

# Fire & Rescue Business Strategy

Including Emergency Planning, Trading Standards and Community Safety

## 2014/15 – 2017/18

Draft subject to agreement by Council in February 2014

# Introduction

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This is a new four-year business strategy for 2014/15 to 2017/18. It builds on the previous strategy agreed in 2011 which included savings of £119m for the council which have been achieved by reconfiguring services to establish a smarter, leaner and more cost effective operating environment, whilst at the same time reshaping services to fit the changed local and national policy environment.

However the hard work does not stop here as cuts in government grant and restrictions on council tax increases put further pressure on the council's budget. In addition there are new service pressures that have been identified which need to be managed. The latest financial outlook means that our Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2014/15 – 2017/18 that sits alongside this strategy proposes a further £64m savings in addition to the £31m already planned.

This new strategy reflects the updated position and incorporates the pressures and savings in the existing MTFP together with the new budget proposals that will be agreed by Council in February 2014. The detail of these pressures and savings is set out in the resources to deliver our priorities section.

This business strategy both drives and is driven by our strategic approach as set out in the council's Corporate Plan and determines our performance management framework.

## Fire and Rescue Directorate Overview

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This Business Strategy covers the Fire & Rescue Service, Emergency Planning and Community Safety Services. The Strategy has been updated in order to capture the medium term (3-5 year) vision for all of the Services identified, as well as their aims to meet the current priorities of the wider county council.

# Delivering the council's corporate priorities

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

**Thriving Economy** – This objective will be supported through our contribution to the sustainable development and protection of the thriving local economy by provision of advice and support. This will enable local businesses and industry to successfully compete in the marketplace, ensure their business continuity, minimise the likelihood and impact of regulatory challenge and minimise the likelihood of emergencies (e.g. accidents and fires). More broadly, the services also protect the environment for example, 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.

**Thriving People and Communities** – This objective is supported by our work to support and protect those at greatest risk from doorstep crime, fraud and scams, domestic abuse and hate crime. In addition, we safeguard our communities from fire risk through the provision of fire protection risk reduction, intervention activities and the provision of information, advice and guidance. 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. We support partners to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime. Our 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.

**Support for the vulnerable** - This objective will be supported by the OFRS integrated approach to community and home safety ensuring that we contribute to this objective through collaboration and information sharing with local partners. We are embedded into the Thriving families programme board and are looking at how we can assist the programme in meeting its outcomes, e.g. use of the safety centre at Rewley Road as an interactive centre. We are currently working with the early intervention hubs to assist in the mentoring and provision of positive role models to young people who are lacking these positive influences and are involved either directly or through their families with the criminal justice system.

Finally, all the services strive to deliver efficiency programmes and provide value for money in general. This is being achieved at a local and regional level to increase efficiency further, the Fire & Rescue Service working within the South East Fire Improvement Partnership and with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services on various collaborative activities.

### **How we work to deliver these priorities**

We have already been working towards the above priorities and as a result have already delivered the following savings for the public in the Fire and Rescue Service, Trading Standards and the Gypsy and Traveller Service since 2010:

- Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning have delivered savings totalling £0.7m by service reviews and more effective procurement
- Trading Standards has delivered savings totalling £0.6m (23% of budget) by restructuring the service and generating additional income
- The Gypsy & Traveller Service is managing contracts with other local authorities who are contributing £0.1m pa to management and overheads. The service is self-financing.

Going forward we are rolling out a programme of 'agile working' in order to support the new ways of working necessary to deliver these priorities. Agile working means: giving staff the right equipment and working environment to suit their role and service; working in a more flexible way that makes best use of staff time, buildings, and resources; and taking advantage of changes in technology and working styles to become more efficient. This will ultimately protect delivery of front line services as far as possible. This programme has already started to deliver benefits to service delivery through:

- Flexible part-time firefighter contracts – this has enabled full-time firefighters to request to work part-time hours and for OFRS to utilise them in a dynamic way to ensure we maximise on-call station availability and response times across the county.
- Joint working with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in the South Oxfordshire area – right across the UK, the increasing pressures on our on-call firefighters from both a family and work perspective is affecting the availability of fire engines in some areas. Locally, we have been experiencing availability challenges in the Henley and Wargrave areas and, as a result, OFRS has teamed up with Berkshire FRS to alternate the emergency cover arrangements at weekends. This innovative trial project is ensuring a weekend response across both FRS areas through a collaborative approach – that also allows the on-call firefighters time with their families and reduces the moral pressure on them to remain in the immediate locality for an extended period.
- Remote Working - we have worked with staff who live significant distances from their work base and identified whether they are able to work from another location or from home.

- On-call station support officers - these are based in our local communities to support the community and the station personnel and work flexible hours to meet the requirement of both parties. They are based at the on-call stations which has been possible due to the improved network availability and accessibility of the ICT infrastructure.
- We are currently in dialogue with the county council's ICT team about the option for staff who need to be re-located to work at our on-call fire stations either as a permanent base or as a drop in centre.

## Services and Priorities

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### **Fire and Rescue Service and Emergency Planning**

Our purpose is to secure a safer Oxfordshire. This plan identifies the risks to public and firefighter safety, and sets out the things we are doing, and plan to do, to control them. Our approach is to prevent incidents happening, protect against their impact and respond quickly and effectively to minimise their effect to people and their communities.

We have a measurable 10-year strategic aim, known as '365 Alive', which was launched in 2006 and sets targets to save lives, save money for the Oxfordshire economy and make our communities safer through education.

Specifically, our three strategic targets are, by 2016, to:

- Save 365 lives – reduce the loss of life in fires and road traffic collisions through the prevention, protection and response work of the Fire and Rescue Service.
- Save the economy £100,000,000 – through the reduced number of incidents, injuries and deaths and their direct and indirect costs to the economy.
- Deliver 840,000 safety messages to make people safer – through the prevention work of the Fire and Rescue Service and other partners.

We have set out the following principles to support these strategic aims through effective and efficient working:

- A truly integrated cross directorate/multi agency approach – adding value across Oxfordshire County Council

- A prioritised & intelligence led approach to keeping Oxfordshire's communities safe
- Focus on prevention across Fire & Rescue and Trading Standards
- Protecting the emergency response function
- Fire & Rescue - Addressing the future risk profile in Oxfordshire to ensure we are 'fit for purpose'.

Collaboration with other Fire & Rescue Services to deliver efficiencies. These strategic aims and principles are in support of our statutory responsibility to provide:

- Fire and other safety related prevention/Educational Activities,
- Fire protection advice and enforcement
- Operational 999 blue light call handling, training and response activities
- Road Safety Advice and Education
- Community resilience

These responsibilities are requirements of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Regulatory Reform (**Fire Safety**) Order **2005**, *Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Fire and Rescue National framework document and they underpin the service's community risk management plan 2013-2018 and our annual community risk action plans.*

This strategy is aimed at saving lives in the home and on the road by identifying, assessing, reducing and controlling the risks to our community from fire and other emergencies. It highlights a shift in emphasis on preventing fires and other emergencies before they occur, while maintaining an effective response. It provides a strategic planning process that ensures the right resources are in the right place at the right time.

The strategy builds upon our improvements in service delivery and firefighter safety and ensures that the service reflects the needs of our communities.

We are also focusing on community resilience through our emergency planning team working both at a local level - to develop focused plans within our local communities - and also with the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum through sharing of notable practice and learning activities with the key partners across the group.

## **Trading Standards**

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 includes but is not limited to activities such as food safety, fair trading and fraud, farm animal health and welfare controls, age restricted sales, product safety and storage and sale of hazardous substances. In addition the service provides an enforcement service in relation to overweight heavy goods vehicles.

A set of strategic objectives have been agreed for the Trading Standards Service. These include:

- Ensuring strong and well publicised business support services that enhance the plans for growth in Oxfordshire.
- Developing stronger ties with partners, such as Citizens Advice locally, and partnerships, such as the Health Improvement Board, to ensure a seamless customer response to consumer problems in Oxfordshire and provide support for wider priorities in Oxfordshire.
- Supporting and strengthening safeguarding mechanisms for vulnerable people and in the new personalised care and support market

## **Gypsy and Traveller Service**

The Gypsy & Traveller Service provides landlord services for some 80 families resident on the county council's six 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 generates additional income to off-set costs.

## **How our services are changing**

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We will always maintain an emergency response to calls for assistance. However, our emphasis towards securing a safer society has shifted to also encompass prevention and education. Multi-skilled employees along with voluntary agencies and other partners, help promote risk awareness, self-help, safeguarding and will sign-post specialist assistance and support when required. This approach embraces the preventative agenda and reduces the call on other council services such as Adult Social Care, which helps support the elderly.

