Update on IRMP Steering Group action strategy

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Addressed to: The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer

Please forward to: Officers responsible for prevention, protection and response policy

Summary
This circular provides an update on the work of the IRMP Steering Group in FRS Circular 25/2007 and announces the publication of the first tranche of IRMP policy guidance chapters on the Communities and Local Government website. This circular also draws attention to research published on the Department's website which will contribute to the evidence base for IRMP.

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1.0 **Background**

1.1 Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) were notified of the work of the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) Steering Group in FRS Circular 25/2007. The IRMP Steering Group provides the forum for key stakeholders to discuss emerging issues on IRMP and to share experiences to date in the IRMP process and its future development. The Steering Group also acts as a source of expertise on all issues of process raised by the public, business or other stakeholders in respect of IRMP and identifies the need for further advice and guidance.

1.2 Representatives on the Steering Group include the Chairs of the Practitioners and Business and Community Safety Fora, Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), Confederation of British Industry, Health and Safety Executive, Local Government Association, Fire Protection Association, and the three main uniformed representative bodies as well as other key stakeholders from the ‘fire industry’.

1.3 As reflected in FRS Circular 25/2007 the IRMP Steering Group endorsed a number of key priorities to support ongoing development of IRMP which fall into two main opportunities for development:

- The production and clarification of policy, advice and guidance to support IRMPs
- Research to address current gaps in the understanding and implementation of IRMPs and the underpinning of future advice and guidance

2.0 **Integrated Risk Management Planning Policy Guidance**

2.1 Work has continued to develop chapters of IRMP policy guidance which will capture and provide good practice for FRAs on approaches to themed areas within the scope of IRMPs. These chapters, developed in consultation with stakeholders, take account of existing policy developments within CFOA, FRAs and other stakeholder areas from within and outside the IRMP Steering Group.

2.2 This circular announces the publication of the following chapters of policy guidance which have been published on the Communities and Local Government website at [http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/developingfuture/integratedriskmanagement/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/developingfuture/integratedriskmanagement/) and will also be available via the Fire Gateway website at [http://www.fire.gov.uk/](http://www.fire.gov.uk/).

- Community Safety
- Road Traffic Collision Reduction
- Protection of heritage buildings and structures
- Wildfire
- Environmental Strategies
- Equality and Diversity
- Business Continuity Management

2.3 A short overview of each chapter is provided at Annex A.
2.4 Communities and Local Government are of the view that an IRMP is best produced and implemented at a local level based upon local needs, but consider that these chapters of policy guidance will assist in ensuring a consistency in approach and quality in the way that IRMPs are produced. For the avoidance of doubt this guidance is not mandatory and has been made available for FRAs to use, should they wish to, in the development of themed areas of IRMP.

2.5 FRAs will be aware that FRS Circular 25/2007 also indicated that chapters of policy guidance would be produced on:

- Flooding
- IRMP and Civil Contingencies Act
- Local Area Agreements (LAAs)

2.6 Since the issue of FRS Circular 25/2007, reviews have been undertaken by the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and Sir Michael Pitt into the 2007 floods. Additionally, a cross Government liaison group has been established to take forward the recommendations from the Major Incident Investigation Board into the Buncefield incident. Consequently, the chapters of guidance on Flooding and IRMP and the Civil Contingencies Act have been put on hold pending reflection of the learning outcomes from these groups and reviews.

2.7 The chapter on LAAs is intended to be released later in the summer to build upon the recently issued LAA tool kit. Publication of the research that underpinned the LAA Toolkit is announced as part of the suite of research reports below.

2.8 This circular also advises that the IRMP Steering Group has recently commissioned two new chapters of policy guidance on Fire Safety and Business Continuity Management which are intended to be published later in the summer.

3.0 Research to underpin and drive forward the evidence base for IRMP

3.1 This circular also announces the publication of the following research reports which are available on the Department’s website. A précis of the research reports is attached as Annex B of this circular and includes the web link to the full reports.

