

Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation Results

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

To advise of the outcome of an extensive, three-month consultation on the Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Proposed Actions document for 2010/11, and to seek approval for changes to these proposals, as recommended by the IRMP Members' Working Group, as result of consultation feedback.

In addition, to seek approval for the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group to progress the 2010/11 IRMP process to the implementation phase.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the extent of the consultation exercise undertaken with staff, stakeholders and the public with regard to the IRMP 2010/11 Proposed Action document;
- b) Approve the changes to the proposals, as proposed by the Fire Authority's IRMP Members' Working Group, as a result of feedback obtained through the consultation process;
- c) Note the budgetary implications of the IRMP proposals; and
- d) Delegate responsibility for implementing the IRMP proposals to the newly constituted Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group.

3 Background

At its meeting on 3 July 2009, the Fire Authority agreed to delegate responsibility to the IRMP Members' Working Group (the Group) for the creation of the Authority's IRMP 2010/11 Proposed Actions document. Members also gave delegated responsibility to the Group for the IRMP consultation process, which was to be held between July and November 2009.

Over the last three months the Group, the Service's Executive Team and the IRMP Team have been consulting on the proposals approved by the Fire Authority at its July meeting. The Group met, on 25 November, to discuss the feedback received from the consultation process, and to agree recommendations on how the proposals should be taken forward by the Fire Authority.

4 Approach to Consultation

As described in its Strategic IRMP, the Fire Authority's approach to consultation complies with guidance issued by both the Cabinet Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). Additionally, the consultation process followed the recommendations of Opinion Research Services (ORS), who have been contracted by the Fire Authority to assist with various consultation exercises for a number of years, including the Fire Authority's annual IRMP consultation.

The central tenet of this guidance was that the extent of consultation should be proportional to the scope of the IRMP and should focus upon communities or interest groups particularly affected by the changes. Although the IRMP Proposed Actions are not likely to impact significantly on the service delivered to the communities of Shropshire, they do involve the movement of relatively significant sums of money from one area of the Service into another, higher priority area. For this reason, it was considered appropriate to try to encourage feedback from all sections of the community.

Summary details of the consultation work undertaken with staff, members of the public and other stakeholder organisations are provided in this report. Appendices A and B (which can be accessed via the Fire Authority's website – please see section 14 of this report for the links) provide the detailed reports on this work.

5 Consultation with Staff and Representative Bodies

As with previous years' consultation processes, and in recognition that the group most likely to be affected by changes proposed within the IRMP 2010/11 Action Plan are the employees of the Fire Authority, the Group focussed a good deal of attention upon consulting effectively with this group. Copies of the plans were placed at all stations, watches and departments within the Service and staff were encouraged to consider and comment upon the information and proposals they contained.

Additionally, all staff were encouraged to attend one of 42 IRMP presentations conducted between 17 July 2009 and 30 October 2009. A total of 434 staff attended these presentations, representing 66% of the workforce. Each of the presentations lasted approximately two hours with staff being provided the opportunity to question the Members of the Group, the Executive Team and/or the IRMP Team. Details relating to the 42 meetings held are provided at **Appendix C** (which can be accessed via the Fire Authority's website – please see section 14 of this report for the link). Following each presentation staff were asked to complete a questionnaire seeking their views on the proposals, thus providing valuable written feedback.

All representative bodies were invited to a meeting and presentation by the IRMP Team and the Group prior to the commencement of the staff consultation process. They were also invited to attend any (or all) of the 42 presentations at stations and Headquarters.

Full details about this consultation process and the responses received are included at **Appendix A**. The Fire Brigades Union response to the proposals is given at **Appendix D** (which can be accessed via the Fire Authority's website – please see section 14 of this report for the link). No responses were received from the other representative bodies.

6 Consultation with the Public and Stakeholder Organisations

The method of consultation with members of the public involved:

- Formal 'Scrutiny Panels'; and
- An on-line and paper questionnaire.

Details about this work are given below. Full details about this consultation process and the responses received are included as part of **Appendix B**.

Public Scrutiny Panel

A 'Public Scrutiny Panel' is a group of people, representing a cross-section of the community, who can be called upon for various consultation requirements, over a number of years. Building on experience from previous years' consultation with ORS, the most effective means for consulting with members of the public remained through the use of 'Scrutiny Panels'. The benefit of using Public Scrutiny Panels is that the Fire Authority is able to demonstrate that an 'informed' process of consultation has taken place.

ORS recruited a total of 34 members of the public to attend one of two Public Scrutiny Panels, held in Ludlow and Shrewsbury. Panel members received the Fire Authority's IRMP documents prior to the meetings. During the meetings, the IRMP Team gave a summary presentation on the purpose of IRMP and the specific proposals contained in the Fire Authority's proposed Action Plan. After a lengthy question and answers session, the group was split into several smaller groups. Each group then discussed and agreed responses to various questions relating to the Fire Authority's proposals.

Although Members of the Fire Authority, the Chief Fire Officer and the IRMP Team were available to answer any additional questions, they did not take part in these discussions.

Questionnaire

To enable more members of the public to contribute to this consultation process the Authority included an on-line questionnaire within the IRMP section of its website. A paper version was also made available for those who preferred it.

