

Making Cheshire Safer

Proposals for 2013-14
and beyond

DRAFT

Integrated Risk Management Plan 2013–14

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(Further details about Service performance and budget will be included in the final publication)





1

Introduction



Cheshire Fire Authority is the publicly accountable body responsible for ensuring local communities are protected by an effective fire and rescue service.

To help it deliver that service while responding to the major cuts in public spending, the Authority has developed a four year strategy – Planning for a Safer Cheshire - available at www.cheshirefire.gov.uk. This reviews the key risks and challenges facing both local communities and the organisation itself and sets out the approach and direction it will take in response.

The practical implementation of the strategy is supported by annual action plans which set out in more detail the projects and work scheduled for the following financial year. Taken together, the publications satisfy the Fire Authority's statutory requirement to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) reflecting up to date risk information and outlining how resources will be used cost effectively to reduce the potential impact on local communities.

This **draft** plan is the most significant in the Fire Authority's history as it sets out a number of far-reaching proposals which have been developed so that it can maintain and improve the services it provides to the local community and make most effective use of its reduced funding, cuts of up to £5 million expected over the next four years.

These options have been developed following extensive analysis and research carried out in line with the principle in the Authority's strategy

that - *"The Cheshire Fire and Rescue of the future will need to be more flexible and able to provide a faster, more innovative and weighted response to the risks and opportunities it faces."*

The package of options set out in this **draft** plan could see the Service with more fire stations, virtually the same number of fire engines as now but staffed differently. The average time it takes to get to life-threatening fires and other emergencies would improve and the Service would also hit its savings targets.

Cheshire is now a far safer place to live than it was a decade ago, with far less fires and injuries and we believe the options set out in this **draft** plan offer us the best opportunity to continue those improvements in the future. They do mean significant change across our whole organisation and for some local communities and we would urge everyone with an interest in the Service's future to look in detail and give us their views.

No change is not an option, but we want to work with residents, businesses, staff and partners in developing and implementing proposals which will ensure we can continue to make Cheshire safer for future generations.

Paul Hancock
Chief Fire Officer

Cllr. John Joyce
Fire Authority Chair



2

Our approach to risk assessment and analysis



Identifying key risks

The Fire Authority has a responsibility to provide an efficient and effective service that protects the communities and infrastructure of Cheshire.

Legislation in 2003 removed national standards of fire cover set by the Government, but introduced a requirement for each fire authority to produce a local plan setting out how it would assess local risks to life and use its resources to protect local communities.

This National Framework for fire authorities has been updated in 2012 to ensure fire authorities state clearly how they will deliver their prevention, protection, response and resilience activities. To support this, Cheshire maintains a detailed understanding of the international, national and local factors that impact upon the delivery of its services.

Each year a comprehensive and forward-looking analysis of these factors is produced, which highlights the most important political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTLE) issues. A summary of this document is available on the Authority's website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk.



The Service also uses a range of sophisticated tools and computer programmes to actively monitor and assess the changing risk profile of Cheshire.

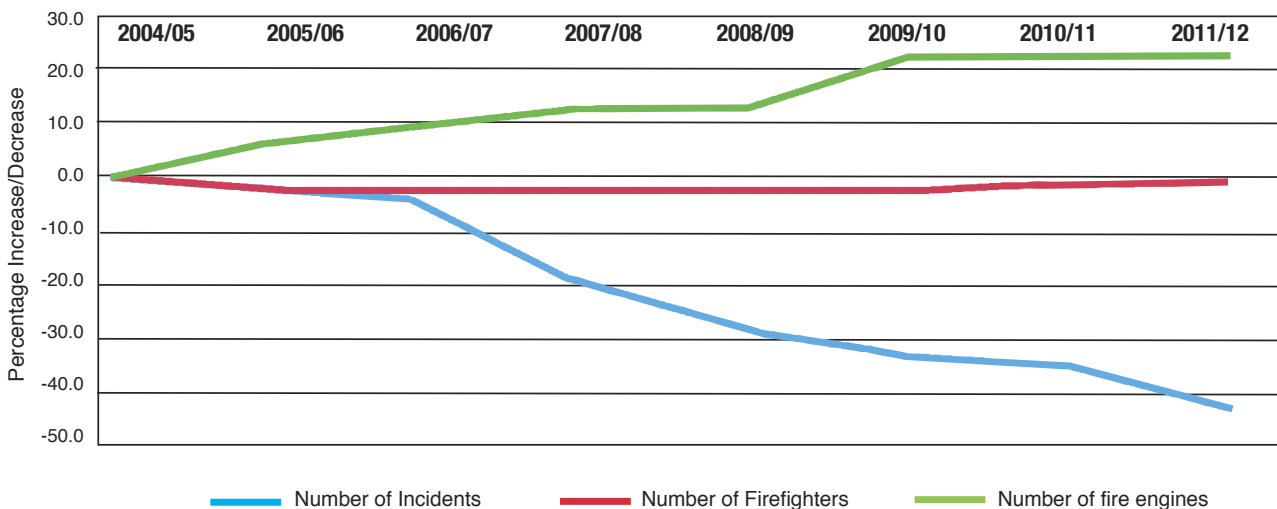
This process draws upon population and demographic information taken from the most recent 2011 Census, as well as a range of data obtained from partners.

This year the Service has undertaken a complete and comprehensive review of its operational resources using a range of analysis and modelling tools and techniques to develop a suite of options to improve service delivery and meet required reductions in national funding. While funding is a key driver – the annual risk analysis shows we need to be more flexible and better match our resources to likely demand, as the graph below clearly shows.

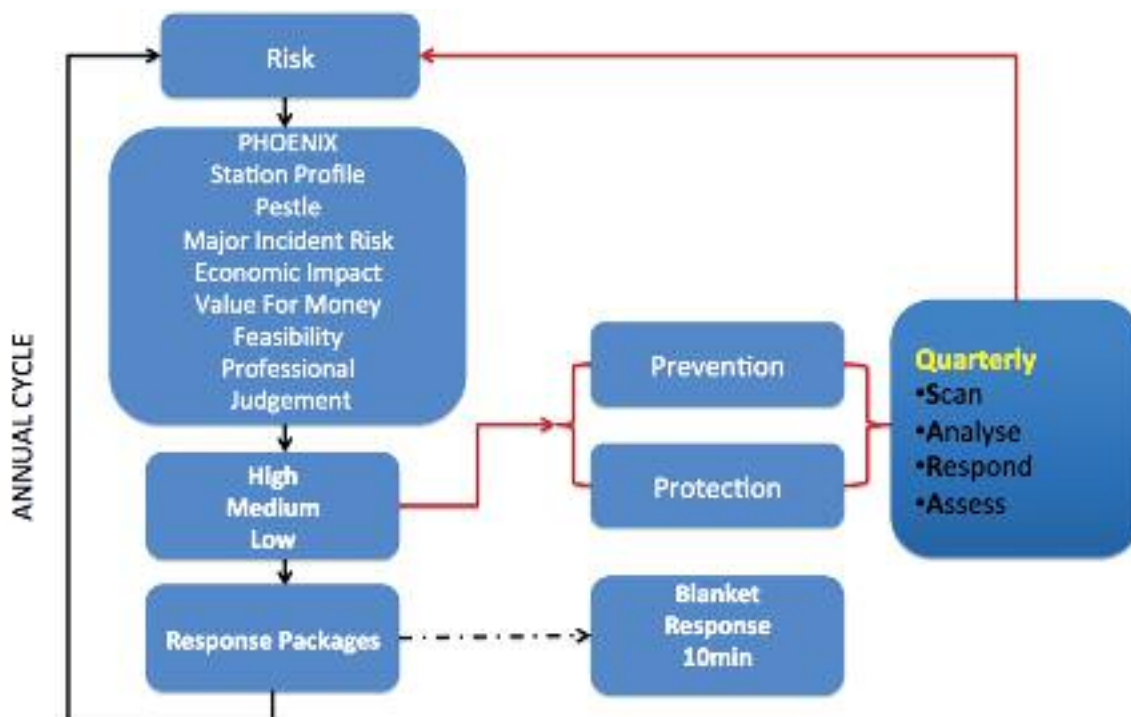
The graph highlights that the number of incidents attended by the Service over the last seven years has reduced by over 40%. Over the same period the number of firefighter posts has reduced by just over 1% while the number of fire engines and other specialist response vehicles increased by over 20%.

The Service's future approach to identifying risk and ensuring it makes the best use of its resources in response is set out in more detail on the following pages.

Activity / Resources



Community Risk Model



The Community Risk Model (CRM) is the Service’s way of monitoring risk levels in order to effectively target resources in the most appropriate areas.

The Service has an existing approach, which is comprehensive but it is complex and does not take account of recent improvements to local risk levels and increases in the range of fire prevention and protection activities.

This includes community safety work targeting the most vulnerable people and fire protection work focussed on enforcing national fire safety legislation.

The Service is looking to adopt a new model - summarised in the flow chart above - which involves a number of strands, including:

- Major Incident Risk Analysis
- Deliberate Fire Analysis (arson)
- Road Traffic Collision Analysis
- Home Safety Assessment Targeting

Each of the strands informs different Service activities such as home safety assessments,

school visits/youth engagement and road safety initiatives and helps our staff to understand who, where and when to target for the best results.

What makes the CRM more advanced than previous models is the ability to identify problems and target them at an extremely local level.

To do this the Service uses a variety of specialist tools including Geographic Information Systems (GIS), demographic information and historical fire and rescue incident data to paint a vivid picture of the risks to the community. This allows the Service to prioritise its prevention and protection work effectively to reduce overall levels of risk and activity.

Response standards

The legislation that removed national standards of fire cover required each fire authority to set its own suite of response standards, outlining the time for a fire engine to respond to an incident.



The current Cheshire response standards have varying response times depending on the level of local risk. These are as follows:

Risk Level	Response time
Very high	0 to 5 minutes
High	6 to 10 minutes
Medium	11 to 15 minutes
Low	16 to 20 minutes
Very low	within 21 minutes

Recent improvements to the safety of communities, including community safety activity, targeting those most at risk and increased smoke alarm ownership, has seen the number of house fires and the levels of risk reduce significantly.

Most areas across Cheshire are now broadly medium or low risk and so the majority of homes - nearly 97% - have an emergency response standard of over 10 minutes. In practice, most attendances are usually quicker. The current response standard for road traffic collisions (RTCs) is 11 minutes.

The Service's proposal is to move to a new 'blanket' response time of 10 minutes for all house fires and RTCs. The new Community Risk Model will ensure that preventative activities are used pro-actively and are focussed on the highest risk communities, as well as achieving a better spread of operational resources across the Fire Authority's area to further drive down levels of risk and activity.

Community Safety targeting methodology

The new Community Risk Model is a key element in shaping the future approach to community safety and preventative activities, such as targeting Home Safety Assessments (HSAs).

After surpassing a target of over 60,000 home safety visits for three years up to 2010, the 2011-12 annual plan set out a revised targeted approach to ensuring the most vulnerable individuals are visited.

The Service is now committed to undertaking a minimum of 20,000 Home Safety Assessments each year in the most vulnerable



households, based upon enhanced data obtained through partner agencies and a revised targeting methodology.

This new approach centres on enriching the over-65s data that the NHS and local authorities share with the Service, by including;

- Personal risk
- Socio-demographic risk, and
- Operational response

The Service has access to further intelligence that helps identify groups, other than those over 65, who might also fall into the high risk category. The individuals with the overall highest risk scores can be prioritised for receiving an HSA visit.

Low risk households are targeted through the Service's Home Safety Direct system on its website – www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/5mins and through targeted local and national campaigns, such as Fire Kills, undertaken throughout the year.

Fire Safety enforcement work

The Service also uses the same risk based and intelligence-led approach to the regulation of businesses; this is achieved through a business safety team, routine enforcement, fire investigation and arson reduction.

Premises with a history of good fire safety practices benefit from extended periods between audits, such as every three years. Those with poor management standards receive closer attention, such as annual checks.

Fire Protection officers adhere to the best practice approaches and principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators and seek to minimise the regulatory burden on businesses.

The Service is certified to the ISO9001 quality standard and the flexible approach to reducing fire risk is responsive to variations in activity within local communities and even to notable fire incidents, nationally and globally.

The Service also works closely with key partners to protect communities and businesses from fire e.g. Housing Authorities, HM Prison Service, the Police, United Kingdom Border Agency, Care Quality Commission and others.

Response and resilience

The National Framework also requires that the Fire Authority has plans in place to reduce the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergencies on national resilience and security.

This is achieved through collaborative arrangements between the Service and other emergency responders locally, through Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) – bodies set up to coordinate the plans and activities of emergency responders, as well as with neighbouring fire and rescue services and national agencies.

The Service is also now required to identify any local gaps in national resilience arrangements to the Government and to address these collectively by working with other fire and rescue services and through the newly established Fire and Rescue Strategic Resilience Board.

The Service will also adhere to national guidance agreed between the Government and the fire and rescue service in terms of providing assurance to Ministers and communities on financial, governance and operational matters in an annual statement of assurance.



3

Projects and proposals



As outlined in previous annual action plans, the Authority’s projects and proposals are presented under the following three headings:

- Developing the organisation
- Protecting local communities
- Responding to emergencies.

Developing the organisation

As the existing Fire and Rescue Service of the Year and one of the first to achieve Excellence in the national Equality and Diversity Framework, the organisation is committed to continuous improvement.

To maintain clear leadership and direction, a fundamental review of the Service’s senior management structure was carried out and new arrangements put in place from the start of the 2012-13 financial year. This involved

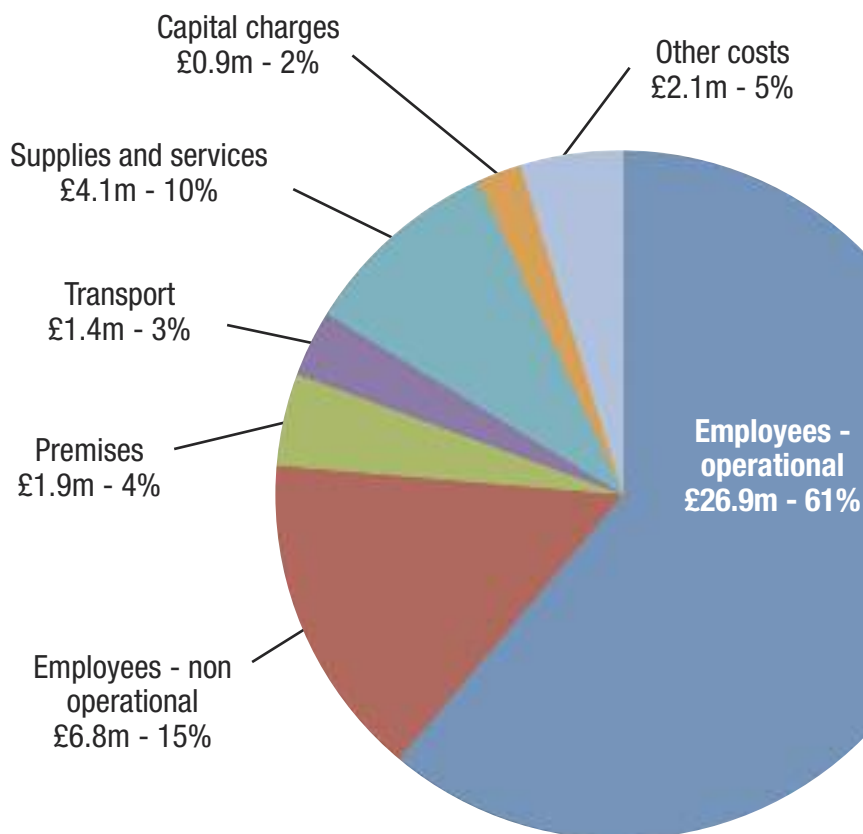
removing director-level posts and changing the responsibilities of other senior roles to establish a more efficient and effective structure which produced savings of over £100,000.

The Service has also been among the first in the country to put itself forward for a new system aimed at assessing the effectiveness of local fire and rescue services. The Operational Assessment and Peer Review involved an independent team visiting the Service to give their views on the organisation’s past performance and future plans.

The six-strong team was made up of senior representatives from other fire and rescue services and local councils and they spent four days in July speaking to a range of frontline and support staff, as well as Fire Authority Members, partners and stakeholders.

In their subsequent report the team praised the way in which the Service operates, highlighting that there was “a strong ethos of

Budget 2012-13 (£44.1m)



‘Team Cheshire’ throughout the whole organisation – from firefighters to Members.” They added that:

- The organisation’s data sharing agreements with key partners represented notable practice
- There was an excellent Member ‘buddy’ system and Member Champions for key areas which tied councillors firmly into the work of the Service
- There are robust local performance management structures, with Member involvement a further area of notable practice
- The proposed risk management model and emergency response review were thorough and well thought out
- Investment in training provided assurance on the competency of front line staff
- In taking the organisation through the difficult years ahead the Authority needs to show courage and resolve and present a vision for staff and others to aim for.

Value for money

The chart on the previous page shows a headline breakdown of the Service’s £44.1 million budget for the 2012-13 financial year. It highlights the fact that 76% of the budget goes on staff costs, with the vast majority of that obviously on operational staff - firefighters and fire officers. It is clear that the bulk of the estimated £5 million savings needed over the next four years will inevitably have to come by reducing staff costs.

The fundamental review of the Service’s fire stations, fire engines and staffing systems has put forward proposals aimed at ensuring the most efficient and cost-effective use of its emergency response resources in the future. To make sure all other areas of the organisation are also working efficiently and in line with the Service’s future needs, a comprehensive programme of value for money reviews began in the last financial year.

Those completed so far include:

- Corporate administration
- Community Fire Protection

- Community Fire Safety
- Transport and Workshops
- Corporate Intelligence Unit
- Health and Safety.

While these reviews did not have targets to save specific amounts of money or cut a certain number of jobs, the results will see savings of over £600,000 together with a reduction in post numbers and changes in responsibilities.

Other reviews scheduled for completion by the end of 2012-13 include the Service’s Facilities and Operational Policy and Assurance departments. The Authority committed to completing value for money reviews of all departments over a three-year period and carrying out the following reviews during 2013-14 will complete that initial programme:

- Human Resources
- Finance
- ICT
- Legal and Democratic Services including Procurement and Stores
- Planning, Performance and Communications.

The review of the structure of the ICT department is the final part of a three-phase programme of change which has seen a £500,000 investment to provide a new, faster and more resilient network linking together all of the Service’s stations. It has also included:

- Increasing the speed of the Service’s connection to the internet
- Installing wireless networks on all community fire stations
- Setting up a rolling five year programme to replace desktop computers and laptops
- Upgrading all key computer servers and system software
- Developing in-house systems which will allow information on different databases to be linked and shared more easily.



Protecting local communities

The next financial year will see the Service fully implementing the outcomes of value for money reviews into the Service's Community Safety and Community Fire Protection departments. Staff in the former work directly with local communities, delivering HSAs to premises across Cheshire, engaging with partners to protect those at greater risk of fire and running a range of programmes for young people.

Community Fire Protection staff work with businesses to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities under fire safety legislation and also prosecute in cases where the laws have not been followed and lives put at risk.

The reviews have streamlined systems and processes and resulted in the equivalent of a dozen posts being cut, with total savings of £368,000. Some of the efficiencies have been achieved by working with key partners to share the costs of employing specialist community safety advocates, such as with the Deafness Support Network.

Staff are also working with partners in Cheshire West and Chester on a project called "Altogether Better" aimed at improving the way local public services are provided. One of the key proposals for the future is extending the Service's specialist Home Safety Assessment process for older people. This sees the normal visit which provides fire and home safety advice extended to signpost people to other specialist support they may be entitled to.

The Service's recognition of the significant increase in safety issues caused by the rising elderly population has seen staff lead on the fire and rescue service's national approach to the issue. At a local, practical level, collaboration with Age UK Cheshire has seen the employment of a specialist outreach worker to visit people affected by dementia. In partnership with local health services, visits are made to the homes of dementia sufferers and a range of practical fire and other safety advice and support is provided.

Other work with partners has seen the Service commissioned by Cheshire East Council to deliver road safety education on its behalf for the next three years. The income covers the cost of staff providing the service and builds on the existing programme of fire safety visits to key Stage II pupils across Cheshire with key "fire survival" messages.

Further opportunities for the Service to be commissioned to deliver some of its youth engagement projects are being developed with 'Primary Respect' courses for pupils in years 5 and 6 set up in Warrington, and additional Prince's Trust programmes for older teenagers running across Cheshire.

Campaigns

During the next financial year the Authority intends to increase its support for two key long-term campaigns aimed at reducing fire deaths, injuries and damage in both homes and businesses.

The first involves campaigning to make it a legal requirement for private landlords to fit long life, linked smoke alarms in all their properties. Significant research and initial lobbying is already underway, while key tasks over the next 12 months include developing a scheme to recognise landlords in Cheshire who make a specific commitment to fire safety.

Sprinklers

The other campaign will see the Service increasing its support and lobbying for the national fire and rescue move to make the fitting of sprinkler systems a requirement in all new buildings in England. The Welsh Government has already passed legislation requiring sprinklers to be fitted in all new and converted residential properties from September 2013.

The Service is already a member of the National Fire Sprinkler Network and recently



held two major events to raise the profile of the campaign locally. The first saw a dramatic live demonstration at an empty accommodation block in Crewe where two identical bedrooms were set on fire, one fitted with a sprinkler system and one without.

A specially invited audience including MPs, local councillors, housing associations and the media were able to watch at close quarters as flames engulfed the unprotected room, destroying the contents in minutes and ensuring anyone inside would have been killed. In contrast, the sprinklers in the adjacent room started working just 30 seconds after the fire started, minimising smoke and fire damage.

The Service then joined forces with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service to stage a regional sprinkler conference where delegates were given information packs, including a DVD of the Crewe demonstration, to emphasise the case for sprinklers. Key messages from both events are to be used by staff and Members over the next 12 months to push the use of sprinklers with all of its key local partners.

False alarms

In July 2012 the Service changed the way it handles calls from automatic fire alarm systems in a bid to halve the number of false alarms firefighters have to deal with each year.

During 2011-12, crews attended 2,757 calls as a result of systems being activated by accident or because of a fault. Just 47 of the calls were genuine fires and of those 47, only 17 required firefighters to take any action.

The new policy involves control operators trying to get confirmation from the premises or the alarm company that there is a genuine emergency before sending any fire crews. If they can't get confirmation either way, one fire engine – instead of the previous two or more – is sent under blue lights to investigate. Calls from premises where there could be people sleeping, such as homes, hospitals, care homes, hotels, hostels and halls of residence are not challenged.

The policy was brought in after detailed consultation but it will be subject to a formal review during the next 12 months to ensure it is meeting the expectations of both the Service and businesses.



Responding to emergencies

The most significant of projects in 2012-13 has been a review of the Service's front-line emergency response. This has seen a dedicated team co-ordinate an in-depth analysis of past, present and future emergency response demands and requirements. The exercise has involved:

- A review of the Service's existing standards for how quickly fire engines respond to fires and other emergencies
- An analysis of incidents attended by the Service over the last three years, including where and when they occurred and the types of emergencies involved
- A review of risk profiles across the Fire Authority
- The use of existing and new computer modelling programmes and consultants to analyse the impact of changing the location of some stations and how and when they are staffed.

Emergency response review

Officers have then used professional judgement to develop a package of proposals which balance value for money and practicality against the impact on risk levels and response standards. The key principles include:

- Replacing the current sophisticated but complex emergency response standards with a blanket 10 minute standard for life risks – fires and road traffic collisions
- Building up to five new fire stations to improve response times in key areas, with two of them acting as operational hubs near key motorway junctions
- Urging partners to share facilities where practical, such as the joint project at Poynton Community Fire Station
- Reducing the number of Wholetime firefighter posts on fire stations which have two fire engines
- Bringing in 12-hour day shifts on some stations and increasing the number of part-time or 'on-call' firefighter posts.



Fire Authority Members have discussed the options in detail and agreed that they should be subject to extensive consultation with residents, businesses, staff and key partners.

The proposals, options and implications are set out on pages 17 to 24. While the Service doesn't operate according to local council boundaries, the proposals have been put into unitary areas for easy reference.

Implementing these options will take a number of years, and while preparations will get under way in 2013 -14, no practical changes will take place until the following financial year.

One of the principles behind the proposals, however, is to change the current variable emergency response standards with a blanket 10 minute standard for all incidents where someone's life might be at risk eg fires and road traffic collisions. This would come in to effect from April 1st 2013 and would also see the introduction of the new community risk management model to take into account the impact the Service's community safety work on local risk levels. This is outlined on page 5 of



this plan and will ensure prevention and protection work is targeted on people and communities most at risk and in those areas where it would be impractical for the Service to achieve the 10 minute response standard.

Another key feature of the proposals is to make greater use in future of “on-call” or part-time firefighters. This system operates in mainly rural areas with staff who live or work within five minutes of the station alerted via a pager day and night. To ensure the Service can recruit and retain sufficient On-call staff in future, options to review payments are being explored as well as potentially increasing the travel to station time to six or seven minutes.

During 2013-14 the Service also intends to implement the outcomes of a number of reviews carried out during the current financial year into its frontline staffing and crewing arrangements. These include:

- **Task analysis** – evaluating the minimum number of firefighters needed to safely carry out key tasks at incidents such as house fires

- **Shift systems** - keeping the current whole-time system (two days, two nights and four days off) but reducing staff on stations with two fire engines to four firefighters on each vehicle - and pay staff extra to provide extra support when needed. OR change the Wholetime system to 12 hour shifts with firefighters providing the additional support by working some shifts at short notice
- **Flexible crewing** – at present a fire engine cannot be sent to an incident if less than four firefighters are available, however, options to allow two or three firefighters to respond to smaller incidents are being explored for On-call stations.

In addition, the Service is also intending to implement the recommendations from a review carried out into the range of specialist vehicles and appliances it uses. These include foam tankers, hazard management units and aerial appliances - fire engines with hydraulic booms so fire crews can work at height.

The recommendations include removing some vehicles which are hardly used and making more use of containers or ‘pods’ to store specialist equipment and supplies so these can be carried easily on flat bed lorries.

Fire Control

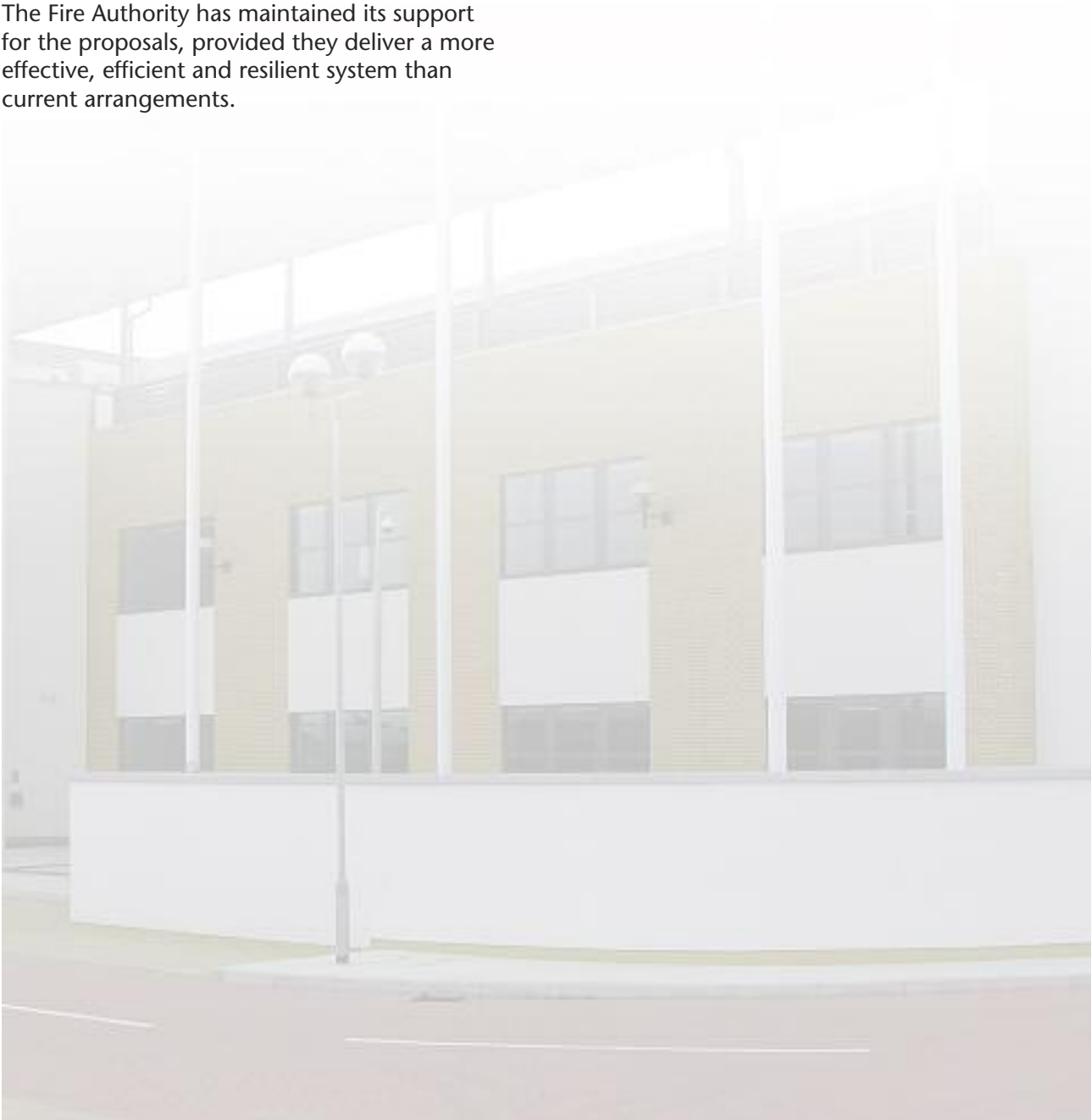
In June 2012 Cheshire took over the handling of 999 calls for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service and the mobilising of their fire engines and officers to emergencies. The move followed an approach by Cumbria which wanted to ensure it had a modern, cost-effective and resilient control system which it could rely on until the proposed North West Fire Control Centre opens in 2014.

