

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**CABINET**  
**MONDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2013 AT 2.00PM**

Agenda Item No.

**9**

**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN  
2014/18.**

*Report of the Director Community Protection*

Author: John Mills, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Tel: 01992 507502)

Executive Member: Richard Thake, Community Safety & Planning

**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To enable Cabinet to consider the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2014/18 following a 12 week consultation period. If agreed by Cabinet the IRMP will be published and come into effect from 1 April 2014.

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 On 3 July 2013, the Community Safety and Planning Cabinet Panel considered a report which sought support on the publication and public consultation of the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's IRMP. Members were advised that the current IRMP would expire on 31 March 2014, which would be proceeded by a new four year plan to come into effect on 1 April 2014.
- 2.2 The draft IRMP 2014/18 was published for public consultation between 15 July 2013 and 30 September 2013 and can be viewed at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/docs/pdf/i/draft-irmp-2014-18.pdf>.
- 2.3 At the conclusion of the consultation period Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) received a total of 44 responses via an online questionnaire. A summary of responses is given in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 2.4 As part of a wider public consultation, Executive Member, Richard Thake, and Deputy Chief Officer, John Mills, also attended a public meeting in Bushey to clarify a number of questions on the proposal to close Bushey Fire Station.
- 2.5 Key proposals contained within the draft IRMP were as follows:
- Section 2:13 proposes that the HFRS will review its current policy for attending calls originating from Automatic Fire Alarms.

- Section 11:4 proposes that the HFRS will examine the number of flexi-duty officer roles within the organisation in the future to ensure that adequate emergency cover is available.
- In Section 14 (Pages 76, 81, 89 and 91) the HFRS proposes to examine the current duty system, rent and other allowances at its 'Day Crewed Fire Stations'.
- Section 14 (page 73) of the plan proposes the closure of Bushey Fire Station. This follows the relocation of Watford Fire Station in 2009 to a location that can cover the whole of the Bushey and South Oxhey areas within the agreed 10 minute attendance standard.

### **3. Recommendations**

2.8 The Community Safety and Planning Cabinet Panel considered a report on this matter at its meeting on 5 November 2013. The Panel recommended:-

*"1. That Cabinet approves the four key proposals contained within the draft IRMP, set out below:*

- (i) Section 2:13: That the HFRS will review its current policy for attending calls originating from Automatic Fire Alarms;*
- (ii) Section 11:4: That the HFRS will examine the number of flexi-duty officer roles within the organisation in the future to ensure that adequate emergency cover is available;*
- (iii) Section 14 (Pages 76, 81, 89 and 91): That the current duty system, rent and other allowances at its 'Day Crewed Fire Stations' be examined; and*
- (iv) Section 14 (page 73): The closure of Bushey Fire Station. This follows the relocation of Watford Fire Station in 2009 to a location that can cover the whole of the Bushey and South Oxhey areas within the agreed 10 minute attendance standard.*

*2. That Cabinet approves the general content and information contained within the IRMP 2014/18.*

*3. That Cabinet agrees that the Integrated Risk Management Plan be published and come into effect from 1 April 2014."*

### **4. The Consultation**

4.1 The draft IRMP 2014/18 was published for public consultation between 15 July 2013 and 30 September 2013; it can be viewed at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/docs/pdf/i/draft-irmp-2014-18.pdf>.

- 4.2 The majority of respondents indicated that the document is clear and well structured. However 2 consultation responses indicated that the document was difficult to understand and some of the language was unfamiliar to the reader.

Response: 70% of respondents agreed that the document was clear and well structured, 4.5% did not answer the question. All charts, tables and maps in the document are presented under clearly defined headings.

- 4.2 The majority of respondents indicated that they had a better understanding of HFRS from reading the IRMP; however 1 consultation response indicated that risk to life had not been fully considered as part of the Plan.

Response: The Fire & Rescue National Framework Document states that *“Fire and Rescue Services identify and assess the full range of reasonable foreseeable risks their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately”*.

The IRMP uses a number of methods to assess risk to life, including MOSAIC demographic profiling software and actual incident data. This information shapes the direction and location of prevention, protection and response resources as described in detail in section 4 of the Plan. The IRMP assesses reasonable foreseeable risk for the whole of the County, not just South Herts. 81.4% of respondents agreed that the IRMP has given them a greater understanding of HFRS and what it delivers to the communities it serves.

- 4.3 The majority of respondents supported a review of the Automatic Fire Alarm Policy. However, 1 respondent indicated that the HFRS should not review its Automatic Fire Alarm Policy.

Response: The proposal to examine HFRS policy on attending automatic fire alarms originated from the ‘Engage’ internal staff consultation process. HFRS has already had some success in reducing Automatic Fire Alarm calls as a result of previous policy reviews, and the proposed review will look at measures to further reduce false alarm calls and the disruption to business caused as a result.

- 4.4 The majority of respondents indicated support for reviewing the number of flexible duty officers. However, 2 respondents indicated that HFRS should not reduce the number of officers in the Service.

Response: The proposal to examine the number of Operational Officers working a flexible duty system originated from the ‘Engage’ internal staff consultation process.

- 4.5 The majority of respondents indicated that the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service should not undertake a review of its crewing arrangements at some of the Fire Stations.

Response: HFRS continually reviews the crewing arrangements at all fire stations and, as a consequence, introduced Day Crewing Plus arrangements at Rickmansworth and Potters Bar Fire Stations without affecting the frontline service. Alternative arrangements to maintain frontline services using flexible staffing arrangements will be explored as part of this work, including increasing the flexibility with regards to retained firefighter recruitment.

4.6 The majority of respondents were against the closure of Bushey Fire Station.

Response:

4.6.1 The HFRS response times to the Bushey and Oxhey areas have been improved since the opening of the new Watford Community Fire Station in Lower High Street in 2009.

4.6.2 The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> appliances to attend any pre-determined attendance to incidents in Bushey, Oxhey and surrounding areas are the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> appliances from Watford.

4.6.3 Wholetime crews from Watford and Garston carry out the vast majority of community fire safety work in the Bushey area and there are no plans to change this arrangement.

4.6.4 The actual operational response rate for Bushey Fire Station has dropped significantly since Watford Fire Station was opened in 2009. There is a built-in 5 minute window for retained firefighters to attend retained fire stations. As a result, fire crews from Watford and Garston provide a reliable 24/7 fire and emergency response cover to the Bushey area.

4.6.5 The following table is a breakdown of incidents attended by Bushey's fire appliance from 2009/10 up until 2012/13; the figures demonstrate that calls have declined steadily during this period, resulting in an overall reduction in calls of 89.1%.

Incident Type	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	4 year Total
Fire	33	16	7	5	61
Mobilised But Not Required	8	6	0	0	15
Over The Border	1	1	1	0	3
False Alarm	47	16	9	5	77
Standby	20	41	30	5	96
Emergency Special Service	17	17	4	1	38
<b>Total Turnouts Per Annum</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>290</b>

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no cost implications arising from this report. Savings generated as a result of the proposed IRMP will form part of the Council's integrated planning process.

## **6. Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves actively considered, the Council's statutory obligations in relation to equalities. This will include paying close attention to any equalities impact assessment produced by officers.
- 6.2 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIAs) has been carried out on the proposals in the report and is attached as Appendix 2. Consideration has been given to the likely impact of the proposals and it is considered that people with protected characteristics will not be affected disproportionately.

### *Background Information*

Report to the Community Safety and Planning Cabinet Panel, July 2013  
Report to the Community Safety and Planning Cabinet Panel, November 2013