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# Oxfordshire County Council

## Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan 2013 - 2018 Consultation Report



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## Introduction

As part of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue's Community Risk Management Planning, the service will be publishing a Community Protection Strategy in 2013. This strategy will set the direction of the service over the next ten years. The service is committed to meeting its statutory duty to consult on its strategy but also sees the benefits from ensuring the service listens to the ideas from its staff, partners and the communities it serves.

Prior to the initial draft of the Community Risk Management Plan (previously titled the Community Protection Plan) which will be published in July 2012, the service consulted with its partners, staff and communities on the main ideas that will be contained in the plan and invited additional suggestions from these groups.

This document is the summary report from the consultation process and will feed into the content of the initial draft of the strategy.

## Executive Summary

The consultation exercise consisted of two focus groups with members of the public, four focus groups with operational firefighters which included both firefighters from the wholetime duty system and retained duty system (on call) and an electronic consultation survey that ran from the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012 to the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2012. The groups were reflective of both the community and the general workforce.

The electronic survey was sent to all county councillors, partners and members of the public who have expressed an interest in commenting on matters relating to Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. The electronic survey was also advertised on the Oxfordshire County Council website and was open for anyone to comment. 101 people completed the electronic survey and 44 people took part in the focus groups.

People's views were sought on 10 approaches that the Fire & Rescue Service is considering to improve the service. People were also asked to give their ideas for improvements.

The majority of answers indicated that the respondents thought the issues were of medium to high priority, much in accord with the Service's expectations.

## Summary of Public Focus Groups

Below is listed the summary of the Public Focus Groups undertaken by an independent company.

- Perceptions of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service were extremely positive and confidence in its professionalism beyond reproach. Building on this reputation, there is a sense that there is room for greater public showcasing of Fire & Rescue Service activities, paying dividends for community awareness of safety and also recruitment into the service itself.
- Public engagement is an activity that the Police were considered to be very good at and something which the fire service could learn from.
- Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service could work more closely with businesses to boost recruitment of retained firefighters. There is also greater scope to forge links with minority communities; there was some suggestion that awareness activities had gone unnoticed in these communities so far.
- Preventative education was viewed as a fundamental component of the remit of the fire & rescue service. Participants wanted consistent school engagement resulting in a lasting awareness of fire safety and road safety issues.
- Participants were very supportive of the proposition of developing fire stations to become valuable community assets (e.g. for meetings, training and other activities), arguing that it would be a good way of educating the public as well as being another route to boosting recruitment of retained firefighters. Placing the fire & rescue service closer to the heart of the community might be assisted by opening up fire stations to allow greater public access. There was some suggestion that rescue demonstrations, activity based workshops (such as how to extinguish a chip-pan fire) all taking place at the local fire station would be beneficial and could attract family participation.
- Allowing more schools to visit the fire stations for 'hands on' experience of the appliances and meeting firefighters first-hand to show the skills, training and teamwork could have a more lasting impression.
- Participants felt safe in the knowledge that the fire & rescue service was constantly reviewing its procedures and knew best how to adapt to changing environments and circumstances. This public confidence in the fire & rescue service's abilities allows some room for experimentation with response units according to varied situations e.g., usage of motorcycles or using vans for non-emergency situations.
- The fire & rescue service must, however, remain cautious as to how any changes in responses are perceived by the public – it must not be seen as a cost-cutting exercise.
- Similarly, although cross-border collaboration between fire & rescue services and other emergency services (such as the ambulance service) is seen as vital, any closer integration would require delicate communication with the public so as not to also be considered as a cost-cutting measure.

## Summary of ideas and suggestions from Staff Focus Groups

All consultation participants were asked for their suggestions to improve the service the summary of ideas and suggestions follows:

- **Prevent road accidents by dangerous drivers.** Perhaps the road safety team could work more closely with the police to ensure that anyone caught using a mobile phone/ overtaking in dangerous areas are educated in the potential consequences of their actions.
- **Review the number of firefighters (increase)** and redistribute these resources across more stations.
- Full review with some radical changes to the way the **recruitment process** is carried out.
- Do not respond to **automatic fire alarms** unless there is a confirmed fire
- **Alignment with ambulance service** rather than police (e.g., sharing of premises) must be a better way forward for personnel as well as clients/service users.
- **Pick up points** for free smoke detectors instead of making bookings to make them more accessible
- Use of **wholetime firefighters to cover at RDS stations (when required)**, at a flat rate payment.
- Looking at ways to **improve response times**, ensure that the right resources are at each incident at the right time to maintain public and firefighter safety
- **Review location and size of fire stations** regularly as community sizes can change rapidly

## Conclusions and Next Steps

The feedback from this process has been invaluable and will feed into the draft Community Risk Management Plan.

The next step in the process is to draft the Community Risk Management Plan. The draft plan will go before the County Council Scrutiny committee and then go through a further 12 week period of consultation with stakeholders, staff and the community. Feedback from these processes will be considered in the final document.

We will aim to publish the Community Risk Management Plan 2013-2018 in May 2013.

