

Report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	
date	16 December 2005	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

DRAFT COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2006/09 (YEAR 3 L (I) RMP) CONSULTATION CLOSE OUT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Authority on the public consultation outcomes in response to the Draft Community Safety Plan (Year 3 Local Integrated Risk Management Plan).

2. BACKGROUND

It is a statutory requirement within the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework that Fire and Rescue Authorities produce an L (I) RMP Action Plan each year. Part of this process is to consult the public regarding the proposals for a period of 12 weeks. The Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority approved the draft document on 22 August 2005. Public consultation commenced on 12 September 2005 and closed on 5 December 2005.

3. REPORT

3.1 Following approval from the Fire Authority the consultation with regard to the Community Safety Plan was conducted in liaison with Opinion Research Services, a professional organisation and key operative of the Fire Service Consultation Association.

3.2 In conjunction with ORS the following elements all combined to form part of the consultation process :

- The documents were placed on the Fire and Rescue website with a high profile link from the homepage; further links were made on the Intranet. Nottinghamshire County Council website also included links on their 'consultation' page.
- At the start of the process of consultation the trade unions were invited to HQ to meet with the head of information services and given the opportunity to raise questions on the proposals. This was also an invite to put their own response back to the organisation as part of the process.
- Colour copies of the document and posters were circulated to all libraries in both the City and County, along with other public buildings including Fire and Rescue Service premises.
- To address key business and community stakeholders, copies of the document were sent to 120 organisations. Included with the document were invites to a stakeholder seminar at the Nottingham Crown Plaza Hotel, held on 29 November 2005.

- Public focus groups were arranged around the County at Gamston, Worksop, Beeston and in the City Centre. Invited members of the public from a cross section of society met to discuss our proposals for the future. In total 34 out of an invited 40 people attended these group meetings.
- A briefing seminar was also arranged at South Forest Leisure Centre, Edwinstowe for all our Watch, Station and Group Managers to engage them in the consultation process.
- Specific focus groups were conducted with regard to Demand Led Resourcing. These involved public and employees within the Central and West Bridgford areas.
- ORS circulated 5,000 questionnaires to members of the public across the County along with all Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service staff. The questionnaire asked seven questions around issues covered in our Community Safety Plan with a six-point scale for answers, from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

3.3 In pure numbers, the responses to the Community Safety Plan did not reach previous years totals. However, because of the way in which the process was handled and constructed by ORS, the responses received have proved to be of a greater quality. Particular areas of reference were:

- **RiskWatch & Firesetters** Without exception the public focus groups were in favour of implementing the plans to extend the RiskWatch and Firesetters programme across the County. The public's view was that this is a key area of work and should be extended to all areas.
- **Achieve 25,000 Home Safety Checks by December 2009** The focus group and stakeholders seminar were strongly in agreement that Home Safety Checks should be increased to improve public safety. The belief was that the Service should provide 'all round' safety advice, as the agency best placed to deliver this service.
- **Demand Led Resourcing** In the context that we require more resources to deliver Community Safety initiatives, the overwhelming majority agreed with this concept. Concerns were raised with regard to resilience should a major incident occur in the hours when these appliances are no longer available. However following assurances over cover moves, the public were supportive.
- **Dunkirk & Beeston Fire Station** There was broad agreement during the consultation process that a new Fire Station that covered both areas would enhance the Service's presence in the community. Some members of the public did express doubt about the concept of a community fire station due to the perception that a fire station is 'out of bounds' to the public.
- **Relocation of Central Fire Station** Due to the major re-developments in the City Centre the participants in the consultation process agreed with the need for a change in location. They asked that the Service balanced this move with the fact that the City Centre is at times highly populated and vibrant.

3.4 In addition to all of the consultation listed, three Best Value reviews looking at Road Traffic Collision response, Emergency Special Service Calls and Partnership Working were also concluded during the consultation period. These were specifically commissioned in light of the new statutory duty placed upon Authorities

to deliver additional response within the Fire and rescue Services Act 2004. The outcomes will be incorporated into the Community Safety Plan and will be implemented within the 2006/2009 period.

3.5 In summary the consultation process has given the Fire Authority and its Senior Managers an informed opinion on their future proposals. These responses, as well as other audits, reviews and Government initiatives, will now be formulated into the final Community Safety Plan, which will be presented, to Fire Authority early in 2006 for final approval.

3.6 The Community Safety Plan, with all of its parts will enable the Authority to firmly position itself in terms of the negotiations with regard to the forthcoming Local Area Agreement. The Authority's wider Safety Agenda sets the organisation well in terms of the Stronger Safer Communities theme and allows for the Service to meet both local and national expectations. By setting out what it intends to achieve within the next three years the Authority is clearly stating how it intends to achieve its vision of "A safer Nottinghamshire by putting Safety at the heart of the Community".

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the public consultation exercise was within the approved budget allocated to the Community Safety Plan for the year 2005/06.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

Staffing for the consultation process comes from within the existing staffing of the Information Services department at Service Headquarters.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As part of the agreement with ORS all of the questionnaires sent out, and forums held were accessible to all areas of our community with regard to certain focus groups the opinion of minority groups were specifically sought.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The need to produce a Local Risk Management Plan is laid down in the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework which is enacted by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Failure to produce and deliver such a plan could result in ministerial intervention.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That responses be factored into the final Community Safety Plan to be presented for adoption in 2006.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

- Fire and Rescue Services Circular 7/2003 ;
- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 ;
- Fire and Rescue Services National Framework 2004/05 ;
- Fire and Rescue Services National Framework 2005/06 ;
- Draft Fire and Rescue Services National Framework 2006/08 ;
- Draft report of Consultation with Public – ORS ;
- Draft report of Demand Led Resourcing – ORS ;
- Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority reports – July, August 2005 ;
- Responses to questionnaires in CSP – ORS ;

- NFRS Best Value review of Road Traffic Collisions ;
- NFRS Best Value review of Special Service Calls ;
- NFRS Best Value review of Partnerships.

Paul Woods
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER