



Business Strategy

2011/12–2014/15

‘Safer by Design’ Community Safety Fire and Rescue and Emergency Planning

Directorate Statement

Directorate	Fire & Rescue Service, Emergency Planning & Community Safety
2010/11 Gross Budget	£29.374m
2010/11 FTE	401.65*

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total of Proposals	-0.596	-1.040	-1.510	-1.610
New service pressures	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050
Net Savings	-0.546	-0.990	-1.460	-1.560

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	TOTAL
Planned FTE savings (including retained RDS fire fighters)	-13.2	-8.0	-1.0	0	-22.2

* There are also 364 retained fire fighters. The full time equivalent for retained equates to 120 hrs per week, many retained staff only offer cover for part of this period. The figure of 364 given is the **total number** currently employed.

The “**Safer by Design**” Business Strategy covers the Fire & Rescue Service, Emergency Planning and Community Safety and is a transitional document which recognises the progressive movement of Services from the former Community Safety and Shared Services Directorate into the Social and Community Services Directorate. The Strategy is written to capture the medium term vision for all of the Services identified.

The strategy links directly with all Corporate Strategic Objectives:

A **World Class Economy** is supported via our contribution to the sustainable development and protection of a thriving local economy by provision of advice and support to enable local businesses to successfully compete in the marketplace, ensure their business continuity and minimise the likelihood of emergencies (e.g. fires).

Healthy & Thriving Communities are supported by our actions to help reduce crime, antisocial behaviour and the fear of crime and supporting and protecting those at greatest risk from doorstep crime, domestic abuse and hate crime. In addition we safeguard our communities from fire risk through the provision of protection, risk reduction, intervention and provision of information. We also provide directly or work with partners to deliver preventative programmes for children and young people at risk of offending and to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Finally we develop service, organisational and community resilience through education and training and the development of community led planning

Environment and climate change objectives are supported by protecting our environment through reducing carbon emissions by reducing emergency incidents (e.g. fires) and through partnership working with the Environment Agency to minimise the effects of flooding, pollution incidents and fire-fighting actions.

We strive for **Better Public Services** by the delivery of our efficiency programme and value for money in general. We work with South East Fire Improvement Partnership for collaborative activities and are by this strategy, developing our data led, targeted prevention activities, aligned to locality working and increased use of volunteers and other partners.

“Safer by Design” is our vision for self reliant safer communities, with enabling actions and resources provided or commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council, working in partnership with a range of third parties. Intelligence led, locality specific approaches will identify practical preventative measures delivered through internal resources and via community based partnerships, which will address many of the emerging societal risks.

The **“Safer by Design”** vision has four main strands of activity which are:

- a) Growing in confidence – a strategy for safer young people
- b) Living in confidence – a strategy for the residents of Oxfordshire
- c) Travelling in confidence – a strategy for those on the move
- d) Working in confidence – a strategy for business.

Although the Fire Service (and, to a lesser extent, Emergency Planning and Trading Standards), will always maintain a reactive/999 response to calls for assistance, the main emphasis of the Council’s approach towards delivering a safer society is intended to be via preventative and educational measures, delivered by multi-skilled employees, voluntary agencies and other partners who can take practical actions as extra eyes and ears (and where appropriate hands) of the County Council, promoting risk awareness, self help, safeguarding and sign-posting specialist assistance and support when required. This approach is specifically designed to embrace the preventative agenda and reduce the call upon other Council services such as Adult Care.

For those services involved in regulation such as Trading Standards and Licensing, we will seek to move forward in conjunction with our District partners to deliver an integrated approach to regulatory services. As an integrated approach develops, the Trading Standards Service will extend locality specific services, supporting communities to address local issues and building preventative partnerships.

Approximately 90% of the overall Directorate budget relates to the Fire & Rescue Service and therefore the main delivery arm of the strategy is via this Service. However, the approach proposed is equally effective for all other services. The main capital and revenue issues associated with the Community Safety Directorate are the creation and maintenance of 'capacity to respond'. The Directorate has varying degrees of ability to make productive use of the 'capacity to respond' in intervening periods between safety related incidents and events occurring. Our future approach will be to further extend our prevention agenda therefore minimising the call on emergency response. Trading Standards Animal Health team is an example where the 'capacity to respond' (e.g. to a foot and mouth outbreak) is also productively used to monitor day-to-day animal welfare issues, eg. inspecting animal markets to reduce the risk of outbreaks of disease. The Fire & Rescue Service, despite its historic 'low cost and high performance' status, has been less able to achieve full productive effectiveness of its 'standing assets' due to the extensive use of Retained Duty System (RDS) staff. The Fire and Rescue Service has received investment through additional fulltime Watch Managers whose role is to support Retained Duty System fire stations, personnel and to improve the operational availability of fire engines. Going forward, we intend to further utilise these resources in localities across the county to deliver a broader suite of community safety initiatives.

The Directorate will ensure challenges are managed to ensure the successful implementation of this strategy. These challenges include:

- the scale of the financial savings
- potential further reductions in government grant funding
- increasing staff understanding and connection with other teams and wider corporate initiatives
- engaging the public and third parties in voluntary service provision
- the potential closure of Consumer Direct service
- growth in demand for reactive services reducing capacity to deliver preventative work streams

The Cabinet has already endorsed Fire & Rescue response targets (80% incidents attended in 11 mins, 95% in 14). The current targets can reasonably be expected to be met, with a minimum station disposition (using predominantly RDS staff) of 24 fire stations and 34 front line fire appliances. Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service already has one of the 'slowest' attendance time pledges with neighbouring brigades stating 'quicker' times than our current Cabinet endorsed pledge.

By 2015 the Directorate seeks to:

- Focus predominantly on 'Prevention and Protection' activities to minimise the need for 'Response' resources
- Remain committed to operational excellence, measured by the speed and weight of response to incidents and staffed by competent employees or partners¹
- Maximise productive use of the 'standing assets' (capital assets, people and 'brand') delivering directly or co-ordinating third party actions designed to improve community safety
- Have developed a range of specific activities (minimum one scheme in each of the 14 localities) designed to meet local needs to improve community safety
- Have implemented wider corporate and community use of Fire Stations
- Have used volunteers and other partners to:
 - Increase the number of referrals from other agencies identifying potential threats to or vulnerable people requiring services (Rogue Traders, Domestic Violence Reports, Home Fire Safety Checks)
 - Conduct specific activities on behalf of the Council, eg. Home Fire Safety checks fitting smoke alarms/security products
 - Provide youth programmes, eg. Junior Citizen activities
 - Extend good neighbour and Neighbourhood Weight Watch² schemes
- Have developed and implemented effective data sharing protocols with Social and Community Services recognising the common customer base allowing for a common data base and a targeted proactive intervention programme
- Have successfully transferred selected Community Safety Services into Community Services under the shared 'Communities' position within Social and Community Services and Children Young People and Families Directorates.
- Have exploited synergies between the Fire and Rescue Service and Social and Community Services support services allowing for integration where effective
- Deliver excellent Customer Service by exploiting the 'can do' attitudes of response staff
- Be intelligence-led and using customer analysis to target support to 'at risk' and vulnerable groups and communities
- Facilitate the most efficient contribution to local community safety priorities from County resources
- Have developed an integrated Road Safety team working with partners to maintain the reduction of those killed and seriously injured on Oxfordshire's roads.

¹ This should be considered against the ability of the service to respond with slightly diminished resources.

² Bridge and road weight limit schemes

Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning

Employees	341.09 FTE*
2010/11 Gross Budget	£24.675m

- There are also 364 retained fire fighters. FTE for retained equates to 120hrs per week, many retained staff only offer cover for part of this period. The figure of 364 given is the **total number** employed at Q2 in 2010.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Savings (£m)	-0.292	-0.464	-0.830	-0.830

Current service activity

The Fire & Rescue Service receives emergency calls for Oxfordshire to enable crews to be mobilised to save life through attending fires, road accidents and other emergencies. The Service also provides humanitarian assistance, responds to acts of terrorism and the effects of climate change, eg. flooding, contributes to the wider civil resilience of the UK, provides community safety advice and education and undertakes fire safety enforcement. Emergency Planning assess the risk of emergencies occurring, undertakes contingency planning, prepares Emergency Plans and delivers Business Continuity Management, including public warning and informing in the event of an emergency.

Statutory minimum

The Service is required under the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 to make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and making arrangements for extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in the event of fire, rescuing people from road traffic accidents and dealing with any other emergency. It is not possible to set a statutory minimum for this, as this part of the Service is demand led. There is also a responsibility to make provision for the purpose of promoting fire safety. In doing so the authority must, to the extent that it considers it reasonable, make arrangements for the provision of information and publicity of steps to be taken to prevent fires and death or injury by fire and give advice, on request about how to prevent fires and restrict their spread and the provision and maintenance of the means of escape in case of fire.

Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005, the Service has the responsibility for enforcement and has to issue enforcement and prohibition notices where businesses have not taken adequate fire safety precautions. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires the Authority as a category 1 responder (ie. an organisation at the core of the response to most emergencies) to assess the risk of emergencies occurring, develop emergency and business continuity plans, and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency. These activities are led by the Emergency Planning Unit whose

existing MTFP has been amended (with corresponding alternative efficiencies) to protect the ability of the Unit to maintain a 24/7 rota, allowing the County to rely on a qualified Emergency Planning professional to initiate emergency response and recovery actions.

Proposals to deliver efficiencies

These proposals list specific deliverable savings which appear as 'Further savings to be identified' in the current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

- **Review of the service**, including current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) projects, the national strategic review of the Fire & Rescue Service and synergies with Children, Young People and Families and Social and Community Services Directorates. This includes:
 - Removal of one fire engine (as already identified in the current MTFP)
 - Reduction of one Technical Fire Safety managerial post
 - Removal of 2 whole time operational fire-fighters through an establishment review at Banbury and Slade Park (Cowley) fire stations

The move into Social and Community Services creates an opportunity to consider how activities currently undertaken, can be streamlined and merged. Service knowledge clearly indicates that we share a common customer base of those who are most vulnerable in society. The future integrated approach will allow a common customer database therefore allowing us to target our resources to those most at risk. Efficiencies realised as a result of this include:

- Removal of one managerial/support/clerical post
- Savings (for the Fire and Rescue Service and Emergency Planning) from more effective procurement (including directorate, regional and sub regional initiatives)

Additional efficiencies have also been considered. This has resulted in the following proposals:

- Reduce initial trainee training volumes (by increased reliance on qualified fire-fighters transferring into the Service)
- Increase income from selling spare places on internal courses to local organisations who also wear breathing apparatus / require specialist driver training
- Remove the Retained Recruitment Officer post and transfer all functions to other managerial positions
- Reduce the Assessment Centre promotion and selection processes and medical related expenditure.

(Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has been subject to several external assessments and inspections all of which identified that we maximise the use of our human resources, so therefore there is very limited managerial capacity remaining).

Impact of the proposal on other Council services

Staff within Shared Services may have to take on additional 'co-ordinating' responsibilities due to the removal of the retained recruitment officer post.

Capital implications of proposed change

The proposals listed above are not dependent on capital funding and will not release any capital assets.