## Appendix I

### Full Feedback from electronic Survey

#### ARE THERE ANY OTHER AREAS THAT YOU THINK THE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE SHOULD REVIEW OR DEVELOP?

HEADLINES: CONCERNS OVER 'MAKE UP' OF WORKFORCE, RECRUITMENT OF RDS FIREFIGHTERS, REMOVAL OF LOCAL RESOURCES, TRAINING PRACTICALITIES, RDS ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY, COST EFFECTIVENESS, STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF FIRE STATIONS.

- Proportional representation of the communities it serves
- Improve the training venues and facilities for firefighters to practice their skills. I know this does come at a cost, however, this is not an area that I believe should be sacrificed.
- Retain local knowledge within fire control centres. Don't centralise to save money and lose local experience/expertise.
- Develop/review other means of extinguishing fires other than by the use of water.
- Be willing to look at new innovative ways that can help eliminate the risk of domestic (house) fires starting in the first place rather than restricting and suppressing using sprinklers.
- Recruit more volunteer firefighters
- Work with schools, youth groups, department of education etc. To involve youngsters and educate them on the importance of the service with a view to recruiting well-motivated trainees.
- Consider incident/fire hotspot trends - both locations and timings and consider pre deploying tenders to these potential locations at the times when the incidents happen, or create patrol routes for fire crews to travel on as part of their shift duties. Each suggestion could potentially reduce response times and help crews familiarise themselves with locations and dynamics of traffic in those locations.
- Activity analysis against vfm criteria would surface some interesting areas for both management and the wider community to consider.
- I think more could be done to prevent road accidents by dangerous drivers. Perhaps the road safety team could work more closely with the police to ensure that anyone caught using a mobile phone/ overtaking in dangerous areas are educated in the potential consequences of their actions.
- Provide information about how to best get out of your home in a fire. I am not sure I would know how to get through double glazed windows.
- Recruitment of full and part time & more female firefighters, is the fire service part of the Duke of Edinburgh awards

- Review the number of firefighters (increase) and redistribute these resources more stations. Create new rota systems to provide crewing to meet business needs (i.e., less cover at night and more in day). Utilise existing operational support staff to crew appliances when needed and extend recall to duty systems.
- Have in place continuously updated major incident plans e.g; aircraft accidents, railway accidents, acts of war and terrorism. 'Surprise visits' to manufacturing and storage facilities, office buildings etc. To ensure compliance with existing statutory regulation - always been a joke in most companies.
- Review location and size of fire stations regularly as community sizes can change rapidly - e.g. Carterton which is comparable to Witney but has no fire station
- Continuing to visit vulnerable residents at home to ensure basic fire safety is in place.
- As long as the fire & rescue service is a senior partner in all community safety services it will be involved in all issues.
- Encourage more autonomy amongst the public in terms of their own safety; i.e. Replacing the 10 year smoke alarms in their homes without reliance upon the fire service, conducting a home fire risk check (hfrc) that will reduce the incidence of emergency response from the service and also offering this service to the more vulnerable within their communities; thus encompassing the big society ethos.
- Given the wonderful job they already do, I think stronger education of the public, in prevention of fires and accidents is of importance.
- Concentrate on fire and rescue and not spread themselves too thinly over other areas which are already covered by other agencies. Still require good communication channels with others.
- I think the whole retained system needs a full review with some radical changes to the way the recruitment process is carried out. I think there should be different levels of firefighter we should recruit, for example you do not need as many skills to ride as no. 5 or 6 but we seem to be trying to recruit the next watch manager on station.
- Do not respond to automatic fire alarms unless there is a confirmed fire
- I hold the fire & rescue service in high regard - and agree completely with what they feel are high priority and services they consider they need to develop
- Develop links in the communities they serve e.g. Girl guides, cubs etc. To increase understanding and create mutual benefits for all parties.
- Review and reconsider input into other OCC areas and withdraw from them if necessary (e.g., education dept?) To concentrate on what OFRS does best. Communication with local district and parish council's to let them know what OFRS does and how it operates, especially heritage sites/building and farming communities. Alignment with ambulance service rather than police (e.g., sharing of premises) must be a better way forward for personnel as well as clients/service users.
- Ensure the crews are trained well and can respond to fires. Ensure that fire appliances are crewed and available at all times fire calls are received promptly and crews mobilised without delay

- Publicising the work that we carry out at the moment to demonstrate the levels of value and technical expertise that the FRS represents currently.
- Use alternative solutions that work for other similar sized brigades.
- I think we should be focusing on the core skills of the firefighting and training our staff to deal with what they will have to deal with rather than often the nice to do add-ons.
- Develop small response teams to attend accidents on the highway/motorway which will ensure the vehicle gets to the incident sooner - locate them at service stations for ease of action
- Use time spent at base to support youth activities
- Planning for resilience required through the increased risk arising from drought - less water available for fire fighting, but more fire fighting is likely to be required to control fires within the countryside.

## DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER IDEAS OR SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW OXFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE COULD IMPROVE ITS SERVICES AND/OR REDUCE ITS COSTS?

