



Safest People, Safest Places

Safer, Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 February 2024

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), formerly known as the Integrated Risk Management Plan, Annual Consultation

Report of Keith Carruthers, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Safer, Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with background to the Fire Authority's CRMP annual action plan for 2024-2027. The Committee will be provided with a presentation setting out details of the plan and consultation process.

Background

2. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework. The Framework sets out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities who must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their duties.
3. The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework document places a responsibility on all fire and rescue authorities to produce and consult on an Integrated Risk Management Plan. The Service uses the CRMP title to align the document with the recommendations from the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC). The Framework directs fire and rescue authorities to:
 - be accountable to communities for the service they provide;
 - identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face;

- make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and the response to fire and rescue related incidents;
 - develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse;
 - collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide.
4. Specifically, the National Framework states that we have a statutory responsibility to include a number of areas within the CRMP. These duties are summarised below:
- Reflect up-to-date risk analyses of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the authority;
 - Demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities;
 - Outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;
 - Set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRO) 2005;
 - Cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as is necessary;
 - Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners; and
 - Be easily accessible and publicly available.
5. The Service's CRMP is a three-year strategic plan. This is reviewed annually to assess the effectiveness of existing arrangements. Following this review an annual CRMP Action Plan is developed.

CRMP Content

6. The CRMP contains profile information regarding the Service area, performance data, governance arrangements and how the Service identifies, manages and responds to risk in County Durham and Darlington.
7. Linking directly to the Community Risk Profile (CRP) and Station Plan, the CRMP sets out the key risks found and what proactive and reactive measures will be in place relating to each identified risk.
8. Each of the main Strategies (Community Safety; Business Fire Safety and Fire Investigation; Emergency Response; People and Organisational Development; Collaboration, Estates, ICT, and Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change) and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is directly referenced with regard to how they are affected by risk.

9. We have included an overview of what we introduced following last year's consultation together with the proposed options for Year 1, 2 and 3 of the 2024-2027 CRMP period.
10. In 2023-2024 we consulted on and delivered the following:

We asked	You said	We did
We propose to crew all our Wholetime fire engines with four firefighters. Do you agree with this proposal?	Yes	We implemented the new crewing arrangement from 1 July 2023.
We propose to review the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) for business premises to ensure our proactive protection and enforcement activities are aligned to identified risks, to maintain the reduction of non-domestic fires and ensure the continued safety, from fire, of employees and visitors to these premises.	Yes	We have reviewed the RBIP and a new version will be introduced on 1 April 2024 focusing on higher risk type premises.

Monitor and review the Service's response standards

11. We have continually monitored our performance against the response standards through our Performance Board, Service Leadership Team, Performance Committee and the CFA. Any response to an incident that fails to meet the relevant standard is scrutinised to identify which component of the response is responsible – call handling time, time of crews to mobilise or time to drive to the incident. Any learning or good practice identified is implemented to improve future response times.
12. The response times were designed to be challenging standards to ensure we continually strive to improve our response times. Throughout the year, performance of all three standards has fluctuated between 65 – 75%. CDDFRS remains one of the fastest services to answer emergency calls and deploy fire appliances, and we are the fastest to respond amongst all predominately rural FRSs. By maintaining the current response standards, we will strive to maintain our current high performance compared to the rest of the fire sector.

Evaluate the staffing arrangements and application of Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs)

13. We carried out an evaluation exercise on the use of TRVs within the Service which resulted in a recommended model for future use and deployment of the vehicles. The results clearly showed that TRVs were best suited to respond to secondary fires and automatic fire alarms (AFAs) as well as the vehicle being used as an additional resource at all other incident types, delivering community safety messages and assisting with productivity.

14. We continue to deploy TRV's based on risk and during periods of high activity.

Evaluate the changes through collaboration projects with local FRS and key partners.

15. We introduced a system of evaluating our collaboration projects and the outcomes are monitored by our Service Leadership Team. This enables us to check how projects are working and whether they are providing good value in terms of costs, resources, relationships and learning.

16. For collaboration projects which no longer provide value or benefit we take action and seek to learn from the opportunity.