The project saw staff from both Services working closely together to ensure the technology and emergency procedures were operating effectively before the formal handover. In addition, a small number of staff from Cumbria transferred to Cheshire and are working in the Service’s current control room at its Winsford headquarters.

Lessons learned from the project will be used to help the implementation of the planned North West Fire Control Centre at Lingley Mere. That is scheduled to be fully operational by the Spring of 2014 and currently has the backing of four out of the five fire authorities in the North West – Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester and Lancashire.

Extensive work has already been carried out on both the technological and staffing aspects of the project, with the Service's Chief Fire Officer Paul Hancock in the role of Project Director.

The Fire Authority has maintained its support for the proposals, provided they deliver a more effective, efficient and resilient system than current arrangements.



Emergency response review – options

The following pages set out a series of options and proposals highlighting how the Service could provide its response to fire and other emergencies in the future. While a number of the proposals are linked, they have been set out under local council areas for easy reference. A key element is changing how some fire stations are crewed in future so this page outlines current crewing systems, station running costs and a graph showing the busier day time for the main stations.

Duty systems overview

The Service currently has 24 community fire stations which are staffed according to local risk and activity levels. There are:

- **Seven wholetime stations** in the main urban areas with crews working 9 hour day and 15 hour night shifts to provide 24/7 cover.
- **Five day crewing stations** in smaller urban areas with firefighters living in Authority-owned houses alongside the stations. They are on duty in the day but respond from home through a pager at night.
- **Two 'nucleus crewed' stations** - here firefighters work 12 hour shifts covering the period of peak activity, with "on-call" staff who live within five minutes of the station covering the rest.

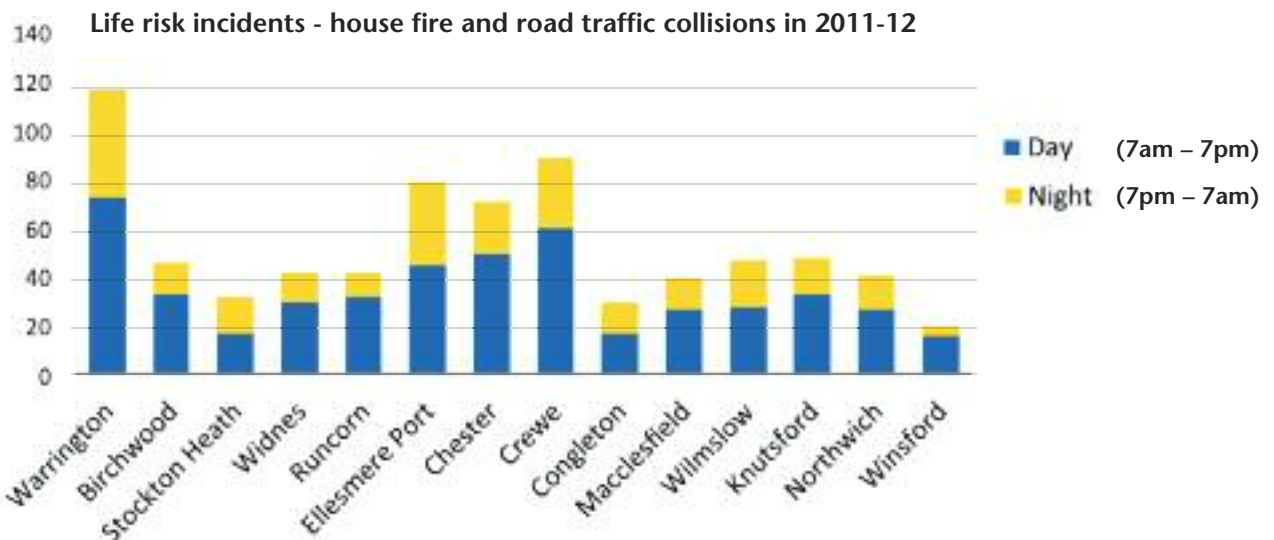
- **Ten on-call stations** – these are in mainly rural areas and staff – formerly known as retained firefighters - who live or work within five minutes of the station are alerted via a pager day and night.

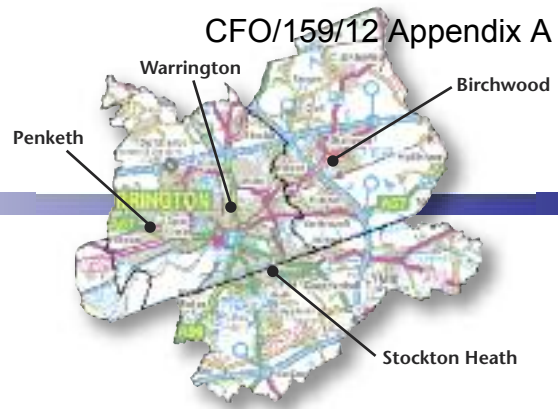
Costs

It currently costs between £1.6 and £2 million a year to run each of the six Wholetime stations with two fire engines and £1 million a year for Macclesfield which has one Wholetime fire engine. Day Crewing stations cost around £700,000 a year, Nucleus Crewing £740,000 and On-call approximately £150,000.

To make it easier to recruit and retain On-call firefighters, options to improve pay and conditions are being reviewed, as well as the impact of allowing people to live or work more than 5 minutes from the station.

The financial implications on the following pages relate purely to annual salary savings. These are provisional at this stage as they are subject to local negotiations over crewing levels, duty systems and potential allowances. There are also one-off costs involved in building and fitting out any new stations. These would vary according to the location and type of station proposed, but would be met from existing reserves and balances or by taking out a loan which would be repaid over a number of years. The precise funding would have to be signed off by the Fire Authority.