Community Safety – Safer Communities Unit

Employees	6.41FTE
2010/11 Gross Budget	£0.884m

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Savings (£m)	-0.141	-0.141	-0.141	-0.141

Current service activity

The Safer Communities Unit delivers the County Council's statutory duty to work in partnership to develop and deliver community safety strategies. These strategies contribute to making Oxfordshire a safe and supportive place to live, work and visit. The Unit's prime focus is around the co-ordination of partnership working to deliver community safety services to the public in the most efficient manner. It also hosts partnership and grant funded posts to support project delivery on Oxfordshire wide community safety priorities.

Statutory minimum

All services aligned with our responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which requires the County Council to work with other designated bodies to tackle crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, racially-motivated crime, substance misuse, fear of crime and re-offending. The Safer Communities Unit has already been subject to a fundamental service review and the future role of the Unit was agreed earlier this year. Work is on-going to restructure the Unit inline with the outcomes of the review. In implementing the recommendations, the Unit will become more focused on mainstreaming community safety into the rest of the council, whilst still supporting district activities covering countywide issues such as domestic violence, drugs and alcohol abuse plus anti-social behaviour.

Proposals to deliver efficiencies

The savings proposals assume a reduction in grant funding. The total 2010/11 budget for the service is £0.884m of which £0.652m is the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) and is passed through to local Community Safety Partnerships. The remainder (£0.232m) supports the establishment of 4.2 FTE. Since the grant allocation is expected to reduce or cease, Community Safety Partnerships will refocus their resources and partnership activity to deliver community safety objectives. This will not affect

the core service provided by the Safer Communities Unit but may affect joint funded project posts that we host (e.g. the County Domestic Abuse Coordinator and Hate Crime Project Lead Officer). The Unit will work closely with the Community Safety Partnerships to mitigate the effects of any reduction in funding.

The corporate restructure and, in particular, the creation of a cross-directorate Communities Team presents opportunities to reconfigure the delivery of the Council's Community Safety obligations. This restructure, coupled with the retirement of 2 members of the team, will present opportunities for delivering efficiencies.

Impact of the proposal on service users and communities

Reductions in the Area Based Grant allocation for Community Safety Partnerships will have a direct impact on the community safety activities undertaken by the partnerships. The majority of this funding is used by partnerships to support community safety officer posts to coordinate and deliver community safety projects addressing identified local priorities. Partnerships will determine how to manage the impact of any reduction but an inevitable consequence is likely to be a reduction in coordinated County wide activities and partnership working.

Capital implications of proposed change

There would be no capital assets released as a result of the changes.

Community Safety – Trading Standards

Employees	47.15 FTE
2010/11 Gross Budget	£2.551m

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Savings (£m)	-0.140	-0.407	-0.507	-0.607

Current service activity

The Trading Standards Service enforces approximately 80 Acts of Parliament and several hundred sets of subordinate legislation on behalf of the Council. The wide remit of the Service ranges from food safety to fair trading and fraud, illegal money lending to counterfeiting, farm animal health and welfare controls to under-age sales, product safety to overweight heavy goods vehicles, doorstep crime to the storage of hazardous substances.

Statutory minimum

All significant activities are aligned with responsibilities under the legislation referred to above. Minor exceptions exist as follows: Community Engagement activities such as Junior Citizen and electric blanket testing, the provision of Consumer Advice, the enforcement of road/ bridge weight restrictions and heavy goods vehicle overloading.

In respect of the duty to enforce legislation, no general minimum requirement is defined. However, the Service prioritises its response to alleged breaches of consumer protection legislation and only responds to complaints and intelligence that require a response to prevent harm (physical or economic). This is currently 34% of all complaints that on initial assessment suggest that a breach of legislation has occurred. In addition, the service already fails to meet the requirements of the national risk assessment scheme which should be used to determine the frequency of inspection of businesses within the county.

Proposals to deliver efficiencies

In October 2010, the Government announced plans to put local authority Trading Standards Services at the heart of their consumer protection policies and to divert almost all central government funding for consumer organisations to local Trading Standards Services and Citizens Advice. Therefore, it is likely that additional functions will be provided by Trading Standards in April 2011. As funding is expected to come through Revenue Support Grant, the amount of grant for these new functions may not be transparent.

