

Consultation

Consultation on the draft Community Risk Management Action Plan 2018-19 commenced on 1st November 2017 and concluded on 31st January 2018. 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.

Correspondence were sent to all Oxfordshire County Councilors, District, and Town & Parish Councils.

Correspondence were sent to all surrounding Fire & Rescue Services.

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

Meeting was held with Representative Bodies (Fire Brigade Union)

Focus groups were held with operational personnel

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

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

A total of 66 responses were received and are broken down as follows:

23 anonymous responses via E Consult

15 external emails

3 collective responses from Watch based staff total of 18 members

2 Meeting with Representative Bodies

1 Collective response from the Technical Communication team 4 members

1 collective response from Training admin team 4 members

Responses have been received from other Fire and Rescue Services- Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service and Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service

The following section summarises the projects for inclusion in the CRMP Action Plan for the fiscal year 2018-19. These include a consultation response summary & OFRS senior management response summary. A full consultation response report will be available & published in April 2018.

Project 1: Establishing Community Safety Advocates or Wardens.

Responsible manager:

ACO Grahame Mitchell

Purpose

To explore new ways in which communities can build their own resilience assisted by establishing Community Safety Advocates or Wardens. The current model is heavily reliant on our firefighters completing many varied prevention activities,

however as our emergency calls rise as we take on new community-based roles such as co-responding to medical emergencies and gaining entry on behalf of the Ambulance Service, we need to ensure we have a sustainable model that is fit for the future.

Objectives

- To increase the wellbeing and safety of all our residents by coordinating the local prevention activities in assisting community and individuals to be more resilient – typically through local Fire Stations based in the heart of the community.
- To trial new initiatives in small market towns to deliver bespoke prevention activities that the community identify as important.
- To use our Safe and Well visits to promote a wide range of wellbeing initiatives making all of our residents safer in their homes.
- To minimise the impact of a wide variety of vulnerabilities by working in partnership with partners and volunteers to achieve our objectives.

Consultation Summary:

The responses received were supportive with the community being able to support themselves within the areas of Safe and Well. Response from staff indicated support for the project and the greater community engagement at this level. There are some concerns that there is not adequate detail with in the action plan as to how this project will be delivered.

Comments received were as follows :-

- With increasing public-sector funding restraints this has to be a way forward. It also builds community spirit
- This is a great idea and there are obvious synergies with police and health that could be examined as part of this.
- This can be done in partnership with existing PCSO's and district council wardens working together as a team
- This is key to future funding pressure, and puts the ownership back in communities
- the community risk registers allude to this but there is very little detail in the CRMP about this
- The role of these wardens is not explained adequately. Cherwell already have street wardens who are active in the District.
- my area of concern is in thatch fire prevention.
- There has been no guidance on how this will happen, where the budgets are coming from and if this will be taking much needed crew from front line staff.

- I think the title community safety advocates is a better term than warden
- This has worked very well in the ambulance service for many years with the Community First Responder scheme. I am a CFR for SCAS responding to medical emergencies as a volunteer. I believe the model is used in Australia or America. Good idea.
- We feel as a watch that this would be a good idea. It could offer more avenues into achieving Project 2 in the CRMP 2018 to 2019.
- Good idea - promoting responsibility within communities for their own safety can only be beneficial both to the community and the Service.
- As a watch, we discussed this at great length. And on the whole, if implemented correctly we would support and agree with the use of fire service personnel/crews performing roles such as hand rail fitting/picking up elderly people etc.

Management Response:

The service is encouraged by the support for this project. We feel that this project will be beneficial to communities and allow the service to have greater involvement in communities that we serve. We take on board the feedback and will work with the parishes and districts to develop this role for their communities. The title of this role has not yet been decided and feedback is helpful. All projects will have a detailed plan to outline the steps to deliver the outcomes required.

Project 2: To increase the diversity of the Operational Workforce in order to reflect the community that we serve.

Responsible manager:

David Heycock

Purpose

To increase the diversity of the operational workforce in order to reflect the community that we serve, support innovation, impact positively on the organisations culture, and develop better relationships with all communities.

Objectives

- To amend current policies, procedures and processes to deliver improved diversity.
- Specifically to increase the current low levels of women and BME members in the service.
- To explore and experiment with initiatives and approaches to increase diversity.

- To look at national best practice both within and outside of the fire sector.

Consultation Summary:

The majority of responses received were supportive of this project and could see the benefits to the service and the community that it serves. There were some concerns that this should not be at the expense of the best person for the role. Our staff could see the benefit in reflecting the community and that recruitment should be conducted fairly and openly.

- OFRS should try and reflect the communities that it serves. The narrative talks about best practice including outside the service - the Police appear to have better results than fire and this could be a line of investigation.
- Whilst it should represent the community it serves, this cannot be at the expense of equality for those it employs.
- what are the measures of success that this will be judged against.
- This is not a high priority and in times where money is short should not be given extra resources other than those already spent on recruitment. I want someone to put out fires, I don't care what they look like. Equality of opportunity is key.
- This is a bigger shift in wider public perception though. In need of more than just targeted recruitment drive. Add a media/ad campaign to depict OFRS in a new light and new position.
- Fire Services should only take the very best applicants, no matter what their sex or ethnic background. I cannot believe the general public who are served by the Fire Service care less what sex or colour the firefighters coming to their aid are.
- We feel this will always be an advantage to frontline staff and we should always strive to achieve this as best we possibly can.
- It is important that the Service are reflective of the communities served; improving diversity should also help improve access to diverse community groups.
- We believe that all recruitment should be conducted openly and fairly for all, and that whoever the best candidates are should get the jobs, irrelevant of sex/race/religion etc.

Management Response:

The service will continue to try to reflect the community that it serves and the support for the project is welcome. We recognise that other emergency services are further forward on this journey than the fire and rescue service and the service will work with all our partners on how to achieve the desired outcomes. The standard of an operational firefighter is set nationally and there is no intention to go away from this model, this project is about reaching out to those communities and genders that have not considered this fire and rescue service as a career previously and encouraging them to consider Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service as a preferred employer.

Project 3: To review resourcing of our fire protection service delivery and the effective enforcement of fire safety legislation in the County.

Responsible manager:

Richard Webb

Purpose

To review resourcing of our fire protection service delivery and the effective enforcement of fire safety legislation in the County. It will consider the inter-relationship between Protection and Response and review the effectiveness of our approach to: training, succession planning and competency in respect of the specialist skills required to deliver fire protection activities. It will also consider opportunities for Thames Valley collaboration and opportunities to improve the fire protection competencies of the wider workforce.

Objectives

- To review the reactive and proactive demands for fire protection activities and how these have changed in recent years.
- To identify the resource requirement to meet public and organisational expectations and to manage periods of exceptional pressure.
- To develop a robust workforce plan to enable the Service to continue to meet its fire protection responsibilities, exploring opportunities for the alignment of supporting processes such as training, succession planning and access to specialist skills with Thames Valley partners.
- To implement processes to ensure operational crews have the knowledge and skills required to offer better support to local businesses, identify fire safety concerns when responding to incidents, and to aid the operational response to incidents.

Consultation Summary:

The responses received were supportive of this project. In light of the recent events at Grenfell in London the responses reflected the need to build in this area. Feedback from the consultation said of the importance to resource fire protection and that this service should not be privatised. Staff have commented that they would welcome the increase in fire protection training for the operational crews.

