

# REVIEW OF THE INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT 5-YEAR PLAN CONSULTATION IN THE AREAS MANAGED BY THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



**PRESENTED TO:** Executive Committee  
**DATE OF MEETING:** Monday 9 July 2007  
**OFFICER PRESENTING REPORT:** Brigade Manager (Support Services)  
Des Tidbury

## 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

To inform the Executive Committee of the areas of the Consultation process managed solely by Officers of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS), the main areas of interest and the comments and views received from stakeholders.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is invited to **CONSIDER** the report, in particular the comments and views received during the consultation process.

## 3. BACKGROUND AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The consultation period ran from 12 February to 11 May 2007. To publicise and assist with the consultation process, RBFRS circulated 3101 copies of the IRMP 5-Year Plan and 4080 copies of the ORS (Opinion Research Services) designed questionnaire. These were sent to various individuals, groups and places where the public have access; including key stakeholders (e.g. Councillors, Local Education Authorities and Unitary Authorities), Post Offices, Community Centres and Libraries (see **Appendix A**). In addition, 110 questionnaires and 68 IRMP booklets were sent following individual requests received by email, letter or telephone.

RBFRS printed 515,000 council tax leaflets, distributed to every household by the relevant Unitary Authority. The back of each leaflet contained a summary of the IRMP proposals and full details of how to respond. Comments on the IRMP proposals could be made using any of the following methods:

- The questionnaire contained in the IRMP booklet
- In writing to RBFRS Freepost address
- Email
- On-line questionnaire at RBFRS Website
- Telephone
- Fax

Senior Officers of RBFRS consulted internally with managers, fire station and control personnel, and non-operational employees, a total of some 92 separate visits. Brigade Manager Des Tidbury met with 10 external bodies (**Appendix B**) ranging

from Parish Councils to Local Strategic Partnerships. A combined audience of 299 people attended these meetings. In addition, two stakeholder forums, three elected Member forums and eighteen focus groups were held, details of which will be provided in a separate paper.

## **RESPONSES**

RBFRS received 72 responses to the IRMP proposals as follows: 28 emails, 42 comments in writing and 2 telephone calls. Of these responses, 6 were from Wargrave/Twyford/Sonning, 42 from Windsor, plus a letter on behalf of the occupants of 234 dwellings, 14 from Crowthorne, plus a 520-signature petition objecting to the possible closure of Crowthorne fire station (available to Members at the Executive Committee meeting), 8 from Reading and 2 unknown.

The responses can be divided into two categories, those that were simple statements and those where a response was required. Twenty-two of the responses were statements and fifty required a response. Some of the responses involved a considerable amount of research and included providing spreadsheets, maps and details of appliance timings.

Some respondents commented on more than one point hence details below.

### **Wargrave/Twyford/Sonning**

One agreement in principle, subject to the correct site being chosen. One wanting reassurance that adequate cover would be in place during the changes, one specifically asking that adequate cover be given to Remenham area and three of a general nature.

### **Windsor**

- Seven respondents were under the impression that there were still plans to close the fire station.
- Fourteen commented on the possible delays in cover from other stations due to volume of traffic.
- Twenty confirmed that they wish to retain the current 24 hr full time cover whilst one was in favour of providing nighttime cover from Slough.
- Ten people cited the importance of Windsor due to the Crown properties, tourism, legoland etc. and were opposed to a reduction in cover for these reasons.
- Five commented that Windsor should not suffer a reduction in service to provide a better service in the Wokingham area.
- One comment thought that the proposals would draw cover away from Ascot.
- The letter on behalf of 234 dwellings in the Ward Royal Residents Association cited traffic problems as its main objection.

## **Crowthorne**

- Three people mentioned the amount of new development in the area as a reason for objecting to the proposals.
- Seven respondents felt that the trial was a start to the inevitable closure of the fire station.
- Eight responses cited the special areas of flora and fauna habitat - 'Sites of Specific Scientific Interest' (SSSIs)
- Six were not clear which areas the trial covered and thought it would take too long to cover Crowthorne from Camberley.
- One letter was in support of the trial.
- The 520 signature petition had three main themes: 1) Time taken from Camberley to Crowthorne due to traffic, 2) Heath and forest fires, 3) Large elderly population. The petition also registered concern over the possible future closure of the station.

## **Reading**

- Three commented on the possible delays getting to Tilehurst/Holybrook/Calcot due to traffic.
- One person commented on the future development in the same three areas as above.
- Two commented on the perceived lack of fire cover in the area already.
- One person thought the whole exercise was a waste of taxpayers' money.
- Two asking for more information before giving a response.

## **4. FINANCIAL, LEGAL, RISK MANAGEMENT AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Due to the controversial nature of some of the proposals contained within the IRMP 5 Year Plan every effort has been made to ensure that the Consultation process has been as robust as possible to withstand external scrutiny.

## **5. COMPLIANCE WITH STANDING ORDERS / FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

No direct impact.

## **6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

The 5-Year IRMP Plan directly improves four strategic aims of the RBFRS. It will help:

1. Minimise loss of life, injury and damage from fire.
2. Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and damage caused by hazards other than fire and render appropriate humanitarian service.
3. Deliver community safety education, tailored to users' needs, to reduce the number of fire calls and to minimise the consequences of fire.

4. Demonstrate continuous improvement in service delivery, based upon consultation and partnership working, within a Best Value framework.

## **7. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE PARTNERSHIP FOR COMMON SENSE**

Members will be aware that Representative Bodies are invited and are active participants in the preparation of all IRMP Plans and projects.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

IRMP Working Party 14 November 2006 Agenda items 4 and 5 and Minutes.

IRMP Working Party 20 December Agenda item 4 and Minutes.

IRMP Working Party 10 January 2007 Agenda item 5 and Minutes.

IRMP Working Party 13 June 2007 Agenda item 4 and Minutes (to be approved).

## **9. COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS**

### **a) Chief Fire Officer**

The Chief Fire Officer supports this report.

### **b) Fire Authority Treasurer**

The Authority Treasurer has noted this report.

### **c) Clerk and Monitoring Officer**

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer has noted this report.

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**Date of report:** 21 June 2007