Warrington

The Warrington area currently has three fire stations, which are staffed as follows:

- **Warrington** is Wholetime, with two fire engines and other specialist vehicles providing 24/7 cover
- **Stockton Heath** has two fire engines and an aerial platform with staff on the Day Crewing system. The second fire engine is crewed by On-call staff
- **Birchwood** has one fire engine staffed through the Nucleus Crewing system.

Warrington – Over the last three financial years there has been a 12.7% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average of 23.4 calls per week, equivalent to 3.35 calls per day, with 65.6% of attendances dealt with by one fire engine.

Stockton Heath – Over the last three financial years there has been a 25.8% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average of 4.65 calls per week, equivalent to 0.66 calls per day, with 61.1% dealt with by one fire engine.

Birchwood – Over the last three financial years there has been a 10.5% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average of 6.69 calls per week, equivalent to 0.95 calls per day, with 66.1% dealt with by one fire engine.

Proposals

Penketh

Build a new Wholetime community fire station with two fire engines, the first transferred from Warrington and the second operated by On-call staff

Warrington

1. Move the second fire engine from Warrington to Penketh
2. Replace the remaining fire engine at Warrington with a new vehicle which combines the capabilities of a traditional fire engine and an aerial appliance or

transfer the existing aerial appliance from Stockton Heath.

Stockton Heath

1. Change the duty system from the current Day Crewing arrangement to On-call
2. Transfer the aerial appliance to Warrington.

Lymm

Build a new Wholetime fire station at Lymm, around the M6/M56 motorway interchange; to be crewed by transferring existing Day Crewing staff from Stockton Heath and Knutsford stations. Use the new station as an “operational response hub” to store specialist operational vehicles

Birchwood

No change

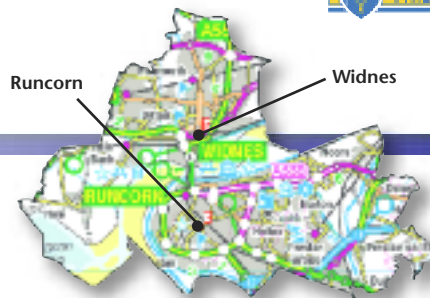
Financial implications

Building the new community fire station at Penketh and new operational station at Lymm will result in one-off capital costs. Ongoing staffing costs for both will be met by moving crews from Warrington, Stockton Heath and Knutsford.

Key points

Potential issues associated with the options:

- The new fire stations will improve emergency response times and provide more flexible support to surrounding areas
- Introducing On-call duty systems means it will take staff up to five minutes longer to respond to incidents than currently because of the time needed for them to travel to the fire station from their homes or places of work
- Setting up On-call duty systems requires new staff to be recruited and trained from the surrounding area.



Halton

Halton currently has two Wholetime fire stations, one in **Runcorn** and one in **Widnes**. Both fire stations have two fire engines, staffed Wholetime providing 24/7 cover.

Runcorn - Over the last three financial years there was a 5.6% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average of 15.98 calls per week, equivalent to 2.28 calls per day, with 70.5% of dealt with using one fire engine.

Widnes – In 2011-12 there were 924 attendances. Over the last three financial years there has been a 24.7% reduction in the number of attendances. The station deals with an average 12.52 calls per week, equivalent to 1.78 calls per day, with 68.3% of attendances dealt with by one fire engine.

Proposals

There are a number of possible options for changing how and where fire and rescue resources are used across Halton which will save significant amounts of money, while aiming to improve overall fire cover.

Runcorn

1. Remove the second fire engine entirely; or
2. Replace it with a 'midi' fire engine which can be used during busy periods such as bonfire night; or
3. Change how the second fire engine is crewed from Wholetime to On-call (24/7); or
4. Change the crewing of the second fire engine to a 12 hour day shift only; or
5. Change the crewing of the second fire engine to Nucleus Crewing model (12 hour day shift and On-call at night).

Widnes

Remove the second fire engine; but provide additional cover by building a new community fire station at Penketh (see Warrington proposals/options on the previous page).

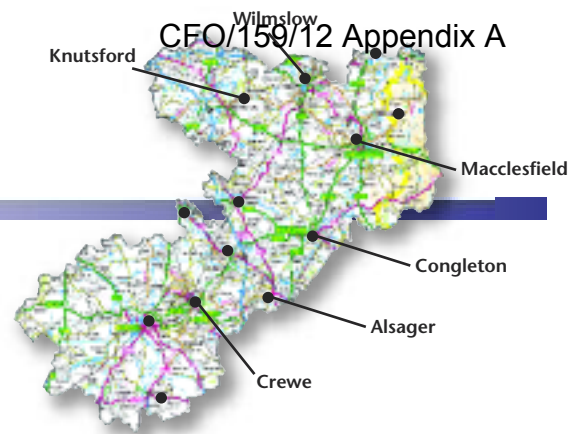
Financial implications

Option	Estimated annual savings
Runcorn	
1.	£800,000
2.	£750,000
3.	£650,000
4.	£350,000
5.	£200,000
Widnes	
1.	£800,000

Key points

This section outlines any potential issues associated with the options presented above.

- Introducing an On-call duty system for second fire engines means it will take staff up to five minutes longer to respond to incidents than currently because of the time needed for them to travel to the fire station from their homes or places of work
- Setting up On-call duty systems requires new staff to be recruited and trained from the surrounding area
- The removal of the second fire engine from Widnes would be supported by the new fire station in Penketh (Warrington). This would have one fire engine crewed 24/7 and a second fire engine On-call.



Cheshire East

The area has a total of 12 fire stations, which are currently crewed as follows:

- **Crewe** is Wholetime, with two fire engines and other specialist vehicles providing 24/7 cover.
- **Macclesfield** is Wholetime, with one fire engine, one On-call fire engine and an aerial appliance
- **Knutsford** has one fire engines and other specialist vehicles, with staff working the Day Crewing system
- **Congleton** has two fire engines one operated by Day Crewing and the second by On-call staff
- **Wilmslow** - has one fire engine operated by Nucleus Crewing
- **Audlem, Bollington, Holmes Chapel, Nantwich, Middlewich, Poynton and Sandbach** are staffed through the On-call system.

Crewe – Over the last three financial years there has been an 8.7% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average 15.01 calls per week, equivalent to 2.14 calls per day, with 63% were dealt with by one fire engine.

Macclesfield – Over the last three financial years there has been an 18.2% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average 9.76 calls per week, equivalent to 1.39 per day, with 65.7% were dealt with using one fire engine.

Knutsford – Over the last three financial years there has been a 1.6% increase in the number of attendances, due to an increase in road traffic collisions and other special service calls. The station deals with an average 4.98 calls per week, equivalent to 0.71 per day, with 68.3% dealt with using one fire engine.

Congleton – Over the last three financial years there has been an 11.7% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average 4.23 calls per week, equivalent to 0.6 per day, with 72% dealt with by one fire engine.

Wilmslow – Over the last three financial years there has been a 6.2% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average 6.94 calls per week or just under 1 a day. Of the incidents attended, 78.1% were dealt with using one fire engine.

Proposals

There are a number of possible options for changing how and where fire and rescue resources are used across Cheshire East which will save significant amounts of money, while aiming to improve overall fire cover.