The proposals for efficiencies within Trading Standards will need to be responsive to this new opportunity and therefore changes are minimal in 2011/12 to ensure that the Service can capitalise on any new funding streams.

It has recently been announced that a grant received by Trading Standards for animal health enforcement has been changed and is to be funded through Revenue Support Grant and reduced by approximately 70% by 2014/15. The impact of this funding change will be a reduction in capacity for animal health and welfare functions.

- The existing plans to deliver efficiencies still apply. However, the plan to re-provision consumer advice through Consumer Direct may need to be revised if national changes are made to Consumer Direct.

Proposals to deliver additional savings are:

- More focused approach to the Community Liaison work - these posts engage with communities in order to identify their needs for our services and deliver events and projects designed to raise awareness of consumer issues. Efficiencies will be gained by reducing the team by 2 posts, therefore requiring the team to coordinate work (including support to the Junior Citizen programme) in a more focused manner.
- A review of options for potential for partnering with other councils or contracting out to another organisation. This has the potential to create economies of scale and further reduce staffing costs. An appraisal of options for shared regulatory services between the Oxfordshire local authorities is being completed and will report in spring 2011. In addition, discussions are on-going with Buckinghamshire County Council to determine whether a joint approach could deliver more resilient services at a lower cost. On this basis, it is considered a possibility that savings through shared services will be deliverable. Alternatively, should such a change be considered undeliverable or undesirable after a full options appraisal has been completed, further reductions in the order of 5 front-line enforcement posts would achieve the savings target but decisions on what functions are no longer provided would be required.
- A managerial restructure in 2012 – this is also being recommended because it fits with the business strategy principle of reducing the number of managers.

Impact of the proposal on service users and communities

New funding opportunities may mitigate the effects of the proposed reductions.

The Service already operates a minimum service in respect of business inspections and in response to complaints. Proposed changes to focus the service resources more on reactive 'response' services.

The reduction in Community Liaison Officer posts will result in a minimised community engagement and harm prevention activities (e.g. doorstep crime training for carers, promotion of the Stop Loan Sharks project, support for the Junior Citizen programme,

proactive business legal advice). Adopting an alternative model for the provision of the Service (eg. contracting out or partnering with another local authority) may offer opportunities to achieve economies of scale and thereby maintain service provision whilst reducing cost. A reduction in managerial posts may result in a change in enforcement capacity and capacity to investigate complaints. The potential for partnering will enable some of this impact to be mitigated through shared resources and expertise..

Impact of the proposal on other council services

Reducing prevention work will result in a cessation of support for electric blanket testing and the Junior Citizen programme which may have an impact on the Fire and Rescue Service. The management restructure will impact on internal workloads and could have a knock-on effect on support provided to other services. Significant pressures could arise on managers when the volume of legal work is high.

Capital implications of proposed change

Depending on the outcome of partnership discussions there could be the potential for shared accommodation which could result in the release of the building currently occupied by Trading Standards. Capital funding could be required to secure shared alternatives.

Community Safety – Gypsy and Traveller Service

Employees	7 FTE
2010/11 Gross Budget	£0.894m

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Savings (£m)	0	0	0	0

Current service activity

The Gypsy & Travellers Service provides landlord services for some 80 families resident on the County Council's 6 permanent sites as well as safeguarding the county's settled communities from the problems associated with unauthorised encampments. The service also provides this function for Buckinghamshire County Council and Brent Housing Partnership which are generating additional income. Further contracts are being sought.

Statutory minimum

There is no statutory requirement on the County Council to provide permanent gypsy and traveller sites. However, we own these sites and as such have a duty to maintain them. The cost of doing so is minimised by efficient running of the sites to collect rent and ensure high site occupancy.

