

FIVE YEAR INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2010/11 - 2015/16

Action Plan 2013/14 - Consultation Summary of Responses



**ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AUTHORITY**

PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Annual Action Plan: 2013/14 - Summary of Responses

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اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات اردو میں درکار ہوں، تو ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے

Summary

On 17 July 2012 Royal Berkshire Fire Authority approved the IRMP 2013/14 Action Plan document for public consultation. The consultation period ran from 23 July 2012 to 22 October 2012. To publicise and assist with the consultation process, the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) initially circulated 968 copies of the IRMP Action Plan 2013/14. 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.

Key briefings were held for all members of staff, a Community Engagement Forum was held on 15 September 2012 and copies of the consultation document were made publicly available via the website and internal intranet.

A total of 86 responses were received dealing with all the items raised in the Consultation document.

The consultation responses have been brought to the attention of the Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Working Party (24 October 2012), The Fire Authority Management Committee (26 November 2012) and the Full Fire Authority on (5 December 2012).

As a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review, announced by the Treasury in 2010, considerable savings are required in 2013/14 and as a result, the consultation process was brought forward against the previous year's timetables, to the one shown above. Also as a result of revised timetable, an IRMP Project team started work on the item regarding Day Crewing Plus, as this item was considered to achieve the greatest savings.

Background

The Fire & Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11 states:

“Each Fire and Rescue Authority must produce a publicly available IRMP covering at least a three-year time span which [amongst other things] reflects effective consultation during its development and at all review stages with representatives of all sections of the community and stakeholders.” Consultation guidance for the Fire & Rescue Service is contained within IRMP guidance note 2, published at the inception of the IRMP process.

As part of the overarching 5 year 2010/11 – 2015/16 Integrated Risk Management Plan for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Annual action plans are produced between May and September every year. Once these documents have been approved by the Fire Authority full public consultation is undertaken in accordance with recommended best practice between October and January of the preceding year. As stated earlier, the dates for 2013/14 have been changed.

Outcome of Consultation

Responses

A total of 86 responses were received from Private Individuals, Employees and Representative Bodies. Appropriate representative responses are detailed below.

Type of Organisation	No of Responses
Fire Authority Member	1
Parish Council	8
Representative Bodies	1
Private Individuals	29
Employees	36
Local Borough Council Members	4
Unidentified responses/Illegible/No comments	7



Emergency Cover Arrangements

Following previous work in this area and the need to reduce the impact of the financial cuts, we have decided to review the way we crew our fire engines at key locations throughout the county.

Two new areas are currently being considered namely, the provision of an additional wholetime fire engine in the Newbury area and a Day Crewing Plus shift system. Additionally as part of the crewing review it is possible to provide firefighters to crew the appliance at Windsor 24 hours a day.

The work will examine alternative approaches for the staffing of our fire engines that will enable us to continue to meet our response standards, whilst also offering options for generating cost savings.

Responses:

The FBU welcomes the provision of an additional wholetime appliance at Newbury, however it does not accept the introduction of the day crewing plus system.

(FBU)

Day Crewing Plus is a massive step backwards

(Employee)

RBFRS Response:

RBFRS will continue to assess alternative Emergency Cover Arrangements to ensure the best available service for Berkshire.

The two specific observations included here are covered in more detail in the relevant section.

MAKING BERKSHIRE SAFER

Newbury and Windsor Fire Engine Crewing

An additional wholetime fire engine is being considered at Newbury Fire Station, because the long term future of the Retained service in Berkshire is unclear. There are two primary reasons for this. Firstly the uncertainty of the current proposals around the European legislation placing a threshold on working hours (retained staff usually have a full time job as well as being a retained firefighter) and secondly, the ability of the Service to recruit staff from the communities to be retained firefighters.

The Retained Review identified a need to provide an additional wholetime resource in the West of the county, should the crewing of retained appliances in the area become unviable.

Crewing of the Windsor fire engine has been the subject of several previous action plans and the following proposal has been reached, subject to the provision of a new fire station as referenced in this document.

It is proposed to disestablish the 14 firefighter posts at Windsor Fire Station and transfer eight of them to Slough, along with the Windsor fire engine. Following the removal of the Rescue Support Vehicle from Slough, a number of firefighter posts are available for other duties and these, in addition to the eight from Windsor, will be used to enable the Windsor fire engine to be crewed with at least four firefighters. At every shift the Windsor fire engine and crew will proceed from Slough to the proposed new fire station in Windsor, to undertake their duties and respond to emergency calls. The remaining six firefighter posts will be transferred to Newbury Fire Station to crew the proposed second wholetime fire engine. Subject to this proposal being viable it is proposed to close the retained section at Newbury. As additional firefighters will be required to crew the second fire engine at Newbury, £198,000 will be used from the current under-spend in the retained firefighter budget to fund these posts.

Responses:

Another pump at Newbury would reduce the standby requirements (**Employee**)

As a resident of West Berks, I am concerned by the lack of fire cover in the evening and night time periods due to periodic Retained appliance unavailability. I therefore believe consideration of a second wholetime appliance is vital (**Employee & resident**)

RBFRS Response:

Newbury

Work is ongoing and is expected to result in additional wholetime resources. We are improving the fire cover in Berkshire.

At Newbury we are aiming to provide improved resilience and operational cover, for the West Berkshire area, without impacting on other areas.

Windsor

Joint work is ongoing with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the provision of a joint fire station, which will be crewed 24/7.

There is a comprehensive response to Day Crewing Plus later in this document.

Day Crewing Plus

Day Crewing Plus (DCP) is a duty system already in operation in a number of fire and rescue services throughout the country. As an example the system enables the total number of firefighters, on a single fire engine fire station, to be reduced from 28 to 14, effectively reducing the number of Watches (teams of firefighters) to two.

However the system maintains the same level of fire cover to the community, as separate rest areas are provided for staff, enabling them to work four duty shift days and four nights (on call) followed by four days off. The provision of rest areas enables staff to eat and have a break from the work place when they are available for duty.

The benefits arising from this duty system are: (i) the same level of emergency cover is maintained across the county area, (ii) annual savings in the region of £330,000 are made by the Service for each fire station where it is introduced and (iii) crews will receive an enhanced salary for providing the additional hours on call. We will consider the options for this duty system within the Service area.

Responses:

Supports the idea of reviewing the wholetime shift system in Berkshire (**Employee**)

There appears to be some opposition from Unions and possibly employees.....we have to be aware of staff morale (**Councillor**)

The change in shift pattern would impact upon family life (**Employee**)

What are the cost implications of building new or altering existing buildings for sleeping/rest accommodation (**Employee**)

Working Time directives are put in place to protect the Health and Safety of employees in the UK (**Employee**)

The proposal to introduce Day Crewing Plus is driven by the need to produce financial savings – nothing more (**Employee**)

FBU Survey returned an 88% response against the proposed system (FBU)
Day Crewing Plus is essentially a throwback to the continuous duty days of the 1930's and 1940's (**FBU**)

I have been researching day crewing plus for a couple of years on a personal level as it is of particular interest to me. I am for the system and am a firm believer in trying to embrace change instead of hinder it (**Employee**)

RBFRS Response:

A full IRMP Project has been undertaken, researching and making a series of recommendations regarding the possible use of DCP in RBFRS.

A number of other FRS's have been contacted and visited. These included some who have successfully implemented the system, some who are considering implementation and some who have researched the system and decided not to progress it.

Staff have been fully consulted through a series of station visits by Principal Officers and the Project Officers as well as the IRMP Consultation Document.

A full costing model and risk assessment has been carried out and a final report has been delivered to the Corporate Management Team (CMT). The report sets out a series of options and recommendations and includes clear legal guidance on the Working Time Regulations 1998.

In a nutshell, the report states that whilst it is possible to implement a DCP system, it would be a long process and there may well be suitable alternatives to achieve the required savings.

This does not mean that DCP could not be implemented at a later date.