Medium Term Financial Plan

17. The Service faces the ongoing challenge of balancing our resources against the risks we face. We are under considerable financial pressure due to cost pressures arising from inflation which is resulting in demands for higher pay awards. The financial pressures faced by the Service are compounded by uncertainty surrounding the level of government funding beyond 2024/25.

18. Our 2023/24 annual budget is £32.1M and to set a balanced budget for 2024/25 it has been necessary to continue to closely monitor our spend and funding from central government. 2023/24 saw the implementation of our option to reduce the overall operational workforce so that fire appliances always have 4 crew members of trained staff on them (we call this 'riding with 4').

19. Historically, we have received an equal amount of our funding from direct government grants and Council Tax. However, over time this has changed, with two thirds of our funding now being received from Council Tax, of which increases are subject to strict limits. Fire and Rescue Authorities will have flexibility to increase Band D Council Tax by up to 3% in 2024/25. Any Fire and Rescue Authority that wishes to increase Band D Council Tax in 2024/25 by 3% or more will be required to hold a referendum. Reliance on Council Tax also brings with it challenges in an area such as ours where a significant number of the properties are in Council Tax Band A or Band B. A 1% increase in Council Tax raises an additional £207,000 for the Authority whereas in other areas 1% raises significantly more. To further illustrate the problem a 1%, pay award costs us over £270,000 per year and other inflationary pressures are adding significant costs to the Service.

Our Plans

20. In 2024/25 the following options will be considered:

- Monitor the crewing of Wholetime fire engines.
- Implement the findings following the review of the Risk Based Inspection Programme.
- Continue to monitor the staffing arrangements and application of TRVs.

- Continue to explore opportunities and evaluate changes introduced through collaboration projects.

21. In 2025/26 the following options will be considered

- Review the newly implemented Service Risk-Based Inspection Programme
- Continue to explore opportunities and evaluate changes introduced through collaboration projects.

22. In 2026/27 the following options will be considered

- Continue to explore opportunities and evaluate changes introduced through collaboration projects.

Our Commitments

23. The Service makes a series of commitments throughout the CRMP. These have now been streamlined and reworded as follows:

Be the Best

Recruit and retain a diverse workforce and continually assess their performance and behaviours.

Prevent

Target at least 80% of our HFSVs to the most vulnerable people, taking referrals from and making them to our supporting partners.

Protect

Work with local businesses to keep people safe from fire and take enforcement action when we need to.

Respond

In an emergency we will be fully prepared to respond and will strive to reduce the impact.

Improve

We will constantly endeavour to improve by monitoring our performance and encourage our staff to be innovative.

Learn

We will learn and improve following scrutiny from HMICFRS, the CFA, external audit bodies and our consultation process

Plan

We will identify the risks you face and plan ways to reduce their impact using our staff and resources effectively.

Budget

We will use our budget, people and equipment effectively to tackle our risks and keep you safe.

Consultation

24. The consultation for 2024/25 will begin on 16 February 2024 and will run for 12 weeks. To ensure that a wide range of views can be gathered the Communications Teams will lead on disseminating a consultation document containing the specific questions regarding the future plans of the Service. The consultation questions are set out at paragraph 26 of this report.
25. The approach to the consultation will include making the CRMP available on the CDDFRS website; organising community events to discuss the plan with the public; liaising with politicians and other local community leaders to disseminate the consultation document and using social media to promote it. We will attend public meetings organised through the Local Authorities, and stage bespoke events. There will be an online survey that people can complete and a paper booklet to support this.

Consultation Questions

26. At the Strategic Planning Day on 16 November 2023 the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) considered the range of options which could be put to the public. Based on the feedback from this day and the Service analysis it is suggested the following questions be put to the public:
- 26.1 Q1 Do you agree with the Service's approach to keeping you safe?
- 26.2 Q2 Do you agree with our commitments outlined in the plan?
- 26.3 Q3 Do you have any comments on our plans for 2024-27?

Recommendations

27. Members are requested to:
- (i) **Consider and note** the content of the CRMP action plan and consultation which will be presented at the meeting.

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