

# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



<b>MEETING</b>	Fire Authority
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	19 February 2014
<b>OFFICER</b>	Jason Thelwell, Chief Operating Officer
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor Catriona Morris
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Public Consultation – Pre-IRMP “Listening &amp; Engagement” research – report of consultation outcomes.</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>At the Fire Authority meeting on 18 December 2013 Members were advised of some consultation work being undertaken on the Authority’s behalf, by Opinion Research Services (ORS), with the Public via a series of five focus groups across the areas served by the Authority. This early consultation work was designed to help inform the development of the next Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring the participants’ general awareness and understanding of the Fire and Rescue Service and the issues facing it (without being given any significant background information);</li> <li>• Their views and expectations after being more acquainted with the issues and challenges facing the Authority/Service and some potential ways that it could respond to these.</li> </ul> <p>In total 50 people participated across the five focus groups. ORS used a deliberative approach which enabled participants to reflect in depth about the issues facing the Authority/Service. Also participants were able to do this without the constraint of worrying about any imminent changes to local Fire and Rescue service provision.</p> <p>The consultation embraced consideration of a wide range of issues and topics relevant to the development of the next IRMP and the direction of the Service more generally including amongst other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of and attitudes to risk;</li> <li>• Expectations of the FRS in relation to issues such as fire safety;</li> <li>• Views on Response Times;</li> <li>• Awareness of governance arrangements and, in</li> </ul>

	<p>particular, the role of the Fire Authority;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of issues and challenges facing the Authority including the current industrial action;</li> <li>• Perceptions of costs and value for money;</li> <li>• Preferences in relation to dealing with funding issues.</li> </ul> <p>The outcomes of the consultation are contained in the annexed ORS report. Because recruitment to the focus groups was inclusive and the participants diverse, ORS advise that the outcomes of the consultation are broadly indicative of how informed public opinion would incline in similar discussions.</p> <p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>Preparation of the next IRMP, which will cover the period 2015-20, is currently underway with a view to officers presenting a draft for Members to approve for public consultation at the June 2014 Fire Authority meeting. Further stakeholder consultations are planned throughout the IRMP development process in line with Government ‘good practice’ guidance.</p> <p>Also it will be possible to re-convene the five focus groups reported on in the attached report, once Members have approved the draft IRMP for consultation, which means that it will receive scrutiny from a more informed perspective than would be possible with fresh groups of people drawn from the wider public. This will help the Authority to demonstrate that it has met the National Framework requirement for active and informed participation in IRMP consultations.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Information.
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	That the report be noted.
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	<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) &amp; 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"> <li>• That the range of views expressed are not typical of the public as a whole;</li> <li>• That the research is poorly executed and fails to meet the specified requirements.</li> </ul> <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>
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>The cost of Phase One of the research is c. £13,000 (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 (formal public consultation on the Draft 2015-20 IRMP) which will take place in the next financial year (2014/15) is to be established but likely to be similar to Phase One.</p>
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>The approach is consistent with the principles derived from case law on consultation and from the National Framework guidance, 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>
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	<p>No direct implications arising from this initial consultation work.</p>
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	<p>The participant selection process was designed to ensure that a representative sample of the public is consulted as detailed in the risk management section above. The socio-demographic profile of the participants in the research is shown at page 7 of the annexed report.</p>
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	<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>
<b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	<p>Public Consultation – Pre-IRMP ‘Listening &amp; Engagement’ Research, Paper to 18 December 2013 CFA Meeting:</p> <p><a href="http://www.bucksfire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/93AA5678-90C2-47F6-9386-30C1C3C836B3/0/ITEM12_PublicConsultationPreIRMPL">http://www.bucksfire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/93AA5678-90C2-47F6-9386-30C1C3C836B3/0/ITEM12_PublicConsultationPreIRMPL</a></p>

	<p><a href="#">ListeningandEngagementResearch.pdf</a></p> <p>Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2012):</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england</a></p>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<p>Appendix 1 – “Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: Responding to Change”, Report of Consultation Outcomes, Opinion Research Services, January 2014.</p>
<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	<p>15 Minutes.</p>
<b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b>	<p>Stuart Gowanlock, Corporate Planning Manager</p> <p><a href="mailto:sgowanlock@bucksfire.gov.uk">sgowanlock@bucksfire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>01296 744435</p>