

# **CFA 11.02.09 – Agenda item 13(A)**

## **Appendix A.**

### **A Report on the Consultation Response to 'Our Plan' 2009 – 2012.**

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## 1 Introduction

'Our Plan' sets out the aspirations of your Fire & Rescue Service. For a large part, and under the auspices of the IRMP, it specifically deals with the deployment of our resources; which for any essential public service, has both an operational and political dimension - calling for a balance of what individuals and society wants and needs, the professional judgment of Fire Officers, evidence based decisions and, of course, what can be achieved with the money allocated to the Service.

The Elected Members of the Combined Fire Authority play a key role in achieving this balance, assisted by the views of all who have an interest in the Fire & Rescue Service. This report is therefore produced primarily for the Combined Fire Authority, to present those views along with Officers' interpretation and response.

### Comment on the National dimension relating to local fire authorities.

During the consultation period for this IRMP, the Audit Commission, as one of those interested parties, published 'Rising to the Challenge' – *Improving fire service efficiency*. That document offers, *inter alia*, the following recommendations to Fire & Rescue Authorities:

Fire & Rescue Authorities should.....

- Challenge themselves and their CFOs to improve efficiency as well as performance.
- Lead communities by taking hard decisions affecting staffing levels and deployment in the interests of efficiency.
- Ensure that they have the right information to justify those decisions, and
- Defend decisions publicly once they have been made.

### Next Steps

This report goes before the CFA on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2009. Members will consider the responses to the consultation along with Officers' advice on any changes or clarifications arising from the plans and the comments received in relation to them.

Depending upon and respecting the outcome of those deliberations, Officers will refine and further clarify the next steps in relation to any proposed service changes and continue the further work on the areas outlined in the plan – presenting full and detailed specific plans for any changes in resource allocation back to the CFA at its next meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009. If and when Members are content with those specific plans, a further more detailed and targeted consultation will take place within areas that may be specifically affected (this will again run for 12 weeks but may be extended should Members wish).

The results of this further consultation will then be reported back to CFA at the end of September 2009 before any changes are set out for implementation.

NB: Several press enquiries have sought and been given clarification on the timing of these next steps.

## 2 Consultation & Method

## **2(i) What we were consulting on.**

We consulted on the proposed contents of 'Our Plan' 2009 – 2012 and Corporate Equalities Plan 2009 - 2012. A major component of Our Plan for this period was a distinct IRMP which used the Northern Review to define our approach risk (chapter 4 of the IRMP). The production of a distinct IRMP also satisfied a number of objectives from previous years' action plans - to review cover in the North of the CFA area and to determine a new attendance standard in the light of the removal of National standards.

## **2(ii) Consultation Method**

Views on proposals were sought through the following activities over a twelve week period ending 7<sup>th</sup> January 2009. (Note: The ORS on line survey ended at the end of November).

ORS on line survey

ORS paper survey

Face to face surveys by members of LFRS community safety team.

Hard copies sent to LFRS Stakeholder list\*

Hard copies sent to public Libraries

4 x Internal consultation sessions

1 x External consultation session

Presentations to Combined Fire Authority members

Presentations to service managers

Presentation to staff side representatives

Specific visits / briefings where requested: Visit to Castle Donnington Parish Council. Ashby Woulds Town Council. Rutland County Council.

\* A number of new parties have asked to be added to the stakeholder list for future consultation.

## **3 Consultation Results**

### **3(i) The Size & Shape of the responses**

#### **ORS Survey**

Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned to undertake a survey of 'Our Plan' 2009-12. The survey was distributed to members of the public, stakeholders, members of partner organisations/businesses and employees of Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service. 2,042 paper versions were distributed and 335 completed paper questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 16%. Respondents were also encouraged to complete the survey

online and 102 online surveys were completed, however, due to the nature of email distribution the response rate is unknown (for example, some respondents given the online link may have completed a paper version). The total number of responses to the survey was 437.

### **Internal Consultation meetings**

Four consultation sessions were held for service employees. Approximately 30 staff attended in total.

### **External Consultation meeting**

A stakeholder forum discussed the plans in full with approximately 20 representatives from organisations on the stakeholder list.