The final draft report has now been published internally and is now subject to the IRMP Working Party approval and challenge day.

Multi-Role (Command) Vehicle Provision

The Multi-Role (Command) Vehicle is currently located at Dee Road Fire Station in Reading. With the relocation of the new Heavy Rescue Unit to Dee Road, we will review workloads for staff at this station along with the crewing and location of the vehicle

Responses:

The FBU looks forward to the inclusion of this review in next year's action plan (**FBU**)

We should have 2 MRV's and no ICU (**Employee**)

RBFRS Response:

Work is currently being monitored to assess any detrimental impacts to the workloads of staff on this station.

Off-Road Firefighting Capability

Our current off-road firefighting capability consists of a number of 4 x 4 Land Rovers that can carry lightweight pumps and other equipment, a six wheel-drive vehicle and a 4 x 4 lightweight off road appliance. We are also introducing a number of 4 x 4 front line fire engines at key locations across the county. These vehicles will make the Service more adaptable in poor weather conditions as well as enhancing our off-road firefighting capability.

As some of these vehicles are quite old their use will be reviewed to establish potential future requirements, taking into account the growing risks of forest and heathland fires, flooding and other abnormal weather conditions.

Responses:

The FBU welcomes the introduction of fit for purpose appliances (**FBU**)
No other comments received

RBFRS Response:

Work is ongoing to achieve this item

Theale Fire Station

Meetings with West Berkshire Council and detailed project work with professional property advisors will continue. Based upon current estimates, it is anticipated that the new fire station should be completed by April 2014.

Responses:

Pleased to note that Dee Road fire station will be relocated to the Theale/Calcot area by April 2014 (**Theale Parish Council**)

At a time of cut backs, is it really necessary to be moving BHQ, Fire Station and Control?
(**Employee**)

Concern over cover from Theale, access to residences in Sulhampstead using access over Kennet and Avon Canal bridge (**Sulhampstead Parish Council**)

Concerns over published timescale (April 2014) as land has still to be purchased (**Employee**)

RBFRS Response:

Work is ongoing, as part of our strategic and ongoing emergency cover reviews. It is still the authorities aim to relocate the fire appliance to a new fire station in the Theale area.

The impact of this will have a significant positive impact on response times. The need to relocate the fire station is as a result of the current station at Dee road not being fit for purpose and as a community asset.

Review of Fire Cover from Pangbourne and Mortimer Fire Stations

With the difficulty in providing a fire crew during certain times of the day at these fire stations, a review will be undertaken to establish the affect of the proposed fire station in Theale. Initial risk modelling indicates that a new fire station in Theale could provide an emergency response to Pangbourne and Mortimer from the new fire station, within the response standards set by the Fire Authority.

Responses:

I believe that should Mortimer fire station be closed and resources relocated to Theale my family and I will experience a greater level of risk following an emergency (**Mortimer resident**)

The Parish Council does not understand how response times can be met (in Mortimer) from a new fire station in Theale (**Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council**)

Grave concerns about possible closures of Mortimer and Pangbourne (**Mortimer Resident**)

It is an outrage to even be considering closing Pangbourne Fire Station (**Pangbourne Resident**)

Beech Hill Parish Council object in the strongest possible way to the proposal to close Mortimer Fire Station (**Beech Hill Parish Council**)

I agree with the proposal to review the future of Pangbourne Fire Station. RBFRS is unable to recruit and keep staff, the incident risks are very low and the incident numbers are very low (**Employee**)

I cannot believe it would be possible to get an appliance from Theale to the Mortimer area in ten minutes given the weight and width restrictions on various canal crossings (**Mortimer Resident**)

I would suggest that Mortimer is the most reliable RDS station in Berkshire (**Employee**)

I feel that RDS still has a great deal to offer in Berkshire (**Employee**)

RBFRS Response:

With the difficulty in providing fire cover during the day at these stations, it is necessary to undertake a review of these fire stations, but this is linked with the Theale Fire Station project and will be subject to formal public consultation at the appropriate time.

