

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING MEMBERS' WORKING GROUP UPDATE

1 Purpose of Report

To advise Members of the progress made by the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) Members' Working Group (the Group) towards the implementation of the improvements required by the Fire Authority's IRMP Action Plan 2006/07. Also, to ask Members to approve the recommendations made by the Group at its meeting held on 27 June 2006. Additionally, to seek delegated authority for the Group to approve the draft Action Plan 2007/08 and commence this year's IRMP consultation process.

2 Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- a) Note the progress made towards the implementation of the Fire Authority's IRMP Action Plan 2006/07;
- b) Approve the proposals put forward by the IRMP Members' Working Group for changes to the service to be consulted upon as part of the draft Action Plan 2007/08, specifically to:
 - i Relocate one appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale;
 - ii Implement a twelve-month pilot project involving a Small Fires Unit, based at Tweedale, to cover the whole of the Telford area; and
 - iii Determine whether there is a need for additional response standards for incidents not covered by the Fire Authority's current standards;
- c) Delegate responsibility for the creation of the draft Action Plan 2007/08 to the Group;
- d) Delegate responsibility for the IRMP consultation process, to be conducted between August and November 2006, to the Group; and
- e) Note that all Members of the Fire Authority are invited to attend any of the IRMP consultation sessions.

3 Background

At a meeting of the Fire Authority on 10 May 2006, the Chief Fire Officer provided a verbal update on the latest developments in the Fire Authority's IRMP process. It was noted that the IRMP Members' Working Group had met in February and



provided direction for officers to follow. In April the Chair of the Fire Authority and Chair of the Group met with representatives of all of the unions to discuss the areas for improvement being explored as part of this year's IRMP process. These could potentially have greatest impact on all wholetime staff and retained staff at Tweedale. It was, therefore, agreed that a working group, consisting of representatives from the wholetime watches, would be set up to discuss these issues further. Meetings would also be arranged with the retained staff at Tweedale. This work would help to enable staff to be involved in, and have an impact upon, the IRMP process before any formal decision was taken as to what should be included within the next round of IRMP consultation with all staff, the public and other stakeholders.

4 Members' Working Group Meeting 27 June 2006

The Group met on 27 June and Members were informed of:

- The progress made towards implementation of the IRMP Action Plan 2006/07, which had been published on 1 April 2006; and
- The findings from the work undertaken into the areas of improvement the Group had previously tasked the IRMP Team to look at.

The remainder of this report summarises the information discussed by the Group and their recommendations as to how the Fire Authority should proceed with the creation of its draft IRMP Action Plan for 2007/08.

5 Progress in Implementing Action Plan 2006/07

Progress towards implementation of the improvements, detailed in the Fire Authority's IRMP Action Plan 2006/07, is detailed below.

Response Standards (01/2006)

New response standards for Life Risk Fires and Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's) were agreed by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 14 December 2005. These were introduced on the 1 April 2006 and are shown in Table 1 below. Monitoring against these new standards has now commenced and performance for April and May is shown in Table 2. With only two months' data to report against (consisting of 32 fire incidents and 13 RTC's) it is difficult to identify any trends at this early stage. The new standards are, however, focused on Life Risk incidents and this data will, therefore, give a more detailed and accurate reflection of the actual risk to life from fire and RTC's in the different areas of Shropshire, thereby further informing the IRMP process. All failures are thoroughly investigated by the officer responsible for operational performance. The first detailed quarterly report will be received by the Audit and Performance Management Committee in September.

Table 1 – Shropshire's Life Risk Fire and RTC Standards

Risk areas	Life Risk Fires		Road Traffic Collisions		
	Minimum of 5 firefighters in:	Minimum of 8 firefighters in:	Minimum of 5 firefighters in:	Minimum of 8 firefighters and rescue pump in:	Rescue tender arrives within:
High	10 minutes	13 minutes	10 minutes	13 minutes	30 minutes
Medium	15 minutes	18 minutes	15 minutes	18 minutes	30 minutes
Low	20 minutes	20 minutes	20 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes
Target 2006/7	75%	95%	77%	77%	85%



