

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25 – Consultation Findings

Purpose of report

1. To receive the findings of the public consultation on the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25, authorise the Chief Fire Officer to amend where necessary and finalise the document for publication, and to seek permission to prepare for public consultation on a proposed new attendance (response-time) standard during 2021-22. An Equality Impact Assessment has also been prepared for consideration and approval.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- i. the report from ORS setting out the findings of the public consultation on the draft Community Risk Management Plan attached as Appendix 1, with a short summary of key findings as Appendix 2, be noted;***
- ii. taking the consultation feedback into account, no significant changes be made to the draft CRMP other than minor textual amendments and that the final document be brought to the next meeting of the Authority for final approval;***
- iii. permission be given to prepare for public consultation on a proposed new attendance standard during 2021-22; and***
- iv. the Equality Impact Assessment attached as Appendix 3 be approved.***

Introduction and Background

2. On 10 June 2020, Members authorised the publication of the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25 (the CRMP) for public consultation. It was also noted that the process for preparation and publication of the CRMP has been aligned with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan 2021-25 as part of the Strategic Fire Alliance.
3. Public consultation on the CRMP took place between 6 July 2020 and 25 September 2020 and was facilitated by Opinion Research Services (ORS), an independent specialist social research practice. ORS have now prepared their report setting out the main findings, and this is attached as Appendix 1.

Consultation Process

4. Members may appreciate that the public consultation was carried out during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. To address this, a CRMP Consultation Communication Strategy was developed to help make sure the consultation was as widely publicised as possible. This included a comprehensive mailshot to key stakeholders, including councillors, parish and town councils, libraries, housing associations and trusts, voluntary organisations, faith and community groups, as well as other fire and rescue services, emergency services and representative bodies. There was also extensive coverage in the Service's internal bulletins for all staff.
5. A separate CRMP Consultation page was also set up on the Service website, which received over 1,000 'hits', with visitors viewing for a good average of almost 5 minutes. The Consultation page included a video presentation by the Chief Fire Officer and an easy to follow animation, both of which were available on the Service's YouTube channel. The consultation was also publicised on the Service's social media sites, with Twitter having a potential audience of 55,000 followers, Facebook with 28,000 fans and LinkedIn with 650 followers. Through this, close to 44,000 saw CRMP information. Further information can be seen in a summary infographic attached as Appendix 4.
6. In addition, reminders were sent out part way through the consultation period, with particular attention given to reaching those groups who tend to be under-represented in consultation responses, such as community, faith and disability groups. This included social media outreach by our partners in the two counties: 'Your Herefordshire' shared the consultation request across their Facebook page with over 11,000 followers, and Worcestershire County Council shared it with their 20,000 followers. A separate review of the outcomes of the CRMP Communications Strategy is also being undertaken to help to understand best practice and learn any lessons for future consultations.
7. While an online questionnaire formed the basis of the consultation, three public focus groups were also held with a diverse and broadly representative cross-section of local residents to enable deliberation of the issues in greater detail. The venues for these sessions were formally risk assessed, and the meetings fully adhered to the government guidance on public safety during the pandemic.
8. The online questionnaire included a series of core questions, as well as sections inviting respondents to make further comments. There were a number of demographic profiling questions. The questionnaire was available in paper format and online via a link on the Service website.
9. Despite this wide-ranging campaign over the 12 week consultation period, 73 questionnaires were completed, all of which were submitted online. Most responses (60) were from individuals, but 13 valid responses were also received from a number of organisations including seven parish councils, a town council, three neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services and West Mercia

Police. In addition, two written submissions were also received from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia (the PCC).

10. The three public focus groups were held in Worcester, Wyre Forest and Hereford during August 2020 and were attended by a total of 26 residents. ORS are satisfied that the outcomes of the three sessions are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline based on similar discussions.

Main Findings

11. The ORS report provides a commentary on all feedback in relation to the CRMP 2021-25 consultation document. As well as summarising the main findings, it also includes full accounts of the views of individuals, organisations, the focus groups and the written submissions.
12. Overall, the format of the draft CRMP was well received, with most respondents positive about Service's approach to risk management and planning. This is summarised in the table below.

