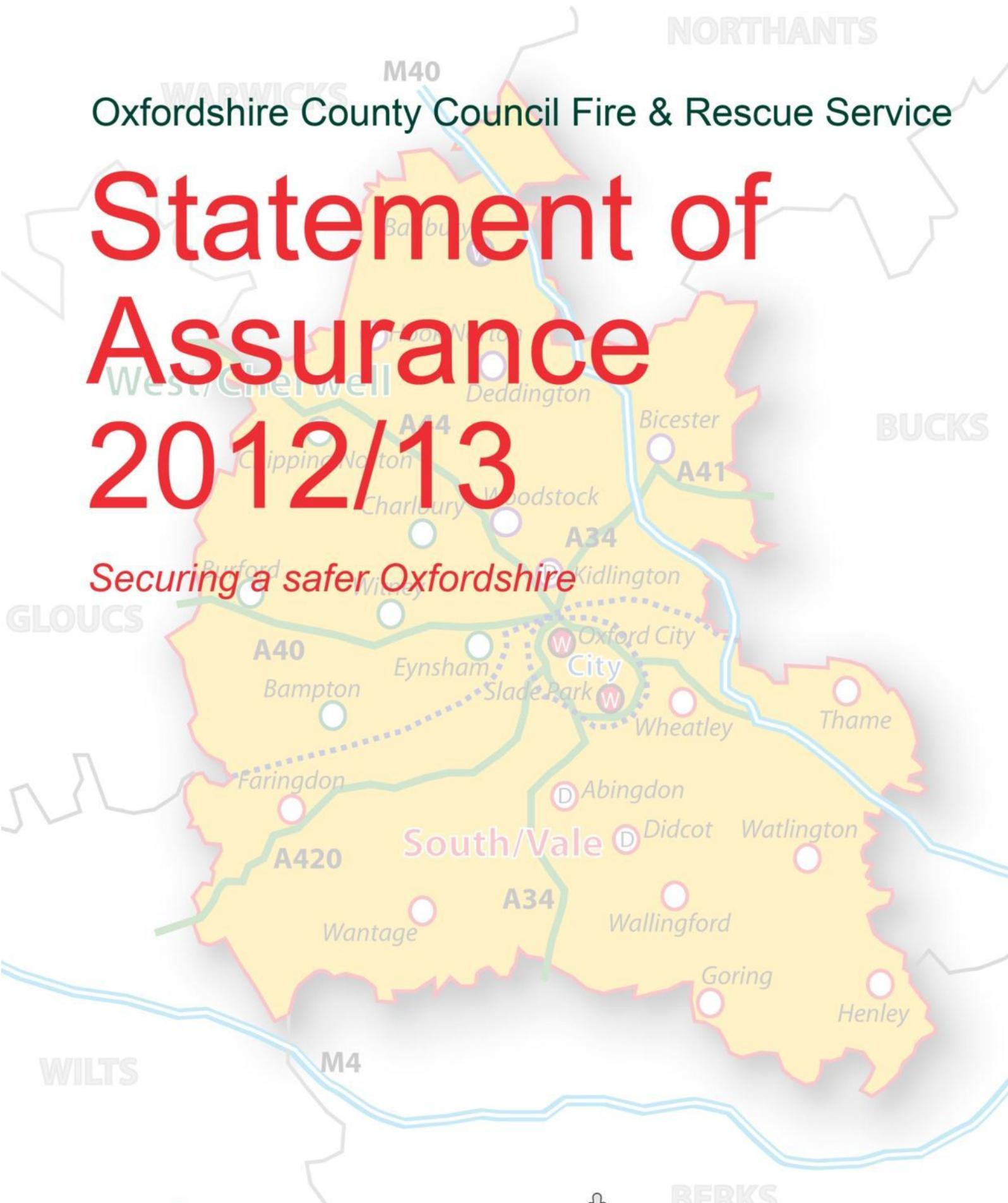


Oxfordshire County Council Fire & Rescue Service

# Statement of Assurance 2012/13

*Securing a safer Oxfordshire*



[www.365alive.co.uk](http://www.365alive.co.uk)



**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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# Welcome and foreword by Councillor Louise Chapman



Cabinet member with responsibility for the fire and rescue service

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority have a legal duty to ensure that an effective fire and rescue service is delivered across our county. We are proud to be a high performing integrated part of the county council which delivers far more than just an effective response service. Through working in partnership with other teams of the county council and key partners, we ensure that our proactive approach focussed on preventative activities help stop incidents from happening and lead to a safer county.

This integrated approach helps the most vulnerable in our communities to gain access to the support that is available and assists individuals and families to help themselves. There are many challenges that are facing our communities and we can assist in many areas beyond the traditional role of a firefighter. As an example, we have implemented projects to support young people with their basic reading skills and have provided mentors for disaffected young people.

We have been at the forefront of innovation looking at new ways to support those that are most at need in our communities. However, I am not complacent and I recognise that there is more that can be done.

I am immensely proud of what we do, the way we do it and what we have achieved. Our personnel are our most important resource and it is through them, with the support of our county councillors and our partner agencies that we will continue to deliver an excellent service to the people of Oxfordshire.

# Foreword by Chief Fire Officer David Etheridge



Welcome to the first Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service Statement of Assurance. As the Chief Fire Officer for Oxfordshire I am pleased to be able to provide this statement for our local communities to show how the fire and rescue authority have met and continue to meet the requirements of The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

The national framework sets out the requirement for fire and rescue authorities to provide an annual statement of assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and to show how they have due regard to the requirements of the framework and the expectations set out in authorities' own integrated risk management plans. To demonstrate this, the framework requires that each authority must publish an annual statement of assurance. The following document is intended to meet the obligation to produce this statement through reference to public webpages, existing reports and documents.

As part of the county council we are committed to delivering an integrated, high performing fire and rescue service which provides excellent value for money to the tax payers of this county. Our integration within the wider county council enables us to ensure that we are joined up in delivering solutions to the key issues affecting our communities, whilst providing the economic benefits of a shared services approach.

The fire and rescue service faces a number of challenges over the next few years in continuing to deliver the same level of high quality service with a developing built environment. Our integrated risk management planning will enable us to focus our priorities on the current and future risk within the county and continue to provide assurance to the people of Oxfordshire that we continue to be a cost effective, well governed and a well-managed organisation.

[National Framework Document Published July 2012](#)



# Communities we serve

## Our community

Oxfordshire is home to around 650,000 people. The population is increasing and is forecast to rise 11 per cent to over 700,000 residents by 2026, with the biggest increases expected around Bicester, Didcot, Carterton, Harwell and Witney.

## Our natural environment

Oxfordshire is the most rural county in the south east and is a popular visitor destination renowned for its rural beauty covering 260,595 hectares. The provision of additional off road response vehicles and partnership work through the Local Resilience Forum will assist in managing the risk from adverse weather.

## Our built environment

Oxfordshire has significant plans for future economic and housing growth, with a focus on the Local Enterprise Partnership Hubs – the Science Vale UK Area (a Local Enterprise Zone), Bicester and Oxford City. There will be smaller but still significant developments at other locations including Banbury, Carterton and Witney.

As we develop our service we will consider residential and commercial areas that are growing, to ensure that we can continue to provide an excellent prevention, protection and response service to all areas of a changing county. Therefore, we will continue to engage early in any planning processes throughout the county to address any areas of concern and give specialist advice where necessary.

## Our heritage

Oxfordshire has over 12,000 listed buildings, including many sites of importance to the country's national heritage. The city of Oxford is internationally famous for its university and college buildings. Blenheim Palace heads a list of nationally important stately homes and is one of 390 grade I listed buildings in the county. We will continue to work with owners and occupiers to ensure plans, risks, training and information is reviewed to safeguard our heritage.

## The risks we face

The Community Risk Management Plan is Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service's (OFRS) analysis of the county's community risk profile, together with our strategic approach of how we intend to effectively manage those risks over the period.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (the framework) requires us to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), known as Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), that identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risk that could affect its community, including those of a cross border, multi authority and / or national nature.

Each year OFRS produces an action plan based on the CRMP which sets out a number of priorities and projects to ensure that residents and businesses are safer, whilst at the same time delivering an efficient and effective emergency response when necessary.

### [Community Risk Management Plans and Annual Action Plans](#)

#### **Social risk**

Our population is also living longer. The number of people aged 75 and over is projected to grow by 60 percent between 2006 and 2026. Historical data shows that older people are at a greater risk from suffering serious injuries or death from accidental fires. Our Home and Community Safety Department, through partnership working, will continue to target our at risk groups through home fire risk checks and education.

#### **Environmental risk**

Oxfordshire has many waterways, which have associated risks of flooding and drowning. We have firefighters trained to rescue people from both moving and still water, including faster moving 'white water'. They will also respond to national emergencies resulting from large-scale flooding. Our firefighters identify potential areas of danger on our waterways and learn the best locations to launch our rescue craft.

## **Economic risk**

The county is home to a number of nationally and internationally recognised businesses such as ISIS, Oxford Instruments, BMW Mini, Williams and Lotus Formula One, academic institutions through the city's two universities and a number of important military establishments, we are also home to many medical hospitals and research departments. Our operational and fire protection personnel work with business to plan for emergencies and carry out fire protection enforcement and advice.

## **Risks beyond our borders**

### **Over the border mutual aid arrangements**

Through sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 OFRS has set up reinforcement schemes for securing mutual assistance with Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Authorities to provide and utilise resources such as fire engines.

Plans are also in place, through National Resilience Advisory Team (NRAT), to provide specialist appliances and crews for mass decontamination, urban search and rescue, water and high volume pumping, hazardous chemical analysis and command and control across England and Wales.

