

Division(s):

CABINET - 24 FEBRUARY 2015

Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Draft Action Plan 2015-16

Report by Chief Fire Officer

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 2015-16.
2. The proposals in this report were presented to the Performance Scrutiny Committee on 25 September 2014.
3. The agreed proposals within this Action Plan 2015-16 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.
4. Our medium term financial plan and supporting business strategy underpin the proposals within our CRMP action plan.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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 2015-16.
9. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service senior management have responded to the comments made during the consultation period and the response summaries are available to Cabinet within this report.

Consultation

10. Consultation on the draft Community Risk Management Action Plan 2015 – 2016 commenced on 10 October 2014 and concluded on 2 January 2015. 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, and Town & Parish Councils.

Letters were sent to representative bodies.

Letters were sent to all surrounding Fire & Rescue Services.

Focus groups were held with operational firefighters both Wholetime & On-Call.

An invite to participate in the consultation was promulgated in Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service weekly newsletter (Routine Orders).

All Fire & Rescue staff were emailed with an invite to participate in the consultation.

The consultation document was published on both the Intranet & Internet.

11. A total of 73 responses were received and are broken down as follows:

11 anonymous responses via E Consult

1 response via E Consult from Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service

2 external emails

1 Middle Manger focus groups (involving 12 Group and Station Managers)

3 Whole time station focus groups (involving 15 personnel)

- 3 On-call station focus groups (involving 30 personnel)
- 1 internal email from operational Watch Manager
- 1 internal email from an operational Firefighter

12. The following section summarises the projects for inclusion in the CRMP Action Plan for the fiscal year 2015-16. These include a consultation response summary & OFRS senior management response summary. A full consultation response report will be available & published in March 2015.
13. **Project 1:** Implement Emergency Medical Support Services in collaboration with South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS).

Responsible Manager: Area Manager - Operations and Resilience

Objective:

14. South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) have entered into a partnership agreement to offer an initial emergency response to agreed categories of medical emergency at the request of SCAS using First Person on Scene (FPOS) qualified Fire and Rescue Personnel
15. OFRS's vision is to make life safer in Oxfordshire. Carrying out first responder duties is one way in which we achieve this aim. SCAS works to provide excellent patient service, saving more lives and improving health. The 'First responder' initiative is an efficient and effective way of both parties jointly achieving this aim.
16. The implementation of professional first aid and trauma care training to our firefighters is essential to ensure they can provide medical assistance to both local communities and their colleagues at a wide range of emergency incidents.
17. FPOS provision forms part of the wider framework OFRS provides to ensure we meet our legal, moral and financial obligations. Following initial trials with the fire station in Thame, OFRS would like to extend this capability to other stations throughout the county.

Consultation Summary:

18. The majority of responses were very positive and fully supported the opportunity to save lives by attending first responder incidents and bringing benefits to the community. Responses from our staff indicated that first responder incidents will increase the number of calls to on-call stations thus raising morale and improving recruitment and retention rates. Concerns were raised that on-call primary employers may challenge their staff if they attend an increased number of non-fire related calls. Suggestions included one person attending first responder incidents in a separate vehicle to reduce the impact of sending fire appliances with entire crews. It was also suggested that FPOS trained staff should accompany ambulance crews as observers to increase their experience.

19. The following bullet points indicate a cross section of consultation responses:
- This is a good idea but training of good quality and with regular updates must be maintained and all competent crews should be trained in order to spread the burden of extra calls.
 - Yes, good idea it works in other countries including the USA, Germany and other European countries. It makes a difference to fire fighters and the public, we can save more lives.
 - This will improve the moral of the On Call sections as it will increase their calls and their feelings of helping the public.
 - This is a good opportunity for collaborative/partnership working.
 - How will we ensure that we are turned out to attend the 'right' medical shouts?
 - Will On Call primary employers challenge their people if they are being taken away more frequently and to incidents that are not within the usual remit of the Fire & Rescue Service?
 - Have OFRS considered using different vehicles and different crewing models for this to reduce costs and the danger to the public?

