

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF : FIRE AUTHORITY **ITEM: 5**
DATE : 10 DECEMBER 2014
REPORT OF : HEAD OF PLANNING, PERFORMANCE AND
COMMUNICATIONS
AUTHOR : TIM BEVINGTON

SUBJECT : INITIAL FEEDBACK - DRAFT INTEGRATED RISK
MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015-16 (IRMP12)

Purpose of Report

1. To provide some initial feedback on the consultation programme which is being carried out into 'Making Cheshire Safer' - the Authority's draft annual action plan for 2015-16 (IRMP12).

Recommended that:

- [1] Members note the interim feedback on the consultation programme for the draft 2015-16 Annual Action Plan (IRMP12).

Background

2. At the last meeting of the Authority (September 2014) Members gave their approval for a 12 week consultation programme on the Authority's annual action plan for 2015–16 (IRMP 12)
3. The consultation programme runs until December 31st, 2014 and information contained in this report is based on views and comments received up to November 21st.
4. The consultation programme consists of face to face briefings and presentations for key stakeholders, directly contacting a comprehensive database of partner organisations and carrying out 12 community consultation roadshows. Promotion and publicity of the consultation has included:
 - Use of the Authority's Annual Report sent to all 488,000 homes and mixed businesses in Cheshire
 - press releases to all local media
 - extensive use of the Service's website and social media channels.

5. While the programme of briefings and community roadshows has been scaled back compared to last year to reflect the more limited scope of proposals, it is clear that the level of responses will be sufficient to provide a high degree of confidence in the results – at least +/- 5%.
6. The report briefly highlights some of the themes from the feedback so far, with the final consultation report containing full details of all responses due for presentation to the Authority meeting on February 11th 2015.

Consultation progress

7. In total 12 public roadshows have been held across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington, with 3,000 consultation packs distributed to residents from across the Service area. The roadshows were held on different days and times to maximise opportunities for different sections of the community to be involved.
8. At the time of writing, 436 responses had been received from members of the public – similar to the mid-point of the previous IRMP consultation. Other responses are still to be returned from the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Council (CHAWREC).
9. E-mails raising awareness of the consultation and encouraging responses have been sent to all key stakeholders including:
 - Members of Parliament and Peers;
 - Statutory partners and local authority leaders, chief executives and councillors;
 - Town and parish councils;
 - Members of the Youth Parliament;
 - A range of voluntary, faith and community groups across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington.
10. Key stakeholders have been issued with an electronic copy of the Service's stakeholder newsletter, which provides information on the consultation. In addition, briefings have been held at the sub-regional leaders meeting and also for Crewe Town Council and the South Cheshire Labour Group, who requested a briefing.
11. Awareness has also been raised by including an article in the CFRS volunteer newsletter to mark the launch of the consultation (it should be noted that volunteers fill in the public survey). Four focus groups are scheduled to take place with Service cadet groups to gather more feedback on the use of information channels and views on a firefighter apprenticeship scheme.

12. A number of staff roadshows have been scheduled and despite extensive internal publicity and promotion, fewer than 30 responses have so far been received from staff. Clearly the industrial dispute will have affected the number of responses, as has the more limited scope and impact of the new proposals in IRMP12, with the existing 12 hour shift proposals remaining the main feedback issue for wholetime operational staff.

Initial results

13. It should be noted that any figures highlighted in this report are indicative only at this stage as responses are still being received and the final data will require validation and more detailed analysis.
14. The initial feedback continues to show the high regard in which the Service is held by residents, with 97% saying they value the organisation as a provider of local services. As with last year's survey, these views continue to be shaped largely by perception with 54% of respondents saying they had not had any contact with the Service in the past three years.
15. Of those who had been in contact, having a Home Safety Assessment (HSA) was the most likely route, followed by attending a station open day (11%) - only 3.3% was as a result of a fire or road traffic collision.
16. In relation to the proposal to increase the Authority's precept by 1.99%, 60% of residents are in support, 30% are not sure and just under 10% are against. This is an increase in support from last year, when 46% of residents were in favour, 39% were unsure and 15% opposed an increase in Council Tax.
17. Other initial findings include:
 - There is strong support (94%) for the introduction of a firefighters apprentice scheme
 - Television (89%) and talking to friends family or neighbours (81%), are the most frequent methods of communication for finding out information on a major emergency
 - Other frequently used communication channels include newspapers (67%), radio (66%) and internet websites (62%)
 - In relation to social media, 32% of residents would use Facebook and 26% would be likely to use Twitter and 27% said they would be likely to use the Service website.
18. Overall, 72.6% of residents support the plans in the draft IRMP, with 22% not sure and 5.4% opposing.
19. Detailed analysis of staff feedback has not yet started however, at this stage their overall support for the IRMP stands at 60% with 12% not sure and 28% opposing.

Financial implications

20. The consultation programme to date has been delivered through the use of existing departmental budgets and staff.

Legal Implications

21. Publication of the final IRMP for 2015-16 by March 31st 2015 will fulfil the Authority's statutory responsibility.

Equality & Diversity

22. The consultation programme was developed to maximise opportunities to involve local residents by reflecting issues highlighted in the impact assessment for the Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy. This and all corporate consultations include monitoring questions so that analysis can identify potential differences between respondents' views according to age, sex, location, etc.

**CONTACT: Joanne Smith, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS: Making Cheshire Safer – Draft Integrated Risk
Management Plan 2015-16**