

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**AUDIT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 23 MARCH 2016**

RISK FOCUS REPORT - COMMUNITY PROTECTION FIRE RESOURCE RISK

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Executive Member: Richard Thake (Community Safety and Waste Management)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide further information regarding the Community Protection fire resource risk and controls recorded on the Hertfordshire County Council Corporate Risk Register. This is relating to the potential of insufficient resources being available during an unplanned large scale or significant incident.

2. Summary

- 2.1. The Audit Committee has requested an update on the above related risk; the assessment and rating of these risks; and the controls in place to minimise their impacts or reduce/avoid the likelihood of their occurrence.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1. The Committee is invited to note and comment upon the information provided in this report.

4. Background

- 4.1. Community Protection maintains one entry on the Hertfordshire County Council Corporate Risk Register relating to fire resource provision. HFRS0007 identifies that during unplanned incidents, such as, terrorist activity, civil disturbance, large scale wide area flooding, or periods of industrial action, there is a risk that HFRS have insufficient resources to cope, which may result in an over-reliance on regional or national resources or significantly reduced fire cover.
- 4.2. Currently within Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) there are 40 front line fire appliances (20 whole-time & 20 Retained), 2 x Aerial Ladder Platforms, 2 x Incident Support Units , Command Support Unit , Decontamination & Environmental Protection Unit, Water Rescue Unit and Rescue Support Unit. In addition we also have several trained specialist teams to provide a specific operational function (Working at Height, Incident Liaison Officer, Trench Rescue, Fire Investigation, Water Rescue)

- 4.3. Whole-time appliances are crewed on a permanent 24/7 basis with the retained appliances being crewed by on-call personnel. The specialist vehicles are alternately crewed when required by utilising the crew from the whole-time fire appliance
- 4.4. An unplanned incident, such as, terrorist activity, civil disturbance, large scale wide area flooding would require a large number of resources and consequently would be deemed as a Major Incident. Likewise for periods of industrial action where resource availability may be dramatically reduced a smaller scale incident may have the impact of a major incident on the organisation's resources.
- 4.5. The Civil Contingencies Act defines a Major Incident as: "An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the UK, the environment of a place in the UK, or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK" HFRS has adopted these terms as the definition of a major incident.
- 4.6. In the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2015, HFRS had 22 large scale or major incidents where 8 or more appliances were used at a single incident; and in addition 12 occurrences where a minimum of 50% of HFRS's operational resources were committed to incidents concurrently.
- 4.7. In January 2010 it was agreed by the Community Protection Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) that our operational planning assumption was based on the Service's ability to tackle a 15 fire appliance incident with sufficient appliances and officers available in the county to reach a swift and safe conclusion to the incident whilst also providing additional resources to provide ongoing fire cover in the rest of the County. This planning assumption is also contained within the current IRMP as agreed by Members.
- 4.8. The Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is the locally determined, publicly available document which sets out Hertfordshire Fire Authority's plan to efficiently and effectively tackle both existing and foreseeable risks to communities in Hertfordshire. The plan establishes a number of fire appliance attendance standards which assist in determining the required amount and location of resources within Hertfordshire. The IRMP is next due for formal review during 2018. Due to the significance of the IRMP the formal review will also be subject to a full public consultation process
- 4.9. When the 2014-2018 Integrated Risk Management Plan was produced, one of the foundation assumptions was that the availability of all retained fire crews was 100%. Over recent years, despite considerable effort, the availability of retained pumps has declined most noticeably during working hours (Mon-Fri 9-5) and there are a number of contributing factors why these crewing shortfalls occur such as, the 'dormitory nature' of many Hertfordshire towns and villages and much greater mobility of residents meaning that they do not want to remain within 5 minutes of a fire station for extended periods. This shortfall has had a negative impact on attendance standards and the availability of retained appliances for operational cover during busy periods and at large scale incidents.

