

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**MONDAY 15 MARCH 2004 AT 2.00 P.M.**

Agenda Item No.

**14B**

**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN  
(IRMP)**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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Executive Member: Iris Tarry

**1. Purpose of Report**

To enable Cabinet to consider the outcome of the draft IRMP Consultation period, commission the proposed amendments and formally adopt the IRMP and the initial Action Plan.

**2. Summary**

As part of the IRMP process it was a requirement to release the draft plan to all stakeholders for consultation. The consultation period is required to last for a minimum of 12 weeks.

At the meeting on 10 November 2003, Cabinet approved the draft IRMP and released it for consultation. The process was completed on 29 February 2004.

Due to the perceived "low key" nature of the Draft IRMP a measured but far reaching approach was adopted. Access to the plan was via various media which included Herts Connect, Herts Direct, copies provided to all HCC libraries and identified key organisations, press releases circulated, CD copies provided to all stakeholders on request and four staff consultation meetings.

Each individual representative body was formally presented with a copy of the plan and kept up to date as part of the normal industrial relations process. In addition, the Secretary of the Fire Officers' Association was a member of the initial IRMP Team. The Service also facilitated the secondment of one of the

Fire Brigades' Union officials to Service headquarters to participate in all issues related to the modernisation agenda. A detailed work plan was produced for him to work to.

In addition, as part of the consultation, the Community Services Scrutiny Committee established a Topic Group to consider certain aspects of the IRMP.

A total of 13 written responses have been received which can be categorised into four areas. These are Public, Staff, Business and Political. In addition, there were a wide range of comments, questions and queries dealt with at the staff consultation.

All of these have been logged and sorted into respective themes/trends. These have been categorised as follows:

1. Those which will require immediate amendment to, and inclusion in, the IRMP Year 1 Action Plan. These will require immediate Cabinet approval.
2. Those that are specific to the IRMP process and will lead to amendment of the strategic part of the document in preparation for Year 2.
3. Those that will not require any alterations to either part of the document but require a response for the purposes of clarification and wider information.
4. Those which have no relevance to the IRMP.

### **3. Conclusion**

Members are asked to formally consider the outcomes of the draft IRMP consultation period, agree the immediate amendments and adopt the IRMP and Action Plan.

## 1. Background

From the 13 consultation responses only a small number require immediate consideration for inclusion in the Plan. These were all received from the feedback provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) with the exception of the minor amendment detailed at item v) which was from the Fire Brigades' Union.

### 1.1 Issues Requiring Immediate Consideration

Comment	Response
Consult with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services to rationalise cross border resources and identify potential economies of scale.	An additional Action Point 12 has been produced and supporting text included in the main body of the document.
Analyse current levels of officer cover relating to risk and operational activity	An additional Action Point 11 has been produced and supporting text included in the main body of the report.
Develop standards for future prevention work	Action Point 6 – Performance Management has been amended
Further consider health and safety implications of proposals for change.	Where appropriate, Action Plans have been updated to recognise the importance of public/firefighter safety
District Profiles - The proposal to complete by April 2004, we believe, leaves insufficient time to be able to build the necessary profile.	In light of the resource implications resulting from the modernisation agenda it is considered appropriate that the completion date be extended to March 2005.

### 1.2 Process issues to be developed in lead up to Year 2 Plan

Further consider health and safety implications of proposals for change.	More detailed information regarding Health and Safety issues to be provided within main body of the document
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<p>Audit Commission comments from verification process.</p>	<p>The Service was subject to a verification process by the Audit Commission. They looked at all key areas related to the modernisation agenda including IRMPs. In the main they gave consideration to process issues only. These issues are being covered either as part of the Year 1 project work or in the lead up to Year 2 planning.</p>
<p>Equality Issues</p>	<p>Jane Brown, Service Equality Advisor, has provided valid comments regarding equality matters. Due to the issues revolving around data capture that these matters raise it has been decided that an appropriate Action Point will be included within the Year 2 Action Plan.</p>
<p>Fire Brigades' Union Response Document</p> <p>Generally, positive comment was received from the Fire Brigades' Union raising some relevant issues regarding the IRMP. There were some areas of the IRMP about which they expressed concern and possible opposition, specifically:</p> <p>Action Point 8 – Reducing Unwanted Calls:</p> <p>Action Point 10 – Supplementary Day Duty Staff:</p>	<p>The Service will not change any responses to AFA calls until a full Risk Assessment has been completed and further consultation undertaken. Completion date 1 October 2004.</p> <p>There are no proposals at this stage to change shift patterns or work practices. Any persons recruited to the cadre of Day Duty staff will be aligned to recognised shift patterns and work practices.</p>

### 1.3 Issues requiring responses for clarification and information purposes

Members of the Public	Where appropriate a specific response is to be provided but generally a “frequently asked questions” (FAQ) response will be provided.
Staff Consultation	Where appropriate a specific response will be provided but generally a FAQ document will be provided. This document will cover all the IRMP related matters raised both within and without the Staff Consultation meetings etc.
Business	Where appropriate a specific response will be provided but generally a FAQ response will be provided
Political - ODPM and Audit Commission	Specific responses either have been or will be forwarded to each body.

### 1.4 Issues with no relevance to IRMP

*Response:* Appropriate response to be made.

## 2. Topic Group

The Community Services Scrutiny Committee established a Topic Group to consider certain aspects of the IRMP. The areas considered were the response policy for Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA), establishment of a day duty shift system, building risk profiles and home risk assessments, each of which is the subject of an Action Plan within the IRMP. These plans state that the AFA policy should be implemented from April 2004 and that policies for the three remaining items should be established by March 2005.

The Topic Group scrutinised the proposals for these issues, ensuring that each of the four policy areas is designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. The building risk profile and home risk assessments are designed to identify risk so it can be reduced. The day shift policy is aimed at having the right people in the right place. The AFA policy is

designed to help with the proper use of resources and that these resources are in the right place to help reduce risk.

The recommendations of the Topic Group will be reported to the Fire Service Panel. Officers will develop proposals and policies in relation to the four areas commented upon by the Topic Group and report to the Panel.

As these and other specific action points outlined in the IRMP are developed further detailed consultation will take place.