

CABINET - 25 FEBRUARY 2014

COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP) OXFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - DRAFT ACTION PLAN 2014-15

Report by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer – Fire & Rescue Service

Introduction

1. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework to which Fire Authorities must have regard when discharging their functions. The 2012 Framework requires each Fire and Rescue Authority to produce a publicly available Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). Within Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) we have called this our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to make it more meaningful to the public. This report proposes a number of projects to be included within the Fire Authority's CRMP for the fiscal year 2014-15.
2. The proposals in this report were agreed for consultation in their entirety by the Delegated Cabinet Member for Policy Coordination, Councillor Louise Chapman, on 9 September 2013.
3. The proposals were also presented to the Performance Scrutiny Committee on 26 September 2013.
4. The agreed proposals within this Action Plan 2014-15 have been subjected to full internal and external consultation for a period of 12 weeks. Cabinet is therefore invited to comment on the proposed Action Plan, consultation responses and management responses to the consultation responses.
5. Our medium term financial plan and supporting business strategy underpin the proposals within our CRMP action plan.
6. The Secretary of State published the latest Fire and Rescue National Framework in July 2012. The purpose of the Framework was to provide strategic direction from central government whilst ensuring that authorities continue to make local decisions. The Framework sets out the Government's objectives for the Fire and Rescue Service and what fire and rescue authorities should do to achieve these objectives.
7. Each Fire and Rescue Authority should ensure that the IRMP:
 - Is regularly reviewed and revised and reflects up-to-date risk information and evaluation of service delivery outcomes
 - Has regard to the risk analyses completed by Local and Regional Resilience Forums including those reported in external Community Risk

- Registers (CRRs) and internal risk registers, to ensure that civil and terrorist contingencies are captured in their IRMP
 - Reflects effective consultation during its development and at all review stages with representatives of all sections of the community and stakeholders
 - Demonstrates how prevention, protection and response activities will be best used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities in a cost effective way
 - Provides details of how Fire and Rescue Authorities deliver their objectives and meet the needs of communities through working with partners
 - Has undergone an effective equality impact assessment process.
8. The framework also states that Fire and Rescue Authorities should review the effectiveness of 'cross-border' integration arrangements with neighbouring authorities and set these out appropriately in their IRMPs.
9. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority published its strategic CRMP in April 2013 providing the strategic direction for the next five years. This document is subjected to annual review and updated and amended as required. The current strategic IRMP requires no amendment for the fiscal year 2014-15.
10. Senior Management from Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has responded to the comments made during the consultation period and the response summaries are available to Cabinet within this report.

Consultation

11. Consultation on the draft Community Risk Management Action Plan 2014 – 2015 started on 18th October 2013 and concluded on 10th January 2014. In order to try and obtain the widest spectrum of responses, several different means of capturing opinions and ideas were used in this year's consultation process:
- Oxfordshire County Council E Consult – Internet based software to survey a database of interested parties.
 - Letters were sent to all Oxfordshire County Councillors, District, Town and Parish Councils.
 - Letters were sent to representative bodies.
 - Letters were sent to all adjacent Fire & Rescue Services.
 - Focus groups were held with operational firefighters, Wholetime and On-Call.
 - An invite to participate in the consultation was promulgated in Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service Routine Orders.
 - All Fire & Rescue staff were emailed with an invite to participate in the consultation.
 - The consultation document was published on the Intranet & Internet.

A total of 57 responses were received and are broken down as follows:

- 25 anonymous responses via E Consult
- 1 response via E Consult from Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
- 1 external email
- 1 face to face response
- 24 people participated in 3 firefighter focus groups
- 2 internal emails from operational Station Watches
- 1 internal email from an operational Firefighter
- 2 internal emails from OFRS Officers

12. The following section summarises the projects for inclusion in the IRMP Action Plan for the fiscal year 2014-15. These include a consultation response summary & OFRS senior management response summary. A full consultation response report will be available & published in March 2014.

13. **Project 1:** Implement the Training Collaboration Review carried out in 2013
Responsible Manager: Area Manager – Organisational and Technical Support

Objective: Following the review of training across four neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Royal Berkshire and Warwickshire) a number of options have been identified for consideration. As a consequence, a programme of collaborative projects will be put together and implemented across the services with the aim of delivering further quality and efficiency improvements for all the services involved. Full details of the recommendations will be known later in the year when the initial report has been released and decisions have been made as to which areas to take forward. Any projects that are agreed will be resourced from across the Services within existing budgets, with the majority of work expected to be completed by March 2015.

14. **Consultation Summary:**

Many of the responses indicated that collaboration with regards to training was a good idea and there were no real concerns expressed. With regards to the priority of the project within the service the response was mixed. Some respondents indicated that it should be a low priority, albeit with little justification. Some respondents indicated that it should be a high priority because of the importance of training and the potential benefits with regards to efficiency.

The following bullet points indicate a cross section of consultation responses:

- *Why are we not looking at a Thames Valley approach as this links in with the Thames Valley Fire Control Service?*
- *Will this lead to shared procedures, equipment etc.?*
 - *In instances where these differ, how will this be facilitated?*

- *How does the Fire Service College fit in with this review?*
- *Will this provide good quality training at a good price?*
- *Have alternative solutions been considered?*
- *What subjects will this collaboration cover?*
- *Are we looking at other partner agencies to coordinate training?*

15. **Management Response:**

OFRS will continue to improve its training provision as part of its on-going management of the function. We are committed to ensuring the safety of our firefighters as part of the 'Safe Person' concept. To this end we will engage with colleagues in neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services to provide affordable training that is also fit for purpose.

Many of the points that have been raised during the consultation already form part of our proposed approach including working closely with the Fire Service College as both a training provider and/or via the use of its venue and excellent facilities. We already work closely with our Thames Valley colleagues and will continue to explore options for collaborative working. This will ensure that we are able to provide training and other essential services that are both appropriate and cost effective in order to support the maintenance of our front line services.

16. **Project 2:** Review our aerial appliance capability and implement changes to staffing supported by that review
Responsible Manager: Area Manager – Operations and Resilience

Objective: Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service will undertake a review of our current and future need for the provision of high-reach capacity (i.e. a vehicle(s) designed to give safe access at height for rescue and firefighting purposes) to align with the planned replacement of the current vehicle in 2017.

We plan to review both the types of incident and the buildings that the high-reach vehicle is currently sent to, as well as analyse when and how it is being used – in order to ensure that all attendances we make are appropriate for the operational needs of those incidents and any new vehicle(s) is designed to meet the identified risks.

This review will also look at alternative crewing arrangements for the vehicle(s) – as well as their location in the county - to ensure that we can have the appropriate capability to work safely at height, but one that is still effectively and efficiently resourced. This aspect of the project has the potential to release resources to support other priority areas of our frontline service delivery.

This review will be completed jointly by the Organisational Planning and Performance Manager, the Fire Risk Manager for Oxford City (current location of the high-reach vehicle) and the Station Manager for Oxford city – Rewley Road (managing the current workforce).

17. Consultation Summary:

There was an almost unanimous response indicating that an appliance with a high reach capability should be retained within Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service. Many of the respondents also used examples of when the use of such an appliance was a contributing factor in the successful conclusion to an incident.

85% of responses indicated that sharing a high reach capability vehicle with a neighbouring Fire & Rescue Service was not a good idea in relation to potential slower response times and the possibility of such an appliance not being available if it was already being used at another incident outside of the county. Some respondents also cited issues of familiarisation and training with the vehicle if it were to be shared.

Many of the respondents were supportive of an alternative crewing approach with regards to this type of vehicle. Some agreed that dedicated staffing of this vehicle was not strictly necessary and that resources could be freed up to provide alternative fire cover in other parts of the county. Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service cited that they had been operating an alternative staffing approach on this type of vehicle for two years without any negative consequences.

The following bullet points indicate a cross section of consultation responses:

- *How will this free up staffing resources?*
 - *What plans would be in place to ensure that this vehicle is covered and that this does not affect the other appliances at Rewley Road Station?*
 - *Have OFRS looked at other services staffing arrangements for high reach vehicles?*
- *Have we looked at aerial provision from neighbouring services?*
- *Have we looked at private provision or sharing with other services of this appliance?*
- *Do OFRS really need a high reach appliance; doesn't modern building construction and the absence of large amounts of high-rise in Oxfordshire negate the need for such a vehicle?*
- *How does the risk assessment process work?*
 - *Are we looking at incident history data*
 - *What are its current and potential uses?*
 - *What are the premises that this is essential for?*
- *What sort of vehicle are we looking for and how will we evaluate this?*
 - *Are OFRS looking at the experiences of other services with regards CARPs? (Combined Aerial Rescue Pumps)*
- *Have OFRS considered rope rescue facilities for the new appliance?*

18. Management Response:

OFRS recognise the need for an appliance with a high reach capability to attend incidents within the county. Travel times and availability make it unlikely that we will rely on other counties to provide this however we will

explore this option with our neighbours. As part of this project, OFRS will look at exactly what incidents this vehicle has attended, how often and for what duration. This will be cross referenced with the risk profile of the County. From this study, we will determine what vehicle would be most suitable for the needs of Oxfordshire.

