

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No. 07

MEETING: 18 FEBRUARY 2013

SUBJECT: INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013-16

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, FINANCE OFFICER AND CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present feedback from staff and representative bodies on the proposed Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) reviews for 2013-16, and to seek Member approval to commence the proposed reviews.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The IRMP is the vehicle we use to make significant changes to the shape of the service, ensuring that services are planned, designed and delivered in a way that balances efficiency and community risk.

2.2 In October 2012, the Authority gave approval to 5 additional IRMP actions covering the period 2013-16 (minute 37 refers). These actions were prepared in the light of what was then known about the likely financial settlement including grant cuts of at least 14.5% over the two years 2013-15. As set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy on today's agenda, it has now been confirmed that the Authority faces cuts of 16.2% over these two years and faces further reductions between 2015-17.

2.3 It was also agreed that feedback from staff and representative bodies would be invited and reported back to Authority early in 2013. This paper presents the feedback on proposals.

2.4 The additional actions upon which feedback has been sought are:

Review the fire cover response model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental review to cover number, type and deployment of appliances • Taking account of new technology • Based on actual and projected risk of all incident types (accidental and deliberate fires, road incidents, rescues)
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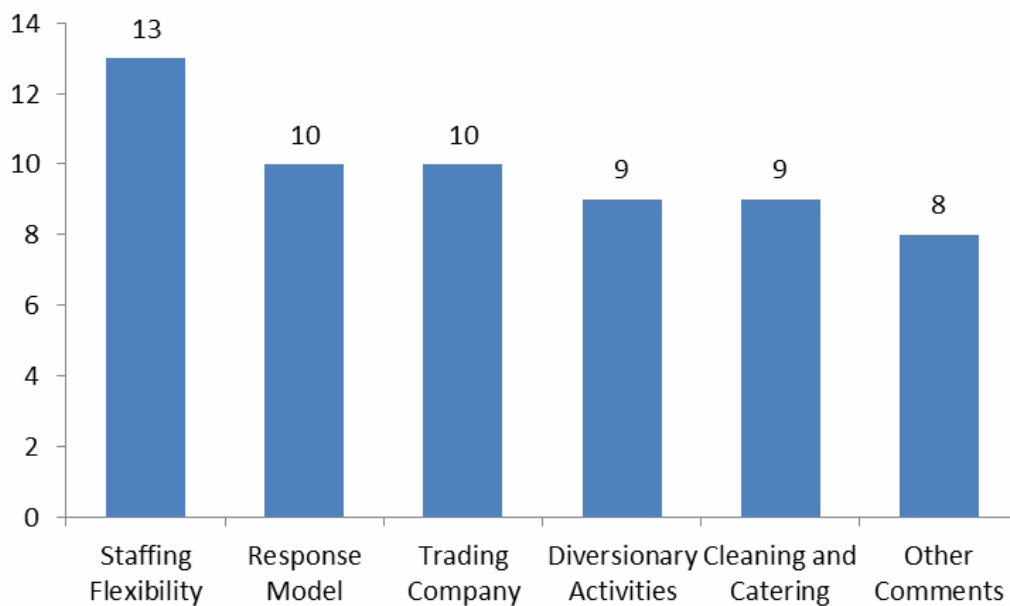
Review Diversionary activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To cover all diversionary activities including Safetyworks, Phoenix, Princes Trust and other programmes • In collaboration with partners- in wider context of how diversion fits with community priorities and activities of others • Outcome will be a clear future strategy- either a sustainable funding and delivery model or cessation of some/all activities
Build on staffing flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further actions to include building on swap a shift; reviewing potential for annualised hours; and consideration of including station managers within the flexi rota
Review cleaning and catering	This is the only area of the back office not yet subject to review
Consider the business case for setting up a trading company	Explore potential for using commercial income to offset more of the cost of service delivery

3 FEEDBACK APPROACH

- 3.1 In order to engage in discussion with staff about the likely financial situation and proposed IRMP reviews, a series of presentations was carried out by members of the Service Management Team (SMT) between Monday 5th November and Saturday 15th December, including individual sessions with every watch to enable those who could not easily attend a larger session to be involved. This method, which had been used at the time of the 2010 Spending Review when it was welcomed, was felt to promote dialogue and ensure everyone had a chance to comment.
- 3.2 Watch Managers were asked to gather any feedback via a simple form asking for views on each of the 5 proposed IRMP actions, as well as any general comments. This was qualitative feedback in the form of comments.
- 3.3 A total of 29 responses were received, of which, nine were nil returns and 5 were hard copies gathered at the session by the SMT member presenting, with the agreement of the watch. This equates to a 45% response rate.
- 3.4 Comments were also invited from Representative Bodies.