Alsager

Build a new On-call fire station and transfer the second fire engine from Congleton.

Congleton

1. Transfer the second fire engine to Alsager. Change the current Day Crewing duty system to an On-call arrangement, 24 hours a day
2. Change the current Day Crewing duty system to a Nucleus Crewing system (Monday to Friday - 8 hour day shifts) with evening and weekend cover being provided by the existing On-call staff.

Crewe

1. Remove the second fire engine entirely; or
2. Replace it with a 'midi' fire engine which can be used during busy periods such as bonfire night; or
3. Change how the second fire engine is crewed from Wholetime to On-call (24/7); or
4. Change the crewing of the second fire engine to a 12 hour day shift only; or
5. Change the crewing of the second fire engine to Nucleus Crewing model (12 hour day shift and On-call at night).

Macclesfield

1. Change the current Wholetime duty system to a Nucleus Crewing system to maintain two fire engines
2. Move from having two fire engines to one during the 12 hour night time period
3. Crew the aerial appliance with On-call staff at all times.

Knutsford

Change the current Day Crewing duty system to On-call.

No changes are proposed at **Wilmslow, Audlem, Bollington, Holmes Chapel, Nantwich, Middlewich, Poynton or Sandbach.**



Financial implications

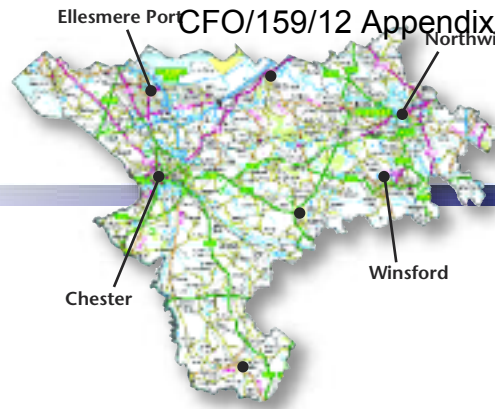
Setting up a new On-call fire station at Alsager will result in one-off capital costs.

Option	Estimated annual savings
Congleton	
1.	£600,000
2.	£300,000
Crewe	
1.	£800,000
2.	£750,000
3.	£650,000
4.	£350,000
5.	£200,000
Macclesfield	
1.	£350,000
2.	£500,000
3.	£100,000
Knutsford	
1.	£500,000

Key points

This section outlines any potential issues associated with the options presented above.

- The new fire stations will improve emergency response times and provide more flexible support to surrounding areas
- Introducing On-call duty systems means it takes staff up to five minutes longer to respond to incidents than currently because of the time needed for them to travel to the fire station from their homes or places of work
- Setting up On-call duty systems requires new staff to be recruited and trained from the surrounding area.



Cheshire West and Chester

The area has seven fire stations, which are currently crewed as follows:

- **Chester** is Wholetime, with two fire engines and other specialist vehicles providing 24/7 cover
- **Ellesmere Port** is Wholetime with two fire engines and other specialist vehicles providing 24/7 cover
- **Northwich** and **Winsford** both have two fire engines, one operated by Day Crewing staff and the second through On-call staff
- **Frodsham, Malpas and Tarporley** are staffed by the On-call system.

Chester – Over the last three financial years was a 9.2% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average of 21 calls per week, equivalent to just under three a day, with 57.8% dealt with using one fire engine.

Ellesmere Port – Over the last three financial years there has been a 12.4% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average 15.9 calls per week, equivalent to 2.27 per day, with 69.5% dealt with by one fire engine.

Northwich – Over the last three financial years there has been a 22.2% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average 7.56 calls per week, equivalent to 1.08 per day, with 68.1% dealt with using one fire engine.

Winsford – Over the last three financial years there has been a 28.8% reduction in the number of attendances at incidents. The station deals with an average 6.75 calls per week, equivalent to 0.96 per day, with 87.1% were dealt by one fire engine.

Proposals

There are a number of possible options for changing how and where fire and rescue resources are used across Cheshire West and Chester which will save significant amounts of money, while aiming to improve overall fire cover.

Chester

1. Transfer the second fire engine from Chester to a new Wholetime station near the M56/M53 motorway interchange. Use the new station as an “operational response hub” to store specialist operational vehicles
2. Replace the remaining fire engine at Chester with a new vehicle which combines the capabilities of a traditional fire engine and an aerial appliance or maintain the existing aerial appliance and fire engine.

Ellesmere Port

1. Remove the second fire engine entirely; or
2. Replace it with a ‘midi’ fire engine which can be used during busy periods such as bonfire night; or
3. Change how the second fire engine is crewed from Wholetime to On-call (24/7); or
4. Change the crewing of the second fire engine to a 12 hour day shift only; or
5. Change the crewing of the second fire engine to Nucleus Crewing model (12 hour day shift and On-call at night); or
6. Transfer the second fire engine to a new On-call fire station, built in Neston.

Winsford

1. Change the duty system from the current Day Crewing arrangement to On-call, 24 hours a day

2. Change the duty system from the current Day Crewing arrangement to a Nucleus Crewing (Monday to Friday - 8 hour day shifts) arrangement with evening and weekend cover provided by existing On-call staff.

Northwich

1. Change the duty system from the current Day Crewing arrangement to On-call, 24 hours a day
2. Change the duty system from the current Day Crewing arrangement to a Nucleus Crewing (Monday to Friday - 8 hour day shifts) arrangement with evening and weekend cover provided by existing On-call staff.

Frodsham, Malpas and Tarporley

No change

Financial implications

Setting up the new Wholetime operational fire station near the motorway junction will result in one-off capital costs.

The ongoing staffing costs would be met by moving the second fire engine at Chester to the new station. There would be similar capital costs for a new On-call fire station at Neston with staffing costs met by transferring the second fire engine at Ellesmere Port to Neston.

Option	Estimated annual savings
Ellesmere Port	
1.	£800,000
2.	£750,000
3.	£650,000
4.	£350,000
5.	£200,000
6.	£650,000
Winsford	
1.	£600,000
2.	£300,000
Northwich	
1.	£600,000
2.	£300,000

Key points

This section outlines any potential issues associated with the options presented above.

- The new fire stations will improve emergency response times and provide more flexible support to surrounding areas
- Introducing On-call duty systems means it takes staff up to five minutes longer to respond to incidents than currently because of the time needed for them to travel to the fire station from their homes or places of work
- Setting up On-call duty systems requires new staff to be recruited and trained from the surrounding area.



Draft timetable

The emergency response proposals put forward will take a number of years to implement. The Fire Authority has set out the provisional timetable below which will be subject to change to reflect feedback and land development issues. Because of the scale and complexity of the projects, it is not proposed to introduce any of the significant changes to crewing systems or stations during the next financial year.

