

# Integrated Risk Management Planning Outcomes of the Fire Cover Review for Shropshire

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this item please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201, Andy Johnson, Head of Risk Management, on 01743 260287, or Joe Whelan, IRMP Manager on 01743 260182.

## 1 Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with details of the outcomes from the 'Fire Cover Review for the remaining areas of Shropshire'. The report also sets out early work on developing an enhanced support role for resilience and other stations.

In addition to this report, a short presentation, covering the most salient points of the Fire Cover Review, will be given at the meeting to assist Members in their decision making.

## 2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is requested to:

- a) Note the conclusions of the outcomes from the Fire Cover Review for the remaining areas of Shropshire; and
- b) Approve the recommendations of the IRMP Members Working Group that:
  - i) The current level of fire cover provision is maintained;
  - ii) The role of resilience stations is developed; and,
  - iii) Further work is carried out into the provision of additional support for incidents.

### **3 Background**

The Authority's Strategic Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) detailed the requirement to review the fire cover provided by Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority. This was broken down into the three areas of:

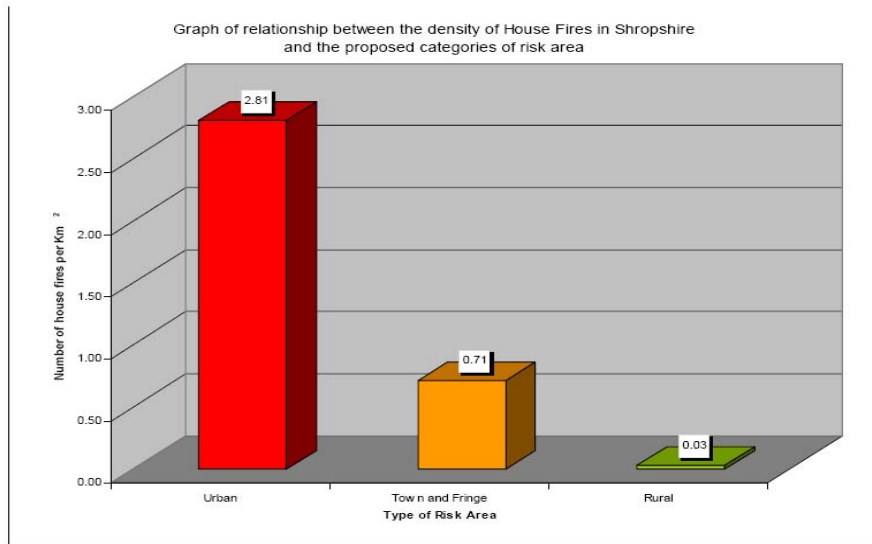
- Telford,
- Shrewsbury, and
- The remaining areas in Shropshire

The Telford review conducted in 2006/07 resulted in the relocation of one wholetime crewed appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale fire station. The Shrewsbury review conducted in 2007/08 resulted in the Members' decision to redevelop the current St Michael's Street as opposed to splitting fire cover and relocation.

At the Fire Authority's meeting held on 11 June 2008 the IRMP Manager gave a verbal update, on behalf of the IRMP Members Working Group, on the progress and emerging findings from the review of the remainder of Shropshire. This indicated that the emerging evidence did not support any significant changes to the current provision of fire cover. This report now sets out the overall outcomes from the review and makes recommendations, approved by the IRMP Members Working Group, relating to how the service can make best use of those resources situated in the more rural parts of the county.

### **4 Standards of Fire Cover**

Development work on the introduction of response standards for Shropshire identified that the county could be divided into three categories in accordance with the Rural and Urban Area Classification 2004 (developed by DEFRA and other Government departments). These classifications were, 'Urban', 'Town and Fringe' and 'Rural'. This was reinforced by the relationship between the number of house fires and the area classifications.



**Table A: Relationship between Population density and Dwelling Fire Levels**

Those fire stations located at Baschurch, Clun, Hodnet, and Prees fall within areas classified as 'Rural' and therefore have an inherent risk from fire that is considered to be low. Table B lists all stations and their respective 'risk ratings'.

Urban (>10,000 population) - High	Town and Fringe (1,500 to 10,000 population) - Medium	Rural (less than 1,500 people) - Low
Telford	Shifnal	The rest of Shropshire
Shrewsbury	Bayston Hill	Including:
Newport	Highley and Alveley	Baschurch
Oswestry	Cleobury Mortimer	Clun
Market Drayton	Bomere Heath	Hodnet
Bridgnorth	Much Wenlock	Prees
Ludlow	Minsterley and Pontesbury	
Whitchurch	Albrighton and Cosford	
	Wem	
	Gobowen	
	Ellesmere	
	Shawbury	
	Craven Arms	
	Church Stretton	
	Bishop's Castle	

**Table B: Final categorisation of the County.**

At that time, the analysis suggested that, to a large extent, these low risk areas could be covered from neighbouring stations. Further detailed analysis of our predicted attendance performance has now shown that any reduction in the number of stations is likely to have an adverse impact on our current response standards for life risk incidents. This would not only affect the immediate station response areas, but would also impact on the neighbouring station response areas in the majority of cases. This analysis is detailed in the table below.

