

**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**MEETING: 17 NOVEMBER 2014**

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**SUBJECT: INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-17**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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**1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report presents the feedback from staff and partner consultation on two proposed new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) actions. It then seeks an Authority decision on whether to proceed with the proposed new actions.

**2 BACKGROUND**

2.1 The IRMP process 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 available resources and community risk. We have used the IRMP process for more than 10 years to change the service, strengthen prevention, reduce costs, reduce incidents and manage the risk in our communities.

2.2 Since 2010, balancing risk and resources has become increasingly challenging and our IRMP actions have been developed against a background of significant reductions in the resources available to the Authority, as a result of reductions in Government spending.

2.3 At the Authority meeting on 23rd June 2014, Members noted that after the Response and Catering reviews have taken into account, there is a funding gap of £2.954m to be filled during the years 2014-17. Members agreed that the Chief Fire Officer should bring forward proposals for further IRMP actions to address this and face the challenges of 2016-17 onwards.

2.4 In July 2014, the Authority agreed a report proposing that two additional actions be added to the IRMP, and that staff and partners should be consulted upon these. The two proposals, which were developed through discussion with staff and Members, were:

## **Organisational review**

- 2.5 A further review of the whole organisation and the way it works. This will build on information from earlier reviews and take as its starting point where we are now; however its scale and scope will be large and embrace all areas of our activity and how it fits together to form an organisation. In this sense it is similar to the review of the operational response model- it will change what we look like while maintaining a strong focus on what we have to deliver for the public.
- 2.6 It is proposed that the review should cover all levels of staff and incorporate a review of management including:
- All parts of the organisation including Service Delivery, but not including frontline operational activities which are currently subject to change following the Response review
  - All management roles SMT to Station Manager and equivalent
  - All leadership, management and command activities including the flexi rota
  - Our coterminosity arrangements which are currently based on 5 Council areas

## **Joint working with other emergency services and key partners**

- 2.7 TWFRS has strong working relationships with both local authorities and other emergency services. Collaborative working takes many forms both operational and in terms of service sharing, such as co-location of North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) and Mountain Rescue staff of TWFRS stations.
- 2.8 Collaboration has the potential for further benefits beyond the financial, and as we know from work already carried out in partnership, is desirable from the point of view of shared commitment to community safety (or other shared agendas); shared intelligence; stronger working relationships and shared focus on the needs of vulnerable people.
- 2.9 The proposal is to build on existing arrangements and explore what further efficiencies can be drawn from collaborative relationships including:
- co-location/sharing facilities with trusted partners
  - exploring potential for operational collaboration
  - Blue light' collaboration regarding specialist skills and resources to build a clear picture regarding need and risk to establish if efficiencies can be made

## **3 CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 3.1 In July 2014, the Authority agreed to commence a high level consultation process on these proposals, focusing on staff and partners rather than members of the public, given the broad nature of the proposals. As in previous years, any detailed change proposals arising from reviews will be subject to further detailed consultation.

3.2 Staff had already been engaged in discussion about potential ideas for further IRMP actions through team/watch meetings and two workshops during May and June 2014.

3.3 The consultation process ran from 19<sup>th</sup> August to 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014, a period of 10 weeks.

### **Staff**

3.4 The staff consultation was introduced via a Chief Fire Officers bulletin and presentation to managers in July 2014. A slide based briefing was prepared which was delivered to all staff in their watches and teams by their managers, building upon their earlier engagement in discussion about the IRMP. This reminded staff of the context, the ideas being consulted upon and how they were arrived at, and encouraged all staff to respond to a set of questions about the proposals.

3.5 The questions were:

- Do you agree that there would be value in the Authority undertaking a further organisational review?
- If yes, do you have any views or ideas about the review?
- If no, why not?
- What are your views on our proposal to consider our coterminosity with District boundaries?
  
- Do you agree that TWFRAs should consider closer collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services?
- If yes, do you have any views about collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services?
- If not, why not?
- Do you have any other comments?

3.6 Responses were requested via the Intranet.

### **Partners**

3.7 Given the nature of the proposals, and their focus on collaboration, it was decided to focus consultation upon key partners including those engaged in Community Safety Partnerships, led by Councils, and the other two blue light services in Tyne and Wear- North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) and Northumbria Police.