HEADLINES: CONCERNS OVER CREWING FIRE STATIONS, STRATEGIC LOCATIONS OF THOSE STATIONS AND COST EFFECTIVENESS/ WASTING MONEY.

- Leaflets/resources in other languages than English should be dispensed with. If you live in this country it is your responsibility to have a working knowledge of English both written & spoken. Scarce resources should not be wasted on translation services when they could be better spent elsewhere.
- Pick up points for free smoke detectors instead of making bookings to make them more accessible
- More efficient buildings - insulation, solar panels etc.
- It could become involved in other activities that can serve our communities such as water marking lead on schools, churches and other public or community buildings.
- Reviewing number and location of fire stations, manning levels etc.
- Continue active involvement in community safety partnerships
- Although you have operational retained and full time firefighters why couldn't you have something similar to a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) who could work locally being a champion for fire safety within a community. I served 22 Years in RAF as firefighter and fire safety officer leaving because I could no longer carry out operational duties but am still passionate about fire safety and willing to spread the word. Merge fire and rescue locations with police and ambulance stations to create 'emergency services hubs'. Merge or share management and back office functions such as procurement, finance, head office, training with other FRSs e.g. why not share chief officers, it works for local government
- Issue more public information and advice
- I think they do a very good job in all areas, especially training and public awareness, as well as the more urgent rescue work.

Note that too large organisations become less effective, so not happy about the proposed merger with adjoining counties. It looks good on paper with a saving of overall costs but you lose the cohesive, interconnected and approachable and locally accountable workforce which makes for efficient action at the point of delivery. Please don't let the Government privatise this operation -look at the service we now get from the so called efficient commercial organisations (hardly any post offices, grossly expensive dental treatment and late and crowded trains etc).

- Start charging for chargeable special services - too many people rely on the goodwill of the Fire Service instead of paying for the services they would otherwise have to obtain from a commercial provider.
- Fire protection could become a reactive service dealing with complaints, advice and post fire inspections.
- My last answer addressed this point: however, in addition, I wonder if working more closely with neighbouring fire services at the edge of areas of responsibility might surface some

benefits. Sharing back office functions, communication facilities and accommodation with other similar agencies (Police, Ambulance, Military Fire & Rescue Services) might also prove beneficial.

- Find a better/duel use for its retained stations which struggle with crewing levels to encourage recruitment and help maintain availability.
- I think it's an excellent service already.
- I believe you have identified where you should concentrate your efforts.
- Stop changing titles i.e. station officer to managers. Total waste of admin costs
- Can the voluntary sector help?
- Concentrate expenditure on acquiring the most modern equipment and pay + benefits for frontline firefighters
- Review role structure and move away from role maps. RSSO role could be crew manager, SM roles only to be SM if managing a station is part of role. Does fire protection need to be staffed by operational personnel? Savings made could increase wholetime establishment to increase available fire cover at required times.
- Train out the attitudes to Health and safety at Work Act issues that have prevented or hampered first response actions when lives are at risk. The 1974 Act places the HIGHEST responsibility on the INDIVIDUAL's actions above all else; not Corporate liability, Team Leaders, Trainers, Systems of work etc.... These are crucial responsibilities but if a responsible Person decides to take a risk he/she feels is viable to save life (not property). They should be fully supported by the service and its chain of command.  
Cost savings are also an individual's responsibility as well as that of the Management team. Is there an incentive scheme in place for all? Is equipment maintained in a proper and accountable manner? How much work is put 'out to contract' that could be done 'in house'? Are members of fire crews actually paid as 'on duty' but not training or firefighting doing useful work?
- Increase the use of intelligence in order to assist the truly vulnerable. Use a mixture of partnerships to get a foot in the door to those most at risk, who tend to be harder to reach. Whilst this information is widely available, I still think that it is used reactively rather than proactively.  
An honest review of vehicles and resources; exchange some of the existing fleet at stations with more appropriate, versatile machines operated by less firefighters.
- Maybe a fee when fires are caused by pure neglect of regulations or carelessness.
- Employ part-time firemen or train volunteers.  
Considering the number of fires, there are too many fire stations and firefighters.
- Increase investment in preventative/education initiatives which, in the long term, will impact on/reduce incidents/call out rates
- I feel for the number of incidents attended that Abingdon and Didcot should be fully retained stations (2 pump) and Bicester should be wholetime. I understand there are union issues etc., but I do feel this would make substantial savings for the Brigade.
- I feel that they are improving their services in the most cost effective way they can.

- Attempt to reduce daily consumable running costs. E.g. reduce energy and water expense at fire stations, car sharing or hot desking from rural fire stations to reduce travel costs and wasted time travelling around the county.  
Have the fire service in Oxfordshire looked into solar panels as a way of saving money / raising revenue?
- No reduction in finance from OCC, possibly cutting it fine in some areas already (H&S?) and gnawing on the bone! Business continuity may be compromised in future if funding is reduced much more, or if reductions in staffing.  
Could OFRS be proactively generating more of its own income from 'special services' charges? Maybe personnel around the county have a few ideas?
- Focus on the core requirements of the fire & rescue, with sufficient fire appliances to deal with the likely incidents in the county.
- The Fire & Rescue Service should be looking at ways to improve response times, ensure that the right resources are at each incident at the right time to maintain public and firefighter safety. To allow this to happen, increasing the quality of training for firefighters to meet the increasing public expectation should be a priority, especially when faced with declining incident frequency.  
The FRS should not be put in a position where it has to compromise the above in order to save money.
- Stop sending all the letters to stations, its small things like this that will make the big difference
- Encourage young people to become cadets
- Improve pay to reduce staff turn-over, and so lower training costs.
- Use an unmanned drone to fly to report incidents and check validity - sensing heat through infrared cameras etc., to provide pictures to control room and firefighters.
- Could allow control room to either reduce size / cost of response or indeed increase it more quickly in some cases.
- No, but I am concerned about cost reduction in case it impacts on your ability to save lives.
- Use of wholetime firefighters to cover at RDS stations, at a flat rate payment.

## Appendix II

### Full feedback from Firefighter Focus Groups

Below is the full feedback from the On Call Firefighter (Retained Duty System) Focus Group

#### *Main discussion areas*

##### *Review the way we respond to emergency incidents*

- In other countries appliances have more equipment, in our service we have less equipment but deal with the incidents.
- A strength of the service is having a uniform equipment/ inventory
- Important to maintain the levels of skills in the retained service. Backup from wholetime can take a long time.
- The service is getting involved in a wider range of incidents.
- Having a uniform fleet means that the when you make up, you know what is coming.
- It is a strength that the service provides equipment if a need is identified.
- Although there is a reduction in calls, calls are more likely to be working jobs.
- During the snow events we were still vulnerable if calls came in from certain areas. 4x4 capacity should be reviewed to give better resilience – as a multi-use vehicle.
- Do we enough have enough water carrier capacity? The reduction in the amount of hose has had an effect on capability especially in rural areas. Sometimes it is necessary to make up\* just for hose.

##### *Joint arrangements with the ambulance service*

- Training for increased medical skills would be difficult/ impossible.
- Roles should be kept separate.
- Ambulances do not set up safe systems of work. Do ambulances have an understanding of what the FRS can do? We are all emergency services.
- Greater understanding between both services to improve service.
- 5 day first aid and trauma course was at a good level. This was also an advantage for rds when displaying benefits to their employers.
- FRS should be involved with a certain level of co-responding.
- Sometimes it is felt that police or ambulance do not want the attendance of the frs.
- Sooner rather than later an incident will happen when an ambulance crew is injured by traffic or a fire.
- There is a desire for retained to be involved in first aid and trauma care for rtc.

##### *Fire stations to become more valuable community assets*

- Fire stations should be more open to the public.
- Some fire stations are only used two hours a week. Why can't they be used by the community?
- Fire detection systems in fire stations are not adequate for building protection (no detection in appliance bays which are the highest risk areas).
- More involvement with community groups – some fire stations are no longer situated in town centres making this more difficult.
- Reduction in CFS budget has reduced contact between fire crews and members of the public.
- Training requirements are onerous so less time is available for community engagement

type work.

- Fire stations should be used more for local resilience (e.g., storage of grit for cold weather).
- Stations should have some incentives to become involved in these groups/ community. (RSSOs and station manager will not stay in the area permanently).
- Service should support local ideas more or give reasons if support is not to be given.
- Fire service is still a good role model.

#### Other discussion areas

##### *Location of fire stations*

- If you take a fire station away how long will the next fire engine take?
- Road network is getting worse for traffic and traffic management.

##### *Working with neighbouring frs*

- Need to more exercises/ drills with other FRSs. Other service can seem very different to our service.
- Understanding risks that crews from different services will work together on across borders.
- Relationship with neighbouring stations is important and should include reciprocal visits.
- The health and safety in some services does not always seem to be at the same high standard of ours.

##### *Partnerships working with other groups to focus on vulnerable groups*

- Ensure partnership working doesn't detract from drill time. Drill periods should be for drill only.
- If things are not core skills do they need to be compulsory?

[\*make up – when more fire engines and firefighter are needed to deal with an incident then the officer in charge will send a 'make up' message to control to ask for these extra resources.

#### OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Drill nights must be for drill nights.

Should Retained stations be off call for some training?

Local initiatives must be sustainable (including finance).

Funding for initiatives might come from areas outside the Fire & Rescue Service

Below is the full feedback from the Career Firefighter (Wholetime Duty System) Focus Group

Rewley Road	Banbury	Didcot
<b>DRAFT PRIORITY: Review the way we respond to emergency incidents in your home</b>		
<b>Headlines: Concerns over any downsizing of fire engines due to safety, difficulty in predicting true scale of an incident and limited times when it would be appropriate – though acknowledgement that smaller, specialist vehicles could be useful in certain circumstances. A view that a wider distribution of resources and skills (e.g. water rescue training) would improve effectiveness and efficiency. Suggestions for operational improvements.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normally the current fire engines are suitable for the incidents that are faced and the number of times their size is a problem is minimal and far out-weighted by the need to have the amount of the resources they carry at the majority of incidents</li> <li>• Incidents will often be larger or more extensive than anticipated and smaller fire engines would not be able to deal with the actual incident faced and therefore a further resource would have to be mobilised anyway</li> <li>• Smaller appliances might be useful in retained areas where they could be staffed with less people which means they can be kept on the run as long as further back up is provided</li> <li>• A reduced attendance or smaller vehicle for relief crews at slow controlled burning incidents would free up the full fire engine resource which is considered wasted if undertaking a watching brief. The fire could be left with the responsible person or a watching brief could be provided as a chargeable service which could be provided by staff on overtime</li> <li>• The majority of water rescues occur in the City in relatively still water. Enhanced Water Rescue training is needed for the staff first on scene to enter slow moving water to perform a rescue. This would ensure we have the training to meet the risk and remove the moral pressure for Managers to make decisions to not enter relatively safe water courses because of the depth or lack of training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire engines should not be downsized as their current size allows for safe systems of work and smaller fire engines would reduce the options to deal with incidents</li> <li>• Access for smaller vehicles would not benefit Banbury but might be more useful in some areas</li> <li>• Current fire engines are superb they have all the equipment required</li> <li>• 4x4 Vehicles would be useful for snow conditions, to be used as a response vehicle</li> <li>• The service should consider new technology equipment like COBRA and use of foam for limited water incidents.</li> <li>• The service should review the way it responds in regard to blue lights. Not all incidents or standbys need to be responded to on blue lights as the risk of response can out weight the risk of the event being attended.</li> <li>• Supervisory Managers should be able to return vehicles before a stop message is sent to reduce the risks to crews responding on blue lights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it necessary for every fire engine to carry all the equipment?</li> <li>• However it was stated that when you need certain equipment you don't want to have to wait for it.</li> <li>• All the services specialist rescue skills are in 'one basket'. Should these skills be more dispersed around the region with other resources in other areas?</li> <li>• If you had different appliances at different stations this would have knock effects when appliances at certain stations aren't available.</li> <li>• Concerns were stated over implementation of safe systems of works if appliances were crewed with less staff.</li> <li>• There should be a review of the front line equipment and what is needed. This could be done easily with the implementation of asset marking?</li> <li>• Ghosts Watch – The RSSO personnel could be used as a 'Ghost Watch' which would provide the gap in cover across the county rather than be associated with one station</li> </ul>

Rewley Road	Banbury	Didcot
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**DRAFT PRIORITY: Continue to develop joint arrangements with the ambulance service so firefighters can provide emergency first aid in certain cases where they are able to get to an incident first**

**Headlines: Concerns over ‘diluting’ firefighting skills (and recruitment and retention) though not completely dismissed, some are interested. Basic life-saving training needs to be improved (in hand). Joint training and co-location with Ambulance Service seen as opportunities. Issues with Ambulance Control and mobilisation. Officers to offer co-response?**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any additional responsibilities? Must be introduced properly with the correct training. There should also be a consideration for an additional responsibility allowance</li> <li>Members of the public already have expectations of the skills levels of firefighters as rescuers and they are unaware that the medical skills of firefighters is at such a basic level</li> <li>Ambulances in Oxford are generally already in attendance at extrications or arrive shortly afterwaRDS. However there is a risk if they do not attend and this puts more pressure on firefighters to perform a medical role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There should be no depletion of fire cover to support the ambulance service</li> <li>Having personnel with specialist skills will create more leave restrictions</li> <li>Concerns were raised that the skill level needed for paramedic skills would lead to reduced skills in firefighting as there is not enough time for extra training.</li> <li>Officers should be used to offer co-responding</li> <li>There would be value in allowing firefighters to be seconded for shifts to local hospitals to improve medical skills</li> <li>Having Ambulance crews on Fire Stations would result in better inter-agency training and understanding.</li> <li>If there was better questioning by Ambulance Control they would pick up more triggers that should lead to an immediate FRS response. The service can provide even basic scene safety to Ambulance staff at the majority of collisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ambulance Control do not automatically mobilise Fire &amp; Rescue Service. FRS often mobilised later in the incident. The FRS as a minimum should be used for protection of ambulance staff on the roads</li> <li>Concerns were raised over the use of medically trained FRS instead of ambulance crews.</li> <li>However it was stated that we are all in the same business of keeping people safe.</li> <li>How would extra training be maintained and where will the gap appear as there is no spare training capacity?</li> <li>It would be useful to have extra medical training with Ambulance crews to improve relationships. It would be useful to get more involved with their training</li> </ul>
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**DRAFT PRIORITY: Develop fire stations to become more valuable community assets, e.g. for meetings, training and/or other activities**

**Headlines: Happy to open stations (many already are) but needs to be controlled to avoid disruption, which is likely to need some support.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is more relevant in smaller communities where there is a lack of other facilities. Not as relevant in the Oxford area.</li> <li>Rewley Road Fire Station is considered approachable and people often drop in for further information.</li> <li>It should not be forgotten that the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire Stations are open to members of the public</li> <li>People using the station need to have responsibility for themselves or a person needs to be provided to be responsible for them.</li> <li>Need to concentrate on fire safety related work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds raised from any room rentals needs to go back into station budgets to improve facilities.</li> <li>Should stations have more open days? Support is needed in case on duty crews are called away. Didcot already host a number of these open days across the year.</li> </ul>
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Rewley Road	Banbury	Didcot
<p>Fire Station is primarily a place of work for firefighters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This type of initiative must be driven by the Fire Station itself</li> <li>• Wholetime Stations must have first call on their facilities, and need the flexibility to use their rooms when it fits in with their day, which can be compromised by other uses of the building.</li> <li>• The removal of social clubs from stations has seriously reduced community engagement in most areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open up stations in a controlled way - 'drop in afternoon' once a month for example. People would become familiar with the opening pattern but it would require less organisation for the station as it is not a full open day.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>DRAFT PRIORITY: Review the location of fire stations</b></p>		
<p><b>Headlines: General acceptance for need to locate stations according to risk and journey times, concern of moving station outside City due to congestion</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocation of fire stations was accepted as likely to provide improvements</li> <li>• Members of the public do not understand difference between RDS/WDS crewed stations and they would be shocked to realise that their station may not always be available to respond</li> <li>• Rewley Road serves the city well. It is in a good location for dealing with calls and visiting schools. Any location on the outskirts of the city would mean a lot of travelling through traffic either to undertake prevention work or returning from emergencies.</li> <li>• There are other parts of the community who would be better served by stations in other locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire stations moves should be based on risk. The example was given of a fire station at Pear Tree: a wholetime station in this location could cover a number of retained stations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service should look at moving assets around the county to better locations.</li> <li>• Nucleus manning (sic) would resolve some of the issues with retained cover</li> </ul>
<p><b>DRAFT PRIORITY: Continue to work with neighbouring Fire &amp; Rescue Services to ensure that people get the quickest possible response to an emergency regardless of county borders</b></p>		
<p><b>Headlines: Total agreement, though concern that Northants may be 'abusing' this arrangement</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed, taken as a given</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of over the border working – Banbury should not be used as a Northants resource. There is a new Northants policy means they used nearest resources even if is Banbury and they do not consider it a priority to get over the border appliances relieved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is always good working with fire crews from other Fire &amp; Rescue Services. However there are issues with Officers from others services who will only communicate through the chain of command and will not speak with firefighters</li> </ul>

Rewley Road	Banbury	Didcot
<p><b>DRAFT PRIORITY: Develop the work of the Oxfordshire County Council Road Safety Team which is managed by the Fire &amp; Rescue Service</b></p>		
<p><b>Headlines: Several suggestions for increasing Road Safety Team's involvement and integration, including involvement in Speed Awareness Courses</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Service should be involved with Speed Awareness Courses. These are currently run by Driving Instructors and an adult themed Choices and Consequences Presentation would be more effective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It must be considered that the performance of the Road safety team can affect the reputation of the FRS because there is such close working</li> <li>The Road Safety Team should be used to support the FRS at School Visits</li> <li>There is a need role for co-ordinating Community Safety activities which has now been removed</li> <li>There should be a greater awareness of the Road Safety Team's activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crews are happy to assist with demonstrations and road safety days - but it doesn't bring in the target audiences</li> <li>Does the road safety team need to work more flexibility to hit the right target groups?</li> <li>Choices and Consequences is being delivered in School assemblies which does not have the same impact as delivering it to individual classrooms</li> <li>Is it possible to have more joined up working between Road Safety Teams and Risk Reduction?</li> </ul>
<p><b>DRAFT PRIORITY: Develop current and new partnerships with other public sector agencies and volunteer groups to further improve safety to vulnerable members of our community.</b></p>		
<p><b>Headlines: Several interesting suggestions on improving engagement and its effectiveness</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was felt that there were three groups of vulnerable people: those you never get through to (they don't care), those that are proactive, those that are in between.</li> <li>Outlying villages do not receive the same level of prevention service to others nearer wholetime duty stations</li> <li>Everybody receives information about their Council Tax through the post even if they don't pay. This normally contains information about the way tax is spent and could contain Fire Safety Information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More initiatives based on local knowledge - Bretch Hill is a good example, this could be considered for a cold calling event.</li> <li>Warm calling idea - market visits times with the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It should be ensured that basic information is passed on from other OCC departments. It would be useful to know when people move home as it would be a good time to do a home fire risk check</li> <li>Crews would like feedback from Safeguarding referrals</li> <li>All properties that the OCC rent from landlords or properties they rent out themselves should have smoke alarms and be registered for Home Fire Risk Checks</li> </ul>

