

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



MEETING	Fire Authority
DATE OF MEETING	18 December 2013
OFFICER	Jason Thelwell, Chief Operating Officer
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Catriona Morris
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Public Consultation – Pre-IRMP “Listening & Engagement” research
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Officers are about to embark on the development work needed to produce the next Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which will succeed the current 2012-17 Public Safety Plan. It is envisaged that the new IRMP will take effect from April 2015.</p> <p>The National Framework requires that, amongst other things, the IRMP “<i>reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies, and partners</i>”.</p> <p>To meet this requirement a two stage consultation process has been planned, parts of which have already been implemented, which will embrace the general public, Authority staff and other stakeholders:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An initial ‘listening and engagement’ phase with the public which will explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perceptions of, attitudes towards and tolerance for risk; • perceptions of the Authority and the services it offers and any expectations in relation to these; • awareness of the issues and challenges facing the Authority and general feelings about potential ways of responding to these; • what really matters to the public and other stakeholders as we seek to effect changes in order to respond to the challenges faced by the Authority. 2. A formal consultation on specific proposals arising out of the IRMP development process. <p>The Authority participates in a national arrangement</p>

	<p>for the procurement of expert consultation advice and services via the Fire Services Consultation Association (FSCA). Accordingly Officers briefed the FSCA appointed agency, Opinion Research Services (ORS), to conduct phase 1 of the consultation process which consists of five ‘Citizen Engagement’ focus groups with up to 12 participants in each group. These were held in the following locations during the period 25 November to 4 December 2013 to capture both urban and rural perspectives: Milton Keynes, Buckingham, Aylesbury, Chesham, Wycombe.</p> <p>A report on the outcomes of this initial research will be submitted to the February CFA meeting.</p> <p>Also there is scope to re-recruit the same participants again in phase 2, when specific IRMP proposals will be consulted on, which means that they will be able to consider them from a more informed perspective than would be possible with fresh groups of people drawn from the wider public.</p>
ACTION	Information.
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the report be noted.
RISK MANAGEMENT	<p>A detailed risk assessment was carried out with ORS at the project planning stage and a risk log established within the Project Initiation Document (PID) & appropriate measures identified to control the identified risks.</p> <p>The key corporate risks arising out of the research process include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the range of views expressed are not typical of the public as a whole; • That the research is poorly executed and fails to meet the specified requirements. <p>Both of these risks could impair the decision making process in relation to the development of the IRMP were they to crystallise.</p> <p>The first risk is controlled via the participant recruitment process which is designed to ensure that a representative sample of the public is selected by using quotas for age, gender, social group, ethnicity and geographic factors. The second, via ORS’ training and research methods which are fully accredited to relevant British, ISO and IQCS standards. ORS are also a Market Research Society (MRS) Company Partner and are fully compliant with the MRS Code of Conduct.</p>
FINANCIAL	The cost of Phase One of the research is c. £14,000

IMPLICATIONS	<p>(including follow on research with Authority staff planned for the new year). This will be met from existing revenue budget resources.</p> <p>The cost of the second phase of the research which will take place in the next financial year (2014/15) is to be established but likely to be similar to Phase One.</p>
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>The approach complies with National Framework requirements by ensuring that consultation is undertaken at appropriate points in the IRMP development process.</p> <p>The outcomes of the consultation are not binding on the Authority. However it is required to have regard to them in reaching decisions associated with the integrated risk management planning process where relevant.</p>
HEALTH AND SAFETY	<p>No direct implications arising from this initial consultation work.</p>
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	<p>The participant selection process is designed to ensure that a representative sample of the public is consulted as detailed in the risk management section above.</p>
USE OF RESOURCES	<p>The consultation work is being resourced from within existing budgets and staff capacity. The outcomes of the consultation work will be used to help inform decision making in relation to future Authority resource allocation.</p>
PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS	<p>Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2012): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england</p>
APPENDICES	<p>None</p>
TIME REQUIRED	<p>10 Minutes</p>
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	<p>Stuart Gowanlock, Corporate Planning Manager sgowanlock@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744435</p>

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