3.8 A consultation document and set of slides were prepared for partners, setting the proposals in the context of the financial position and previous IRMP reviews. District Managers were tasked to engage with their local Community Safety Partnership and seek a response to the questions. Responses were also requested from NEAS and Northumbria Police via existing meetings between principal officers.

3.9 The partner consultation consisted of a shorter set of questions, to which a written response was requested. The questions were:

- What are your views on our proposal to carry out a further organisational review, including consideration of our coterminosity with District boundaries?
- Should TWFRAs consider closer collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services?
- If so, what are your views (specifically in relation to your own agenda as a partner/partnership) on what form such collaboration might take?

## 4 FINDINGS

### Staff questionnaire

4.1 334 staff responded to the consultation (a 34% response rate). Their responses are summarised below.

#### Q1 Have you attended a presentation regarding the 2014 IRMP proposals?

4.2 330 staff answered this question. Of these, 283 (86%) indicated that they had attended a presentation.

#### Q2 Do you agree that there would be value in the Authority undertaking a further organisational review?

4.3 297 staff answered this question. The majority (256 or 86%) felt that there is value in undertaking a further organisational review. 41 (14%) answered No to this question.

#### Q3 If yes, do you have any views or ideas about the review?

4.4 Of the 256 respondents who felt there was value in a further organisational review, 144 (56%) added free text comments in answer to this question. Responses fell into a number of themes, which are summarised below.

Theme	Total
Management should be reviewed again	41
Welcoming the idea of a whole organisation approach	32
Specific proposals about areas that could be looked at	32
We should focus on what the service needs going forward in doing the review/make sure that future workloads are realistic and achievable	23
Concern about the impact of a further review on staff	17
We need to focus on skills not just roles and/or support staff to gain the skills we need	13
Comments about how the process should be carried out, including avoiding stress for staff through the process (linked to timescales, processes for applying for roles etc)	13

Comments on other issues (including revising decisions about the Response review, purchase of cold cut equipment, energy saving; reducing the number of fire stations; using rental income from other agencies to secure fire cover; cost of emergency fire cover)	14
Systems and processes could be more efficient	12
No further Organisational Review	12
Lessons learned from last round of reviews	11
Comments about use of agency workers	10
Comments about grey and green book staff. A range of views including some feeling that more work should be done by operationally qualified grey book staff with reductions in other roles; others that green book staff have borne the brunt of reductions so far	9
The back office should be reviewed again	9
Timely, open and honest communication	8
Although the commitment to avoiding redundancies is understood, some comments that people would be willing to take VER or voluntary redundancy	8
Work more closely with partners/share services	7
There is no alternative given the financial situation	7
Give staff the opportunity for development	6
Review should be carried out by a third party	6
Progress with the trading arm/charge for more services to raise income	4
Concern that the organisation has already been reduced a lot and resources are stretched	3
Concern regarding public safety	3
The review should happen quickly	3
Listen to staff	3
Why have previous reviews not been implemented yet	2
Suggestions and comments from consultation should be acted upon	2
Management and the authority will do what they want anyway	1
Staff not feeling valued	1

#### Q4 If not, why not?

4.5 Of the 41 staff who feel there is no value in a further organisational review, 21 (51%) provided free text answers to this question. This represents 6% of all respondents. The responses are summarised below.

Theme	Total
A review would be biased/should be done by an independent third party	5
There should be no more cuts/management and members should be arguing against cuts/for more funding	4
Not sure what further cuts can be made	4
Management and the authority will do what they want anyway	4
Too much consultation/too time consuming	3
There is no alternative given the financial situation	2
Should have been done properly the first time	1
Comments about grey and green book staff	1
Concern regarding public safety	1
Management will be protected	1

#### Q5 What are your views on our proposal to consider our coterminosity with district boundaries?

4.6 157 respondents (47%) answered this question. Their responses are summarised below.