### **Petitions** (available for inspection)

Collective responses in the form of petitions were received as a response to the consultation. Petitions received were from residents in Shepshed and Moira. Officers are aware of a similar approach Oakham, but no petition has been forwarded to the Authority at this stage.

Shepshed - Petition received with 1,063 signatures in support of the statement .....“We the undersigned oppose the closure of Shepshed Fire Station due to close proximity to the M1, East Midlands Airport, Donington Park & we are a back up service for Loughborough and Coalville”

Moira - 1,633 petitions received in support of the statement.... “Save Moira Fire Station” with the added narrative “ I wish to register my objection to any proposal from the IRMP 2009-2012 and associated documents to close Moira Fire Station. I feel that:-

The IRMP does not sufficiently recognise the value of Moira Fire Station to community safety. The IRMP does not address the issues around proposed future developments and existing risks in Moira and the surrounding area. The additional risks posed to the community and visitors by an increase in waiting time for a fire engine from a different station are not acceptable. I can see no clearly identified case or measure where any savings or changes made (either cashable or in terms of a more effective fire service) will benefit me as a resident of Leicestershire.”

### **e-mails and letters** (available for inspection)

Both along similar lines to the petitions:

Shepshed - 38 emails received. 3 letters received. 1 letter from Shepshed Town Council.  
Moira - 6 letters received. 1 letter from Appleby Magna Parish Council.

### **Written submissions from:**

Rutland County Council (available for inspection).

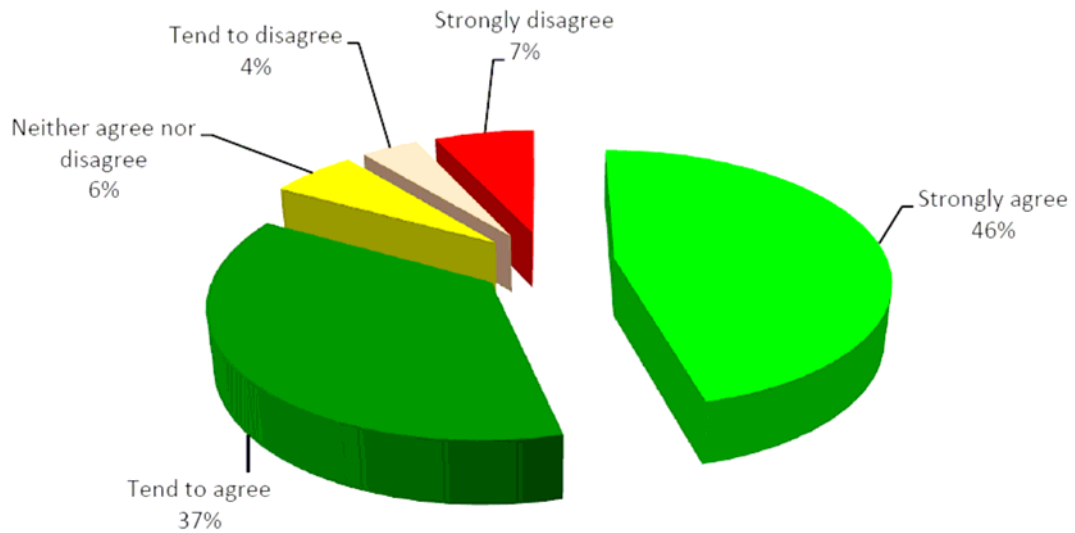
FBU response(available for inspection).

FPA written response(available for inspection).

**3(ii) Content of the response**

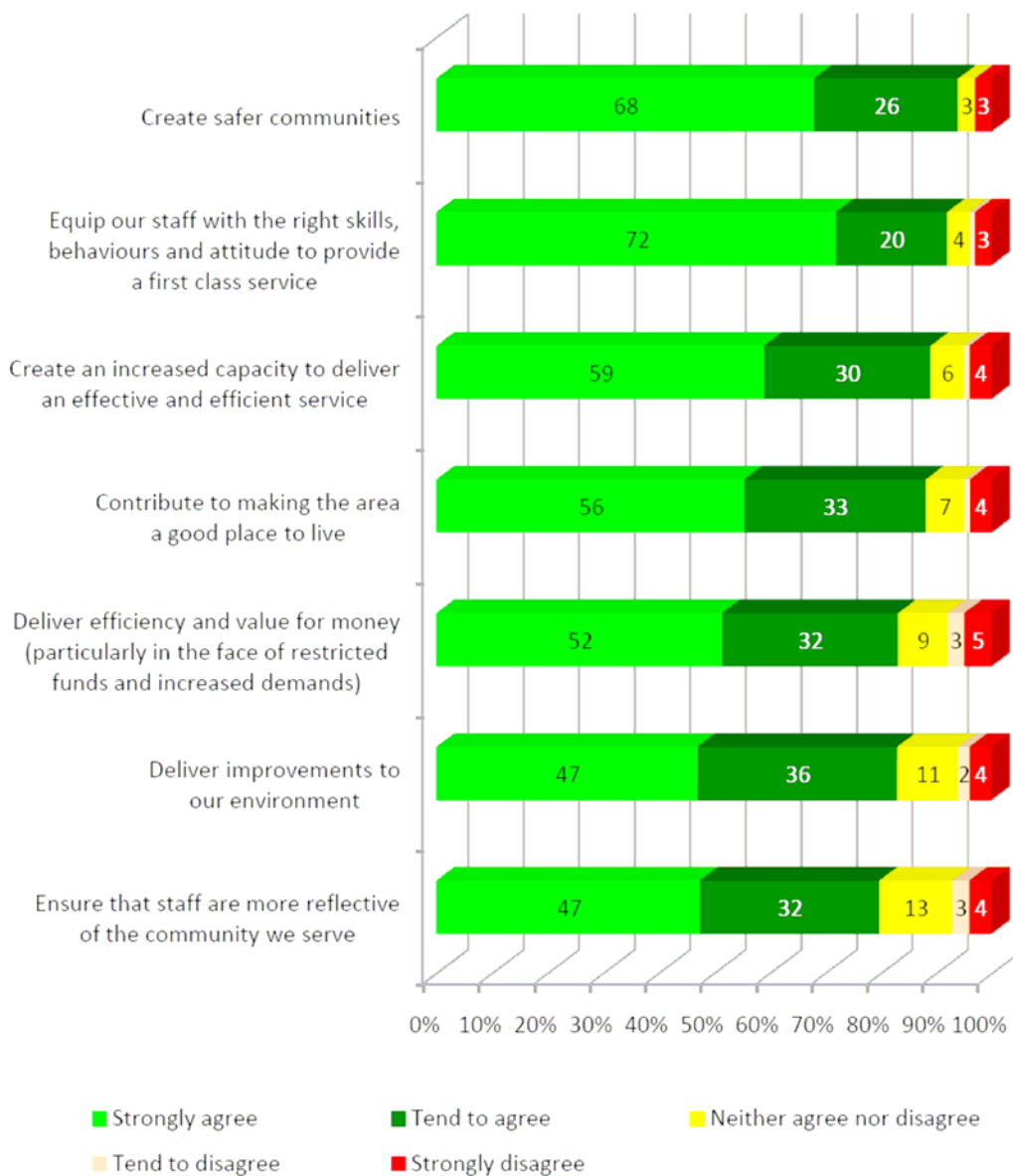
**ORS - Our Plan**

83% of respondents agree that the vision of safer communities in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and the mission statement of making our communities safer are appropriate for their Fire and Rescue Service, with 46% strongly agreeing. However, 11% disagree that the vision and mission statement are appropriate, with 7% strongly disagreeing.



## Our Objectives

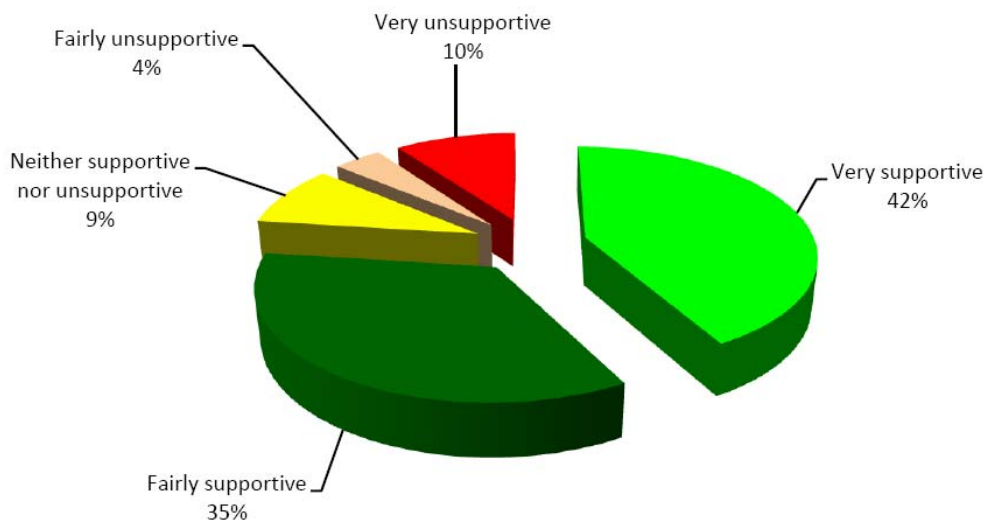
The vast majority of respondents agree with the seven priority objectives: create safer communities (94% agree); staff should be equipped with the right skills, behaviours and attitude to provide a first class service (92% agree); create an increased capacity to deliver an effective and efficient service (89% agree); contribute to making the area a good place to live (89% agree); deliver efficiency and value for money (84% agree); deliver improvements to our environment (83% agree) and ensure staff are more reflective of the community (79% agree). Only small proportions of respondents disagree with the objectives, ranging from 3% to 8%.



## Integrated Risk Management Plan

More than three quarters of respondents (77%) are supportive of the content of the risk management proposals, with 42% being very supportive. However, 14% report that they are unsupportive, with 10% reporting they are very unsupportive. A similar proportion (9%) are neither supportive nor unsupportive.

79% of respondents did not have specific comments to make regarding the proposals. Of those who did have specific comments, more than a third of comments (36%) related to not closing stations/making cuts whilst 13% relate to respondents reporting they are happy with the Fire & Rescue Service/Fire & Rescue Service do a good job. 6% of comments relate to respondents not agreeing with the report/the report being vague, whilst smaller proportions relate to: leading questions/lack of details (3%); more consultation needed (3%); question when/if plan will be delivered (3%) and 2% of comments stated it was nice to be consulted with.



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## Specific Comments on Proposals – Under ‘Other Comments’

Where respondents answered other, the comments stated are:

- All areas covered.
- All the views contained are generic, why cannot the service record specific processes on recent targets and its aim to reduce these further during the period.
- Concern on what issues and information will be used to influence 'professional judgement' on weight of attack. If the judgement is of principal managers when did they last attend a fire in the early stages? Suggest that many senior levels of management are not sector competent and therefore their judgement cannot be classed as professional.
- Has the fire service increased, shrank or remained same?
- Have combined ambulance and fire stations, on major routes
- Hope cutbacks do not affect the service.
- How can you cut front line jobs when you have increased the number of office based jobs?
- How many staff members are? How many vehicles you got? Do you need more staff?

- I believe that the weight of attack is a matter for public consultation and it is insulting to say otherwise. As not only an employee but also a resident of Leicestershire along with my family. I would like to think the service would send the best resources they have available at that time of my emergency call. Unfortunately I don't believe this is the case now and looks increasingly like it will only get worse! By reducing the number of fire stations and appliances people's lives will be put at risk.
- I feel that it is not a smaller fire service that we require but a larger one, the population of this country is increasing & there is more traffic on the roads.
- I feel the discussions that will be made will be based on financial and operational data. This should not increase risks to the local community. i.e., changing the cover given by fire stations, i.e. 24 hour 7 days per week to 12 hour day cover.
- I would also like to see how the tax payers' money is allocated in percentage terms to actual 999 calls, fire fighter pay, fire fighter training, risk management plan, creating safer communities, etc.
- Interested where the money is coming from and who it will be helping the community
- Is it possible to include English in your ethnic group
- Large control centres should cope better with wide areas and multiple needs but smaller areas served by local units may produce faster immediate response in many situations. Balance is necessary for optimum effect even if it costs more.
- Making communities safer relies not only on our intervention but requires areas of communities which are receptive to being educated and there are members within the community who just will not be interested. Those are areas which will require specialist intervention not utilising operational resources to try and fix the problems.
- Our Fire Service to present answers to most of what is laid out. What a waste of money putting to paper what is the Commander in Chief's job and his team. We will be told what you want to tell us, and no doubt cut services, often whatever the cost, it is a total waste and better spent at services and we send it to Swansea!?
- Overall it would seem that the brigade is using progression thinking as opposed to following dicta.
- Part-time station become full-time
- Please can you make sure that your staff have had training in dealing with people with dementia?
- Pleasing to see that attendance times have been on the whole maintained against a background of physical barriers which could have an adverse affect (traffic calming, increased traffic volumes).
- Public attitude – trouble, with youth, hoax calls - promote.
- Should be active in promoting the services provided.
- The IRMP is open and honest; the targets set in the specific recommendations are realistic but challenging.
- The job of a Fire and Rescue Service is to put out fires and rescue people. End.

#### **4 Summary of the key themes (where not in support of plans.)**

##### **Shepshed - Common responses / reasons to not close the station:**

- Endangering lives / properties

- Loughborough / Birstall are too far away
- It is a newly constructed building
- There is a local busy road network
- It is a growing population
- It is near the M1, A42 and airport
- The current firefighters do a good job
- There are many old people, old peoples' homes, single parents, schools and families
- Previous experiences of rescues etc
- Local development plan means there will be more buildings built
- Donington Park is close by
- They currently cover Loughborough and Coalville too
- Busy traffic means others won't be able to reach the area rapidly

#### **Moira - Common responses / reasons to not close the station:**

- Close to M42 / National Forest
- Twycross Zoo, chemical plant, Conkers, Moira Furnace and hotels close by
- Tourism
- Future developments and existing risks
- Too far for anywhere else to cover
- Current education and cover is very important
- Safety of employees and people at work (in Moira)
- Previous experiences of fires, rescues etc
- Increasing traffic in the area

#### **Specific points raised by Ashby Woulds Town Council**

- Relocation means cuts to the local people.
- Consultation and advertising of the consultation needs to be given greater clarity.
- Growth in North West Leicestershire, what effect will it have?
- Will the new proposed HQ result in cuts in front line services?
- Cost of Moira is £114K ? Needs clarifying.
- (County Councillor) asked about the use of developers contributions and how we would utilise them.
- There was a request to produce data that reductions in the "over provision" in NW Leicestershire in comparison to other areas would not produce an under provision in this area as a result.
- What would the closure of Moira Station mean to the attendance times on the various stretches and carriageways of the M42/A42.
- FBU asked about how we would deal with the staff if the station was closed.
- What % of the budget is spent on operational as opposed to support staff and how has that % changed over the years?

#### **Rutland County Council Response**

Concerns arising from a reduction in cover – based principally upon:

- The rural nature of the County and travel distances

- Proximity of alternative provision
- The importance of sustaining community involvement and the role of LFRS within the LSP.

Aware of the status of the consultation and wish to participate in ongoing dialogue as plans evolve.

### **Fire Brigades Union Response**

A welcome response that was well presented, considerate of the challenges and community focused.

Number of issues both technical and non technical – some of which accepted in the caveats of the Northern Review (need to bring in further data on risks other than dwelling fires and RTCs, retained availability, workloads etc). Other matters will inform ongoing dialogue with FBU and other rep bodies relating to weight of attack etc.

Critical of the consultation itself – not good enough.

## 5. Conclusions.....

### The consultation itself.

Need to improve public awareness of the process and timings.  
Improve stakeholder list with geographically defined community groups.  
Greater clarity in defining proposals.

### Clear tension between local and CFA wide considerations.

Note strength of local feelings. Local matters to local people. Understood.

### The effect of growth plans for CFA area

Officers aware of LDFs and various core strategy documents. Tension between dealing with the here and now and potential future risk. Balance to be struck.

### Continue to build on picture of risk

As set out in Northern Review – more work to be done to refine picture.  
More detailed work on Castle Donington.  
Also - particular emphasis on workload modelling in relation to contribution to local partnerships and community safety work - Oakham.

### Examine failure to achieve 10 min standard

Current inability to meet 10 min standard – examine volume / impact.

### FBU contribution

Given the quality of response from FBU - consider working party with FBU to further develop the proposals - specifically ridership / crewing proposals.

### Impact on other Service levelwork

Ensure that retained review, RCC project and this IRMP are coordinated.