

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan 2022 – 2026 Consultation report

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Introduction

Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) would like to express their sincere thanks to all those who have taken the time to engage with our consultation on the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-26. Your contribution will help to shape the future direction of the service going forward to 2026.

As part of the CRMP review process, a new four-year Strategic Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 was drafted for consultation. This incorporates our analysis of the county's community risk profile, together with our strategic approach of how we intend to manage those risks effectively over the period.

The draft strategic CRMP 2022-26 was submitted for approval to the council's full cabinet following pre-consultation with key stakeholders and has been subjected to full internal and external consultation from 22nd September 2021 to 15th December 2021. This report summarises the feedback to our consultation.

Our medium-term financial plan and supporting business strategies underpin the priorities set out within our CRMP.

A formal management meeting has taken place with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) on behalf of representative bodies. A full set of comments detailing all consultation responses has been sent to the FBU to ensure transparency within the consultation process.

Executive summary

In total, the consultation received 234 responses. Eighty-three were received via the online consultation portal and 149 members of staff were consulted in group sessions and 2 email responses were received.

Overall, the consultation responses received were very positive and agreed with the strategic priorities that have been set out in the CRMP for the next four years. Some concerns were raised around the feasibility of our On Call duty system and our aspirations for achieving 100% availability across the fire stations in the county.

Concerns were raised about the level of resources within our prevention teams and the ability to deliver our prevention activities, as well as suggestions that we could utilise our operational staff to a greater effect with our prevention activities. It was suggested if our protection teams would visit more companies and not just the priority ones. As well as concerns of the ongoing challenges of resources and financial funding, in order to achieve the priorities, set out in the CRMP.

We welcome the comments and suggestions that have been put forward and have provide a response in the main body of the report.

Methodology

Between 22nd September and 15th December 2021, OFRS invited comments on the draft strategic CRMP 2022-2026.

Based on advice from the Consultation Institute and the OCC Engagement and Consultation teams, the Oxfordshire County Council online consultation portal was used to capture comments, with a structured set of questions around the key areas in the strategy.

The consultation asked for feedback on the community risks that had been identified for Oxfordshire, asking “are these the right risks and is anything missing?”. We also sought comments on our proposed priorities to address these risks and any ideas for what we could do differently.

The consultation engaged with both internally and externally with the following stakeholders:

- Community / public of Oxfordshire
- Members of parliament (MPs) and councillors
- OFRS staff
- Other OCC directorates and staff
- OFRS’s Strategic Leadership Team
- FBU and other representative bodies
- South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS)
- Thames Valley Police (TVP)
- National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)
- Environment Agency
- Parish, town and district councils in Oxfordshire
- Royal Life Saving Society
- Surrounding fire and rescue services (Royal Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Dorset & Wiltshire)

This was communicated through:

- Electronic invites to external / key stakeholders.
- Email invites to OFRS staff and county councillors.
- An invite to participate in the consultation was promulgated in OFRS’s internal staff communication platform, Newsfeed.
- Presentations delivered to OFRS teams, watches and stations.
- Recorded presentation distributed via service communication channels.

Consultation responses were collected through the OCC online consultation portal “Let’s Talk Oxfordshire” and by the delivery manager at several internal ‘group’ consultation sessions, and from emails submissions.

A total of 234 responses were received and are broken down as follows:

- Responses from 149 people attending group meetings
- 83 responses via OCC Consultation portal
- 1 email response
- 1 response from representative bodies (FBU).

A full list of the number of responses received for questions can be found in the appendices;

- Appendix A consultation portal responses
- Appendix B staff group consultations audience figures
- Appendix C demographic data.

Note: The consultation portal was set so that not all questions required an answer.

Staff Consultation session.

A total of 23 sessions involving 149 staff were conducted for the purpose of direct consultation. Feedback received from the sessions were predominantly positive, attendees liked the style of the documents and the clear separation between the management plan and the in-depth risk analysis document that drove the direction of the service's strategy.

Consultation Response and Our feedback

The following section summarises the responses received to the consultation and our response to questions raised or comments made.

Response priorities

We have put forward four strategic priorities for our emergency response for the period of this CRMP and have asked for feedback on these priorities.

- Public and Firefighter safety
- Availability of resources and appliances
- Workforce productivity
- Organisational learning and assurance

The majority of responses received agreed with these proposals, 85.4 percent agreed, 4.8 percent disagreed, and 9.8 percent remained neutral.

Twenty-nine comments were received with the majority in support of the priorities. Areas were raised on the challenges to On Call recruitment and retention, as well as concerns of our aspiration for 100% availability being achievable. People commented on the importance of local fire stations and how they reduce response

times to incidents. We were also asked if it was possible to include a more diverse way of looking at the operational staff and if we are going carry out a Wholetime recruitment during this plan

Our response

We acknowledge the concern raised regarding our On Call duty system and our aspiration to achieve 100% availability and we recognise that this is a very challenging ambition within our current operating model. However, we believe that having all of our fire engines available 100% of the time should remain our ambition, as this would provide the best emergency response provision for our communities and will ensure that we continue to test our approach through our CRMP to drive improvement. As an example, we have recently carried out a review of our On Call duty system and have a project in place to identify new ways to improve and develop the retention and recruitment of our On Call duty system.

Although our availability is positive, having an average of 25 fire appliances available each day, Covid has presented the country with new ways of working, with the increase of agile, hybrid & home working. We believe this will present a potential increased opportunity to widen our recruitment pool in our market towns.

We utilise our operational staff that are non-station based, who carry out fire prevention, protection and support functions, to support our availability model. We continue to explore all options to ensure we maintain and improve the availability of fire appliances across the county, which in turn will improve our response times to incidents by dispatching the quickest appliance to incidents from our Thames Valley Fire Control Service centre

We continually manage recruitment, both wholetime and on-call, and during the lifetime of this plan it is anticipated that we will carry out wholetime recruitment on several occasions when it is needed. The CRMP outlines how we manage risk, and therefore we don't include our recruitment plans within the document.

Prevention priorities

We have put forward four strategic priorities for our prevention activities for the period of this CRMP and have asked for feedback on these priorities.

- Targeting those most at risk
- Developing digital solutions
- Evaluating and supporting an evidence-based approach
- Supporting collaboration

The majority of responses received for this area agreed with these proposals. A total of 82 responses were received, of these, 84.1 percent agreed, 7.3 percent disagreed, and 8.5 percent remained neutral.

Twenty-eight comments were received, the majority were in support. Areas were raised on the level of resources within our prevention teams and the ability to deliver our prevention activities, as well as suggestion on how we could utilise our operational staff to a greater effect. It was suggested that the service could be more proactive in targeting their prevention activities, especially Safe and Well and water safety, rather than being reactive.

Our response

We acknowledge the concerns raised regarding the resources within our prevention team and the suggestion of using our operational staff more proactively. As part of our prevention strategy, we are developing digital solutions to support our delivery of prevention activities. This will enable self-service for lower risk people in our communities. This will increase our capacity to focus on residents at higher risk and those who are unable to access our self-service options.

We have been creating a profile of the communities within Oxfordshire that will assist us to identify those most at risk from fire and other emergency incidents. The product enables risk to be identified within an area, a town, a street and down to household level, displayed on an interactive map. This will be provided to our operational crews by the summer of 2022, to enable them to create local plans to reduce the levels of risk in their areas.

Protection priorities

We have put forward five strategic priorities for our protection activities for the period of this CRMP and have asked for feedback on these priorities.

- Inspect the highest risk commercial premises
- Undertake “themed” audits
- Take action where there are breaches in fire safety legislation
- Engage with businesses to reduce risk
- Expand our Primary Authority Scheme (PAS) partnership working

The majority of responses received for this area agreed with these proposals. A total of 83 responses were received for this question, 85.5 percent agreed, 4.8 percent disagreed, and 9.6 percent remained neutral.

Twenty-four comments were received, the majority were in support. Areas were raised over the productivity and number of audits carried out by staff. Are we going to visit more companies and not just the priority ones? Could protection advise on refurbishment and build of residential properties. It was suggested that the service should look at how we priorities businesses for inspection.

Our response

We acknowledge the suggestions raised regarding the protection teams being more involved in advising on residential properties. We recognise that this is an area that the public has become more concerned over following the tragic incident at Grenfell Tower. We work in partnership with local authorities on new developments with a focus on public and firefighter safety. We enforce the Fire Safety Order (2005) which limits our auditing and enforcement activities to the common parts of residential buildings, such as flats, including areas such as corridors and staircases that are linked to evacuation from a building. We have no powers in connection to a standard home or house. Grenfell has changed the thinking and approach to high-rise residential buildings, and this will soon be supported by new legislation. We inspect all high-rise residential buildings in Oxfordshire on an annual basis.

We have a Risk Based Inspection Programme that targets those premises with the greatest risks to the public such as hotels, bed and breakfast accommodation and buildings that present a higher risk from fires. Over the course of this CRMP we will review this to ensure that it stays relevant and takes in to account any emerging risks to the public based on local and national events.