Theme	Total
Do not have a strong view	37
Yes, this should be considered	34
Yes, this should be considered with reasons, eg removing districts could reduce the number of personnel required and allow savings, could allow teams to be consolidated or used more effectively; could reduce management; some other organisations are pulling away from this eg police	32
Term coterminosity not clear	19
Coterminosity should be removed	12
Coterminosity should be kept	12
Not covered in detail, in briefings so would need more information to comment	11
Not sure it would save money	7
No comment	1

**Q6 Do you agree that the Authority should consider closer collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services?**

4.7 220 (66%) of the respondents answered this question. Of these, 194 (88%) felt that Yes, we should consider closer collaboration. 26 (12%) answered No.

**Q7 If yes, what are your views about collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services?**

4.8 150 respondents provided free text responses to this question. This is 77% of the 194 people who felt we should consider closer collaboration. The responses are summarised below.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Total</b>
Agree collaboration is a good idea	42
We should all be sharing the same buildings and funds	30
We should collaborate with all the emergency services	28
Share or outsource support functions e.g. training, control room, HR	16
As long as this does not dilute the service we provide/is beneficial to the FRS	14
Collaboration has potential to help us make more savings	12
Co locating is a good idea/cuts running costs/could mean we do not need to lose assets	11
We should collaborate with local authorities (including specific ideas)	11
We should collaborate with the ambulance service (including specific ideas)	9
Collaboration would improve the service to the community/improve the response to incidents	7
Specific proposals about areas that could be looked at	7
Do not have a strong view	6
We should collaborate with other FRS	6
The three emergency service should remain as separate entities/maintain their specialisms	5
We already work in partnership and could do more	3
Concerns we could be swallowed up in larger agendas	3
This is driven by Government	1
We should share management	1
We should all be together	1

## Q8 If no, why not?

4.9 Of the 26 respondents that said No, 19 (73%) provided free text answers to this question.

Themes	Total
No. the three emergency service should remain as separate entities/do not dilute services	15
Difficult to comment without further detail	1
Nice to do	1
TWFRS has borne a lot of the cost in previous collaborations	1
Depends on the financial implication of collaboration	1
Emergency services should be funded correctly/management should be arguing against cuts/for more funding	1
Government may decide, giving little choice	1

## Q9 Do you have any other comments?

4.10 106 respondents provided free text responses to this question. This is 32% of all respondents. It should be noted that of the 106 respondents, 30 (28%) stated they had no further comments, therefore, 76 (23%) of the total number of respondents provided further comments.

Theme	Total
No further comment	30
Management should be reviewed again	12
Timely, open and honest communication	11
Specific proposals about areas that could be looked at	9
Concern about the impact of a further review on staff	8
Comments about use of agency workers	8
We should focus on what the service needs going forward in doing the review/make sure that future workloads are realistic and achievable	7
Give staff the opportunity for development	7
The back office should be reviewed again	6
Another review of the back office function will not realise huge savings	5
Although the commitment to avoiding redundancies is understood, some comments that people would be willing to take VER or voluntary redundancy	5
We need to focus on skills not just roles and/or support staff to gain the skills we need	4
There is no alternative given the financial situation	4
Spend reserves	4
Comments about grey and green book staff.	4
There should be no more cuts/management and members should be arguing against cuts/for more funding	4
Comments on other issues	4
To review and cut fairly across all departments	4
Lessons learned from last round of reviews	3
Systems and processes could be more efficient	3



Any further cuts will deliver a poorer service to the public	2
Suggestions and comments from consultation should be acted upon	2
The service should continue to avoid redundancies	2
Liked the way briefings were rolled out	2
Co locating is a good idea/share the same building/could mean we do not need to lose assets	2
Comments about how the process should be carried out, including avoiding stress for staff through the process (linked to timescales, processes for applying for roles etc)	2
Impact of cuts on firefighter safety	1
Review Diversionary activities	1
Concern that the introduction of a trading arm could conflict with the interests and core purpose of the FRS	1
It's still a good job	1
Management and the authority will do what they want anyway	1
Concern that the organisation has already been reduced a lot and resources are stretched	1
In my opinion TWFRS is the best FRS in the country and we should say so	1
Reviewing the back office will not realise huge savings	1
Progress with the trading arm/charge for more services to raise income	1
Difficult times to implement change given the ongoing issues associated with the pensions dispute.	1
Questionnaire could have been more detailed	1
Listen to staff	1

## 5.0 Partner responses

5.1 The responses of partners are included below.

### **North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS)**

***What are your views on our proposal to carry out a further organisational review, including consideration of our coterminosity with District boundaries?***

5.2 NEAS recognises the impact that the current financial pressures on all public sector organisations in the North East is having and the supports the plans for the Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service Authority (TWFRS) organisational review. Including co-terminosity with District boundaries makes imminent sense.