Rewley Road	Banbury	Didcot
<p><b>DRAFT PRIORITY: Continue to lobby local and national bodies to increase installation of sprinklers and other automatic water suppression systems in as many new homes as possible.</b></p>		
<p><b>Headlines: Supportive but concerns over maintenance of such systems and view that smoke alarms should be pushed more, using insurance companies as a more attainable lever than legislation</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sprinklers require maintenance and therefore are best suited to managed properties only.</li> <li>• Should it become law to have a smoke alarm in your house? Should insurance companies demand that you have a working smoke alarm and reduce payments if you don't?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service should be involved with pushing forward for sprinklers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobbying for domestic sprinklers would be a good idea. But who would be responsible for sprinkler maintenance</li> <li>• Insurance companies should be lobbied to require smoke alarms</li> </ul>
<p><b>DRAFT PRIORITY: Continue to develop targeted and innovative safety education initiatives, together with the Police and other agencies</b></p>		
<p><b>Headlines: Supportive but challenge is how to effectively target limited resources, also reputation concern if too involved in enforcement activities</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is already being done with Schools, Scouts and other groups</li> <li>• There are challenges in the retained areas and this is where some of the most vulnerable groups are located.</li> <li>• Consider the use of off duty staff to deliver presentations to schools so visits are not interrupted by fire calls</li> <li>• Set up a partnership with the Street Wardens who have daily interactions with some vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speeding intervention courses - are they the right group to be targeted. A majority of the people who attend these courses may not be the most at risk groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Choices and Consequences for Speed Reduction Courses</li> <li>• The FRS should not get involved with any enforcement agencies as they need to protect their image as a friendly service</li> </ul>
<p><b>DRAFT PRIORITY: Be more involved in working with communities to develop 'community resilience plans' (These plans set out what a community would do to prepare for and respond to severe flooding, snow or other incidents)</b></p>		
<p><b>Headlines: Supportive of this. Use of fire stations to bring communities together to plan and provide guidance and information through Parishes</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This links in with using Fire Stations as better community assets. Local people could meet at fire stations to discuss these types of plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a good idea to pre plan for these events.</li> <li>• The Fire &amp; Rescue Service could try and assist on a trial basis and see if it works</li> <li>• Guidance for the creation of these plans and how to set them up could be include in Parish information packs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This seems like a good idea but not sure how crews would get involved</li> </ul>

Rewley Road	Banbury	Didcot
<b>OTHER IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service should consider a better location for the smokehouse so that it can be used more without upsetting neighbours and the service should invest in fire behaviour training facilities that can be used locally</li> <li>• The service should consider using WT staff on their off days off as a part time workforce on retained stations</li> <li>• The service should fit solar panels on flats roofs to reduce energy costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better screening of vulnerable groups to ensure smoke alarms are available for the most needy</li> <li>• More Fire Prevention, Road Safety Prevention work but the fire service should get involved in the wider safety agenda.</li> <li>• Educate Health Visitors to do assessments or have better knowledge of the assessments. This could be done by firefighter on fire stations.</li> <li>• Better publishing the outcomes of the IRMP projects. Stations are not aware of what has been delivered by the projects.</li> <li>• Rental properties - why are we fitting smoke alarms for landlords – The service should push for a Legal Obligation for landlords to fit them. An example was given where a private landlord had given his tenants details and requested smoke alarms and they were unaware when the station called up to make appointments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4X4 Vehicles for resilience as station vans - can be used as a community resource.</li> <li>• There are still crewing issues at Didcot as a result of the change in shift patterns</li> <li>• Talking with other organisations - better partnership working (Social services - identification with at risk groups.) New Movers could be identified for a visit</li> <li>• Technical Fire Safety - Not covered in the priorities</li> <li>• Emphasis on Emergency Response - up skilling in this area</li> <li>• Quickly identify new technology and get it in use</li> <li>• Service is becoming too risk averse</li> <li>• There are concerns that a 'blame culture' exists in the service</li> <li>• Not as many incidents as we used to have, need to get the most from experiences</li> <li>• Uniforms - is our work wear right for the job that we do</li> </ul>

## Appendix III

### Responses to a survey conducted on behalf of the Fire & Rescue Service

**Review the location of fire stations and vehicles to ensure our limited resources are best placed to deal with the changing risks that communities face at different times of the day and night.**

66% of people who responded to an electronic survey thought this should be treated as a high priority.

The staff focus groups generally accepted the need to locate stations according to risk and journey times but expressed concerns over moving stations outside Oxford due to the congestion getting to and from incidents.

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**Review the way we respond to emergency incidents in your home. This could mean an initial response from fewer firefighters who get to your home more quickly, with more extensive back up if needed.**

63% of people who responded to the electronic survey thought this should be treated as a high priority.

Staff focus groups suggested a reduced number of firefighters should be used for slow burning fires\* to free up firefighters and keep fire engines available. The focus groups expressed concerns over any downsizing of fire engines due to safety and the difficulty in predicting the true scale of an incident although there was some acknowledgement that smaller, specialist vehicles could be useful in certain circumstances. There was also a view that a wider distribution of resources and skills (e.g. water rescue training) would improve effectiveness and efficiency. On-call firefighters felt that having the same fire engines and equipment was a strength as you knew exactly what equipment was on every vehicle as the vehicle fleet is almost completely standard.