General comments

There were a number of comments thought out the consultation that had a common theme with regards ongoing challenges of resources and financial funding and the suggestion of a single service in the Thames Valley. There were some concerns raised that this is a high-level document that doesn't outline how these priorities will be achieved or how success will be measured.

Our response

We acknowledge that there is considerable pressure on public services with regards resourcing and funding and this is likely to always be a challenge. The service has always had a firm focus on ensuing good value for money. However, more recently we have adopted a value for money benchmarking framework alongside other fire and rescue services. This has helps us to compare ourselves to other services and share best practices. Which ensures that we continue to provide the best service to the public. This has helped us to assure that our CRMP delivers the right balance between community safety outcomes and cost.

We work collaboratively with our neighbouring Thames Valley FRSs and have extensive plans in place that will see the services align operational response. We have carried out a number of joint buying exercises i.e., fire appliances and breathing apparatus, to ensure a commonality in equipment to support this alignment and provide value for money.

The CRMP is a high-level document and each area within the document has an accompanying strategy that outlines how the service intends to deliver against these priorities. These strategies will continually be reviewed, alongside any emerging risks, to ensure they remain relevant and current in a changing environment. We will track our performance by measuring community outcomes over the course of the plan and report annually to the public on our progress against the plan.

Appendix A

Consultation portal responses

How satisfied are you with our 'Response' priorities (which we will deliver between 2022-2026)?

Answer option	Number
Very satisfied	49
Somewhat satisfied	21
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8
Somewhat dissatisfied	2
Very dissatisfied	2

How satisfied are you with our 'Prevention' priorities (which we will deliver between 2022-2026)?

Answer option	Number
Very satisfied	48
Somewhat satisfied	21
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7
Somewhat dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	2

How satisfied are you with our 'Protection' priorities (which we will deliver between 2022-2026)?

Answer option	Number
Very satisfied	49
Somewhat satisfied	22
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8
Somewhat dissatisfied	2

Very dissatisfied	2
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How satisfied are you that our CRMP Plan will make the county safer?

Answer option	Number
Very satisfied	37
Somewhat satisfied	26
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	15
Somewhat dissatisfied	3
Very dissatisfied	2

Would you support this CRMP?

Answer option	Number
Yes	59
Maybe	17
No	2
Don't know/Not sure	3

Appendix B

Staff consultation audience figures

23 sessions with a total of 149 people

Group	Numbers attended
City South Protection team	4
Middle Manager Training	9
Prevention team	11
Rewley Road white watch	8
Rewley Road red watch	9
Rewley Road blue watch	10
Rewley Road green watch	9
Slade white	5
Slade red	5
Slade blue	5
Slade green	5
Banbury white	5
Banbury red	5
Banbury blue	5
Banbury green	5

Abingdon red	5
Abingdon blue	5
Didcot red	5
Didcot blue	5
Kidlington red	5
Kidlington blue	5
All Councillor's briefing	14
Emergency Planning	5

Appendix C

Demographic data collection from consultation portal

Responded as

83 responses to this question

Response	Number
Oxfordshire resident	34
Public living outside of Oxfordshire	4
A business	1
A representative of a group or organisation	6
Parish, Town, District or County Councillor	6
FRS staff	32
Other	0

Home or business location?

83 responses to this question

Response	Number
Oxford City	9
Cherwell	19
West	16
Vale of White Horse	20
South	10
Outside Oxfordshire	8
Don't know/Not sure	1

How did you find out about the consultation?

81 responses to this question

Response	Number
Facebook	10
Twitter	2

Instagram	0
LinkedIn	1
Next door	1
Oxfordshire.gov.uk website	11
Email from OCC	33
Local News item	0
Radio advert	0
Oxfordshire county Councillor	1
District councillor	0
Parish or Town Councillor	5
Local community news item	0
Poster	0
Local community group	0
Friend or relative	7
Other	13

What is your Gender?

81 responses to this question

Response	Number
Female	26
Male	47
Prefer not to say	6
I use another term	2

What is your age?

81 responses to this question

Response	Number
Under 16	0
16-24	1
25-34	6
35-44	16
45-54	31
55-64	10
65 and over	12
Prefer not to say	5

What is your ethnic background?

81 responses to this question

Response	Number
Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or any other Asian background)	1

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian and any other mixed background)	1
White (British, Irish, Scottish or any other white background)	68
Prefer not to say	11
Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, or any other Black background)	0
Chinese	0
Other ethnic group or background (please specify)	0

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions, disabilities or illnesses which reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

81 responses to this question

Response	Number
Yes – my life is affected a lot	2
Yes – my life is affected a little	1
No	60
Prefer not to say	9