***Should TWFRS consider closer collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services?***

5.3 As a partner organisation to TWFRS which works in close collaboration on local resilience forums and indeed shares accommodation in some Fire & Rescue locations in Tyne & Wear. As an organisation facing its own challenging financial, performance and quality targets, NEAS welcomes the opportunity to discuss further closer collaboration on both operational matters and in discharging support services where to do so makes sense.

***If so, what are your views on what form such collaboration might take?***

- 5.4 As discussed above, both operational and support services by which NEAS would not rule out collaboration on any support service where it makes sense for both the Fire & Rescue Authority and NEAS.

**Northumbria Police**

***What are your views on our proposal to carry out a further organisational review, including consideration of our coterminosity with District boundaries?***

- 5.5 Northumbria Police has no objection to TWFRS carrying out a further organisational review. We recognise the continued financial constraints facing the service and understand the rationale behind carrying out a further review. Northumbria Police appreciate that this review would assist in addressing the financial pressures facing TWFRS whilst balancing the need to continue to deliver an efficient, effective and rapid response to the communities within Tyne and Wear.

***Should TWFRS consider closer collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services?***

- 5.6 Northumbria Police agrees that it is timely and appropriate for TWFRS to consider closer collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services. Collaboration discussions appear a logical response to the current challenges faced, which are also being felt by local authorities and other emergency services. Nationally there is a trend for closer working between blue light services, and many examples of successful and effective collaboration between fire services and local authorities and other emergency services exist. The decision to consider closer collaboration would be in line with the current government, which strongly advocates that collaboration between the public services - fire, police and ambulance - is the future of local service delivery. Specifically, Northumbria Police would welcome the opportunity to explore closer collaboration with TWFRS, in line with our 'Collaboration and Partnership Strategy'. Consideration of closer collaboration recognises the duty placed upon the police under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to explore collaboration 'where it is in the interests of the efficiency or effectiveness of the force to do so'.

***If so, what are your views on what form such collaboration might take?***

- 5.7 Northumbria Police recognises the need to work in new and innovative ways in order to keep pace with greater public expectations, the challenging financial environment, and the ever more complex operational challenges. The force also acknowledges the benefits of collaboration and aspires to work collaboratively wherever possible (providing it adds value to the services we deliver) with the aim of making our communities safer and increasing public confidence in our service. To this end, Northumbria Police are open to exploring collaborative opportunities with TWFRS across all areas of business, building upon the current position dialogue regarding co-locations and shared facilities.

## **Sunderland Partnership**

- 5.8 In the current financial climate and with increasing budget constraints being placed on public sector bodies we fully support your proposal to carry out a further organisational review, including consideration of your co-terminosity with District boundaries.
- 5.9 The consideration of closer collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services would also appear to be sensible. At the current time we do not have a specific view as to the form such collaboration might take, aside from the fact that it should not be detrimental to services or employment provided within the city.
- 5.10 As you state within the consultation document collaboration has the potential for further benefits beyond financial, and is desirable from the point of view of our shared agenda; shared intelligence; stronger working relationships and shared focus on the needs of vulnerable people. As such we would be happy to work closely with you and the wider partnership over the coming months to fully explore potential options available.
- 5.11 I would be grateful if you could keep the partnership up to date with developments and future opportunities to engage with you in discussions as proposals emerge.

## **North Tyneside Strategic Partnership**

### ***What are your views on our proposal to carry out a further organisational review, including consideration of our coterminosity with District boundaries?***

- 5.12 The Fire and Rescue Service is a valued partner in North Tyneside. This strong partnership working has contributed to North Tyneside remaining the safest Metropolitan borough in England. We note the success that has been achieved over the past six years in reducing accidental fires in people's houses by 64%.
- 5.13 However, as with other parts of the public sector, there is a need to continually review what we do to ensure that it is providing the greatest value for money for residents. Last year the NTSP developed the Our North Tyneside plan which sets out our priorities for the future, based upon feedback from residents and an understanding of local need.
- 5.14 We will fully support any actions that contribute to the delivery of the Our North Tyneside plan and lead to more integrated partnership working by building upon the existing strong local relationships.
- 5.15 In addition, as the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service will be aware, North Tyneside Council passed a motion in January 2014 in opposition to any proposals which include the closure of Wallsend Fire Station. A concern at the time was that the proposals did not reflect the ongoing work to develop the North Bank of the Tyne.