The public focus groups were generally supportive of this approach. Some felt that the current response can sometimes be a bit 'heavy handed' at times. By reviewing the way incidents are responded to, it was felt that the service would be more flexible and better able to respond quickly and as appropriate to need. It was felt that smaller villages (which house more vulnerable groups, such as the elderly) should be better catered for. There were concerns about it being an excuse for cuts and leading to a lowering of standards; A few were worried that such a review would lead to a move to regional control centres, which would mean a loss of local knowledge in control rooms; Some suggested that it would mean that Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service would lose its ability to bulk buy with neighbouring services and there were concerns by one or two about being too reliant on statistics.

[\* slow burning fires will include hay stacks which are difficult to put out but are not usually dangerous so are left to burn out under close supervision]

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**Continue to develop joint arrangements with the ambulance service so firefighters can provide emergency first aid in certain cases where they are able to get to an incident first.**

70% of people who responded to the electronic survey thought this should be treated as a high priority.

The staff focus groups expressed concerns over ‘diluting’ firefighting skills to contend with the wider range of incidents they face, although some are interested in learning more skills. There was a wide view that basic life-saving training needs to be improved: further training is already planned for this year. It was also suggested that co-location with the ambulance service would be a good opportunity to improve joint training among the two services. On call firefighters expressed a wish to improve their skills in trauma care and first aid.

The public focus groups showed strong support for working with the ambulance service. One group agreed that if firefighters are first on the scene, then they should deal with the incident and provide basic first aid until the ambulance arrives. It was recognised that firefighters, like medics, are trained to deal with an emergency and able to make the right decisions quickly when it matters. However, residents wouldn’t want a firefighter to attend an incident solely instead of a fully trained medic.

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**Continue to work with neighbouring Fire & Rescue Services to ensure that people get the quickest possible response to an emergency regardless of county borders.**

66% of people who responded to the electronic survey thought this should be treated as a high priority.

The staff focus groups agreed with this approach but there was some concerns expressed as to how neighbouring services use Oxfordshire’s resources and whether this represented good value to local communities because local fire engines may be used more often in neighbouring counties.

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**Develop fire stations to become more valuable community assets, e.g. for meetings, training and/or other activities**

50% of people who responded to the electronic survey thought this should be treated as a low priority.

Staff focus groups stated that they were happy to continue to open fire stations to the community but this must be controlled to minimise any disruptions. The on call firefighter focus group felt that their stations should be open to their communities as a lot of the time they are not occupied and this would provide a good opportunity to engage with the local community.

The public focus groups felt that fire stations are viewed as intimidating places and the proposal of opening them up to the community was positively received, with the following benefits identified: It would encourage/ remind residents to implement safety measures in their homes; It may encourage people to consider careers in the fire & rescue service; The money generated from hiring out the rooms could be put back into the Service; Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service could better engage with and educate young people; It would help enhance the neighbourhood and community spirit. In addition to hiring rooms out to the public, participants suggested a number of events run by the Fire & Rescue Service: fire safety training courses/ drop in sessions, car washes to raise money for charity, family fun days' & football tournaments with young people.

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### **Develop the work of the Oxfordshire County Council road safety team which is managed by the Fire & Rescue Service**

50% of people who responded to the electronic survey thought this should be treated as a medium priority.

Staff focus groups suggested that the Fire & Rescue Service should become involved in delivering 'speed awareness courses' to improve drivers behaviours.

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### **Develop current and new partnerships with other public sector agencies and volunteer groups to further improve safety to vulnerable members of our community.**

50% of people who responded to the electronic survey thought this should be treated as a medium priority.

Staff focus groups suggested that we should consider notifying residents when we were going to be in their area delivering safety advice, a concept of 'warm calling', to improve the take up of advice. They also suggested that a closer partnership could be made with the City Council community wardens to help identify people in need of our help.

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### **Continue to lobby local and national bodies to increase installation of sprinklers and other automatic water suppression systems in as many new homes as possible.**

40% of people who responded to the electronic survey thought this should be treated as a medium priority.

Staff focus groups thought that the Fire & Rescue Service should lobby for working smoke alarms to be a legal requirement or a requirement by home insurers.

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## **Continue to develop targeted and innovative safety education initiatives, together with the Police and other agencies**

51% of people who responded to the electronic survey thought this should be treated as a medium priority.

Staff focus groups were supportive but challenged as to how to effectively target limited resources and also expressed concerns over the reputation of the Fire & Rescue Service if we became too involved in enforcement activities.

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## **'Be more involved in working with communities to develop 'community resilience plans' (Which set out what a village, neighbourhood, estate etc. would do to prepare for and respond to severe flooding, snow or other incidents)'**

53% of people who responded to the electronic survey thought this should be treated as a medium priority.

Staff focus groups were supportive of this and suggested that fire stations could be used to bring communities together to develop this kind of plan.