### **Standard operating procedures**

OFRS have been engaged in the Collaborative Partnership Programme to promote a common approach when working across borders. We are also planning to have a joint fire control with two of our neighbour Fire and Rescue Services, Royal Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, known as the Thames Valley Fire Control Project.

During a re-structure we have established a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Development Team. The SOP information is carried on fire engines and accessed via Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's). It will enable all operational staff to access the most up to date guidance and information at scene with neighbouring authorities working to the same procedures.

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Project (JESIP) has also been formed to enhance joint working further across services and collaborate where possible.

# Overview of Fire and Rescue Service

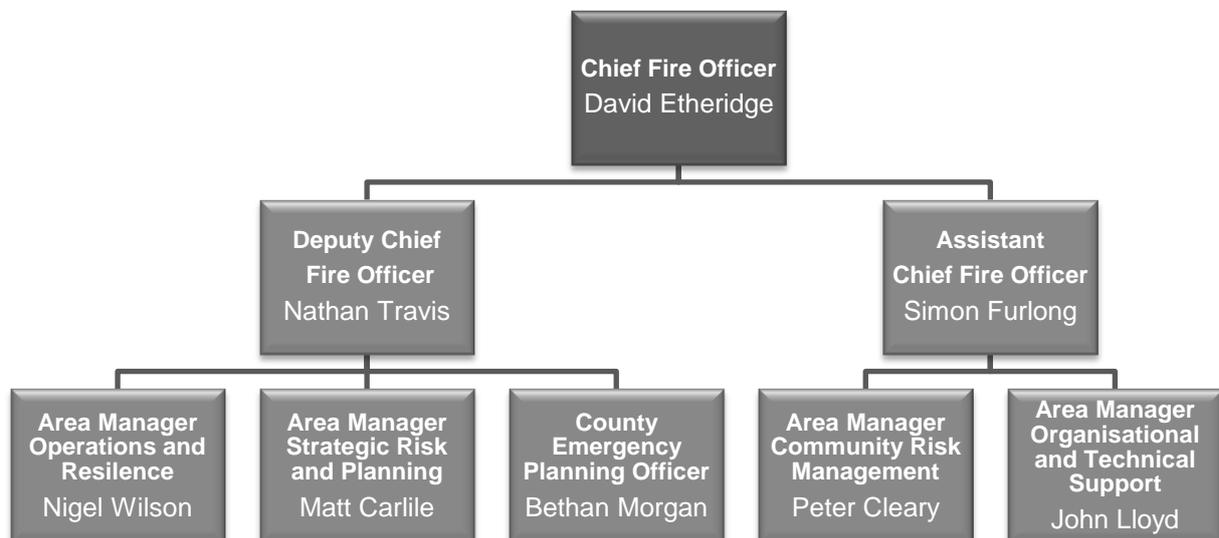
## Overview of our structure

OFRS is governed by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) whose full members are listed below. Full SLT meetings are held monthly with fortnightly meetings to discuss specific issues. SLT reports to County Council Management Team (CCMT).

- Chief Fire Officer — David Etheridge
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer — Nathan Travis
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer — Simon Furlong
- Area Manager Operations and Resilience — Nigel Wilson
- Area Manager Strategic Risk and Planning — Matt Carlile
- Area Manager Community Risk Management — Pete Cleary
- Area Manager Organisational and Technical Support — John Lloyd
- Human Resources Business Partner — Kim Terry
- Finance Business Partner — Tim Paul.

Following an extensive period of engagement with managers across the organisation and a period of staff consultation, the Senior Leadership Team implemented a re-alignment of the service which commenced on 1 April 2013.

## Strategic Leadership Team



## Our people

At the end of March 2012 there were a total of 25 control room staff, 247 whole-time firefighters and 74 support staff. We also had 352 people working as on-call firefighters in Oxfordshire's local communities.

## Our resources

There are currently 24 fire stations in Oxfordshire, which are staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by a mix of full time and on-call firefighters. They offer safety advice, education and a response to emergencies calls.

We have a front-line fleet of 34 fire engines and a number of specialist vehicles. This includes a hydraulic platform for performing rescues at height, a specialist rescue vehicle for attending road traffic collisions and other specialist rescues, an environmental protection unit (provided in partnership with the Environment Agency) and two mobile command units.

## Our values

OFRS fully supports the underpinning values of the county council, as well as those agreed nationally by the Chief Fire Officers' Association, the Fire Brigades' Union, UNISON and a number of other fire and rescue services. These combined values provide a central focus on the standards and principles we expect our employees to promote, uphold and maintain.

### We value **service to the community** by:

- focusing on our customers' needs
- working with all groups to reduce risks
- treating everyone fairly and with respect
- being accountable to those we serve
- striving for excellence in all we do.

### We value **diversity** in the Service and community by:

- treating everyone with dignity and respect
- providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- promoting equality of opportunity in employment and progression within the service
- challenging prejudice and discrimination.



### We value **each other** by practising and promoting:

- fairness and respect
- recognition of merit
- honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- personal development
- 'can-do' attitude, co-operative and inclusive working
- one-team approach.

### We value **improvement** at all levels of the Service by:

- taking responsibility for our performance
- promoting and supporting innovation
- embedding efficiency and effectiveness in all we do
- being open-minded
- responding positively to feedback
- learning from others
- consulting others.

## Chief Fire Officer's statement on equality and diversity

Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service recognises that all individuals have fundamental human rights and therefore adopts a rights based approach to equality. We shall develop practices that promote the right for everyone to participate in all aspects of life by promoting initiatives which remove barriers to participation and by actively promoting equality and social inclusion. We will have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other unacceptable conduct, to promote equality of opportunity and to promote good relations between all persons with respect to their disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, transgender status or gender reassignment, age, marital status and pregnancy or maternity.

We seek to develop and provide relevant, appropriate and accessible services that meet the needs of our diverse population. We will eliminate unlawful or otherwise unjustifiable discrimination and promote equality in the provision of our services. As an employer we will value the contribution that every employee makes and respect individual differences, utilising the diversity of our workforce as a positive benefit.

Chief Fire Officer, David Etheridge

[Equality and diversity information from the fire service](#)

## Our services to the community

The Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's (OFRS) analysis of the county's community risk profile, together with our strategic approach of how we intend to effectively manage those risks over the period. Each year OFRS produces an action plan based on the CRMP which sets out a number of priorities and projects to ensure that residents and businesses are safer, whilst at the same time delivering an efficient and effective emergency response when necessary.

We consulted with the community on nine proposed projects in the 2012-13 action plan. The risks are identified in our Operational Risk Register for Oxfordshire. This plan then considers how each of these risks could affect the public and firefighters, and explains what we currently do to manage these risks under the headings:

- Prevention — eliminating or reducing the likelihood of the risk occurring
- Protection — reducing the impact of the risk should it occur
- Response — providing a rapid and effective response should an incident happen.

[Community Risk Management Plans and Annual Action Plans](#)

## Governance arrangements

OFRS is an integral part of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). OCC are responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. OCC is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

OCC has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. The OCC Annual Governance Statement enables the fire and rescue service to demonstrate that it has fulfilled its obligations under the framework. Full details can be found in the OCC Annual Governance Statement which is included in our 'Statement of Accounts' publication, at the end of the document.

### [Annual accounts and audit](#)

## Your fire and rescue authority

Oxfordshire County Council is a county authority and is the delegated fire authority for Oxfordshire. All the key decisions are made by cabinet members, meeting either jointly as the cabinet or as individual cabinet members, taking delegated decisions within their own responsibilities. We now have two cabinet members overseeing our service areas:

- Councillor Louise Chapman has responsibility for fire and rescue and trading standards plus cross-council responsibility for policy coordination, equalities, localities and community cohesion.
- Councillor Rodney Rose has responsibility for Emergency Planning Unit, Thames Valley Fire Control Project, South East Fire Improvement Partnership (SEFIP) plus cross-council responsibility for internal management, human resources, industrial relations and strategic rail issues.

The performance of the fire and rescue service is overseen by the Performance Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee. Cabinet meetings are held once a month and are attended by cabinet members. The cabinet is also responsible for preparing the budget and policies to propose to the full council. The scrutiny committees provide advice to the cabinet on major policy issues and may review its decisions. Details of how the community can attend meetings and access agendas and reports can be found on the [Meetings and decisions web page](#).

## Our legal responsibilities

### Responsibilities under the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004

The Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 sets out the duties and powers of fire authorities. Under the Act, the Fire Authority has a number of core functions:

- Fire safety - promoting fire safety, including the provision of information and publicity on steps to be taken to prevent fires and the giving of advice on how to prevent fires and on the means of escape from buildings in case of fire.
- Firefighting - extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in the event of fires.
- To respond to and rescue people from road traffic collisions (RTCs) and protecting people from serious harm in the event of RTCs.
- Emergencies - when necessary deal with emergencies, other than fires and road traffic accidents.

We address these core functions in our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community. Each year we produce an action plan based on the CRMP which sets out a number of priorities emergency response when necessary.

[Community Risk Management Plans and Annual Action Plans](#)  
[The Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004](#)

### Responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) places certain duties on all Category 1 Responders as defined by the act, including OFRS. One of these duties is the formation of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF). The purpose of this forum is to ensure that there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi agency response to emergencies which may have a significant impact on the communities OFRS serve.

TVLRF is a partnership consisting of representatives from police, local authorities, fire, ambulance, environment agency, health, military, utility companies and transport companies. The act requires Category 1 Responders to maintain the plans for preventing emergencies; reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of emergencies; and taking other action in the event of emergencies.

These plans are drawn from risk assessments and have regard for the arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public at the time of an emergency. The Emergency Planning Unit helps the council meet these duties.

### [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)

## **Responsibilities under the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007**

The Fire & Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007 instructs fire authorities to make provision for:

- At chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear emergencies make provision for decontamination of people and to limit harm to the environment.
- Rescue people at emergencies involving collapse of building, structures, incidents involving trains, trams or aircraft, and where resources are required beyond the scope of day to day operations.
- Provide personnel, services, training and make arrangements to carry out these above functions.
- Respond to emergencies outside the fire authorities' area.

We make provision for these requirements through operational planning and procedures as part of our involvement with the New Dimensions Programme. Planning and management of the programme, as well as delivery of the capabilities have been overseen by a partnership between Communities Local Government (CLG), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA), managed through the New Dimension Programme Board (NDPB) reporting to the Fire and Resilience Programme Board (FRPB).

### [Fire resilience website](#)

### [The Fire & Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order](#)

## **Responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service enforces' general fire safety legislation on behalf of the county council. The legislation the authority enforces includes:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Dangerous Substances (Notification and Marking of Sites) Regulations 1990
- The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007.

Our enforcement activities adhere to the principles of 'better regulation' contained in the Enforcement Concordat and Regulators Compliance Code and we aim to support business and other responsible persons through education and the provision of advice and guidance. Where it is absolutely necessary, we will take enforcement action and will only consider prosecution where it is in the public's best interest.

Full details of how we discharge our responsibilities under fire safety legislation can be found on the [Fire safety advice for businesses web page](#).

## **Responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999**

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service operates within the County Council's Management Framework which incorporates the provisions of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the responsibility to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy working environment for all employees.

Our health and safety policy documents explain how we discharge our responsibilities under health and safety legislation.

[Fire and Rescue Service Health and Safety Policy Part 2](#)

[Fire and Rescue Service Health and Safety Policy Part 3](#)

## **Responsibilities under the Road Traffic Act 1988 section 39**

Oxfordshire County Council as the local authority has a statutory responsibility under section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 for road safety engineering, education, training and publicity (ETP) which are discharged through both the Environment and Economy and Social and Community Services Directorates. The responsibility for Road Safety Education, training and publicity now sits directly with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue service and this is a unique position for only a few services across the UK.

Full details of how we discharge our responsibilities under the Road Traffic Act 1988 can be found on the [Road safety web page](#).

## **Responsibilities under the Localism Act 2011**

The Localism Act 2011 gives fire authorities powers of competence to:

- Carry out its functions so that it will be able to do anything they consider appropriate for purposes linked to their statutory responsibilities to help deliver innovative and more personalised services to their communities.
- Make charges for certain services. These new powers enable both councils and fire and rescue authorities to act innovatively to generate efficiencies and secure value for money outcomes.

Full details of the community right to challenge and right to bid for community assets can be found on the [Community Rights and Localism Act web page](#).

Further details of the Localism Act 2011 can in the [Localism Act 2011 document](#).

## **The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework**

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England to:

- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately.
- Work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service.
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.

A gap analysis has been completed to ensure that OFRS has met the requirements of the framework document and an action plan has been established.

### [National Framework Requirements Gap Analysis](#)

Full details of how OFRS assesses the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks our areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately, can be found in [Community Risk Management Plans and Annual Action Plans](#)

## Management of risk

The county council has a risk management strategy which aims to ensure that there is continuous improvement in the arrangements for managing risk across the directorates.

Full details can be found in the OCC Annual Governance Statement which is included in our 'Statement of Accounts' publication, at the end of the document. These are published each year, on the Council's website, on the [annual accounts and audit web page](#).

OFRS risk management strategy follows the principles of the Office of Government Commerce, Management of Risk Framework. All members of staff work to identify threats and opportunities to the service and our communities.

Once a risk has been identified we decide how we want to deal with the risk and it will be closely monitored. Risk registers are maintained for strategic risk, operational risk, community incident and firefighter safety risk and a business and resident profile risk report is kept. The nature of certain risks means that not all records will be accessible to all.

[Risk Management Strategy](#)

# Our purpose

## Our vision

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) is proud of the quality of the services that it delivers to the public. We have a clear vision and strive to recognise and respond to the key issues and challenges. These combine to create our ten year vision for a safer Oxfordshire. This commenced in 2006 and is called 365alive. This vision sets three challenging targets for us.

By 2016, thanks to the emergency response and the community and partnership work of Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service, there will be:

- 365 more people alive<sup>1</sup>
- £100 Million saved to the economy of Oxfordshire
- 840,000 safety messages delivered to the community.

For more details visit [365alive.co.uk](http://365alive.co.uk)

## Our aims and objectives

### Safer by design

The 'Safer by Design' Business Strategy covers the fire and rescue service, Emergency Planning Unit and Community Safety Services. The strategy has been updated in order to capture the medium term (3-5 year) vision for all of the services identified, as well as where their aims meet the current priorities of the wider county council. In addition, this strategy also highlights how the various services add extra value to local communities, above and beyond their traditional role, by becoming more 'integrated' i.e. proactively assisting other directorates and partners in delivering their community safety objectives.

