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Integrated Risk Management Plan 2005/06: Improvement Plan Actions

1. Reason for Report

To ask Members to consider proposals for further change or action, in line with the Fire Service Modernisation programme, that will be included within the Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan 2006/07.

2. Background

2.1 Members will be aware that the Fire Authority is required to produce an Annual Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) that is subject to stakeholder consultation. The 2006/07 consultation plan will be presented to the Fire Authority in October 2005. If approved the plan will then be subject to a 90 day stakeholder consultation exercise and then be re-presented to the Fire Authority in February 2006 for final approval.

There are a number of major considerations that have had or will have an influence on the change action programme as follows:

2.2 Fire (Scotland) Act 2005

As previously reported the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and related orders place a series of new duties and responsibilities upon Fire Authorities. Accordingly, the IRMP will set out how each new duty will be discharged in terms of provision of services.

2.3 Best Value Duty

The Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 requires the Fire Authority to secure Best Value for its services. In practice this will require the Service to deliver the modernisation programme within the levels of affordability defined by the Spending Review 2005-08, Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) for fire. The GAE allocations for 2005-08 include the 'pay back' of transitional funding that was provided in 2003/04 to fund the 'additional' elements of the Firefighters pay award that resulted from the 'Heads of Agreement' 2003.

Therefore, the Service will aim to manage all service pressures (pay awards, fuel increases and inflation etc.) and meet the new duties and responsibilities previously referred to, within the GAE allocation for 2006/07 and beyond.

This report provides Members of the Fire Modernisation Sub Committee with an advanced notice of the proposed change actions for 2006/07 that have been determined to meet and manage these considerations.

2.4 The 2005/06 IRMP

The Fire Authority's first IRMP set out five principal aims as follows:

- 1) To fully develop a risk model, to provide accurate risk analysis and risk assessment outcomes and actions.
- 2) To provide more staff flexibility.
- 3) To reduce unwanted operational action.
- 4) To improve operational response options.
- 5) To provide more resources to community safety activities.

2.5 Members will recall that each of the 25 actions set out within the 5 key aims were selected to support the Fire Authority's strategic objectives that in turn were developed to support and complement the Council's Corporate Plan and Joint Community Planning Priorities. The actions were also shaped to reflect the emerging modernisation agenda that has now been defined by the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and draft National framework.

2.6 It is important to note that the key aims and some of the actions set out in the 2005/06 IRMP remain valid for 2006/07 and possibly beyond and, these will be reflected within the draft plan presented to the October Meeting of the Fire Authority.

The following proposals have been developed to reflect new issues or significant revisions to those issues set out in the 2005/06 IRMP.

3. Proposals for Inclusion within the 2006/07 IRMP

1) New Duty for Dealing with Flooding

The Fire Authority already has some capacity for dealing with Inland Waterbourne incidents and flooding incidents. It is proposed that the service reviews, with partners, all flooding and water related risks with a view to producing an improvement plan that will enable the Fire Authority to fully discharge its duty.

2) Co-Responder Scheme

To date the Service has commenced two Co-Responder Schemes at Lockerbie and Annan with a third to be established in Dalbeattie, in partnership with the Scottish Ambulance Service. It is proposed to consider extending these schemes to other areas across Dumfries and Galloway subject to the success of the current pilots.

3) Fire Investigation

The Fire (Scotland) Act provides the Fire Authority with a new power to investigate fires. Whilst the Service has well established protocols with Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, the new power provides greater scope for the Service to develop its Fire Investigation role to reduce fire deaths, injuries and deliberate fire setting.

It is proposed that the Service develops a Fire Investigation improvement plan, working in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, Scientific Services and in collaboration with other Scottish Fire and Rescue Services.

4) New Duty for Environmental Protection

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 places a new duty upon the Fire Authority to deal with the effects of chemical, biological and radiological contaminants upon people, property and the environment.

It is proposed that, working in collaboration with other Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, the Service develops an improvement plan that will enable the Fire Authority to fully discharge this duty.

5) Special Appliances Review: Implementation

Action 4.3.1 of the 2005/06 IRMP confirmed the Services intention to review the location, availability and crewing arrangements of the Services Specialist Support Vehicles. The first element of the review has been concluded.

It is proposed that the 2006/07 capital programme will confirm how the revised arrangements for two special appliances based at Dumfries can be improved to secure best value.

6) Sprinklers

As highlighted at the recent seminar held in Dumfries which focused upon the role of sprinklers in reducing fire deaths, injuries and losses, sprinklers are seen as a key improvement area.

It is proposed to develop an implementation plan that will aim to establish a series of sprinkler installation schemes in key premises across Dumfries and Galloway.

7) Fire safety Regime

Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act will be commenced in Summer 2006. In line with Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspection report (June 2005) and the 05/06 IRMP Action 5.2.2 the Service will need to ensure this revised Fire Safety Duty can be effectively discharged.

It is proposed to identify an effective service delivery structure with continuity planning arrangements (succession planning) and continuous professional development principles, to ensure the Fire Authority can fully discharge this duty in the short, medium and long term.

8) New Duty (New Dimensions) Search and Rescue

The Fire Authority has a new duty to provide services to deal with persons who require to be rescued from collapsed structures, tunnels and trenches.

It is proposed to establish an improvement plan to seek to identify all risk (categories) and resourcing plans for search and rescue incidents to enable the Fire Authority to fully discharge this duty.

9) Fire Control

Scottish Ministers are scheduled to announce and consult further on future Fire Control arrangements in Scotland. In March 2005 the Fire Authority agreed to suspend the Best Value review of its Fire Control arrangements.

It is proposed to review the impact and implications of the ministerial announcement on Fire Control in Scotland (once made) to ensure the best interests of Dumfries and Galloway stakeholders can be monitored and where appropriate enhanced.

10) Devolved Structures

The Service is in the process of appointing four District based teams in support of the Council's decentralisation policy and service planning objectives. Two of the four teams will be based at Fire Stations that have no office facilities.

It is proposed to establish two cost effective office bases at Annan and Kirkcudbright via a top sliced capital bid to the Scottish Executive working in conjunction with the Community Planning property review group.

11) Working with Youth

The Fire Authority has already established Fire Service Support for Dumfries and Galloway's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and as part of our Community fire Safety work we are engaged in a range of educational, restorative behaviour and advisory work with young persons and children.

It is proposed to develop a youth strategy that will seek to maximise the Services contribution to citizenship, learning and development and behavioural programmes across Dumfries and Galloway.

12) Specialist Support Roles

As part of the Service Best Value and Modernisation aims we have sought to utilise non-uniformed staff to support specialist functions and roles wherever practicable.

It is proposed to undertake a further review of non operational roles and activities to identify areas where non uniformed staff can be used to secure best value from services.

4. Recommendation

To seek Members support for actions to be included within the Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2006/07, that will be subject to formal consultation in October 2005.

David Wynne
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