



Business Strategy

2012/13–2014/15

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

	Fire & Rescue Service, Emergency Planning and Community Safety
2011/12 Gross Budget	£29.313m
2011/12 FTE	410.38 FTE

Year on Year changes as per 2011/12 – 2015/16 MTFP	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	Total £m
Previously Agreed Pressures and Funding	0.208	0.307		0.515

Variations to MTFP Savings

Year on Year	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15	Total
Previously Agreed Savings	-0.444	-0.420	-0.100	-0.964
Variations to 2011/12 MTFP Savings	-0.117			-0.117
Revised Savings	-0.561	-0.420	-0.100	-1.081

Introduction

The “**Safer by Design**” Business Strategy covers the Fire & Rescue Service, Emergency Planning and Community Safety and is a document which recognises the successful movement of Services from the former Community Safety and Shared Services Directorate into the Social and Community Services Directorate. The Strategy has been updated in order to capture the medium term vision for all of the Services identified, as well as where their aims meet the current priorities of the wider County Council.

In addition, this strategy also highlights how the various services can add extra value to local communities, above and beyond their traditional role, by becoming more ‘integrated’ i.e. proactively assisting other Directorates and partners in delivering their community safety objectives.

As stated in the 2011/12 budget process, savings made in the Fire and Rescue Service would not adversely impact on front-line service provision to the public

OCC Strategic Objectives

The strategy links directly with the Corporate Strategic Objectives centred on delivering a **Thriving Oxfordshire**:

World Class Economy - 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). The services also protect the environment through reducing both carbon emissions and emergency incidents, as well as through partnership working with partners such as the Environment Agency to help minimise the effects of flooding, pollution incidents and fire-fighting actions, as well as promoting quicker recovery.

Healthy and Thriving Communities - supported by our actions to help reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime, by 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 with partners) preventative programmes for children and young people at risk of offending. We manage and deliver the Junior Citizen Programme countywide as well as the Consumer Challenge Quiz for children with special needs. Trading Standards Service is a key player in the development and delivery of the 'Support with Confidence' approval scheme enabling social care clients to make safer choices about the care they receive. Emergency Planning helps to develop service, organisational and community resilience through education, training and the development of community led planning.

Finally, all the services strive to deliver **Efficient Public Services** through their efficiency programmes and providing value for money in general. For example, the Fire & Rescue Service benefits from working within the South East Fire Improvement Partnership and with neighbouring FRS's on various collaborative activities, as well as developing data-led, targeted prevention activities, aligned to locality working, which promotes the increased use of volunteers and partnership working.

Safer by Design

"Safer by Design" is our vision for more self-reliant, safer communities - with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) working in partnership with a range of third parties - as both provider and/or commissioner - to help enable communities to better help themselves. Intelligence-led, locality-specific approaches will identify practical preventative measures delivered through internal resources and via community-based partnerships, which will aim to address many of the emerging societal risks.

The **"Safer by Design"** vision for the Fire & Rescue Service, in particular, 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.

Furthermore, as an “**Integrated Fire & Rescue Service**”, we also intend to proactively support the broader community safety agenda – not only the priorities of OCC but also our local partners, such as the Police and Health Service – in order to tackle a much wider range of community safety issues. Through the delivery of this approach we will add public value and be able to demonstrate continuous improvement and enhanced value for money.

Although the Fire & Rescue 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 through 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. Such an approach promotes risk awareness, self-help, safeguarding and the sign-posting of specialist assistance and support when required. It is specifically designed to embrace the preventative agenda and reduce the call upon other OCC services such as Adult Social Care.

Those services involved in regulation, such as Trading Standards and Licensing, will seek to move forward in conjunction with District partners to deliver an integrated approach to regulatory services. As this approach develops, Trading Standards 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 services are the creation and maintenance of ‘capacity to respond’. However, the services have 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 focus on extending our prevention agenda and, therefore, minimise the call on emergency response resources. 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 e.g. 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 RDS 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.

Successful delivery of this strategy will require the effective management the following key challenges:

- 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 mins). 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. From now until 2016/2017 the services will continue 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 partners
- 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
- Develop a range of specific activities (minimum one scheme in each of the 14 localities) designed to meet local needs to improve community safety
- Implement wider corporate and community use of Fire Stations
- Use 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 OCC, e.g. Home Fire Safety checks fitting smoke alarms/security products
 - Provide youth programmes, e.g. Junior Citizen activities
 - Extend good neighbour and Neighbourhood Weight Watch¹ schemes

¹ Bridge and road weight limit schemes

- Develop and implement effective data sharing protocols with Social and Community Services (SCS)
- Successfully transfer selected Community Safety Services into SCS and Children, Education & Families (CEF) Directorates.
- Exploit synergies between the Fire and Rescue Service and SCS support services - allowing for integration where effective
- Deliver excellent Customer Service by exploiting the 'can do' attitudes of response staff
- Use intelligence-led 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
- Develop an integrated Road Safety team working with partners to maintain the reduction of those killed and seriously injured on Oxfordshire's roads.
- Work collaboratively with partners to maintain the reduction of those killed and seriously injured on Oxfordshire's roads²

Delivering on the County Council Savings Priorities

To deliver the OCC Business Strategy, the following work streams have been brought together to manage the Council's approach to releasing the estimated £119m of savings required by 2015:

OCC Priority 1 - Changing the way we work - Driving cultural change across the organisation to equip and empower staff to do their jobs differently.

OCC Priority 2 - Reshaping Management - Enabling the organisation to become more streamlined and deliver more cost-effective services, by reducing the numbers of managers by 25%, rationalising management layers and ensuring there is support for employees leaving the organisation.

OCC Priority 3 - Customer Service Centre - Delivering the next-generation of Shared Services, by evaluating different operational models and developing a cost-effective solution which will deliver high levels of customer service.

OCC Priority 4 - Asset Management Strategy - Ensuring OCC property assets are properly planned for, used and managed to support the work we do and will enable significant savings to be made.

OCC Priority 5 - Customer Focus - Ensuring we achieve better customer service and effectively manage the Council's reputation in difficult financial times.

² E.g. Fire and Rescue Service collaborative initiatives in Thames Valley

OCC Priority 6 - Service and Resource Planning - Developing a 'light touch' process that ensures delivery of previous year's savings are managed, new savings identified and re-invested savings are challenged.

OCC Priority 7 - Big Society - Reducing barriers so that individuals and communities are more able to help themselves, as well as facilitating joint working to enable partners and voluntary organisations to support this.

OCC Priority 8 - ICT - Underpinning many of these other projects and transforming OCC into a more modern, effective organisation.

Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning

Activity Area	Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning
2011/12 Gross Budget	£24.825m
2011/12 FTE	344.04 FTE

Year on Year changes as per 2011/12 – 2015/16 MTFP	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	Total £m
Previously Agreed Pressures and Funding	0.208	0.307		0.515

Variations to MTFP Savings

Year on Year	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15	Total
Previously Agreed Savings	-0.177	-0.346		-0.523
Variations to 2011/12 MTFP Savings	-0.117			-0.117
Revised Savings	-0.294	-0.346		-0.640

* The figure of 344.04 includes 6.48 FTE's in the road safety team that has transferred from the Environment and Economy directorate. There are also 356 retained fire fighters. FTE for retained equates to 120 hrs per week, many retained staff only offer cover for part of this period. The figure of 356 given is the **total number** employed at Q1 in 2011. The number of employees has increased by **2.97 FTE** and the number of retained firefighters has reduced from **364 to 356**.

In Fire & Rescue, 11 out of the 16 Retained Service Support Officer (RSSO) posts have been created during 2011/12. These support the recruitment, training and competency of retained firefighters. Additionally, there were 6.48 FTE posts transferred from Environment and Economy's Road Safety Team to Fire & Rescue. This means that Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning would have reduced by 14.51 FTE posts had these additional posts not been included.

Proposals to deliver efficiencies in Fire & Rescue Service:

- **Service Review**, including current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) projects, the national strategic review of the Fire & Rescue Service and synergies with Children, Education and Families (CEF) and Social and Community Services (SCS) Directorates. This includes:
 - Removal of one fire engine - **already implemented**
 - Reduction of one Technical Fire Safety managerial post– **planned for 2012/13**
 - Reduction of 2 whole time operational fire-fighters through an establishment review at Banbury and Slade Park (Cowley) fire stations - **already implemented**
 - Structural review to highlight any further efficiencies in relation to managerial posts, which takes into account the need to maintain a 24 hour a day - 7 days a week - 365 days a year emergency response services– **planned for 2012/13**
 - Incorporating the OCC Road Safety function from the Environment and Economy Directorate and identifying any potential for streamlining its workforce - **implementation in progress**
 - Remove the Retained Recruitment Officer post and transfer all functions to other managerial positions - **planned implementation April 2012**
 - Reduce the Assessment Centre promotion and selection processes and medical related expenditure.– **already implemented**

The move into S&CS creates opportunities to consider how activities are 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– **planned for 2013/2014**
- Savings (for the Fire and Rescue Service and Emergency Planning) from more effective procurement (including directorate, regional and sub-regional initiatives)– **on-going** with savings scheduled for 2013/14
- Sharing data on vulnerable people to help targeted prevention activities– **in discussion with Adult Social Care**
- Explore opportunities to assist the Customer Services Centre in providing its out-of-hours service– **in early discussions.**

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

- Reduce initial firefighter trainee training volumes (by increased reliance on qualified fire-fighters transferring into the Service)– **already implemented**
- Progress opportunities to share properties and services with other OCC directorates and partners, such as South Central Ambulance Service and Thames Valley Police - **in progress based on specific projects**
- Increase income³ from selling spare places on internal courses to local organisations who also wear breathing apparatus / require specialist driver training– **still being planned for 2012/2013.**

(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). Notification of Fire Grant was received after Council agreed the 2011/12 budget. The additional budget was retained in Fire & Rescue, subject to a decision on Fire Control. This double funding can now be removed (£0.117m).

In relation to Emergency Planning, the following efficiencies have been identified:

- **Reducing Print Costs** - using the intranet, TVLRF website and National Resilience Extranet (for Business Continuity purposes) to store emergency and business continuity advice and plans - making updating easier, faster and cheaper. Planning internet pages to provide a one-stop location for advice and resources with a review of content and signposts offered– **in planning.**
- **Partnership Working with District Councils** - Delivering a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between OCC and the District Councils to develop Oxfordshire plans - reducing duplication and encouraging all local responders to act together in response to alerts or events for a faster, more efficient response. - **in planning**
- **Online and Flexible Training** - on specific plans and in skill-sets to facilitate training in own-time and prevent travel. Where possible, sharing training with District partners, encouraging commonality of approach, offering courses at several locations to reduce travel and increasing opportunities for mutual aid in the future.– **early discussions**
- **Resilience During Emergencies** - Working with the Customer Service Centre to identify opportunities to provide a more robust and customer-focused telephone and information system for use during an emergency to warn & inform the public of risks and assist residents to help themselves through an event– **early discussions.**
- **Community Emergency Plans** - Support further development of community emergency plans across all Parish and Town Councils using an OCC template. Also promoting business continuity to the local businesses with partner agencies– **on going.**

³ Limited to cost recovery and contributions to overheads only

- **ICT Resilience** - supporting ICT resilience through liaison with the BCSG and ensuring that flexible BC plans are in place across the organisation– **on going**.

Impact of the proposal on other Council services

Staff within the Customer Services Centre may have to undertake additional 'co-ordinating' responsibilities due to the removal of the retained recruitment officer post, as well as the improvement in resilience during emergencies.

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

Service Area	Community Safety – Safer Communities Unit
2011/12 Gross Budget	£0.770m

Year on Year changes as per 2011/12 – 2015/16 MTFP	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	Total £m
Previously Agreed Pressures and Funding				

Variations to MTFP Savings

Year on Year	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15	Total
Previously Agreed Savings		-0.001		-0.001
Variations to 2011/12 MTFP Savings				
Revised Savings		-0.001		-0.001

During 2011, a review of the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership was completed to ensure the partnership was ready for the changes likely to arise following the implementation of Police and Crime Commissioners – as they will hold most community safety funding in future. A key change to the partnership was the adoption of a strong business planning cycle designed to identify and tackle the most significant community safety risks for Oxfordshire. Going forwards, the Safer Communities Unit will have an important role in supporting the partnership to identify these risks and to plan effective interventions. The Unit will also need to support the process for fund bidding from the Police and Crime Commissioner, the success of which could be crucial in determining how much resources come into Oxfordshire.

Community Safety funding is in a state of flux. Police and Crime Commissioners are likely to be elected in 2012. Government proposals envisage that all community safety grant funding will be held by the Police and Crime Commissioners from April 2013.

Currently, the County receives the Community Safety Fund which replaced the Stronger and Safer Communities Grant and Young People's Substance Misuse Grant from April 2011. This grant will reduce by approximately 50% in 2012/13. In addition, it is possible that some of this funding may be allocated to Police and Crime Commissioners rather than directly to local authorities. From 2013/14, when Police and Crime Commissioners will hold all Community Safety grant funding, the element of the Safer

Communities Unit budget which is used to fund Community Safety Partnerships could be removed. As a consequence, the County Council will still be a statutory community safety partner but will not be providing any funding to the Partnerships.

The recent Thames Valley Police Force restructure resulted in structures which support work at either at a Local Policing Area level (aligned with District Council boundaries) or at a force wide level. The Oxfordshire wide structure (Basic Command Unit) has been removed. As a consequence, in order to provide for clear links between Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Valley Police and to maintain strong county-wide partnerships, a temporary joint Community Safety Manager position has been created. This position replaces the Safer Communities Unit manager post

Reduced funding will result in Community Safety Partnerships refocusing their resources and partnership activities. This will not affect the core service provided by the Safer Communities Unit but may affect joint funded projects posts that we host (e.g. the County Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator 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

Proposals to deliver efficiencies

The Safer Communities Unit budget includes an element which is passed through to local Community Safety Partnerships. For 2011/12 this was reduced by 21.6% to £0.511m (from £0.652m in 2010/11). The remainder of the Unit's budget (£0.232m) supports the establishment of 6.41 FTE) – **already implemented.**

Impact of the proposal on service users and communities

Any reduction in funding for Community Safety partnerships will have a direct impact on the community safety activities undertaken by the partnerships. However, from April 2013 at the latest specific community safety grant funding will be channelled via the Police and Crime Commissioner who will hold the responsibility for decisions on activities and projects to fund. The Community Safety Partnership will need to adapt to manage the service delivery changes that will arise from this new funding arrangement. The funding currently allocated to local Community Safety Partnerships by the County Council 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

Service Area	Community Safety – Trading Standards
2011/12 Gross Budget	£2.623m

Year on Year changes as per 2011/12 – 2015/16 MTFP	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	Total £m
Previously Agreed Pressures and Funding				

Variations to MTFP Savings

Year on Year	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15	Total
Previously Agreed Savings	-0.267	-0.082	-0.100	-0.449
Variations to 2011/12 MTFP Savings	0.050			0.050
Revised Savings	-0.217	-0.082	-0.100	-0.399

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 and sale of hazardous substances.

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 42% 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. The Government's consultation on these proposals concluded in September 2011 and the final outcome will not be announced until spring 2012. It is likely that significant funding will be available for local authorities either individually or in collaborative groups for both short-term projects and long-term service provision. It is intended that Oxfordshire will seek to capitalise on these opportunities where they can provide income and support the achievement of outcomes in Oxfordshire – **planning around government timetable.**

The existing plans to deliver efficiencies still apply:

- Consumer Direct - Citizen's Advice are planning to take on responsibility for the Consumer Direct service. This should ensure the plan to re-provision consumer advice through Consumer Direct is deliverable. However, our plans are now subject to successful development of the new service by Citizens Advice and agreement from them to accept Oxfordshire's call volumes since the agreement reached with the previous operator cannot be assumed to transfer. – **dependent on Citizen's Advice.**
- Complex Citizen's Advice Cases – it is expected that complex cases or those requiring face-to-face advice will be passed to local Bureaux and Trading Standards Services. Therefore, a new working relationship between local Bureaux and Trading Standards is developing.– **dependent on Citizen's Advice**
- Community Liaison Officer Posts – Reducing these posts from 3 to 2. 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. The reduction in posts will require the team to target work towards the most vulnerable areas and communities of Oxfordshire – **in progress, planned for 2011/12.**
- Managerial and Internal Restructure - to support the business strategy principle of reducing the number of managers in the organisation – **In progress, planned for April 2012.**

Earlier plans need to be revised in respect of:

- Adopting an Alternative Approach to the Provision of the Service - an options appraisal for shared Trading Standards services between Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire has been developed This assessment, concludes that a joint service will not deliver significant savings but could deliver more effective and resilient services at a lower cost and ensure that the service is able to capitalise on opportunities arising from the Government's consumer protection landscape review. Informal

approval has been given to develop a full business case for Cabinet consideration in early 2012 with a view to implementation of the shared service during 2012/13 if approval is received. Implementation of a shared service will contribute to the savings required (£0.100m in 2013/14 and £0.200m from 2014/15 onwards) but further reductions in posts will be needed. The number of posts that would need to be deleted depends on whether any form of shared service is to be adopted and the extent of efficiencies that can be delivered through internal business process improvements.

- Increasing Grant Income - current plans envisage an increase in grant income to £0.090m net from 2012/13. It has not been possible to deliver this proposal. Grant income of at least £0.035m will be achieved in 2011/12. A similar level of grant income is likely to be achievable in 2012/13 and given the opportunity to access additional grant funding arising from the Governments' proposed changes to the consumer protection landscape and funding that is likely to be available to support enforcement around the Olympics, additional income should be possible. Income across the Community Safety Services will be sufficient to meet any shortfall in Trading Standards income for 2012/13 given the likely income levels of the Gypsy and Traveller Service.

Impact of the proposal on service users and communities:

New funding opportunities and any shared service approach may mitigate some of the effects of the proposed reductions. The Service already operates a minimum service in respect of business inspections and in response to complaints. The proposed changes will focus resources more on reactive 'response' services. The reduction in Community Liaison Officer posts will result in a reduced 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). A reduction in managerial posts will 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 may affect 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 change the building requirements of Trading Standards. However, there are not likely to be any changes in the short-term.

Community Safety – Gypsy and Traveller Service

Service Area	Community Safety – Gypsy & Travellers
2011/12 Gross Budget	£1.095m

Year on Year changes as per 2011/12 – 2015/16 MTFP	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	Total £m
Previously Agreed Pressures and Funding				

Variations to MTFP Savings

Year on Year	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15	Total
Previously Agreed Savings		0.007		0.007
Variations to 2011/12 MTFP Savings	-0.050			-0.050
Revised Savings	-0.050	0.007		-0.043

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.

There is no statutory requirement on the County Council to provide permanent gypsy and traveller sites. However, we own the Oxfordshire 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 to discharge a range of statutory responsibilities, e.g. 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

Income Generation - The Gypsy and Traveller Service already generates income of £0.800m, leaving a net cost to the service of £0.115m. Further contract or consultancy opportunities are being sought which may reduce the cost of the service further— **currently being managed.**

The Provision of an In-House Repairs and Maintenance Function – Traveller sites in Buckinghamshire have operated this approach since September 2010, resulting in reduced maintenance costs. However, 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, as it has not been adopted to date. A business case will be prepared for extending this arrangement to Oxfordshire’s sites based on the saving delivered in Buckinghamshire— **business case dependent on results of the property and facilities procurement project.**

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.

External pressures

1.

External pressure	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Total
Training for fire fighters using Breathing Apparatus (£m)	0.050	0	0	0	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.

Funding has already been received for this pressure

2.

External pressure	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Total
Part time workers (Prevention of less favourable treatment) Regulations 2000	0	0.100	0	0	0.100

Retained fire fighters are classed as part time workers under these regulations. Claims are in the process of being settled and a one-off cost figure of £0.190m has been established, followed by an estimated annual revenue cost of £0.100m over the next few years, which may change depending on operational workloads and future settlements in terms of pensions, linked to equal pay.

This cost of this funding pressure has now been clarified following agreement at national level. The Fire & Rescue Service expects to be able to manage this pressure from within the retained duty system budget by reducing the amount of community fire safety work undertaken by retained duty staff. There is a small risk to council balances as variances against this budget are met from or returned to balances.

Risks potentially leading to additional funding pressures

All our Services recognise the financial climate and the need to promote innovation and increased efficiency in addressing new challenges. There are numerous small scale examples where individuals and their managers have come up with minor service

amendments which have either increased resilience, improved performance or made a financial efficiency. This approach will continue and, wherever possible, new pressures will be met within the services concerned.

However, there are also a number of financial challenges – some, as yet, are undefined - which may be beyond the scope of the services to absorb within current budgets. These include:

1. Wholetime and Retained Duty System (RDS) firefighter pensions

A consultation regarding technical changes to the two current firefighter's pension schemes is underway and a further consultation regarding employee contributions as part of the Treasury cost reduction targets is anticipated this summer. Both of these are pre Hutton Report further changes anticipated later in the year which will be informed by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) valuation of both firefighters' pension schemes as at 31 March 2011. In line with the 2007 valuation, the valuation will seek to:

- - review the demographic experience of the schemes
- - assess the cost of benefits accruing to firefighters in the future, and
- - place a value on the benefits accrued by firefighters in respect of service up to the valuation date.

The outcome will assist the Secretary of State in determining the required level of contributions, including employer contributions, under each scheme.

