of additional work since 2004.

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<sup>1</sup> "Costs and benefits of alternative responses to Automatic Fire Alarms Fire Research Series 2/2008", CLG, May 2008

Under Action 03/2004, two specialist appliances were moved from Shrewsbury to Telford Central, and the New Dimension's Incident Response Unit (supplied by the Government to deal with large terrorist incidents anywhere in the country), replaced them in Shrewsbury. All of these specialist appliances were crewed by the same personnel that staffed the county's aerial ladder appliances. These changes helped to ensure these underutilised resources were used more efficiently. This was further improved over subsequent years.

The advent of IRMP finally enabled the Fire Authority to implement its proposal to introduce XL Cabs onto five stations (04/2004), which had stalled due to the Government's inability to make a decision on these new appliances. This resulted in the Authority being able to reduce its fleet by five appliances, thereby producing £90,000 per annum savings in maintenance and replacement costs; more than £360,000 worth of savings since April 2004.

## **5 Year two – 2005/06**

Unlike the previous year's Action Plan, which had seen the Fire Authority take the opportunity to make some 'quick win' changes, the IRMP Action Plan 2005/06 was a year of reviews. This was commented on by the Audit Commission during its audit of the Service that year. However, the approach the Fire Authority took to developing robust proposals for future change ensured that the Authority brought all stakeholders along with it.

The 2005/06 Action Plan included the following activities:

- 01/2005 – Community Safety Risk Strategy
- 02/2005 – Review of the Management and Incident Command structure
- 03/2005 – Other Buildings Risk Assessment
- 04/2005 – Fire Cover Review
- 05/2005 – Aerial appliance cover

01/2005 saw the Community Safety Department update the 'Fire Safety in the Community Strategy' document to reflect the findings from the risk assessment work that had been completed the previous year. Whilst this helped to further reduce fires in dwellings, 03/2005 progressed the risk assessment work relating to all of the commercial properties across the county. The progress made here enabled the Authority to start on the Fire Cover Reviews (04/2005). Although Shrewsbury was initially thought to be greatest priority, early assessment work showed that the people of Shropshire would get greater benefit from a review of the fire appliances in the Telford area. This resulted in the proposals for change the following year.

The Management / Incident Command review (02/2005) resulted in a more flexible Brigade structure which was better placed to meet the demands of the Government's National Framework document, provide support to staff working the Retained Duty system and improve on the level of partnership working the Authority is able to participate in, across the various political boundaries in the county.

Although 03/2004 had improved the efficient use of our specialist appliance crews, the Fire Authority recognised that it needed to go further. Permanently crewing two aerial appliances in Shropshire seemed to be over resourcing. 05/2005 therefore required the Service to look at whether any changes were required to the number, location and crewing of our aerial appliances. The Fire Authority assured stakeholders that they would be given the opportunity to comment on any proposed changes, prior to them being implemented.

## **6 Year three - 2006/07**

The 2006/07 Action Plan included the following activities:

- 01/2006 – Life Risk Response standards
- 02/2006 – Resilience Standards
- 03/2006 – Aerial Appliance Provision
- 04/2006 – Improved use of existing resources

Having completed the risk assessment work, the Fire Authority was able to develop its new Response Standards (01/2006 and 02/2006), which replaced the old National Standards of Fire, which had been withdrawn in April 2004. Rather than looking to drive service improvement based solely on the number of buildings in a given area, the Authority's new standards look to improve the response to all incidents that involve risk to life, including Road Traffic Collisions. The new standards are now pushing the Service to increase the speed and weight of response across the county, most notably in the larger villages in the more rural parts of the county.

The Aerial Appliance review from the previous year resulted in a proposal to reduce the number of permanently crewed aerial appliances from two to one (03/2006). Following a very positive response from all stakeholders, the change was implemented resulting in a reduction of eight wholetime firefighters and a saving of £518,000 since June 2006 (£259,000 per annum).

An additional benefit from the Aerial Appliance project was the introduction of formal overtime arrangements for Shropshire's wholetime staff, which has resulted in greater flexibility in the way the Service crews some of its special appliances during unusual operational conditions (e.g. ability to permanently crew the boat during periods of flooding) and 100% availability of all permanently crewed wholetime appliances. This project was closely linked to 04/2006, which required the Service to make better use of their wholetime staff when the number on duty is above the minimum number required to crew

all front-line appliances. This includes using these staff for activities that support the Authority's Risk Reduction Strategies across the whole of the county, rather than just in their own station areas (Shrewsbury, Telford and Wellington).

## **7 Year four - 2007/08**

The 2007/08 Action Plan included the following activities:

- 01/2007 – Telford Fire Cover Review
- 02/2007 – Small Fires Vehicle Pilot
- 03/2007 – Response to non-fire and non-life risk incidents

The first of the two wholetime Fire Cover Reviews (01/2007) looked at the Telford area and resulted in the relocation of one wholetime appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale. As a result of this move the Fire Authority has:

- Reduced the average response time for the first appliance to get to incidents in the south of Telford by more than 1½ minutes; and
- Redirected approximately £8,000 of RDS turnout costs away from response and into additional CFS and operational contingency planning work

The Small Fires Vehicle (SFV) pilot project (02/2007) is exploring the potential for new smaller vehicles, requiring fewer staff, to be mobilised to small grass and rubbish fires. Although the last two years of wet summers has significantly reduced the potential benefits from this pilot, there have been 92 occasions when the pilot SFV was mobilised instead of a full size appliance. This equates to approximately £4,300 worth of additional wholetime capacity (3 fewer staff mobilised to each incident) that was able to continue with other risk reduction activities. The pilot project has been integrated with another project looking at difficult access issues and will report its full findings to the Fire Authority in October.

