

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY BUDGET MEETING		
DATE:	26 FEBRUARY 2015	REPORT NO:	CFO/007/15
PRESENTING OFFICER	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	JACKIE SUTTON IRMP OFFICER
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP		
TITLE OF REPORT:	POST CONSULTATION REPORT - INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN SUPPLEMENT 2015/17		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX 1: IRMP SUPPLEMENT 2015/17 APPENDIX 2: ORS CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 3: WEBSITE CONSULTATION RESULTS APPENDIX 4: LIST OF PARTNERS CONSULTED APPENDIX 5: LETTER FROM POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER APPENDIX 6: REPRESENTATIVE BODIES SUMMARY APPENDIX 7: FBU RESPONSE APPENDIX 8: FOA RESPONSE APPENDIX 9: UNISON RESPONSE APPENDIX 10: UNITE RESPONSE APPENDIX 11: LOG OF AMENDMENTS APPENDIX 12: EIA
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Purpose of Report

1. To request that members consider the outcomes of public consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Supplement 2015/17 and approve the publication of the final (post-consultation) version of the IRMP 2015/17 Supplement.

Recommendation

2. That Members;
 - a. Consider whether the responses to consultation have been adequately considered and are reflected within the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015/17 Supplement, where appropriate.
 - b. Approve the IRMP 2015/17 Supplement for publication on 26th February 2015.

- c. Note that this document is a supplement to the IRMP 2013/16 and continues to reflect the challenging budget position. In order to set a balanced budget further savings of £6.3m will need to be made by 1st April 2016 (£2.9 from support staff, £3.4 from front line fire stations).

These savings will be made by:

- A reduction of approximately 90 Firefighter posts
 - Merging fire stations – 3 pairs of stations have been identified for potential merger
 - Closing fire stations – initially Allerton but potentially other sites in the future
 - Loss of 40+ support staff posts
- d. Reaffirm their commitment to ensuring that the impact of the changes on the communities of Merseyside should be minimised and firefighter safety maximised, noting there are areas of the IRMP that will have significant impact upon our staff. In line with all staffing matters these will be the subject of additional staff consultation/negotiation. Likewise fire station mergers and closures have been, and will continue to be, subject to extensive public consultation.
- e. Request that the Chief Fire Officer reports the outcomes of these consultations separately to the Authority, as appropriate.
- f. Prior to any implementation (and in line with normal practice) instruct the Chief Fire Officer to exercise his full delegated responsibility for completing those consultations/negotiations and managing the implementation of any changes.

Introduction and Background

3. It is a statutory requirement of the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2012 to produce an IRMP. This document has been written to ensure compliance with the National Framework.
4. Merseyside FRA's IRMP is a medium term plan that evaluates progress made as a result of previous IRMP's and captures future aspirations and the strategic direction for the Authority in order to deliver its Mission: Safer, Stronger Communities; Safe Effective Firefighters.
5. Members will be aware that the published IRMP 2013/16 is still current. However due to the effect of Government grant cuts for 2015/16 it was considered appropriate to publish a Supplement to the existing IRMP 2013/16 covering a 2 year period 2015/17.
6. The Supplement deals in a strategic way with the implications of the budget cuts on the provision of prevention, protection and response services including

proposals to merge and close fire stations. Future reports to the Authority will contain the detail on these matters.

Consultation

7. Since the draft IRMP Supplement was approved by the Community Safety and Protection Committee on 23rd October 2014 a twelve week consultation process has taken place. The outcomes of this process are summarised below and reported within Appendix 2 to 11.
8. Amendments made as a result of the consultations are included at Appendix 11.
9. The consultation process included the following:
 - a) One joint consultation forum
 - b) Distribution of the IRMP to over 150 strategic partners and other interested parties
 - c) Meetings with Representative Bodies – Fire Brigades Union, Fire Officers Association, UNISON and UNITE.
 - d) District Managers meeting Local Authorities and community partners
 - e) An on line questionnaire on our website for the public and staff

Public Forum

10. Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned to facilitate an all-Merseyside forum to consider the Authority's draft IRMP. ORS's role was to recruit and facilitate the meeting and report outcomes. ORS worked with Officers to prepare stimulus material for the meeting with the fullest possible information for participants.
11. MFRA has had an extensive programme of 'engagement' with residents for a number of years and, in this context, ORS has facilitated district-based and all-Merseyside forums regularly. Within this on-going framework, MFRA has conducted both 'listening and engagement' and 'formal consultation' meetings on a regular cycle.
12. The consultation forum followed earlier all-Merseyside 'listening and engagement' meetings that considered hypothetically a wide range of policies and options for MFRA in the context of reduced budget due to grant cuts. The forum considered the operational methodology applied in reaching the proposals and the adequacy of the consultations process. The full ORS Consultation Forum Report can be found at Appendix 2.
13. Although there have been minor changes made to the IRMP as a result of the consultation process, this has not materially affected the proposals contained within the plan.
14. In general, the public consultation to the IRMP was supportive of the proposals; understanding that they were driven by necessity due to the budget cuts. The

outcomes from the consultation would suggest that the public were reassured that the Authority, whilst not wanting to make many of the proposed changes, had carefully considered the associated risk to our communities and were satisfied that MFRA would strive to keep any impact on service delivery to a minimum.

On-line Questionnaire

15. An on-line questionnaire was available on the MFRA website. The full report is attached at Appendix 3. The majority of respondents (61.1%) felt the IRMP proposals were very reasonable and 36.1% felt they were fairly reasonable. 100% agreed the IRMP was clear and easy to understand. Comments included:

“The Service provides considerable support to other organisations which is worthy of mention”

“Paints a stark picture of the impact of cuts on the Fire Service and what that means for residents”

“Very comprehensive”

Staff Representative Bodies

16. Consultation with representative bodies generally accepted that while the changes were not welcome, decisions made by the Authority were made with the safety of staff and the people of Merseyside. There was some concern from UNISON about the extent of support staff cuts and when staff would be advised they were at risk. In a comprehensive response (attached as Appendix G) the Fire Brigades Union expressed opinions on matters related to the reduction in the number of appliances, closure of fire stations and the increase in attendance times, unwanted fire signals and productivity. There was a query about the target for Equality Objective 4 of reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions by 37.5% by 2020. This is a United Nations road safety target. No specific changes have been requested.

Consultation with Partners

17. District Managers distributed the draft IRMP widely among the partners they work with on District. Partners are invited to complete the survey on the MFRA website. A list of partners the document was distributed to is attached as Appendix 4. No specific changes were requested.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, Rt. Hon Jane Kennedy, wrote to the Chief Fire Officer, at Appendix 5, supporting the IRMP Supplement while understanding the challenge presented by the budget cuts. She stated she was keen to work together in partnership to lessen the impact of the cuts and commented:

“It is reassuring to see that regardless of the cuts, overall fire incidents in Merseyside have reduced by 54% over the 10 year period 2004/05 and 2013/14. This reduction is testament to the excellent and dedicated work of the MFRS and its personnel”

Equality and Diversity Implications

16. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the IRMP and is attached as Appendix 12.
17. An Equality Impact Assessment will also be completed for actions within the plan prior to implementation.
18. The all-Merseyside forum discussed equalities issues and focused on MFRA's recruitment – reaching the conclusion that MFRA should not adopt formal recruitment targets for minority groups, but instead should use positive action to encourage diverse applicants. By a ratio of two to one the participants opposed formal recruitment targets, but welcomed positive encouragement of minority group applications.

Staff Implications

19. It should be noted in order to minimise the impact on services to the community and to ensure Firefighter safety the Authority recognises that in light of the capacity reductions it is essential that there are changes to the way in which we work as an organisation. The IRMP supplement that the Authority is now being asked to approve makes reference to specific issues that will have significant impact on staff. In line with all staffing matters these are the subject of additional staff consultation/negotiation prior to any implementation. These are:
 - Loss of 40+ support staff roles,
 - Reduction of 90 Firefighters posts,
 - Merger and closure of fire stations.
20. In line with normal Authority management arrangements and the specific budget resolution of the Authority (26th February 2013 and reaffirmed at the AGM on 26th June 2014) the Authority will note that the Chief Fire Officer has full delegated responsibility for completing those consultations/ negotiations and managing the implementation. To deliver the savings and efficiencies in a timely manner and in a way that minimises risk.
21. It is recognised that that some of the changes proposed may be challenging for staff. This may mean that agreement may not be reached with all representative bodies and the CFO will need to consider the appropriateness of the resolution processes as set out in the grey book and indeed the full range of processes available to the Authority as employer in order to achieve the required outcome.

22. The outcomes from the detailed consultations on all these matters will be reported back to the Authority at a later date in line with normal practice.

Legal Implications

23. This report is the last stage of the process to fully discharge statutory duties placed upon the Authority to produce and publish an IRMP and Action Plan as required by the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

24. The full financial implications were established during the development of the IRMP proposals which have been designed to meet the cuts in Government Grant. No alternative proposals were suggested during the consultation period that would still allow the Authority to meet their obligation to set a balanced budget. Resources are allocated in line with the IRMP in the Authority budget and financial plans.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

25. This document details the strategic approach to risk management, encompassing what has been done to manage risk and what will be done in the next two years.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

26. The IRMP is the key document by which Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority manage its resources with full consideration of the impact on risk to life for the people of Merseyside. This document details the actions we intend to take to achieve our Mission.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/074/13 IRMP 2013/16 Post Consultation Report IRMP 2013/16

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
FRA	Fire and Rescue Authority
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan