

## **The Highland and Islands Fire Board**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Integrated Risk Management Planning Working Group** held in Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Harbour Road, Inverness on Friday, 21 August 2009, at 11.40 a.m.

### **Present:**

**Representing the Highland Council:** Mr R Durham  
Dr A Sinclair

**Also in attendance:** Mrs L Munro  
Mr D Mackay  
Ms I Campbell  
Mr D Henderson  
Mr E Hunter  
Ms M Smith

**Representing Comhairle nan Eilean Siar:** Mr I MacKenzie

**Also in attendance:** Mr N Macleod  
Mr P Carlin  
Mr M Macleod (Substitute)

**Representing Orkney Islands Council:** Mr A Drever

**Also in attendance:** Mr B Leslie

**Representing Shetland Islands Council:** Mr A Duncan

**Also in attendance:** Mr A Cooper

### **Officials in attendance:**

Mr B Murray, Chief Fire Officer  
Mr J Donaldson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
Mr T Johnson, T/Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Ms R Moir, Assistant Clerk

### **Mr R Durham in the Chair**

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr D Flear, Mrs H Carmichael and Mr D Fallows of the Highland Council.

All other Board Members also having been invited by the Convener to attend the meeting, apologies for absence were also intimated on behalf of Mrs M Paterson, Mr

J Gray, Mr R Balfour and Mr J Ford of the Highland Council and Mr C Nicolson of Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar.

## 2. Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Risk Review – Phase I: Capital Build Programme Methodology

There had been circulated Report No. IRMP4/09 dated 11 August 2009 by the Chief Fire Officer on the outcome of the validation of the IRMP Risk Review Phase I Capital Build Programme methodology carried out at the request of the Board by Risktec Solutions.

The validation exercise had been commissioned to ensure the methodology developed and the information gathered formed an appropriate base suitable to influence the strategic decisions of the Board. The report acknowledged that significant effort had been expended by Highland and Islands Fire and Rescue Service (HIFRS) to ensure that all the datasets were robust and to verify that the methodology and datasets used were fully transparent and robust enough to support the future strategy development.

The Risktec Solutions report recommended that the Board/Service:

- alter the scoring scheme for the FSEC additional Lives Saved dataset to reflect allocation of the scores based on the logarithmic value the FSEC data; this would make it simpler to continue using the method in the future
- where the potential number of day cover recruits was low, carry out specific investigations to check the data
- review the results from recruitment campaigns and compare against the scoring scheme and scores for potential day recruits and establishment
- recognise that using a past positive trend in establishment numbers might be optimistic (in that it effectively projected this improvement into the future)
- carry out a series of 'test calls' for stations that currently received a low number of calls, as this would help establish a more accurate set of statistics for low or no call stations
- review data for pumps 'booked off the run' against call statistics to determine if this had any effect on the data used for this methodology (e.g. could this show a potential change in the Crew Confidence score).

The T/Assistant Chief Fire Officer outlined examples where the Service had already taken steps to address some of these recommendations. The comments made with regard to the potential for 'optimistic' scores relating to positive trends in establishment numbers were noted by Members. This matter would be given further consideration during the latter stages of the Risk Review. In response to Member questions, the T/Assistant Chief Fire Officer clarified that the possibility of utilising test calls was being explored. He outlined the intention that they could be used where a station's call-out figures were low, perhaps to provide a minimum of five call-outs. This would provide a more objective assessment of performance. He confirmed that, while staff would be made aware of the possibility of such calls, no specific warning of test times would be given.

After discussion, the Working Group **NOTED** the content of the Risktec Solutions report and **AGREED** to recommend that the Board accept its recommendations.

### 3. IRMP Risk Review – Phase II

There had been circulated Report No. IRMP5/09 dated 11 August 2009 by the Chief Fire Officer introducing, as an Appendix, the IRMP Risk Review Phase II Sustainability Report, which set out recommendations appertaining to the second phase of the Risk Review proposal agreed by the Board on 23 January 2009, notably: to 'review stations which present serious sustainability issues'.

In introducing the report, the Chief Fire Officer welcomed the significant Member attendance and emphasised the Service's desire for transparency when considering the findings of this phase of the Review. He also outlined the Service's intention to share the information generated with the relevant stations, in the hope that this could help to promote improvement. However, he warned that the Board could nevertheless face some difficult decisions in the future.

In speaking to the report, the T/Assistant Chief Fire Officer reminded Members that Phase I of the Review had considered Capital Build Programme priorities, Phase II was considering stations which presented serious sustainability issues, and Phase III would assess the contribution each station/appliance made to life safety and would consider the interaction between Service-wide resource provision and identified risk.

He also reminded Members of the Board's legal obligation to ensure the safety of firefighters, which was one of the main drivers for this stage of the Risk Review. He outlined the general obligations for firefighter safety, with particular reference to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007. Arising from these obligations, the Service had established that the minimum number size for an appliance crew, in order to ensure that a safe system of work could be implemented at an emergency incident, was four. Calculations had shown that the minimum station establishment required to provide continuous cover was six persons.

The Service had carried out a Service-wide Sustainability Review over a 36 month period from April 2006 to March 2009. In addition to the data captured and analysed as part of the Sustainability Review, information had also been reviewed relating to operational activity for the periods:

- April 2004 to March 2009, for stations with a full intervention role; and
- June 2005 to March 2009, for stations assuming Community Response Unit (CRU) status and providing a combination of Community Fire Safety, Wildfire and Road Traffic Collision roles.

From a detailed review of both historic and current station establishment numbers, the Service had identified a list of three retained stations and twelve Community Response Units presenting serious sustainability issues.

The T/Assistant Chief Fire Officer, outlined the establishment history of each station so identified and highlighted the recommendations being made in each individual case, recommending that one Retained station should no longer have an intervention role and should become a CRU undertaking CFS duties only, while the other two be given a further 12-month period to try to recruit more members and

provide the appropriate level of performance in relation to operational incident response. The recommendations relating to the 12 CRUs ranged from closure for some stations which had no members, to a reduction for some others in their intervention responsibilities, to the allocation to others of a further 12-month period to try to recruit more members and provide the appropriate level of performance in relation to operational incident response. Appropriate operational cover would be maintained for the affected locations from other areas of the Service. The ongoing IRMP process would keep the position under review.

Members carefully examined each set of recommendations in turn and were assured that support would be provided to those locations for which a further period to recruit and improve performance was being proposed.

The T/Assistant Chief Fire Officer also looked ahead to the workload/types of decision envisaged for Phase III of the Review and recommended that the Board introduce a Phase IIa before moving to this stage. Phase IIa would involve producing a report on those stations whose performance impacted upon future analysis, with the aim of promoting performance improvements and involvement in the Risk Review process.

During discussion, Members highlighted the legal and capital challenges facing the Board. They were reminded that the Board's case had been made repeatedly and robustly in recent years and had met with some success in top-slice allocations. Opportunities to reduce the cost of new builds, whether, for example, through joint ventures or by adaptation of existing buildings, were also being actively explored. Reference was made to the importance of staff morale and motivation, with an explanation of the operational policy on crewing of second vehicles given to Members. The importance of sharing the Review outcomes with stations, local communities and Constituent Authorities was emphasised and all Members were encouraged to become involved in this.

Members congratulated the Chief Fire Officer and his staff on the work carried out and on the thoroughness of the review, which provided a sound and evidenced basis for the Board's decisions on the important issues raised.

Following discussion, the Working Group **AGREED** to recommend to the full Board:

- i. each of the detailed recommendations contained in the IRMP Risk Review Phase II Sustainability Report appertaining to the 15 named stations; and
- ii. that a Phase IIa Report be submitted on those stations whose performance impacted upon future analysis of the full network, with a view to promoting performance improvements and involvement in the Risk Review process.

The meeting ended at 1.00 p.m.