

**PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING****TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY****MEETING: 16 MARCH 2009**

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**SUBJECT: INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2009/2012 AND  
ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2009/2010 – REPORT OF  
CONSULTATION****JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE  
AUTHORITY, THE FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report outlines the results of the consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2009/2012 and accompanying 2009/2010 Annual Action Plan.
- 1.2 Members are requested to consider the content of the report and, subject to any amendments they may wish to make in light of the consultation exercise, approve the IRMP 2009/2012 strategy document and 2009/2010 Annual Action Plan.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 As Members will be aware, since April 2004, all Fire and Rescue Authorities have been required to produce a local IRMP that sets out their risk assessment and reduction strategy in collaboration with other agencies with the specific intention of:
  - Reducing the number and severity of fires, road traffic accidents and other emergency incidents occurring in the area for which it is responsible.
  - Reducing the severity of injuries in fires, road traffic accidents and other emergency incidents.
  - Reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents.
  - Safeguarding the environment and heritage (both built and natural).
  - Providing value for money.
- 2.2 In essence, each Fire and Rescue Authority must have in place an IRMP which reflects local needs and which sets out plans to tackle effectively both existing and potential risks to communities. They should also:

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- Produce annual action plans on which they have fully consulted their local communities, allowing twelve weeks for the consultation.
- Have regard to central government guidance in producing their plans.
- Make efficient and effective use of resources to implement the IRMP and the Annual Action Plan, including using more efficient working practices where appropriate.

**3 IRMP 2009/2012 AND ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2009/2010**

- 3.1 The Authority has complied with this requirement and produced a draft IRMP strategy document, covering a three-year period from April 2009 to March 2012 and an associated Annual Action Plan covering the period 2009/2010.
- 3.2 This draft document was presented at the Authority meeting held on 15 September 2008 where Members considered, and subsequently approved, the 2009/2012 Draft IRMP and the 2009/2010 Draft Action Plan for public consultation (Minute 51 (ii)/2008 refers).

**4 TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY – DRAFT IRMP 2009/2012 AND ACTION PLAN 2009/2010 CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 4.1 Subsequent to this approval the public consultation exercise commenced on 22 September 2008 and ran for a period of 12 weeks. During this time consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders in order to seek their views on the proposals contained within the draft plan.
- 4.2 Hard copies of the IRMP were not distributed to stakeholders as a cost saving measure. However, the document was placed on the Authority’s website with an accompanying web survey questionnaire. Stakeholders were asked to view the document prior to any consultation exercises.
- 4.3 Letters were also e-mailed to over 450 stakeholders including Fire and Rescue staff, MPs, MEPs, councillors and libraries providing a link to the IRMP pages on the Authority’s website.
- 4.4 The draft plans were also available, upon request, in a number of alternative formats. However, no requests were received.
- 4.5 E-mail links of the IRMP were distributed to the following:

<b>Stakeholder (E-mail link to twfire.gov.uk)</b>	<b>No of Emails</b>
Tyne and Wear MPs and MEPs	17

Tyne and Wear Councillors	318
Libraries of Tyne and Wear	79
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Fire Stations	17
District Officers	5
Heads of Departments of TWFRS for circulation to their staff	32
<b>Total (e-mails sent)</b>	<b>468</b>

4.6 Letters were also sent to stakeholders informing them of the consultation and informing them how they could review the plans. Those who received letters were:

<b>Stakeholder (Letters)</b>	<b>No of Copies</b>
Community Groups representing people and faiths from many parts of the world who now reside in Tyne and Wear	48
Public Agencies such as the Police, the Ambulance Service and One North East	32
Unions representing employees of TWFRS	3
Other Fire and Rescue Services	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>

4.7 A questionnaire was used to gather feedback on the plan. Freepost envelopes were provided to encourage responses.

4.8 The following information was also placed in the public arena:

- A summary of the proposals for the Draft IRMP 2009/2012 and Annual Action Plan 2009/2010 were placed in three local newspapers, namely the Evening Chronicle, Sunderland Echo and the Shields Gazette.
- Electronic copies of the Draft IRMP 2009/2012 and Annual Action Plan 2009/2010 were available at [www.twfire.gov.uk](http://www.twfire.gov.uk)

4.9 Focus Groups, drawn from members of the Northumbria Police Citizens Panel, were used as part of the consultation process. The Focus Groups were held at Community Fire Stations in the five local authority areas of Gateshead, Newcastle, Sunderland, South Tyneside and North Tyneside.

**5 COMMENTS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

5.1 It is disappointing to note that there was a limited response to the consultation, with eight responses received from the web survey and 22 completed questionnaires submitted.

5.2 The tables below show a combined summary of the key comments contained in both sets of questionnaires:

	Yes	No
• Felt that the plans were well structured.	93%	7%
• Agreed that the Plan was easy to understand.	100%	0%
• Felt that the plans were relevant to them.	90%	10%

5.3 In specific response to the request for comments on the draft Annual Action Plan 2009/2010 the following were received:

	Yes	No
• Approved with the proposal to introduce a community engagement team.	93%	7%
• Agreed with the initiative to conduct a quality assurance audit of the Home Safety Check process.	100%	0%
• Agreed with the review of our current working relationships with local authorities.	97%	3%
• Indicated that they agree strongly with the measures to review crewing levels and location of Emergency Response Vehicles.	93%	7%
• Agreed with reviewing the type of Emergency Response Vehicles we use and the equipment carried on them	97%	3%
• Supported the review of the Personal Development Plan process.	97%	3%
• Agreed with our proposal to design and implement policies and systems that will enable us to respond dynamically to risk.	97%	3%

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|---|------|-----|
| • Agreed that we should embed operational assurance across the service  | 100% | 0%  |
| • Supported the proposal to collect data to enable measurement of the impact on the environment of our activities | 90%  | 10% |
| • Agreed with the proposal to gain recognition for implementing an environmental management system                | 96%  | 4%  |

5.4 100% of the respondents believe that by implementing the proposals in our IRMP 2009/2012 strategy document and Annual Action Plan the Authority will help to make Tyne and Wear a safer place.

