



Oxfordshire County Council
Equalities Impact Assessment

Fire and Rescue Cover Model

13/08/2025

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Community Safety Services
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Proposals for changes to the Fire and Rescue Service's emergency response model.
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing function
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	<p>Proposed changes to the Fire and Rescue emergency response model, that would be subject to public consultation, involving the introduction of day shift wholetime systems at five existing on-call stations, a potential new fire station towards the north of Oxford to combine Rewley Road and Kidlington fire stations. Additional options include investment proposals, closure of up to three on-call fire stations and the removal of the second fire engine at Thame.</p> <p>The recommendations and considerations for change would create greater parity in emergency response performance across the county with performance improving in general in rural and lower density urban areas. It is anticipated that this greater parity in response performance, although worsening the service slightly for Oxford's more relatively deprived communities, would offset an existing inequality in emergency response performance and positively support Oxfordshire's rural communities.</p>
Completed By	Jason Crapper
Authorised By	Rob MacDougall
Date of Assessment	13 Aug 2025

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>Community Safety Services commissioned a review of the Fire and Rescue cover model because of a long-term decline in On-Call availability, particularly during daytime hours. Reducing On-Call availability results in a reduction in day-to-day fire engine availability, increasing service overtime costs, increased emergency response times and reduced service productivity. The review also offers the opportunity to ensure that the service's operating model aligns resources appropriately with community risk.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>It is proposed that the Fire and Rescue Service proceed to public consultation concerning recommended changes, and further considerations for changes, to the Fire and Rescue cover model used within the service. The recommendations comprise core changes to the way in which some fire engines are crewed using a set of key principles which are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the use of full-time (wholetime) firefighters at nighttime and instead increasing the use of these staff during the daytime at various stations to provide more resilient daytime appliance availability and to improve firefighter productivity during the day in activities such as our prevention work. • Relying on part-time (on-call) firefighters more at night when their availability is very good. • Increasing the parity in emergency response performance between more densely populated urban areas and less densely populated urban and rural areas to enable a redistribution of resources to provide more resilient daytime appliance availability. <p>The resulting response model could result in the following changes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The introduction of a day shift wholetime system at Chipping Norton, Faringdon, and Wallingford (or Crowmarsh site relocated from Wallingford) to crew the fire engine during the day with the current on-

call crews crewing the fire engine at night. This will also allow local on-call crews to focus recruitment energies on nighttime hours.

2. The introduction of a day shift wholetime system at Bicester and Witney to crew the first fire engine in the day with the current on-call crews crewing the second fire engine during the day and both fire engines at night.
3. The removal of the on-call fire engine from Rewley Road.
4. The building of a new fire station towards the north of Oxford to replace both Rewley Road and Kidlington fire stations. This new station would house two fire engines and a high reach appliance (hydraulic platform) with one of the fire engines crewed on a 24/7 basis by wholetime staff. The second fire engine would be crewed by day shift wholetime staff in the day and on-call crews at night with on-call staff being transferred and permanently rehomed from Kidlington Fire Station.
5. Investment options that would entail additional investment in the number of firefighters to maintain an additional fire engine 24/7 for Oxford, to maintain station crewing levels at current levels or to enable the service to retain Station Support Officers.
6. The closure of one, two or three fire stations at Woodstock, Eynsham and/or Henley due to perennially poor on-call availability.
7. The removal of the second fire engine from Thame Fire Station due to perennially poor availability.

These options have been developed over several months and following extensive independent modelling with a third-party consultant with the aim of trying to improve both the availability and response performance of fire engines in Oxfordshire. The proposals being offered are forecasted to improve overall fire engine response performance across Oxfordshire as a whole. However, there are unavoidable conflicts to make such improvements within the existing cost envelope which means that there are forecasted to be corresponding reductions in response performance at other times and/or in certain parts of the county to deliver these overall benefits. These can be summarised as follows:

- Whilst there are significant first fire engine response improvements forecasted during the day in four out of the five local council areas, the performance in Oxford City is forecasted to be slightly worse under the options being put forward. This is a result of the conscious move to transfer resources to less densely populated rural areas that suffer from poor on-call firefighter availability and thus ensuring greater parity in response performance across the county. However, the level of emergency response

resources is proposed to be kept higher for Oxford compared to other parts of the county due to its risk profile. This means that despite the reduction, response performance is still forecasted to be between 1% and 12% better in Oxford City than other parts of the county overall.

- First fire engine response performance is forecasted to be marginally worse at night across the county overall but with some improvements in three of the five local council areas. For Oxford City, the response performance at night is forecasted to be worse than it is now but with broadly the same performance across the day and night.
- Second fire engine response performance is forecasted to improve overall with bigger improvements during the day. Response performance for the second fire engine to incidents reduces at night in four out of the five local council areas.

Evidence / Intelligence

List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.

- [Mid-Year Population Estimates, England and Wales, June 2023](#) – Used to assess any disproportionate impacts on persons of different ages.
- [Ethnic Group Census 2021 data](#) – Used to assess any disproportionate impacts on persons belonging to different ethnic groups.
- [Index of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\) 2019, The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 Oxford City Results](#) – Used to assess any disproportionate impacts on areas of deprivation.
- [Census 2021 religious data](#) – Used to provide data regarding the distribution of people identifying as having a religion.
- [Disability census 2021 data](#) – Used to provide data regarding the Distribution of people identifying as having a disability.