We will also examine alternative crewing methods as part of this review in order to identify how we can utilise our resources more effectively within the whole County of Oxfordshire.

19. **Project 3:** Review of Light Response Vehicle Capability and implement changes to staffing supported by that review

Responsible Manager: Area Manager – Strategic Risk and Planning

Objective: OFRS will undertake a review of our current emergency fleet (standard fire engines) to consider the introduction of a Light Response Capability.

This will involve analysing the more localised risks across a number of key areas of the county (e.g. restricted vehicle access, road access during periods of poor weather and the benefits of providing a ‘first strike’ emergency response capability where current crewing levels are proving a challenge to maintain at certain times) so that a risk-assessed approach to adapting current working practices and equipment is developed. In other words, we will look to have the right vehicle with the right levels of equipment and crew - in the right place, at the right time - to meet the changing risk profile of our local communities.

The ways these vehicles are staffed will need to be considered against our ‘standard’ arrangements and will need to be flexible to meet the needs of both the on-call and full-time stations across the county. Consideration will need to be given to levels of resilience and business continuity in periods of peak demand.

The introduction of such vehicles will primarily need to be assessed in terms of how they might improve and support our ability to respond to emergencies at any time of the day or night from all of our 24 fire stations – but they also have the potential to reduce the financial burden of renewing all of our fleet with standard fire engines, where the local risks of a community may be effectively met by providing a light response capability in the area. Early trials of the approach will commence in autumn 2013, in order to provide an evidence base on which to make further decisions.

20. Consultation Summary:

In the main there were some positive responses to the introduction of a 'Light Response Vehicle' (LRV) for example, in rural areas and small towns and villages where lanes were narrower. One respondent cited that there would be a case for these vehicles where 'On-Call' crewing was a challenge during certain times of the day. Another respondent cited that it was a great idea and that LRV's should be considered at all stations that have two appliances.

There were however some areas of concern from some respondents citing that it was a dilution of the service and that it would put moral pressure on crews attending an incident as they may feel compelled to "go further" than is safe for a minimal crew to do so.

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service indicated that they would welcome the sharing of research into alternative vehicles and the potential for joint purchasing.

The following bullet points indicate a cross section of consultation responses:

- *What incidents are being considered for this vehicle?*
- *What are the crewing numbers and arrangements for this vehicle?*
 - *Would this include a level one officer (a supervisory manager)?*
- *What equipment and capability will these vehicles have?*
 - *This could be used as a medical first responder unit?*
 - *Have the limitations been considered against aspects such as the highways procedure?*
 - *Would OFRS consider limiting the equipment to remove the potential for dealing with incidents outside specific safety parameters (i.e. remove BA and RTC equipment)?*
- *If BA and Fire Fighting equipment are used will this not lead to dangerous situations arising where crews are tempted to enter burning buildings without the appropriate means of protection?*
- *Have we looked at alternative vehicles, this vehicle will predominantly be used to transfer personnel to incidents? If so, would a mini bus or a 4x4 be a cheaper and more multi-purpose vehicle leading to a more flexible response?*
- *Have we looked at other services use of these vehicles and was it successful?*

21. Management Response:

OFRS aims are for this project to enhance its current response capability by providing an alternative to the standard fire engine based fleet. We believe that this will improve response standards in some areas particularly where On-Call crewing can be a challenge at certain times of the day. We know through incident data that some incidents do not require the attendance of a fully crewed standard fire engine however we recognise that this must not reduce the safety of our firefighters or members of the public. As such, a full

risk assessment will be carried out detailing the types of incidents an alternative vehicle could attend, how this will be crewed and what support arrangements will be in place.

22. **Project 4:** Review of Prevention, Protection and Response Resources to meet the expansion and changing risk profile of Banbury, Bicester, Carterton, Wantage and the South of the County
Responsible Manager: Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Oxfordshire is the most rural county in the South East with over 50% of the population living in small towns, villages and hamlets of less than 10,000 people. However, the county is prosperous and is set to grow rapidly over the next few years. As a consequence, Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service needs to effectively plan ahead for the proposed increase in residential and business development in a number of key areas across the county.

