

MEETING: 22 NOVEMBER 2010

SUBJECT: DRAFT INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2011 TO MARCH 2015

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

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval of the proposed content of the Authority's draft Integrated Risk Management Action Plan (IRMP) for the period April 2011 to March 2015. Approval is also sought for the draft IRMP Action Plan to be subject to public consultation for a period of twelve weeks.
- 1.2 Members are reminded that 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 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The actions proposed in this IRMP have been developed through consideration of the risks facing the community; service objectives and performance; statutory duties and the wider local and national context in which we work.
- 2.2 A key feature of this context is the recent Spending Review, which requires all FRAs to manage a 25% reduction in grant over the period 2011-2015. This unprecedented level of financial constraint presents our service with a major challenge, particularly bearing in mind that the service has met all its previous efficiency targets and, unlike many FRS and other public bodies, reduced real terms spending over the last five years.
- 2.3 It is considered that the IRMP will be an important part of how we manage the impact of the Spending Review, along with continued good financial management and ongoing work to improve efficiency, procurement and effective use of assets and other resources. It is considered that an IRMP covering the whole four year period of the Spending Review will provide the clearest approach to strategic and financial planning. The proposals in this draft IRMP are reflected in the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy also under discussion today, and will form an integral part of our Strategic Community Safety Plan, which will also cover a four year period.

- 2.4 This approach will also allow us to consult with staff, partners and communities on the impact of the Spending Review in its totality.

3 SPENDING REVIEW IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 TWFRS has been independently judged by the Audit Commission and Operational Peer Assessment as an effective and efficient organisation, delivering better outcomes for the community. This has been achieved through a clear strategy developed by officers and members over a number of years. This strategy covers the following:

- Commitment to maintaining standards of service to the public
- An appropriate balance of prevention, protection, response and resilience activity
- Commitment to improving performance, efficiency and effectiveness through innovative practices
- Strong management of resources
- Minimising the impact of spending reductions on the quality of service experienced by the public
- Valuing staff and maintaining a commitment to health, safety and welfare
- Working in partnership to deliver shared objectives

- 3.2 There are a number of possible responses to reduced funding including changing strategy, changing structures or changing governance. In developing this IRMP, the intention has been to focus on maintaining our successful strategy as far as possible, with particular emphasis on minimising the community impact of the Spending Review. The proposed actions therefore focus on structural and process change, whilst maintaining the core strategy.

- 3.3 It is considered that the majority of the actions set out in the IRMP can be carried out in a way which minimises community impact; however some of the actions which could be included in the later part of the programme could impact on the quality of service experienced by the public, or our ability to deliver shared objectives through collaboration. These actions will therefore only be considered should circumstances make this unavoidable.

- 3.4 These actions will undoubtedly mean further reductions in the size of the workforce over the next 4 years. It is proposed that we take a managed approach to the implementation of IRMP actions so that the negative impact on staff is minimised.

4 PROPOSED NEW ACTIONS FOR 2011-15

- 4.1 In addition to the implementation of reviews already completed in the current year, (see section 5), it is proposed that the following actions be added to the programme for 2011-15.

Action 1 – Review of Management Structure

As a number of reviews in recent years have allowed the organisation to redesign services and determine their future resource requirements, it is timely to review management structures required to give leadership to these services. It is proposed to conduct a review of all management structures from Principal Officer up to and including Station Manager level and equivalent. The review will take account of the findings of earlier reviews and provide proposals for management which is balanced and proportionate.

It is proposed that this review be carried out in Year 1 (2011/12) with implementation in Years 2 and 3 (2012-14).

Action 2 – Review of Protection and Technical activities

Following on from the review of community safety activity in 2010/11, it is proposed to review the risk based inspection programme within its statutory framework. This review will seek to ensure the most efficient model of delivering this service against the level of risk present in the protected environment.

It is proposed that this review be carried out in Year 1 (2011/12) with implementation in Year 2 (2012/13).

Action 3 – Review of staffing profiles

It is proposed to undertake a review of the current staffing profiles to ascertain whether arrangements can be made more efficient through greater flexibility. This will include consideration of the flexible duty officer system, ridership factor and opportunities for greater flexibility within shifts.