Additionally, various sources were used to identify registered places of worship as follows:

District Name	Buddhist	Chapel	Christian	Islam	Jehova's Witness	Judaism	Nirankari	Temple	Grand Total
Cherwell		3	132	1	1			1	138
Oxford City	1	5	89	3		1	1		100
South Oxfordshire		3	125		1				129
Vale of White Horse		7	114						121
West Oxfordshire		1	121		1				123
Grand Total	1	19	581	4	3	1	1	1	611

To assist the analysis further, information in relation to risk factors for dwelling fires have been used to assist in understanding the equality impacts of the proposed changes.

The NFCC have commissioned [risk stratification research](#) to understand the risk factors for dwelling fires. These can be separated into factors affecting the risk of a person being killed in an accidental dwelling fire and those that affect the risk of a person having an accidental dwelling fire or being injured by one. According to the research, the risk of a person being killed in an accidental dwelling fire are driven by the following factors:

- Over 70 years old, particularly in combination with any pre-existing mental or physical impairment including frailty.
- Children under 11 years old, but especially under 5 years who are less likely to be able to self-rescue.
- Being male (particularly when combined with other risk factors)
- Smokers – especially if combined with poor mobility or other health condition.
- Low Socioeconomic Status (SES) i.e. deprivation.
- Disability or long-term health condition (including dementia).
- Mental and/or physical impairment caused by alcohol and/or drugs.
- Non-owned property or mobile home – this may be a proxy indicator for low SES.
- Single-parent families, and households with more children.

The risk of a person being injured by an accidental dwelling fire are instead driven by the following factors:

- Living alone.
- Having had a fire before, and lack of basic fire safety knowledge.
- More prevalent among people in the 40-49 age group.

With respect to Road Traffic Collision risk, research by the NFCC indicated that statistical modelling for likelihood did not produce any pertinent demographic findings, although some factors were tentatively linked to higher rates of RTCs. However, such risk factors do not define where an RTC might occur, and the likelihood and consequences of RTCs are instead driven by risk factors pertaining to the road itself. As such, for the purposes of this EIA, there are no adverse equality impacts pertaining to RTCs as a result of the proposed emergency response model.

<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>Extensive modelling has taken place in arriving at the recommendations for change summarised above. However, no alternative stand-alone models have been fully developed and therefore the recommendations should currently be viewed alongside a 'do nothing' option which is forecast to result in continued long term decline in on-call availability and reduced overall appliance availability.</p>
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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proportional age of residents across the five local council areas are broadly similar except for a spike in the population of Oxford between the ages of 20 and 24 that is commensurate the city's student population. The 20-24 age group is not			

				considered to be a group that is disproportionately vulnerable to domestic fires. On that basis, any proposed changes that results in a more equal emergency response performance across the five district council areas would have a positive impact on age equality.			
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People that have a disability or long-term health condition (including dementia) are at higher risk of being killed in an accidental dwelling fire. Based on age-standardised proportions, people identifying as being disabled with day-to-day activities limited a lot vary marginally across Oxfordshire with the highest being 6.2% in Oxford and the lowest being 4.7% in South Oxfordshire. Given that these differences are only slight, it is taken that the proposed model of response does not have an overall impact on persons identifying as being disabled.			

Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Ethnic groups which are not "White British" by local council in Oxfordshire are greatest in Oxford with 46.5% and lowest in West Oxfordshire with 11%. Whilst the proposed changes would have a disproportional impact on non-White British communities in Oxford, ethnicity is not considered to be a risk factor with respect to accidental dwelling fires. On this basis, it is considered that the proposed changes would result in a more equal emergency response performance across the five district council areas with no specific adverse impact on people from certain ethnic groups.</p>			

Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whilst being male is a recognised risk factor with respect to accidental dwelling fires, the proportion of male to female is broadly the same across Oxfordshire and therefore the proposed emergency response model would not have an adverse impact on males.			
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proportion of people identifying that they have a religion is broadly similar across the five district council areas:</p> <p>Cherwell = 59.48% Oxford = 56.69% South Oxfordshire = 56.21% Vale of the White Horse = 55.63% West Oxfordshire = 56.85%</p> <p>With respect to the numbers of registered places of worship, these are also very similar across the the five local council areas with 14% difference between the four council areas with the most registered buildings. Oxford City stands out as having the fewest number of registered places of worship, albeit serving a more densely populated area. The number of registered non-Christian places of worship across Oxfordshire are overall much smaller but greatest in Oxford with six, perhaps reflecting the greater diversity within Oxford City's population. Taken altogether, it is suggested that the proposed risk model will not have an adverse impact on</p>			
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				people who identify as having a religion.			
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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed changes are resulting in greater parity in response performance between Oxford City and the other parts of the county, creating improvements in the response performance and prevention work productivity in the county's more rural areas.			
Armed Forces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	As of 2019, Oxford remains the most deprived of the five Oxfordshire districts. On that basis, any change that results in a poorer emergency response to Oxford City	The proposed changes would indirectly address existing inequalities in emergency response performance in Oxfordshire. As such, whilst the response		

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
				arguably has an overall detrimental impact on those areas of deprivation in Oxford. However, there are also relatively deprived areas in other parts of the county and therefore this would partially be offset by improved responses in the rest of the county.	performance is forecast to worsen in Oxford, the overall response performance and service resilience is still set to be higher in Oxford and this has included the proposed commitment to maintaining the fire station at Slade Park in Oxford which is well located to respond to some of Oxford's more deprived areas.		

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The creation of new day shift opportunities across the service is anticipated to offer welcomed opportunities for some staff to continue to operate on fire engine crews without the nighttime			

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
				commitments that extend to our current duty systems. Additionally, the widening of daytime wholtime appliance availability will reduce the pressure on some on-call crews to provide daytime fire engine availability which can have a corresponding negative impact on family life.			
Other Council Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social Value ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	
Person Responsible for Review	
Authorised By	