5.16 It will therefore be important that the Review is carried out with an understanding of other partners' plans. Further discussions on these plans would be welcomed.

***Should TWFR consider closer collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services?***

5.17 Yes. There are a large number of overlaps between various activities within the public sector which could be shared and therefore reduce overall costs.

***If so, what are your views on what form such collaboration might take?***

5.18 Collaboration could involve the sharing of back office facilities e.g. HR, Finance, Estate management.

5.19 There is also an opportunity to build on the 'brand' of the Fire and Rescue Service in terms of community deployments to increase community confidence / cohesion. The sharing of command and control responsibilities could reduce the scale of the current model and promote greater integration.

**North Tyneside Council**

***What are your views on our proposal to carry out a further organisational review, including consideration of our coterminosity with District boundaries?***

5.20 I don't think you can escape the need to revisit your organisational review and I think you're right to focus on a managerial/leadership review rather than another operational response review.

5.21 I was interested to read of your statutory 'prevention' and 'protection' responsibilities. Whilst I assume the protection responsibility will remain consistent, I wonder if the community fire safety aspect of the service is an area to explore 'need' based on progress to date and future collaboration opportunities.

***Should TWFR consider closer collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services?***

5.22 Closer collaboration should definitely be considered.

***If so, what are your views on what form such collaboration might take?***

5.23 From a planning perspective, targeting resources for the most vulnerable/in need is something that the local authority is focussed on as we consider future service delivery options. There must be the opportunity to share intelligence and prevent duplication.

5.24 From a service delivery perspective, I am sure there will be collaborative opportunities in areas such as;

- Community safety advice and smoke detector installation
- Shared service delivery points
- Shared fleet services
- More joined up process in relation to licensing and planning applications
- Development of the risk management profile of the physical estate and community within.

## **Gateshead Council**

### ***What are your views on our proposal to carry out a further organisational review, including consideration of our coterminosity with District boundaries?***

5.25 It is clear that TWFRAs have made significant changes to the way in which they deliver their service across Tyne and Wear. The type of financial pressures that TWFRAs are facing are not that dissimilar to the issues currently being experienced by all other partner agencies involved in tackling crime and community safety. With this in mind, it is fully recognised that a further organisational review would be difficult to undertake, particularly as these areas have already been subject to rigorous reviews in the past. However, it would seem practical to undertake the additional organisational review alongside the ongoing IRMP actions to ensure that changes are not undertaken in isolation and are able to compliment all areas of TWFRAs activity. It is pleasing that the additional organisational review will not focus on frontline operational activities. Finally, the proposal for TWFRAs to have boundaries that are coterminous to that of the local authority would be beneficial – and would mirror other emergency services and partner agencies responsible for delivering services within the Borough.

### ***Should TWFRAs consider closer collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services?***

5.26 Gateshead Council and its partner agencies already have a very well established and robust partnership working with TWFRAs – and the proposal to develop a further collaborative relationship would only strengthen our current approach to addressing community safety-related issues for local residents.

### ***If so, what are your views on what form such collaboration might take?***

5.27 It would be reasonable to suggest that sharing facilities with partners will help to alleviate the financial pressures facing public sector organisations – and is likely to lead to further collaborative benefits. As a result, Gateshead Council would be supportive of the proposal for TWFRAs to explore options for further collaborative working. Safer Communities are already in discussions with TWFRAs to be involved in the local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), that is being developed within Gateshead, which will strengthen collaboration in relation to protecting and supporting vulnerable adults; and is likely to lead to TWFRAs officers being co-located in the Local Authority along with other key partner agencies and services (including Probation, Police, Health and Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations). In addition, further collaborative work should be considered by TWFRAs in relation to the prevention agenda. Some recent examples undertaken within Gateshead (e.g. introduction

of domestic sprinklers in Gateshead Housing Company properties, identification of high-risk clients as well as the development of a multi-agency Arson Protocol).