4 FEEDBACK FROM STAFF BRIEFINGS

- 4.1 Overall, staff were well aware of the likely financial situation and the need to make further significant reductions in spending.
- 4.2 They also made the point on a number of occasions that this is a very early stage in consultation since we were consulting on which reviews to do and not on any concrete proposals which would arise from them. Whilst there was willingness to engage in discussions about the proposed reviews, staff expect an opportunity for detailed consultation on any options which arise, and assurance was given that this will take place along with public consultation once options have been developed through the review process.
- 4.3 The chart below shows the breakdown of the number of responses received regarding each IRMP proposal. Comments are summarised below: the verbatim comments are available should Members wish to examine these.



REVIEW OF FRS RESPONSE MODEL

- 4.4 This proposal attracted much discussion in the sessions, and a number of responses mostly expressing concern. Themes included:



4.5 ***Reviewing Response***

- Several responses felt that any real savings required will be made through removal of front line appliances. One suggested that front line appliance cover should not be decreased until all savings have been identified from non operational management and staff
- Station locations and appliances should be located according to risk, not financial circumstances.

4.6 ***Concerns about number and type of appliances***

- This was the commonest concern about this review, specifically that the review could lead to proposals to remove fire appliances, and replace them with different vehicles such as 4x4s with fewer staff.
- These were seen to be inferior in several responses, with the view expressed that fire appliances have been developed specifically to deal with a range of incidents and that using vehicles such as transit vans/4x4s would increase risk to personnel
- One response proposed a much better use of technology on the appliances in order to have less reliance on returning to station after each incident.

4.7 ***Other comments***

- Dealing with major incidents. One watch felt that it only takes one decent size incident to occur and the service becomes stretched, partly because if a number of special appliances are needed then you lose pumping appliances due to dual staffing.
- Capability issues. One response felt that this seemed to be the main concern, in particular Breathing Apparatus and compliance with the Incident Management protocols and procedures.
- Response could be a priority response similar to the ambulance service, and a designated appliance each day dealing with non-urgent secondary fires
- It was felt that one pump stations are not the best model for training and organising daily work place activities and larger stations would work better



REVIEW OF DIVERSIONARY ACTIVITIES

4.7 This proposal attracted fewer comments. In general there was agreement that these activities should be reviewed. Themes included:

4.8 *Views about the relative value of prevention and response*

- Many watches felt that although our prevention work is valuable, we have a moral and legal responsibility to first provide an adequate and safe response and that is the nature of an emergency service- diversionary activities should be “expendable” if that would reduce the impact on frontline response
- The value of diversionary activities to the community was noted by some; there were also some comments about whether withdrawing them would increase incidents
- One response commented on the relationship between the two- ie if the service has appliances cut now and we keep Phoenix project etc, then in the future when they are forced to go due to further cuts then we will not have the establishment to deal with an increasing volume of calls. This increase is likely to come about as a consequence of all that preventative youth engagement work suddenly coming to an end.

4.9 *Level of savings*

- A number of staff wondered how much money is actually spent on diversionary activities, and how much saving could be achieved through this review
- One response felt that the level of saving should be weighed up against the potential impact of stopping this type of activity

BUILDING ON STAFFING FLEXIBILITY

4.10 This proposal attracted the largest number of comments. The main themes were:

4.11 *Support for Swap a Shift and suggestions for improving it*

Many respondents supported the use of Swap a Shift which was felt to be effective in increasing flexibility without major shift pattern changes. All expressed a willingness to continue to work flexibly. There was a view that the system could be improved and better managed, and a number of detailed suggestions were put forward for how this could be done including:

- Look at what is required especially officer cover
- Where staffing is up, consider short term transfers to alleviate imbalance
- It's too ad hoc at the moment.
- Allowing a shift for a shift swap (ie not day for day and night for night). This was the most raised suggestion
- This would need to be supported by a central electronic staffing data base system.
- Overall staffing on certain watches restricts Swap a Shift being fully taken advantage of, however this could be eased when 13 goes to Day Crewing Close Call and the possibility of personnel being redeployed.
- One response expressed the view that management would not listen to suggestions for improving the system

4.12 Other comments

- In one response, staff acknowledged the need for flexibility but said they would like managers to be aware that some personnel arrange all childcare provision around the current shift system and are unable, as opposed to unwilling, to be flexible.
- Possible introduction of a self-rostering model
- Possibility of day staffing, nightshifts and weekend cover by outlying stations
- Will overtime become more prevalent to overcome staff shortages?
- A shift change would not benefit the ops workforce and would damage morale further

REVIEW OF CLEANING AND CATERING

4.13 A number of comments were received about this proposed review. The main themes were:

4.14 Need for the services

- A number of responses expressed the view that cleaning and catering are needed for the smooth running of the organisation.
- One response felt that cleaning has health and safety implications

- Several responses expressed a wish not to lose station cooks although one felt that this did need to be looked at in the current economic climate. There were concerns about job losses.

4.15 Potential for savings

- Some respondents did not believe significant savings could be made from reviewing cleaning and catering
- The view was also expressed that an alternative approach to delivery, eg an outsourced arrangement, might not allow savings

4.16 Practical suggestions and considerations

- Consider cleaning every other day?
- Questioning of how cleaning contracts will work with PFI stations and if it will create two levels of service whereby those at old stations have additional station workloads for cleaning duties
- If catering services are cancelled, will kitchens be de-commissioned and only basic re-heating be available?

CONSIDER THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SETTING UP A TRADING COMPANY

4.17 The potential for establishing a trading company generated significant debate and a number of comments were received. The key themes of these were:

4.18 Support for the proposal if it generates income to offset cuts

- Several responses felt that the Service as a lot to offer in terms of trading and suggested areas which could be included from training to occupational health to leasing available space to flooding support in non-humanitarian situations
- TWFRS' expertise and reputation would be helpful in identify revenue streams and bring in income.
- In order to sell training to outside bodies a high calibre of accredited instructors need to be employed



4.19 Concerns about trading

- There were a number of comments about the ethical aspects of trading including the use of public assets and potential to alienate other companies
- If training was carried out as part of a trading company we would need to ensure there is no negative impact on our ability to meet our own training needs
- There was some concern about the liabilities of a trading company and how this would affect the service should it be unsuccessful
- Would training from the independent company then be sold to the operational department giving an artificial imbalance in budgets
- A concern that any income generated through trading would be taken into consideration by Government in settling future funding settlements and therefore be lost through further grant reductions

OTHER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.20 Staff were asked for any other suggestions they wished to make and a number were received. These include:

- Further savings from energy efficiency including solar power
- Reducing the size of the non operational vehicle fleet
- Savings through collaborative procurement eg purchase of fuel/energy and the possibility of working with other FRS's to have a greater purchasing power, and the further possibility of buying DERV in advance to obtain a better price.
- Review tasks given to staff if numbers are above requirements, eg at BTC
- Review necessity for publications eg Wildfire, and whether these could be made available on the intranet

