



Fire Brigades Union Tayside

Initial Response to the 2008/09 IRMP Consultation Document

Legislative Background

Why do Fire Authorities have to produce an IRMP?

The requirement to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan is laid out in the National Framework Document, as directed by the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005. The Act states;

40 Framework document

(1) The Scottish Ministers shall prepare a document—

(a) setting out priorities and objectives for relevant authorities in connection with the carrying out of their functions; and

(b) containing—

(i) such guidance in connection with the carrying out of any of those functions; and

(ii) such other matters relating to those authorities or those functions, as the Scottish Ministers consider appropriate.

41 Adherence

(1) In carrying out their functions, relevant authorities shall have regard to the document prepared under section 40(1).

The document referred to above is the National Framework Document which expands on more detailed requirements such as;

9. *In summary, Fire and Rescue Authorities must each have in place and maintain*

an IRMP which reflects local need and which sets out plans to tackle effectively both existing and potential risks to communities. They should also:

- produce annual action plans on which they have fully consulted their local communities and stakeholders (including Fire and Rescue Authority staff), allowing twelve weeks for the consultation;*
- take account of Scottish Executive or HM Fire Services Inspectorate guidance in producing their plans, incorporating good practice identified across Scotland; and*
- make efficient and effective use of resources to implement the IRMP and the action plan, including using more efficient and flexible working practices where appropriate.*

A number of key phrases have been highlighted.

Summary

The Fire Brigades Union was looking forward to the opportunity to discuss the future of the fire and rescue services we provide to the community. As an organisation we have been at the vanguard of the move to risk based fire cover and remain convinced that this is the correct way to allocate limited resources. It is therefore disappointing to be reviewing the Tayside Fire and Rescue Boards 2008/09 IRMP document and find it **inadequate, big on buzz words and corporate argot but bereft of detail, short on information and lacking in vision.**

The IRMP document disguises cuts to front line services behind a glossy brochure of misrepresentative graphs and non-committal jargon. This years document appears to give the public and stakeholders consultation on the services future plans but totally fails to mention the method by which 16 jobs are being shed from front line service. **This dishonesty is contrary to the National Framework Document.**

The introduction of a "Combined Aerial Rescue Pump" or CARP appears to be one method by which managers intend to cut firefighter posts, Nowhere in the document is there an opportunity for consultees to highlight the concerns surrounding introducing a vehicle of this nature in Dundee.

It is our strong belief that placing this vehicle in central Dundee is not an efficient or effective use of resources and therefore is **contrary to the objectives of the National Framework Document.**

Would any of these proposed changes result in a safer Tayside? Without firm evidence, or information it is completely impossible to say. Without the inclusion of specific proposals in the IRMP it cannot be regarded as a consultation document and is therefore **contrary to the National Framework Document.**

Tayside F&R seem to misunderstand the concept of consultation on an evidence based proposal.

Areas of concern that professional firefighters have consistently raised are - for yet another year - not discussed and rather than debate the difficult issues, Tayside Fire Board have chosen to disregard those topics and the anxieties of the community, so issues such as fire cover in Perth and Angus are completely ignored. Also ignored are the expansion of the service role in relation to Road Traffic Accidents and the development of the Fire Brigade into a "rescue service". No mention is made of the substantial contribution Tayside is making to the Scotland wide New Dimensions project. **By dismissing these genuine concerns Tayside Fire Board will be disregarding the very people who elect them. By failing to consult them the Board is acting contrary to the National Framework Document.**

The FBU agrees with the current Scottish Government that savings from public services should not be from front line services. The key proposals from Tayside Fire & Rescue do not appear within their IRMP. They are therefore intent on cutting those front line services without conducting any consultation.

By failing to provide open and honest consultation on their actual plans rather than their theoretical objectives Tayside Fire and Rescue are not only letting down the people of Tayside but also their staff. **In doing so they are acting outwith the National Framework Document and therefore are acting contrary to the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005.**

The Fire Brigades Union totally objects to the current corruption of the consultation process and calls for full open and transparent public consultation on both the proposals to reduce firefighter posts and also on the wider role and future size and shape of the fire service.

The FBU calls for a new IRMP to be produced in line with Scottish legislation, in keeping with the National Framework Document, complying with guidance from HMI Scotland and to a standard acceptable to the people of Tayside.

The FBU submit the following documents for consideration.

- 1) – This initial response to the TFR 2008/09 document
- 2) – The FBU response to the 2007/08 IRMP document
- 3) – The FBU 2007/08 supplementary document No 1 (Perth)
- 4) – The FBU 2008/09 supplementary document No2 (CARP)

Documents are available from;

<http://www.fbutayside.org.uk>

or

<http://www.fbuscotland.co.uk/region/brigades/tayside.htm>