Table 2 – 2006/07 Performance to date against Life Risk Standards

	Life Risk Fires		Road Traffic Collisions		
	Minimum of 5 firefighters in:	Minimum of 8 firefighters in:	Minimum of 5 firefighters in:	Minimum of 8 firefighters and rescue pump in:	Rescue tender arrives within:
Target 2006/7	75%	95%	77%	77%	85%
Performance	84.4%	89%	92.3%	58.3%	58.3%

Resilience Standards (02/2006)

Resilience Standards are the MINIMUM standards which the Fire Authority aims to deliver to the people of Shropshire during periods of exceptional demand upon its operational resources. The standard is a minimum of one appliance in 20 minutes, to anywhere in the County. These standards were introduced on 1 April 2006. As modification to the existing mobilising system to provide an automated recording of incidents during resilience state was found not to be cost-effective, a manual process has been introduced. To date there have been no periods of exceptional activity or incidents requiring the introduction of the standard.

Aerial Provision (03/2006)

The policy of crewing only one of the two aerial appliances at any one time was introduced on 1 April. This involved a reduction of eight wholtime posts, with the savings being re-invested into the Retained Review Project for the employment of eight new Retained Support Officers.

Due to natural wastage, the establishment on the watches at Shrewsbury and Telford has already reduced to fifteen, delivering the reduction in posts earlier than anticipated. A consequence of this improvement is the need to introduce a new overtime and mixed crewing policy, which will enable the Service to guarantee the availability of all wholtime appliances. These policies are not yet in place, although the process required for their implementation, including consultation with the representative bodies, is advancing well. Until the system is fully in place the Service continues to suffer occasions when appliances are not available, but the overtime budget will be attracting an under-spend. The new policies are likely to be implemented during August.

In relation to re-investing the savings into the Retained Review Project, interviews for the Retained Support Officer posts have been completed and the successful candidates will take up their positions at the beginning of August.

Improved Use of Existing Staff Resources (04/2006)

Wholtime staff, in excess of the minimum number required to crew the appliances, are used for duties outside their station area. This includes community fire safety work in the more rural parts of the County (most notably the Highley and Alveley areas), risk planning and training activities, as well as crewing retained appliances at strategic stations when necessary. This has been happening on an ad-hoc basis for some time. The project requires that recording systems are put in place to measure the effectiveness of the process. As aspects of this and the previous project are linked; the development of policies which reflect and properly embed these activities will be subject to the same delays, with potential completion during August.



6 Improvements under Consideration for Draft Action Plan 2007/08

Following the direction given by the IRMP Members' Working Group, at their February meeting, the IRMP Team explored areas identified for potential service improvements. These included:

- Review of the use of staff resources available overnight;
- Relocation of one wholetime appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale;
- Potential for a Small Fires Unit in Tweedale; and
- Review of other incidents not covered by the new Response Standards.

At the meeting on 27 June, the IRMP Team reported on its investigations into these areas. These are summarised below.

Reviewing Staff Resources

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has issued a Draft Guidance Note on Shift Patterns and Efficiency Gains. While they cannot (at this stage) be considered "best" or "good" practice, they do inform the future planning process and identify opportunities appropriate to Shropshire. It is anticipated that these areas will form an integral part of the 'Use of Resources' assessment later this year. Issues affecting Retained Duty Staff were covered by the Retained Review Project presented to Members in December 2005. The number of officers per head of population is amongst the lowest in the Country, but changes implemented to officer duty systems in Cheshire reportedly make them lower. This will be investigated.

Actions already implemented for wholetime shift patterns include improved use of the limited surplus crewing on days (2006/07 IRMP Action Plan - Improved Use of Existing Staff Resources). Investigation into night shift crewing has shown:

- 120 night shifts where crewing levels are overstaffed;
- Although this equates to only a 2.7% inefficiency, the IRMP Team has been tasked to investigate whether this could be improved;
- Analysis of activity and response standards confirms that five wholetime appliances are required 24 hours a day;
- The IRMP Team has worked with the Watch Working Group to identify options for shifting surplus staff onto days where they could be productively used for additional community fire safety activities;
- The impact of the new overtime requirements (2006/07 IRMP Action Plan – Aerial Provision) is, however, expected to have an impact on this issue;
- Following feedback from the Watch Working Group, officers are investigating the greater integration of leave, training schedule and possible additional flexibilities in staff being able to book time off (in lieu of accrued overtime) in advance.