It is proposed that this review be carried out in Year 1 (2011/12) with implementation from Year 2 (2012/13).

Action 4 – Review of Aerial Ladder Platform provision and crewing

Building on work carried out in the 2009/10 IRMP, it is proposed to review the level of provision and staffing of our aerial ladder platforms to ascertain the future requirements for these balanced against community risk and utilisation patterns.

It is proposed that this review be carried out in Year 1 (2011/12) with implementation in Years 2 and 3 (2012-14).

Action 5 – Review of Mobilising

By 2014 our existing mobilising and associated sub-systems will be approaching the end of their sustainable life, therefore this project is proposed in order to meet the Authority's statutory duty in terms of call taking and mobilising resources. This links with the possibility for needing to review the service's approach to mobilising and control depending on the future of the national RCC project.

It is proposed to undertake a fundamental review of the staffing and systems required to deliver an effective mobilising function for the next ten years.

It is proposed that this review be commenced in Year 1 (2011/12).

5 ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE CURRENT IRMP

5.1 It is proposed that, subject to Authority approval, the final 2011-15 IRMP Action Plan should also include the implementation of the four IRMP actions carried out in 2010/11:

- Review of Prevention and Education (community safety) activity
- Review of the retained appliance at Station 13 (Gateshead East) Community Fire Station
- Review of potential for a low activity staffing models at some less busy stations
- Review of back office functions (2 year programme completing in 2011/12).

5.2 Individual papers will be brought to Authority on the findings of these reviews over the next three months.

6 FURTHER AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 6.1 It is envisaged that the actions set out above, along with the implementation of the 2010/11 reviews, will be deliverable in such a way that the impact on the service affecting the community can be minimised. In addition to these, two further areas of activity have been identified which are likely to impact on the quality of service experienced by the public, or our ability to deliver shared objectives through collaboration.
- 6.2 Because significant spending reductions in these areas may have direct service impact, it is not proposed to include them as proposed actions in the IRMP at this time, but to include them as potential actions should the need arise. This allows a fuller picture of the potential impact of the Spending Review to be consulted upon.
- 6.3 Any proposals to implement these actions in the future will be subject to further reports to Members.

Potential Action A – Cessation of specific diversionary and education activities

TWFRS delivers a number of youth diversionary activities including Phoenix, Young Firefighters, Princes Trust, HotShots, boxing clubs and activities with firesetters, as well as the Safetyworks interactive safety centre based in Newcastle but available to communities and partners across Tyne and Wear.

Many of these activities are valued by partners as helping to deliver wider community objectives, and there is some degree of commissioning associated with Phoenix and Safetyworks in particular (approximately half the annual operating costs of Safetyworks are currently covered by Northumbria Police; other partners support delivery in kind though funding has not been associated with this).

These activities have been shown through evaluation to have positive impact on participants, particularly those at risk of anti social behaviour with whom other partners may find it difficult to engage. The numbers involved are, however, relatively low and the cost of delivery relatively high. The impact on our own performance is difficult to quantify, and the value added is at least as much for other organisations/the wider community (in terms of reduced anti social behaviour) as for ourselves, while in many cases our contribution to this agenda is not recognised or funded.

The implementation of the review of Prevention and Education proposes continuation of diversionary activity, but with a streamlined and consolidated structure to mitigate issues with lack of sufficient/sustainable funding. However, should partners' own responses to the Spending Review undermine their ability/commitment to supporting collaborative diversionary work, TWFRS

should review its ongoing capacity to deliver diversionary activities and the Safetyworks project.

Alternatively, should a commissioning approach to diversionary activity develop in the future in any of the areas in which we work, opportunities could be afforded to the service to be directly commissioned to deliver these or similar activities. Such an approach would be likely to deliver efficiencies to the area as a whole and place TWFRS' engagement in such activities on a clearer footing. TWFRS is well placed to promote and engage in partnership discussions of this nature.

