

Notice of a Meeting

Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee Monday, 8 November 2010 at 10.00 am County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND

Membership

Chairman - Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Deputy Chairman - Councillor Carol Viney

<i>Councillors:</i>	John Goddard	Lorraine Lindsay-Gale	Bill Service
	Patrick Greene	Sajjad Hussain Malik	Alan Thompson
	Stewart Lilly	Susanna Pressel	

Notes: *A sandwich lunch will be provided for all members of the Committee.
Date of next meeting: 14 February 2011*

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

- Community safety; anti-social behaviour; crime and the fear of crime; fire and rescue; consumer protection; emergency planning; police issues; coroner's service; gypsies and travellers; drugs and alcohol awareness; road safety (police, trading standards, fire and rescue); adult learning (oversight of the adult learning service in provider mode); libraries; museums and heritage; the arts; archives; leisure and recreation; registration service; community cohesion; equalities and social inclusion; voluntary and community sector.
- The functions of the responsible authorities (local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, the police, primary care trusts and the Probation Service) which comprise a Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership/Community Safety Partnership.
- Those regulatory functions of the Planning & Regulation Committee not falling within the remit of the Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee.

How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am on the working day before the date of the meeting.**

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Chairman	-	Councillor Lawrie Stratford E.Mail: lawrie.stratford@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Committee Officer	-	<i>Kath Coldwell, Tel: (01865) 815902 kath.coldwell@oxfordshire.gov.uk</i>

Peter G. Clark.

Peter G. Clark
County Solicitor

October 2010

About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 74 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 630,000 residents. These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 6 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
2. **Declarations of Interest - see guidance note on the back page**
3. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 30)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2010 (**SSC3**) and any matters arising on them.

4. **Speaking to or petitioning the Committee**
5. **Director's Update**

10:15

The Chief Fire Officer will give a verbal update on key issues.

SCRUTINY MATTERS

To consider matters where the Committee can provide a challenge to the work of the Authority and its Partners

6. **Draft Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy 2011-2014**

10:45

Contact Officers: Jackie Wilderspin, Assistant Director of Public Health - NHS Oxfordshire, (01865) 336721; Ruth Whyte, Manager – Safer Communities Unit, (01865) 815396

Consultation on the 2008 – 11 version of the Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy to inform the development of the new strategy recently took place at 5 venues across the county, with the last date being 6 August 2010.

Members of this Committee were provided with a copy of the consultation booking form and the current strategy after the 5 July meeting to enable them to feed into the consultation if they so wished.

The new draft Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy 2011 – 2014 (**SSC6(a)**) (which has been developed under the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership and will come into force in April 2011) outlines the priorities in relation to alcohol for the next 3 years.

Today's meeting is the opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to comment on the new draft strategy.

Members of this Committee may wish to read the Director of Public Health's new Annual Report (Version 4 – May 2010) which reports on 2009-10 and includes recommendations for 2010-2011.

This report includes a section on alcohol for the first time (identified as one of the six long term threats to the health of Oxfordshire) and some comments about the way forward for the new strategy, including a recommendation that the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider scrutinising progress made, as part of their work plan for 2011/12.

Given that the strategy falls under the remit of this Committee, the Chairman of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee does not consider it necessary for the strategy to also be considered by that Committee, in the interest of avoiding duplication.

The relevant sections of the report are attached (**SSC6(b)**).

Ms Jackie Wilderspin (Assistant Director of Public Health - NHS Oxfordshire) who chairs the strategic Alcohol Tactical Business Group, together with Ms Ruth Whyte, Manager – Safer Communities Unit, will attend for this item in order to answer Members' questions.

The Committee is invited to comment on the new draft strategy.

(a) Draft Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy_(Pages 31 - 38)

(b) Director of Public Health Annual Report_(Pages 39 - 54)

7. Self Help Communities - Progress Update (Pages 55 - 56)

11:15

Contact Officer: Paul James, Head of Partnership Working, (01865) 323959

In July this Committee conducted a select committee investigation into community pride/self help and put forward a number of recommendations as part of the officer paper to the County Council Management Team (CCMT), which was considered on 28 July. This paper was subsequently circulated to all members of the Committee for information.

Mr Paul James, Head of Partnership Working, will attend for this agenda item in order to update the Committee on progress to date.

A written progress update is attached at **SSC7**.

The Committee is invited to receive the update.

8. Summary of OFRS Operational Assurance Peer Review Inspection Report and OFRS Response (Pages 57 - 60)

11:35

Contact Officer: David Etheridge, Chief Fire Officer, Tel: (01865) 855205

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) has undergone an operational peer assessment overseen by the Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA) and led by the Chief Fire Officer of Cornwall, Des Tidbury. He was supported by a group of experienced individuals ranging from an elected Member to local government and development review staff (formerly the IDeA). Following the removal of the Comprehensive Area Assessment process this report is likely to be the most authoritative independent review of the Service for a prolonged period.

The attached report summarises the most significant findings and informs the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee of the current performance of the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (**SSC8**).

The Chief Fire Officer will attend for this item to update the Committee and to answer Members' questions, accompanied by Mr Nigel Wilson, Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

The Committee is invited to note the contents of the report and task the Chief Fire Officer to deliver an action plan to close out the key recommendations.

9. Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service Response Standards Performance 2009/10 (Pages 61 - 70)

11:55

Contact Officer: Peter Cleary, Service Delivery Manager – Social & Community Services (01865) 852171

The attached report (**SSC9**) provides details of Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service's performance statistics for fire appliance response times to emergency incidents during 2009/10. The report provides details of that performance and the actions being undertaken to mitigate risk.

On the rising of this meeting the Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities will be asked to note the contents of the report and request the Chief Fire Officer to report back to the Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities on the response standards for 2010/11.

The Committee is invited to offer any advice/comment to the Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities and to request the Chief Fire Officer to report back to Scrutiny on performance against the response standards for 2010/11.

12:25 – 12:50 SANDWICH LUNCH

10. Draft OFRS Integrated Risk Management Action Plan (IRMP) 2011-12 (Pages 71 - 90)

12:50

Contact Officer: Nigel Wilson, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, (01865) 855206

The Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities considered Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service's Draft Integrated Risk Management Action Plan for 2011-12 on 4 October 2010 and **AGREED** to:

- a) approve the proposed projects to be included in the Draft IRMP Action Plan 2011-12 for 'risk analysis' and consultation as outlined in the report; and request the Chief Fire Officer to keep the Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities and the Chairman of the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee advised of progress when appropriate, with particular regard to Project 6;
- b) ask the Chief Fire Officer to report the outcome of consultation, with any recommendations for amendment, to the Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities in February 2011, with a view to formal adoption of the Action Plan for implementation from April 2011.

The report is attached at **SSC10**.

All members of the Committee are asked to note that the consultation period commences on 15 November 2010 and runs for 12 weeks.

Therefore, the Committee is invited to conduct a brief debate at today's meeting, with a view to putting forward a response to the consultation in due course.

Ms Belinda Dimmock-Smith (Policy and Review Officer) will contact all members of the Committee via email to agree the Committee's response to the consultation.

Members are reminded that they can also submit individual responses to the consultation if they so wish.

The Chief Fire Officer, together with Mr Nigel Wilson (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) and Mr Peter Cleary (Service Delivery Manager) will attend for this agenda item.

This Committee is invited to:

- ***note the proposed projects to be included for consultation in the draft IRMP Action Plan 2011-12;***
- ***conduct a brief debate, with a view to putting forward a response to the consultation in due course;***
- ***encourage other Members to take part in the consultation process.***

11. Quarterly report on the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 by Oxfordshire County Council (Pages 91 - 94)

13:25

Contact Officer: Richard Webb, Deputy Head of Trading Standards, (01865) 815791

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) ('the Act') regulates the use of

covert activities by Local Authorities. It creates the statutory framework by which covert surveillance activities may be lawfully undertaken. Special authorisation arrangements need to be put in place whenever a Local Authority considers commencing covert surveillance or considers obtaining information by the use of informants or officers acting in an undercover capacity.

Codes of Practice issued under the Act provide guidance to authorities on the use of the Act. A revised Code of Practice came into force in April 2010. This new Code of Practice specifies that elected members should review the authority's use of the Act and set the policy at least once a year. They should also consider internal reports on the use of the Act on at least a quarterly basis.

The attached report (**SSC11**) provides an overview of the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 by Oxfordshire County Council in the period from 1st April 2010 to 30th September 2010. The report summarises applications for authorisation to undertake activities within the scope of the Act made during this period. Where those activities have been concluded the report includes the outcomes achieved.

The Committee is invited to conduct a question and answer session on the use of the RIP Act by Oxfordshire County Council.

REVIEW WORK

To take evidence, receive progress updates and consider tracking reports.

12. Report relating to Debt Advice Scrutiny Review

13:45

Contact Officer: Belinda Dimmock-Smith, Policy and Review Officer, (01865) 816316

[Lead Member Review Group Members: Councillors Lawrie Stratford, Bill Service, John Goddard and John Sanders]

A paper detailing the Group's findings is attached for the Committee's information (**SSC12(a)**).

Councillor Stratford will provide a verbal update at the meeting.

The Committee is invited to note the report.

(a) Debt Advice Scrutiny Review Report_(Pages 95 - 114)

INFO SHARE

13:55

- **Fire Service Command and Control Room - the FiReControl and FireLINK Projects**

Contact Officer: Colin Thomas, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Head of Service Support, (01865) 855206.

A progress report is attached (**SSC12(b)**).

BUSINESS PLANNING

To consider future work items for the Committee

13. Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 119 - 122)

14:05

Contact Officer: Belinda Dimmock-Smith, Policy and Review Officer, (01865) 816316

To note the attached timeline (**SSC13**).

- **Proposed review of Health and Safety in the County's Youth Centres**

The Committee is asked to note that the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee has now nominated Councillors N. Turner, D. Sexon and V. Smith to the Working Group.

14. Forward Plan

14:10

The Committee is asked to note any items of interest on the current version of the Forward Plan which covers the time period November 2010 to February 2011.

15. 14:15 approx Close of Meeting

Declarations of Interest

This note briefly summarises the position on interests which you must declare at the meeting. Please refer to the Members' Code of Conduct in Part 9.1 of the Constitution for a fuller description.

The duty to declare ...

You must always declare any "personal interest" in a matter under consideration, ie where the matter affects (either positively or negatively):

- (i) any of the financial and other interests which you are required to notify for inclusion in the statutory Register of Members' Interests; or
- (ii) your own well-being or financial position or that of any member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association more than it would affect other people in the County.

Whose interests are included ...

"Member of your family" in (ii) above includes spouses and partners and other relatives' spouses and partners, and extends to the employment and investment interests of relatives and friends and their involvement in other bodies of various descriptions. For a full list of what "relative" covers, please see the Code of Conduct.

When and what to declare ...

The best time to make any declaration is under the agenda item "Declarations of Interest". Under the Code you must declare not later than at the start of the item concerned or (if different) as soon as the interest "becomes apparent".

In making a declaration you must state the nature of the interest.

Taking part if you have an interest ...

Having made a declaration you may still take part in the debate and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a "prejudicial" interest.

"Prejudicial" interests ...

A prejudicial interest is one which a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would think so significant as to be likely to affect your judgment of the public interest.

What to do if your interest is prejudicial ...

If you have a prejudicial interest in any matter under consideration, you may remain in the room but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter under consideration, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

Exceptions ...

There are a few circumstances where you may regard yourself as not having a prejudicial interest or may participate even though you may have one. These, together with other rules about participation in the case of a prejudicial interest, are set out in paragraphs 10 – 12 of the Code.

Seeking Advice ...

It is your responsibility to decide whether any of these provisions apply to you in particular circumstances, but you may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.

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SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday, 6 September 2010 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.45 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Lawrie Stratford – in the Chair

Councillor Patrick Greene
Councillor Stewart Lilly
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale
Councillor Sajjad Hussain Malik (Saj)
Councillor Susanna Pressel
Councillor Bill Service
Councillor Alan Thompson
Councillor Carol Viney (Deputy Chairman)

Other Members in Attendance: Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities:
Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat
Cabinet Member for Police & Policy Co-ordination:
Councillor Kieron Mallon

Officers:

Whole of meeting K. Coldwell (Corporate Core); D. Etheridge, N. Wilson & C. Thomas (Social & Community Services); R. Edwards (Corporate Core).

Part of meeting

Agenda Item

Officer Attending

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 5. | D. Etheridge (Social & Community Services) |
| 6. | J. Jackson, D. Etheridge, C. J. Taylor, M. Brown & K. Warren (Social & Community Services) |
| 7. | C. Thomas (Social & Community Services) |
| 8. | B. Morgan (Social & Community Services) |
| 9. | R. Edwards (Corporate Core) |
| 10. | R. Edwards (Corporate Core) |
| 11. | R. Webb (Social & Community Services) |

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.

78/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS
(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Goddard.

79/10 MINUTES
(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2010 were approved and signed.

Matters Arising

Minute 69/10 – Community Pride and Self Help Select Committee – Ms Coldwell undertook to chase up the information on community development workers as requested by Councillor Pressel.

Minute 72/10 – Draft Action Plan Arising from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Inspection of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) – the Chief Fire Officer stated that OFRS was still awaiting formal HSE approval of the Service's action plan. Once this had been received costings for Recommendation 3 (delivery of operational training policy) would be provided to the Committee.

Minute 77/10 – Forward Plan – the Committee noted that the report on Cogges Trust was now due for consideration at the 19 October Cabinet meeting.

80/10 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE
(Agenda No. 5)

The Committee received the update as part of Agenda Item 6.

81/10 SERVICE AND RESOURCE PLANNING PRESENTATION
(Agenda No. 6)

The Chief Fire Officer and Director for Social & Community Services gave presentations to the Committee which provided a high level overview of services provided and the challenges which will need to be addressed to meet the savings targets. Copies of the presentations are attached to these Minutes and to the signed Minutes.

The County Librarian undertook to provide the following data to all members of the Committee:

- Number of visits per week to each of the county's mobile libraries 2009/10 (based on sample week count)
- Cost per visit per mobile library 2009/10
- Issues by mobile library 2009/10
- Cost per issue per mobile library 2009/10

82/10 FIRE SERVICE COMMAND AND CONTROL ROOM - THE FIRECONTROL AND FIRELINK PROJECTS
(Agenda No. 7)

The Committee noted the update from Mr Thomas and thanked him for his tireless work in relation to the rollout of the mobile data terminals and for maintaining the morale of the control room staff.

Mr Thomas undertook to provide the Committee with a report in six months' time which would detail the benefits of the new systems.

83/10 PAPER ON PROGRESS MADE IN RELATION TO INCREASING THE COUNTY'S RESILIENCE TO FLOODING
(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee thanked Ms Morgan for her report and conducted a question and answer session.

Ms Morgan undertook to provide:

- the draft version of the Joint Extreme Weather Response Plan to a future meeting of this Committee for comment prior to sign off (it is currently anticipated that the joint plan will be prepared by November 2010 in order for training to be provided to staff by January and testing in March 2011).
- an update on financial accountability in relation to flooding response to the Committee.

Ms Morgan undertook to provide a copy of the most recent report of the Oxfordshire Strategic Flooding Group (OSFG) to Councillor Pressel at her request.

84/10 NOMINATIONS TO SCRUTINY REVIEW IN RELATION TO YOUTH CENTRES
(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee noted that the Lead Member Review Group would consider the Directorate's review report prior to commencing scrutiny activity (due at the end of October/early November) and **AGREED** to nominate Councillors Viney and Service to join the Lead Member Review Group.

85/10 FUTURE ITEMS FOR POSSIBLE SCRUTINY CONSIDERATION
(Agenda No. 10)

The Committee **AGREED** to request that statistics pre and post the removal of speed cameras be provided for its February meeting. Data should include levels of speeding, the age and gender of offenders, numbers and types of accidents and numbers of serious injuries and deaths. The purpose would be to enable a comparison to be made between the periods when speed cameras were in operation and following their removal.

This report would:

- be considered in conjunction with the business plan for the integrated road safety approach within the Council if the latter document was available for the February 2011 meeting. (This Committee intends to consider the business plan in light of the current and anticipated further reduction in funding to the Thames Valley Road Safety Partnership);
- also be brought to the attention of the Growth and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee on the grounds that those areas of road safety not covered by this Committee (SSC Scrutiny Committee covers road safety in terms of Fire & Rescue, the Police and Trading Standards) sit within its remit.

It was also **AGREED** that an update in relation to the latest position on the Coroner's Service Scrutiny Review be provided to a future meeting and that updates on the current position of all the service areas that sit under the remit of this Committee be provided at least annually to all members of this Committee (possibly on the rising of the meeting).

A number of suggestions were made for items to be incorporated into this Committee's future work programme; these will be considered when the work programme is next reviewed and decisions are made about resource availability.

(a) Tracking Scrutiny Items

The Committee noted the information as listed on the face of the agenda.

(b) INFORMATION SHARE

- **Tackling Illegal Money Lending Progress Report**

The Committee thanked Mr Webb for his informative report and **AGREED** to express its appreciation of the way in which the team had rolled out its work in Oxfordshire during its first year of operation in this county.

Mr Webb undertook to provide a breakdown of the number of reports of activity the team had received to date in time for the next update to Committee.

86/10 FORWARD PLAN
(Agenda No. 12)

No items were identified for consideration.

87/10 CLOSE OF MEETING - PRESENTATION ON THE REGISTRATION SERVICE

(Agenda No. 13)

The Committee received information on the Registration Service from Mrs Jacquie Bugeja, Head of Registration, on the rising of this meeting.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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Fire & Rescue, Emergency Planning and Community Safety Service and Resource Planning

**Safer and Stronger Communities
Scrutiny Committee
6 September 2010**

Dave Etheridge – Chief Fire Officer



Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning

- Overall cost of service = £24.5m
 - Service Delivery £16.4m
 - Service Support £7.8m
 - Emergency Planning £384k



Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning

What is statutory?

- Statutory requirements - Fire Services Act 2004
 - Receive emergency calls
 - Saving life through attending fires, road accidents and other emergencies
 - Provide humanitarian assistance
 - Respond to acts of terrorism and the effects of climate change e.g. flooding
 - Contribute to the wider civil resilience of the UK
 - Community Safety advice and Education
 - Fire Safety Enforcement



Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning

- Statutory Requirements – The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005 –
 - Ensure the safety from fire of our community in all places other than single private dwellings
 - Risk assessed proactive approach
 - Support businesses in conducting risk assessments
 - Enforce the order where necessary



Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning

- Statutory Requirements - The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
 - Assess the risk of emergencies occurring
 - Contingency planning
 - Preparation of Emergency Plans
 - Business Continuity Management inc public warning and informing in the event of an emergency



Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning

– Scale of the service

- 24 fire stations
- 600 Personnel, consisting of
 - 248 whole-time staff
 - 352 retained duty staff (part time not whole time FTE's)
- 35 fire appliances
- 12 specialist appliances



Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning

- The Fire & Rescue Service has a 10 year vision – 365 alive for 2006 – 2016.
 - 365 more people alive
 - » Current target: 153
 - » 203 more people alive
 - » *50 better than target*
 - £100 million saved
 - » Current target: £49,290,320
 - » £66,315,472 saved
 - » *£17,025,152 better than target*
 - 840,000 people safer
 - » Current target: 357,000
 - » 435,868 people safer
 - » *78,868 better than target*



Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning

- Non Statutory Services
 - Fire cadets - cost £40k



Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning

What do we get for this money?

- **Intervention**

- 12,500 calls to control suite
- 6,092 incidents attended
- 1,785 fires inc 25 rescues from accidental property fires
- 396 traffic collisions attended
- 1,213 other emergency incidents
- the remainder includes false alarms and assisting the ambulance service (co-responder).



Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning

What do we get for this money?

- **Prevention**

- 5500 children educated through our Junior Citizen programme in 2009/10
- 118,000 Safety messages delivered in 2009/10
- 1946 Home Fire Risk Assessments in 2009/10 resulting in 2693 smoke detectors being installed including 26 deaf units
- 49 Level 2 Fire Investigations leading to 4 awaiting trial, 5 curfews, 11 convictions,

- **Protection –**

- 665 Technical fire safety audits completed
- 31 Formal notices issued
- 273 Informal noticed issued.
- 1983 Building Regulations consultations completed



Community Safety – Gypsy and Traveller Service

- Overall cost of Service = £96k
- Provides landlord services for some 80 families resident on the County's permanent sites
- Safeguards the County's settled Communities from the problems associated with unauthorised encampments
- Provides the same function for Bucks County Council and Brent Housing Partnership – Income generation



Community Safety - Safer Communities Unit

- Overall cost of Service = £232k
- Fulfils the County Council's statutory duty, through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Act 1998 to work in partnership to develop and deliver community safety strategies
- Acts as a conduit for those who require specific safety, protective or crime related services



Community Safety – Trading Standards

- Overall cost of Service = £2.26m
- Enforces approx 80 acts of parliament
- Through targeting doorstep crime, assists vulnerable older adults to maintain independent living in their own homes.
- Wide remit covering – food safety; fair trading; fraud; illegal money lending; counterfeiting; farm animal health; and welfare controls; underage sales; product safety; overweight heavy goods vehicles; storage of hazardous substances
- Covers civil, criminal and contract law.



Changes already being implemented – Budget and Business Strategy

- Management review
 - Structural changes – transition into Social and Community Services Directorate (SCS)
 - Posts deleted at Head of Service Level
 - CFO role – reports to Chief Executive for Fire & Rescue and Director for SCS for Community Safety



Changes already being implemented – Budget and Business Strategy

- **MTFP**

- Fire and Rescue & Emergency planning – savings of £1.4m (not inc inflation) over 5 years
- Community Safety savings of £700k over 5 years
- Most savings proposals already achieved or under development
- £661k savings in Fire & Rescue still to be identified.
- Most significant funded pressure of £660k is for increased support for retained fire fighters



End

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COUNTY COUNCIL**

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Service and Resource Planning Community Services

Safer & Stronger Communities
Scrutiny Committee
6th September 2010

Budgets

	Gross Spend £m	Income £m
Libraries	8.7	0.9
Heritage and Arts Service	2.9	0.5
Cultural & Community Development	0.9	
Music Service	2.7	2.1

What do we get for this money?

Libraries

- 43 libraries; 7 mobile libraries
- 142,000 people in Oxfordshire borrow books
- 52% of the population use libraries
- Over 4m book issues
- Nearly 4m physical visits plus extensive use of website

What do we get for this money?

Heritage and Arts

- Oxfordshire Museum: 162,000 visits
- Oxfordshire Records Office and Oxfordshire Studies: 28,000 visits; 32,000 enquiries
- The Mill Arts Centre: 120,000 visits
- Museum Resource Centre: 1 million objects in our care; 5 miles of documents
- Other heritage services e.g. 380,000 visits to heritage websites

What do we get for this money?

Music Service

- 339,000 pupil lessons
- Average net cost per lesson = £1.54

What is statutory?

- Required to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” library service - no detailed clarity on what this means
- Must provide a limited archives service. Other heritage and arts services are up to us
- It is up to us whether we provide a music service but currently we get £0.7m of government grant funding if we do
- If something is statutory then we still have discretion as to how we meet that requirement

Savings already planned

- Self-service in libraries (£256,000)
- Reduction in management/professional capacity in library services (£566,000)
- Cogges to be run independently at no revenue cost to the County Council
- Increased fees and charges for the music service as part of a strategy of reducing County Council funding

Future financial challenges

- County Council needs to find £200m from its non-school budgets (£500m)
- This is 40%
- All services need to look at how they can contribute towards this
- Some of the savings on the previous slide will contribute
- To find more savings we need to decide
 - whether we should stop providing some services
 - reduce spending across all services
 - or look at doing things differently
- More complex changes will take time

Contents:

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- **National Picture**
 - Coalition Government – setting national policy
- **Local Context for Oxfordshire**
 - Annual Public Health Report 2010
 - Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy 2008-2011
- **Aim and Priorities**
 - Central Concepts
 - Community Safety
 - Health
 - Young People
 - Crossovers
- **Ownership and Delivery**
 - Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership
 - Oxfordshire Alcohol Steering Group
 - Annual objectives and action plans

Executive Summary

Alcohol is an embedded part of British culture. It is important to recognise that it can play a positive role but that excessive consumption can have serious consequences for individuals, families and communities as well as impacting on public services.

The negative impact alcohol can cause cannot be tackled in isolation or by a single organisation. The issues connected with alcohol are often interlinked to other themes such as domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, risky sexual activity, increased health concerns and lifestyle choices. As alcohol cuts across a wide range of agendas, it is vital that organisations work in partnership to raise awareness and tackle the issues together to ensure a coherent and effective approach is taken. Involvement of local communities will also be key to challenging social acceptability of alcohol misuse and its associated behaviour.

The Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy 2011-2014 aims to **reduce the harmful impact of alcohol in Oxfordshire through**

- **effective partnership working across the public, private and voluntary, community and faith sectors**
- **encouraging people to get the facts, weigh up the risks and live with the consequences**
- **ensuring the right services and support are in place for anyone who wants and needs help**

National Picture

In May 2010, a new **Coalition Government** was formed between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrat parties. The first joint document to be published, 'The Coalition: Our Programme for Government', set out the immediate vision and priorities to be tackled. Alcohol was specifically identified under the Crime and Policing section:

- Ban the sale of alcohol below cost price.
- Review alcohol taxation and pricing to ensure it tackles binge drinking without unfairly penalising responsible drinkers, pubs and important local industries.
- Overhaul the Licensing Act 2003 to give local authorities and the police much stronger powers to remove licences from, or refuse to grant licences to, any premises that are causing problems.
- Allow councils and the police to shut down permanently any shop or bar found to be persistently selling alcohol to children.
- Double the maximum fine for underage alcohol sales to £20,000.
- Permit local councils to charge more for late-night licences to pay for additional policing.

This indicated a shift in policy from the previous Labour Government. In the months that followed the Coalition Government demonstrated its commitment to tackling alcohol as a major issue by:

- Moving responsibility for the Licensing Act 2003 to the Home Office from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport
- Opening two public consultations – one focusing on pricing of alcohol and the other on overhauling the Licensing Act 2003

**** This section will need to be added to once the Home Office consultations have closed and any actions published ****

The Coalition Government also launched the concept of '**Big Society**' and encouraging people to get involved and participate in their local communities. It also saw an emphasis on increased local control and devolved decision making.

In relation to **Public Health and alcohol** under the new Government; in a speech to the Faculty of Public Health Annual Conference in July 2010, the Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley, outlined the principles of self responsibility which will be encouraged in further developing the public health agenda. The Minister said that a new approach is needed: "We have to impact on demand. That means we have to change behaviour, and change people's relationships with each other and with drugs, alcohol, tobacco and food." He went on to say that causative social factors have to be addressed, including perceptions of drinking in our society and, ultimately, the issue is one of building self esteem to enable people to make healthy choices.

Alongside changes in Government, the **National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)** has developed a set of three guidance documents focused on addressing alcohol related problems:

- Alcohol use disorders: preventing the development of hazardous and harmful drinking.
- Alcohol use disorders: diagnosis, assessment and management of harmful drinking and alcohol dependence.
- Alcohol use disorders: diagnosis and clinical management of alcohol-related physical complications.

Local Context for Oxfordshire

For the first time, the **Director for Public Health Annual Report for Oxfordshire in 2010** included a chapter on alcohol as one of the six long-term threats to the health of Oxfordshire residents. It emphasised the need to:

- be realistic in changing attitudes and behaviours in connection with alcohol,
- shift towards prevention and helping people take responsibility for their health by providing factual information
- make use of 'Brief Advice' by professionals at appropriate opportunities

The report identifies the impact alcohol has locally on crime and anti social behaviour, hospital admissions (acute care and Emergency Departments are affected), an individual's health, families and wider communities.

It highlights that a good start has been made on tackling alcohol issues in Oxfordshire, but given the threat that alcohol poses it should take a higher priority. This Strategy for 2011-2014 hopes to do just that and to build on the previous good work of the Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy 2008-2011.

Under the previous **Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy for 2008-2011**, there was an increased focus on alcohol issues across the county. The Alcohol Steering Group brought people together to deliver effective work and the issue was given much needed leadership.

There will be continued coordination of issues around alcohol and its negative impact on Oxfordshire. Under the previous strategy for 2008-2011, there were five objectives:

- **Reduce alcohol related disorder**
- **Increase the consistency and quality of alcohol awareness for all ages**
- **Develop key health initiatives and commission alcohol treatment services**
- **Develop a balanced sustainable leisure economy for the benefit of all ages**
- **Reduce young people's demand for and supply of alcohol and its associated harms**

The strategy for 2008-2011 saw a number of successes such as the public awareness campaign in 2009 which included a practitioner's conference on alcohol and its impact, developing 'Nightsafe' standards across all of the separate schemes, making better strategic links with leads on domestic abuse and young people, developing local brief advice training for professionals outside of health and a pilot project with trained alcohol workers in the Emergency Department at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

The strategy for 2011-2014 has refined and refocused the alcohol priorities for Oxfordshire which are clearly outlined in the following section. As alcohol is a fundamental cross cutting theme, the strategy is not designed to stand alone but to link into and complement other strategies and action plans as appropriate.

Aim and Priorities for 2011-2014

The overall aim of the Strategy is to **reduce the harmful impact of alcohol in Oxfordshire through**

- **effective partnership working across the public, private and voluntary, community and faith sectors**
- **encouraging people to get the facts, weigh up the risks and live with the consequences**
- **ensuring the right services and support are in place for anyone who wants and needs help**

At the heart of the Strategy are a number of key **central concepts** that underpin the strategic approach for Oxfordshire and are essential to achieving the aim. They need to be taken into consideration when developing the annual objective and action plans under the priority themes.

Central Concepts:

1) Raising Awareness

Through consistent messages that are relevant to the intended audience and are delivered in the most appropriate way. This could be via a communication campaign for the general public, best practice sharing for professionals or targeting a particular 'at risk' group.

2) Multi Agency Responses

All agencies and organisations which deal with alcohol and its effects need to work together to realise a more coherent and effective response to the issues and accomplish more effective outcomes.

3) Challenge Social Acceptability by Promoting Self Responsibility

There needs to be a shift towards changing unacceptable behaviour linked to alcohol and encouraging people to take responsibility for the impact of their drinking on their own health and the wellbeing of others.

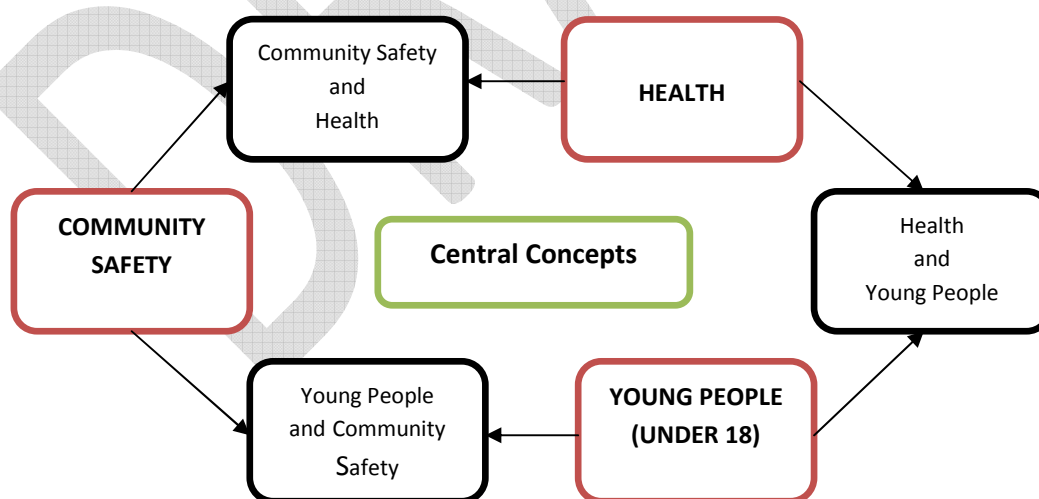
4) Prevention, Early Intervention and Specialist/Targeted Approaches

It is important to identify which approach needs to be taken when action planning with more emphasis being put on prevention. Evidence based practice is also key to choosing the most appropriate way to achieve the aim.

5) Family and/or Community Centred

A holistic approach must be taken which incorporates the impact on wider family and social networks rather than focusing solely on the individual.

The **Priorities** have been set out under three strategic themes which are connected by crosscutting priorities, all of which have the key central concepts running through them. As part of the annual delivery plans, the Alcohol Steering Group will set annual objectives and actions under the themes. These action plans will be published separately and progress in implementing the actions will be reported regularly.



Priority Themes:

It is vital to use evidence of best practice but to also be at the forefront of innovative solutions and getting local communities to be engaged, where appropriate, to tackle the issues.

1) Community Safety

Community Safety covers a wide range of issues that can affect local people and communities. This includes levels of crime, anti-social behaviour, hate crime, fear of crime and how satisfied people are with their local area. Alcohol is often linked, in varying degrees, to specific problems being addressed such as anti social behaviour, environmental issues, domestic abuse and the impact on emergency services. The action plans drawn up on these and other specific issues need to include work to address use and abuse of alcohol where this is a root cause.

2) Health

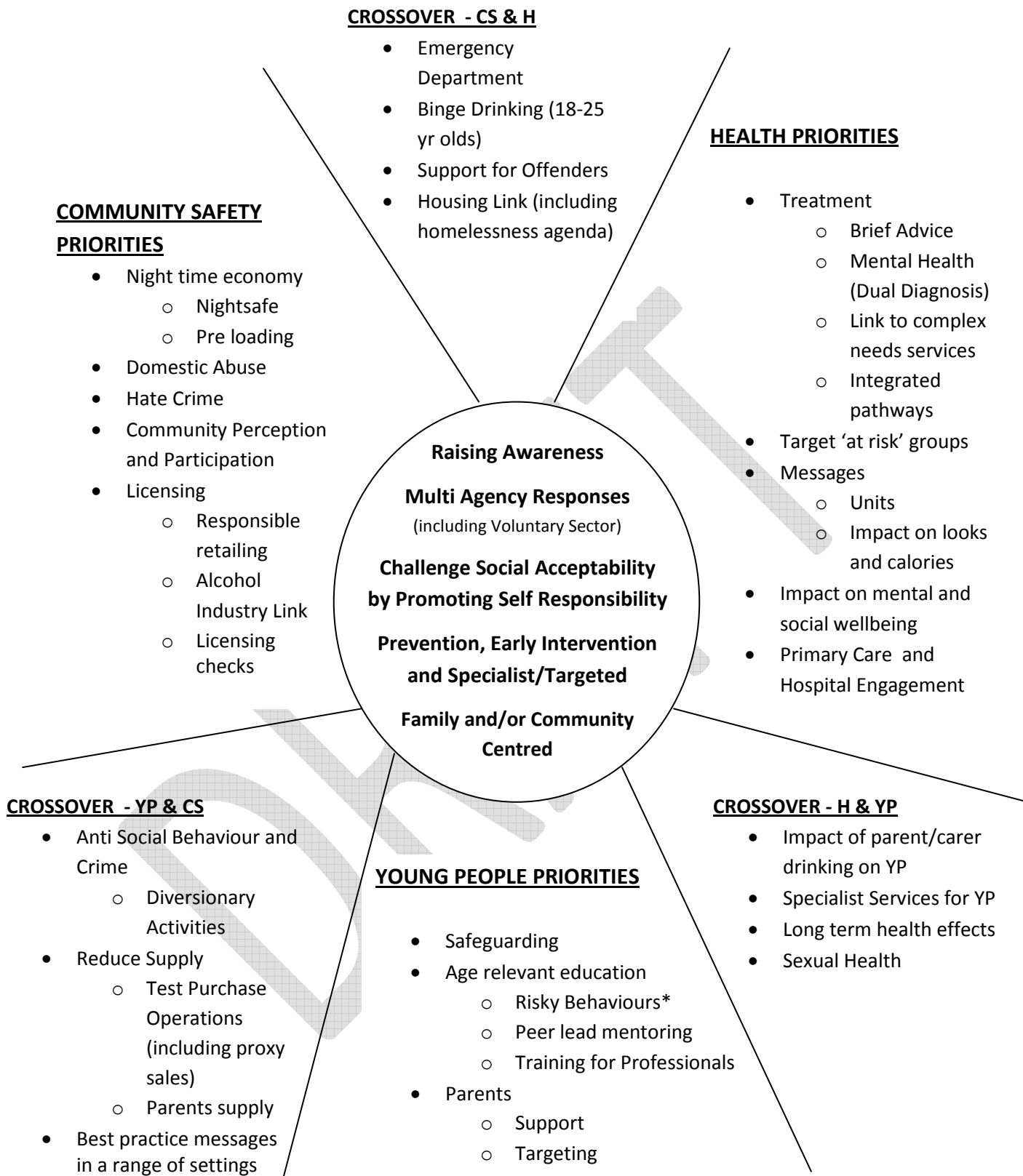
The impact of alcohol on health and wellbeing is wide reaching across all ages and backgrounds. It can be a major cause of disease, injury, disability, violence, social problems and premature death.

There are certain groups of people who may be at increased risk of alcohol related harm to their health but they will not be regarded as “alcohol dependent”. There is growing concern about the impact of drinking at higher than recommended levels over long periods of time. This is known to increase the likelihood of a range of cancers and heart problems as well as the more well-known liver diseases often associated with alcohol consumption. Many people who may regard themselves as social drinkers may come into this risk group.

3) Young People (under 18)

Young People and their relationship with alcohol should not be tackled in isolation. It is important to make the links to other risky behaviours such as sexual activity, unplanned pregnancy, anti social behaviour and being a victim of crime.

As there are a wide range of agencies engaging with young people, it is essential to have a coordinated approach to minimise duplication and maximise effectiveness in delivery. The strategic approach for alcohol needs to be part of the Every Child Matters agenda and link to the Children and Young Peoples Trust and its Children and Young People’s Plan and objectives.



*Risky Behaviours can include Sexual Activity and Pregnancy, Drugs, Bullying, Peer Pressure, ASB and Crime, becoming a victim, etc. **Is this defined by Children's trust?**

Ownership and Delivery

The Strategy comes under the remit of the **Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP)**, the strategic body for community safety in Oxfordshire which reports to the Public Service Board. Within the OSCP structure, the delivery of the Strategy is owned by the multi agency Alcohol Steering Group. However, the scope of the strategy goes beyond the remit of the Community Safety Partnership and can only be delivered by a wider range of partnerships and organisations including the Children and Young People's Trust and the Health and Well-Being Partnership.

The **Alcohol Steering Group** will set annual objectives and action plans to work towards which will support the delivery and achievement of the aim and priorities set out in this document. One of the key roles of the Alcohol Steering Group is to identify areas where alcohol is a cross cutting theme and ensure that it is given the appropriate level of priority in all agencies and that a coordinated and consistent approach is taken. This means that some of the objectives and actions on the annual plans will be led by other organisation or partnerships. This will include local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to deliver actions at a local level depending on their individual needs assessment. Members of all the CSPs are represented on Alcohol Steering Group.

DRAFT

**DIRECTOR OF
PUBLIC HEALTH
FOR OXFORDSHIRE**

**ANNUAL REPORT
IV**

***Reporting on 2009-2010
Recommendations for 2010-2011
Produced: May 2010***

SUMMARY

This is the fourth Annual Report by a Director of Public Health for Oxfordshire (jointly appointed by the NHS and the County Council). The recommendations are made for all organisations in Oxfordshire and for the public.

The aims are simple:

1. To report on progress made in the last year and set out challenges for the next year
2. To galvanise action on five main threats to the future health, wellbeing and prosperity of Oxfordshire
3. To add an emphasis on two strongly emerging threats, namely those posed by dementia and alcohol abuse.

The five main long-term threats are:

- Breaking the cycle of deprivation
- An ageing population – the “demographic time bomb”
- Mental health and wellbeing: avoiding a Cinderella service
- The rising tide of obesity
- Fighting killer infections

The threat posed by dementia is described in the chapter on an ageing population.

The threat posed by alcohol abuse takes its place as the sixth long-term threat to health.

Progress will be monitored in future reports. Your comments are welcome as long-term success will depend on achieving wide consensus across many organisations.

Please direct comments to: ruth.fenning@oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk

I hope you enjoy the report and act upon it.

Dr Jonathan McWilliam
Director of Public Health for Oxfordshire
May 2010

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INTRODUCTION

What is the purpose of a Director of Public Health's Annual Report?

The purpose of a Director of Public Health is to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Oxfordshire. This is done by reporting publicly and independently on trends and gaps in the health and wellbeing of the population in Oxfordshire and by making recommendations for improvement to a wide range of organisations.

The role of the Director of Public Health is to be an independent advocate for the health of the people of Oxfordshire.

The Director of Public Health's Annual Report is the main way by which Directors of Public Health make their conclusions known to the public.

This is the fourth Annual Report by a Director of Public Health appointed jointly by local government and the NHS. This report attempts to build on the momentum generated by the first three which were generously received by a wide range of audiences.

What is the thrust of this particular Annual Report?

This report aims to keep the spotlight firmly on the five main long term threats to public health by reporting on progress made in the last year and by making recommendations for next year. The main threats are:

- Breaking the cycle of deprivation
- An ageing population – the “demographic time bomb”
- Mental health and wellbeing: avoiding a Cinderella service
- The rising tide of obesity
- Fighting killer infections

Sound progress is now being made across the county on these five areas.

It is now timely to emphasise two new threats which are emerging, namely those posed by dementia and alcohol abuse.

The threat posed by dementia is described within the chapter on an ageing population.

The threat posed by alcohol abuse is set out in a new chapter ‘Alcohol: What’s Your Poison’ making it the sixth current major threat to the public’s health.

Public Health – everyone’s business

Good health and wellbeing are not created in a vacuum. Good health is closely related to a wide range of factors such as employment, quality of neighbourhoods, quality of schools and having a part to play in society. These factors are, in turn, linked to issues of housing, skills and employment and all contribute to the general economic prosperity of the county. **In addition, to make a difference, it is necessary to focus on the same topics for a number of decades to make sustained change.**

For these reasons, the recommendations made in this report are long-term and wide-ranging and are not confined to traditional areas such as health services and social care.

The Contents of this Report

The first chapter takes an overview of general progress made during the last year.

The following six chapters concentrate on progress made on the six major threats. Recommendations for improvement are made at the end of each chapter.

Progress against recommendations will be reported each year and, in this way, this document has been designed as a tool to be used and built upon the year on year. I hope you enjoy it and act on it.

Dr Jonathan McWilliam
Director of Public Health for Oxfordshire
May 2010.

CHAPTER 7: Alcohol: What's your poison?

Why is it time to take Alcohol seriously as a major Public Health issue?

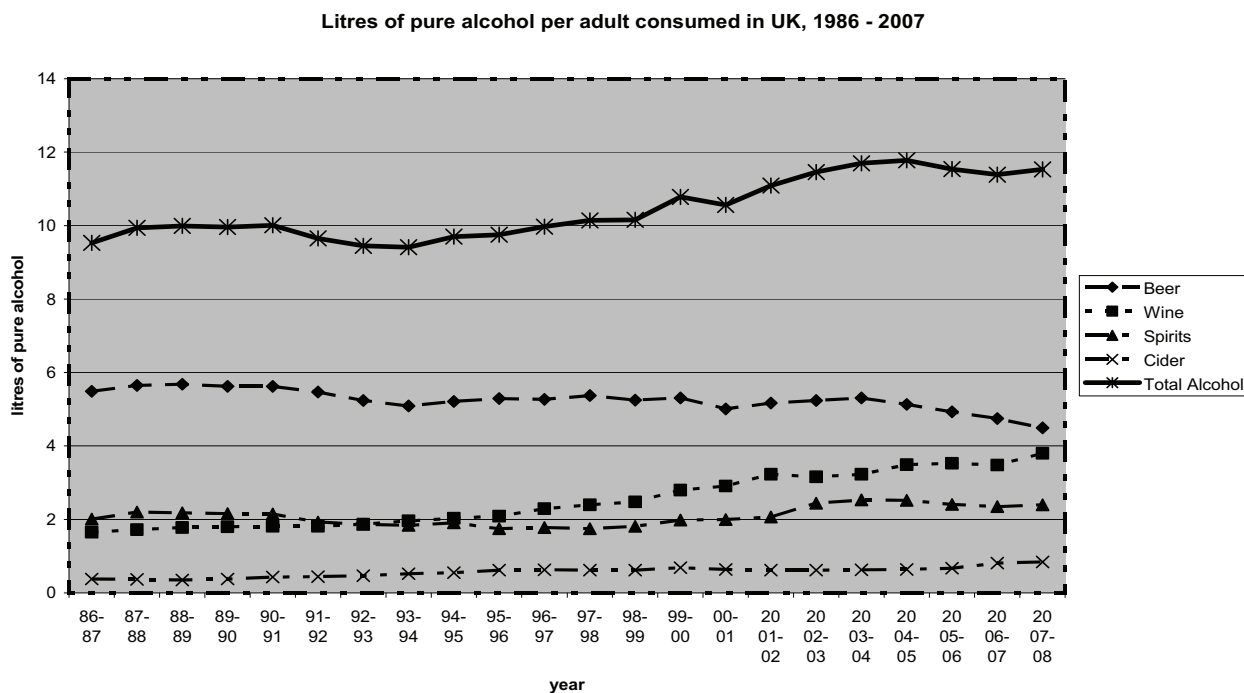
Alcohol is perhaps the last major gap in Oxfordshire's Public Health defences.

Despite good, innovative work in the county over recent years, this issue is not yet sufficiently in the mainstream of Oxfordshire's policy making, and it needs to be. Why? Alcohol is a deeply ingrained part of British culture. It is widely used in the home as a relaxant and its effect in lowering inhibitions is valued in social gatherings. Indeed, to many, the presence of alcohol is a social signal that says 'party'. Indeed, the majority of adults in our society do control their drinking and 9% abstain altogether. So, what is the problem? The list is as follows:

Alcohol consumption has risen in the last 40 years

In England, average adult alcohol consumption has risen by 40% since 1970. The graph below shows the recent trends in consumption.

Figure 7.1



Source: Institute of Alcohol Studies Factsheet "Drinking in Great Britain" www.ias.org.uk

A comprehensive summary of definitions relating to alcohol use and abuse are provided at the end of this chapter.

Many Adults exceed recommended drinking levels and one in five drinks at hazardous levels

- In 2006, almost half (48%) of British men and 4 out of every 10 British women exceeded recommended daily guidelines on at least one day in the previous week.
- Similarly, British men and women aged 25 to 44 were more likely than other age groups to have drunk heavily on at least one day during the previous week, followed closely by those in the 16 to 24 age group.
- Individuals in managerial and professional occupations are more likely to have drunk alcohol in the previous week, and to drink more frequently than those in routine and manual occupations

- In 2008 one in every five of over 16's consumed alcohol at hazardous levels.
- Only 9 per cent of the White British population are non-drinkers, but the proportion is higher among some ethnic minority groups, rising to 90 per cent or more among those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin.

Alcohol consumption in young people has increased with heavy drinking and binge drinking a concern in this group and consumption among girls has been increasing rapidly.

Between 1990 and 2006, drinking in UK's 11-15 year olds roughly doubled from an average of around 5 units per week to around 11 units per week.

In addition to this there are proven links with risk taking behaviour which may result in:

- Teenage conceptions
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Mental health problems
- Alcohol related accident and injury
- Poorer school attendance and lower attainment
- Involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime

Alcohol without doubt causes disease and early death. It is a poison.

- In England in 2006, 16,236 people died from alcohol-related causes.
- The number of deaths from alcohol-related liver disease has almost doubled in the last decade.
- Alcohol causes cancers of the liver, bowel, breast, throat, mouth, larynx and oesophagus; it causes osteoporosis, reduces fertility and causes accidents of all kinds.
- Alcohol is responsible for around 950,000 unnecessary admissions to hospital nationally per year, and this is rising (an increase of 70% in the 6 years between 2002/03 and 2008/09).

Alcohol is getting cheaper and more easily available

- The real cost of alcohol has fallen: a unit of alcohol cost 67% less in 2007 than in 1987.

The health benefits of alcohol are overstated

- The potential health benefits of alcohol tend to be greatly overstated.
- Above the age of 40 years, drinking a small amount of alcohol may reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- For those who drink above this low level, and for those under 40 years who drink any amount, alcohol **increases** the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- For those of any age, drinking any amount of alcohol increases the risk of cancer – there is no safe limit.
- Across England, alcohol results in over 13 people being admitted to hospital for every one that it prevents.

Alcohol damages the family and social networks

- Living with somebody who misuses alcohol can be a horrendous ordeal. Alcohol can make a partner's behaviour unpredictable, aggressive and erratic.
- Marriages in which one or both partners have an alcohol problem are twice as likely to end in divorce.
- British Crime Survey figures for 2007/08 suggest that 125,000 alcohol-related instances of domestic violence occurred over this one-year period.

Alcohol fuels antisocial behaviour and changes the character of our towns, especially in the evening at weekends

- Local Councillors have frequently stated their unease about the drinking culture apparent in towns across Oxfordshire, particularly among young people in the evening at weekends.
- Nationally, aggressive behaviour resulting from alcohol misuse, in particular binge drinking, is a major cause of street violence. The British Crime Survey found that almost half of the 2 million victims of violence thought that their attacker was under the influence of alcohol, with 39,000 reports of serious sexual assault also being associated with alcohol consumption.
- The effects of crime extend beyond those who are directly attacked, creating an environment of fear.

Alcohol damages front-line services and the economy and places a huge financial burden on the taxpayer.

- Half of all assaults on staff in hospital emergency departments are committed by those under the influence of alcohol.
- There are over 8,000 alcohol-related assaults on police officers every year in the UK.
- This makes it difficult to deliver community services in areas where staff feel threatened, demoralising front line healthcare staff and other professionals.
- One in every four accident and emergency attendances is related to alcohol
- The total cost to the NHS is estimated to be £2.7 billion per year and rising - almost double the cost in 2001 when the cost was £1.47 billion.
- At least 14-17 million working days are lost per year in the UK because of alcohol, costing up to £6.4 billion per year.
- The National Social Marketing Centre estimated that the total annual societal cost of alcohol misuse to the nation to be £55.1 billion.

In 2008 the Chief Medical Officer summed up the problem well:

“Drinking alcohol is a deeply ingrained part of our society; each year the average intake per adult is equivalent to 120 bottles of wine. Since 1970, alcohol consumption has fallen in many European countries but has increased by 40% in England.

The consequences of drinking go far beyond the individual drinker’s health and well-being. They include harm to the unborn foetus, acts of drunken violence, vandalism, sexual assault and child abuse, and a huge health burden carried by both the NHS and friends and family who care for those damaged by alcohol. “

The position in Oxfordshire:

Hospital admissions for alcohol related harm in Oxfordshire

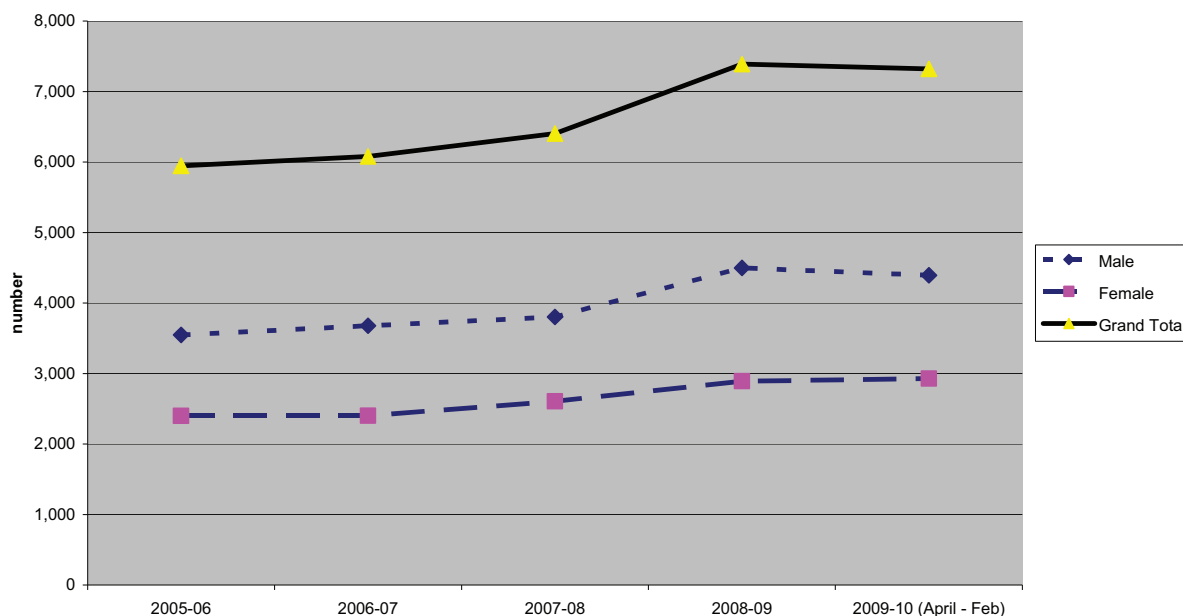
Local statistics show the burden of disease related to alcohol in Oxfordshire.

The graph below shows how hospital admissions due to alcohol related conditions have been rising steadily from 2005 to 2010. This calculation takes 5 common conditions and records the proportion of each one that is caused by alcohol.

The top five alcohol related illnesses are breast cancer or other related illness, heart rhythm problems, rectal cancer, heart disease related to artery deposits and other unspecified chest pain.

Figure 7.2

Total number of Hospital admissions in Oxfordshire for the top 5 alcohol related conditions (all ages), 2005-06 to 2009-10



Source: SUS (U-R) data analysed by Decision Support, NHS Oxfordshire April 2010

Self reported under-age drinking in Oxfordshire

The Big Voice survey was carried out in Oxfordshire between March 2008 and June 2009. An online survey was completed at school by almost 5000 young people aged 4 – 19 with additional on-street interviews for 16-19 year olds. This gave the following results which many may find shocking.

- 72% of young people aged over 11 have drunk alcohol,
- 9% regularly drink,
- 51% have been drunk
- 9% are regularly drunk.
- 5% agree that there is a lot of pressure to drink alcohol.

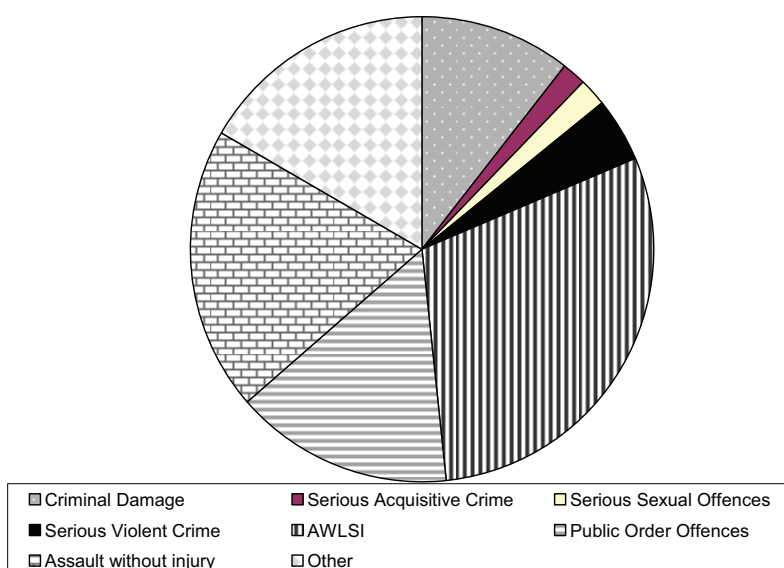
Under age sales of Alcohol in Oxfordshire

Police Licensing Teams and Trading Standards officers carry out checks of sales of alcohol to under age young people. Results of the police led operations in 2009-10 showed:

- 50 out of 207 premises tested sold alcohol to underage customers (24%)
- Over a third of these failed again when re-tested
- Seven premises were prosecuted for repeated failures

Figure 7.3: Alcohol related crime in Oxfordshire

Alcohol related crime in Oxfordshire 2009 - main crime types



Source: Thames Valley Police, March 2010 (Note – AWLSI stands for Assault with Less Serious Injury)

- **Over 11% of all crime in Oxfordshire last year was related to alcohol consumption**
- **This absorbs a substantial proportion of taxpayers' money spent on police services**
- Assaults make up the largest proportion of crimes which are committed under the influence of alcohol,
- Public order offences make up a high proportion of these crimes including being drunk and disorderly and using threatening words or behaviour. This behaviour often leads to other criminal behaviour including assault or the causing of criminal damage.

The cost of alcohol related crime can be estimated. For example, the crime figures from Oxfordshire last year indicate that:

- Alcohol related criminal damage cost approximately £4.5m (over 5,000 incidents at an indicative cost of £890 per incident)
- Violent assaults fuelled by alcohol in Oxfordshire cost approximately £1.5m (149 offences at an indicative cost of £10,409 each)
- Serious sexual offences linked to alcohol use cost approximately £3.1m (99 offences at an estimated cost of £31,438 each)

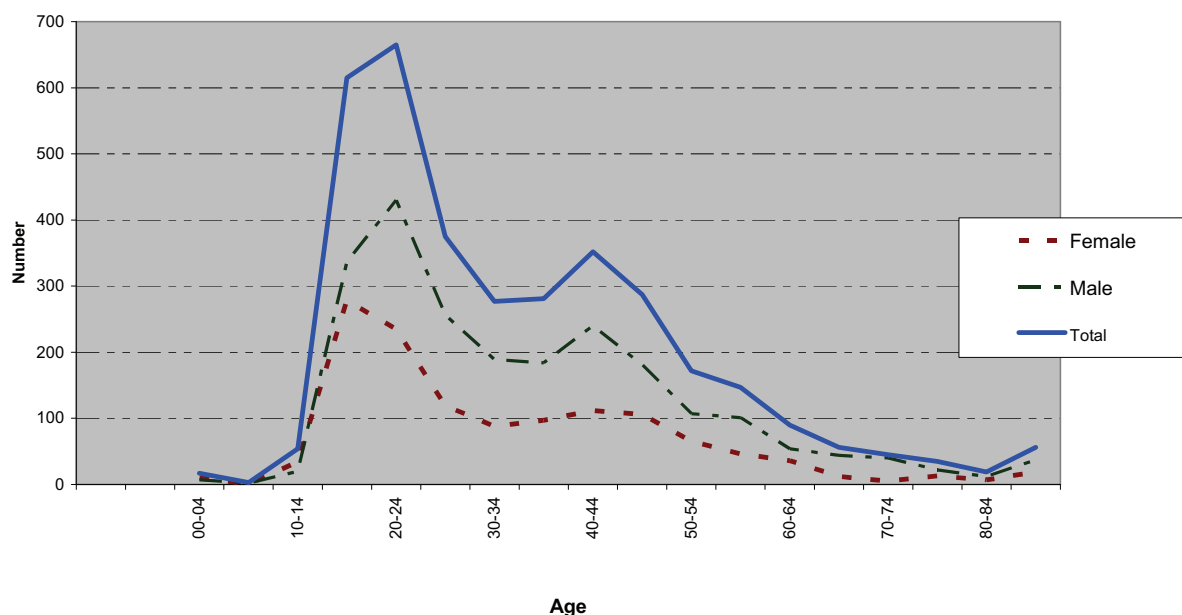
Accident and Emergency (A & E) attendances caused by alcohol in Oxfordshire

3,500 A and E attendances were related to alcohol in 2009/10. This is expensive to the taxpayer and inefficient for our services, especially when our emergency departments struggle to see patients within the national 4 hour standard. These 3,500 attendees mean longer waits for everyone. The predominance of young people and young adults, especially young men, is simply a reflection of the drinking culture society permits, aided by liberal licensing laws around opening times. In Oxford at the weekend it is easy to carry on drinking until 3 o'clock in the morning.

National statistics indicate that 70% of emergency admissions on a Friday and Saturday night are due to alcohol consumption.

Figure 7.4

Alcohol related attendance (suspected or confirmed) at Oxfordshire Emergency Depts, by age group and gender. 2009-10



Source: Data from Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals Trust, analysed by Decision Support, NHS Oxfordshire.

Ambulance call-outs related to crime and disorder incidents in Oxfordshire

The further cost of alcohol to society is reflected and is shown in ambulance call outs to crime and disorder incidents. One quarter’s data shows the pattern of activity, often focusing on built up areas in Oxford and Cherwell, resulting in 4,000 to 5,000 call outs a year.

The Oxford Nightsafe Partnership maps this data by location of the pick-up on a regular basis. They particularly look at the ambulance attendance where there is a record of assault / sexual assault, overdose / poisoning or stabbing or gunshot wounds. A high proportion of these pick-ups are made at licensed premises.

Table 7.1: Records of ambulance call outs to crime and disorder incidents in Oxfordshire July – Sept 2009

LA district	Month (2009)			
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Cherwell	83	92	87	262 (21%)
Oxford	165	184	147	496 (41%)
South Oxfordshire	39	52	28	119 (10%)
Vale of White Horse	78	57	45	180 (15%)
West Oxfordshire	52	48	42	142 (12%)
Total	417	433	349	1199 (100%)

Source: South Central Ambulance NHS Trust (Oxfordshire)

Summary

The British Medical Association summed up the position well in 2008, and also criticised the effectiveness of our current national policies to control alcohol.

“Alcoholic beverages consumed in moderation are enjoyed by many. Although socially accepted, alcohol can be an addictive drug. Alcohol misuse can be harmful foremost to the individual but also places a substantial burden on families and society. The levels of alcohol-related disorder, crime, morbidity and premature mortality in the UK are

unacceptably high. Despite this, the strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm in the UK has seen an over-reliance on popular but ineffective policies, as well as liberalisation of the major drivers of alcohol consumption: availability and price. This represents a significant shortcoming in the political drive to improve public health and order.”

What are we doing about it?

Our current strategy is a good start and provides a solid foundation.

The Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy 2008-11 has made a very good start. Put together by an impressively wide range of organisations, its key priorities are to:

- Reduce alcohol related disorder
- Increase the consistency and quality of alcohol awareness for all ages
- Develop key health initiatives and commission alcohol treatment
- Develop a balanced sustainable leisure economy for the benefit of all ages
- Reduce young people’s demand and supply of alcohol and its associated harms

This strategy is now due for renewal, and that gives us an opportunity to move forward faster.

Evidence of green shoots and good practice

New actions which have been carried out as part of this strategy include:

- A campaign to raise awareness of the safe drinking levels
- A wide range of organisations coming together including the police and ambulance services to keep our City and town centres safer at night time (the Nightsafe partnerships)
- Joining up work between the public health department and the John Radcliffe A and E Dept to follow up people with alcohol related injuries with the aim of reducing alcohol intake.
- Checks on shops selling alcohol to underage drinkers leading to successful prosecutions and greater awareness.
- A special theatre production for schools aimed at raising awareness of alcohol problems and limits called Last Orders.
- Brief Advice training for schools and Health Trainers (people working in the community to offer help on health issues to those who are the hardest to reach) so they are confident to raise the issue of drinking.
- A new alcohol treatment service procured by DAAT as mentioned above.
- Revising the Children and Young Peoples’ Plan to include better action plans which will bring more joined up action from a range of organisations
- Carrying out the Oxfordshire Voice Survey of alcohol consumption and attitudes showing that levels of awareness are quite high.

What should we do next?

The direction of travel on tackling alcohol issues is good and we need to build on this success. The focus of this work, our understanding of the issues and the delivery of initiatives have increased enormously in the last few years. From a position where tackling alcohol related harm was not “owned” by anyone we now have a shared vision and a plan which is being implemented by several partners. The Alcohol Strategy has brought people together and given leadership to this issue.

OPINION: A good start has been made to tackle alcohol issues in this county. Given the size of the threat posed, this topic should be given a higher priority in the County. The preparation of a revised County alcohol strategy is an opportunity to do this which should be seized.

How do we get there?

We have to be realistic. Some of the actions needed to change attitudes and behaviour in connection with alcohol have to be carried out at a national level. Campaigns, information and regulation are important. The debate will continue on whether the Government should set a minimum price for a unit of alcohol and many would say that tax is already high, but it is undeniable that price does have an influence on consumption.

We have to shift the emphasis to prevention and give people the right information to help them take responsibility for their health. It is only changes in individual behaviour that will lead to reductions in overall consumption and this disease.

We have to use 'brief advice'. Many professionals could take the opportunity to raise the issue of alcohol consumption and give brief advice if required. There is good evidence that this works. Early detection and increased awareness are the best tools in the prevention agenda. The role of GPs and primary care are crucial in this. This work should be stepped up and made consistent across the county.

Recommendation

The revision of the Alcohol Strategy in the next year will give a great opportunity for a further step-change. We need a strong strategy which should include the following key elements by March 2011.

1. Powerful and far reaching information about the potentially toxic effects of alcohol to health, community safety and family life that make it a personal issue for all of us.
2. Further reductions in alcohol related crime and disorder in our towns and City with targeted approaches and a firm resolve to enforce action against premises and people causing problems. This is a lead area for Nightsafe partnerships around the county who should continue to develop their role.
3. Joined up and effective advice and treatment services are needed, including in primary care. The NHS and Drug and Alcohol Action Team should work together to commission prevention and treatment services proportionate to the size of the issue.
4. Involvement of young people is essential in devising and rolling out campaigns and activities to tackle the youth drinking culture. This will need to be part of the planning carried out by the Children's Trust.
5. Enforcement of the law to prevent sales of alcohol to under 18s (or people buying it for them). Trading Standards and the Police Licensing Officers can work together to ensure consistent coverage on this issue across the county.
6. A comprehensive set of process and outcome measures should be set monitored and reported regularly so that the impact of this step change can be seen. This responsibility should fall to the Alcohol Strategy Group who should make sure their results are reported to the Health and Wellbeing Partnership and the Children's Trust as well as to the Community Safety Partnership
7. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee should consider scrutinising progress made as part of their work plan for 2011/12.

Alcohol: a note on terms used

Looking closely at the subject of Alcohol requires some special jargon. The key terms are defined in this box.

Unit

In the UK, alcoholic drinks are measured in units (10 millilitres (ml) of alcohol.) One unit of alcohol is about half a pint of ordinary strength beer, lager, or cider (3-4% alcohol by volume), or a small pub measure (25ml) of spirits (40% alcohol by volume). There are 1½ units of alcohol in a small glass (125ml) of ordinary strength wine (12% alcohol by volume). There is substantial variation in the measures used in bars and restaurants and measures poured in the home tend to be larger.

Recommended drinking guidelines

In the UK, it is recommended that men should not regularly drink more than three to four units per day, and women should not regularly drink more than two to three units per day. In terms of weekly limits, men are advised to drink no more than 21 units per week and women no more than 14 units per week i.e.:

- **for men**, an **average** per day of 1½ pints of beer, 3 shorts of spirits or 2 **small** glasses of wine
- **for women** an **average** per day of 1⅓ **small** glasses of wine, 2 shorts of spirits or 1 pint of beer

Harmful drinking: drinking that causes harm

Harmful drinking is a pattern of alcohol use that causes damage to physical and/or mental health. Harmful use commonly has adverse social consequences.

Hazardous drinking: drinking that puts the individual at risk of future harm

Hazardous drinking is a pattern of alcohol use that increases the risk of harmful consequences for the individual. In contrast to harmful drinking, hazardous drinking is of public health significance despite the absence of any current disorder in the individual use as it is likely to lead to future problems.

Heavy drinking: drinking in excess of what is considered moderate

A pattern of drinking that exceeds some standard of moderate drinking. In the UK, heavy drinking is defined as consuming eight or more units for men and six or more units for women on at least one day in the week.

Binge Drinking: heavy drinking in one session

Binge drinking is defined as drinking at twice the recommended levels or more in one session. This would be 8 or more units for men and 6 or more units for women in one go.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to colleagues across the County for their generosity of time and talents in the preparation of this report

Angela Baker
Dawn Beechey
Jean Bradlow
Alison Burton
Paul Cann
Stephen Capaldi
Tim Chapman
James Clark
Jim Couchman
Julie Dandridge
Ian Davis
Ruth Fenning
Shakiba Habibula
Anna Hinton
Fred Hucker
John Jackson
Huw Jones
Juliet Long
Noel McCarthy
Val Messenger
Sonia Mills
Keith Mitchell
Catherine Mountford
Ronan O'Connor
Brendan O'Dowda
Jan Paine
John Parry
Tom Porter
Stephen Richards
Geoff Rowbotham
Sue Scane
Joanna Simons
Paul Smith
Meera Spillett
Matthew Tait
Patrick Taylor
Fenella Trevillion
Alan Webb
Jackie Wilderspin

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Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee

8 November 2010

Community Self Help: Update

In July this Committee conducted a select committee investigation into community pride/self help and put forward a number of recommendations.

These were considered by the County Council Management Team (CCMT) on 28 July.

The intention was to produce a draft strategy by the end of September 2010 for Scrutiny to consider in November. The extra work caused by preparing for the impact of government cuts to budgets has meant that it has been delayed until January – due to these pressures on capacity partners were unable to meet as early as we would have wished.

However, the following progress has been made:

Overall there is consensus about priorities for community self-help: reducing barriers to volunteering, improving access to advice and support (including simpler access to grants), and supporting community development where possible.

On 23 September the County Council led a meeting about community self-help with district council colleagues and the Director of Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) and agreed that the local authorities will work together and agree a combined approach to community grants, future funding of voluntary sector infrastructure development organisations, and the funding of advice services.

On 4 October John Jackson (Director for Social & Community Services) and Stephen Capaldi (Assistant Chief Executive – Strategy) attended the Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance (OSCA) meeting (the county-wide voluntary and community sector partnership) to discuss the likely impacts of the Government's spending review for the county council and the voluntary sector.

OSCA organised the following meetings in October which we attended to discuss:

- Preparing for change – discussing cuts and options for rationalisation in the voluntary sector.
- Big Society – practical solutions, developing self help priorities.

In summary, we are waiting for the Council's Revenue Support Grant/ financial settlement from the Government at the end of November before we can fully understand the impacts for our services and the voluntary sector. In the meantime we have set the scene about the importance of community self-

help with district councils and voluntary sector colleagues and agreed some priorities to work on together.

Paul James
Head of Partnership Working
Chief Executive's Office
27 October 2010

Tel: (01865) 323959

Division(s): All

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 8 NOVEMBER 2010

OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW OF OXFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE 2010

Report by Chief Fire Officer

Introduction

1. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) has undergone an operational peer assessment overseen by the Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA) and led by the Chief Fire Officer of Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, Des Tidbury. He was supported by a group of experienced individuals ranging from elected members to local government and development review staff (formerly the IDeA). Following the removal of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) process, this report is likely to be the most authoritative independent review of the Service for a prolonged period.
2. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) requested an Operational Assessment Peer Review. The current performance framework for the fire and rescue sector has a strong focus on within-sector peer review and the development of the Operational Assessment Peer Review was key to establishing these arrangements.
3. The Fire Services Management Committee of the Local Government Association approved a partnership approach between the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) and Local Government (LG) Improvement and Development that includes developing the already established LG Improvement and Development local government peer review process to fully meet the fire and rescue sector's requirements.
4. The peer review process is designed to help a fire and rescue service (FRS) assess its current achievements and its capacity to change. It aims to help a FRS identify its current strengths, as much as what it needs to improve.
5. With the abolition of the CAA process, it is not yet known how these arrangements will evolve. As a result, this report is likely to be the most authoritative independent review of the service for a prolonged period. The Service is supporting the continuation of the process and has two trained peer assessors who have undertaken reviews in their services.
6. The basis for this review is the toolkit for operational assessment. The key lines of enquiry (KLOE) are:
 - Community risk management
 - Prevention
 - Protection

- Response
 - Health and safety
 - Training and development
 - Call management and incident support.
7. The overarching outcome statement is that OFRS is providing a good, low cost, effective service and is striving to continuously improve. The report identifies that the Service has made the most of being an integral part of the county council and is well led, with staff having pride and feeling valued. The review team were particularly impressed with the positive culture and the “can do” attitude of the Service. Specific positive comment was made of the Service’s involvement in the Safeguarding agenda.
8. The strong support from the Chief Executive, CCMT and politicians was noted, along with a widespread organisational awareness and commitment to the 365 Alive vision.

Summary of Report

9. Several areas were commended and work is underway for “areas of notable practice” to be provided to local government and development review for sharing with other Services. These include:
- progress on equality and diversity;
 - preparations for the transfer of the current call receipt and mobilising function to a regional entity; and
 - the Service’s performance management framework.
10. The review commended the service for operating at low cost and maximising resources, whilst continuing to provide a high performing service. It has been praised for making efficiency savings that have not impacted on service levels.
11. The reviewers were impressed by the 365 Alive programme, which is a ten year initiative aiming to:
- reduce serious injury road traffic collision numbers by 10%
 - reduce non-domestic fires by 15%
 - reduce domestic fires by 20%
 - deliver a safety message to 840,000 young people and adults
 - achieve savings of £100,000,000 for Oxfordshire.
12. The review says this innovative programme is on target and demonstrates a strong commitment to community wellbeing.
13. Oxfordshire was the first Fire and Rescue Service in the country to receive the Customer Service Excellence Award in March 2009, and was nominated for 'Brigade of the Year' at this year's national Spirit of Fire awards. Hook Norton Fire Station won the Fire Station of the year award.

14. The Fire and Rescue Service has been praised for working well within Oxfordshire County Council, making good use of resources, whilst developing effective internal partnerships. This Council's Chief Executive described the service as a seamless part of the council which acted as its "ambassador".
15. Road safety is a priority of the Fire and Rescue Service, and one of many successful partnerships has resulted in the 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive' campaign. The Fire and Rescue Service has been involved in the Thames Valley Police Road Safety Partnership, working with the Driving Standards Agency and the county council's Road Safety Team. This work has contributed to a reduction in road traffic fatalities from 68 in 2006, to 28 in 2009.
16. Two key issues were highlighted as areas requiring active management. These are:
 - **High turnover of senior officers** – The review team reported a high level of projected turnover of senior officers in the next 18 months. As noted by the team, this is being well managed by the Strategic Leadership Team, with good succession planning arrangements in place. Since the review, approximately half of the projected retirees have left the Service and new appointments have been made, inducted and are now performing strongly in their new roles.
 - **Ongoing resilience of the Retained Duty System (RDS)** – This area is being progressively addressed through the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) supported appointment of Wholetime Watch Managers to Retained stations over the next two years. Effective monitoring and reporting arrangements are in place to assess the impact of these officers.

Key Recommendations

17. Key recommendations have been made based on each of the "Key Lines of Enquiry." The most significant of these are identified below:
 1. Make further arrangements to monitor the capacity of the workforce so that it does not reach the point of overstretch¹;
 2. Build on the firm platform of equality and diversity to embed this in all aspects of the organisation and direct specific activities to vulnerable at risk groups in the community;
 3. Make more extensive use of OFRS, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and partner agency data systems, using risk profiling to target themed community safety initiatives in geographical areas ;

¹ This area has been reinforced by the outcomes of the recent OCC staff survey and is being addressed by the OFRS action plan.

4. Develop the current response strategy with reference to targeting increased protection activities for those areas with known longer response times;
5. Use the Watch Manager deployment at Retained stations to address local community safety initiatives;
6. Continue work to improve Retained Duty System staff resilience and competence.

Financial and Staff Implications

18. Many of the above issues are challenging, particularly sustaining the RDS. The increasing focus on localities, use of data to identify and target at risk groups and the opportunities created by closer working with Social and Community Services are all areas that will assist in responding to the challenge.
19. An overarching action plan will be developed and actively discharged to address the report's key recommendations. Several items already feature in this year's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. **The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report and task the Chief Fire Officer to deliver an action plan to close out the key recommendations.**

DAVID ETHERIDGE
Chief Fire Officer

Background Papers: Operational Assessment Peer Review Report for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service 2010 (available from Members' Resource Centre or contact the Chief Fire Officer).

Contact Officer: David Etheridge, Chief Fire Officer Tel: (01865) 855205

October 2010

Division(s): All

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 8 NOVEMBER 2010

OXFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE – RESPONSE STANDARDS PERFORMANCE 2009/10

Report by Chief Fire Officer

Introduction

1. Since April 2005 Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) has had local Response Standards for attending emergency incidents in the county. The Cabinet approved these standards on 22 June 2006 (see Refer CA11). Additionally, the Chief Fire Officer was required to report annually on the F&RS's performance against these standards and bring forward any recommendations as appropriate for future improvements, particularly to address life-threatening situations. This report fulfils that requirement.

Response Standards

2. Local Response Standards are based on the historical location and status of our current fire stations and are used as a basis for improvement planning in the future. The Standards provide a common performance target across the county based on risk and acknowledging that fire deaths and casualty reduction is a national performance target which will drive future improvement options. The standards are as follows:
 - 80% of all emergency incidents will be responded to within 11 minutes
 - 95% of all emergency incidents will be responded to within 14 minutes.
3. The above is measured by the time it takes to get the first fire appliance to the scene from the time at which the fire station is first alerted.
4. In addition to the Response Standards for the first attending appliance, the Fire and Rescue Service will despatch a sufficient number of vehicles and personnel to safely and effectively deal with the type of incident reported, as determined by national and local risk assessments.
5. OFRS attends a wide variety of incidents and not all are emergencies. Therefore, it is necessary to categorise incidents to enable improvement plans to concentrate on the highest priority areas. All Incident Commanders classify incidents they attend into one of three categories:
 - (a) Life threatening emergency
 - (b) Serious, but non-life threatening emergency
 - (c) Damage to property/heritage/environment.

6. Our operational effectiveness is measured against these three categories (a, b and c), which all require an emergency response.

2009/10 Performance – Response Standards - Monthly Summary

(Further geographical breakdown and specific commentary is detailed in Appendix 1)

	Incidents in scope	No in 11 mins	% in 11 mins	No in 14 mins	% in 14 mins
Apr-09	289	242	83.7%	275	95.2%
May-09	282	227	80.5%	258	91.5%
Jun-09	305	239	78.4%	283	92.8%
Jul-09	340	269	79.1%	316	93.0%
Aug-09	300	246	82.0%	281	93.7%
Sep-09	304	238	78.3%	288	94.7%
Oct-09	333	266	79.9%	305	91.6%
Nov-09	270	202	74.8%	244	90.4%
Dec-09	255	190	74.5%	233	91.4%
Jan-10	303	212	70.0%	259	85.5%
Feb-10	235	180	76.6%	213	90.6%
Mar-10	272	210	77.2%	256	94.1%
Totals for year 2009/10	3488	2721	78.0%	3211	92.1%
Totals for Year 2008/9	3605	2852	79.1%	3318	92.0%
Target Figures			80.0%		95.0%

7. There are a number of general factors that have affected our performance against these targets:

Weather:

8. In January 2010 the response figures were affected by the heavy snowfall for three weeks and poor weather conditions at various times. This is marginal in terms of overall percentages for the year, but still had an effect on our emergency response times across the county.

Traffic Management:

9. The ongoing traffic measures put in place in a number of towns and villages have had a significant affect on attendance times. A case in point is the new one way system in Henley which both hampers arrival of personnel to the station and then their travel to any incident on the South/East side of the town.

Motorway:

10. On the Motorway and to a lesser extent the A34, there are some long travel distances between junctions (e.g. J11 to 12 – Banbury to Gaydon, J9 to 8A – Bicester to Thame, A34 – Southbound towards Newbury.) For some incidents it is necessary to traverse the whole section between two junctions and then return to get to the incident (e.g. an incident between J9 and 10 or J11 and 12.) The result is that some of the incidents are physically impossible to reach within the allocated target times. This also applies to a number of the remote areas within the County such as the Downs around Faringdon and Wantage and the villages on the County border with Berkshire in the Henley area (e.g. Sonning Common etc.)

Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

11. Community Safety activities are targeted in areas known to be outside the 14 minute attendance times. Every 'failure' against the standards is analysed by the relevant Station Manager, who then reports this to their Fire Risk Manager (FRM) and, where possible, appropriate action is taken. The performance management of response times is monitored and viewed weekly by Fire Risk Managers on our Scorecard performance management system.
12. The Senior Leadership Team receives a quarterly performance review against the response standards. Where there are discrepancies, further detail is sought of the action taken or justification for delays in attendance.
13. The Response Standards remain stretching, with the slight increase in attendance times for 2009/10 reflecting the National Trend*. OFRS, through effective management, aims to achieve the most effective possible response, whilst ensuring the safety of both crews and other road users.
14. *Attendance times are increasing as traffic volumes increase and traffic management systems become more widespread. The new 20mph speed restrictions within Oxford are monitored regularly to ensure that they do not have a direct effect on the speed of response of retained personnel to Rewley Road and Slade Fire Stations and in accordance with national guidance will reduce attendance speeds from 50mph to 40mph (it is recognised that emergency vehicles exercising due care and attention may proceed to incidents at a speed 20mph above the posted speed limit).

DAVID ETHERIDGE
Chief Fire Officer

Background Papers: Nil

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Tel: (01865) 852171

October 2010

Breakdown of response standards by district, area and station and associated graphical information

Oxfordshire Response Standards for 2009-2010

Response Standards by Fire Risk Area					
April 2009 - March 2010					
Area	Incidents in Scope	Number in 11 minutes	% in 11 minutes	Number in 14 minutes	% in 14 minutes
Oxfordshire	3488	2721	78.0%	3211	92.1%
City	1320	1237	93.7%	1304	98.8%
West/Cherwell	1151	835	72.6%	1039	90.3%
South/Vale	1017	649	63.8%	868	85.4%

Response Standards by District					
April 2009 - March 2010					
Area	Incidents in Scope	Number in 11 minutes	% in 11 minutes	Number in 14 minutes	% in 14 minutes
City	1220	1181	96.8%	1215	95.6%
West	485	327	67.4%	451	93.0%
Cherwell	766	564	73.6%	677	88.4%
South	692	435	62.9%	581	84.0%
Vale	325	214	65.9%	287	88.3%

Response Standards by Station					
April 2009 - March 2010					
Station	Incidents in Scope	Number in 11 minutes	% in 11 minutes	Number in 14 minutes	% in 14 minutes
Abingdon	157	115	73.25%	147	93.63%
Bampton	47	30	63.83%	44	93.62%
Banbury	356	319	89.61%	344	96.63%
Bicester	244	122	50.00%	179	73.36%
Burford	23	8	34.78%	20	86.96%
Charlbury	37	25	67.57%	30	81.08%
Chipping Norton	54	37	68.52%	52	96.30%
Deddington	32	13	40.63%	24	75.00%
Didcot	234	202	86.32%	222	94.87%
Eynsham	72	38	52.78%	65	90.28%
Faringdon	94	51	54.26%	72	76.60%
Goring	30	8	26.67%	19	63.33%
Henley	130	65	50.00%	94	72.31%
Hook Norton	30	23	76.67%	29	96.67%
Kidlington	104	87	83.65%	101	97.12%
Rewley Rd	569	555	97.54%	565	99.30%
Slade	651	626	96.16%	650	99.85%
Thame	56	40	71.43%	51	91.07%
Wallingford	115	66	57.39%	101	87.83%
Wantage	74	48	64.86%	68	91.89%
Watlington	62	29	46.77%	50	80.65%
Wheatley	65	25	38.46%	44	67.69%
Witney	224	171	76.34%	216	96.43%
Woodstock	28	18	64.29%	24	85.71%
Totals	3488	2721	78.01%	3211	92.06%

Narrative Relating to specific Stations (stations chosen on the basis of poor performance and/or no improvement in 209/10 over the preceding year):

Bicester

1. 2008/9 figures were 64% (11 mins) and 83% (14 mins)
2. 2009/10 figures were 50% (11 mins) and 73% (14 mins).

Bicester has historically had longer attendance times in comparison with other Oxfordshire Fire Stations. This is in part due to the extended travel distances when responding to the M40 and more remote rural areas (e.g. Finmere.) Any increase in calls to the motorway or remote rural areas can distort the attendance times as these are areas that cannot be reached within the 11 and 14 minute attendance times.

During peak periods, traffic congestion in the Bicester area has extended the turn in time for retained personnel (when they are required to comply with the full requirements of the Road Traffic Act). The responding crew then has to negotiate the traffic congestion to reach its destination. Congestion in Bicester is, according to staff reports, of increasing significance, with specific comments often made in relation to the congestion connected with the large volume of traffic to and from retail premises located at the edge of town. Reduction in this congestion would enhance Fire Service response performance.

Burford

1. 2008/9 figures were 64% (11 mins) and 76% (14 mins)
2. 2009/10 figures were 34% (11 mins) and 86% (14 mins).

For 2009-2010 of the 23 incidents that were in scope, 11 of these were in a “yellow*” area (11-14 minutes) and one of these was in a “red area*” (more than 14 minutes), so we would not expect them to reach these within 11 minutes. This would mean that we would expect them to reach the remaining 11 incidents within 11 minutes. Burford managed to reach eight of these within 11 minutes, leaving three incidents that they didn't.

We had to extend their turnout time to eight minutes approximately one year ago due to temporary crewing difficulties when one firefighter badly injured his leg in a motorcycle accident, and another did not achieve the necessary competencies in incident command. Thus, we were relying on firefighters responding to the station from further away.

We are dealing with small numbers of incidents at Burford; therefore, minor changes have a greater overall affect on the percentages.

** Response times are mapped for Oxfordshire and colour coded accordingly. For green areas we aim to respond in 11 minutes, yellow areas in 11 -14 minutes and remote rural areas are classified as red, with a response time of >14 minutes.*

It is pleasing to note that Burford have actually improved their response standards for attending within 14 minutes from 76% in 2009-09 to 86% in 2009-10. It is also worth adding that for this year (2010/11) to date, Burford have achieved attendance times of 78% of their emergencies in 11 minutes and 89% in 14 minutes. Thus, indicating that the figures for 2009/10 were a short-term issue rather than a trend.

Goring

1. 2008/9 figures were 34% (11 mins) and 47% (14 mins)
2. 2009/10 figures were 26% (11 mins) and 63% (14 mins).

The geographical area covered by Goring is largely classified as yellow or red areas; therefore, in many cases they cannot achieve a sub 11 minute attendance time to calls. However, it is pleasing to note a 16% improvement in their ability to respond to incidents within 14 minutes when compared to the preceding year.

Wheatley

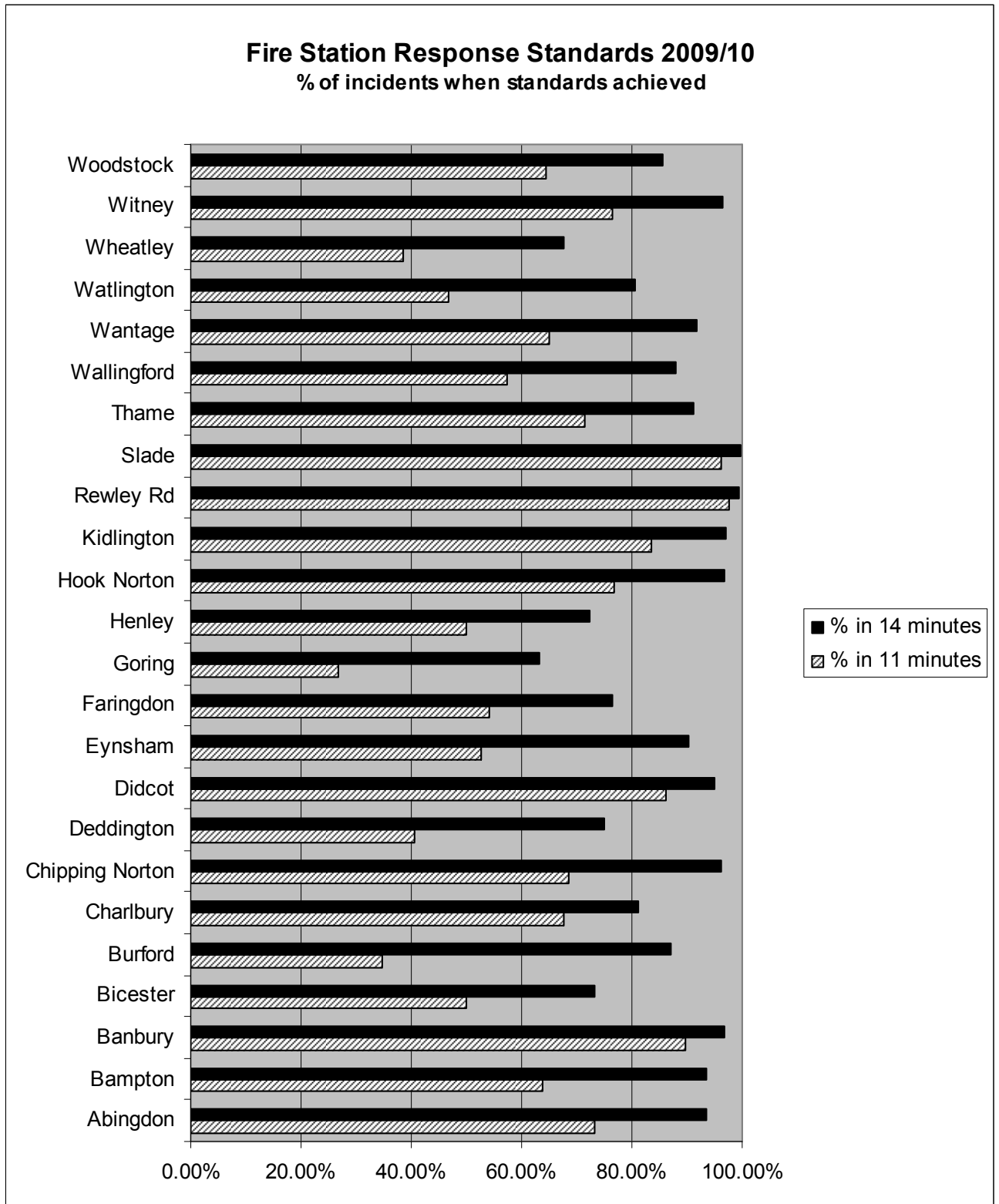
1. 2008/9 figures were 41% (11 mins) and 76% (14 mins)
2. 2009/10 figures were 38% (11 mins) and 67% (14 mins).

This is a small change since 2008/9. Wheatley, like Bicester, responds to the M40 and, therefore, has extended travel distances. Any increase in calls to the motorway can distort the attendance times as there are areas that cannot be reached within the 11 and 14 minute attendance times.