GAD will not directly recommend increases in employee and / or employer contributions but it will say if the two pension schemes are fully funded or under funded. It will be for the Secretary of State, as part of the wider Hutton Report outcomes to decide on any increase in employer contributions so therefore we are not able to provide any definitive figures.

2. Control – Call Receipt and Mobilising

Due to the government's cancellation of the mandatory regional control approach, there is now a degree of uncertainty concerning potential capital and revenue implications of the need to refresh, combine, or outsource our call facilities. CLG identified a potential £1.8m grant for this activity. However, up to £1m of that fund could be required for Airwave (emergency services radio scheme) licensing / facilities depending on the solution identified. At this time, subject to a successful bid to DCLG in November, and the agreement of a joint Thames Valley approach it is considered unlikely that significant funds would be required in 2012/13. Further certainty is not yet available.

3. Warwickshire – Increasing Health and Safety implications for Firefighters / Fire Service operations

Following the four Warwickshire firefighter fatalities, the sector is awaiting detailed evidence from the HSE and Police during forthcoming trials. Three operational officers, as well as the Chief Executive, former Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman of the fire authority, are all currently under arrest and bailed to appear in court at a later stage with regard to their responsibilities for 'arrangements' of a safe and competent workforce. This matter has the potential to place an increased level of training burden on our retained workforce, as well as other operational requirements such as the provision of specialist equipment and levels of command and control at incidents.

4. Firefighter Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

After extending its current PPE contract which commenced in 2001 for an additional two years, and deciding to step back from a South East contract that would have increased costs of OFRS in the region of £90k per annum on its current PPE budget, OFRS, via OCC procurement has successfully undertaken its own tender exercise and has awarded a new 8-year contract to Lion Apparel Systems. The resulting 'total care' contract will guarantee high-quality, comparable fire kit for OFRS firefighters, at a cost of £0.047m per annum less than the South East contract and avoiding some of the potential cost escalation contract clauses in that contract. Nevertheless, despite the clear value for money the OFRS contract offers, it is still £0.051m per annum more expensive than the current budget. The Fire & Rescue Service will manage this pressure from within its total budget.

5. Trading Standards

Consumer Direct – there is £0.102m efficiency identified at the beginning of year 2012/13 with reference to re-provision of the Oxfordshire County Council Consumer Advice Service through re-directing county residents to the Consumer Direct national call centre. This includes the reduction of 3 posts. This efficiency was identified prior to the government's announcement of their intention to move the Consumer Direct helpline to a third party/voluntary sector to deliver. Citizens Advice will be providing this service from 1st April 2012. However there are some concerns that the timescale for developing the infrastructure to manage the contact volumes is very challenging. The delivery of our efficiency target may be affected by any delay to the Citizen's Advice procurement process for a commercial partner to provide a call handling service.

General Risks

1. Fuel and Utilities

With on-going inflationary increases in the prices of fuel and utilities, Community Safety services continue to have additional pressures placed on them due to their reliance on diesel to deliver public services and to heat, light and power their buildings.

2.Olympics

All Community Safety services are currently undergoing increased pressure on their staff in terms of resourcing Olympic planning. Additionally, 2012 coincides with the Queen's Jubilee, therefore, there is an expectation of increased crowd sizes and capacity due to many other events, such as Henley Regatta, as well as management of direct Olympic risks such as the torch relay and planning for significant emergency events in and around Oxford. The Fire and Rescue Service provides a specialist regional resource for potential Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive incidents and Emergency Planning are actively involved as part of the wider Local Resilience Forum. Trading Standards has been approached to help support host authorities with enforcement of advertising restrictions and intellectual property controls. Whilst this pressure is associated with time only, it has the potential to deflect staff and management focus away from other areas including delivery of the business strategy.

3. Maintenance of Buildings

The capital building stock of the Service is requiring regular - maintenance, – which, in conjunction with the rapidly developing urban areas across the county and the associated congestion of the road network, is putting increasing pressure on the Service to consider a major building programme that could see fire stations being relocated in order to better meet current response time targets. This pressure, however, may have longer-term benefits associated with it as the Service continues to proactively look to share assets with other OCC services and partners, such as Thames Valley Police, neighbouring Fire & Rescue Services, district councils and the Ambulance Service. – Therefore consolidating public sector capital assets in the county over time.

Summary

The Services of the former Community Safety Directorate are embarking on a significant period of change as we continue to move towards integration with Social and Community Services and other partners. 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 previous announcements 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.

Our future approach will continue to 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 aim to 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.