In respect of unauthorised encampments, the team's work directly supports the authority discharging a range of statutory responsibilities, eg. to provide for welfare and education needs of travellers and to deal with obstructions on the highways. In addition, the team's work minimises clean-up costs and promotes good relationships between the settled and traveller communities.

Proposals to deliver efficiencies

The Gypsy and Traveller Service already generates income of £0.800m, leaving a net cost to the service of £0.096m. Further contract or consultancy opportunities are being sought which may reduce the cost of the service further.

The provision of an in-house repairs and maintenance function for Traveller sites is in operation in Buckinghamshire and it is believed that this approach could reduce maintenance costs. The in-house repairs and maintenance function commenced in September 2010 in Buckinghamshire. It has not been possible to achieve the £0.020m saving in the existing Gypsy and Traveller Service efficiency plan that relied on providing the repairs and maintenance in Oxfordshire. However, a business case to

commence this work will be prepared based on the saving delivered in Buckinghamshire and a business case for extending this arrangement to Oxfordshire's sites will be prepared.

Impact of the proposal on service users and communities

As the proposals are income generating there are no negative impacts on communities. The provision of an in-house repairs and maintenance service could improve relations on sites.

Impact of the proposal on other council services

The proposal to develop in-house repairs and maintenance for the Oxfordshire sites would lead to a reduction in demand from the service for minor repairs from property services.

Capital implications of proposed change

There are no immediate capital implications from the proposals. Any increase in contracts for service provision could lead to an increased need for staff and associated office space.

Directorate's external pressures

1.

External pressure	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Training for fire fighters using Breathing Apparatus (£m)	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050

The report received following an inspection by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has resulted in 18 recommendations, one of which is to increase the amount of breathing apparatus training for fire fighters. The service has no control over the HSE which can issue improvement notices if it believes there is a significant breach of health and safety.

2..

External pressure	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Part time workers (Prevention of less favourable treatment) Regulations 2000	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known

Retained fire fighters are classed as part time workers under these regulations. Claims have been made by the Fire Brigades Unions (FBU) and negotiations continue regarding a settlement. A figure of £0.225m has already been assumed for one off costs but what cannot be predicted at this point are the ongoing costs of equal pay.

The implications of the Government FiReControl project are excluded from the above due to uncertainty at this time.

Summary

The Community Safety Directorate is embarking on a significant period of change as we move towards integration with Social and Community Services. This, coupled with the national comprehensive strategic review of Fire & Rescue Services and the work within Trading Standards around forming external partnerships and a single regulatory approach with Districts, requires significant change management. This would have been challenging had there been no other external requirements.

Within Fire and Rescue, there is a significant challenge in order to meet the original £0.662m efficiency saving that remained 'to be identified' in the current MTFP. The Service's history of a low cost base and previous efficiencies means there is little capacity for the delivery of further savings without significantly causing detriment to the front line emergency response.

The recent announcement over the potential abolition of the Office of Fair Trading and the National Consumer Direct helpline creates uncertainty over government Trading Standards direction. However, the government appears to be wishing to pass responsibility for consumer protection and enforcement to the professional Trading Standards Officers at Local Authority level and, subject to accompanying resources, Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards welcomes this future opportunity.

Additionally, there is a pressure on the delivery of animal welfare following a decision by DEFRA to reduce grant for this service over the next four years.

Our future approach will involve re-engineering our existing working practices and through maximising the use of the councils assets (both human and capital), create an integrated service delivery to produce a safer, more informed society. **"Safer by Design"** is our vision for self reliant safer communities, with enabling actions and resources provided or commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council, working in partnership with a range of third parties. Intelligence led, locality specific approaches will identify practical preventative measures delivered through internal resources and via community based partnerships, which will address many of the emerging societal risks. Through a truly integrated approach, we will seek to improve the safety, awareness and confidence of those who choose to grow-up, live, work or travel in Oxfordshire.