Our Firefighters who ride the fire engines are also involved in the delivery of our risk reduction prevention and protection activities to help make Oxfordshire safer. They are supported by a small dedicated team, in total we invest £96,000 a year in preventative activities: £70,000 for Risk reduction and £26,000 for Fire cadets.

The 'Safer by design' vision for the fire and rescue service, in particular, has four main strands of activity which are:

- Growing in confidence – a strategy for safer young people
- Living in confidence – a strategy for the residents of Oxfordshire
- Travelling in confidence – a strategy for those on the move

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<sup>1</sup> By looking at the reduction in the number of people who dies as a result of fires and road traffic collisions and the number of rescues we perform, we calculate the number of people who are still alive as a result of our work.

- Working in confidence – a strategy for business.

### Fire and Rescue, Emergency Planning and Community Safety Business Strategy 2011-12 to 2014-15.

## **Our challenges and priorities during 2012-13**

The OFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2012-13 formed part of our approach to mitigate risk within Oxfordshire through prevention, protection and intervention strategies. The IRMP 2012-13 action plan identified the following priorities:

- Project 1: Business continuity review
- Project 2: Recruitment and advancement review
- Project 3: Road traffic casualty reduction
- Project 4: Olympics 2012 pre-planning
- Project 5: Retained duty system availability review
- Project 6: Operational assurance framework
- Project 7: Data sharing to improve the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children
- Project 8: Review of incident command, worst case operational scenario planning assumptions
- Project 9: Improving fire control resilience.

### Community Risk Management Plans and Annual Action Plans

## **Our collaborative arrangements**

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) exist between other agencies such as Highways Authority, Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service, Defence Fire Rescue Service.

We also have MOU's with other local organisations such as RAF Brize Norton, Emergency Planning Unit, British Red Cross, HMP Huntercombe, Emergency Response Team Search and Rescue & Oxfordshire Lowland Search and Rescue.

A full list of Memorandums of Understanding can be found on the [Memorandums of understanding document](#).

## **Reinforcement schemes**

Under sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 OFRS have a duty to enter into reinforcement schemes with other fire and rescue authorities. A list of these schemes can be viewed in the [Memorandums of understanding document](#).

## **How we secured business continuity**

Business continuity management is a series of processes and plans which identify risk and develop OFRS resilience to ensure that adverse events cause minimal disruption to the services provided and that critical services are maintained.

OFRS business continuity management was satisfactorily audited in January 2013 by OCC Internal Audit Team. During the year 2012-13 significant progress has been made in improving business continuity management within the organisation with increased training and awareness at all levels and all departments carrying out reviews to identify areas of weakness.

# Our performance

## How we performed during 2012-13

A description of the fire authority's key performance indicators and targets against which the service is measured can be found in Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service Annual Report for 2012-13.

This report reviews our performance over the last financial year, April 2012 to March 2013, and shows the headline statistics and trends in incidents and emergencies that we have attended. This allows us to recognise areas where we have done well, identify where we can improve our service and trends in specific incidents and emergency types. It helps us decide where to focus our efforts and resources to reduce threats and seize opportunities. The report contributes to our future planning and is essential to our process of integrated risk management.

[Annual Report 2012-13](#)

## Response standards performance

Since April 2005 Oxfordshire County Council Fire & Rescue Service has had local response standards for attending emergency incidents in the county. The Chief Fire Officer is required to report annually on the fire and rescue service's performance against these standards and bring forward any recommendations as appropriate. Our response targets remain stretching, yet over recent years we have achieved levels within a few percent of the target.

Local response standards are:

- 80 per cent of all emergency incidents will be responded to within 11 minutes
- 95 per cent of all emergency incidents will be responded to within 14 minutes.

The above is measured by the time it takes to get the first fire appliance to the scene from the time at which the fire station is first alerted.

Response standards performance 2012/13	Total emergency incidents in scope	Incidents responded to <11mins	% response standards <11mins	Incidents responded to <14mins	% response standards <14mins
Totals	3409	2665	78.18	3161	92.73

The Response Standards Performance Report 2012-13 can be found on the [Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Performance web page](#).

## Benchmarking

We use national benchmarking reports and tools. We are also part of a [Chief Fire Officers Association](#) (CFOA) family group to facilitate benchmarking against fire and rescue services of similar size and demographics and to promote best practice.

[Fire and Rescue Service: Operational Statistics Bulletin for England 2011 to 2012](#)  
[Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Performance](#)

## What others have said about our performance

### Operational assessment (Op A) peer challenge

The Op A peer challenge is scheduled for December 2013, with a self-assessment to be forwarded to Local Government Association (LGA) in October 2013. An initial assessment has taken place to establish a benchmark against the seven Key Assessment Areas (KAA's) during November 2012, this has fed action plans for 2013 to improve performance and deliver a successful peer review with improved performance against the KAA's. The KAA's include community risk management, prevention, protection, response, health & safety, training & development and call management & incident support.

The last peer review of Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service was carried out in September 2010 and a report was produced, as OFRS strives to improve with every opportunity it has developed an action plan in order to tackle the points raised.