Risk Location of Wholetime Fire Engines

The locations of our wholetime fire stations currently provide optimum levels of emergency cover for the areas they serve. However, with the significant decrease in the number of emergency incidents we attend, it may be more effective to use flexible locations for our fire engines, for better emergency deployment at different times of the day/night. Risk modelling will be undertaken to establish where such alternative locations may be.

Responses:

No Comments received

Thames Valley Fire Control Project

This project has been running since December 2010. Work is progressing well to develop a single, joint service Control Room with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. We have now completed the initial resilience phase of the project and it is expected that Stage 2, which will enable both Control Rooms to mobilise each other's resources, will be completed by October 2013.

Following approval by both Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet and Royal Berkshire Fire Authority the new joint Control Room will be located in Calcot Berkshire.

This programme has recently completed a dedicated consultation process and accordingly this is an information only item and does not form part of this Integrated Risk Management Plan consultation process.

It is anticipated that the project will be complete in Spring/Summer of 2014, when the new joint Control Room will become fully operational. It is then intended to offer the facility to other fire and rescue services and other partner agencies with call-handling requirements.

Responses:

I feel this is progression for RBFRS (**Employee**)

RBFRS Response:

This item is progressing well and running to the anticipated completion date. A number of updates have been published and are available on the website.

Windsor Fire Station

Officers from the Service and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead continue to work towards enabling implementation of this proposal, which includes the provision of a new fire station in the Dedworth area of Windsor.

Revised proposals for the new fire station include the provision of a full-size fire engine with a dedicated 24-hour crew.

Responses:

In favour of shutting Windsor Fire Station completely, however supports the use of Slough as the new base for the crew (**Employee**)

In previous IRMP's it has been highlighted again and again that the station at Windsor is not required. How come this has changed and a new station will be built (**Employee**)

RBFRS Response:

See response earlier in this report

Training Resources Review

This project was completed last year and work is now underway to implement the proposals. Key themes include the provision of a new dedicated Rescue Training facility at the new fire station in Theale.

With the decline in numbers of emergency incidents, it is essential for firefighters to maintain their operational skills by undertaking realistic training.

Responses:

I fully agree with the recommendations detailed within the Training Review 2010/11 (**Employee**)

RBFRS Response:

This initiative is continuing and following the completion of the Training Review a short, medium and long term plan has been developed to progress the review findings.

Risk critical training remains at the forefront of the Services commitment to ensuring a competent work force and as such suitable training regimes are in the process of being implemented to address the reduction in real scenarios and subsequent skills decay.

A Review of Prevention and Protection Departments

A comprehensive review of the resources and management of both departments was undertaken recently, which resulted in a significant reorganisation. However, the reduction in funding from central Government makes it necessary to undertake a further review of these departments.

Responses:

Pleased to note 5,929 home checks (**Theale Parish Council**)

Is the number of HFSC's carried out the right amount and given to the right people?
(**Employee**)

The figure of 5,929 HFSC's are attributed to the "service". This appears to imply that this figure is wholly the work product of the HFSC Team? (**Employee**)

RBFRS Response:

RBFRS's Prevention Department target the provision of HFSC to those households most vulnerable from fire. Every dwelling fire is analysed and cross-referenced with data systems that determine the demographic profile of the affected household. These profiles, along with work with key partner agencies such as housing; social care and local authority ensure that HFSC's are delivered to the households most at risk. At present we are achieving an 80% accuracy rate for delivery to target groups, and the service is working to improve this percentage, year on year.

Of all the HFSC's delivered in 2011/12, 72.8% was achieved by Station based personnel, and 27.2% by a team of 3 dedicated technicians within the Prevention Departments HFSC Team.



List of Respondents

Theale Parish Council
Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Slough Borough Council
Crowthorne Parish Council
West Bekshire Parish Council
Sulhamstead Parish Council
Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
Beech Hill Parish Council
Purley on Thames Parish Council
West Berkshire District Council
Pangbourne Parish Council
RBFRS Employees (36)
Private Individuals (29)
Fire Brigades Union

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