

Dublin Fire Brigade



‘Working together for a safer Dublin’

Vision for Dublin Fire Brigade

2015



INTRODUCTION

Dublin Fire Brigade is preparing an updated Fire and Operations Plan to fulfil the statutory obligation of Dublin City Council as a Fire Authority as outlined in Section 26 of the Fire Services Act, 1981 and 2003. Although the legislation only requires this plan to deal with arrangements made with regard to Fire and Emergency operations, this plan will also take into consideration the substantial volume of Fire Safety and Fire Prevention work carried out by the Brigade along with the contribution the Brigade makes to Major Emergency Management. The Plan will provide a comprehensive, balanced strategy to ensure the safety of the public in their homes and other locations, as well as fire fighter safety in providing emergency services. The Plan will be about managing risk, addressing public safety improvement, incident reduction, response standards and service delivery structures. The plan will be informed by national guidance and policies and statutory legislation. The adoption of a Section 26 Plan of the Fire Services Act 1981 and 2003 is a reserved function and will be brought to Council for approval.

Dublin Fire Brigade wants your views on the future direction of the service.

DUBLIN FIRE BRIGADE

Dublin City Council operates Dublin Fire Brigade as a full time Fire, Ambulance and Emergency Rescue Service for the four Dublin Local Authorities of Dublin: Dublin City, Fingal, South Dublin and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Councils. The Brigade serves an area of 356 square kilometres, with a population of 1.27 million and 464,749 households.

To facilitate the provision of this service DFB employs over 1,000 personnel working in 6 districts with 12 full-time stations, 2 retained (part-time) stations, a Training Centre, an East Regional Control Centre (ERCC - processing in excess of 140,000 Fire, Accident and Emergency calls annually). All whole-time stations are staffed around the clock seven days per week by officers and firefighters. The Fire Brigade also provides an Emergency Ambulance Service on behalf of the Health Service Executive (HSE) for most of the city and part of the county. The integrated Emergency Rescue, Fire and Ambulance service is provided 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. The annual cost of providing this service is €112.91m, with the net costs being shared between the four Dublin Local Authorities. An ambulance is based at each whole-time station with the exception of Dun Laoghaire. In addition all DFB front line appliances carry Automatic Defibrillation equipment to carry out Pre Hospital Emergency Medical / Cardiac Intervention.

OUR AMBITION

In recent years, the landscape of the Fire Service in Ireland has been changing. Dublin Fire Brigade is reviewing the way that we provide our services and we would like to take time, to listen to your views upon our proposals. We are at an early stage in developing our future plans, and, as a consequence, this document sets out the principles, rather than the detail, of our proposed future developments.

Dublin Fire Brigade has a long and proud record of public service. For more than a Century, the men and women who make up our service have demonstrated their bravery and professionalism in dealing with generations of emergencies. In so doing, we want to hear your thoughts and opinions on the key policies set out in the document. We want our plans to be shaped by your views and our policies based upon shared priorities. We want to hear the views of our partners and our communities. In essence, we want this consultation document to reflect the broadest possible range of stakeholder opinion.

Across our long history, Dublin Fire Brigade has adapted and developed its emergency services in response to the needs of its communities. In recent years, reviews of our service have signposted the need for change. This document seeks to refine our strategic approach and maximise the use of our scarce resources. It also seeks to identify opportunities to realign and redistribute resources. In so doing, the document sets out to provide the right emergency response, in the right place, at the right time. The document reinforces our commitment to achieve excellence in our provision of emergency services to the communities we protect. We have always, and will always, place Public safety, and Firefighter safety at the forefront of our ambitions and the proposals set out here are designed to enhance, refine and develop those priorities. These are our proposed developments; we want to hear your views.

OUR STRUCTURE

The organisational structure of Dublin Fire Brigade has remained relatively unchanged for a long period of time. We will review these internal boundaries and the districts they form, in order to provide options for change which will make our structure more flexible and responsive to the needs of the communities we protect. We will also review the position and location of our stations and appliances, based upon an assessment of risk, and of the evidence of activity and demand, to ensure that our resources remain in the optimum location to secure the highest levels of public safety. Where necessary, we will re locate staff and vehicles to match the changing nature of risk. We will seek to develop an intelligence led approach to our emergency response which will improve response times, more effectively target risk and provide the highest levels of community safety.

OUR STAFF

We recognise the increasing pressure placed upon our frontline staff and their dedication in providing such outstanding service. We recognise that our patterns of work place great strain upon them and have remained broadly unchanged for decades. We will review these arrangements in order to provide a flexible, responsive and family friendly range of policies which will meet the increasing demands placed upon our staff, particularly Health & Safety and training. We will produce options which will change our work routines on Fire Stations, making sure we make the best use of our time at work. We will also consider the demands of our communities and the requirement for our organisation to design services which are responsive to the needs of the public, as well as appropriate for our staff. Our response to road collision, chemical risk, water rescue and line rescue has been refined greatly over the years; it is now time to review the training, safety and operational preparedness which is essential to ensure that our Firefighters remain competent and safe while undertaking their wide range of duties and exercising their skills. In making the best use of our time at work, we will continue to ensure adequate rest periods for our staff.