The Op A Report and action plan can be found on the [Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service performance web page](#).

### Customer Service Excellence

The government wants services for all that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering with the citizen always and everywhere at the heart of service provision. With this in mind Customer Service Excellence was developed to offer services a practical tool for driving customer-focused change within their organisation. OFRS have maintained the Customer Service Excellence award for 2012-13.

## **Organisational Assurance Team**

The Organisational Assurance Team was established following a re-structure of the service in 2013. The role of the team is to ensure consistently high performance throughout the organisation by conducting quality assurance audits. The first quality assurance check undertaken in 2013 looked at operational audit, debrief, monitoring and feedback systems and processes.

## **Lessons learnt**

### **Operational debriefs**

Operational debriefs are used at both incidents and exercises and form part of a quality control system to ensure effectiveness of core activities at a tactical level. They help ensure that any lessons learnt can be actioned and improve the service we provide. Outcomes and actions taken from previous debriefs are made available to all personnel.

### **Coroners Rule 43 notices**

Coroners have recently issued two Rule 43 notices. The purpose of a Rule 43 notice is that the coroner will inform persons or authorities that they believe a similar incident can be prevented by taking certain actions.

The coroner issued a Rule 43 notice following the inquest into a fatal fire at Lakanal House, Camberwell, London on 3 July 2009.

A Rule 43 notice was issued by the Coroner following the inquest into the tragic deaths of two Firefighters at Shirley Towers, Hampshire on 6 April 2010.

It is important that fire and rescue services learns from these tragic incident and implements changes to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future. As a result, we have conducted a review of the recommendations against our current policies, procedures and training programs and produced an action plan for improvement.

The Shirley Towers and Lakanal House Rule 43 notices and our action plans can be found on the links below:

- [Letter to London Fire Brigade pursuant to Rule 43 - 28 March 2013](#)
- [Rule 43 letter](#)
- [Lakanal House and Shirley Towers Rule 43 Action Plan](#)

# Financial performance

## Statement of accounts

### Our budget for 2012-13

OFRS are an integral part of OCC who provide the statement of accounts and audit which can be found on the OCC public website.

[Annual accounts and audit](#)

### Revenue expenditure

The budget for the Fire and Rescue service for 2012-13 was £24,911,000. A summary of OFRS expenditure can be found in the Annual Report 2012-13 on the [Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Performance web page](#).

## Where our money came from

### Expenditure per head of population<sup>2</sup>

The cost of providing the fire and rescue service is approximately 11p per day for each person within Oxfordshire.

The cost per head of population for 2011-12 was £39.99. We are lower cost than the average cost per head of:

- South east region fire and rescue services - £42.51
- Family group fire and rescue services - £40.22
- All fire and rescue services - £45.04.

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<sup>2</sup> Financial data is taken from the CIPFA Fire and Rescue Statistics 2011/12, FRSs that did not supply data to CIPFA are not included in these averages. Number of incidents taken from CLG stats tables 3a, 3d (i), 7a.

## What your money was spent on

### Expenditure per member of staff

We provided a service at a cost of £42,060 per member of staff in 2011-12 compared to the average cost of:

- South east region fire and rescue services - £44,436
- Family group fire and rescue services - £42,661
- All UK fire and rescue services - £42,028.

### [Pay Policy Statement](#)

### Expenditure per incident

Our overall expenditure against the number of incidents we attend is above average for other fire and rescue services, £4,841 per incident in 2011-12 compared to the average of:

- South east region fire and rescue services - £4,304
- Family group fire and rescue services - £4,090
- All UK fire and rescue services - £4,046.

This is mainly due to the success of our prevention work. By using our resources effectively to deliver prevention work we are reducing the number of incidents that occur. Therefore those incidents that do occur are seemingly more expensive. It is also to a lesser extent due to the rural nature of Oxfordshire. To provide a suitable response across the whole county the level of resources are higher than more densely populated areas. This is why the on-call firefighters are so important in delivering an excellent and cost effective service.

### How we provide value for money

Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan sets out the key objectives and priorities for action for the council. It's a key document that sets out the broad strategic direction, as well as the values and principles, that guides all of our work. We have an absolute focus on ensuring services are efficient and delivering value for money for local people.

### [Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan](#)

## **Auditors findings**

A summary of auditors' reports and findings can be found in the Annual Audit Letter 2012-13 on the link below. The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 require local authorities, including fire and rescue authorities, to prepare an annual governance statement in support of the annual statement of accounts. Full details can be found in the OCC Annual Governance Statement which is included in our 'Statement of Accounts' publication, at the end of the document.

[Annual accounts and audit](#)

## **Our future plans**

### **OFRS overarching plan 2013-14**

This plan is a précis of each of the functional plans drawn up for 2013-14. We will always maintain a reactive 999 response to calls for assistance. The main emphasis of OCC's approach towards delivering a safer society will be via preventative and educational measures delivered by multi-skilled employees, voluntary agencies and other partners. These groups are able to take practical actions on behalf of the County Council, promoting risk awareness, self-help, safeguarding, and sign-posting specialist assistance and support when required.

[Overarching Plan 2013-14](#)

## **Our future challenges**

We regularly analyse the county's community risk profile and set out our strategic approach as to how we will effectively manage those risks.

This is detailed in our Community Risk Management Plan 2013 to 2018, which can be found on the link below. The Government requires us, by law, to regularly produce and review our plan, which is also known as our 'Strategic Integrated Risk management Plan'.

[Community Risk Management Plan 2013-2018](#)

## Our future commitments

The Community Risk Management Action Plan 2013-14 details the specific projects we will start in 2013.

- Project 1: Implement the service's road safety strategy as an integral part of its prevention and protection activities.
- Project 2: Implement opportunities for technological advancements - following a review of fleet, equipment and working practices - to further support and enhance public and firefighter safety.
- Project 3: Review and revise the service's Learning and Development Strategy to further support and enhance public and firefighter safety.
- Project 4: Deliver the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Programme.
- Project 5: Implement further collaborative opportunities with other Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) Category 1 and 2 responders and align working practices to improve our provision of multi-agency prevention, protection and response services.
- Project 6: Review and revise the service's strategy for the effective management of operational incidents in order to further support and enhance public and firefighter safety

[Community Risk Management Action Plan 2013-14](#)

## Our Community engagement

In preparation for the CRMP for 2013-18, the OFRS consultation team devised a questionnaire for members of the public, to give their views and to comment on the risk plan and the action plan before finalising the content, taking into consideration the replies and commentary.

OFRS sent out over 3000 invitations to community groups, local representatives and people who had already expressed an interest, bringing in hundreds of unique responses, providing the service with both positive and negative feedback. The team also spent five days around the county with a mobile road show, asking people to comment and give their input to the process.

## Comments and compliments

The fire and rescue service is passionate about delivering top quality customer service. Delivering excellent customer service benefits us as individuals, our organisation and our customers. We also know that we need to continually adjust and improve our levels of customer service because we need to meet the changing needs and expectations of our customers.

If you have any comments, compliments, complaints or suggestions please contact us using whichever of the following methods is most convenient to you:

- In person at our offices.
- By phone – 01865 815906.
- By email – [complaints@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@oxfordshire.gov.uk).
- Online – [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/complaints).
- By post – writing to: Complaints Team, FREEPOST (SCE 7709) Oxford OX1 1YA.

Comprehensive information is available in the following links:

- [How to make a complaint about Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- [Fire and rescue service comments, compliments and complaints](#)

## How you can become involved

To make a request for a free Home Fire Risk check call the community Safety Helpline free on 08000 325999 or visit the [365alive website](#) and complete our quick on-line questionnaire.

For fire and road safety advice visit the [365alive website](#).

Follow us on Twitter at [OxonFireRescue](#) or like our [Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service \(official\)](#) page on facebook.

## Access to information

Details regarding the fire authority's arrangements in respect of access to data and information can be found on the council's [access data and information web page](#).

# Signature

Signed on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council:

..... Date.....

Councillor Louise Chapman

Cabinet member with responsibility for the fire and rescue service

## **Do you want to become an on-call firefighter?**

There is currently a shortage of on-call firefighters at some fire stations in OFRS. This is particularly the case in our small towns and rural areas because nowadays there are fewer people who live and work in their local towns and villages. You might be just the person to fill the gap.

### **Where do you work?**

First of all, you need to live or work near to a fire station because you have to be able to get there within a few minutes of a call. Secondly, because we can't predict when you'll be called out, you have to be flexible in your work. The chances are that you'll be working at home, self-employed or for a community-minded employer who can let you off from time to time.

### **Are you fit for the job?**

To apply to join the fire and rescue service you don't need any paper qualifications. You must be at least 18, with good all-round fitness. You will be asked to take a straightforward physical test as part of the process, and just as important are qualities like common sense, commitment and enthusiasm.

### **How often will you be needed?**

On average, you will be called out two or three times a week for a couple of hours. If you cannot be available all the time, that's not a problem. You can be paid for being "on-call" for only part of the day or week. There is a particular shortage of people who are available during weekends, but you would have some evenings and weekends free if you need to, and still do a valuable and worthwhile job. If you really can't be on-call - for example because of a holiday or a deadline at work - you can take time off.

### **What do you get out of it?**

Apart from the excitement, the challenge and the satisfaction of a job well done, your on-going training will assist you in becoming more self-reliant and confident. After all, if you can cope in a real emergency, you are ready for anything else which life might throw at you. You will meet a lot of people in your local community and earn their confidence and respect. You will also get continual, on-going training in the use of equipment and in other more general life skills including first aid. Added to all this, you get paid! You get paid a basic retainer, plus a fee for call-outs and another fee for going into action. You also get paid for training and duties like equipment maintenance.

If you think you've got what it takes to join the team, contact your local fire station for further information, or check out [our vacancies pages](#).