4.21 A number of respondents commented on the positive opportunity to discuss the cuts and proposals with members of SMT

5 COMMENTS FROM REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

Fire Brigades Union

5.1 The FBU has raised a number of points regarding the proposals, a précis of which is given below.

- As in previous years the FBU do not believe that the proposed IRMP is a genuine risk based document as the action points are financially motivated and not a pure assessment of risk, indeed the briefings given to employees during staff consultation were entitled " *Protecting, preventing and responding with less*".
- TWFRS has an obligation to respond to a range of incidents in a safe and effective manner. In 2012 the Service was faced with incidents including unprecedented flooding on several occasions which saw the Service display all the attributes of professionalism the public have come to expect. It is the professional opinion of the FBU that should any reduction in the fire cover occur then TWFRS will be placing an intolerable burden upon supervisory managers and operational crews.
- TWFRS has a duty of care to its operational crews to ensure that they will be provided with the correct weight of response in a timely fashion. On this point it is worth noting that 10 years ago TWFRS would normally have approximately 160 firefighters on duty with 32 pumping appliances fully crewed and available and approximately 8 special appliances primary staffed. In 2013 TWFRS has approximately 119 firefighters on duty, with 29 wholetime pumping appliances and no special appliances primary staffed.
- While recognising that the number of incidents has declined in recent years it is clear that TWFRS does not have anywhere near the same resources as in previous years, yet the demands of the service are changing with environmental events now placing a more significant burden upon the service than before. It is an inescapable conclusion that TWFRS will not be able to provide the same level of protection to the public of Tyne and Wear or to the staff they employ should the front line response be reduced any further.
- On the issue of Diversionary activities; The FBU have fully supported all diversionary activities however if TWFRS are unable to access adequate funding or partners that are able to fully support or help sustain such schemes then the FBU would expect that TWFRS prioritise such schemes as to remove any negative financial impact upon the service.
- On increased flexibility; FBU members have demonstrated a high degree of flexibility for several years since the introduction of swap a shift, this involves operational personnel taking leave when staffing is above minimum and attending for duty when the service has a requirement for them to do so, for this

to be 'built upon' the service will need to adopt a similarly pragmatic and flexible approach.

- With regard to the trading company; while certain assurances have been received regarding the services intentions the FBU view the possible implications with concern; however as with much of the IRMP and its recent action points such is the lack of detail that it is not possible to have a clear understanding of the possible impact or the services intentions.
- Regarding public consultation; The FBU would expect that the appropriate level of information is given to the public that would allow the public to have a clear understanding of the action points and the impact upon their safety and that of their family and friends.
- We would also expect the public consultation is undertaken in such a manner and timeframe that would allow the public a meaningful opportunity to engage and influence any outcomes of the consultation process.
- In conclusion the FBU expect that balances or reserves are utilised to minimise any potential impact upon the emergency response as we view the protection of the front line response as fundamental and intrinsic to the safety of FBU members and the public of Tyne and Wear and would expect the Fire Authority to support that position.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has no direct financial implications. Reviews will seek to balance efficiency and community risk and the financial implications of any proposed actions will be included in any future reports on specific reviews.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The assessment of impact on community risk will form a key part of reviews described in this report, and the results of this will be included in any future review reports.
- 7.2 The impact of the Spending Review has been recognised as a significant corporate risk and is part of the Corporate Risk Register.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Equality and Diversity implications will be considered as part of each proposed action, and implications included in any subsequent reports.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Health and Safety implications will be considered as part of each proposed action, and implications included in any subsequent reports

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 These proposals have been prepared against a background of further significant cuts for TWFR, building on those already imposed in 2011-13. It is clear from feedback that this situation is well understood by staff and representative bodies.
- 10.2 The Chief Fire Officer has carefully considered the issues raised and the views expressed through the feedback. In the light of the now clear financial settlement, he retains the view expressed in the October 2012 report that a review of response and diversionary activities is necessary along with the other proposed actions.
- 10.3 It is appreciated that feedback has so far been sought on the areas to be reviewed rather than on detailed options. Both staff and representative bodies have requested that full and detailed consultation be carried out on any options generated through the reviews; it is reiterated that this is the intention as part of the review process. Any detailed comments or suggestions made so far will also be taken into account as reviews are carried out.
- 10.4 The Chief Fire Officer would reiterate that the process of carrying out reviews as part of the IRMP balances resources and risk, allowing the available resources (which are reducing) to be targeted at known risk. The proposed reviews will follow the pattern of previous reviews in making extensive use of risk data to prepare and test any options.

10.5 Having taken feedback into account, the Authority is recommended give approval for:

- the five reviews set out in section 2.4 to commence, with detailed timescales set by review leads
- in depth and detailed consultation to be carried out with staff, the public and partners as appropriate during the review process (as agreed at Authority 15th October 2012)
- full reports to be brought to Members on each of the reviews so that decisions can be made on any specific proposals