OUR SPECIALIST RESOURCES

Dublin Fire Brigade provides an impressive range of specialist skills and specialist vehicles. Our specialist vehicles and our Aerial appliances provide vital services to the communities we serve. The activity of these vehicles remains highly variable and we intend to review the requisite staffing arrangements for them to ensure that we are properly balancing our risks and our resources. Many of these specialist vehicles are high impact, low activity. In other words, they make a great contribution to incidents when used, yet their use is relatively infrequent. We will therefore seek to enhance a dual crewing procedure, common in many other services, where the staff dual crew a number of vehicles. This will free up staff resources. In turn, this will enhance the levels of operational service delivery within the Dublin area and also provide greater equity in the availability of and access to specialist resources across Dublin. This may require the redeployment and redistribution of resources within other parts of the organisation.

OUR TRAINING

Our staff are our greatest asset and their safety is our priority. Our firefighters have adapted well to the increased skills and demands placed upon them, particularly in relation to the widening of their role and the limitations of available training time. We want to review training within Dublin. We want to examine just how we maintain all of our diverse range of

skills, and how often we are able to train our Firefighters. We will pilot the use of a new system of Strategic Reserve for training purposes. This will involve freeing up appliances and their crews, at designated times, to undertake safety critical training. This will always be done, while our staff are at work and will cause no inconvenience. While on Strategic Reserve for training purposes, the vehicles will always remain ready to rejoin and assist their colleagues, if required, for emergencies. We will also consider new ways of delivering enhanced and additional training time, while our staff are at work, both to ensure that we stay safe, and to deliver the most effective response to the people we serve. We will undertake an analysis of our training needs and we will further explore electronic training recording systems to free up staff time and will seek to introduce a system of audit to provide the appropriate level of quality assurance.

SAFER COMMUNITIES

The safety of our communities remains the foremost priority of Dublin Fire Brigade. In this complex area of our activity, we will review and realign our Prevention and Protection activities. This review will seek to examine outputs and strategies roles within the existing Fire Prevention function and include the safety of the public whilst at home. We will seek to integrate safety in public buildings together with safety at home. We will work more closely with our partners to refine and develop our joint approach to wider issues of community safety and Prevention.

OUR PROFESSIONALISM

Our Operational staff provide the back bone of our organisation and we remain rightly proud of the outstanding range of services they deliver. In particular, our Senior Officers have developed an extremely broad range of operational and management skills. We will continue to provide educational and training opportunities to our staff to enhance their skills.

SUPPORT SERVICES

We will seek to develop and enhance the existing range of Support Services. We will undertake a full Support Staff Review to establish a clear set of job descriptions for which the appropriate and necessary skill sets may be established. We will redistribute resources from other parts of the organisation to enable us to establish a range of Support Services and to reinforce existing arrangements. Human Resources (H.R) and Information Technology

(I.T) are two areas where we need to significantly enhance existing capabilities and deliver more efficient services. We will further seek to examine Procurement, Logistics and Workshops arrangements. In addition, the existing Planning and Auditing arrangements require to be evaluated to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and appropriate.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Dublin Fire Brigade has always worked in partnership with a range of other organisations. We intend to further refine and develop our partnership arrangements in future. In particular, we will seek to further integrate and support Civil Defence. We will also further refine and develop our Major Emergency Management arrangements, particularly in relation to disaster planning and adverse weather events. We will seek to refine not only our intervention strategies, but also our prevention strategies. We will continue to develop our Prevention arrangements in concert with our partner agencies. In addition, we will also seek to target vulnerable groups who are most at risk from fire, including disadvantaged households, the elderly and others.

OUR PRIORITY

In dispatching resources, we will use a process of intelligence based mobilising. We will screen calls which are false and by call challenging, we will seek to dramatically reduce false alarms. We will examine the nature of repeat, false calls to large premises and determine the most appropriate attendance going forward. Whilst we will challenge calls, we will always prioritise sleeping risk and life risk and we will always send a vehicle as quickly as we can and under blue light conditions. We will make more use of information technology to further develop our intelligence based modelling to ensure that the right resources are always available to protect communities across Dublin most effectively and at all times.

OUR PROMISE

By redeploying and redistributing resources, we believe that these future developments will enhance public safety across Dublin. We will also ensure that we distribute the right resources to the right place at the right time. Our priorities remain the Safety of our citizens and the Safety of our firefighters. Our structure and our organisation will therefore be changing, however, one thing that will never change, is the commitment and enthusiasm of our staff to deliver the highest possible levels of public safety. By working in partnership, both with our partner agencies and with our communities, we promise to work together, for a safer Dublin.