The Cabinet has already endorsed Fire & Rescue response targets (80% incidents attended in 11 minutes, 95% in 14 minutes). The current targets can reasonably be expected to be met, with a minimum station disposition (using predominantly On-call Duty System staff) of 24 fire stations and 34 front line fire appliances.

Our future approach is to look at the planned developments within the county and identify developing risks in those areas to ensure that our resources are allocated to meet the future needs, whilst maintaining the agreed response targets across Oxfordshire. We are looking for wider collaboration opportunities with other local authorities and community partners which will focus on outcomes rather than outputs to meet the community's needs.

The following areas of work have already been agreed within the current business strategy.

Agreed:

- Review of local conditions of service
- Aim to reduce fire calls for on-call staff
- Reduction in pension payments
- Review of support services

New proposals:

- Thames Valley Fire Control receiving emergency calls for Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.
- Delivering efficiencies through further flexibility with our existing resources
  - Review of prevention, protection and intervention in all district council areas
  - New crewing models for specialist appliances
  - Review of working patterns
- Look at staff and building requirements
- Identify opportunities for sharing buildings



- Working with partners ensure we collaborate where we can
- Working with local communities to help them develop their plans to prepare for local emergencies e.g. flooding
- Cease funding Community Safety Partnerships, reflecting the responsibility for this funding passing to the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Refocusing and reducing our support to community safety partnership coordination
- Further prioritisation in Trading Standards including reducing our animal welfare work and response to lower risk consumer complaints
- Increasing income in Trading Standards through enhanced business support and training services
- Alignment of Business Continuity with Fire & Rescue
- Developing further opportunities to generate income

## Managing our performance

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The successful delivery of the council's corporate plan and business strategy will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. Progress will be published on the council's website.

A series of performance indicators will be used to assess our performance in delivering the priorities set out in this strategy. Performance Indicators are currently being developed by directorates and will be considered by the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Once agreed directorate performance indicators will form an appendix to this strategy.

# Resources to deliver our priorities

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## Draft Medium Term Financial Plan - Fire & Rescue and Community Safety

	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m
Base Net Budget	27.9	28.4	28.0	28.2
Virements Agreed in 2013/14				
Inflation*	0.2			
Previously Agreed Pressures	0.3			
Previously Agreed Savings	-0.1			
New Savings Proposed	-0.7	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5
New Pressures Identified	0.8		0.7	
<b>Proposed Budget</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>27.7</b>

\*Inflation only allocated to directorates in 2014/15

## Details of Previously Agreed and Proposed Budget Changes

Reference	Type of Budget Change	Detail	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Total £'000
		<b><u>Community Safety - 2013/14 Net Budget £2.594m</u></b>					
12CS19	S	Further savings to be achieved either through adopting an alternate model for provision of a Trading Standards Service (subject to options appraisal and approval) or through further reductions to be identified	-100				-100
14SCS32	P	Trading Standards - Joint working - pressure arising from non achievable saving in 2012/13 Medium Term Financial Plan.	100				100
15SCS13	NP	Cessation of contract to provide petroleum and explosives licensing and enforcement function for another local authority	25				25
15SCS14	NP	Reduction in income from legal metrology services arising from local business developing an accredited 'in-house' service (Trading Standards)	40				40
15SCS15	NS	Cease funding provided to local Community Safety Partnerships (with £44k retained to continue to support the Domestic Abuse Coordinator post)	-190				-190
15SCS16	NS	Cessation of dedicated Community Safety coordination work through the Safer Communities Unit		-194			-194
15SCS17	NS	Increased income from business support services and new specialist training service (Trading Standards)		-20			-20
15SCS18	NS	Reduction in livestock welfare enforcement work and refocus of remaining animal health activity on animal health and disease control (Trading Standards)		-30			-30
		<b>Total Community Safety</b>	<b>-125</b>	<b>-244</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-369</b>

O - Previously Agreed One-Off Investment  
P - Previously Agreed Pressure  
S - Previously Agreed Saving  
NS - New Saving Proposal  
NP - New Pressure Identified