Management Response:

20. South Central Ambulance Service experienced very high levels of demand during the Christmas/New Year 2015 period. OFRS offered to assist by making our FPOS trained staff available to attend first responder incidents (on a voluntary, trial basis). The offer was accepted and between 20 December 2014 and 7 January 2015 we attended 282 first responder calls throughout Oxfordshire. It is appreciated that the initiative happened at short notice however the response from control and responding crews was exceptional with much positive feedback received from patients and SCAS crews.
21. This trial emphasised the benefits of offering this service to the community and the impact the fire and rescue service can have in assisting the Ambulance service in saving lives and improving casualty care during periods of exceptional demand. These measures were only implemented on an interim basis as part of a trial, subject to longer term approval of this project.
22. First responder calls are attended by our FPOS trained staff who have completed an extensive four- day BTEC training course, delivered by SCAS, to enable us to work under their clinical governance.
23. The model of using a fire engine and crew to respond was developed to enable the fire engine to remain available for fire service calls, whilst still attending first responder incidents. An FPOS working group has been established, which will assist the development of this project. The service will engage with local employers of on- call staff if any concerns are raised regarding their increased number of calls due to first responding incidents. FPOS trained staff have ridden with SCAS, and their staff with us, to build relationships with our partners and gain experience.
24. **Project 2:** Review adverse weather resilience arrangements with the emergency planning team and other partners.

Responsible Manager: Area Manager - Strategic Risk and Planning

Objective:

25. During the last decade Oxfordshire has suffered several instances of extreme weather including two substantial floods and a period of unprecedented snow fall. The emergency services have worked hard to save lives, protect property and facilitate a return to normality. Due to the increasing likelihood that this type of event will occur in both greater magnitude and frequency OFRS would like to work more closely with partner agencies in order to ensure a better coordinated response to all such incidents - seeking improvements wherever possible.

Consultation Summary:

26. There was a positive response praising the work OFRS performed during previous flooding incidents and the majority of responses supported the project to review our adverse weather resilience arrangements. It was suggested that crews should have more training in relation to the role of other agencies during adverse weather conditions and familiarisation with their equipment. Many responses suggested the project should explore the use of trained community volunteers. Other suggestions included providing additional; dry suits carried on fire appliances, boats and 4 x 4 capacity. The responses highlighted the role of the Emergency Operations Centre, led by the Emergency Planning unit, during adverse weather incidents and suggested this should form part of the review.

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

- By all accounts, their response was very, very good: both innovative and effective.
- There is a lack of knowledge about what other services have and a good training package would benefit fire crews to understand how they fit into the bigger picture with crews from other services.
- These are quite rare occurrences so should we expend greater costs when this money could be better spent elsewhere?
- I think the emergency services could coordinate groups of local volunteers who are training and mobilised to aid their communities, thus providing ample capacity for the emergency services to prioritise those at most risk in any given incident.
- You are the professionals and I fully support your actions.
- It should be realised that any response by OFRS to flood events, especially those that recur, indicates a failure of flood risk management be it by poor maintenance or absence of defences or as a result of construction on areas of high risk. We should not be in a situation that the OFRS response becomes the default in such events to compensate for the failures of other agencies in properly managing flood risks. Response by OFRS should be preserved for truly unpredictable or unprecedented situations.
- Why is it that Oxfordshire only has one boat in the county

Management Response:

28. OFRS recognise that due to the changing weather patterns bringing storms, flooding and snow a review of our resilience arrangements is required. We are currently working towards a closer integration with Emergency Planning, the Local Resilience Forum, OCC Adult Social Care and other partners to improve our planning, preparation and response through a multi-agency approach to severe weather related incidents. All the factors raised during this consultation will be used to inform this project.

29. **Project 3:** Trial emergency cover review recommendations in the Carterton area.

Responsible Manager: Area Manager - Operations and Resilience

Objective:

30. The Service has undertaken detailed risk modelling of the county including the developing risk profile of areas over the next 10-15 years which indicates accelerated growth in the Carterton area. In the first instance, any changes to emergency response cover would have to be supported by using full-time firefighters, as it could take 3-5 years for a competent on-call crew to be established. The call rates in the area would not warrant permanent use of a full-time fire crew, compared with other similar areas of the county.

31. Introduction of additional emergency cover in Carterton has the potential to improve the overall response time standards for the area.

32. The proposal looks to redistribute existing resources to more effectively and efficiently cover the growing risks in the West Oxfordshire District area by using a staffing model that is already well established and performing in areas with similar risk profiles in the county.

33. In addition, it has the potential to improve the operational support for larger incidents in the West Oxfordshire area, as more resources will be available across the District.

34. In addition to these extra emergency response resources, on-going targeted prevention and protection activities will continue to be used to drive down emergency incidents, particularly within vulnerable groups, and will continue to help mitigate and reduce any increased risks that result from community development and population demographics.

Consultation Summary:

35. The consultation provided a healthy mixture of responses. Whilst most responses were in favour of trialling emergency cover review recommendations in the Carterton area, other responses questioned the need for a new fire station at Carterton. Suggestions were made regarding collaboration with RAF Brize Norton for resources, buildings and personnel.

