



LANCASHIRE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

LANCASHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE TRAINING CENTRE, WASHINGTON HALL, WESTGATE, CHORLEY. PR7 6DH

TEL – 01257 241557

Response to Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-2022

The Fire Brigades Union welcome the opportunity to comment on the latest IRMP document from LFRS. To be honest there is little contained within that we would seek to take issue over. We look forward to seeing detailed and updated information becoming available throughout the lifetime of this IRMP through the production of Annual Service plans and the next Emergency Cover Review.

Efficiency and Collaboration

The FBU has been involved with and supported the LFRS/NWAS Co-responding collaboration pilot from the beginning as part of the wider National Joint Council (NJC) Emergency Medical Response work stream trials. Outside of these national trails, this type of work is not currently contained within the role maps of firefighters and therefore is outside of their contractual obligations. This was deemed to be, and still remains the case today, by Judge Mr Justice Butterfield in the High Court *Bull and anor v Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority; Lincolnshire County Council v FBU and others [2007]*. It is therefore premature, in our view to state, “Delivery of integrated public services will see us continue to build on our co-responding partnerships” until we have a clearer picture of the National position. As things stand there is only a commitment for the NJC pilot schemes to continue until the 28th February 2017. If the NJC agree that this type of work will be incorporated into our conditions of service in the future then of course we will continue to liaise with LFRS, NWAS and the paramedic unions to develop this work further.

Accountability and Transparency

The FBU nationally remains opposed to Police and Crime Commissioners taking on responsibility for the delivery of Fire and Rescue Service’s. The public have a tremendous respect for Firefighters and quite rightly hold them in high regard, readily allowing them into their homes. We feel this trust and respect could be compromised if we become too closely associated with the police. Locally, we have attended regular meetings with the Lancashire PCC, Clive Grunshaw and these will continue whilst this move is still on the Governments agenda. The FBU in Lancashire continue to support the current Combined Fire Authority governance arrangements. We will also be keeping a close eye on devolution proposals for a Combined Authority for Lancashire.

Workforce Reform

The FBU welcome the commitment to transform workforce diversity, however we do have to question how the recent decision to restrict recruitment onto the last whole time recruits course to RDS personnel assisted the service in this matter. Within the IRMP LFRS recognises the diverse communities it serves. To make our workforce truly diverse recruitment needs to be opened up to people from all communities of

Lancashire and beyond and not just those living and working in areas served by RDS appliances. This type of strategy would not only assist with creating a more diverse workforce, it would also enable recruitment of talent from outside of the service, providing equal opportunity for all. RDS staff of course would still be free to apply for whole time positions under a recruitment strategy open to all.

Prevention and Protection

The FBU in Lancashire support the four themes of helping people to start safe, live safe, age safe and be safe on our roads as a way of providing strategic focus to the delivery of these services in collaboration with partner agencies.

Responding to Fires and other Emergencies

The FBU always support the ambition to deliver high standards of operational response. With critical fire incidents especially, time is of the essence, second's count. Speed and weight of attack is paramount with the correct number of firefighters and officers deployed to effect a competent and safe resolution to the incident. We are happy to see the IRMP contain a commitment to equipping staff with the best information, training and equipment to carry out their role efficiently, effectively and most importantly in our view, safely.

We welcome the commitment to *"identify key lessons through effective debriefing to ensure future operational response continues to evolve"*. We would also like to see systems evolve for the better sharing of information between Fire & Rescue Services so that we continue to improve the way we learn from each other. The FBU in Lancashire has a history of sharing H&S information with LFRS in the hope of improving firefighter safety, this information should automatically be shared by between FRS where it can be done so legally.

The provision of risk information to crews is an essential first building block towards resolving incidents. The more crews know about a property and its contents the better equipped they are to understand and mitigate the risks involved when an incident occurs. Systems should be in place to ensure that risk information is gathered from multiple sources both inside the organisation and from partner agencies, especially when we are responding jointly or on their behalf as we do for the Police with Gaining Entry incidents.

Valuing our People

The FBU welcomes LFRS commitment towards its staff; this shows recognition that its greatest resource is its staff. We agree with all the ambitions from *"providing a highly content workforce that is broadly representative of the diverse nature of the communities it serves"* through to *"providing staff with opportunities for learning and development"*. The FBU has always had a good working relationship with LFRS and we also will strive to ensure a productive industrial relations environment continues to be the norm in Lancashire.

Delivering Value for Money

The FBU will reserve comment for the separate consultation currently taking place on the capital and revenue budgets, other than to say that we recognise the ongoing pressures on the LFRS budget due to this Governments continued squeeze on public sector finances.

Ian McGill

FBU Brigade Secretary