General

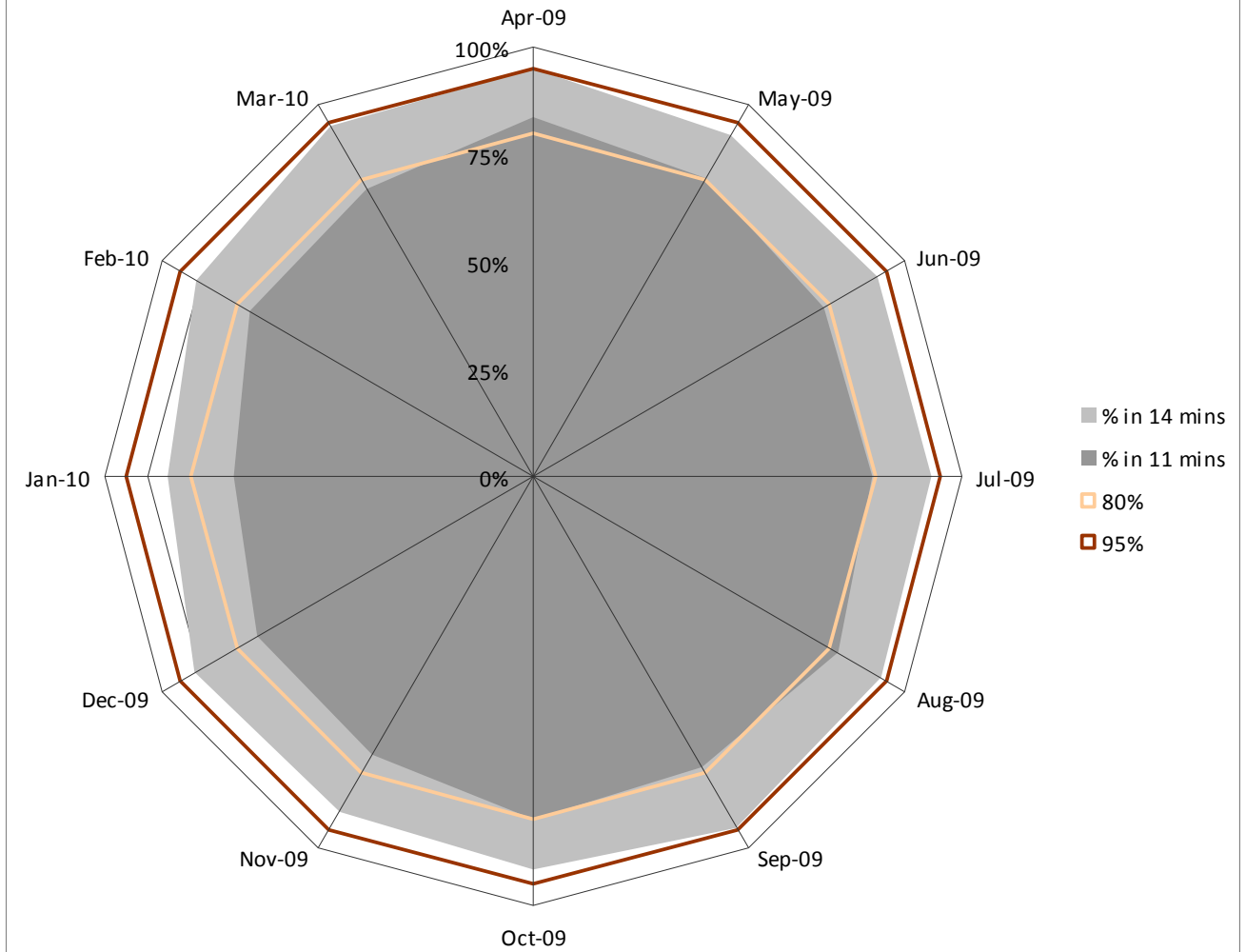
The management recognises that overall performance for the 11 minute target has declined and continues to address this both locally and strategically. The Cabinet endorsed programme of providing dedicated watch managers for selected stations is already having a positive effect on station availability and it is anticipated that this will generally improve response standards.

Response Standards Graphical Information



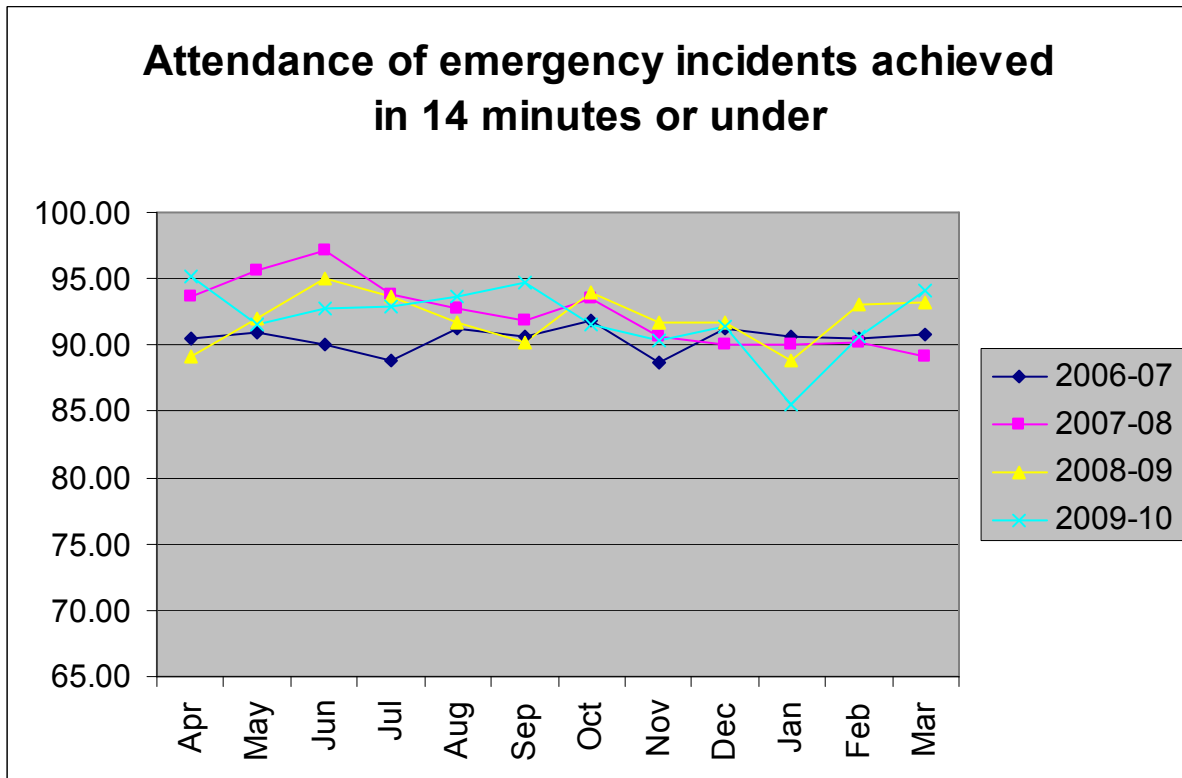
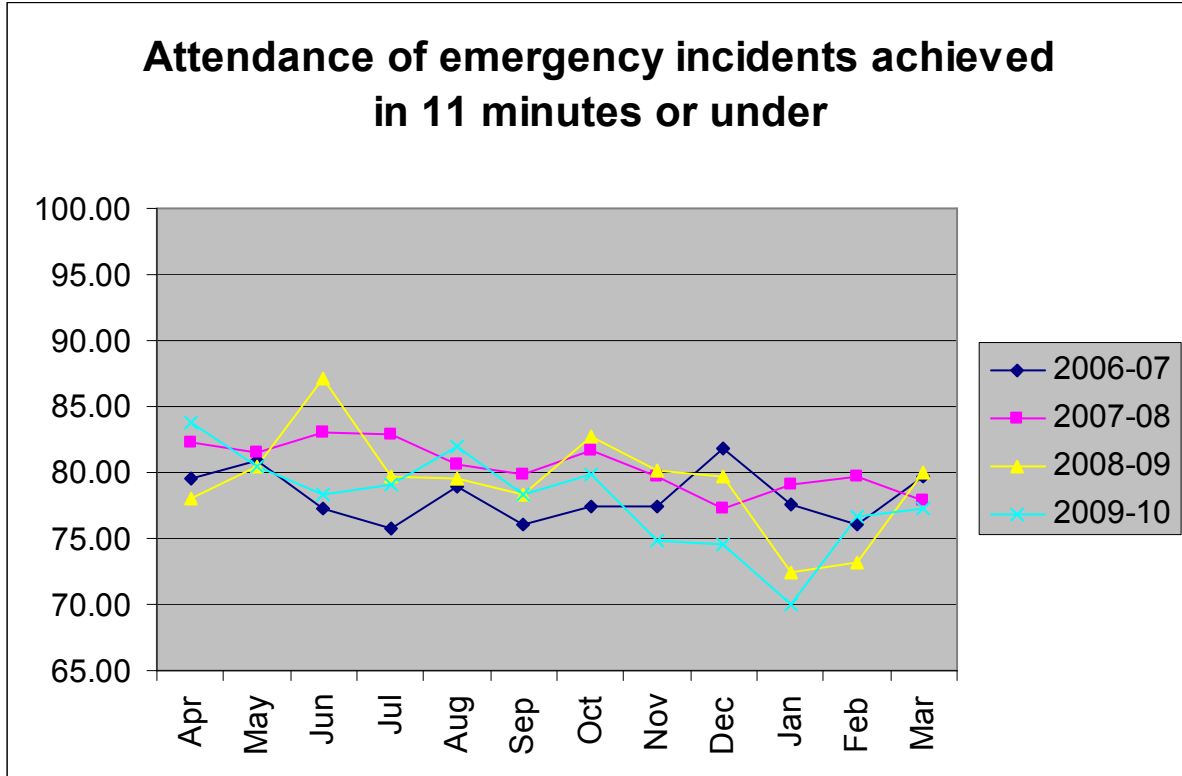
Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Response Standards

Monthly Performance against Response Standards 2009/10



Response Standards – Historical Data 2006 to 2010

Line graphs showing response performance for the previous four years. The apparent downturn in performance across the financial year may be due to seasonal variation.



Oxfordshire Response Standards for 2008-2009

Response Standards by District

April 2008 - March 2009

Area	Incidents in Scope	Number in 11 minutes	% in 11 minutes	Number in 14 minutes	% in 14 minutes
City	1342	1286	95.8%	1330	99.1%
West	359	256	71.3%	331	92.2%
Cherwell	783	596	76.1%	706	90.2%
South	765	470	61.4%	637	83.3%
Vale	356	244	68.5%	314	88.2%

Response Standards by Station

April 2008 - March 2009

Stn No. and Station	Incidents in Scope	Number in 11 minutes	% in 11 minutes	Number in 14 minutes	% in 14 minutes
1.Banbury	344	312	90.70%	330	95.93%
2.Hook Norton	28	20	71.43%	26	92.86%
3. Chipping Norton	77	56	72.72%	70	90.91%
4.Charlbury	23	12	52.17%	22	95.65%
5.Woodstock	35	20	57.14%	28	80.00%
6.Kidlington	110	82	74.55%	105	95.45%
7.Bicester	238	153	64.29%	198	83.19%
8.Deddington	28	9	32.14%	19	67.86%
9.Eynsham	58	40	68.97%	55	94.83%
10.Witney	132	107	81.06%	125	94.70%
11.Burford	25	16	64.00%	19	76.00%
12.Bampton	44	25	56.82%	40	90.91%
21.Rewley Rd	539	527	97.77%	536	99.44%
22.Abingdon	180	135	75.00%	170	94.44%
23.Faringdon	95	57	60.00%	79	83.16%
24.Wantage	81	52	64.20%	65	80.24%
25.Goring	38	13	34.21%	18	47.37%
26.Henley	124	58	46.77%	81	65.32%
27.Thame	69	55	79.71%	66	95.65%
28.Wheatley	65	27	41.54%	50	76.92%
29.Watlington	103	53	51.46%	83	80.58%
30.Slade	803	759	94.52%	794	98.88%
31.Wallingford	94	45	47.87%	81	86.17%
32.Didcot	272	219	80.51%	258	94.85%
Totals	3605	2852	79.11%	3318	92.04%

Division(s): All

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 8 NOVEMBER 2010

OXFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY DRAFT INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN 2011-12 (IRMP)

Report by Chief Fire Officer

Introduction

1. This report proposes a number of projects to be included within the Fire & Rescue Authority's Integrated Risk Management Action Plan (IRMP) for the fiscal year 2011-12. The proposals summarise areas where the Service's Senior Leadership Team believe service improvements may be achieved. To meet the requirements of the IRMP process, each proposal is supported by robust evidence, validating both their inclusion and their contribution to improved community engagement and community/firefighter safety. Similarly, each proposal recognises the prevailing economic constraints.
2. These proposals, which will be amended as necessary following the public consultation process, and subsequently approved by the Cabinet, will be adopted in the final version of the IRMP Action Plan 2011-12. The projects will be monitored through established performance management systems, reviewed every quarter and reported to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety (currently Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities).
3. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 received Royal Assent on 22 July 2004. Part 3, Chapter 21 of this legislation requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework to which Fire Authorities must have regard when discharging their functions.
4. The Secretary of State initially published the latest Fire and Rescue National Framework in May 2008. The purpose of the Framework was to provide strategic direction from central government whilst ensuring that authorities continue to make local decisions. The Framework set out the government's objectives for the Fire and Rescue Service and what fire and rescue authorities should do to achieve these objectives. More recently, Ministers have stated that the 2008/11 National Framework remains in force, but the Minister responsible for Fire and Rescue matters no longer expects to enforce the following aspects of it: regional management boards, equality and diversity, workforce development and asset management. The Minister made clear that the use of Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) will continue to determine the need for and allocation of local fire prevention, protection and response resource to allow local decisions to be made by practitioners and elected members on the basis of locally assessed risks and circumstances.

5. The 2008-11 Fire and Rescue National Framework requires each Fire and Rescue Authority to produce a publicly available IRMP covering at least a three-year time span which:
 - is regularly reviewed and revised and reflects up-to-date risk information and evaluation of service delivery outcomes;
 - has regard to the risk analyses completed by Local and Regional Resilience Forums including those reported in external Community Risk Registers (CRRs) and internal risk registers, to ensure that civil and terrorist contingencies are captured in their IRMP;
 - reflects effective consultation during its development and at all review stages with representatives of all sections of the community and stakeholders;
 - demonstrates how prevention, protection and response activities will be best used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities in a cost effective way;
 - provides details of how Fire and Rescue Authorities deliver their objectives and meet the needs of communities through working with partners;
 - has undergone an effective equality impact assessment process.
6. Fire and Rescue Authorities should review the effectiveness of 'cross-border' integration arrangements with neighbouring authorities and set these out appropriately in their IRMPs.
7. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority published its strategic IRMP in April 2008 providing the strategic direction for the next five years. This document is subjected to annual review and updated and amended as required. The current strategic IRMP requires no amendment for the fiscal year 2011-12 and will be refreshed as a new five year strategic document for the fiscal year 2013-14.
8. The projects that have been proposed for the action plan 2011-12 will be subject to consultation for 12 weeks starting on 15 November 2010. During this period, Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority will consult with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, partner organisations such as the Highways Agency and the Environment Agency, the Fire Brigades Union, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue staff (uniformed and non-uniformed) and members of the public.
9. The Senior Management from Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service will respond to the comments made during the consultation period and the responses will be made available to the Cabinet in the final report in 2011 and published on the internet for public access.
10. The following list summarises the projects for inclusion in the IRMP Action Plan for the fiscal year 2011-12:

- **Project 1: To permanently remove the 2nd appliance from Faringdon from the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) fleet.***

Responsible Officer – Service Delivery Manager

**Originally in 2007/08 IRMP – Project 6 Fire Cover Resilience: Review of the second fire engine availability at Faringdon. Appliance was removed from Faringdon in April 2009.*

Objective: To permanently remove the 2nd Fire Appliance from Faringdon from Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service fleet, reducing the fire appliance fleet provided by OFRS from 35 to 34.

- **Project 2: To complete the review and commence implementation of the outcome of Project 2 from the 2010/11 IRMP - Special Appliance review, including aerial rescue appliances and specialist rescue capability*.**

Responsible Officer – Emergency Response Manager

** Where the outcomes of the review will require further consultation, these will be included in the 2012/13 IRMP. Those areas that can be implemented within normal managerial delegation will be acted upon as appropriate.*

Objective: To review the specialist appliances within Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, looking in particular at locations and crewing arrangements. Identifying and delivering ongoing effective working arrangements with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services under revised mutual agreements to secure the effective provision of specialist appliances.

- **Project 3: To review and further extend existing Safeguarding measures throughout OFRS.**

Responsible Officer – Risk Reduction Manager

Objective: For all Fire and Rescue Service individuals and functions working with and/or having contact with adults/children who are at particular risk of harm as a result of abuse or neglect, to be able to identify at risk individuals, then work in partnership within a multi-agency framework to secure the wellbeing, security and safety of the vulnerable person.

- **Project 4: To develop and implement a strategy to ensure that protection and prevention activities are targeted at those personnel and properties most at risk from fire, particularly in locations remote from early Fire Service intervention in the event of an emergency.**

Responsible Officer – Risk Reduction Manager

Objective: To ensure that resources are dedicated to protecting remote communities, working with the local community on self-help projects to support vulnerable people through the training of Community Fire Safety Advocates.

- **Project 5: To develop the role of Retained Station Support Officers to work as local community advocates to be fully involved in developing and supporting local initiatives in conjunction with local people, delivering the county council’s localities agenda through engagement with youth services, education, and healthcare providers.**

Responsible Officer – Service Delivery Performance Manager

Objective: To use a recognised and trusted role model to assist in delivering local initiatives on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and other interested parties for the good of the local community.

- **Project 6: In light of the Oxfordshire County Council Business Strategy and the emerging financial situation, continue the 2010/11 IRMP project 6* – (“Review the current provision of Fire Appliances to ensure operational resilience and value for money”) to ensure continued cost effective, resilient service provision*.**

Responsible Officers – Service Delivery Manager

**Is not likely to be concluded in 2010/11 due to changes in national priorities – continuation for 2011/12.*

Objective: To review the current provision of fire appliances to ensure operational resilience and value for money.

Financial and Staff Implications

11. Each project will fully recognise the prevailing economic constraints, delivering efficiencies or allowing existing/additional services to be delivered more effectively.

RECOMMENDATION

12. **The Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) note the proposed projects to be included for consultation in the draft IRMP Action Plan 2011-12;**
 - (b) conduct a brief debate, with a view to putting forward a response to the consultation in due course;**
 - (c) encourage other members to take part in the consultation process.**

DAVID ETHERIDGE
Chief Fire Officer

Background papers: National Framework document for the Fire and Rescue Service
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority Integrated Risk Management Plan 2008-12
The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11.

Contact Officer: Nigel Wilson, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Tel: (01865) 855206

October 2010

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OXFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

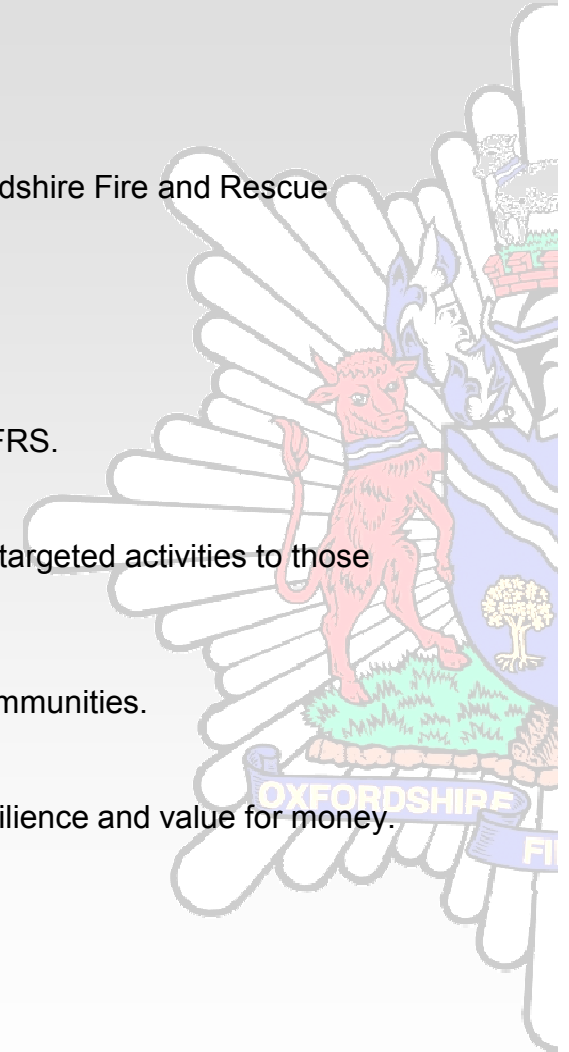
ACTION PLAN 2011-12

INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN



Contents

- [Foreword](#)
- [What the action plan will achieve](#)
- [The projects](#)
 - [Project 1:](#)
 - Permanent removal of the 2nd appliance from Faringdon from the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) fleet.
 - [Project 2:](#)
 - Implementation of the specialist appliance review of 2010/11.
 - [Project 3:](#)
 - To review and adopt appropriate Safeguarding measures throughout OFRS.
 - [Project 4:](#)
 - To design and implement a protection and prevention strategy enabling targeted activities to those most at risk.
 - [Project 5:](#)
 - To enhance the role of Retained Station Support Officers within their communities.
 - [Project 6:](#)
 - Review the current provision of fire appliances to ensure operational resilience and value for money.
- [Summary](#)
- [Consultation process](#)





Foreword by Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities, and Chief Fire Officer David Etheridge on behalf of the Fire Authority.

'Oxfordshire Fire Authority are pleased to introduce their action plan for 2011-12. The plan forms part of our integrated approach to mitigate risk within Oxfordshire through prevention, protection and intervention strategies.

Our main aims are to save lives, prevent damage to property and protect the environment, whilst making the most effective use of our resources.

The projects contained within this action plan will ensure that Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service continues to be proficient, cost-effective and resilient through the challenging times ahead.

We have worked diligently to foster partnerships to benefit the community - particularly the most vulnerable - and work closely with neighbouring fire services to deliver training and operational responses to incidents.

We recognise that we have wider responsibilities and opportunities to make people safer. Therefore, the assistance of stakeholders such as businesses, voluntary groups other agencies will be crucial in helping us to support the most vulnerable and hardest to reach members of the community.

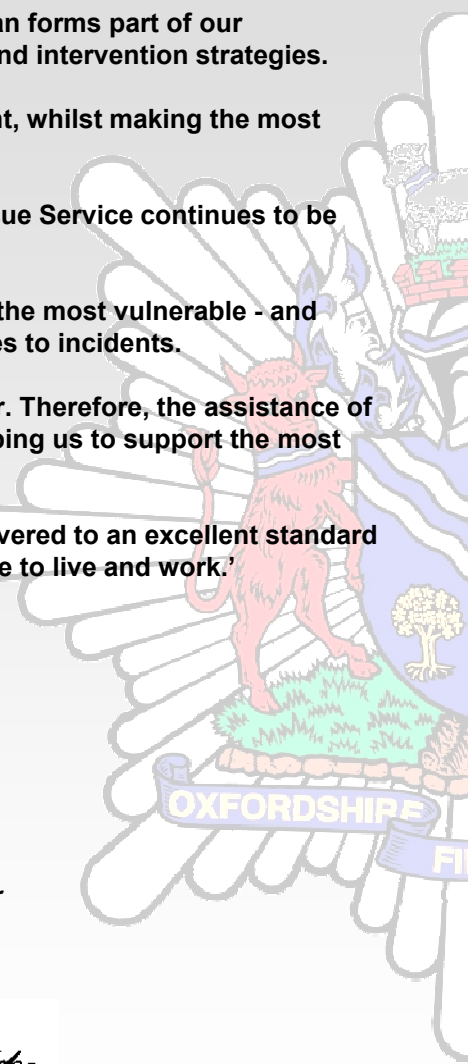
We have a highly competent and committed workforce who ensure that services are delivered to an excellent standard and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is determined to make Oxfordshire a safe place to live and work.'



*Councillor
Judith Heathcoat
Cabinet Member
for Safer and
Stronger
Communities*



*David Etheridge
Chief Fire Officer*





What will the action plan achieve?

Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service is more than a service that responds purely to emergencies; we possess an array of skills and knowledge in a number of areas such as community education through to enforcing legislation to ensure people are safe from fire.

Traditionally, we provide the residents and visitors of Oxfordshire with an excellent service, responding to emergencies such as fires, road traffic collisions and natural disasters. We now have an additional role and responsibility to be part of the emergency response called to deal with acts of terrorism and the effects of climate change.

This action plan will help us deliver more effective community safety advice at a local level. This will ensure that residents and businesses are safer, whilst at the same time delivering an emergency response when necessary. These functions will be discharged by local firefighters who are supported, trained and equipped to operate in a safe and efficient manner.

Consultation for this plan will last until **15th February 2011**

If you require more information on these projects or about the IRMP, please visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/irmp or contact us using the details below.

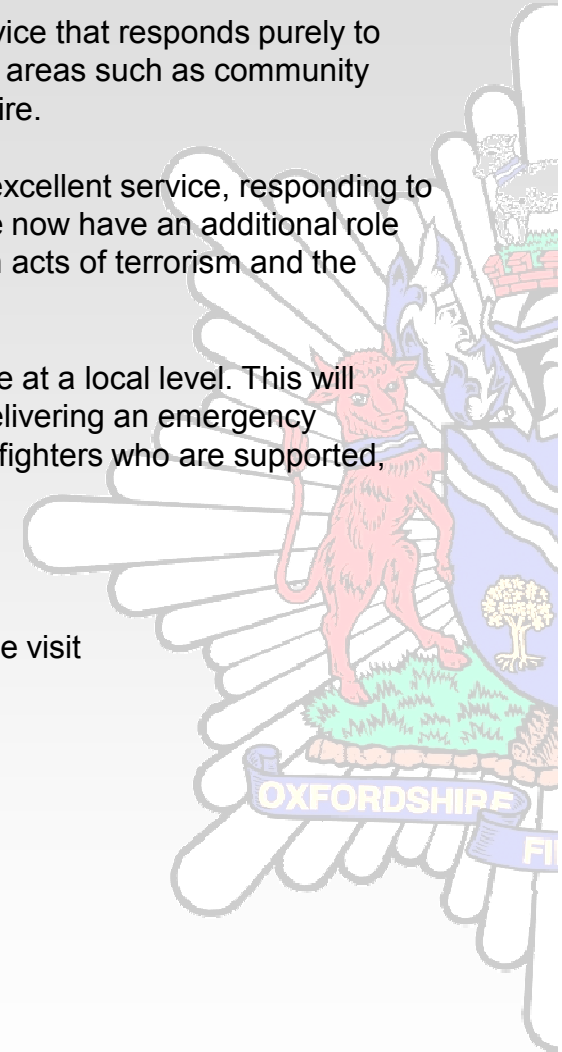
Email: irmpteam@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Tel: [01865 842999](tel:01865842999)

Or write to us at:

IRMP Team

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service HQ
Sterling Road
Kidlington
Oxford
OX5 2DU





Optional projects for the IRMP Action Plan 2011-12

The following pages detail the projects contained within our action plan for 2011-12. The detail includes the anticipated outcome or benefit, and a summary of the analysis supporting its inclusion. More detailed information can be provided if required by contacting the IRMP team.

These projects will be monitored and reviewed by senior management to ensure that milestones are met.

The option projects for IRMP Action Plan 2011-12 are as follows:





Project 1: Permanent removal of the 2nd appliance from Faringdon from the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) fleet.

Objective: To permanently remove the 2nd fire appliance from Faringdon, reducing the OFRS fire appliance fleet from 35 to 34.

(This appliance was removed in April 2009 following consultation in the 2007/8 IRMP, as a direct result of sustained inability to recruit and retain staff in the Faringdon area)

Risk analysis: Remaining fire cover ensures that appropriate response arrangements are in place for Faringdon and that strategic Fire & Rescue cover arrangements for the county are maintained.

Outcome: Appropriate Fire & Rescue cover arrangements are maintained through the effective monitoring of performance against agreed response criteria and proactive resource management.

Responsible post: Service Delivery Manager



Project 2: To complete the review and begin implementation of project 2 of the 2010/11 Action Plan, examining location, crewing arrangements and effective working with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services and where necessary, revising mutual agreements for the provision of special appliances.

Objective: To ensure that appropriate specialist appliances are available in locations that will enable effective crewing and response.

Risk analysis: Specialist appliances are required to support front line appliances; arrangements need to ensure availability; an appropriate location relative to the potential risk and competent personnel.

Outcome: The implementation of the outcomes of the report will ensure that OFRS has a provision or access to specialist appliances to the standard detailed in the risk analysis.

Responsible post: Emergency Response Manager





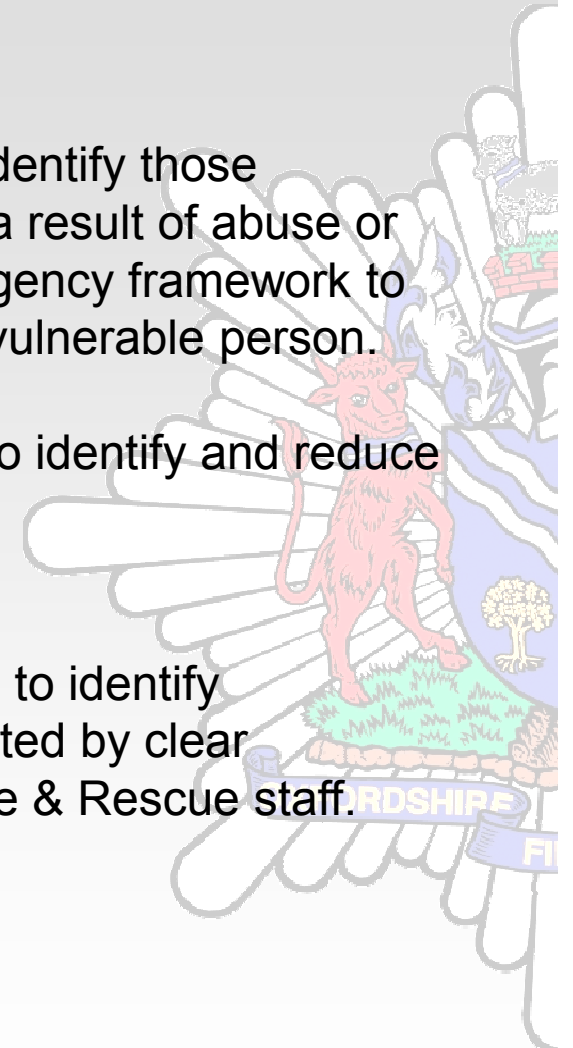
Project 3: To review and adopt appropriate Safeguarding measures throughout OFRS.

Objective: To further enable staff to be able to identify those individuals who are at particular risk of harm as a result of abuse or neglect, and work in partnership within a multi-agency framework to secure the wellbeing, security and safety of the vulnerable person.

Risk Analysis: Ensuring the skills and training to identify and reduce risk to vulnerable adults and children.

Outcome: Well trained Fire & Rescue staff who are be able to identify safeguarding issues within communities. Supported by clear procedures and reporting mechanisms for all Fire & Rescue staff.

Responsible post: Risk Reduction Manager





Project 4: To develop and implement a strategy to ensure prevention and protection activities are targeted at people and property who are most at risk from fire, particularly those in remote locations, by ensuring that resources are dedicated to protecting remote communities.

Objective: To ensure that resources are dedicated to protecting remote communities, working with the local community on self help projects to support vulnerable people through the training of Community Fire Safety Advocates.

Risk analysis: Protection & Risk Reduction is critical to the county's success in reducing incidents where people could be injured or die and where businesses suffer fire losses, all of which are primarily as a result of fire or road traffic collisions. Countywide, risk increases in relation to the vulnerability of individuals. Success in reducing the risk will be dependant on effective enforcement and through efficient working in partnership to target our resources at the most vulnerable groups, ie. the elderly, the infirm and young people.

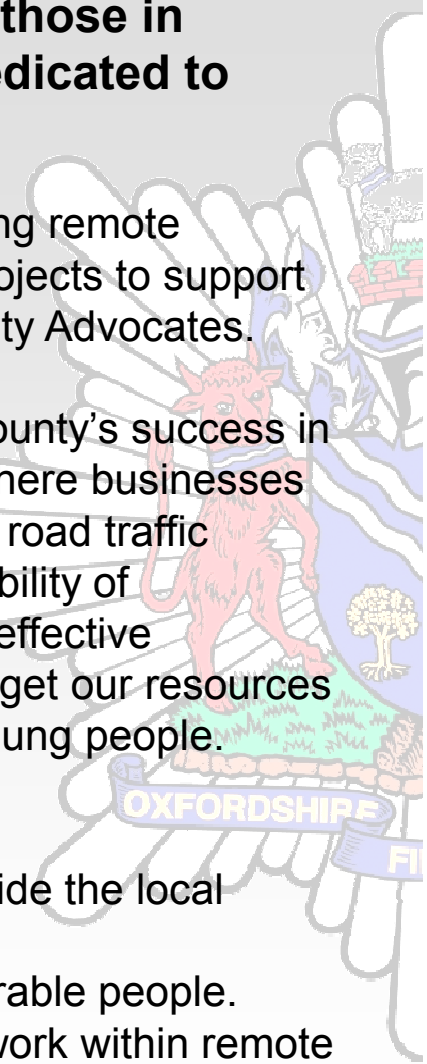
Outcome:

To review the activities within the fire risk areas which fall outside the local response standards within the county.

To explore opportunities for self help projects to support vulnerable people.

A prevention strategy is created and implemented to support work within remote locations.

Responsible post: Risk Reduction Manager





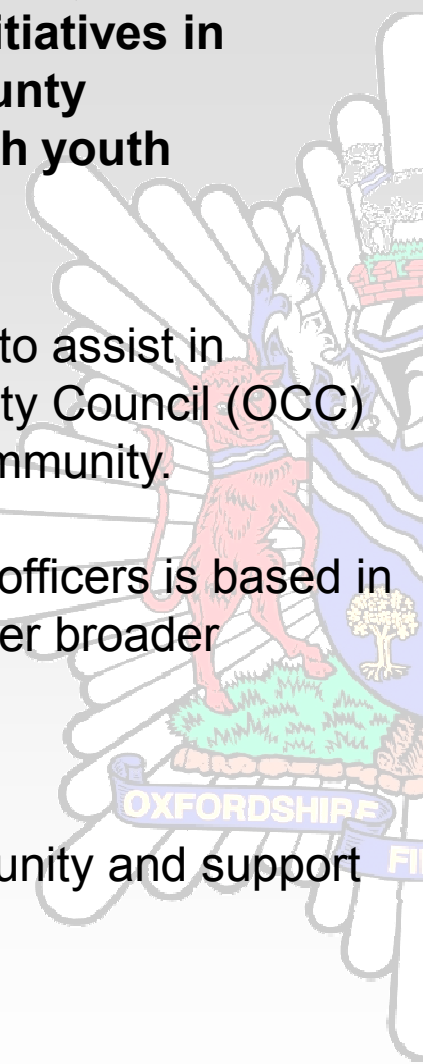
Project 5: To develop the role of Retained Station Support Officers (RSSO) to work as local community advocates, to be fully involved in developing and supporting local initiatives in conjunction with local people and delivering the county council's localities agenda through engagement with youth services, education, and healthcare providers.

Objective: To use a recognised and trusted role model to assist in delivering local initiatives on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and other interested parties for the good of the local community.

Risk Analysis: The role of the retained station support officers is based in local areas and therefore provides opportunities to deliver broader community initiatives.

Outcome:
An integrated approach to deliver services to the community and support the delivery of local community initiatives.

Responsible Post: Service Delivery Performance Manager





Project 6: In light of the OCC Business strategy and the emerging financial situation, continue the 2010-11 IRMP Project 6 – (“Review the current position of Fire Appliances to ensure operational resilience and value for money”) to ensure continued cost effective, resilient service provision.

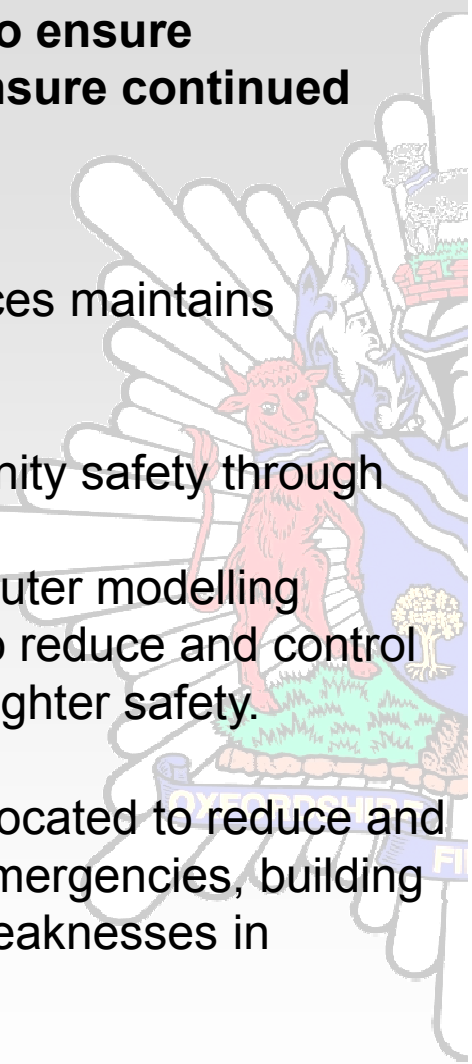
Objective: Ensure the future provision of fire appliances maintains operational resilience and value for money.

Risk analysis: Provide a strategy to improve community safety through the allocation of appropriate resources.

To provide a full risk profile of the County, using computer modelling software to determine the most appropriate method to reduce and control the risk to life within the community and maintain firefighter safety.

Outcome: Fire and Rescue Service resources are allocated to reduce and control risks to our communities from fire and other emergencies, building on existing strengths and where possible removing weaknesses in securing a safer community.

Responsible Post: Service Delivery Manager





Summary

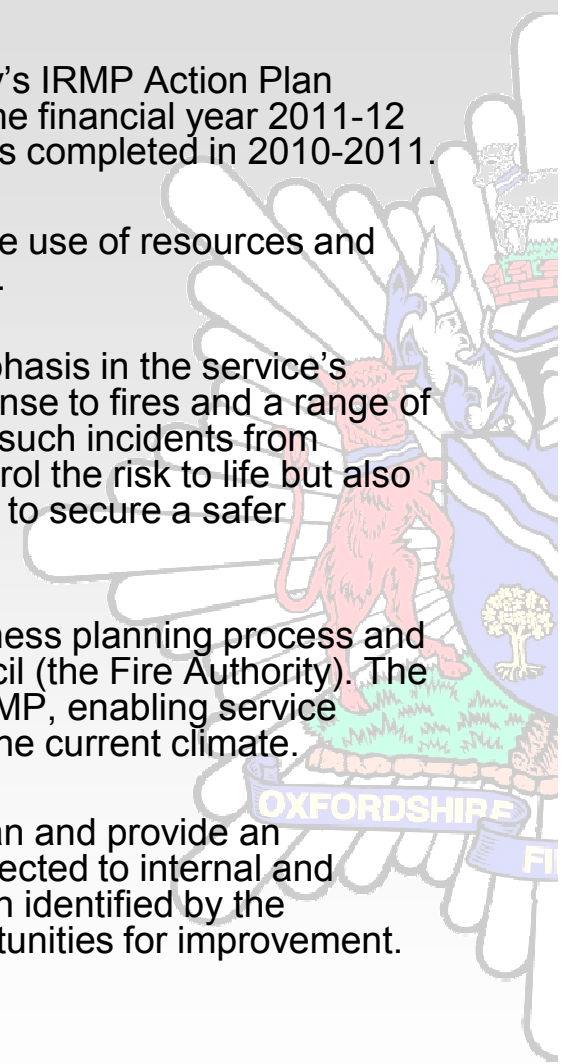
This is your opportunity to provide feedback on the fire authority's IRMP Action Plan which provides details of the proposed options for projects for the financial year 2011-12 and, when published, will provide a brief review of those projects completed in 2010-2011.

The projects seek to improve community safety through effective use of resources and realising opportunities for more efficient delivery of our services.

An integrated approach to managing risk requires a shift of emphasis in the service's activity. We will always maintain an effective and efficient response to fires and a range of emergency incidents, but our focus of activity will be to prevent such incidents from occurring. This strategy is designed not only to reduce and control the risk to life but also to mitigate the consequential cost of those incidents. Our aim is to secure a safer community and a safer workforce.

The IRMP forms the fundamental element of the service's business planning process and is aligned to the strategic priorities of Oxfordshire County Council (the Fire Authority). The action plan provides for the structured implementation of the IRMP, enabling service improvements to be prioritised and effectively managed within the current climate.

Once agreed, individual projects form the basis of the action plan and provide an implementation programme that is regularly monitored and subjected to internal and external audit. The projects contained within this plan have been identified by the service's Strategic Leadership Team as offering effective opportunities for improvement.





Additional information and contact details

If you have any questions in respect of the Action Plan, if you require further information or have an observation to make during consultation, please contact us at:

Email:
irmpteam@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01865 842999

Or write to us at
IRMP Team,
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue
Service HQ
Sterling Road
Kidlington
Oxford
OX5 2DU

Consultation for this plan will last
until **15th February 2011**

This year's action plan has been formulated to maximise the effectiveness of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and has been subjected to an equality impact assessment.

If you require this action plan in any other language or format, please contact the IRMP team.

Take the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service pledge today. It only takes a little effort to make a big difference in your own life.

www.365alive.co.uk



Community Safety Helpline
08000 325999

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Division(s): All

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 8 NOVEMBER 2010

QUARTERLY REPORT ON THE USE OF THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 BY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report by Deputy Head of Trading Standards and Community Safety

Introduction

1. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ('the Act') creates the legal framework for the lawful use of covert surveillance and access to telecommunications data by public authorities. Prior to the introduction of this Act, the use of covert surveillance and access to communications data were not controlled by statute. Codes of Practice issued under this Act contain the detail that public authorities must have regard to when using covert surveillance or accessing communications data.
2. There is no direct sanction against Local Authorities within the Act for failing to comply with its provisions. Nevertheless covert surveillance or accessing communications data by its nature is an interference of a person's right to a private and family life guaranteed under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The consequences of not obtaining prior authorisation in accordance with the Act may mean that the action is unlawful by virtue of Section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 i.e. a failure by the Authority to conduct this work in accordance with human rights conventions.
3. The Codes of Practice under the Act require that elected members review the Authority's use of the Act quarterly and review the Authority's policy annually. This paper provides a summary of the activities undertaken by Oxfordshire County Council that fall within the scope of this Act for the period 1 April 2010 to 30 September 2010.

Use of the Act by Oxfordshire County Council

4. The table below summarises the applications for activities falling within the scope of the Act that have been considered by the designated authorising officers. Some explanation on common activities may assist in understanding the activities concerned.
5. **Under-age sales test purchasing in shops.** Trading Standards will carry out test purchases of age restricted goods on a number of occasions throughout the year. Such test purchases are one aspect of the work that the service carries out with the aim to reduce the availability of age restricted goods to persons below the legal minimum age. The age restricted goods concerned may include cigarettes, knives, alcohol, fireworks and solvents. Test purchasing and other activities are carried out in order for the service to

meet its responsibilities to enforce age restricted sales legislation and to support community safety strategies.

6. Premises are selected for test normally as a result of intelligence or complaints from the public, but some routine market surveillance is also carried out. The operation involves a young volunteer attempting to buy the age restricted product whilst being observed by a trading standards enforcement officer. The test purchases are carried out in accordance with national guidance and the young volunteer will state their true age if challenged. No recording equipment is used.
7. Should a premises fail a test purchase, officers will investigate the circumstances for the sale occurring (e.g. what training has been provided to the sales assistant concerned, what policies and procedures have been adopted by the business, etc.). On the basis of this investigation advice and assistance may be offered to the business concerned. Further test purchases are then carried out at a later date to determine whether the business has improved.
8. **Doorstep crime related surveillance.** It is known that doorstep criminals repeatedly victimise vulnerable people. Frequently, Trading Standards is made aware of an incident and the time when it is suspected that the suspect will return, normally to attempt to obtain further money from the victim. In these circumstances surveillance is carried out at the victim's home, with their consent, to attempt to identify and detain the suspect. The victim's family and regular visitors to the victim's property are made aware of the surveillance in order to minimise intrusion.

Date	Service requesting authorisation	Description of activity	Granted/refused	Outcome
27.06.10	Trading Standards	Under-age sales test purchasing in shops (cigarettes) (11 premises in Oxford).	Granted	Only 16 premises were tested. 6 failed and 10 passed. Remaining premises to be tested at a later date.
27.06.10	Trading Standards	Under-age sales test purchasing in shops (cigarettes) (8 premises in Kidlington, Didcot, Thame, Wheatley and Witney).	Granted	
03.08.10	Trading Standards	Under-age sales test purchasing in shops (knives) (9 premises in Didcot, Abingdon, Oxford and Wheatley).	Granted	Only 7 premises were tested and 2 failed. Remaining premises to be tested at a later date.

07.09.10	Trading Standards	Surveillance on property in Didcot with owner's consent following a doorstep crime incident.	Granted	Suspect did not return to the premises. Surveillance ceased.
22.09.10	Trading Standards	Under-age sales test purchasing in public houses and restaurants (cigarettes) (12 premises in Oxford, Eynsham and Bicester).	Granted	Operation on-going.
22.09.10	Trading Standards	Under-age sales test purchasing in a shop in Oxford (cigarettes).	Granted	Operation on-going.
22.09.10	Trading Standards	Surveillance on property in Chinnor with owner's consent following a doorstep crime incident.	Granted	Operation on-going.
27.09.10	Trading Standards	Surveillance on property in Goring with owner's consent following a doorstep crime incident.	Granted	Operation on-going.

Office of Surveillance Commissioners' Inspections

9. The Council's arrangements for authorising RIPA are subject to formal inspection by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners. Inspections are usually conducted by a retired member of the judiciary who inspects the policies and procedures of the Council and undertakes a review of all authorisations. The last inspection took place on the 7 May 2008 and no new inspection is scheduled.

