

The Highland and Islands Fire Board

Minutes of Meeting of the **Integrated Risk Management Planning Working Group** held in Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday, 9 January 2009 Thursday, at 10.30 a.m.

Present

Representing the Highland Council

Mr R Durham
Mr D Flear
Dr A Sinclair
Mrs H Carmichael

Representing Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Mr I Mackenzie

Representing Orkney Islands Council

Mr A Drever

Representing Shetland Islands Council

Mr A Cooper (substituting)

Officials in attendance:

Mr B Murray, Chief Fire Officer
Mr T Wood, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Mr T Johnson, Area Manager, Community Risk Management (CRM)
Mr A MacAllister, Head of Corporate Services, Fire & Rescue Service
Mr M Jenks, Finance Manager, Fire and Rescue Service
Mr S Ross, Performance and Best Value Manager, Fire and Rescue Service
Mrs M Grigor, Treasurer's Office
Ms M Morris, Clerk
Mrs R Moir, Assistant Clerk
Mrs L Lee, Clerk's Office

Mr R Durham in the Chair

1. Apology

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr A Duncan, Shetland Islands Council.

2. Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Draft Action Plan 2009/10

There had been circulated Report No. IRMP1/09 dated 17 December 2008 by the Chief Fire Officer presenting the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan for 2009/10.

The Area Manager, Community Risk Management (CRM) advised that the IRMP Action Plan was now being combined with the Service Plan, which would simplify the working relationship between the two documents. The Action Plan gave details of the consultation method proposed, highlighted achievements against the previous year's Action Plan, and detailed the Actions programmed for 2009/10.

Achievements against the 2008/09 Action Plan included:

- evidence gathering and analysis to identify priorities under the capital build programme
- provision of regular performance reports to all stations
- completion of preparatory work to ensure the Service was able to undertake the role of Enforcing Authority as required by the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, Part 3
- development of a risk-based audit regime for premises falling under the Act – for example, all properties where people slept (care homes, hotels etc) were given a high priority.
- provision of training events for businesses etc to assist them to comply with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, Part 3
- completion of over 5,000 home fire safety checks, installation of over 2,500 smoke detectors; installation of over 1,000 detectors in homes of residents connected to the Telecare “help” system
- promotion of road safety and crash reduction to young people in schools across the Board area
- action aimed at young people, including pro-social activities and promotion of drug and alcohol awareness,
- publicising the fire safety message through radio campaigns, portable TV/DVD equipment in public places, and the promotion of targeted safety campaigns i.e. the use of puppets.

Objectives for 2009/10 included:

- updating the Service’s risk modelling software
- continuing to gather evidence and ongoing analysis of this
- reporting findings to the Board
- continuing to provide a risk-based intervention resource
- continuing to enhance community safety, including working with partner organisations to provide training for those working with vulnerable members of the community
- continuing working with young people
- continuing to take action to reduce the number of unwanted fire calls
- continuing to promote the installation of fire suppression systems in the homes of vulnerable residents and in new build premises
- continuing with the enforcement of the Fire (Scotland) Act Part 3 for premises presenting the highest risk to life
- continuing to assist stakeholders to provide appropriate levels of fire safety.

With reference to the work being carried out by the Service in relation to enforcement action under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, the Area Manager CRM explained that businesses were now required to undertake their own risk assessment and provide the appropriate level of fire safety to ensure their compliance with Fire Safety legislation. The Service’s role was then to carry out sample audits to ensure that the person responsible for any given premises had fulfilled their duty as to whether standards were being met. This work was currently being carried out by multi function officers as part of their day-to-day activities. To enhance the level of delivery the Service provided, consideration was being given to setting up a dedicated legislative fire safety team.

A risk-based audit programme had been established by the Service to inform the priorities for carrying out Fire Safety audits. Where action was found to be required, the Service provided generic advice and support to assist the person responsible in bringing about improvements; however, if a way to ensure

compliance with legal requirements could not be progressed on this basis, enforcement action would be taken to ensure public safety.

In discussion, it was suggested that the Internet publicity attached to breaches of Environmental Health legislation could assist in expediting compliance, and that a similar approach might be helpful in Fire Safety enforcement. The Area Manager CRM undertook to investigate what might be possible in this regard, in particular whether there were any legal considerations. Members highlighted other aspects of Environmental Health enforcement practice, including that (a) performance indicators used in inspections provided an audit trail, and (b) schedules were put in place to ensure medium and low risk premises were also audited. Members also suggested that the possibility of using funding under LEADER for the Service's pro-social activities be investigated, Mr D Flear offering to work with the Area Manager CRM in this regard.

In answer to a question raised regarding the installation of automatic suppression systems, the Area Manager CRM confirmed that the Service, where appropriate, considered applications for planning permission, sending a letter to applicants highlighting the benefits of suppression systems and the provision of smoke detectors over and above the level required by building regulations and recommending their installation.