3.2 The Research and Statistics Division of Fire and Resilience Directorate carries out research in support of Communities and Local Government policy. In particular the work announced here supports the evidence base for IRMP and is complementary to the first tranche of IRMP policy guidance chapters. The titles of the research reports are:

- FSEC Toolkit Strategy Document: Executive Summary
- Costs and Benefits of Alternative Responses to Automatic Fire Alarms
- Risk Terminology
- Risk assessment tools and techniques for IRMP and CCA
- Local Target Setting: the development of a risk based model for the fire and rescue service
- Legislative base for Integrated Risk Management Planning
Update on IRMP Steering Group action strategy

3.3 The reports will also be available via the Fire Gateway website at http://www.fire.gov.uk/.

3.4 A report describing the analysis of fire and rescue service performance and outcomes with reference to population socio-demographics was also published as part of the circular 34/2008 and is a part of the research work supporting IRMPs.

3.5 FRAs will also wish to be aware that the Research Councils hosted in March an ‘IDEAS Factory’ on IRMP research. This was an innovative way to generate research projects from cross disciplinary academic teams with the aim of finding new knowledge to support future challenges facing FRSs. As part of this the Research Councils have agreed to make available significant funding in the order of £2m for the successful projects developed from the IDEAS factory. A decision on which projects are to be funded is expected in Autumn this year; FRSs will be apprised of when known.

3.6 Communities and Local Government research on the following subjects will also be published in due course:

- Evaluating the Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund Grant Programme
- Evaluation of Home Fire Risk Check Initiative – Interim Evaluation
- Understanding attitudes towards fire risk

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Fire and Rescue Service Development Division
ANNEX A

Summary of IRMP Policy Guidance Chapters

- Community Safety
- Road Traffic Collision Reduction
- Protection Of Heritage Buildings And Structures
- Wildfire
- Environmental Strategies
- Equality and Diversity
- Business Continuity Management

Community Safety

1. Fire prevention programmes will remain at the heart of the work of FRA work in local communities. In taking forward this work authorities will be seeking to influence the behaviour of many of the same groups within communities as other public service providers – for example the elderly, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, those living in poor quality housing, drug and alcohol users and those involved in crime and disorder. This provides clear opportunities for development of effective partnership programmes.

2. There is an increasing recognition of the contribution that the FRS can make to wider public safety outcomes. The outcome is however most effective if there is engagement between local authority, police and health and other partners through defining community strategies and delivering this ambition through LAAs.

3. Whilst this document is titled Community Safety this is set in the context of the contribution the FRA may wish to make to improved community safety outcomes in the widest sense in its area rather than the Home Office/Police definition of community safety, which is synonymous with crime, and the fear of crime.

4. This document sets the context of community fire safety with regards to IRMP as well as indicating the contribution the service is able to make, should they so wish, to wider community safety through the scope of other national and local policies working in conjunction with other partner agencies.

Road Traffic Collision Reduction

5. The national road safety strategy produced by the Department for Transport acknowledges the responsibilities of local authorities and local road safety partnerships for the reduction of road injuries, expressed through Local Transport Plans and more targeted delivery plans. This is included within “Safer Roads” objectives that promote travel choice and healthy communities, free from the intimidation caused by road traffic, particularly the antisocial use of vehicles.
6. There have been significant reductions in road injuries since the national road safety strategy was introduced but there is much to be done to bring down road injuries still further and to deal with the harmful effects of road traffic. Whilst there is no statutory duty there is a clear opportunity for the FRS to become a part of national and local road safety partnerships and take benefit from the existing experience, knowledge, skills and links that are already in place and to assist in reducing deaths and injuries on the road. This chapter outlines the strategies and delivery mechanisms available to the FRS in contributing to road traffic collision reduction should they wish to include this activity within their IRMP.

**Protection of heritage buildings and structures**

7. This document is intended to guide FRAs in the preparation of an IRMP strategy for Heritage Protection. The purpose is to assist the FRS in understanding the scope of heritage considerations in the IRMP process to undertake risk analysis, develop response and prevention strategies, develop delivery mechanisms and to monitor and review and evaluate such activity.