The questionnaire provided the respondent with information about the Fire Authority's IRMP proposals and asked a series of questions, on which the Fire Authority was seeking specific comments. Space was also provided for any other comments they wished to make. The questionnaire was made available for three months, giving ample time for people to respond.

Awareness of the questionnaire was raised with the public by signposting it on the homepage of the Service website and through the distribution of posters, advertising its existence, to all Post Offices, supermarkets and Parish notice boards in the County. Press releases were also sent to all news media outlets in and around the County.

Only six responses were received via this means; they were therefore included within the main response sections rather than as a separate section of the report.

7 Consultation with Stakeholder Organisations

Two methods were used to consult with organisations that have a vested interest in the service delivered by the Fire Authority, namely:

- Formal 'Stakeholder Forums'; and
- The online and paper questionnaire.

Details about this work are given below. Full details about this consultation process and the responses received are also included as part of **Appendix B**.

Stakeholder Forums

On the recommendation of ORS the Fire Authority determined that the most effective means for consulting with organisations and businesses most likely to be affected by the Authority's proposals was through stakeholder forums. This format of consultation allows for the proposals to be explained on a face-to-face basis prior to obtaining the views of stakeholders through in-depth discussion.

More than 240 organisations were, therefore, informed of the Fire Authority's IRMP 2010/11 Proposed Action Plan and the possible impact it could have on them. These included:

- Both Unitary Councils in Shropshire;
- The Local Area Committees in the Shropshire Council area;
- The Parish Councils in the Telford & Wrekin Borough Council area;
- Police and Ambulance Services in Shropshire;
- Neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services;
- Primary Care Trusts;
- The Environment Agency and Environmental Health departments;
- Shropshire's diversity forums.

The Working Group was disappointed that only 2 people attended the Shrewsbury forum and no-one attended the Ludlow Forum.

The forum was managed through a structured approach by ORS, and the forum members' views on the Authority's proposals were obtained and reported to the Authority in a 'Consultation Report'. The findings from this work with stakeholders are contained in the relevant sections of the full ORS report (Annex A to Appendix B) and summarised within the sections of this report that deal with each proposal.

The forums were managed through a structured approach by ORS, and the forum members' views on the Authority's proposals were obtained and reported to the Authority in a 'Consultation Report'. The findings from this work with stakeholders are summarised in the relevant sections of the full ORS report, included as part of **Appendix B**.

Questionnaires

The Fire Authority was keen to make sure that those organisations that were unable to attend one of the Stakeholder Forums had every opportunity to comment on its proposals. Therefore, every invite to the forums that was sent out also included a paper questionnaire, which gave details of the proposals and asked for their thoughts. Despite the effort put in to attract comment, only 4 completed questionnaires were returned.

The feedback from the Authority's Public and Stakeholder consultation process is detailed in **Appendix B**.

8 Summary of the Consultation Feedback

The feedback received during this process has been extremely perceptive and constructive. The significant outcomes from the consultation process are detailed on the following pages.

a. District Development Teams

Feedback from Staff and their Representative Bodies

- The Group was pleased to see the high level of support for the District Development Teams (DDT) amongst staff, however, Members also noted the concerns that some people have about the proposed structure of those teams.

Feedback from the Public and Other Stakeholders

- The returned questionnaires showed there was strong support for the proposal and there was overwhelming support from the members of the public and stakeholders that attended the scrutiny and forum panels. Panel members believe that this proposal will bring significant benefits to Retained staff and consequently to the communities that they serve.

b. Reduction of Wholetime Ridership Factor

Feedback from Staff and their Representative Bodies

- A small majority of staff (53% for, and 28% against) agreed with the proposal to reduce the Wholetime Ridership Factor and re-invest the savings into the DDT's.
- However the Working Group noted the concerns, from staff and the Fire Brigades Union, that reducing the Wholetime Service by 8 posts may result in the Service not being able to crew its front-line appliances, or a reduction in the levels of morale amongst staff.

Feedback from the Public and Other Stakeholders

- 66% of people who responded to the questionnaire, agreed with this proposal.
- There was also overwhelming support for reducing Wholetime Ridership Factor and re-investing the savings into the DDT's from those members of the public and stakeholders that attended the scrutiny and forum panels. The panel members see this proposal as improving efficiency, whilst at the same time meeting an important need within the Service.

c. Consolidation of Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) Cover at Telford Central

Feedback from Staff and their Representative Bodies

- This proposal has attracted much comment, both during the presentations and in response to the questionnaire. Whilst there is some support for the option of locating the main ALP at Telford and the spare in Shrewsbury, there are people who feel that this would not work well. The main concerns are around maintaining competencies and the delay in getting the spare on the run, should it be required to cover break-downs.
- Very early on in the consultation process Shrewsbury staff put forward an alternative proposal, which was that ALP cover should come to Shrewsbury and the Incident Response Unit (IRU) should go to Telford. This would meet the benefit identified in the initial proposal, which is mainly around the reduced competency requirements needed by staff based in Shrewsbury. This would also negate the need to spend £25,000 on extending a bay at Telford (although some staff consider this would not be required) in order to accommodate both ALPs. Staff also point to the additional benefits of having the IRU based at Telford, which relate to there being more room at Telford to train with the equipment carried on the IRU and that the Training Centre would then have the Fork Lift Truck available for driver training.
- The major concern by staff opposing this alternative proposal is that, in combination with the movement of the appliance from Telford to Tweedale last year, removing the ALP from Telford could impact on the morale of the Telford staff.

Feedback from the Public and Other Stakeholders

- With 55% in favour of the proposal and 33% against, the questionnaires show that, based solely on the information contained in the IRMP Proposal Document, a small majority of people agree with the proposal to consolidate ALP cover in Telford.
- The public and stakeholder panels were able to discuss both the initial proposal to consolidate ALP cover in Telford, as well as the alternative that had been raised through consultation with staff, that cover should be concentrated in Shrewsbury. Following a lot of discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of both options, both of the public panels and the stakeholder panel agreed that the Shrewsbury option appeared to be the most effective. All panels agreed that there was very little difference between the two options, with the Shrewsbury option generally being preferred, because it meant that both ALPs could be located on the same station without the need to do any additional building works.

9 Recommended Changes to IRMP Proposals 2010/11

Having considered all of the feedback received, at its meeting on 25 November 2009, the IRMP Members' Working Group made the following recommendations to the Fire Authority on how it should progress its IRMP Action Plan 2010/11.

a. District Development Teams

The Group recommends that:

1. The Fire Authority implements the proposal to create four District Development Teams; and
2. A full evaluation of the project should be conducted, within the first 12 months, to ensure the benefits from this proposal are being obtained.

b. Reduction of Wholetime Ridership Factor

The Group recommends that:

1. The Fire Authority should implement this proposal, in a staged approach, as stated in the IRMP Proposals document;
2. A review of the impact on service delivery, possibly encountered as a consequence of the reduction in the number of Wholetime staff, should be undertaken within the first 12 months of the start of the implementation project (after the first phase of staff reductions); and
3. The results of this review should be considered by the Fire Authority before it agrees progressing to the second phase of staff reductions.

c. Consolidation of Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) Cover

The Group recommends that:

1. The Fire Authority should implement the alternative proposal of consolidating ALP cover in Shrewsbury and moving the Incident Response Unit to Telford Central.

10 The Next Stages

Subject to the agreement of the Fire Authority that the proposed amendments detailed above be made to its IRMP Action Plan 2010/11, it is also recommended that authority be delegated to the newly constituted Strategic Planning Working Group to oversee the following stages of the IRMP process:

1. Update and finalise the Action Plan, to reflect the agreed changes;
2. Provide feedback to consultees with regard to the outcome from the consultation process and the changes made as a result;

3. Publish the Fire Authority's IRMP Action Plan 2010/11, by 1 April 2010;
4. Develop implementation projects in accordance with the Actions stated in the Action Plan 2010/11; and
5. Commence implementation of these projects.

11 Financial Implications

The table below shows the predicted implications on expenditure, efficiencies and budget growth requirements as a consequence of the three projects contained in the Fire Authority's IRMP Action Plan 2010/11. The table includes the £107k, committed by the Fire Authority as part of the 2009/10 budget, to finance the District Development Teams Pilot Project.

The financial impact, depicted in the table, has been taken into account in the Budget Planning Papers, being presented to the Fire Authority under separate cover.

	Budget 2010/11 £	Budget 2011/12 £	Budget 2012/13 £
Total Project Expenditure	506,294	709,321	732,236
Committed Growth – 2009/10 Budget	107,000	107,000	107,000
Efficiencies	421,256	569,608	569,608
Difference	(21,962)	32,713	55,628
Additional Growth Requirement - 2010/11 Budget	0	0	0
Additional Growth Requirement - 2011/12 Budget	-	32,713	32,713
Additional Growth Requirement - 2012/13 Budget	-	-	22,915
Total increase on 2009/10 budget	0	32,713	55,628

12 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'.

13 Equality and Diversity Implications

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

14 Appendices

It was intended to attach a number of appendices to this report but, because of their length, officers have decided to place them on the Fire Authority's website. Should Members wish to access them, they can be found on the following links:

Appendix A

www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/webimages/managing-the-service/cfa/fireauthority-meetings-data/pdf-613-appendix-a-irmp-staff-consultation-response.pdf

Staff Consultation Response Document

Appendix B

www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/webimages/managing-the-service/cfa/fireauthority-meetings-data/pdf-613-appendix-b-irmp-public-and-stakeholder.pdf

Stakeholder and Public Consultation Response Document

Appendix C

www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/webimages/managing-the-service/cfa/fireauthority-meetings-data/pdf-613-appendix-c-irmp-presentations.pdf

Timetable of presentations given during IRMP Consultation

Appendix D

www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/webimages/managing-the-service/cfa/fireauthority-meetings-data/pdf-613-appendix-d-irmp-fbu-response.pdf

Fire Brigades Union IRMP Consultation Response Document

15 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

3 July 2009, Report 17, Integrated Risk Management Planning

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 Area 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	*