Following the consultation feedback received on proposal 03/2007, the Fire Authority has now introduced response standards for water rescue incidents, which will drive improvement in this increasingly important area of work. It also resulted in the Service changing the way it responds to certain non-fire and non-life risk incidents. The Service no longer uses the exemptions it has under the Road Traffic Act, to respond to incidents that do not involve risk to life. It also routinely charges the owners of properties to which the Service is called to assist people out of lifts in which they have become stuck. This change aims to encourage these owners to take proper responsibility for the maintenance of their lifts.

These relatively minor changes have resulted in 112 fewer blue-light journeys on Shropshire's roads and an additional £1,745 in reclaimed charges.

## 8 Year five - 2008/09

The current year's Action Plan includes the following activities:

- 01/2008 – Shrewsbury Fire Cover Review
- 02/2008 – Officer Cover Resilience

The second of the two wholetime fire cover reviews (01/2008) has resulted in the decision for the response resources, located in Shrewsbury, to remain on the current site, instead of being split between two locations. Stakeholders agreed that the Fire Authority would do better to invest its efforts in continuing to target its CFS in the high risk parts of the county town, rather than spend somewhere in the region of an additional £5 million on building two new stations on two new sites.

The proposal to increase the number of officers working on the flexible duty rota (02/2008) has enabled the Service to improve the level of support given to our crews when they are involved in incidents either in the counties that surround us or, as is increasingly the case, when they support other Brigades around the country during major national incidents (e.g. the floods of 2007).

## 9 Summary of benefits to date

Table 1 shows that the IRMP changes, discussed in this report, have produced the equivalent of more than £1 million worth of additional capacity, within the Service, since April 2004.

IRMP Action	Cost saving
02/2004 - Changes to the AFA Response Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced RDS turnout costs</li> <li>• Additional Wholetime capacity</li> </ul>	£61,000 £120,000
04/2004 - Introduction of XL Cabs onto five stations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced lease and maintenance costs</li> </ul>	£360,000
03/2006 – Aerial Appliance Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 fewer Wholetime staff</li> </ul>	£518,000
01/2007 – Telford Fire Cover Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional CFS and contingency planning work</li> </ul>	£8,000
02/2007 – Pilot Small Fires Vehicle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Wholetime capacity</li> </ul>	£4,300
03/2007 – Response to non life risk incidents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in reclaimed charges for lift rescues</li> </ul>	£1,745
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,073,045</b>

**Table 1 - Summary of IRMP financial benefits**

Members will be aware that these savings have been invested into areas of activity that continue to help drive down the risk to those living in, and passing through, Shropshire. Perhaps the most notable example of this has been the Retained Review project, which supports the Fire Authority in the achievement of two of its three IRMP objectives:

1. To increase Community Fire Safety (CFS) activity in the more rural areas of Shropshire; and
2. To drive improvement in the Retained Duty System, to ensure its long term viability.

The tables below show how the Fire Authority has invested in the Retained Service, and the benefits that have accrued.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
8 Retained Support Officers	£324,000
Increased training for all RDS Staff	£187,000
Introduction of XL Cab appliances onto all retained stations – increased establishment from 11 to 14	£272,000
Additional funding for RDS to undertake CFS activities	£100,000
Finances to all RDS Stations for admin, equipment maintenance and cleaning	£76,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£959,000</b>

**Table 2 - Investment in the Retained Service**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Number of RDS recruits	19	16	39
Number of RDS leavers	19	15	8
Total number of RDS staff	297	297	328

**Table 3 - Recruitment levels in the Retained Service**

The availability of RDS appliances to respond to emergency incidents across the county has risen from 94% in 2005, to nearly 99%. The county loses only 6 hours of fire cover per day across all of the 28 fire appliances.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Home Safety visits by RDS staff</b>	<b>Detectors fitted by RDS staff</b>
2005/06	13,000	4,233
2006/07	28,389	12,025
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,389</b>	<b>16,258</b>

**Table 4 - Community fire safety work in Shropshire's rural communities**

As a consequence of this type of work Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is consistently one of the best performing Brigades in the country, both for number of dwelling fires and injuries sustained in those fires. With dwelling fires having decreased by more than 16% since 2004 and the number of fire injuries being in single figures for the last two years.

## **10 IRMP Members Working Group**

As a consequence of their ongoing work to direct the Authority's IRMP Process, the IRMP Members Working Group has clearly played a significant role in producing the benefits discussed in this report. Members may therefore wish to recommend to the Fire Authority, that the Working Group continues with its excellent work, including the work required to develop the Authority's next IRMP Strategic Plan.

## **11 Financial Implications**

The financial implications are as outlined in the main body of the report.

## **12 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

## **13 Equality Impact Assessment**

This report simply summarises the financial and other benefits that have accrued from previously agreed IRMP proposals. It has been assessed against the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and this has shown that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.

## **14 Appendices**

There are no appendices attached to this report.

## **15 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.



Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	*
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity	*	Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings	*	Retained	*
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*