Station	Impact on the Immediate Area	Neighbouring Area affected	Impact on the Neighbouring Station Area
Baschurch	Increased failure of 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> response standard	None	
Clun	As above	Bishops Castle	Increased likelihood of failure of 2 <sup>nd</sup> attendance standard
Hodnet	As above	Market Drayton	Increased likelihood of failure of 2 <sup>nd</sup> attendance standard
Prees	As above	Wem	Increased likelihood of failure of 2 <sup>nd</sup> attendance standard
		Whitchurch	Minimal impact

**Table C: Impact of removing fire stations in low risk areas**

## 5 Resilience Standards

In setting its 'normal' Response Standards, the Authority also set its 'Resilience Standards', which aim to guarantee a minimum level of service to the people of Shropshire during times when the Service is exceptionally busy.

Previous work to assess the possible impact from reducing the number of available firefighting appliances, from the normal level of 28 pumps, identified that in order to achieve the Resilience Standard (at least 1 appliance in 20 minutes) a minimum of 14 strategically placed appliances are needed. It should be noted, however, that there would still remain areas of the county that are either impossible to reach from any station within 20 minutes, or the addition of another station would not make any significant improvements.

Monitoring against the Resilience Standards has shown that the Service went into 'Resilience State' on 12 occasions during the previous 12 months. This is in line with predictions.

Any reduction in the current level of fire cover provision (23 stations and 28 appliances) would have a significant impact on our future ability to meet and maintain these standards.

## 6 Fire Service Emergency Cover Model

Utilising the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) computer based risk modelling toolkit, the impact on predicted fire losses can be assessed. This assessment has shown that removal of any one of the identified low risk fire station appliances increases the likelihood of fatalities in fires and special service calls, and property loss due to additional fire damage.

The model assesses the predicted savings from removing resources against the increase in predicted loss. The model predicts an additional fatality approximately once every 10 years as a result of the reduction in the number of appliances.

The model then evaluates the projected savings against the potential increase in losses. It predicts that the annual savings, by the Service, of £100,000 would be offset by the predicted increase in annual losses by society of more than £200,000. This consists of the increased cost of additional lives lost and property damage. FSEC analysis therefore shows that a reduction in fire cover would not be cost effective.

## 7 Development Opportunities

The low number of calls that the low risk area stations (resilience stations) attend each year, present potential difficulties for the staff on those stations to maintain their operational competence. To overcome this issue, it is proposed that greater use is made of these stations to support the Service's strategic fire cover during busy periods. This work would not be limited just to the resilience stations, but would also include other stations with low turnouts.

In addition to this change to the way we resource our general incidents, the Operations Department are currently reviewing the provision of additional specialist functions required to support the county. A number of retained duty stations currently provide cover for specialist appliances and equipment such as pumping of large volumes of water, foam, environmental protection and incident command support. The Service intends to make greater use of the Resilience Stations to support these specialist crews, thereby improving the Service's ability to maintain these functions during protracted incidents, as well as incidents that occur elsewhere in the country.

The review has also identified a number of additional functions/skills that are considered worthy of further investigation. This includes;

- Large animal rescue technicians
- Logistic support to level 3 incidents
- Dedicated safety and rescue crew for incidents of 4 or more pumps
- BA Pathfinder teams – specialist trained teams in laying guidelines

This work will not be limited to the Resilience Stations, but will need to look across all stations to ensure the training requirements that would subsequently fall to each station are balanced against their training capacity. The current round of IRMP presentations is exploring these development opportunities with staff. Their feedback will help to inform how this review progresses.

## **8 Recommendations**

In view of the results from the Fire Cover Review, summarised above, the IRMP Members Working Group recommend that there should be no reduction in the current levels of fire cover in the county. The Fire Authority is asked to approve this recommendation.

If accepted, this will provide a sound basis from which the development opportunities, outlined in the previous section, can progress.

## **9 Financial Implications**

There are likely to be some financial implications that fall out of the development opportunities outlined above, particularly where additional specialist training is required. These will form an integral part of the review, with approval for additional funds being sought as part of the project initiation process.

## **10 Legal Comment**

The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2008/11 issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government states that 'Fire and Rescue Authorities must each have in place and maintain an IRMP which reflects local need and which sets out plans to tackle effectively both existing and potential risk to communities.

## **11 Equality Impact Assessment**

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached to this report.

## **12 Appendices**

There are no appendices to this report.

## 13 Background Papers

### Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

30 April 2008, Report 15 - Integrated Risk Management Planning Members' Working Group Update

11 June 2008, Report 14 - Integrated Risk Management Planning Consultation Schedule and Members' Working Group Update and IRMP Manager's verbal 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.

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	*