- 4.10. The publication of procedures and the robust management of Retained personnel is enforced to maximise both personnel, and therefore appliance availability. Following an independent review of the RDS system several improvements were identified; the implementation and issue of new contracts (April 2016) will provide a greater flexibility in personnel and appliance availability, in addition the introduction of a RDS software system (GARTAN) will facilitate an improved process for personnel to indicate their availability whilst also improving the management and performance auditing process.
- 4.11. Both Whole-time and Retained establishment is reviewed on a regular basis (monthly) to identify current and future deficiencies. Findings and recommendations are reported to the Strategic leadership Group to authorise recruitment requirements to maintain establishment, crewing levels and appliance availability. To support this, a designated department (Crewing Office) is used to manage and maintain crewing levels on a daily basis across the organisation and to ensure appliance availability.
- 4.12. HFRS has recently procured a new specialist Rescue Support Unit (RSU) and supporting operational equipment with appropriate training being provided to applicable staff. The vehicle has been designed to bridge the gap between the original RSU and the current Urban Search and Rescue resources provided under National Resilience, this addition will meet the current risk regarding specialist technical rescue and prevent over reliance on external resources.
- 4.13. For certain types of large scale / major incidents it has been recognised by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) that it would not be financially viable for a single Fire Authority to fund enough resources to efficiently, effectively and safely manage these types of incident. Therefore under the National Co-ordination Advisory Framework (NCAF). National Resilience resources are hosted locally by FRSs for a potential deployment on a national scale, to deal with major incidents such as wide area flooding, mass casualty decontamination, urban search & rescue and marauding terrorist firearm attacks (MTFA).
- 4.14. HFRS hosts a number of National Resilience resources/assets (High Volume Pump, Enhanced Logistic Support, MTFA & Water Rescue) which are also available for immediate deployment for local and regional use as well as national deployment should they be required.
- 4.15. Under existing arrangements Hertfordshire has the ability to request additional resources for operational incidents directly from neighbouring FRSs (FRS Act 2004, Sections 13 & 16) and also nationally under mutual aid arrangements.
- 4.16. Site specific response plans, operational procedures and contingency arrangements are reviewed regularly to ensure they meet current resourcing, address existing risks and provide an effective, efficient and safe response for HFRS personnel, partners and communities.
- 4.17. To ensure that existing risks, planning assumptions and resourcing requirements are sufficient and correct, HFRS organises and hosts regular large scale/major incident exercises in conjunction with local partners. These exercises are held on a local, county and regional platform to assure current planning assumptions, models, procedures, training and resourcing.

5. Purpose of the Risk on the Corporate Risk Register

- 5.1. HFRS0007 is inwardly focused and considers whether current internal resource provision is sufficient to effectively and safely manage major/large scale incidents whilst also providing enough additional operational cover for business as usual activity without the reliance on resources from other FRSs.
- 5.2. In respect of the above, the attendance standards contained within the IRMP and associated planning assumptions support determination of the provision of fire appliances and specialist resources to meet both the local community and also the County risk(s). However the effectiveness of the resource provision is entirely reliant on the continued availability of appliance's via the maintenance of staff numbers and the continued availability of both whole-time and retained personnel.
- 5.3. Even though the IRMP is a locally determined document for assessing risk and resource requirements, the production of the IRMP is mandated through the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England which sets out the priorities for FRSs regarding risk and resource requirement, collaboration to deliver their service and accountability.
- 5.4. The score against HFRS0007 remains assessed as 'Severe', as even though the mitigating measures appear substantial, should this under resourcing occur for any of the reasons identified it could potentially have a very high impact on the County..
- 5.5. The inclusion within the Corporate Risk Register is therefore deemed important to ensure that HCC continues to monitor the risk effectively and identify, provide and maintain sufficient resources for all foreseeable and unplanned fire related incidents, whilst also continuing the on-going delivery of operational cover during the incident in the rest of the county.

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Risk Number	Risk Owner	Department
HFRS0007	Ian Parkhouse	Community Protection
Date risk first included on risk register	Strategy for managing the risk	Executive Member
27/01/2009	Reduce	Richard Thake
<p>Short description of the risk</p> <p><i>During unplanned incidents, such as, terrorist activity, civil disturbance, large scale wide area flooding, or periods of industrial action, there is a risk that HFRS have insufficient resources to cope, which may result in an over-reliance on regional or national resources or significantly reduced fire cover.</i></p> <p>Consequences of the risk</p> <p>Possible damage to reputation, possible legal action or examination at public enquiry, increased risk to communities, additional damage to property and/or environment and increased suffering caused to those affected by the incident.</p>		
<p>Current controls</p> <p>HFRS0007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IRMP is reviewed on a regular basis to assess the current community risk(s) against resource provision. • Both Whole-time and Retained establishment is reviewed on a regular basis (monthly) to identify and take appropriate action for current and future deficiencies. • HFRS provides a designated department (Crewing Office) to manage and maintain crewing levels on a daily basis across the organisation and ensuring appliance availability. • The application of procedures and appropriate management to maximise both personnel and appliance availability. • The procurement and provision of specialist vehicles, equipment and teams to meet the current technical rescue risk within the County and prevent over reliance on external resources. • Site specific response plans, operational procedures and contingency arrangements are reviewed regularly to ensure they meet current resourcing and existing/foreseeable risks. • To ensure that existing risks, planning assumptions and resourcing requirements are sufficient and correct, HFRS organises and hosts regular large scale/major incident exercises in conjunction with local partners on a 		

<p>local, county and regional platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should under resourcing occur, established arrangements are in place to request additional resources both locally and nationally 		
Current Risk score based on effectiveness of current controls (Q1 2015/16):		
Likelihood score:	Impact score:	Overall score:
Possible (3)	Very High (16)	Severe (48)
Reason for inclusion on Corporate Register		
Risk that current resources provision will not be sufficient to meet the needs of a major/large scale incident(s).		
Direction of travel (overall risk score for previous three quarters)		
Severe (48)	Severe (48)	Severe (48)
Target risk score		
Likelihood score:	Impact score:	Overall score:
Unlikely (2)	Very High (16)	Severe (32)

Reason for changes in risk score.

n/a