RICHARD WEBB

Deputy Head of Trading Standards and Community Safety

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Richard Webb, Deputy Head of Trading Standards and Community Safety, Tel: (01865) 815791

October 2010

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SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 8 NOVEMBER 2010

FREE DEBT ADVICE IN OXFORDSHIRE

Purpose/Recommendation

1. **Members are asked to consider the findings of the debt advice meeting**

Background

2. Debt Advice in Oxfordshire was subject to an earlier Scrutiny Review in 2008/09. However at its meeting on 1 February 2010, this Committee agreed that further work be undertaken in this area but to focus on and consider the current provision of free debt advice to Oxfordshire residents.

It was also agreed that Councillors Lawrie Stratford, Bill Service, John Goddard and John Sanders would be the Lead Member Review Group.

In order to find out what free debt advice is currently available, a meeting was set up between the Lead Member Review Group and a number of providers of free advice. The meeting was to focus on three main areas:

- Where in the County is free debt advice available?
- Are there geographical gaps?
- How is the quality of free debt advice established and maintained?

The meeting was attended by representatives from:

- Oxfordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Oxford Advice Centres Forum
- Wantage Independent Advice Centre
- Advice UK
- Oxfordshire MIND
- Oxfordshire County Council's Trading Standards

Key Issues

3. **Findings of the meeting**

The meeting acknowledged that there was a good spread of free debt advice provision across the county, although the Vale area had limited face to face provision.

Online and telephone advice would be offered through a new 'one number' and an enhanced website by the Citizen's Advice Bureaux. Although this will provide full coverage of the County, it was acknowledged that some, more vulnerable users would not necessarily benefit from these services.

Quality assurance programmes were implemented by all of the represented groups.

Provision of free debt advice by local groups fits with Council priorities of breaking cycles of deprivation and with central government priorities on locality based service provision.

The County Council's role could be further enhanced by continuing to provide assistance with co-ordination between voluntary providers. Additionally, there is an opportunity to effectively signpost from the Council's new customer service centre to the new CABx single point of contact phone line.

It is recognised that office/meeting space is an issue for advice services and the Council will explore opportunities to utilize council buildings with spare meeting room capacity.

Conclusion

- It was felt that this meeting had been invaluable and that it had successfully addressed the focus areas set out for the meeting. Officers and Councillors felt reassured that provision across the County was now well understood (acknowledging dependency on future funding from various sources).
- Oxfordshire County Council officers will take forward areas of opportunity and will liaise directly with the appropriate providers.
- Councillor Stratford will attend the 'Money Matters' conference, and provide a verbal update at the meeting.

Report by Councillor Stratford on behalf of the Lead Member Review Group

Contact: Belinda Dimmock-Smith, Performance and Review Officer
Tel: 01865 816386

September 2010

**Notes from Meeting of Free Debt Advice Providers
17 September 2010**

Attendees:

Silvana Dallenagra – Oxfordshire Citizens Advice Co-ordinator
 Barbara Shaw – West Oxfordshire Citizens Advice
 Ann Groom – Abingdon Citizens Advice
 Sue Tanner – Oxford Advice Centres Forum
 Lisa Bengé – Wantage Independent Advice Centre
 Dal Warburton – Advice UK and Oxfordshire Money Advice Group
 David Bryceland – Oxfordshire MIND
 Cllr Lawrie Stratford – Chair of Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee, Oxfordshire County Council (*Chair of the meeting*)
 Cllr Bill Service – Member of Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee, Oxfordshire County Council
 Cllr John Sanders – Oxfordshire County Council
 John Parry – Associate Director for Shared Services, Oxfordshire County Council
 David Etheridge – Chief Fire Officer and Head of Community Safety, Oxfordshire County Council
 Belinda Dimmock- Smith – Performance and Review Officer, Oxfordshire County Council
 Richard Webb – Deputy Head of Trading Standards, Oxfordshire County Council
 Kate Davies – Team Leader, Consumer Advice and Intervention, Oxfordshire County Council

Focus of the meeting

1. What is the provision of free debt advice in Oxfordshire?
2. Are there gaps in this provision?
3. How do the providers of free debt advice ensure the quality and consistency of the advice they give?

Key issues

All attendees were given an opportunity to outline provision of free debt advice in Oxfordshire. Background papers were provided (below) from each organisation, providing details of what services they provide, what gaps they are aware of and quality standards they adhere to.

Summary

Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CAB)

- There are 9 CABx across Oxfordshire and 30 outlets in total, taking into account outreach centres at GP surgeries, barracks, community centres etc.
- They operate as a consortium

SSC12(a)

- 80% of the staff are volunteers and the estimated worth of their work in Oxfordshire alone is £2 million
- Banbury CAB has 1 employed debt advisor. In total, the CAB employs 35 debt advisors, all of whom are CABx qualified. There are 18 full time equivalent debt advisors in the Oxfordshire CABx. There are a further 200 volunteers trained to give debt advice.
- CABx identifies a gap in service provision in the Vale of White Horse area
- There is no centre in Faringdon or particularly near to it. However, there is provision in Abingdon and Witney and Wantage has its own independent centre
- From November 2010 there will be 1 telephone point of initial contact for the whole of Oxfordshire CABx. It will be operated between 10am and 4pm on weekdays by 10 Gateway Advisors, who can signpost to other organisations, make appointments at any local centre and refer for immediate assistance. There is an acknowledged gap in out of hours and weekend provision
- Last year, Oxfordshire CAB handled approx 21,000 debt enquiries and more than 2 thirds were dealt with by face to face assistance – generally agreed to be the most effective form of advice.
- A pilot debt management partnership project is currently underway
- CABx have their own in house training packages. Clients contacts are regularly audited for quality and consistency
- For the last 18 months, Oxfordshire CABx has been running a Financial Capability Project and has provided money management training to more than 500 clients and to approximately 100 other advice providers. Clients have included schools groups, the elderly, college students and people already in debt who have been referred by district Councils where they are in Council Tax arrears.
- A joined up website (providing information of where and who provides free advice across Oxfordshire) will be launched at the end of September.

Oxford Independent Advice Centre

- The Centre provides holistic advice on a range of matters but debt advice is the most time consuming
- They provide an invaluable resource for those who are very poor, have poor literacy, poor English and those that do not have the skills to access or make use of telephone or internet advice. These centres do not have their own websites.
- Lack of a translation service is a problem for the centres
- Funding has come from the Social and Community Services Directorate although it is recognised that it is likely to come under threat as the Directorate focuses on providing personal budgets for its clients.
- The Advice centres are staffed by volunteers and have no paid staff
- 1 or 2 of the independent advice centres also provide money management education e.g. in youth centres.

Wantage Independent Advice Centre

- The Centre has 30 years experience in providing debt advice to Wantage (and surrounding areas, including Faringdon)
- Debt advice is the most time consuming element of the holistic advice available from the centre which is part of the Advice UK network
- It has 30 advisors of whom 12 are debt specialists.
- They try to use written materials from other sources to cut down on costs and do not produce their own guides etc
- They run drop in sessions and give appointments for debt advice
- They refer clients to the CAB if they do not have the capacity to cope.

Advice UK and Oxfordshire Money Advice Group

- Advice UK is a voluntary organisation of more than 850 voluntary and community groups across the country, with 11 member groups in Oxfordshire. These groups advise on a number of different issues.
- Debt Advisors in member groups are expected to meet the Generalist and Caseworker competencies in the Money Advice Trust's Money Advice Standards. Such advisors would also be expected to follow the Institute of Money Advisors' Money Advice Statement of Good Practice.
- Voluntary advice centres often emerge in the areas of greatest need as a result of community action. They provide services to the poorest and most marginalised in the community.
- There are different methods of providing advice from self help guidance at one end of the spectrum to face to face casework at the other (casework includes representing clients in negotiations with creditors or the Courts).
- Oxfordshire Money Advice Forum is a part of the Advice UK network. It is a sub network of those directly involved in money/debt advice provision. There is already a demonstrable and effective networking of such groups to co-ordinate and support each other so far as is practicable. It is also networked with the Thames Valley Financial Capability Forum, which is hosted by Reading CAB and which helps with sharing best practice and resources in financial capability training and advice.

MIND

- MIND help vulnerable clients who use debt advice services
- OCC Money Matters team provides essential support for vulnerable clients
- 1 in 4 people is in mental distress and an essential part of a successful recovery involves stability in income, accommodation and in debt management
- Face to face contact for people with mental health difficulties is essential so web and telephone self help services are of little value to these people
- Education in money management in small groups is also very important to these clients.

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

- Trading Standards Advisors signpost to other organisations where it seems appropriate
- Trading Standards enforces criminal aspects of the Consumer Credit Act and has engaged in a partnership with the National Illegal Money Lending Team which seeks to address the problem of loan sharking.
- Within OCC's Shared Services Directorate there exists a Money Management Team which supports the clients of Adult Social Services. Vulnerable clients are given active assistance which includes money management. Currently this service helps approximately 1,000 clients.
- Provision of free debt advice by local groups fits with Council priorities of breaking cycles of deprivation and with central government priorities on locality based service provision.
- OCC can assist with co-ordination between voluntary providers
- There is an opportunity to effectively signpost from the Councils new customer service centre to the new CABx single point of contact phone line
- It is recognised that office/meeting space is an issue for advice services and the Council would explore opportunities to utilize council buildings with spare meeting room capacity
- Opportunity to improve signposting to advice groups on Council's website could be prioritised
- The Council's "Big Debate" on allocation of resources is going on at the moment and all attendees of this meeting were encouraged to attend and contribute towards it, stressing the importance of debt advice
- There is an opportunity as the Council undergoes organisational changes (including the creation of the Deputy Director for Communities post) to consider how the Council will work with advice groups in the future
- Further opportunities exist on developing and training staff with face to face contact with the public in terms of making referrals and signposting where obvious signs of problems are present.

Conclusion

- It was felt that this meeting had been invaluable and that it had successfully addressed the focus areas set out for the meeting. Officers and Councillors felt reassured that provision across the County was now well understood (acknowledging dependency on future funding from various sources).
- Councillor Stratford, Chairman of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee, will report back to the Committee, outlining the information shared at the meeting, concluding the work on the 'Debt Advice Review'
- OCC officers will take forward areas of opportunity and will liaise directly with the appropriate providers.

Submission to Oxfordshire County Council Working Party on Debt

About AdviceUK

AdviceUK is a membership organisation of over 850 voluntary and community organisations that give free advice and support to members of the public. Our members work throughout England, Scotland and Wales, helping over 2 million people a year solve the legal and social welfare problems they face. In Oxfordshire we have 11 member organisations.

Independent advice services provide advice, support, advocacy and representation in one or more areas of social welfare law – such as welfare benefits, debt, housing, community care, employment and immigration. Independent advice services often grow out of community action and self-help groups – local people finding solutions to local need. They typically focus on supporting the poorest and most marginalised.

What do we mean by debt advice, and how is quality maintained?

By debt advice, AdviceUK means the structured framework used to enable clients to manage and resolve their debt problems. We would expect debt advisers to meet the generalist and caseworker competences set out in the Money Advice Trust's Money Advice Standards. These can be found on the AdviceUK website:

<http://www.adviceuk.org.uk/supporting-you/money-advice/moneyadvicetraining>. We would also expect advisers to follow the Institute of Money Advisers' Money Advice Statement of Good Practice. This can be found on the IMA website at: http://www.i-m-a.org.uk/pdfs/statement_of_good_practice.pdf. AdviceUK members that give debt advice can opt to be part of our group debt counselling licence – it is a requirement of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 that any business or organisation that helps people with their debt problems must be licensed by the Office of Fair Trading.

Why are links with other social welfare advice services and support services important?

We believe that debt advice cannot be effective if it is provided without reference to other services. For example, debt advice provided alongside help to maximise the client's income will result in better long-term resilience to debt. Debt advice provided alongside support to clients who are vulnerable in other ways – for example, people with health problems or older people in fuel poverty – will result in advice that is acted upon and followed up. Debt advice provided in the context of support to help a client look for work – for example, making sure that the person concerned has a home – will bring better outcomes. Local advice services with a long-term commitment to local communities have the networks to enable this kind of ongoing, locally-based support to be provided.

What's involved in giving advice (including debt advice)?

An **advice service** involves: diagnosis of the client's enquiry and the legal issues involved; giving information and explaining options; identifying further action the client can take; and some assistance: e.g. contacting third parties to seek information; filling in forms. It would usually be completed with one interview although there may be some follow-up work. The client would take responsibility for any further action.

An **advice service with casework** involves all the elements of an advice service previously listed, with the following in addition: taking action on behalf of the client to move the case on; negotiating on behalf of the client with third parties, and follow-up work. The advice service and its advisers would take responsibility for this ongoing work.

An **advice service with specialist casework** involves: all the above elements with additional casework requiring the presentation of complex legal arguments, representation and litigation at court, and tribunal hearings. It may include applications to higher courts or tribunals, instructing experts – such as barristers – for representation in higher courts, and negotiation with the opposing party in a dispute (or other third parties).

For a detailed description of the above definitions, please see:

<http://www.adviceuk.org.uk/projects-and-resources/projects/wtfa/qualitymark>

Voluntary sector advice services in Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire Money Advice Group

AdviceUK has been involved in supporting voluntary sector advice services in Oxfordshire. We have produced [a Google map of local advice services](#), giving basic information on service provision across the county. Oxfordshire Money Advice Group (contact Dal Warburton dal.warburton@adviceuk.org.uk or Jane Phipps Jane.Phipps@citizensadvice.org.uk for further details) is a hub for those involved in managing and delivering free and independent money advice services in Oxfordshire. We meet four times a year to:

- exchange and share information on money advice issues
- promote collaboration between money advice providers to make services more coordinated, effective, efficient, and responsive to diverse needs
- improve access to money advice services for Oxfordshire residents, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable
- develop relationships with other key stakeholders that have an interest in our work, including funders, decision makers, creditor organisations, financial capability networks, and organisations working with vulnerable groups of Oxfordshire residents
- work together to draw in additional sources of funding for money advice services
- give local money advisors opportunities to access training and other events that equip them to provide a better service to clients

As members of the Working Party may be aware, we are involved in running an event focusing on tackling debt and managing money in Oxfordshire – which will take place on September 28. See <http://oxfordshiremoneymatters.eventbrite.com/> for further details. The outcomes of the day and information gathered as a result will give us an excellent basis to plan further work to ensure residents have access to the support they need.

We would also like to highlight the work of the Oxford Advice Centres Forum and Citizens Advice Oxfordshire, two other networks that are key to effective advice provision by the voluntary sector in Oxfordshire, and understand that they will also be contributing to discussions about debt advice provision in the county.

Value of advice services and why local advice services should be a priority

AdviceUK has demonstrated why it makes good economic sense for local authorities to fund local advice services, how advice can cut waste and bureaucracy, and the economic benefits that advice brings to communities. In July 2010, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude, and Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd, wrote an open letter to the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors asking them to share ideas about how they could help reduce the deficit. [This was our response](#). For more information about how costs and waste in public services can be reduced, please read our research about [advice outcomes](#).

It is clear that investment in financial capability programmes (helping people manage their money more effectively) results in long-term gains for local people and the local economy, and reduces the burden on public services by helping people to avoid crises. This work is already being carried out by local voluntary sector advice services, for example Rose Hill and Donnington Advice Centre's work in youth clubs, or the Save Xmas and Energy Best Deal programmes being delivered by local Citizens Advice bureaux.

It is also clear that Oxfordshire is particularly vulnerable in the current economic situation because of the high percentage of jobs that are dependent on public sector employers and funding streams. Supporting people through redundancy and preventing repossessions and evictions will make the county more resilient to the impact of such cuts.

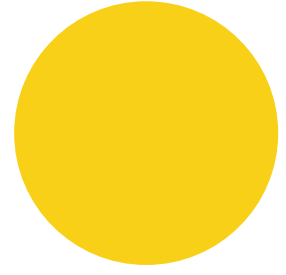
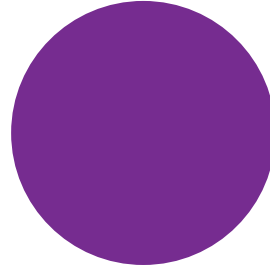
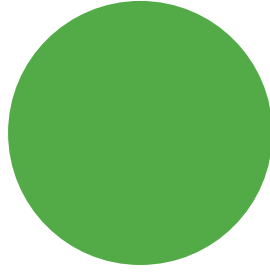
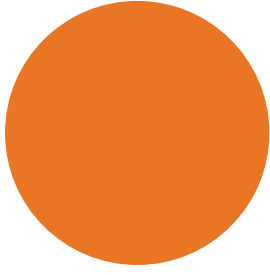
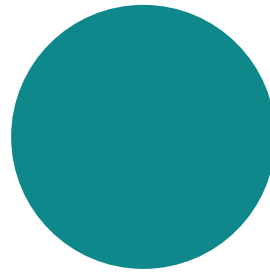
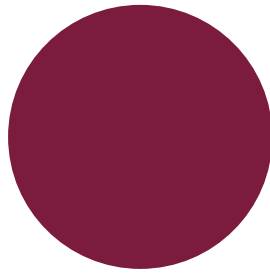
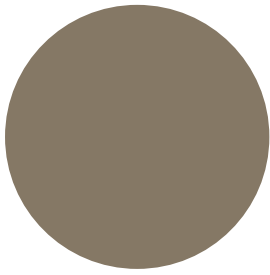
Key steps that could be taken by Oxfordshire County Council

We are grateful for the support the County Council already gives to voluntary sector advice services, for example the help given to put on the Money Matters event later this month.

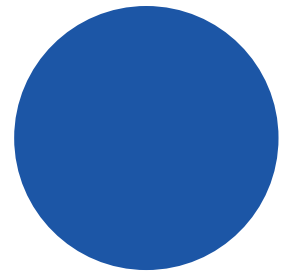
We would recommend that:

- advice service provision by individual organisations is accorded a high priority when making spending decisions – this will lessen the impact of cuts on the poorest and most vulnerable, those who are least able to weather hard times
- Oxfordshire County Council works together with the networks described above to develop collaborative, coordinated strategies for the provision of services
- Oxfordshire County Council considers providing low-cost support to networks that already coordinate advice service provision – for example, free meeting room space at County Hall to Oxfordshire Money Advice Group; a page acting as a portal to voluntary sector advice services for Oxfordshire residents hosted on the council's website
- Oxfordshire County Council encourages dialogue between advice services and its own in-house services to identify waste and address systemic failures in policy and practice

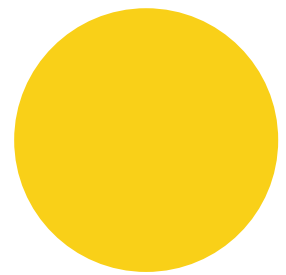
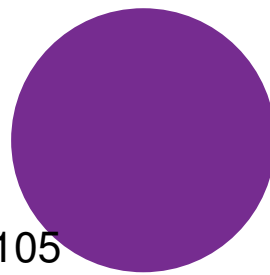
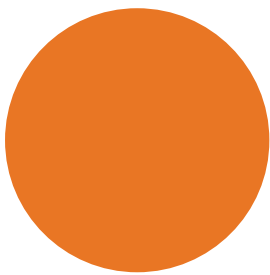
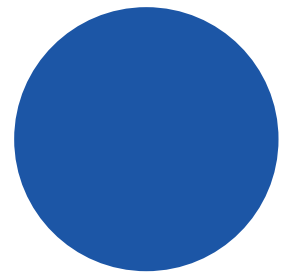
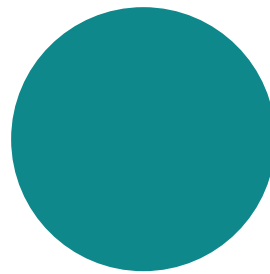
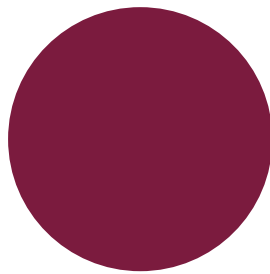
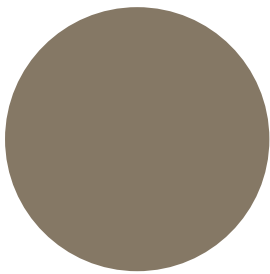
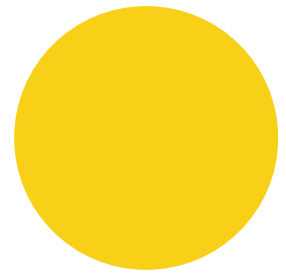
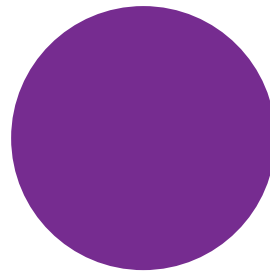
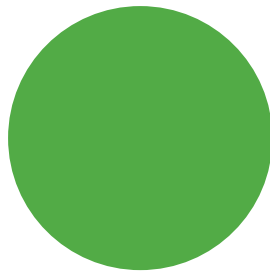
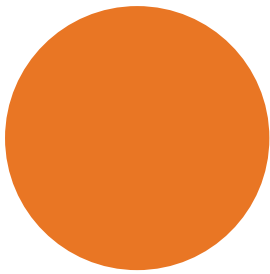
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Debt Advice from Citizens Advice Bureaux in Oxfordshire



September 2010 V2.



1. Introduction

There are eight Citizens Advice Bureaux in Oxfordshire. The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

The service provides the advice people need for the problems they face and works to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

The main areas of advice that bureaux provide are in debt, welfare benefits, housing and employment. Through a process of initial assessments and using skilled advisers, bureaux focus the level of their support in accordance with the client's need. This report highlights the work that is done nationally and in the county on debt advice.

During 2009/10, Oxfordshire bureaux dealt with more than 21,400 debt problems. Of those, 5,000 were for priority debts, such as mortgage and rent arrears, council tax arrears, 3,860 concerned credit cards, store cards and charge cards and 2,935 unsecured personal loans. Nearly 1000 issues related to Debt Relief Orders.

Bureaux give advice and information in a wide range of subjects. It is extremely rare for clients to have debt problems which aren't also affecting other areas of their lives. If left alone money worries can escalate into a range of problems, including health deterioration, homelessness and relationship breakdown.

Bureaux assist clients to prioritise their debts and make affordable offers to creditors, based on an assessment of their income and expenditure. As well as dealing with the debt, bureaux also work with schools and other groups on improving financial capability, to help people with the basics of budgeting and money management before problems occur.

Citizens Advice Bureaux are recognised by 95% of the population, and there are bureaux covering every district in Oxfordshire. Clients come from every ward and the bureaux work in a co-ordinated way to ensure that coverage is consistent. The bureaux are in the process of setting up a county wide telephone service which will allow residents from anywhere in the county to access the CAB service and then quickly get the advice they need.

All bureaux are members of Citizens Advice which monitors and safeguards quality. Bureaux are audited by Citizens Advice which provides them with the Quality Mark from the Legal Services Commission (LSC). Unlike other organisations who are only monitored by the LSC, the Citizens Advice audit includes assessment of the quality of advice.

Using thoroughly trained volunteers, bureaux provide clients with a range of services, tailored to their needs, from initial information through to ongoing and in depth casework and Debt Relief Orders.