5.28 To build upon the existing arrangements that TWFRAs has with NEREO, the Fire Authority may also wish to consider sharing 'staff skills' training with Gateshead Council, or join in the Public Service Academy, which will allow TWFRAs to share a number of short course training events and master classes with Gateshead College, Northumbria University, Gateshead NHS Foundation Trust, Your Homes Newcastle, and Northumberland and Durham County Councils. We recognise that TWFRAs already have access to shared training across Police, Probation and Ambulance Service through the NEREO route – however, further collaboration with Local Authorities on learning and development activities would be beneficial.

## **Safe Newcastle**

### ***What are your views on our proposal to carry out a further organisational review, including consideration of our coterminosity with District boundaries?***

5.29 We recognise that budget cuts of this proportion unfortunately, inevitably require reviews of staffing levels and management to mitigate the impact on delivery of statutory and key services.

5.30 Co-terminosity and coordinated delivery at a ward level through Safe Neighbourhoods has been extremely beneficial to deliver effective partnership responses to community safety; though which we recognise may not be sustainable going forward.

5.31 However, co-terminosity at a district level is regarded as key to effective intelligence-sharing, the development and coordination of strategic & operational responses and performance management arrangements. If new districts were proposed, for instance North & South of Tyne, it would be possible to structure and manage the stations / sectors and staff responsibilities to align with local authority and possibly ward boundaries.

5.32 Resource levels within potential new Districts will remain crucial to effective delivery. The Board is aware that the extent and nature of crime, community safety and community issues in Newcastle continue to present the most significant challenges to the TWFRS, as with other partners, and therefore would seek assurance that the resourcing model will effectively meet this need.

### ***Should TWFRAs consider closer collaboration with local authorities and other emergency services? If so, what are your views on what form such collaboration might take?***

5.33 Newcastle City Council would welcome the opportunity to explore further options for collaboration and cooperation including:

- Building on current arrangements with partners, could the Council undertake back office functions for TWFRS such as payroll, Occupational Health?

- Could the Council commission the TWFRS communication, media and resource unit at cost to undertake communications work that the Council does not have capacity for?
- Could TWFRS draw on staff on the Council's redeployment register to fill posts currently recruited through a temp agency?
- Could FRS stations and facilities be used more by the Council for breaks on patrols, tasking, or even as multi-agency hubs in communities, particularly when police stations close?

5.34 Your Homes Newcastle has identified the following for further collaboration:

- The FRS should encourage greater collaboration between all local authority housing providers which could help standardise facilities across the region including fob systems, key box provision etc
- It is increasingly common for fire appliances from outside Newcastle to attend fires at YHN properties which has raised issues with access around bi lock key access.
- YHN would be willing to arrange building facilities familiarisation (site visits) for all fire service personnel particularly for new and/or refurbished premises. And provide information on tenant needs, building records and information etc.

5.35 The Safe Newcastle Unit has identified potential options for closer collaboration between emergency services including:

- Greater inter-operability between emergency services eg TWFRS and the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS). Fire appliances carry defibrillators & crews are trauma trained, could this be used to add capacity to emergency response?
- Greater use of volunteers to support fire safety checks or could checks be undertaken by staff from other partners who regularly visit houses / premises?
- Increased cross boundary deployment of fire appliances based on distance from incident ie deploy an appliance from Northumberland if it would provide a quicker response in north Newcastle
- Risk assessment to deploy vehicles ie use smaller vehicles to respond to certain incidents
- Consider joint control room between TWFRS and police or NEAS

### **South Tyneside Council**

5.36 In general terms the Council would seek to be involved at an early stage of the generation of any detailed proposals that may impact on assets and resources that are located within the Council's area. Similarly, the Council would seek early sight of any options relating to joint working with emergency services and key partners so that it can work with the Fire and Rescue Service and wider sector to understand and help develop the most appropriate way forward.

5.37 I would be grateful if you could therefore keep me informed of the next steps in relation to the reviews once the Fire Authority has considered its approach.