This means that we need to review our current emergency response, prevention and protection arrangements in areas such as Banbury, Bicester, Carterton, Wantage and the South of the County to ensure we continue to effectively:

- Target our community safety advice and education to prevent accidents and injuries in the homes of our most vulnerable citizens, as well as at our places of work, in our schools and on our roads.
- Support and promote fire safety at work – particularly for those of us that are employed in higher risk environments – and help businesses to comply with their responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Maintain the appropriate levels for frontline emergency response resources in order to meet the changing and growing risks across Oxfordshire.

23. **Consultation Summary:**

With regards to our prevention work some respondents cited that we could improve our approach by the use of improved data usage i.e. Mosaic lifestyles and Origins data to target particularly vulnerable groups. Others suggested better information exchange with relevant agencies and some cited that we should work closely with key stakeholders with regards to the provision of domestic sprinklers. One respondent cited that we could save money by adopting a means tested approach with regards to smoke alarm provision.

Whilst some respondents suggested a more robust enforcement approach with regards to commercial premises, the majority advocated that we should work more closely with local businesses in a supportive approach.

With regards to our current emergency response resources within Banbury, Bicester, Carterton, Wantage and the South of the County this provided the most number of responses. Whilst some respondents cited that our current resources were sufficient, others felt that we should increase our resources,

particularly Wholetime, and that to do this we should seek more money from central government. There were a particular number of responses that cited that Banbury should remain as it is with regards to its fire crewing model and indeed some cited that it should be increased due to housing developments for the future. Some respondents however recognised that the risk profile of the county is changing considerably and that resources should be placed in areas where they are needed most.

The following bullet points indicate a cross section of consultation responses:

- *How are OFRS going to protect the risks in Banbury (both present and future)?*
 - *Won't new risks in Bicester will be limited due to modern construction and fire safety provision?*
 - *Don't the risks at Banbury warrant a Whole Time station?*
 - *Are On call staff competent, trained and experienced enough to cover this area?*
 - *Shouldn't the growth in Banbury lead to an increase in whole time resources?*
 - *Isn't Whole time resources needed in Banbury to cover the surrounding on call stations?*
 - *Couldn't a whole time resource be positioned between the two (Bicester and Banbury – maybe Adderbury Ambulance station)?*
- *How will OFRS maintain response standards in Banbury?*
- *Will the current proposal add another Enhanced Rescue Vehicle (a vehicle with greater capabilities for rescuing people from car crashes etc) to the fleet?*
- *Would a phased approach be a good idea for this, providing purely day staff at Witney and Bicester for a couple of years in order to provide fire safety advice and therefore lower any potential risks even before they come to fruition?*
- *Are OFRS looking at the Carterton area and the risks associated?*
- *Shouldn't the South of the County have more resources especially during daytime hours when they receive more calls?*
 - *Should stations be amalgamated in the South to save costs and pool resources?*
- *What has the service done in terms of recruitment for stations that struggle to retain enough personnel?*
 - *Are the service looking at why people stay (rather than leave) the employ of the Fire Service?*
- *Has a targeted approach based on sleeping accommodation above commercial premises been considered due to their increased likelihood of unsafe fire safety arrangements?*
 - *Would the service benefit from a historically driven targeted fire safety approach?*
 - *Have OFRS considered a joined approach with neighbouring services for commercial fire safety enforcement?*
- *Are OFRS pushing fire suppression systems in homes and new buildings?*
- *What road safety measures are in place to combat the driving deaths and injuries sustained by young people (18-25)?*

24. **Management Response:**

OFRS recognises that Oxfordshire is changing in terms of population, demographics, housing developments, industry, traffic volumes etc. and this has to be reflected in future planning for the service. Fire stations and vehicles must be located in the most appropriate locations and staffed by the right people, with the most efficient crewing models in order to effectively respond to areas of greatest risk whilst also maintaining our front line service provision. Prevention activity must be focused on those who are most vulnerable and at risk of being injured in a fire or road traffic collision and protection activity must ensure that the county's commercial and residential buildings provide a safe environment for the people who work and live in them. As a consequence, all of the factors raised during this consultation will be used to inform this project.

Financial and Staff Implications

25. Each project will fully recognise the prevailing economic constraints, delivering efficiencies or allowing existing/additional services to be delivered more effectively. If any budgetary pressures result from the implementation of these projects, they will be managed within existing budgets or highlighted to Cabinet through the annual Service Resource and Planning process.

RECOMMENDATION

26. The Cabinet is recommended to accept all the project proposals within this report for adoption in the final version of the CRMP Action Plan 2014-15.

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Background papers:

National Framework document for the Fire and Rescue Service
Oxfordshire Fire Authority Integrated Risk Management Plan 2013-18
The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2012
Community Risk Management Plan 2014-15 (Consultation Results)

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February 2014