## **6 FEEDBACK FROM CITIZENS PANEL FOCUS GROUPS**

- 6.1 550 invitations to the focus groups were sent out but unfortunately only a total of 26 people attended the five meetings.
- 6.2 Those who attended were generally supportive of our proposals and agreed that the proposed actions would help make their communities a safer place to live in.
- 6.3 No comments were made that prompted any changes to the draft IRMP or the Action Plan.

## **7 THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION'S RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

- 7.1 Understandably, of the written submissions received, the Fire Brigades Union's (FBU) work was the most detailed and it raised a number of issues for consideration. A précis of their submission is outlined below for consideration by Members:
- The proposal to introduce a community engagement team has their full support.
  - Although there were some issues about the initiative to conduct a quality assurance audit of the Home Safety Check process, including concerns that preventative work does not adversely affect other areas of work, the FBU indicated that any attempt to improve the effectiveness of prevention work would be supported.
  - The review of working relationships with local authorities was recognised as being a benefit to the organisation.

- There were concerns raised about the review of crewing levels on, and location of, Special Emergency Response Vehicles. Their opinion is that current primary staffing arrangements are appropriate and further changes would detrimentally affect the Service's response to incidents.
  - The review of equipment carried on and the type of Emergency Response Vehicles was welcomed, and they were "fully supportive of any process that is applied which provides safe, reliable, efficient and effective equipment".
  - The review of the Personal Development Plan process was also generally supported, with the caveat that there would be no link to pay and conditions of its members.
  - Whilst the proposal to design and implement policies and systems to enable us to respond dynamically to risk was supported there were concerns expressed about the variation in the availability or disposition of appliances or staff as a result of this initiative.
  - The FBU were generally supportive of the proposal to embed operational assurance across the Service.
  - Full support was given to the two proposals that refer to addressing environmental issues, assuming there is no adverse health, safety or welfare effects on their members.
- 7.2 The Chief Fire Officer was impressed by the content of the submission and has taken time to carefully consider the issues that were raised within the document. However, having taken into account a range of other concerns, in particular the impact of future cost pressures on the service, he does not propose to amend any of the proposals in the IRMP.

## **8 STAFF PRESENTATIONS**

- 8.1 Three presentations were arranged to allow staff to be briefed on the content of the Draft IRMP 2009/2012 and Annual Action Plan 2009/2010. These presentations also offered them the opportunity to discuss any issues raised by the documents.

## **9 MEMBERS WORKSHOP**

- 9.1 A workshop was held on 23rd February 2009 to inform Members of the Draft IRMP 2009/2012 and Annual Action Plan 2009/2010 consultation and to discuss any changes that may be required to the document.
- 9.2 Following presentations and discussions on the results of the consultation those Members present stated that no changes were necessary.

**10 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The 2009/2010 IRMP action plan proposes reviewing crewing levels on Special Emergency Response Vehicles. Proposed changes to crewing levels that will emerge from this review will be monitored to ensure that no health and safety implications arise.
- 10.2 Any other proposal which may impact on health, safety or welfare will also be subject to thorough risk assessments before implementation.

**11 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The financial implications arising from the IRMP have been fully taken into account in the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy. It is worthy of note that the IRMP has generated efficiency savings for the Authority that have allowed reinvestment into service provision, thereby increasing the resources available for achieving the vision of 'Creating the Safest Community'.
- 11.2 Close monitoring of the IRMP will continue be undertaken to ensure that associated elements of the Medium Term Financial Strategy are delivered.

**12 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 The Draft IRMP 2009/2012 and Action Plan 2009/2010 demonstrate a commitment to equality and diversity issues by introducing measures that will help to ensure that the Authority can move forward in respect of developing an appropriate gender and ethnicity mix within the service.

**13 RISK MANAGEMENTIMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 The Authority will continue to monitor all aspects of its service in order to rapidly identify any significant unforeseen issues arising from the implementation of the 2009/2012 IRMP strategy document and accompanying 2009/2010 Annual Action Plan.

**14 CONCLUSION**

- 14.1 The Chief Fire Officer, having carefully considered the comments submitted by the FBU and other stakeholders as part of the consultation exercise, does not consider that the draft IRMP requires amendment.
- 14.2 It is proposed that the Authority consider the Draft IRMP 2009/2012 and Annual Action Plan 2009/2010 (attached at Appendix A) and, subject to any comments provided at the meeting, approve its implementation and distribution.



## **15 RECOMMENDATIONS**

15.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- Consider the contents of this report.
- Approve the Draft IRMP 2009/12 and Action Plan 2009/2010, subject to any amendments they may wish to introduce.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- i) Appendix A – Draft IRMP 2009/2012 and Action Plan 2009/2010.
- ii) Tyne and Wear IRMP 2008/2009 Consultation File