

Consultation Strategy

SFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

Scope

The purpose of this consultation is to seek views from staff, the public and partner organisations on the future role and priorities of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service in order to shape the recommendations being made to Cabinet in 2016 regarding the intentions contained within the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015-2018.

The responses from this consultation will be used to help confirm recommendations to the County Council Cabinet for any options to change the way the Service is delivered in the future, with a view to starting implementation in 2016.

Context

Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, provision of fire and rescue services in England is a local government responsibility. In putting our plans together, Fire Authorities are required to have due regard to this guidance issued by central government in its National Framework document. This document explains the government's expectations and requirements for Integrated Risk Management Plans.

These requirements are that we should:

- Identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the communities we serve including those of a cross-border, multi-authority and national nature.
- Demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will be best used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities through authorities working either individually or collectively in a cost effective way.
- Set out our plan and risk based inspection programme for ensuring business and building owners are acting responsibly in line with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Our IRMP should cover at least a 3-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the fire and rescue authority are able to deliver the requirements set out in the National Framework.
- Reflect and respond to up to date risk analysis and the evaluation of service delivery outcomes.

The National Framework states the IRMP must ‘*Reflect effective consultation throughout their development and at all review stages with the community, workforce, representative bodies and partners.*’

This consultation strategy summarises how we will undertake the next phase of consultation as part of the development of the IRMP. The Service faces a number of challenges which will require changes to the way we operate. Our consultation this year included a pre-consultation exercise, providing us with early feedback from stakeholders and the public that has influenced the way we have prepared our IRMP and associated documents for Cabinet to approve, and continues to shape our thinking as to how to redefine the shape of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service in the future.

Recognising the important nature of the options being presented in the IRMP, we have engaged the support and expertise of 2 external providers, The Consultation Institute (TCI) and Opinion Research Services (ORS). These two organisations have provided invaluable support in developing the consultation strategy and approach and, by virtue of the separation from SFRS, offer a degree of independence which in turn adds rigour to our process.

Principles

Paying due consideration to the County Council Consultation Guidance note (including the 4 Gunning Principles of consultation), we are adopting the following principles of good consultation practice:

- Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage i.e. plans can change depending on the outcome of consultation
- Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response
- Adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and
- The results of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account.

Stakeholders

Our stakeholders fall into 1 of 5 main groups; our staff, the public, partner organisations and the business community. This consultation will ensure that we engage effectively with each.

Stakeholder Group	Subgroups for consideration	Notes
Staff	Firefighters, officers, support staff	We will seek the views of all of our staff
	Representative Bodies	There are 4 recognised representative bodies; The Fire Brigades Union, The Fire Officers Association, The Retained Firefighters Union and UNISON

Councillors	County Council, District and Borough, Town and Parish Councils	We will seek the views of all of our councillors across the Suffolk political landscape
Public	Geographic	<p>We wish to seek the views of people across the whole of Suffolk.</p> <p>Suffolk Fire and Rescue Services covers the local government districts/boroughs of Ipswich BC, St Edmundsbury BC, Forest Heath DC, Babergh DC, Mid Suffolk DC, Suffolk Coastal DC and Waveney DC.</p>
	The equality duty covers the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation	<p>We have a duty to:</p> <p>Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.</p> <p>Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.</p> <p>Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.</p> <p>Our consultation activity will be planned to reach these groups.</p>
Partner Organisations	Other emergency services	Suffolk Police, East of England Ambulance Service
	Other Fire and Rescue Services	Regional and bordering FRS's
	Local authorities	In addition to Suffolk County Council, there are a further 7 district councils in our area. We will also be contacting town and parish councils across Suffolk.
	Voluntary organisations	We have many partnerships with organisations in the voluntary and community sector. We have been invited to use the extensive networks of Suffolk Congress and Community Action Suffolk in our efforts to extend our reach.
Business Community	Small, medium and large	We wish to contact local businesses to seek their views on our approach.

Consultation Questions

The questions we are asking our stakeholders can be found within the IRMP document and are available for all to access as an electronic document though hard copies can be made available on request. Stakeholders are invited to submit their views to SFRS via the online questionnaire or alternatively responses can be returned via the hard copy questionnaire found at the back of the booklet.

Consultation document

The IRMP consultation document will be available on the SFRS website at the start of the consultation.

Publicising the consultation

The publicity of the consultation will be managed by the Fire Service Redesign Programme Team, with advice and support as necessary from Suffolk County Council's strategic communications team. The IRMP document and supporting papers will be available electronically at the start of consultation. Key stakeholders will receive a hard copy of the IRMP document and be signposted to our website for further information. We will have Freepost arrangements in place to support the return of paper copy questionnaires though it is anticipated and encouraged that most respondents will reply via an online questionnaire. Listed below are the different ways we will publicise the consultation.

- SFRS webpages
- SCC website
- SFRS intranet
- MySFRS (staff newsletter)
- Fire stations (hard copy)
- Social media
- Press release to all local media teams
- Radio Interviews
- Letters to stakeholders (as per stakeholder list)
- Other SCC buildings including libraries and other office locations
- Doctors surgeries
- Suffolk Resilience Forum website
- Local Authority Newsletters e.g. Inside SCC, WSH News
- Presentations to Local Authorities and Emergency Services Partners (on request)

Survey

The preferred mechanism to receive feedback will be through an online questionnaire as this will ensure that data is captured in a consistent manner. The questionnaire will ask a

number of questions related to the specific proposals presented as well as some IRMP based questions.

The IRMP document will contain provision for those wishing to respond by paper copy.

Consultation activities

Our Staff

In addition to the questionnaire, we will undertake the following additional activity to consult with our staff:

- Station visits
- Local public meetings that staff will be able to attend
- Regular updates via internal communications (MySFRS) and our intranet pages
- Ongoing dialogue with all 4 representative bodies

The Public

In addition to the questionnaire, we will undertake the following additional activity to consult with the public:

- Local public meetings at venues and locations across Suffolk
- Public forums (members recruited by an external facilitator, Opinion Research Services)

Our Partners

In addition to the questionnaire, we will undertake a series of face-to-face meetings, with the Chief Fire Officer and senior officers briefing partners on the consultation and encouraging them to submit a response. The Service will also respond to any request to present to partner forums during the period of consultation.

Consultation responses

Consultation responses will be managed via agreed arrangements made by the Service Redesign Team and Opinion Research Services. To ensure this, the Service Redesign Team can be directly contacted in the event of questions or guidance required by any person wishing to respond during the consultation period and a dedicated email address and phone number will be set up and published on the consultation materials.

All responses will be given a unique identifier and will be logged in a single consultation response register which will be hyperlinked to the individual response.

Analysis and reporting

A report on the consultation responses will be produced for the County Council Cabinet to consider in 2016.

The results of the consultation will be presented against each of the questions asked and, where possible, broken down by the demographic data supplied.

Free text responses submitted via the questionnaire will be analysed to identify common themes against which additional reporting may be undertaken.

We will not identify a member of the public in the report. Responses from elected representatives and organisations will be identified (this will be highlighted when seeking consultation responses).

We will be encouraging those who comment on social media to respond formally via the consultation questionnaire. Whilst we will monitor trends and themes on social media sites, the nature of the platform makes it very difficult to apply a consistent analysis method and therefore will not be considered as a formal response to the consultation.

Feedback

We will publish a report summarising the consultation responses and opinion research we have undertaken. We will inform those who have contributed to the consultation of the results and what will happen as a result of consultation.