It is anticipated that these measures will enable the Service to demonstrate that it is making the most effective use of its resources. The Members' Working Group agreed that this was the most effective way forward. This area would not need to be included in the IRMP consultation, but the process should highlight the work that has already been undertaken in this area.



Relocation of Wholetime Appliance from Telford to Tweedale

The strategic IRMP identified that a review of fire cover in Shrewsbury was a higher priority than Telford. Analysis of performance against the new response standards showed, however, that the failure rate is more significant in Telford than Shrewsbury. Table 3 below shows the results of this analysis, identifying the primary areas of failure. In addition, Members will be aware of the move to provide Regional Control Centres. The relocation of our existing Fire Control, as part of any relocation of Shrewsbury would, therefore, be unjustified.

It is possible, using the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) computer modelling program, to make a prediction as to the typical response time to all road junctions in the County, from all fire stations in the County. The results from this modelling show that relocating one of Telford Central's two wholetime appliances to Tweedale has the potential of improving response times to approximately 20% of the overall Telford Risk Area. FSEC analysis also predicts this improved response would have a positive impact on the risk to life in house fires and road traffic collisions.

A capital provision of £20,000 has been set aside for any alterations required to the Tweedale station to accommodate a wholetime crew. Refurbishment and provision of limited kitchen facilities and dormitory provision would be met from this capital provision. Additional revenue costs of approximately £150,000 per annum would be required to provide for an increase in the establishment of four posts.

Providing a wholetime appliance at Tweedale would impact on the activity levels of the existing retained appliance at this station. While it is difficult to predict with certainty what this impact would be, it is likely there would be a reduction in operational activity. The provision of a wholetime appliance has, however, the potential to extend the station's response area. This is due to a reduction in appliance response time for a wholetime crew. Combined with the Small Fires Unit pilot the actual impact on retained duty system staff may not be that significant.

Table 3 – Average Response Performance

All Shropshire	Risk area	% Brigade failure	All Shropshire	Risk area	% Brigade failure
1st Response 73% success	Telford	45.7	2nd Response 92% success	Rural	62.2
	Shrewsbury	23.9		Telford	11.8
	Rural	12.9		Shrewsbury	5.0

Small Fires Unit

In conjunction with the previous proposal it is proposed to pilot a Small Fires Unit at Tweedale. The appliance utilised would be the existing Land Rover currently stationed at Tweedale. This would be crewed by two of the existing retained staff. For operational and safety reasons the types of incident to which this appliance would respond would be limited to small fires in the open involving rubbish, bins and grass. Currently there are an average of 64 incidents fitting these criteria in Tweedale and 326 in Telford each year. These are dealt with by a major pumping appliance crewed by either four or five firefighters, often disrupting important work, such as community safety visits. Utilising a Small Fires Unit would enable these crews to carry on with this important work without disruption. It is not envisaged that the appliance would be used for vehicle or property fires due to limited operational capability and health and safety considerations for the crew. In addition the vehicle and crew could be utilised in the Ironbridge area for both operational and heritage protection work.



There are currently no attendance standards set for attending these types of incidents. It is, therefore, proposed as part of the pilot to establish such standards.

Review of other incidents not covered by the new Response Standards

Following on from the introduction of Response Standards for Life Risk Fires and RTC's an assessment of other potentially life-threatening incidents has now been undertaken. All incidents over a five-year period (2000 – 2005) where persons have been rescued or released were taken into consideration. The outcome of the analysis indicated that the three notable types of incidents were:

- Water Incidents - 151;
- Rescues from height - 21; and
- Extractions from equipment or machinery - 14.

While further analysis of the water incidents revealed that on 47% of calls no action was required, it still represents the most significant group of other rescue incidents. Additionally, while working at height does present risks to the rescuers, it is usually in a more controlled environment. It is, therefore, considered that after fires and RTC's, water Incidents present the next most significant risk.