The Working Group **AGREED**:

- i. to recommend approval of the draft IRMP Action Plan 2009/10 to the Board; and
- ii. that the potential to access LEADER funding for the Service's pro-social activities be investigated.

The Working Group also **NOTED** that, subject to Board approval, the draft Action Plan would be made available for public comment following the Board meeting on 23 January 2009.

3. IRMP – Risk Review – Methodology

There had been circulated Report No. IRMP2/09 dated 17 December 2008 by the Chief Fire Officer reminding Members that, at its meeting on 14 September 2007, the Board had accepted proposals highlighting the way forward for the risk review of the Service area, including agreeing that future risk modelling strategy include consideration of sustainability and evaluation of the effectiveness of current intervention resources.

A presentation was made to the Working Group on a methodology which proposed an approach by which individual data sets could be quantified, analysed and ultimately brought together to present information which would provide evidence to support risk reduction strategies. Members were asked to review the methodology and recommend that the Board approve in the first instance its application to determine priorities, based upon identified risk and sustainability information, for the capital build programme.

The data sets collected for each station were as follows:

Stage 1 – Critical performance measures

- ability to meet contract availability targets – i.e. there must be enough fire fighters available for sufficient hours to provide cover at any given time
- ability to achieve crew confidence level target – i.e. there must be enough fire fighters able to turn out at any given time (a minimum of 4 was required to crew an appliance)
- acceptable turn out time – i.e. the time taken for retained / CRU fire fighters to respond to a call-out and commence the journey to an incident must be acceptable
- meet allocated Community Fire Safety targets – i.e, the target number of home fire safety checks etc. must be met

Stage 2

- incident frequency
- type of incidents
- incident time of day
- establishment history
- demographic profile
- other appropriate information, including employment profile within a demographic area, command training, number of breathing apparatus (BA) wearers, number of vehicle drivers etc.

The data gathering and analysis comprised the “Sustainability Review” process. This process enabled the Service to assess whether stations were meeting required performance targets, and indicated where opportunities for improvements might be possible.

Data had been collected and analysed over the past 30 months and had been used to compile Station Action Plans for each station, developed by Deputy Area Commanders in conjunction with the persons responsible for the local management of stations. Performance had improved as a result. Progress was continually monitored and each station had been provided with information allowing performance to be gauged in relation to targets over time. The aim was for stations to achieve the first three critical performance measures (above) on all occasions.

The Sustainability Review was an ongoing process aimed at continuous improvement and best allocation of resources. Future actions included:

- continuing to support performance improvement
- continuing to analyse sustainability information
- involving Members
- developing a scoring mechanism / methodology to analyse the many data sets, which would most effectively identify the most pressing needs of the Service
- reporting urgent issues so identified to the Board
- analysing inter-station relationships
- exploring alternative options
- reporting to the Board on the way forward

With reference to bullet point 4 above, the Area Manager CRM presented a proposed scoring system that would take the following factors into consideration: a station’s Life Critical contribution (ie. the size of the population it served, number of vulnerable persons, the risk profile of the area and the number of incidents), its

demographic profile / recruitment potential, and its establishment – current numbers and previous trend. He also set out a proposed timescale for using the data to inform the capital build programme:

- first quarter of 2009/10 – apply the methodology to the capital build programme
- second quarter of 2009/10 – review those stations which presented serious sustainability issues and report to the Board
- third and fourth quarters of 2009/10 – assess the contribution each appliance made to life safety, and, where required, develop proposals for alternative arrangements, such as additional stations, changed allocation of resources, changing the role of a station, other options.

As at previous meetings, the Area Manager CRM stressed that proposed timings might be required to change as a result of the findings at each stage.

Changing to an evidence based approach highlighted the life saving contribution made by each station. It was possible that the data would suggest a different list of priorities for the capital build programme. The process might also identify where additional resources might be required.

In response to a question raised, the Area Manager, CRM, advised that the data used covered a retrospective five-year period. However, it was recognised that communities changed, and additional data, such as population projections, was also important. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer stressed strongly that the methodology would not supersede the professional judgement of officers and the role of Members. In some cases, the strategic need for a station in a particular area would outweigh other factors, such as a challenging demographic profile.

In response to concerns raised regarding one-off major incidents, Members were assured that a fire service would always be provided, but that resources had to be located according to risk. There was an increasing role for Community Response Units, particularly on the A9, and the Service was looking at developing the CRU concept.

The Convener supported the suggestion that the information provided to the Working Group should also be presented to Community Planning Partnerships and, in view of the potential impact on the Board's and Service's decision making, proposed that the presentation also be made to the full Board.

The Working Group **AGREED:**

- i. that a presentation on the methodology be brought to the next meeting of the Fire Board, and to Community Planning Partnerships; and
- ii. to recommend that the Board, following receipt of the presentation, approve (a) the proposed risk review methodology; and (b) in the first instance, application of the methodology to determine priorities, based upon identified risk and sustainability information, for the capital build programme.

The meeting ended at 11.55 a.m.