Potential Action B – Review of the type, number and location of Category 01 and 02 appliances

The service's network of 17 fire stations and 31 appliances (plus specialist equipment) is strategically situated taking into account population, known community risk and transport links, to allow the best possible deployment of resources across the five council areas. Appliances operate across council boundaries and the same level of service is offered to all council areas regardless of the number of fire stations and staff based within the area.

Value for money figures provided by the Audit Commission (*Rising to the Challenge* 2008) point to the fact that TWFRS has the most utilised fire stations, and the second most utilised appliances, of any FRS nationally. This indicates that the number of appliances/stations is more likely to be providing value for money- *"Station utilisation varies (nationally)...the least busy stations are almost three times more expensive per incident to maintain"*.

TWFRS has undertaken reviews of appliance provision in previous years, including an exploration of the retained appliance at Station 13 (Birtley) in 2001/11. Should it be necessary, it is proposed to carry out further analysis of risk and utilisation to ascertain whether there is any scope to further reduce the provision of appliances.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 In accordance with national IRMP guidance it is proposed that the draft IRMP actions for 2011-15 be subject to public consultation before Members are asked to finally approve the IRMP in March 2011.
- 7.2 This will include consultation meetings between the relevant representative bodies, senior management and Members in order to ensure that their views and comments are considered, as well as consultation with the public and partners. It is envisaged that there will be widespread consultation on the impact

- of the Spending Review on local areas through LSPs, and our proposed IRMP actions will feed into this.
- 7.3 It is proposed to continue with the consultation processes used in the past, including seeking the views of the following:
- MPs and Ward Councillors
 - Business organisations
 - Local authorities and public agencies
 - Our partners
 - Other emergency services
 - Citizens
- 7.4 The consultation process covers the high level proposals for the IRMP. Further consultation will be carried out on each specific action and fed into any decision making process relating to these.
- 7.5 It is proposed that the consultation exercise will commence on 23 November 2010, and conclude on 22 February 2011.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The financial implications arising from the implementation of the draft 2011/15 IRMP will be significant given the requirement to reduce spending in line with the Spending Review. Although financial implications are not yet finalised, provisional figures have been built into the Authority's draft Medium Term Financial Strategy.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The impact of the Spending Review has been recognised as a significant corporate risk and is part of the Corporate Risk Register. Risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure that the risks to the Authority relating to these specific actions are minimised as far as practicable.
- 9.2 Should the action points finally be agreed there will also be a risk of delays in the completion of these planned actions. Target dates will be established and monitored to determine any factors which may result in delays and appropriate adjustments to dates will be made following approval by the relevant senior officer.

10 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Equality and Diversity implications have been considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process for the proposed 2011/15 IRMP actions. Equality Impact Assessments will also be undertaken on each specific action contained in the final plan, and fed into any decision making process relating to these.

11 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Health and Safety implications have been considered in the development of the proposed 2011/15 IRMP actions. The Health and Safety implications of each specific action will also be considered.

12 LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Legislative implications have been considered in the development of the proposed 2011/15 IRMP actions.

13 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 Learning and Development implications have been considered in the development of the draft 2011/15 IRMP Action Plan.

14 CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The proposed 2011/15 IRMP actions represent the continuing commitment of the Authority to providing an efficient and cost effective fire and rescue service which is responsive to community risk. In particular the proposals seek to provide a clear process through which we can respond to the Spending Review in such a way that the successful strategic approach set out in Section 3 can be maintained as far as possible.

15 RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 The Authority is requested to:

- i. Agree the principle of a four year IRMP covering the period 2011 to 2015
- ii. Consider the draft actions for the 2011/15 plan (section 4) and provide comments and views in respect of any amendments considered necessary
- iii. Comment on the Additional Areas for Consideration (section 6) and the approach of including these as potential actions in the draft plan
- iv. Agree, subject to (i), that the proposed 2011/15 actions are subject to staff, public and partner consultation, as detailed in this report
- v. Agree that the Chief Fire Officer reports the results of the consultation exercise to the Authority for consideration prior to final approval and implementation of the /15 SCSP/IRMP and associated action plan.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Spending Review 2010. *HM Treasury, October 2010 (Cm7942)*