- This should be carried out using the context of national and international enforcement – it is often cited that we have low incidences of deaths and injuries in commercial premises however I believe that this is due to high quality and correctly
- We need to resource this function more adequately and embed FP within firefighter roles better

- Recent tragedies have demonstrated that when it comes for fire safety and protection of the public from fire, the Fire and Rescue Service are still the best placed to deliver an advising and enforcing service. Building control being sometimes private
- how are you going to judge public expectations?
- Always good with so much development to ensure we have adequate coverage.
- Yes, but is this not a bit of a strange thing to have as a project? Not very action-focused. So, we will review if we have enough resources to provide the service we want to provide. Definitely review it but more importantly get resources in place!
- In the light of the 'Grenfell Towers' disaster we feel as a watch it would be a failing if this wasn't addressed.
- Public safety across the workplace, commerce and leisure is a key strand to safer communities; as such Fire Protection and legislative enforcement are key elements to any overarching strategy.
- We believe this should include increased/higher levels of fire protection training for crews.

Management Response:

In light of recent events in London, Fire Protection is in people's mind and this has been reflected in the feedback from the consultation and the support for this project. We are awaiting the outcome of the Dame Hackett review of building regulations and fire protection which will inform this review. It is encouraging that our staff wish to develop their understanding of this area further, in order to enable them to provide the correct advice and guidance to the businesses in Oxfordshire. This project, as with the other projects, is part of the services medium term financial plan for 2018-19.

Project 4: Implement the outcomes of the 2017/18 review of the whole-time shift duty system.

Responsible manager: David Heycock

Purpose

Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service are currently reviewing the Wholetime duty systems. The review is looking at options on how to utilise the operational staff to provide optimum crewing, whilst supporting staff welfare, this review will conclude in April 2018.

The project for 2018/19 will look to implement the outcomes of the review.

Objectives

- To ensure that the use of resources is effective and efficient and aligned to our strategic intention.

- To design with staff the working arrangements that support the delivery of our preventative and protection work and provide effective emergency response when it is needed.
- To use data to design evidence-based arrangements that are also forward-looking. To learn from other fire and rescue services and consider the use of good practice from elsewhere.
- To liaise with the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service and to look for opportunities to align where possible.

Consultation Summary:

The majority of responses were supportive of the proposed project and could see the benefits of reviewing the crewing models across the service to utilise resources to the best outcome for the public. There were concerns as to the level of detail within the action. There is concern from staff that there is no evidence or reason for changing the current crewing models. Staff have suggested to trial any proposal before committing to changing the service.

- Optimum crewing makes perfect sense otherwise we are just wasting precious resource
- This system must still provide a resilience based on historical and potential needs - at times of local, regional and national emergency we must have adequate personnel to respond. MTFAs, CBRNe, recall to duty and flexibility.
- This will bring opportunities for both parties.
- We need to be flexible and be able to align our differing shift systems
- what are you asking for me to agree or disagree with? you are telling me what you are doing.
- This statement is a matter of fact so there is no point in replying as it is already happening.
- There has been Zero evidence provided this saves money or improves staff welfare as stated above. The whole process looks like it could cost more than the "potential savings that have been muted".
- This is a bit confusing. Agree it needed a review to make sure we are effectively using resources. But implementation will be in 2018/19 or 2019/20? Never too soon to test/make those changes.
- Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service are only reviewing ONE of the wholetime duty systems. The true feeling of what is being proposed will be felt when it comes to consultation, but no doubt will be enforced anyway, as has been threatened.
- As 2 of our watch are currently on the working group for this project, we appreciate in the current economy that all efforts to make the service as efficient and value for money to the community as possible is paramount.
- Optimising the use of resources especially the human resource is key to maintaining an effective and efficient Service. This will be a challenging project and needs to be evidence based not merely change for changes sake.
- We believe that using our staff as efficiently and effectively as possible is a good idea, provided that this does not negatively affect staff conditions. Potentially this new system should be trialled at one station first to test it.

Management Response:

The service welcomes the feedback on this project and is encouraged by the recognition that reviewing the crewing model can be seen of benefit to staff and the public. The service acknowledges the concerns raised from staff with regards to the current level of detail. The current review has involved staff from all levels of the service who are developing the final proposal on the shift system. Once this piece of work has been completed a further staff consultation period will be undertaken. The wording from the original document has been changed following feedback from the consultation, to make the project clearer to understand.