The Consultation Document	
• 77 per cent of respondents agreed that the document was easy to understand.	
• 80 per cent of respondents agreed the document gave them valuable information about HWFRS works.	
• 90 per cent of respondents showed an interest in the future plans of HWFRS.	
• 79 per cent of respondents agreed that HWFRS had correctly identified the main risks facing the community.	

Prevention, Protection and Response

13. Six questions were asked about the Service's aims in relation to delivering its Prevention, Protection and Response services. Responses from individuals and organisations were generally very positive for all six areas covered as shown in the table below.

Prevention, Protection and Response		
<i>HWFRS should:</i>	<i>Individuals</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
Co-ordinate its Prevention, Protection and Response roles in order to manage and reduce risk.	94 per cent agreed	All 13 agreed
Prevent emergencies by targeting is Safe and Well Visits to the more vulnerable households.	88 per cent agreed	All 13 agreed
Prevent emergencies by continuing its educational campaigns in schools and	96 per cent agreed	All 13 agreed

the wider community.		
Protect the community by doing safety audits in businesses and places where people work, shop and visit.	92 per cent agreed	All 13 agreed
Monitor and evaluate how effective Prevention and Protection activities are in reducing community risk over time.	96 per cent agreed	All 13 agreed
Allocate its emergency Response resources (vehicles and crews) on the basis of varying risk levels in different areas of the two counties.	78 per cent agreed	12 agreed

14. The positive response was echoed in the three public focus groups, who were able to consider the questions in more depth and to provide additional comments. A summary of comments is shown in the table below:

Prevention, Protection and Response	
<i>HWFRS should:</i>	<i>Public Focus Groups – additional comments</i>
Co-ordinate its Prevention, Protection and Response roles in order to manage and reduce risk.	The importance of Prevention was frequently stressed at the focus groups
Prevent emergencies by targeting is Safe and Well Visits to the more vulnerable households.	The focus groups also acknowledged that HWFRS can and should work differently to support a wider safety agenda, but also sought more information about how the process works in practice
Prevent emergencies by continuing its educational campaigns in schools and the wider community.	Prevention work in schools was strongly supported by the focus groups, providing the work is continuous and targeted at all age groups. The importance of using social media to promote safety messages was supported, but other methods were considered essential to reach those unable or unwilling to engage digitally.
Protect the community by doing safety audits in businesses and places where people work, shop and visit.	Fire safety audits were strongly supported by the focus groups, highlighting universities, high-rise buildings and premises housing concentrations of chemicals as particularly important.
Monitor and evaluate how effective Prevention and Protection activities are in reducing community risk over	No additional comments.

time.	
Allocate its emergency Response resources (vehicles and crews) on the basis of varying risk levels in different areas of the two counties.	The need for flexibility to ensure resources are in the right place was also supported by the focus groups, though some considered it essential to consult with staff around any resource changes.

Attendance (Response-time) Standards

15. The questionnaire also asked two questions about reviewing the Service's current Attendance Standards. Most respondents agreed that the standards should be reviewed, but there was less agreement on whether they should be aligned with those of Shropshire FRS, with less than half of the individual respondents in support of an alignment of standards. A summary of responses from individuals and organisations is shown in the table below.

Attendance (Response-time) Standards		
<i>HWFRS should:</i>	<i>Individuals</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
Review its response-time standards for all incidents.	80 per cent agreed	All 13 agreed
Consider aligning its response-time standards with Shropshire FRS as part of the Strategic Alliance.	47 per cent agreed	10 agreed

16. The public focus group participants were more positive, however, though more information was required on the nature of the alignment. A summary of additional comments from the focus groups is noted in the table below.