2. Debt Advice

2.1. An Overview of Problem Debt

Total personal debt in the UK currently stands at £1.46 trillion. The average household debt in the UK is £8,920 (excluding mortgages). This figure increases to £18,583 if the average is based on the number of households who have some form of unsecured loan¹. However, not all debt is problem debt. Citizens Advice defines over-indebtedness as when people “are unable to pay their current credit repayments and other commitments without reducing other expenditures below normal minimum levels.”²

Keeping up with bills and other commitments is either a constant struggle or worse for nine per cent of the population³. Data from Citizens Advice Bureaux suggests the problem is growing. The number of clients that bureaux advise with debt issues is rising year-on-year. It increased by 13 per cent in 2009/10.

In 2009/10, 583,000 Citizens Advice Bureau clients sought advice on 2.4 million debt issues⁴. The most common issues presented concern credit cards, store cards and unsecured personal loans. Other issues that saw large rises were mortgage and secured loan arrears, fuel, water and telephone debts, rent arrears and overdraft problems.

The causes of over-indebtedness are most commonly an unforeseen change in circumstances (such as illness, redundancy or divorce) or unrealistic repayment expectations on the part of the creditor or the lender.^{5 & 7} Citizens Advice also cites the effects of changes in government legislation as a contributory factor.¹⁶

Debt problems rarely exist in isolation: many people face clusters of problems, of which debt may be the main or simply a component part. Over-indebtedness can be caused by, and contributes to, social exclusion, financial exclusion and poverty.¹⁸ Low-income groups are three times more likely than the general population to be in arrears with rent, council tax, utility bills or mortgage arrears⁶ and research suggests 35% of low-moderate income families are unable to meet repayments on at least one bill or credit commitment.⁷

The impacts of problem debt on the individual can be severe. In-depth research conducted by the Legal Services Research Centre suggests 89% of debt clients worried about their problems most or all of the time.

Key Statistics: CAB Debt Advice 2009/10

- ✓ 583,000 debt clients
- ✓ 2.4m debt problems presented
- ✓ The most common debt issues presented concern credit cards debts and unsecured personal loans.
- ✓ One in two CAB clients seeing a money advice worker recorded a positive outcome
- ✓ FIF: £73 million worth of client debt was written off and where benefits were claimed the average income gain per client was £2,400
- ✓ LSRC research clear evidence of a positive impact of debt advice, financial improvement greater when advice is given.

¹ Credit Action debt statistics, 2010. Available at <http://www.creditaction.org.uk/debt-statistics.html>

² *In Too Deep*, Citizens Advice, 2004. Available at: <http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/in-too-deep.pdf>

³ Financial Capability in the UK: Establishing a Baseline, Financial Services Authority, 2006: http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/other/fincap_baseline.pdf

⁴ Client and Advice Statistics: National Issues, Citizens Advice, 2010.

⁵ *Tackling Over-Indebtedness*, DTI (now BERR), 2005. <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file18547.pdf>

⁶ *Action on Debt*, Social Exclusion Unit, 2004. Available at: <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/seu/downloaddoc1967.pdf?id=214>

⁷ *Fair, Clean and Competitive: The Consumer Credit Market in the 21st Century*, Department of Trade & Industry (now BERR), 2003. Available at: <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file23663.pdf>

Around 43% of clients felt their health had suffered to some extent, while around 60% said they had received treatment, medication or counselling as a result of their problems. Further, it was identified that problem debt can impact on an individual's relationships, employment, education and plans for the future.⁸

Problem debt also has a range of impacts beyond the individual. The Consumer Credit Market White Paper of 2003 concluded as follows: "The costs of over-indebtedness... [affect] financial institutions or creditors, and the State as a whole. Over-indebtedness, particularly among low-income groups, also has a significant negative impact on a number of existing Government initiatives – for example, on eliminating child poverty, welfare to work aims, health inequalities and neighbourhood renewal."⁹

2.2. How do individuals benefit from debt advice?

Detailed research on the impact of debt advice was published in 2007 by the Legal Services Research Centre, entitled *A Helping Hand: the Impact of Debt Advice on People's Lives*.²¹ The research "provided clear evidence of a positive impact of debt advice."

The research found that financial improvement is greater when advice is given than when no advice is given at all. 70% of clients felt they had made headway against their debt at a twelve-month follow up. 33% stated that they owed a lot less; in fact, a year after receiving advice, clients owed, on average, £7,585 less.¹⁰

Clients' financial situations were also found to have improved through better budgeting and improved negotiations with creditors. There was also evidence that advice improves people's understanding of their personal finances and, seemingly, helps them to better target 'priority' debts. At a twelve-month follow up, more than 50% of clients in the advice agency study (one of the four strands of research undertaken by the LSRC) believed that advice had helped them avoid or curtail legal action.

Individual benefits extend beyond purely financial gains. The research found that a year after receiving advice, 90% of clients reported improvements in their health; citing cases in which doctors have 'prescribed' debt advice in favour of medication (in the context of a proactive debt initiative), where this has been seen as a more effective route to addressing poor health brought about by debt.

The advice agency study also found that advice positively influenced clients' perception of their ability to cope and their outlook. 84% of clients reported feeling more in control of their finances following receipt of advice. The number worrying all or most of the time about their debts reduced from 89% at initial advice to 31% a year after receiving advice. A related outcome was that 70% of improvements in relationships were attributed to advice.

⁸ *A Helping Hand: the Impact of Debt Advice on People's Lives*. Legal Services Research Centre, 2007. Available at: <http://www.lsrc.org.uk/publications/Impact.pdf>

⁹ *Action on Debt*, Social Exclusion Unit, 2004: <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/seu/downloaddoc1967.pdf?id=214>

¹⁰ The researchers note that this figure should be treated with caution

2.3. How do communities benefit from debt advice?

The average cost per debt problem to the public (including lost economic output) is estimated to be over £1,000, with more serious problems costing many times this amount.¹¹

The LSRC researchers arrived at the figure of £1,000 per debt by considering a variety of costs to communities, including the cost to Local Authorities of providing temporary accommodation to people who lose their homes; and the stress caused by 'difficult to solve' debt problems.

Health problems that result from problem debt cost not only the NHS but local businesses too, leading in some cases to "...absenteeism and loss of productivity for those in work."¹² The decline in productivity associated with over-indebtedness is conservatively estimated to be 30% of salary. The cost of its workers' financial problems to a company can be estimated by multiplying 30% of a workers' salary by the percentage of the workforce with such problems.¹³

The cost of funding debt advice is considerably less than the cost of dealing with problem debts, particularly in Oxfordshire, where the service is mainly provided by volunteers, rather than paid staff.

2.4. Contribution of debt advice to wider social policy and Central Government

Over-indebtedness presents a barrier to delivery of objectives across Government, from tackling child poverty and social exclusion, to reducing barriers to work, and encouraging appropriate saving and investment.¹⁴ Access to free face-to-face money advice is crucial to enable vulnerable consumers to deal with financial distress.¹⁵

Additionally a key success of Citizens Advice's social policy work in debt advice in 2009 was the introduction of a joint protocol with the Local Government Association (LGA) on best practice in collection and enforcement of council tax arrears¹⁶ⁱ.

¹¹ *A Helping Hand: the Impact of Debt Advice on People's Lives*. LSRC, 2007: www.lsrc.org.uk/publications/Impact.pdf

¹² *Action on Debt*, Social Exclusion Unit, 2004: <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/seu/downloadaddoc1967.pdf?id=214>

¹³ *Fair, Clean and Competitive: The Consumer Credit Market in the 21st Century*, Department of Trade & Industry (now BERR), 2003. Available at: <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file23663.pdf>

¹⁴ *Over Indebtedness*, Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2006. Available at: <http://www.dti.gov.uk/consumers/consumer-finance/over-indebtedness/index.html>

¹⁵ *Financial Inclusion: The Way Forward*, HM Treasury, 2007 www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/7/B/financial_inclusion030407.pdf

¹⁶ Citizens Advice Social Policy Impacts Report, 2009 www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/publications/impact_social_policy.htm

3. Oxfordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux and debt clients

3.1. General debt work

35 full time equivalent volunteers deliver generalist advice, including debt, to Oxfordshire clients. Banbury CAB also has an LSC-funded debt specialist located in the principal bureau office. There are also 35 paid advisers and caseworkers in the county (18 FTE). Six of the bureaux provide debt advice to the tenants of housing associations, helping them to keep on paying their rent and avoid homelessness.

During 2009/10, Oxfordshire bureaux dealt with more than 21,400 debt problems. Of those, 5,000 were for priority debts, such as mortgage and rent arrears, council tax arrears, 3,860 concerned credit cards, store cards and charge cards and 2,935 unsecured personal loans. Nearly 1000 issues related to Debt Relief Orders.

The bureaux are actively involved in local social policy. Through this process, the experiences of clients can be used to influence local and national policy and practice. Issues reported on include irresponsible lending by banks, payment protection insurance and the activity of bailiffs.

3.2. Outcomes for clients

West Oxfordshire CAB collect information on financial gains for their clients, this includes debts written off and benefits gained. Last year £1,787,240 was gained for clients.

Oxford CAB carried out a survey of its debt clients in 2009/10, although representing a small sample of their clients, of the respondents: 66% said their confidence was better or much better; 60% reported that their peace of mind was better or much better; 48% felt that their physical health and comfort was improved; and nearly 50% of clients were in a better or much better financial situation.

The level of debt that Oxford CAB is helping clients to manage is over £6million.

3.3 Case study

Mrs X was in receipt of Pension credit and attended the bureau as she was finding it difficult to maintain payments for several loans. She had been targeted by double glazing salespeople over an 18 month period. They used pressurised selling techniques remaining in her house for up to 8 hours and only leaving once she placed an order backed by a loan. During this time she obtained 5 separate loans for home improvements. Mrs X had been miss-sold Payment Protection Insurance on two of the loans as she wasn't eligible, and the value of her home and her income had been inflated. The double glazing company had gone into receivership. After contacting the loan company her Payment Protection Insurance premiums were returned and we persevered with a claim of undue influence and obtained an admission that the salespeople had ignored the safety protocols attached to the loan applications. The remainder of the debt was written off and Mrs X received a full refund of all the payments she had made over the years.



3.4. Financial capability

In addition to one to one debt advice, most of the bureaux also implement programmes of financial capability outreach work. The county wide Financial Capability project has 16 volunteers delivering money skills training. They are currently working with groups ranging from school leavers, social housing tenants, military personnel, older people and credit unions. They also work with front line workers at organisations such as Mind, Headway and the Probation Service.

The main objectives of the project are to practically address the importance of preventative action within the context of debt work. People are given the money skills, confidence and knowledge to make good and effective financial decisions which will steer them away from becoming consumed by debt and in need of more direct intervention and complex money advice.

3.5. The future

As the effects of the economic downturn continue to be felt, there is an ongoing and high level of need for debt advice in the County. During the past year, West Oxfordshire CAB, for example, saw an increase in debt advice of 48%. The impact of further public sector cuts, is likely to continue to have an impact on the demand for debt and other advice over the coming years.

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REVIEW OF FREE DEBT ADVICE PROVISION IN OXFORDSHIRE

Submission from Oxford Advice Centres' Forum

Questions raised by Councillors:

Question 1: where in the county is free debt advice available and what form does that advice take?

Response from Oxford Advice Centres' Forum:

NB. This describes the situation in Oxford City only.

Forum members include city-wide and universal advice providers such as Oxford CAB; city-wide specialist providers such as Age Concern, Oxfordshire Chinese Community & Advice Centre, and Mind; and locally-based advice centres. They provide face-to-face advice at drop-in sessions and/or by appointment; advocacy on behalf of clients and representation at court hearings; referral to other agencies where appropriate. The advice and advocacy is free, confidential and impartial.

The areas within Oxford City which are served by local advice centres are as follows: Barton, Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys, Rose Hill, Donnington, Littlemore, Cowley, Weirs Lane estate.

Oxford CAB are also expanding their telephone advice service in order to help those who cannot attend their office. Some of the local advice centres provide telephone and e-mail advice to their own communities.

Oxford Community Work Agency, based at Barton, offer debt advice across the county. Turpin Miller Solicitors advise clients who have access to legal aid.

It is important to recognise the value of the relationship between debt advice services, other advice services and other front-line organisations in both the voluntary and public sectors dealing with, for example, housing, welfare benefits, disability and health issues.

Question 2: are there geographical gaps in the county where no free advice is available, and if so, where are they?

Response

Within the City, there are a number of areas which have no local provision. These include Marston, Cutteslowe and North Oxford, Wolvercote, Botley, the Cowley Road area. The CAB is available to all but is very busy.

Forum members point out that, as well as geographical gaps, there are structural gaps such as provision for people who are at work during the day. For this reason, all the advice centres would like to run more sessions in the evenings or at weekends but do not at present have the resources.

The County Council has available to it a report prepared in 2007 by the Oxfordshire Data Observatory on Indices of Deprivation in Oxfordshire. This report identifies those areas of greatest deprivation in the county and should help councillors conclude where the need for free debt advice is most essential.

continued

Question 3: how is the quality of free debt advice established and maintained by the organisations providing it?

Response

Most of the members of the Oxford Advice Centres' Forum have the Legal Services Commission Quality Mark, which requires an audit every two years.

The Citizens' Advice Bureau is subject to the national CAB quality audit procedures, which monitor quality of advice as well as processes.

Members share good practice through the Forum, and the Oxfordshire Money Advice Group. They all ensure that advisers undergo regular training.

Advisers as individuals can also become members of the Institute of Money Advisers, which provides training to ensure that advisers are up-to-date, and which is developing an online course.

Conclusion

The resources of all the advice providers who are members of the Forum are stretched to the limit. The need for their services will almost certainly expand at a time of national and local government cutbacks and they would like to make the case for an increase in provision. They suggest that the most cost-effective way of doing so would be to fund the existing services to provide "outreach" sessions in areas where it is not currently available, and at times other than during normal working hours.

The County Council could also support the advice sector in other ways, for example: by making Council officer expertise available in setting up websites; by facilitating meetings between advice providers; by ensuring that the public are aware of all the agencies which are available to them.

They wish to remind elected councillors that, as voluntary and charitable organisations, they provide excellent value for money. The income which they help clients to access amounts to far more than the cost of providing the service, and this income tends to be spent locally. The debt and money management advice they give helps clients to retain their homes (whether private or publicly provided) and to remain independent of any need for further county council support.

Sue Tanner
Convenor, Oxford Advice Centres' Forum
September 2010

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 8 NOVEMBER 2010

FIRE SERVICE COMMAND AND CONTROL ROOM – THE FiReControl And FireLink PROJECTS

Report by Deputy Chief Fire Officer Colin Thomas (Oxfordshire's Senior User
for the FiReControl and FireLink Projects and Joint Regional
Project Board Member)

Project Summary

- **Project Review** We still await outcome of the Communities and Local Government (CLG) review of FiReControl and the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review on the project. The Secretary of State for CLG has made it clear that the contractual situation between CLG and Cassidian (the new name of the EADS division which is the lead contractor for the FiReControl project) is very poor. CLG have activated Milestone 3 of the contract which requires the Contractor to deliver the first 3 Regional Control Centres (RCCs) by July 2011 and the Minister has made it clear that they should be delivered to time, quality and cost. It remains to be seen if Cassidian can meet these requirements. In the meantime, the FRS continues to work to deliver its project outputs to the current planned timescales. While some issues remain, FireLink Phases A and B are now close to sign-off, the CLG FireLink team has been disbanded and the remaining elements of FireLink delivery (Phase C) which is about the introduction of Mobile Data Terminals in Fire Service vehicles has been absorbed into the FiReControl project. In view of this, this report will no longer cover FireLink as a separate topic and all future reporting will be under the FiReControl heading.
- **Current Resilience** We constantly monitor the resilience of our Control Room with a rigorous risk assessment every 6 months. As a result we initiated a project to replace our obsolete Integrated Call Concentrator and this is progressing well. Sungard carried out a site survey in September and, as a result, have now indicated that installation of the replacement will take place in early 2011 (we had hoped to achieve this in late 2010); however, this small delay does not materially increase the risk to our current capability.
- **Consultation** We expect to hold "reasonableness" interviews for all our Control staff in early 2011. These will be led by the LACC HR team and the Senior Operations Manager of the RCC with OFRS oversight. In preparation all staff will be given a pre-interview questionnaire to complete with FRS assistance. We are now planning the **interview** schedules for January and February. However, these may be delayed if there is any change to the project timetable. Our Control personnel will be fully supported through the process by OCC HR and FRS management. The roll matching questionnaires to allow current Control Room posts to be equated to roles within the RCC were completed in September.

- **Data Migration** The tool which we were expecting (Data Conversion and Migration Toolkit 2 (DCMT2)) for the migration of the bulk of our data into RCC compatible formats now appears to be in doubt. It was expected to be provided by now, its User Acceptance Test was postponed by CLG and no forecast for its delivery has been given. Further delay in this area poses a significant risk to data migration. We continue to map our data to understand its completeness and location but any further progress is becoming difficult and delay further compresses the time available to complete this major work and we may not have sufficient resource to meet shortened delivery times. This situation has been made very clear to both the SE Regional Project Team and CLG.
- **Ways of Working (WoW)** CLG have said that the first tranche of the WoW work has been completed by all regions and CLG are now making sure that cross-cutting processes are harmonised. We have not been informed of the timing of subsequent work.
- **Early Deployment of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs)** We are now working on phase 2 of the MDTs rollout. We now have our Standard Operating Procedures in an appropriate validated form and are working to do the same with property risk **information**. This is a bigger and more complex task. Our current aim is to complete this work by December and make the information available on our MDTs when the next FireLink software update is rolled out. This is currently expected in January 2011. It is likely that we will have to do the update manually via physically visiting each station which is not as effective as our long term goal of undertaking this over the OCC Wide Area Network. We still await an indication of when we may have the network software to allow us to do this remotely via the wireless connectivity system OFRS provided as part of the station end upgrades.
- **Joint Project Board (JPB) /South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCC).** Both the JPB and SEFRCC are driving project activity in line with the current project plans. **However**, uncertainty over both the timing and form of FiReControl will remain until clear direction is given by the Government. This is not expected until the Comprehensive Spending Review and subsequent local government settlement are announced. Until then it has been made clear that we must work to existing plans and continue to deliver outputs that are of benefit to the FRS. However, planning for alternative solutions, should the project be terminated by Communities and Local Government, are being scoped.

COLIN THOMAS
Deputy Chief Fire Officer - FiReControl & Firelink Senior User
Tel: (01865) 855206

October 2010

Glossary

Acronym	Full name	Remarks
Cassidian	Cassidian	The new name of the division of the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS) who are delivering the project
CLG	Communities and Local Government	Government department responsible for the project
DCMT2	Data Conversion and Migration Toolkit 2	Item of software that should allow collation, cleansing and transfer of all data sets to the Cassidian system
EADS	European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company	Company contracted by CLG delivering the project
FiReControl	FiReControl	National project to replace all 46 individual fire control rooms with 9 networked regional controls
FireLink	FireLink	Replacement of the legacy analogue radio system with a digital encrypted system with potential interoperability with other emergency services
JPB	Joint Project Board	Regional group responsible for the operational delivery of the Fire and Rescue Services elements of the project. A Principle Officer from each Service attends all meetings and is titled "Senior User"
MDT	Mobile Data Terminals	Computes in cab of fire engines giving access to mapping, routing, standard operating procedures, hydrant locations and risk information
RCC	Regional Control Centers	Farham in Hampshire is the south east centre making nine in total in England
SEFRCC LTD	South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre LTD	The Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) set up and wholly owned by the nine Fire and Rescue Authorities in the South East which is responsible for running the new service
WoW	Ways of Working	Details of how all calls will be handled, operator prompts, data retention, ownership and privacy etc

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Existing items logged for future consideration (November 2010)

	6 Sep 2010	8 Nov 2010	13 Dec 2010	14 Feb 2011	10 May 2011	5 Jul 2011	6 Sep 2011	8 Nov 2011	13 Dec 2011	14 Feb 2012
Crime & Disorder Scrutiny (OSCP) (annually)				Q&A						Q&A
TVPA 3 Year Strategic Plan 09-12 (annually)					Q&A					
Draft IRMP* (annually)		Discuss then respond to consultation in due course								
Operation of Birmingham City Council's Illegal Money Lending Team in Oxfordshire (ongoing)	Progress Update NB from now onwards a quarterly paper report circulated outside the meeting unless there is something that needs to be brought to cttee			Q&A as one year on from commencing work in Oxfordshire						

SSC

	6 Sep 2010	8 Nov 2010	13 Dec 2010	14 Feb 2011	10 May 2011	5 Jul 2011	6 Sep 2011	8 Nov 2011	13 Dec 2011	14 Feb 2012
Budget (annually)	Presentation		Further detail prior to 20 Dec mtg							
Debt Advice Scrutiny Review		Final report								
Plans for Banbury Library/The Mill Arts Centre**				Report						
OFRS Response Standards (annually)		Q&A						Q&A		
Fire Control & Fire Rank	Update	Update			Update – to include report on benefits of the new systems					
Quarterly internal report on use of the RIP Act		Q&A		Q&A		Q&A		Q&A		Q&A
Authority's use of RIP Act (annually)						Review authority's use and set policy				
Museums Service										
Road Safety including considering business plan for road safety approach once available				Review situation including report on impact of removal of speed cameras						

SSC

	6 Sep 2010	8 Nov 2010	13 Dec 2010	14 Feb 2011	10 May 2011	5 Jul 2011	6 Sep 2011	8 Nov 2011	13 Dec 2011	14 Feb 2012
Libraries Transformation Programme										
Provision of Adult Learning										
Cogges Manor Farm Museum										
Reports on how district council arrangements for scrutinising crime and disorder are working										
Proposed review of Health and Safety in County's Youth Centres (with Children's Services Scrutiny)			Update to cttee if review commences post consideration of Directorate Review report							
OFRS Operational Assurance Assessment		Report								
Oxfordshire's Draft Alcohol Strategy		Comment on								
Self Help Communities	Update	Comment on framework/strategy		Track progress in relation to framework/s strategy						

SSC

	6 Sep 2010	8 Nov 2010	13 Dec 2010	14 Feb 2011	10 May 2011	5 Jul 2011	6 Sep 2011	8 Nov 2011	13 Dec 2011	14 Feb 2012
Oxford Inspires										

***Project 1 of the IRMP 2010/11** – OFRS to report to the Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities and the Scrutiny Committee on a four monthly basis in the first twelve months after implementation. This report to also include details of the beneficial elements to RDS stations from the staff redeployment of the four Watch Managers. OFRS to flag up when they are ready for the reporting to start.

**A detailed written report will come to scrutiny (including information on governance, the facilities to be provided and a serious assessment of the flooding risk and mitigation for this) at the appropriate time, possibly when consultation takes place with Banbury residents. Currently on hold pending the Cabinet's consideration of capital priorities in September or October.