Further work in this area will consider the benefits from setting response standards for these incidents (water, height and extrication) as well as the range of other non-life risk incidents attended. Benefits would include the ability to:

- Identify areas for service improvement;
- Prioritise resource allocation; and
- Prioritise staff training across the County.

The consultation process would serve to inform this work.

7 Public/Stakeholder Consultation

Previous public and stakeholder IRMP consultations have been achieved by means of focus groups in Shrewsbury and Ludlow. As the existing Shrewsbury and Ludlow groups have built up a level of experience and understanding working with the Service; it is considered advantageous to maintain them. This year's IRMP proposals have a significant impact in the Telford area and it is, therefore, proposed to extend the focus groups to three, namely Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Telford.

8 Members' Working Group Recommendations

Based upon the work outlined above, the Members' Working Group make the following recommendations to the Fire Authority, in relation to the areas of improvement to be consulted upon, between August and November 2006, as part of its Draft IRMP Action Plan 2007/08:

- 1 Relocate one appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale;
- 2 Implement a twelve-month pilot project involving a Small Fires Unit, based at Tweedale, to cover the whole of the Telford area; and
- 3 Determine whether there is a need for additional response standards for incidents not covered by the Fire Authority's current standards.



9 Proposed Contents of the Draft Action Plan for 2006/07

An outline of the contents of the draft Action Plan 2007/08, on which consultation is required over the coming months, is given below.

- Updates on progress in implementing the actions from the 2006/07 IRMP Action Plan;
- Progress in implementing other priority work due for completion prior to April 2007; and
- The improvement areas detailed in section 6 of this report.

The Fire Authority is asked to approve the delegation of responsibility for developing the draft Action Plan 2007/08 and then undertaking a three-month consultation with all staff, members of the public and other stakeholder groups, to the IRMP Members' Working Group.

10 Financial impact

The potential impact from the introduction of the improvements identified for consultation will be in the region of £150,000 revenue and £20,000 capital. Various efficiency savings are being looked at as part of the Service's ongoing budget planning process. These will be considered separately to the IRMP process. The feedback from the IRMP consultation and the budget planning process will be brought together at the Fire Authority's December meeting. This will ensure that IRMP and financial planning are effectively integrated.

11 Timetable for Year Four IRMP – 2007/08

As stated above, in order for the IRMP process to inform the Fire Authority's Budget Planning process, any changes proposed for the 2007/08 financial year must be known by December 2006. It is, therefore, necessary to complete consultation on the Draft Action Plan 2007/08 by November 2006. The timetable given in the table below will enable the Fire Authority to meet these deadlines.

Date	Action
19 July 2006	Fire Authority approves the proposed contents of the Draft Action Plan 2007/08
End of July/ start of August 2006	IRMP Members' Working Group approves Draft Action Plan and the IRMP consultation process
August to November 2006	IRMP consultation is conducted
November 2006	IRMP Members' Working Group consultation feedback meeting The Group makes recommendations to Fire Authority
December 2006	Fire Authority considers budgetary constraints and improvements to be implemented during 2007/08 and agrees its IRMP Action Plan 2007/08
January to April 2007	IRMP Action Plan 2007/08 is published and implemented

It is intended that at least one member of the IRMP Members' Working Group will attend all of the sessions conducted during the consultation process. A complete list of all planned consultation meetings will be made available to all Members of the Fire Authority prior to its commencement. Members' attendance at these meetings is welcomed and encouraged.



12 Legal Comment

In 2003 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister requested fire authorities to prepare IRMPs. Although this request does not have the force of statute, there was a clear expectation that the request would be complied with. This expectation has been further formalised by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, which states that fire and rescue authorities must 'have regard' to the Government's National Framework Documents, which in turn state that fire authorities 'must' have an IRMP in place.

13 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

14 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

10 May 2006, Minutes Item 20, Integrated Risk Management Plan Update

14 December 2005, Report 9, Retained Review and Report 10, Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation Results

20 July 2005, Report 17, Integrated Risk Management Planning Members' Working Group Update

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.

Business Continuity Planning		Integrated Risk Management Planning	*
Capacity		Legal	*
Civil Contingencies Act		Member Involvement	*
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		National Framework	*
Equality and Fairness		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings	*	Retained	*
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	*
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	

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