36. Several responses suggested making sector competent day duties staff, currently based at HQ, more flexible by enabling them to work from on-call stations to improve on-call availability.
37. The following bullet points indicate a cross section of consultation responses:
- Growth in Carterton and Brize Norton means it is sensible to increase the capacity in Carterton, however, this could be achieved by moving resources from either Bampton or Burford.
 - Yes, but done in conjunction with rationalising cover at adjoining stations and providing flexibility
 - The expanding area of West Oxfordshire will of course need more resources. But this must not be provided at the expense of other areas by reducing the existing fire cover in those areas.
 - Does Carterton really need a fire station?
 - Could we look to relocate personnel from HQ to Carterton to crew as part of their daytime commitment?
 - Have we looked at collaboration with the RAF base, maybe using their resources, buildings, personnel etc?
 - Other planned housing developments, particularly in Banbury, Bicester, Witney, and Didcot are also important.
 - Is this about numbers of houses and population rather than actually looking at the risk, these houses will all be modern builds with hard wired smoke alarms etc, the risk and call level won't be there.

Management Response:

38. OFRS recognises that Oxfordshire is changing in terms of population, demographics, housing developments, industry and increased traffic which has to be reflected in future planning for the service. The option to build a new station was taken following detailed analysis of the current and future development of the town and the increased risks to the community. 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. This project aims to demonstrate that additional emergency cover in Carterton has the potential to improve the overall response time standards for the area. We have explored the possibility of delivering a service using resources and assets with RAF Brize Norton but this was not achievable. Nevertheless, we believe that this project will improve the operational support for larger incidents in the West Oxfordshire area, as more resources will be available across the District. It is intended that the new Carterton fire station will be a multi-agency hub incorporating partners from Age UK Oxfordshire, Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service and OCC Adult Social Care. The issues raised in the consultation responses will be addressed by the project to assist us in ensuring that the future risks to the community are addressed.

39. **Project 4:** Identify opportunities to work with partners to improve health, safety & wellbeing in local communities.

Responsible Manager: Area Manager - Community Risk

Objective:

40. This project aims to identify opportunities to formalise work with partners and, in particular, Public Health to improve health, safety and wellbeing in local communities. OFRS have been very successful for many years in fire prevention, safeguarding and educating the public about the dangers of fire, and more recently this has expanded to include road safety education, training and publicity. Nationally and locally, fire and rescue staff are held in high regard by the public, being seen as strong role models.
41. The 2014/15 Community Risk Management plan includes exploring opportunities to further integrate our work into the public health arena to support other teams within Oxfordshire County Council and make our communities safer and healthier.

Consultation Summary:

42. Many responses stated that they considered firefighters to be good role models, well placed to deliver messages to improve safety and wellbeing in the community. Other responses included suggestions that the project should look at; dealing with bariatric patients and engineered safety solutions to fast roads. Several responses supported opening up stations as 'community' fire stations with rooms bookable for community meetings in order to reach community groups with safety messages and improve on-call recruitment. Warwickshire FRS are also considering including this project in their future CRMP.
43. The following bullet points indicate a cross section of consultation responses:
- I believe Firefighters are good role models of fit disciplined citizens within a caring community.
 - Consider more funds available for local visits and CFS, increasing our image and participation with the local community
 - It is not clear why OFRS would wish to expand its remit to encompass areas of health improvement, safety and wellbeing that are already addressed by other agencies and organisations. Before any decision is made a need analysis should be carried out and consulted upon with the public and particularly other key stakeholders and those already working in these areas.
 - Bariatric – A project concerning how we deal with these incidents, what equipment we have, what our role should be and procedures around this. Also an analysis of what other agencies are doing to support these vulnerable people.
 - Fast Roads Safety – We should look at the engineered safety solutions that are available and encourage their use in Oxfordshire

- Are we taking on the role of a commissioning service? Will we receive funding because of it?
- This could be achieved alongside opening up stations more to the public. We could expand this to team working, social responsibility, life skills and contribution to society.

Management Response:

44. In the past 10 years OFRS has traditionally focussed on prevention activities for those who are most vulnerable and at risk of being injured in a fire or from road traffic collisions. Further integration with other teams within OCC Adult Social Care and Public Health will provide an opportunity for our fire-fighters and staff to actively engage with our communities on wider risks and hazards which aims to not only make our communities safer but also healthier in the long term. OFRS will expand its existing prevention activities to include more practical educational advice and support in the home, in schools and on the roads. OFRS will also actively explore the practical opportunities to open up and share its fire stations in order to support the county council's wider health and wellbeing agenda. All of the factors raised during this consultation will be used to inform this project.

Financial and Staff Implications

45. 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.

Equalities Implications

46. None

RECOMMENDATION

47. Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree that all of the project proposals within this report are accepted and adopted in the final version of the CRMP Action Plan 2015-16.

DAVID ETHERIDGE
Chief Fire Officer

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)