

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

Review

I am pleased to report on a number of successes in the last year which have contributed towards the delivery of our commitments made in the Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2019-2023.

The 2019/20 year saw the implementation of both phases of the Remotely Managed Stations and Flexi Duty Officer Project. This project followed the Service Redesign consultation in 2016/17, and had a set of clear objectives to be achieved. These were:

- Transfer of additional resources and investment into our frontline station delivery model;
- Achieve a resilient and highly skilled operational command model;
- Secure an efficient and effective middle management tier;
- Provide increased resilience of the organisation across the middle manager tier;
- Achieve the agreed IRMP savings of £550k; and
- Provide greater flexibility for promotion, overcoming some existing barriers.

Importantly, this innovative project was delivered in co-design with the Fire Brigades Union and has seen us create a more resilient incident command model through the introduction of 24 Watch Based Stations Managers, opening up new career opportunities for our station-based staff. Following this investment in our frontline station delivery model, we were able to reduce the overall number of flexible duty officers across the whole organisation generating the required IRMP savings, whilst still allowing investment in our middle management tier through the recruitment of specialist Protection and Prevention Managers, as well as the addition of a number of specialist Grey Book Officer roles. All in all, we achieved our objectives and IRMP savings of £576k.

A number of other important IRMP projects have been progressing positively and will be covered by my colleagues in greater detail. These include the delivery of new fire

appliances, procurement and build of a new Arial Ladder Appliance and the development of the new Community Fire Station at Theale, all of which are important elements of our IRMP programme.

A significant focus in the last year was the development of three new strategies and underpinning risk analysis covering our Prevention, Protection and Response activities. These strategies were developed and agreed by the Fire Authority for consultation in February 2020. The analysis of risk has allowed us to examine our IRMP commitments in detail and develop proposals to further refine our understanding of local risk. I am pleased that the outcome of that consultation will be conscientiously considered by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 25 June. I am particularly proud of the steps taken with this consultation to improve on accessibility and inclusivity, and I am pleased to see moves towards a more balanced representation in the respondent profile. Our planned communication and engagement activity was impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions, however, through an increased focus on our digital channels, we managed to reach an additional 49,892 people when compared to the last consultation. In doing so, we were able to ensure we received over 300 responses to the consultation.

We have also been actively shaping and leading work at a national level through the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) Community Risk Programme. This programme aims to provide fire and rescue services with a set of standardised tools which will enable consistent identification, assessment and mitigation strategies for community risk. I believe that our independently validated Risk Modelling Methodology can be held up as best practice and I am pleased to report that we are contributing to the Community Risk Programme at both a practitioner and strategic level, with our Director of Support Services acting as Project Executive of the NFCC IRMP Guidance Project, and we will continue to be an active participant in this work in 2020/21.

Ongoing and looking forward

It would be impossible not to discuss the impact of COVID-19 in writing this update. In considering the safety of both our residents and staff and the need to protect our core service delivery function, we suspended all non-essential work areas in March

2020. This decision, resulted in us limiting our Safe and Well and Fire Safety Audit activity except where the risk of fire was greater than the risk presented by COVID-19. These challenging circumstances will impact on the delivery against our Prevention and Protection commitments in these areas throughout 2020/21, however, we are developing risk-based recovery plans for how these services will be reintroduced safely and in accordance with Government guidance. I am also pleased to report that whilst COVID-19 has created challenging circumstances, during this time we have maintained both our operational availability and our Thames Valley Fire Control Service. In addition to which, and despite the challenges faced, since the COVID-19 restrictions have been in place, we have been meeting and exceeding our Response Standard commitment to the people of Royal Berkshire, by responding to emergency incidents within 10 minutes on 75% of occasions.

Following consideration at Fire Authority in June, work will commence on the delivery of the agreed proposals in the Prevention, Protection and Response Strategies. In addition this work, the draft Annual Plan outlines a number of additional activities we will be undertaking which will include:

- Further development of our existing Risk Methodology and Risk Modelling capability to ensure we have an even better understanding of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks, working with academic partners to peer review and validate our work;
- Response to and learn from recommendations relating to the Grenfell Tower fire and align our Protection Strategy, policies and processes to these recommendation; and
- Align our systems of work and training to National Operational Guidance and National Operational Learning.

Cllr Dexter Smith, Integrated Risk Management Lead Member