



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 13 September 2023

Report title: 2025-30 CRMP Listening and Engagement Consultation Outcomes

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse: Service Delivery, Protection and Collaboration

Report sponsor: Mick Osborne, Chief Operating Officer / Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Author and contact: Stuart Gowanlock, Corporate Planning Manager

sgowanlock@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision

Recommendations: That the report be submitted to 11 October 2023 Fire Authority meeting for information and noting.

Executive summary:

At the Fire Authority meeting on 7 December 2022, Members approved the outline process and timetable for production of the successor plan to the 2020 – 2025 Public Safety Plan, to be known as the ‘2025 – 2030 Community Risk Management Plan’ (CRMP).

As part of the development process for the new CRMP, officers commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS), an independent social research practice, to carry out an initial consultation with a broadly representative / diverse sample of the public domiciled within the areas served by the Authority.

This early consultation work was designed to help inform the development of the 2025 – 30 CRMP by exploring the participants’:

- general awareness of / perceptions of risk and understanding of the Fire and Rescue Service and the issues facing it (without being given any significant background information);
- 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.

In total, 40 people participated across five focus groups (three of which were held virtually and two at physical locations in Aylesbury and Milton Keynes). ORS used a deliberative approach that 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.

The outcomes of the consultation are contained in the appended 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 as a whole would incline in similar discussions.

Next Steps

Preparation of the 2025 – 30 CRMP is currently underway with a view to officers presenting a draft for Members to approve for a formal 12 week public consultation at the 14 February 2024 Fire Authority meeting. Further stakeholder consultations are planned throughout the CRMP development process in line with National Framework, [CRMP Fire Standard](#) and [Communication and Engagement Fire Standard](#) requirements.

Also, it should be possible to re-convene the five focus groups reported on in the attached report, once Members have approved the draft 2025-30 CRMP 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 requirements of: the National Framework; CRMP and Communication and Engagement Fire Standards; and, the underlying [Gunning Principles](#) for active and informed participation in consultations.

Financial implications: The costs associated with this, and any further consultations associated with the preparation of the 2025 – 30 CRMP, will be met from within existing Service Budget provisions.

Risk management: A detailed risk assessment was carried out with ORS at the project planning stage with a risk log established within the Project Initiation Document (PID) & appropriate measures identified to control the identified risks. The key corporate risks arising out of the research process include:

- 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.

Both of these risks could impair the decision making process in relation to the development of the CRMP were they to crystallise.

As a university spin out company, ORS seeks to guarantee academic standards for all applied social research. ORS is a Market Research Society Company Partner and are fully compliant with the MRS Code of Conduct. All of ORS' research activities and systems are fully certified to ISO 27001:2013, ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 20252:2019.

The scope of the ISO certification covers the entirety of their research business from client management and identification of client needs through to frontline data collection, analysis and report writing.

ORS fieldwork procedures are fully IQCS certified, and all field and telephone interviewers are fully trained to IQCS standards.

Legal implications: The approach complies with National Framework requirements by ensuring that consultation is undertaken at appropriate points in the CRMP development process. 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 community risk management planning process.

Privacy and security implications:

ORS' Information Security Policy requires that personal data is only sent from ORS using secure media. Checks are made to ensure that identifying information is removed prior to dispatch of data to clients.

Duty to collaborate:

The National Framework requires every fire and rescue authority to produce its own CRMP. However, officers share thinking on approaches to CRMP development and consultation practices with other fire and rescue services, in particular our Thames Valley partners.

Health and safety implications:

No direct implications arising from this initial consultation work.

Environmental implications:

No direct implications arising from this initial consultation work.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

The participant selection process was designed to ensure that a broadly representative / diverse sample of the public was consulted. Details of the participants' demographic profile are set out at paragraph 2.9 on page 11 of the appended report.

Consultation and communication:

The consultation themes were approved by the Senior Management Team on 2 May 2023 and also shared with the Lead Member for Service Delivery, Protection and Collaboration.

The Consultation findings will be shared with Service staff as well as Authority Members.

Background papers:

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/11/item-10-fire-authority-meeting-7-december-2022-2025-2030-service-planning.pdf/>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030: Public Engagement Report of findings	None