## Details of Previously Agreed and Proposed Budget Changes

Reference	Type of Budget Change	Detail	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Total £'000
		<b>Fire and Rescue &amp; Emergency Planning - 2013/14 Net Budget £25.315m</b>					
		<b>Fire &amp; Rescue</b>					
14SCS31	P	Fire & Rescue - National agreement regarding the rights of Retained Fire Fighters to join the pension scheme	200				200
15SCS19	NP	Change of staffing to support county-wide Emergency Cover - Bicester Fire Station - potential staffing model change from fully on-call (2 appliances) to 1 appliance on-call and 1 appliance Day Crewed. (This will require an additional 10 firefighters plus 4 supervisory managers)			700		700
15SCS20	NP	Change of staffing to support county-wide Emergency Cover - Establish an initial additional emergency response resource for Southern County area - (requiring an additional 6 Firefighters)	216				216
15SCS21	NP	New provision of staff to meet changing emergency cover needs - Establish an initial additional emergency response resource for West Oxford District Council & Carterton area (additional 6 Firefighters) - long term move to an 'on-call' model	216				216
15SCS22	NP	Development of established staffing model to support emergency cover - Increase in on-call firefighters in the West Oxford District Council & Carterton area				50	50
15SCS23	NP	New Provision of Staff to meet changing emergency cover needs - Additional on-call crewing to strengthen second appliance response in Wantage / Science Vale area		50			50
15SCS24	NP	Workforce Development/Training Strategy - Increase on-call Firefighter & Supervisory Manager Core Operational Skills experiential training	210				210
15SCS25	NP	Vehicle Renewal/Replacement Programme - Increased costs (inflation and specialist equipment costs)	25				25
15SCS26	NS	Emergency Planning - Restructure and alignment with Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue in relation to business continuity management.			-20		-20
15SCS27	NS	Agile Working - Full review of administration and support function following the introduction of agile working arrangements				-60	-60
15SCS28	NS	Development of Commercial Training Unit (Income Generation)	-25	-25	-25	-25	-100

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## Details of Previously Agreed and Proposed Budget Changes

Reference	Type of Budget Change	Detail	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Total £'000
		<b>Fire and Rescue Continued</b>					
15SCS29	NS	Collaboration Efficiencies - Revenue reductions associated with implementation of Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)	-150	-75	-25	-25	-275
15SCS30	NS	Collaboration Efficiencies - reconfiguration of Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue's Technical Communications Team following the implementation of TVFCS			-25		-25
15SCS31	NS	Collaboration Efficiencies - Benefits realisation of collaborative approach to training delivery, leading to the reduction in staffing costs.			-50		-50
15SCS32	NS	Collaboration Efficiencies - Benefits realisation of collaborative approach to training support, leading to reconfiguration of training administration resources				-50	-50
15SCS33	NS	Senior Management Restructure and Collaboration - amend operational rota			-30		-30
15SCS34	NS	Charging and Fees Efficiencies - Review of current charges including revisiting Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 Section 13/16 arrangements	-25	-25			-50
15SCS35	NS	Middle Management Review - Road Safety function		-40			-40
15SCS36	NS	Large/Major Incident Command Review - review OFRS resources in conjunction with the other Thames Valley fire & rescue services.				-30	-30
15SCS37	NS	Targeted Smoke Detector Provision for the most vulnerable only	-10				-10
15SCS38	NS	Review of Road Safety Educational Delivery	-38				-38
15SCS39	NS	Change of Staffing to Support County-wide Emergency Cover - Reduction in staffing for one on-call appliance at Bicester - covered by Day Crewed personnel (see 15SCS19)				-50	-50
15SCS40	NS	Conditions of Service Review - locally agreed reduction in allowances & subsistence	-20				-20
15SCS41	NS	Change of Staffing to Support County-wide Emergency Cover - Alternative crewing arrangements for hydraulic platform and frontline appliances at Rewley Road (releasing 8 Firefighter posts)	-288				-288

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## Details of Previously Agreed and Proposed Budget Changes

Reference	Type of Budget Change	Detail	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Total £'000
		<b>Fire and Rescue Continued</b>					
15SCS42	NS	Change of Staffing to Support County-wide Emergency Cover - Banbury Fire Station - staffing model change from 1 appliance full time 24/7 and one on-call appliance to 1 appliance Day Crewed and one on-call (release 10 Firefighters plus 4 Supervisory Managers)			-360		-360
15SCS43	NS	Reduction in Full-time Firefighter Support - for new Carterton emergency cover arrangements (see 15SCS21)				-216	-216
		<b>Total Fire and Rescue &amp; Emergency Planning</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>-115</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>-406</b>	<b>-45</b>
		<b>Total Fire &amp; Rescue and Community Safety</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>-359</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>-406</b>	<b>-414</b>

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