## **6.0 FBU RESPONSE**

6.1 The FBU wrote to the Chairman following the agreement to consult upon two further IRMP proposals in July 2014. This letter is reproduced below.

At the meeting of the Fire Authority on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014 two new proposals were briefly discussed as additional IRMP actions, these were a further “Organisational review” and “Joint working with other emergency services and key partners”.

The FBU wish to formally express our disappointment that such major initiatives have been proposed so soon after a 3 year IRMP was agreed by the Authority.

This has already caused concern and anxiety amongst employees of the Authority with the organisational review immediately labelled “Back office review 2”. The initial back office review caused employees a huge amount of uncertainty and impacted massively upon the well-being of employees. This is backed up by the appointments with the services welfare officer; these increased by 100% as a direct consequence of the stress related to the back office review.

The FBU hope that the service will learn from the previous back office review and that employees will not have to endure such a lengthy and upsetting experience.

Particularly of concern are the comments regarding “operational collaboration and specialist skills”, this could mean many things, however the FBU wish to place on record that the Police are an enforcement agency and as such have a particular role in society. The role of the Fire service is fundamentally different and the regard that the Fire Service is held in by the public is because of our role and commitment to our communities. Any blurring of roles and responsibilities in the eyes of the public would be unacceptable to the FBU.

The FBU have many questions regarding closer involvement with the Police and will require significant reassurances as to the possible implications of a closer link with the Police.

For the above reasons we are disappointed and angry that the Authority agreed to the additional actions without a due regard to public consultation. It appears that the Authority are content for this to be largely a staff and “stakeholders” consultation. The FBU view that as unacceptable and demand all proposals resulting from the additional actions are subject to a detailed and meaningful public consultation.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 This report has no direct financial implications. The IRMP process is about balancing community risk with available resources, and as such the outcome of any reviews arising from these IRMP proposals will have financial implications.



## **8.0 HR IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 This report has no direct HR implications. Any reviews arising from these IRMP proposals will be subject to agreed HR processes and further reports.

## **9.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 This report has no direct community risk implications. The IRMP process is about balancing community risk with available resources, and as such the outcome of any reviews arising from these IRMP proposals will need to take community risk into account.

9.2 A key risk on the corporate risk register is that we do not realise the savings proposed in our IRMP resulting in reduced financial resilience and potential impact on service delivery (11/01). This risk is relevant to this report although the report does not contain specific proposals for realising savings; these would follow should the Authority agree to go ahead with the reviews outlined in this paper.

## **10.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 In terms of the proposal to carry out a further Organisational Review, the majority of staff who responded to the consultation were of the view that there is value in a further organisational review, making a variety of comments about what should be included in the review (with a whole organisation approach, including a review of management, welcomed by many) and other comments made about how the review should be conducted, including learning lessons from previous reviews (a view also expressed by the FBU). These should be taken on board in conducting any Organisational Review.

10.2 Regarding the inclusion of our coterminosity arrangements with Districts in the organisational review, a number of different views were expressed about coterminosity by partners and staff, but the majority of respondents did not have an issue with including these arrangements in an organisational review. Some partners indicated that they would wish to have dialogue about coterminosity as part of the review, and this should be taken forward as part of any Organisational Review.

10.3 On the issue of collaboration, all partners expressed a willingness to collaborate with TWFRAs and to engage in further discussion about collaboration opportunities; a number of specific suggestions were made which can be followed up in reviewing collaborative arrangements. The majority of staff who responded to the consultation were also in favour of exploring collaboration opportunities. Some expressed this in general terms with others specifying which services we should collaborate with, or mentioning specific ways to collaborate. Some concerns were also expressed, including in the FBU's response. The ideas and concerns should be taken into account in any detailed work on further collaboration with partners.

10.4 The concern of the FBU regarding consultation is noted and the Chief Fire Officer is committed to carrying out detailed consultation on any proposals arising from reviews.

10.5 Based on the consultation responses, the Authority is recommended give approval for:

- An Organisational Review to be commenced, with detailed timescales to be agreed through the Chief Fire Officer
- Further work to be done with partners and staff on developing collaborative opportunities, building on the partner responses given to the consultation
- full reports to be brought to Members as required on any specific proposals