Attendance (Response-time) Standards	
<i>HWFRS should:</i>	<i>Public Focus Groups – additional comments</i>
Review its response-time standards for all incidents.	While some in the focus groups thought the current standards achieved were good, considering resources available and the rural nature of the Service area, there was strong support for defining more appropriate standards. It was also agreed that the call-handling time should be included in the review. Further support was given to having an inclusive standard, while focusing on life-risk, and that the standard should differentiate between urban, town and fringe and rural areas. It was also questioned at one group whether

	a public-facing standard is needed so long as it is measured internally.
Consider aligning its response-time standards with Shropshire FRS as part of the Strategic Alliance.	While the focus groups hesitated on whether any standard should cover all incidents or focus on the more serious ones, two groups thought the standard could be aligned. The Worcester group were more uncertain and needed definitions of urban, town, fringe and rural areas. It was also noted that more prevention work is required in remote areas; that any rural standard should account for different degrees of rurality; and that information on call patterns of both Services also needs to be considered to judge the desirability of alignment.

17. Further details and analysis of all responses can be found in the full Report of Consultation Findings, attached as Appendix 1.

Written Submissions

18. To complete their report, ORS included the written submissions from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia (the PCC). While neither submission responded directly to the consultation questionnaire, their comments are important and are included in full in the appendix to the ORS report.

Minor Amendments

19. In the light of the consultation responses and feedback, subject to approval the draft CRMP document will be amended and prepared for publication on 1 April 2021. Having assessed the responses, it is expected that most amendments will be small textual changes only.

Attendance (Response-time) Standards – Public Consultation

20. As reported at paragraphs 16-17 above, there was a strong agreement from the consultation respondents that the Service's Attendance Standards should be reviewed. The review would also consider the potential for aligning the standards with those of Shropshire FRS as part of the Strategic Fire Alliance.
21. It is recommended that officers be instructed to undertake the review and bring findings and proposals back to the Authority for approval to carry out formal public consultation during 2021-22. It should also be noted that lessons learned from the CRMP consultation process will help to shape how best to carry out the Attendance Standards consultation.

Equality Impact Assessment

22. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 outlines a Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires public authorities to have regard to equality considerations when exercising their functions. Completing an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a way of considering the potential impact of policies on equality prior to their implementation. An EIA has been completed for the CRMP 2021-25 and is attached as Appendix 3. The format of the EIA follows a template recently drafted by the National Fire Chiefs Council. Members are recommended to consider and approve the EIA.

Conclusion/Summary

23. This report summarises the findings of the public consultation on the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25. The document was generally well received and a good level of support was given to the various prevention, protection and response aims consulted upon. There was also agreement that the current Attendance Standard should be reviewed.
24. Taking the consultation feedback into account, it is proposed that the Plan is finalised, including any minor amendments, prior to publication in April 2021. Subject to Member approval, officers will undertake the review of the Attendance Standard and will carry out a public consultation during 2021-22, with results brought back to a future meeting.
25. It is also recommended that Members consider and approve the Equality Impact Assessment, which has been prepared to have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Sustainable funding will be required in order to maintain the delivery of high quality services over the four-year term of the CRMP. Over this period, there may be public sector funding pressures that could impact on the delivery levels of services.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	The CRMP will represent the Authority's overall strategic plan for delivering priorities and policies between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2025, and will guide all Service functions.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	The CRMP sets out the Authority's overall approach to risk management. Proposed activities to manage risks identified in the CRMP will be assessed and managed through normal departmental planning processes.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Preparation of the draft CRMP involved joint workshops with colleagues at Shropshire FRS to ensure a common approach to risk identification and management. An extensive programme of local risk workshops was also conducted with staff in all Service departments prior to publishing the draft CRMP for public consultation. Full public consultation was carried out between 6 July 2020 and 25 September 2020.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached as Appendix 3.

Supporting Information (as separate enclosure)

Appendix 1 – Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan 2021-2025 – Report of Consultation Findings, Opinion Research Services, October 2020.

Appendix 2 - Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan 2021-2025 – Summary Report of Consultation Findings, Opinion Research Services, October 2020.

Appendix 3 – Community Risk Management Plan 2021-2025 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 4 – CRMP Consultation Infographic