8. The whole of our historic environment enriches our quality of life, and contributes to local character and a sense of place; and some historic buildings, monuments, landscapes and areas are of special importance nationally or even internationally. There is also a case to be made for its contribution to the local economy, as an employer, through associated business enterprise and through tourism. This chapter sets how the IRMP needs to take account of this by setting out how the FRA will contribute towards the protection of our heritage and the contribution it makes to the economy and culture for local people and visitors to the UK.

**Wildfire**

9. This document is intended to guide FRAs in the preparation of an IRMP strategy for combating wildfires. The purpose is to assist the FRS in understanding the scope of wildfire considerations in the IRMP process to undertake risk analysis, develop response and prevention strategies, develop delivery mechanisms and to monitor and review and evaluate such activity.

10. Forest, heathland, agricultural, and other vegetation fires have considerable direct and indirect impacts on society, the economy, health and well-being, and may impact directly upon the transport and recreation sectors. Projected climate change highlights the urgency with which fire prevention planning for wildfires should be addressed.

11. In aiming to successfully deliver wildfire strategies the FRS will need to work in partnership with other stakeholders. The challenge to the FRS will be identifying the most appropriate stakeholders and then working effectively together to deliver the shared goals of the wildfire strategy. The FRS should work with policy advisors, such as Natural England, Forestry Commission and Environment Agency, National Parks as well as Local Authority Officers to:

   - Ensure that habitats that are susceptible to fire have appropriate fire management plans that ensure prevention designs, practices and operations.
   - Encourage landowners to engage with the FRS to ensure partnership working.
   - Provide relevant spatial data sets to increase the effectiveness of Risk Analysis Systems (RAS).
12. This document offers information, advice and direction in order that FRSs can pre-plan for incidents that are within their normal capability and ‘extra-ordinary’ events that may require the assistance of external organisations in order to find an efficient resolution.

**Environmental Protection**

13. The protection of the environment by the development of pollution prevention and control is seen as a core function in an IRMP that is designed to improve the safety of the community.

14. In the emergency and non-emergency phases of an incident, FRS intervention can significantly reduce the impact that spillages or firewater run-off containing environmentally damaging materials may have on the environment. Such actions can also provide significant public health benefits. Public drinking water is drawn from rivers, lakes, lochs and groundwater. FRS activities to protect these waters will help safeguard public drinking water supplies and consequently public health, thereby fulfilling the duties under Section 7(1)(b) of the FRS Act 2004.

15. Non-fire incidents, such as flooding, may also result in environmental impact from a site which the FRS may be able to work with those responsible for the risk and other partners to mitigate.

16. This chapter complements existing guidance by the Environment Agency on pollution prevention and working protocols with the FRS and provides guidance on prioritising environmental protection as an objective within the FRA’s strategic, systematic and dynamic risk assessment process.

**Equality and Diversity**

17. Valuing and promoting equality and diversity are central to the effectiveness of the FRS. The ability to protect the public through fire prevention, fire protection and emergency response depends on understanding the differing needs of the diverse communities they serve.

18. For all FRAs the core of IRMP is about assessing and analysing local risks and the action required to prevent and limit the impact on their communities. Included at the core of this planning process must be issues of equality and diversity. The strategic planning and mainstreaming of equality and diversity at the onset will enable FRS to analyse and identify the risks facing their communities, develop appropriate policies and prioritise and allocate the required resources to deliver an efficient and effective response.

19. This chapter provides guidance and assistance to FRAs with regards mainstreaming equality and diversity in developing their IRMPs.

**Business Continuity Management**

20. The British Insurance Brokers Association (BIBA) report that Government figures suggest nearly 1 in 5 businesses suffer a major disruption every year and 80% of businesses affected by a major incident close down within 18 months. Such disruption does not only occur in the commercial estate; local authorities and other public and voluntary sector organisations can also be victims of a major adverse event. The consequential impact of such an event can extend beyond the curtilage of the organisation and into the community; its effects are potentially long term, and can be a contributory factor in increased levels of crime, worklessness and health inequalities.
21. Communities and Local Government (CLG) issued guidance to fire and rescue authorities in England in 2003, outlining its requirements for the production of Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs). IRMP Guidance Note 1 detailed what authorities needed to do in order to produce a plan and what such plans might contain. In addition to expectations relating to the reduction of loss of life and injury in fires, there is an objective within the principal guidance (Guidance Note 1) for ‘reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents’.