2013-2014

1. Implementing recommendations from the review of specialist vehicles, their location and crewing
2. Introduce the new Community Risk Management model and the 10 minute operational response time for life risk incidents
3. Start riding with four firefighters on each fire engine at Wholetime stations with two fire engines and pay staff extra to provide additional support when needed. OR change the Wholetime system to 12 hour shifts with firefighters providing the additional support by working some shifts at short notice
4. Extend the current Flexible Crewing Arrangements across all On-call stations
5. Increase the On-call recruitment catchment area to 6 minutes and 7 minutes (maximum) if the existing 5 minute standard does not provide sufficient firefighters
6. Start recruiting for On-call staff at Alsager, Penketh, Stockton Heath, Knutsford, Neston and Congleton
7. Consider introducing a salary scheme for On-call firefighters
8. Implement the recommendations from the review of flexi-duty manager posts

2014-2015

1. New fire station at Penketh (12 hour shifts) – “go live”
2. Remove the second fire engine from Widnes
3. Introduce new crewing arrangements for the second fire engine at Runcorn
4. Introduce new shift system at Macclesfield
5. Start riding four firefighters across all stations
6. North West Fire Control – “go live”

2015-2016

1. New fire station at Lymm (12 hour shifts) – “go live”
2. Transfer staff from Stockton Heath and Knutsford to Lymm
3. Transfer Technical Rescue Unit from Knutsford to Lymm and Incident Response Unit from Winsford to Lymm
4. Introduce On-call model for Stockton Heath and Knutsford
5. Implement new crewing arrangements at Congleton
6. New On-call fire station at Alsager – “go live”
7. Introduce new crewing model for Winsford and Northwich
8. Introduce specialist combined fire engine / aerial appliance at Warrington

2016-2017

1. New fire station at M53/M56 interchange (12 hour shifts) – “go live”
2. Introduce new crewing arrangement for second pump at Ellesmere Port or “go live” for new On-call fire station at Neston
3. Introduce new crewing arrangement for second pump at Crewe
4. Transfer Foam Unit from Ellesmere Port and Incident Response Unit from Chester to M53/M56 station
5. Transfer High Volume Pump from Congleton to Ellesmere Port
6. Introduce specialist combined fire engine / aerial appliance at Chester



4

Involving our staff and our communities



The Authority recognises that the future changes it needs to make so it can continue to protect local communities during a time of major funding cuts are significant and will raise a number of issues for both its staff and the people they serve. As a result it is committed to ensuring the programme of consultation and engagement is as extensive and inclusive as possible and follows nationally accepted best practice.

As part of the process the Authority is intending to ensure that the programme has the endorsement of the Consultation Institute through its Compliance Assessment scheme.

Within the organisation initial briefing sessions have been offered to all staff, while there have also been dedicated meetings with trade union officials. Externally the Service is contacting its key partners and inviting their comments on future proposals, while full details and an online survey will also be available on its website – www.cheshirefire.gov.uk. The website also provides links to the organisation's Facebook and Twitter social media channels which communities are encouraged to make use of in giving their views and debating the options.

In addition, there will be face to face briefings for key people and organisations and a series of community roadshows where people can discuss the proposals in detail.

The formal consultation on the draft IRMP10 will run from September 24 to December 17 2012. A full consultation report will be considered at the Fire Authority's meeting on February 13, 2013 when Members will also confirm the organisation's budget for 2013-14. Copies of the consultation report will also be published on the Service's Intranet and website. The contact details for further information are as follows:

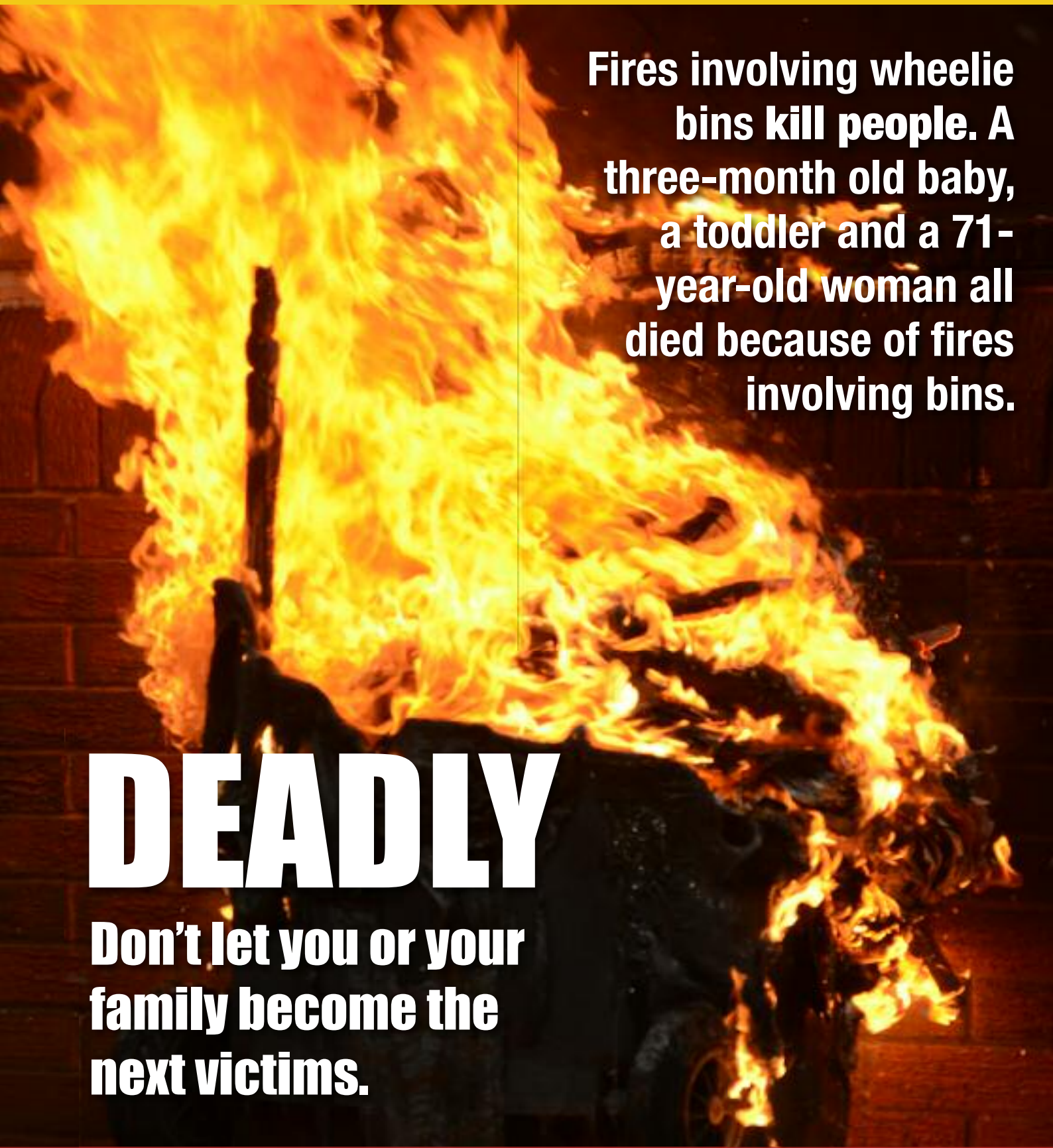
e-mail: consultation@cheshirefire.gov.uk

tel. 01606 868408

post: IRMP 10 Consultation,
Planning, Performance and
Communications Dept.,
Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service,
Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire
CW7 2FQ

or
FREEPOST Cheshire Fire Consultation





Fires involving wheelie bins kill people. A three-month old baby, a toddler and a 71-year-old woman all died because of fires involving bins.

DEADLY

Don't let you or your family become the next victims.

Lock your wheelie bin away and call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 if you suspect someone of lighting fires.