22. In addition to the assessment and mitigation of risk in the community, fire and rescue authorities as Category 1 responders within the definition of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) have a duty to put in place their own Business Continuity Plans. This Chapter is not intended to cover the ‘internal’ CCA requirements for business continuity management. This document is intended as a guide to fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in consideration of their obligations within the IRMP framework, relating to the consequential impact of an adverse event. It is intended to be used for the outward facing aspects of community risk management.
ANNEX B

RESEARCH REPORTS PUBLISHED ON THE CLG WEBSITE

The FSEC Toolkit Strategy Document: Executive Summary
This report is intended to improve the understanding of the FSEC Toolkit within the middle and senior management roles of the FRSs who are using it. This should improve the acceptance of the Toolkit and use of the outputs, in particular now that the FiReControl project is requiring high quality risk data in support of the Risk Management Functionality that will be a part of the Regional Control Centres.

http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fsectoolkit012008

Costs and benefits of Automatic Fire Alarms
Automatic fire alarm (AFA) calls provide a major proportion of FRS turnouts and are often false alarms. Fire Service Circular 31/2004 and The CFOA Remotely Monitored Fire Alarm Policy had previously proposed possible approaches to attending automatic fire alarms. This project first identified the strategies for attending automatic fire alarm calls that are in use in fire and rescue services, then developed a cost benefit model and collected the data necessary to carry out a numerical analysis of the strategies.

The results of this research indicate that an automatic fire alarm response strategy where response is matched to time of day and to the risk level of a building is likely to be the most efficient use of resources.

http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firealarmsresearch22008

Risk Terminology
In order to improve inter-operability at incidents all agencies need to understand what they mean by potentially differing or conflicting risk terminology, procedures and signals. This project provides the foundation for a data dictionary for use by all agencies dealing with risk.

The research undertaken by CLG was supplied to the Cabinet Office to assist in the development of their glossary of terms for Category 1 and 2 responders (as outlined in the Civil Contingencies Act), thus supporting effective cross Government working. The output of this initiative will also support operations in the new Regional Fire Control Centres.

http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/riskterminology

Risk Assessment Tools and Techniques
The Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) and Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) are both focused on integrated emergency management which require effective risk analysis and planning for a range of defined emergencies.Whilst they are supported by underpinning advice and guidance there is lack of clarity of what risk assessment tools, techniques and data are (a) available, (b) appropriate and effective, (c) required and (d) already used to support the respective risk analysis.
Update on IRMP Steering Group action strategy

This study provided advice on the availability, selection and use of risk assessment techniques, tools, data and guidance by Fire and Rescue Services, Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) and other Category 1 and 2 responders (as defined in the CCA).

The report includes an Appendix with details of over 180 different data sources, tools and techniques with comments on the suitability of each. It is planned to format these as a simple search guide and publish it on the Fire Gateway.

http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/riskassessmenttools

Local Target Setting: the development of a risk based model for the fire and rescue service

A Toolkit to support Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in making the most of the new performance framework was recently published on the CLG website. This report details the background work that supported the development of that toolkit. The outcome of the report was that FRAs wanted support in local target setting and that they wanted some examples to guide them, all of which was incorporated into the published toolkit.

http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/localtargetsetting

The Legislative Base for Integrated Risk Management Planning

Part of the process of drawing up an IRMP requires Fire and Rescue Authorities to be aware of a variety of legislation and guidance that affects their responsibilities as both category 1 responders and employers - there is a lot of legislation that they need to comply with. Case law suggests that CLG should provide guidance to Fire and Rescue Authorities on their legal duties, but CLG should be aware of the responsibilities that exist when providing guidance. Given that IRMP is a relatively new requirement on Fire and Rescue Authorities, it was considered appropriate to assess the legal requirements underpinning the IRMP process. This information was structured in a spreadsheet, so that it could also be integrated with other aspects of IRMPs.

http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/developingfuture/integratedriskmanagemen­t/