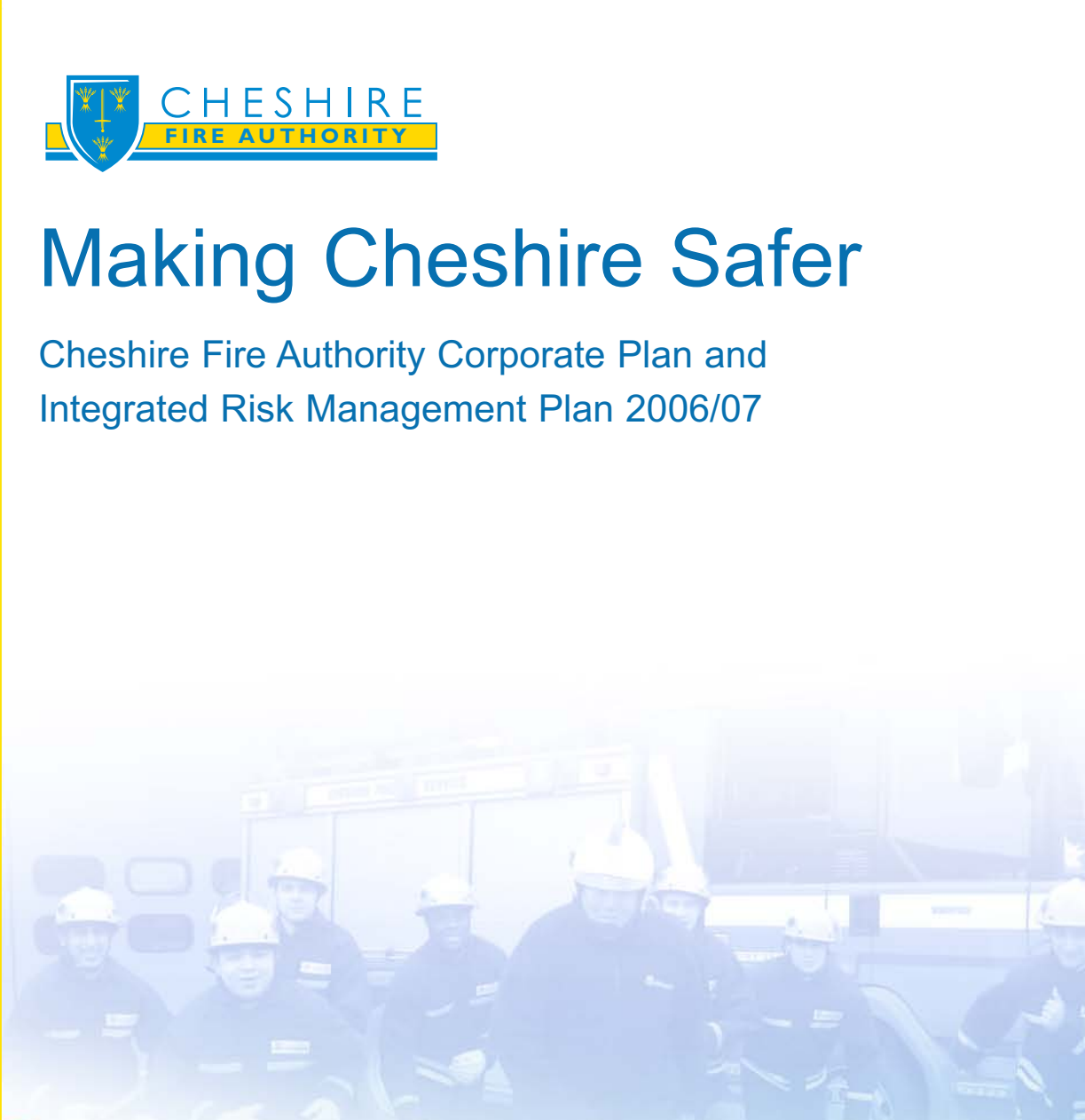
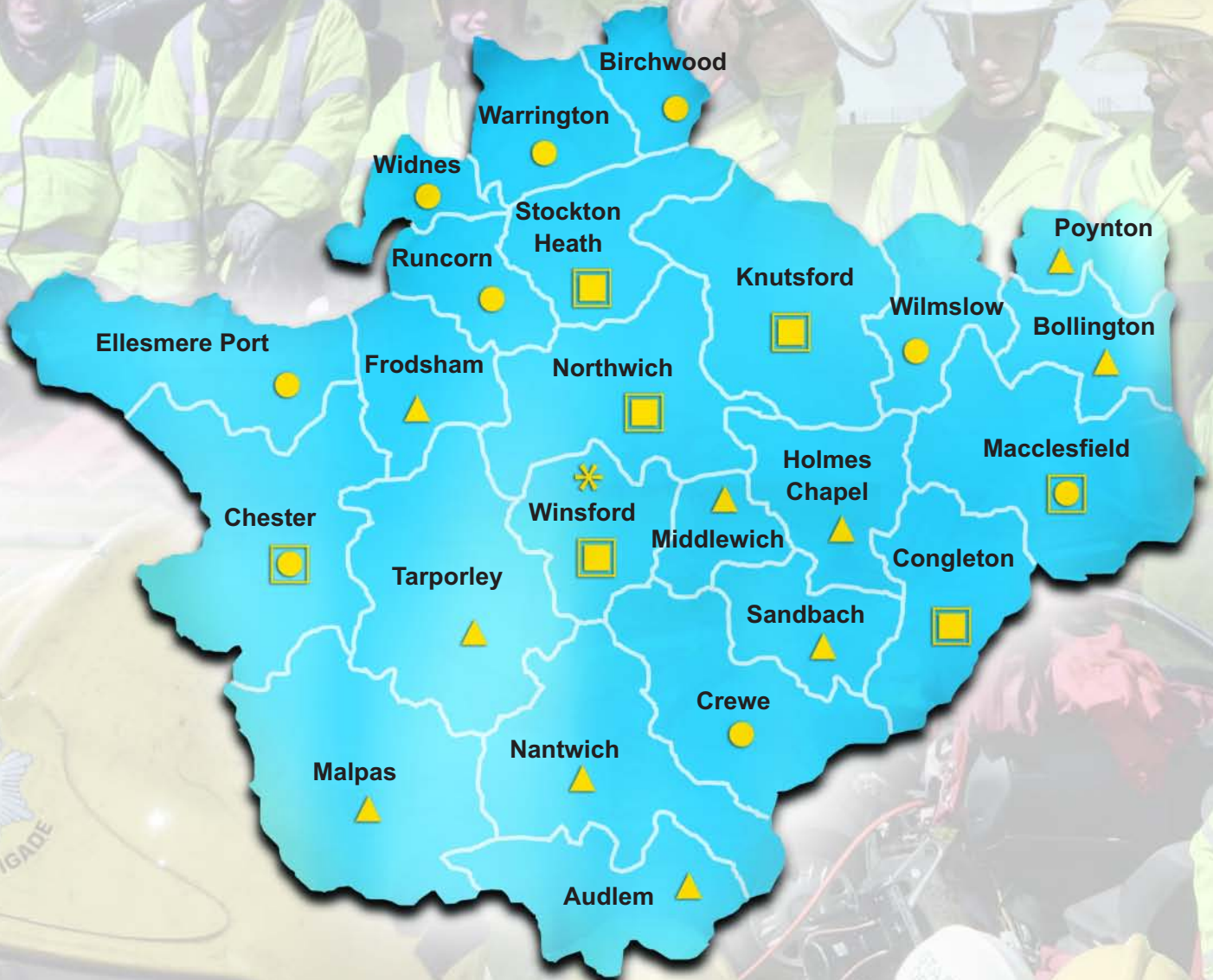


# Making Cheshire Safer

Cheshire Fire Authority Corporate Plan and  
Integrated Risk Management Plan 2006/07



Station Map



**KEY**

- Wholetime Stations
- Day Crew Stations
- ▲ Retained Stations
- \* Control
- A box around the symbol indicates there are Retained personnel on Station

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## Foreword

In introducing this plan - the first in the name of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service - it is appropriate to reflect on the rationale for the change in our name because it represents much more than just a play on words.

The events of September 11th started a chain of events that have affected all of us and continue to present us with the real threat of terrorist attack. In addition, disasters like Hurricane Katrina have focussed world attention on the potential – and unpredictable - impact of climate change. We have seen the dramatic effects of both these phenomenon vividly, and much closer to home, in London during July and September 2005, together with the floods in Boscastle in 2003 and Cumbria in 2005.

Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, we have a number of new duties and responsibilities – most particularly a duty to attend emergency incidents other than just fires. These include road traffic collisions and accidents, chemical emergencies, major accident hazards, rescues, large scale emergencies, flooding and many more. Previously these incidents have been attended on a ‘goodwill’ basis.

Not only do we now have a duty to attend a wide range of emergencies, we also have a responsibility to try to prevent them. How we plan the resources and capacity needed for our broader spheres of responsibility and activity must be prioritised, properly targeted and determined through local risk management.

The “centre of gravity” of the Fire and Rescue Service, therefore, has shifted and we are now part of the critical infrastructure that must be in place to deal with these events and risks. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service is ready and prepared to be part of an emergency response on a local, regional, national and, indeed, international basis.

However, in light of the complexities outlined it is no longer possible for organisations like ours to operate in discrete or self contained ways. Local authorities, other emergency services, the community and voluntary sector all form part of a public realm facing many of the same issues and challenges. Our best chance of achieving our wider goals for community safety is by greater integration and by working with other public, private and voluntary sector bodies - not to mention the community itself - and persuading them to act on our behalf and in all of our collective interests.

This more rounded concept lies at the very heart of the Government creating Public Service Agreements and Local Area Agreements, where the “sum of the whole” can make a difference to communities in ways unachievable by individual organisations. This change of emphasis means that the core purpose of our organisation has shifted from simply emergency response to greater community leadership and involvement.

This Plan, therefore, brings together how we will operate at local, regional, national and international levels with other emergency services and the wider public sector and other organisations. However, our central focus remains firmly on improving the safety of all communities in Cheshire and achieving our vision of **zero preventable deaths from fire or other emergencies in our area.**



**Steve McGuirk**  
Chief Fire Officer



**Tony Hooton**  
Chairman of Cheshire Fire Authority

## Part 1 : Corporate Plan Overview

### Introduction

The focus of Cheshire Fire Authority remains clear and it is to make Cheshire a safer place and to deliver our vision of 'zero preventable deaths'. This consolidated Plan is the key strategic document which sets out our future aims, objectives, priorities, the resources needed to deliver these priorities and the targets we will use to measure our progress in achieving our goals.

As the public body responsible for providing a key emergency and safety service to the communities of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington, Cheshire Fire Authority must ensure its resources are used to maximum effect. To support this we must recognise our resources are finite and we must use risk assessment both in the day-to-day management of the organisation, and in achieving our objectives.

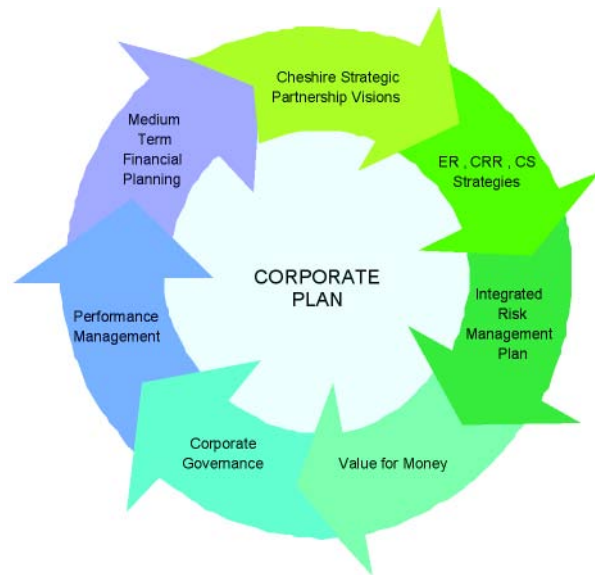
Accordingly, this Corporate Plan now incorporates our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The IRMP is a statutory document which all fire and rescue services are required to publish each year and which details our analysis of local risk and how we intend to deploy our resources.

In one document, therefore, we have consolidated all of our strategic planning framework, with the emphasis on clarity of purpose and prioritisation of activity and resources, through robust performance management.

The Corporate Plan details the steps the Authority has taken to examine the significant local (micro) and strategic (macro) issues which are likely to have an impact on the safety of residents, businesses and visitors to the area.

Notwithstanding the need to plan, there are also growing expectations of continuing value for money from all public services, and a need to demonstrate our intent and commitment to communicate and consult with local residents, businesses and other partners, so they can influence the way their fire and rescue service develops.

Thus, the Corporate Plan also includes our longer term objectives, and sets out how we intend to ensure we have the necessary resources to continue improving our service. This includes



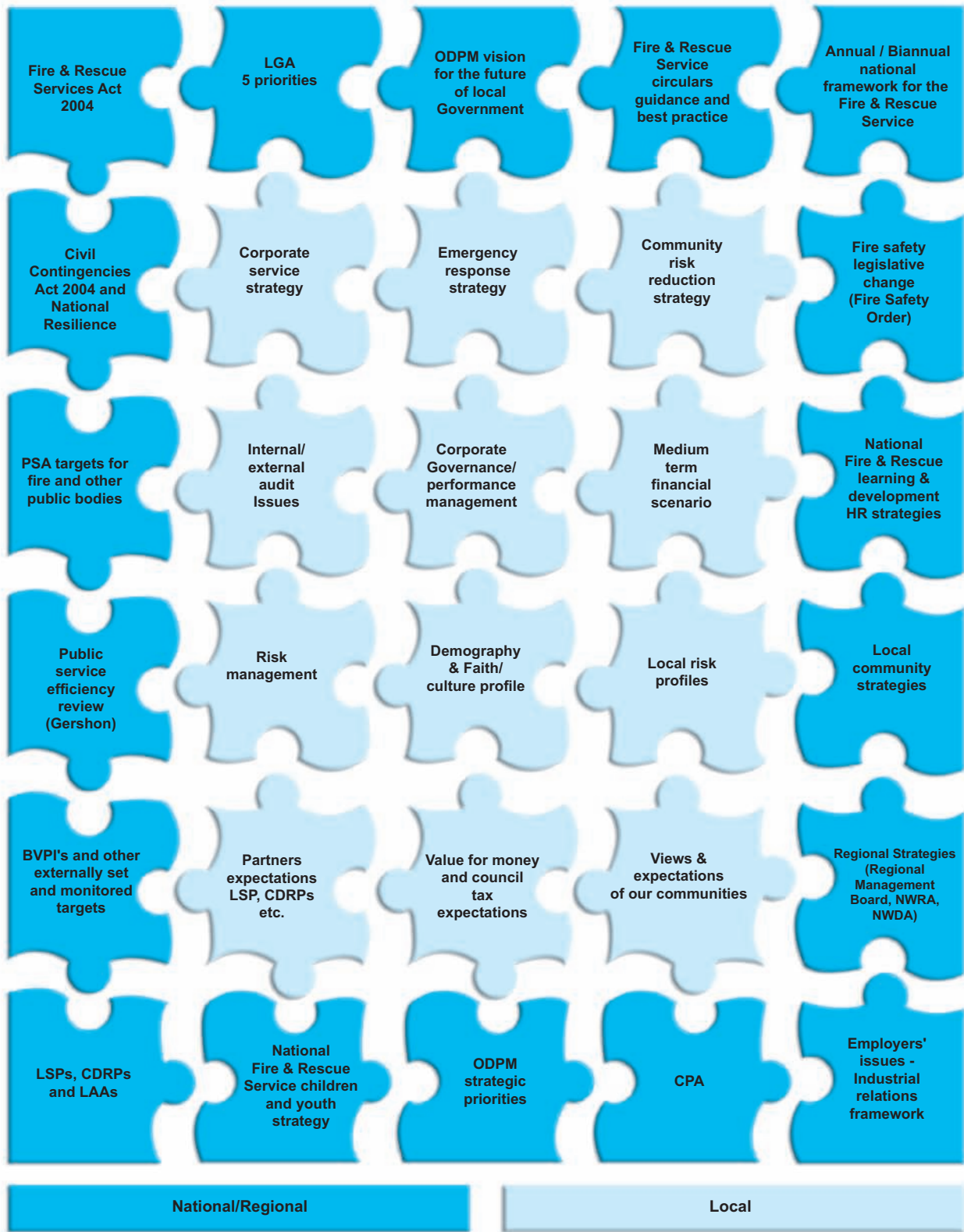
acknowledging the changes in the age and structure of our local communities and making sure our services are accessible by a multi-cultural and multi-faith society in the future.

### The Plan;

- Articulates the Authority's and the Service's strategic direction.
- Through the IRMP, identifies local priorities and standards for our front-line service delivery.
- Details the prioritised activities/initiatives required (with timescales) to achieve our objectives.
- Ensures that these activities/initiatives are delivered efficiently and effectively and provide value for money for the council tax payer.
- Details the targets by which we will measure progress and success and thereby enables the Authority to contribute to creating sustainable communities and making Cheshire, Halton and Warrington a safer place in which to live, work and travel.

In determining our vision, mission, aims and objectives and how we intend to achieve them, many complex influences, drivers and constraints need to be considered. While the key ones are summarised in the jigsaw below, a more comprehensive Political, Economic, International, Social and Technological (PEIST) analysis may be found on our website at [www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk):-

## National, Regional and Local Influences



## Public Service Agreements

Public Service Agreement (PSAs) incorporate ambitious goals for key service improvements across the whole of government. They represent an agreement between the Government and the relevant public body or bodies, and reflect key priorities across all areas of public services. By implication they require a multi-agency approach through the pooling of capacity, resources, expertise and goodwill.

As far as possible within this plan, we have sought to contribute to many national PSAs, as well as those specific to fire and rescue services (covered later in the IRMP section). With finite resources, our contribution to the wider discretionary targets has, and will often be, in kind. The initiatives detailed in this Plan though, do seek to support this 'whole community' focus and approach.

We also believe that as PSAs evolve to feature within Local Area Agreements, we can make a bigger contribution to the wider community safety and community cohesion agenda, especially

through the following 'blocks' of activity identified by the Government:

- Safer and stronger communities
- Children and young people
- Healthier communities and older people
- Economic sustainability and environment

### Our Vision

It will be noted that many of these key issues and national influences are highlighted in our jigsaw diagram overleaf and have shaped our thinking. By acknowledging these and assessing the risk and social profile of our community we have determined our own vision and established clear priorities. To ensure we maintain our focus and clarity, we have sub-divided these into three key aims and seven organisational objectives.

These also reflect the Fire Authority's determination to ensure that the Service is responsive and cost-effective, continuously improving, with the reduction in fires and other emergencies at the very heart of our agenda.

### VISION

Our vision is a Cheshire where there are no preventable deaths, injuries and damage from fires and other emergencies

### MISSION

Our mission is to help create safer communities, to rescue people and protect economic, environmental and community interests

### AIMS

Our three key aims are:

Improve community safety by risk reduction  
**(PREVENTION & PROTECTION)**

Respond effectively to emergency incidents  
**(EMERGENCY RESPONSE)**

Deliver efficient and effective services underpinned by a robust governance framework  
**(CORPORATE SERVICES)**

### ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Our seven organisational objectives are to:

**CRR1**  
Prevent dangerous anti-social and careless behaviour

**CRR2**  
Protect life, property and other interests

**ER1**  
Deploy emergency teams according to risks

**ER 2**  
Deal effectively with emergency incidents

**CS 1**  
Develop a workforce fit to realise our vision

**CS 2**  
Ensure services meet the needs of all local communities through inclusive consultation & communication

**CS 3**  
Ensure value for money and maximise investment in front line services

## Public Service Agreements

The charts on the following pages demonstrate in more detail how the three functions of Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Emergency Response (ER), and Corporate Services (CS) have been established to align to these aims and contribute to the achievement of the objectives. We have also highlighted the key targets we will use to measure our performance. However, before expanding on these it is important also to consider our values.

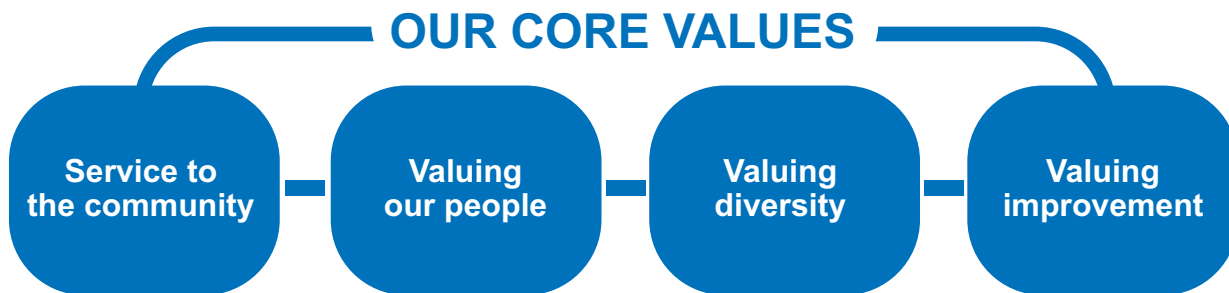
### Our Core Values

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has always practiced and been praised for its open and supportive culture. We are keen to adopt the new Core Values for the Fire and Rescue Service,

seeing these as an opportunity to improve citizenship and respect across the Service and we believe strongly in demonstrating we are a values-based organisation.

Establishing effective values plays a major part in providing our Service and the people in it with a clear and consistent picture of what we are all about.

**Our vision is about where we want to be;  
our mission is about what we want to do;  
our values are about how we do it**





### Our objectives

We have identified how our three key aims flow from our vision and mission and set out below are templates that identify how these three simple aims translate into more complex objectives and targets for delivery.

Each of the three overarching aims is the responsibility of a Deputy Chief Fire Officer. The detail of how all of these targets will be achieved is in our consolidated action plan available on our website at [www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

## CHESHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE CORPORATE OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK 2006/7

AIMS

Respond effectively to emergency incidents  
(EMERGENCY RESPONSE)



Brigade Manager DCO Keith Newnes

AIMS

CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

**ER 1**

Deploy emergency teams according to risk

**ER 2**

Deal efficiently with emergency incidents

CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

HEADLINE PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- Achieve good or better performance in Operational Assurance under the second round of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)
- Achieve the Cheshire standards of Emergency Response overall on 90% of occasions
- Meet the Cheshire 'Resilience' standard on 95% of occasions
- Ensure all stations achieve the 'turn out' time standard on 90% of occasions
- Reduce the numbers of fires that spread beyond the room of origin by 3% by 2008
- Attain the use of the strategic reserve for ER, CRR and training / exercising on 90% of occasions
- Reduce the incidence of malicious hoax calls by 20% by 2008
- Maintain Station minimum crewing levels on 90% of occasions

HEADLINE PERFORMANCE TARGETS

## Headline Performance Targets

### CHESHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE CORPORATE OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK 2006/7

AIMS

Improve community safety  
by risk reduction  
(PREVENTION & PROTECTION)



AIMS

Brigade Manager DCO Chris Turnock

CORPORATE  
OBJECTIVES

#### CRR 1

Prevent dangerous anti-social and careless behaviour

#### CRR 2

Protect life, property and other interests

CORPORATE  
OBJECTIVES

HEADLINE PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- Reduce the number of accidental fire-related deaths in the home by 20% averaged over the period 1999-2010
- Achieve a 10% reduction in deliberate fires by 31 March 2010
- Reduce the numbers of unwanted fire signals from automatic fire alarm systems by 6% in 2006/07
- Target and deliver over 40,000 home safety assessments each year and ensure that smoke detectors are fitted to those homes identified as being at greatest risk
- Carry out Fire Safety Order risk assessment audits to premises identified as very high and high risk
- Reduce the numbers of fire related incidents in non domestic properties to no more than 21.43 per 1000 properties in 2006/07
- Increase the numbers of volunteers working on community risk reduction issues by 100% based upon the 2005/6 baseline (a minimum of another 100 volunteers)
- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Cheshire's roads (excluding motorways) by 44% by 2008 through a partnership agreement with others

HEADLINE PERFORMANCE TARGETS

# CHESHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE CORPORATE OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK 2006/7

AIMS

Deliver effective services underpinned by a robust governance framework  
(CORPORATE SERVICES)



AIMS

Brigade Manager DCO Kathryn Foreman

CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

**CS 1**  
Develop a workforce competent and able to realise our vision

**CS 2**  
Ensure services meet the needs of all local communities through inclusive consultation and communication

**CS 3**  
Ensure value for money and maximise investment in front line services

CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

HEADLINE PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- Reduce the incidence of staff sickness from 9.7 days lost per person to 6 days per person per annum during 2006
- Ensure Cheshire is in the top 25% of all Fire & Rescue Services in all national performance indicators that demonstrate the workforce is representative of the community it serves
- Reduce accidents and injuries in the workplace by 10% by 2007
- Remove all barriers to the recruitment to whole-time positions from within the retained duty system during 2006
- Achieve a score of 3 in the CPA "Use of Resources" judgement
- Achieve 'Gershon' efficiency targets and redeploy savings into front line service priorities as detailed in the action plan
- Achieve the national Fire and Rescue Service target for e-governance and to achieve recognised accessibility standards for online services
- Achieve level 3 in the Local Government Equality Standard by 2007
- Achieve 72% customer satisfaction in the 2006/07 general user satisfaction survey
- Reduce paper consumption by 10% by 2007

HEADLINE PERFORMANCE TARGETS

## Part 3 - Corporate Support / Corporate Services

### 1. Achievements to date

Cheshire Fire Authority fully embraced the observations and recommendations of the Independent Review (Bain, 2002) regarding the need for a necessary balance between the traditional role of emergency response, new statutory responsibilities for prevention and protection, and the need of a sound framework of corporate support and governance.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, therefore, restructured two years ago to reflect this new approach. This is illustrated in the Integrated Risk Management model below.



The new structure has three arms which relate directly to the IRM model, each of which is led by a Deputy Chief Officer to emphasise their significance.

The three arms are :

- **Community Risk Reduction (CRR)**
- **Emergency Response (ER), and**
- **Corporate Services (CS)**

The previous sections have covered the activities of the ER and CRR arms. Over the last few years however, the Corporate Services arm of the organisation has undergone a transformation to make it 'fit for purpose', and to play a key role in delivering the challenge of the modernisation agenda:

- The skill base of Corporate Services has been significantly extended by the appointment of key managers from the professional spheres of HR, Finance, Communications, Legal etc.
- An Integrated Management System has been introduced to underpin financial and other reporting, as well as achieve increased efficiency and effectiveness in back office processes.
- A Business Improvement Team has been appointed to benchmark research and facilitate best practice solutions in other sections of our delivery across the organisation.
- HR and Training functions have merged to achieve the cultural shift towards integrated people development.
- A new emphasis has been placed on governance, performance management, planning and budget management necessary for an ambitious precepting authority.

Our CPA assessment reflected that much has changed and that the 'building blocks' are now in place for Corporate Services to meet its key objectives which are to:



Much progress has already been made and is outlined overleaf.

**CS1**  
**Develop a workforce  
competent and able to  
realise our vision**

We have already identified how we have completely transformed the skills and capability of a Corporate Services function. However, we have similarly restructured the workforce at “the sharp end”.

### **Administrative managers at fire stations and safety centres**

New Administrative Manager posts have been filled to cover all stations and fire safety centres as part of modernising and “upskilling” the organisation. The role of these new managers is designed to give frontline staff more time for community safety duties, improve communication throughout the Service and promote better management of resources and performance at a local level. They are explicitly there to challenge the way we have always done things and to support change in a modern and progressive way alongside – but not instead – of existing station and watch managers.

### **New staffing model/ Restructure**

We have now completed the move from the old ranks of fire brigade hierarchy management e.g. Station Officers, Leading Firefighters, etc, to the seven new roles identified as necessary to address the needs of a modern Fire and Rescue Service.

These new roles are Brigade Manager, Area Manager, Group Manager, Station Manager, Watch Manager, Crew Manager and, most importantly, Firefighter .

This has been an enormous undertaking and has also proved to be a valuable de-layering exercise, stripping out a number of unnecessary layers of management and ensuring that our ‘people resource’ is aligned to delivering our objectives.

In undertaking this work, we have also taken the opportunity to re-structure the whole organisation.

### **“Mixed Economy” approach**

This has already been covered in the IRMP but encompasses safety advocates as well as safety teams of volunteers and partner organisations in support of our own front-line staff.

### **Appraisal**

One of the most important levels in our planning hierarchy (detailed below) is that of individual objective setting at appraisal.

We have re-launched an appraisal scheme which seeks to ensure that all staff are aware of their role in delivering the Service’s objectives through individual objective setting.

However, the scheme goes further to measure all grade performance against role map/job description/personal qualities and attitudes and values.

From this a development profile is agreed and these priorities are fed into the organisation’s Organisational Development Group and appropriate solutions arranged.

This emphasis on development, as opposed to traditional operational training, is a key objective of the Integrated Personal Development Scheme which we are implementing on an incremental basis.

This shift in emphasis is also one of the main drivers for the review of the training function in 2006, which will see its merger with HR completed.

(See also Equalities and Diversity below under CS2).

### **Retained / Wholetime**

We have made significant inroads into breaking down the barriers between our wholetime and retained staff. The philosophy that “a firefighter is a firefighter” is fully subscribed to. We have recently recruited two retained staff into wholetime positions in our Training department and in 2006 will assimilate other staff to the wholetime duty system.

<sup>7</sup> The role maps that expand on these seven roles may be found on the web site of the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and form part of the national Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS)

CS2  
Ensure services meet the needs of all local communities through inclusive consultation and communication

**Communications Strategy**

A three year strategy has now been adopted by the Authority. It covers both internal and external communication and also includes renaming the organisation as “Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service” to reflect better the new duties and responsibilities. In addition, the strategy sets out guiding principles on both communications and consultation. The aim of the strategy is threefold. To ensure that :

- all of our stakeholders are clear about our priorities.
- staff are aware of these priorities and how their role relates to delivering these.
- these priorities are influenced by the community - the so-called “voice and choice” agenda.

**Equalities and diversity**

We have re-established our Equality and Diversity Forum and re-launched our Equalities Task Group. We have also commissioned work to support us from leading experts in the equalities field. We already play a key role in funding and supporting the “Connecting with Communities” project which is being run through the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Racial Equality Council (CHAWREC), but we want to do much more. We intend to develop stronger links with CHAWREC and make better use of its contacts with Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) communities to assist in both staff recruitment and during consultations on access to our services.

We are also monitoring recent increases in the numbers of migrant workers from several European countries who have moved into the area. For example, significant communities of both Polish and Portuguese families are now established in the Crewe area.



We have already translated some of our key safety messages into the relevant languages to make sure they can receive appropriate help and support, but we want to explore ways of working with these communities better.

To ensure we are consistent in the way we approach and include our most vulnerable to reach communities, we will be implementing a new community engagement strategy during 2006/07.

**Data Sharing**

We believe better sharing of data among public sector organisations is critical to reducing the risks facing some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. While the Authority recognises the potential conflict with existing legislation, such as the Data Protection Act, we feel that these can be overcome by a joint commitment to prevent “at risk” families and individuals from slipping through the public service net.

In 2006/07 and beyond we will lobby locally, regionally and nationally for emergency services to be given the necessary powers to allow better, practical data sharing in the future.

In the meantime, we have been pro-active in engaging our Cheshire public sector partners, both through the Cheshire and Warrington Information Consortium (CWIC) and through the Coroner's Office, to consider local protocols to facilitate data exchange pending any legislative changes.

**CS3**  
Ensure value for  
money and  
maximise investment  
in front line services

### Review of day crew housing

A detailed review of all of the Authority's accommodation was undertaken in 2005 and a report setting out over 20 key points was agreed in principle as the basis for more detailed investigation and consultation. Decisions on the specific matter of the future of day crewed housing are dependent on the more comprehensive review of the day duty system which is scheduled to report in 2006/07. However, what is clear is that it is unrealistic for these houses to be occupied at a purely nominal rent and that value for money will underpin the new licence to occupy or sale arrangements.

### Integrated Management System (IMS)

We have implemented a major new ICT system which will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our financial planning. Collaboration with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service on providing the IMS and on providing payroll services has ensured major cost savings.

The management information available through the IMS will support the 'golden plait of improvement' detailed below.

Once embedded, the capacity released by IMS will be able to be deployed into administrative areas currently lacking support. The IMS will also provide the platform for delegated budgets (to station/Community Safety centre level) through web-requisitioning of 'general stores' and a new approach to property maintenance.

### 'Gershon' efficiency savings

In 2004/05 we achieved the 2.5% efficiency savings and our efficiency statement was described by the ODPM as 'best practice'.

These savings have been reinvested into front line service priority areas in the 06/07 budget.

### Procurement review

We have undertaken a review of our procurement function against the backdrop of the regional review led by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue.

What is clear, is that we will make considerable improvements in efficiency and effectiveness by introducing web-based requisitioning in respect of 'general stores' and by engaging with a partner Fire and Rescue Service for the provision of strategic procurement support. This will take place in 2006.

### Performance delivery groups

We have now re-launched Performance Delivery Groups (PDGs) at local level.

These groups monitor the effectiveness of our performance and the delivery of projects and services, placing an emphasis on home safety and arson reduction. PDGs are based on the local authority boundaries in Cheshire, the same as Local Strategic Partnerships and Crime Reduction Partnerships. This has been done to ensure greater consistency in performance management, greater engagement with local communities, increase Elected Member involvement and to 'localise' the delivery of our Corporate Plan priorities.

The membership of each of the PDG groups consists of:

- Group Manager for the locality.
- Station Manager(s) aligned to the locality and station Administration Managers.
- Community Risk Reduction Officer aligned to the locality.
- Community Safety Officer aligned to the locality.
- Retained Station Support Officer.
- Corporate Support Representative.
- Local Elected Member Representatives
- Community Representative.



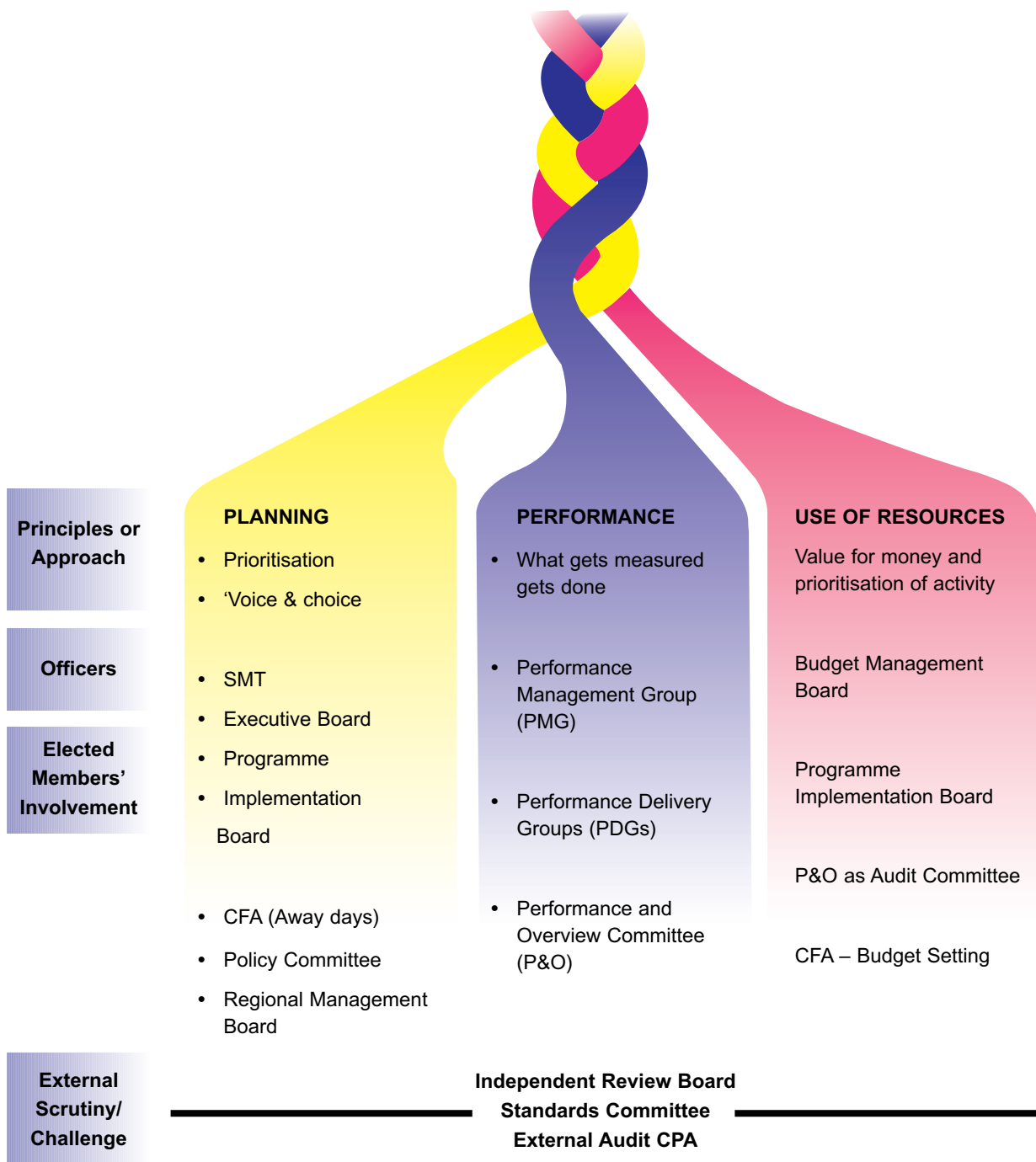
A PDG Toolkit now ensures consistency of management of these groups in a localised context with an increasing role being played by the newly-appointed Administration Managers.

However, during 2006/07 one of our major priorities is to embed what we are calling the 'Golden Plait of Improvement'

**The 'Golden Plait of Improvement'**

It is impossible for an effective organisation to consider its planning, performance and use of resources as separate issues. Unless they are tightly interwoven (plaited) and seen as interdependent rather than independent, a seamless route to continuous improvement will be impossible to achieve. Our approach to each of these elements has been overhauled.

See the diagram below.

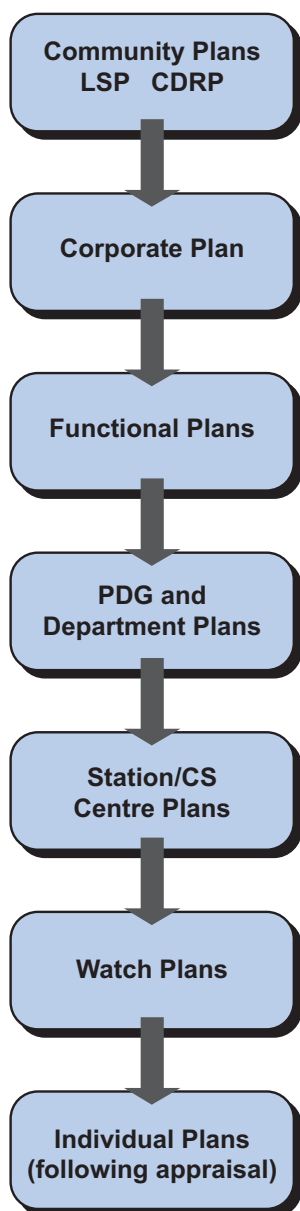




## 2. Planning, performance and financial strategy

The Authority's planning horizon has been extended from 'year to year' to a 5 year minimum. Each of the three arms of the organisation has a 5 year plan in pursuit of the Authority's vision. Annually, these plans are revisited and prioritised into an action plan in the context of our IRMP, our partners plans and the views and expectations of the community. Our draft action plan is consulted upon extensively.

This plan then acts as the catalyst for planning throughout the Service, right down to individual objectives set at appraisal as the following hierarchy shows



These plans ensure accountability by setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-related) targets and naming responsible officers.

### Performance

Historically, performance management focussed on reporting against nationally set Best Value Performance Indicators within the 'family group' framework, which was often achieved in most areas.

This has been developed on the basis of two principles:

- i. What gets measured gets done
- ii. Measurement must focus on achievement of our key targets.

We have now developed a suite of local indicators which contribute to achievement of our key targets. These are complementary to the Best Value Indicators set out in Section 1. A specialist software programme is used to monitor performance against these indicators. Crucially, our Performance Delivery Groups, our Strategic Performance Management Group together with our Policy and Overview Committee, focus on the key targets and potential barriers towards their achievement. These impediments are consistently addressed whether they are organisational, human, financial or political.

### Use of Resources

In 2004, the Authority became a precepting Authority, setting a local Council Tax in its own right. As a precepting Authority it was no longer possible, in crude terms, to budget on a "year to year" basis. It was essential that medium term financial planning became linked to service planning. Only in this way and through a clear strategy on "reserves and balances" is the Authority able to ensure that resources are available to meet its priorities and that spend is relatively even over a period of years, despite known "peaks" such as the anticipated retirement 'bulge' in 2008.

As the annual budget is built to accommodate priority activity, new disciplines like Activity Based Costing have enabled managers to forecast the resources they require more accurately in their business bids. Where these bids are successful, the activity they support is monitored through our Programme Implementation Board including spend against progress.

We are also beginning to compose our unit cost for activity, e.g. fitting a smoke alarm, with our family

members to consider whether we are achieving value for money.

Set out below is a summary of the Authority's revenue budget for 2006/07 and details of the Council Tax Precept required.

The vast majority of the Authority's Capital Programme for 2006/07 is taken up by the station redevelopment programme outlined previously.

### Fire Authority budget 2006/ 07

The Fire Authority has set a budget of £37.7m for the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington areas for 2006-07. This will ensure that £21.8m will be raised from local Council Tax, which is equivalent to £60.07 for each Band D dwelling. This compares with £58.32 for 2005-06 and represents an increase of £1.75 (3%).

The budget equates to a cost per person of 73p per week.

### Estimated expenditure and income

	2006/2007	2005/2006
	£m	£m
Firefighters' pay	26.3	25.9
Other staff	4.8	4.5
Other expenditure	11.6	10.5
Gross revenue expenditure	42.7	40.9
LESS Income	(1.6)	(1.6)
Asset management charges	(3.4)	(3.3)
Budget requirement	37.7	36.0

*NOTE : The 2005-06 budget has been restated by Government to reflect the partial transfer of pensions grant and liability from the Fire Authority to a Government managed local pensions account. The restated budget is known as the Alternative Notional Amount and has been set as £36.0m. The detailed 2005-06 figures shown above have been adjusted to reflect the restatement.*

	£m	% Increase
Last year's budget	36.0	
Pay and price inflation	1.2	3.2
Essential growth	0.6	1.7
Cashable efficiencies	(0.6)	(1.6)
Other*	(0.5)	1.3
Total	37.7	4.6

\*Other includes:

Revenue costs of capital programme	0.1
Contb'n to Community Risk Reduction reserve (to fund smoke alarms in peoples homes)	0.1
Repayment of Government grant (incorrectly calculated in previous years)	0.3

### 3. Actions for 2006/07

#### The Golden Plait

As indicated, the real value of these revitalised disciplines is only felt when they are woven together.

“Are we achieving high performance against prioritised plans with effective and efficient use of resources?”

It is important that this question is considered robustly by other than those who determine the priorities and budget allocation or are responsible for delivery of the service plan.

Performance measurement, review and scrutiny are all looking at what has already happened and cannot be changed. The real value of performance management is to ensure that the performance guides our leadership role in making informed decisions about future improvement.

Hence, in addition to the Programme Implementation Board, the Performance Management Group and the Budget Management Board (each of which is chaired by a Deputy Chief Officer), the following review and scrutiny takes place:

- i) The Policy and Overview Committee requests thematic review of performance or performance against a target or plan (including this year the extent to which we have modernised in accordance with the June 2003 Pay Agreement). Additionally, in its capacity as Audit Committee, it regularly reviews performance against targets and budget.
- ii) The robustness, contextualisation and prioritisation of our plans, as well as our performance against them and our officer interpretation of Authority policy, is challenged by an Independent Review Board comprising the Brigade Managers and three non-executive directors - a senior health sector officer, a Cheshire Local Authority Chief Executive and a director of a national blue-chip company. This external challenge is seen as extremely important in the light of the changes set out in the foreword to this plan but also because of the

different perspectives and insights it brings to our planning and service delivery approaches. It is understood that Cheshire is certainly the only Fire Authority, and probably the only local authority, to have introduced the role of “non-executive directors”.

Our quarterly reports to the CFA will now align service delivery of priorities to performance against key targets to our use of resources.

#### Business Continuity Planning (Civil Contingencies Act 2004)

In addition to our responsibilities as an emergency service under the CCA, we are required to produce and exercise a Business Continuity Plan to ensure that we are able to perform our functions in the event of an emergency (so far as reasonably practicable). As an emergency service, it is vital that during periods of emergency, when our role in ensuring community safety is likely to be at its most stretching, we are able to sustain that service, regardless of the impact of the emergency on our own organisation.

Our Business Continuity Plan has been drafted and we will refine it during 2006 as we learn from our experience in exercising it.

Similarly, our Industrial Relations Protocol ensures that we are able to maintain our emergency services if industrial action has an impact on our own resources. This will be kept under continual review in the light of national developments. Our aim is to become self sufficient and not place reliance on the military for emergency cover in the event of industrial action.

#### Risk Management

Our risk management approach, methodology and documentation is good and consistently applied. However, we believe we can improve the link to our financial planning and our appraisal of priorities, outside of the IRMP process.

In 2006, we intend to rectify this.

### Environmental Policy

We have identified a number of environmental issues as posing a significant risk to the authority. We are already setting targets to reduce our paper consumption, while a number of sustainability principles have been incorporated into our major redevelopment programme. During 2006/07 we will draw up these and other issues into a new Environmental Policy.

### Value for money (VFM)

We continue to use best value methodology effectively. For example, the review of accommodation is addressing some difficult issues including provision of Fire Authority houses. It has generated a range of options based on clear cost benefit analysis.

At officer level, and through our elected Members, the scrutiny of Value For Money is thorough and consistent. This was reflected in our 2005 Comprehensive Performance Assessment report which highlighted our use of best value reviews to 'challenge existing provision and drive efficiency.'

In 2006/7, however, we intend to mainstream VFM in the organisation through:

- i) Devolution and delegation of budgets;
- ii) Training for staff in "client-side" contract management and raising awareness of corporate governance;
- iii) Using our family group for the comparison of unit costs;
- iv) Widening our market of trusted suppliers via an approved list; and
- v) Exploring different models of measuring efficiency and effectiveness.

### Embedding Corporate Governance at all levels of the organisation.

The fundamental principles of Corporate Governance are integral to the values of the organisation. We believe that they are one of the keys to success in any organisation.

Openness

Inclusivity

Integrity

Accountability

The Authority's statutory Officers (Monitoring Officer and Treasurer) have worked with our proactive Standards Committee to seek to embed corporate governance throughout the organisation's policies, practices and codes of conduct. The upskilling of the Corporate Support Team means that Officers are now available at all levels to support and advise their peers in these areas.

However, in 2006, we intend Corporate Governance to feature as one of the main themes of our bespoke management development programme from Watch Manager (or equivalent) to Group Manager (or equivalent) level. We will focus on:

- Community focus and engagement
- Service delivery arrangements (infrastructure)
- Structures and processes
- Risk Management and internal control
- Standards of Conduct

### Customer Service Standards

In the same way that there are now Cheshire Standards for Emergency Response, Fire Safety and Home Safety Assessments, in 2006 Customer Service Standards will be developed. These will be twofold:

- (i) Applicable to all external agencies and individuals with whom our staff or organisation interfaces ;
- (ii) Applicable within the service level agreement through which corporate support is provided to the front line. This support must be timely and of high quality and will be triggered, in future, through calls to a single point helpdesk.

### Change Management / Change Reflection

It is important that we ensure that maximum positive impact is achieved from our change management programme. We intend, therefore to embark on a change reflective initiative (using six sigma software). This initiative will consider reflection from all levels of the organisation and from external stakeholders.

### Local Negotiation of Terms, Conditions and Procedures.

Under the new "Grey Book", the Authority now has significantly more flexibility to negotiate local terms and conditions for staff within a national framework to better enable the achievement of our objectives. There is also the opportunity to revise many of our HR procedures to incorporate "best practice" now that we have completed the establishment of a professional skills base in house.

Ultimately, our aim is to achieve harmonisation of the whole of our workforce as far as legally permissible.

### Asset Management

The Authority's 2005 Comprehensive Performance Assessment report highlighted that the organisation is managing its property assets well and that we use best value reviews to challenge existing provision and drive efficiency. For example, the best value review of accommodation prompted our current redevelopment strategy which looks to maximise the latent development potential of a number of our sites to finance a programme of new build and refurbishment of all of our fire stations. This self financing programme avoids the ongoing financial burden to the local tax payer of a PFI development, while increasing community access to our facilities and upgrading the place of work of our staff. The practical changes carried out at stations through the refurbishment programme will also support the Authority's ongoing commitment to modernisation and projects such as the phased move to a 'wakeful watch'.

We consider this to be a particular achievement when our council tax precept in 06/07 of 3% is one of, if not, the lowest within the fire service nationally.

### Communications and Technology

The implementation of our Corporate Communications Strategy 2005 – 08 has already begun.

Key issues during 2006/07 include the better use of technology and introduction of online services to allow residents and businesses to improve fire safety and reduce risks at home and at work. In addition, the Service's website will be enhanced and developed to ensure it meets recognised accessibility standards. It will also ensure integration with the "E-Fire Portal" – a national

project to provide joined-up access to a number of core services provided by fire and rescue authorities. We believe technology has great potential to improve the way we deliver our service.



### Learning and Development / Leadership / Recruitment

National Initiatives within the Fire and Rescue Service are seeking to establish a "cradle to grave" organisation development strategy.

In Cheshire, we have the infrastructure in place now to deliver such a strategy via the Resources Forum and our Organisational Development Group.

The Organisational Development Group is responsible for the achievement of business-led people development. All development is aimed at achieving the current and future business aims of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service which arise from people's abilities and potential.

During 2006, through these groups, our Head of HR will lead an implementation of the revised National Firefighter Selection Process in our recruitment, adoption of the National Leadership and the Learning and Development Strategy and will focus on succession planning to prevent any deviation from our organisational targets as the 2007 / 08 retirement peak approaches.



In addition, the Resources Forum and the Organisational Development Group will use the appraisal system to ensure that training needs are matched to the organisation's objectives and assist in the production of a workforce development strategy.

### **Next steps**

This combined IRMP / Corporate Plan recognises the enormous strides which have been made throughout the organisation over the previous year in implementing the changes necessary to deliver a modern and flexible Fire and Rescue Service.

The Authority sees the next financial year as a period to consolidate and embed the new roles, structures and duty systems implemented over the past months. While this Plan contains a number of innovative projects for the next financial year and beyond, these are regarded very much as helping to support and strengthen the modernisation programme and initiatives already in place.

The Authority has already taken into account the views of key stakeholders in the development of this Plan, but further detailed consultation will be carried out where specific proposals have a direct impact on local communities, staff and partner organisations.

We will use a range of different communication channels to provide feedback to all interested parties during the implementation of this Plan. Residents, businesses and organisations will also be able to register to receive automatic electronic news updates by visiting our website – [www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

## Glossary of terms and abbreviations

**ASBO** - anti-social behaviour orders

**ASC** - anti-social behaviour contracts

**ATF** - Arson Task Forces

**Business Continuity Plan** – sets out what the Service needs to do so it can continue in the event of a major emergency

**CAST** - Critical Attendance Standards, developed by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) to highlight the resources needed to tackle incidents safely

**CFOA** - Chief Fire Officers Association

**CHAWREC** - Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Racial Equality Council

**CWIC** - Cheshire and Warrington Information Consortium

**CCA** - Civil Contingencies Act 2004

**CPT** - Community Profiling and Targeting model to help target resources to at risk areas

**CRR** - Community Risk Reduction, the Service's function with the key role of reducing community risk

**CSOs** - Community Safety Officers

**CPA** - Comprehensive Performance Assessment

**COMAH** - Control of Major Accident Hazard sites

**CS** – Corporate Services, the function which manages the organisation's support services

**E-Fire Portal** – a national project to provide online access to certain core services provided by fire and rescue authorities

**ER** – Emergency Response, the function which manages the Service's frontline emergency response staff and appliances

**Firelink** – the new national radio project to support the regional control centre programme

**FSEC** - the Fire Service Emergency Cover toolkit, specialist software to help assess risk and the best use of resources

**Flashover** - the term used to describe the phenomenon of the contents of a room simultaneously bursting in to flame

**Get Up and Get Out** - one of the Service's programmes which works with disaffected young people

**HATOs** - Highways Agency Transport Officers

**HSAs** - Home Safety Assessments

**HSE** - Health and Safety Executive

**IdEA** - Improvement and Development Agency

**IFE** - Institution of Fire Engineers

**IMS** - Integrated Management System, computer system to co-ordinate financial and other support information

**IPDS** - Integrated Personal Development Scheme

**IRMP** - Integrated Risk Management Plan

**IRUs** - Incident Response Units

**Kooldown** – one of the Service's programmes which works with disaffected young people

**LAA** - Local Area Agreements, new initiative to join up, measure and monitor the delivery of local services

**LPSAs** – Local Public Service Agreements, pacts between local and central government which guarantee extra funds provided key targets are met

**LSPs** - Local Strategic Partnerships, bodies responsible for bringing together public, private, voluntary and community groups to join up and improve local services

**NFPA** - National Fire Protection Association

**NWDA** - North West Development Agency

**NWRA** - North West Regional Assembly

**ODPM** - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

**Outreach fire station** – mobile units used by the Service which can be set up in the heart of a local community to help deliver safety projects

**PDGs** - Performance Delivery Groups, used by the Service to monitor performance at local level

**PEIST** – an analysis of Political, Economic, International, Social and Technological issues facing an organisation

ensure lessons learned from fires and other emergencies are used to reduce risk in the future

**RCC** - Regional Control Centre, the national project for nine regional fire control centres

**Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005** – new Order bringing together 100 separate pieces of safety legislation into one, with the emphasis on risk assessment

**RMB - Regional Management Board** - The National Framework requires all Fire Authorities to establish RMBs to assist collaboration and to deliver regional priorities.

**RTCs** - Road Traffic Collisions

**TRVs** - Targeted Response Vehicle, midi fire appliances designed to deal with smaller incidents

**UKFSSART** - UK Search and Rescue Team

**USAR** - Urban Search and Rescue Team



A S A F E R C H E S H I R E  
THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME  
WITH THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT AND THE RIGHT SKILLS  
ACHIEVING THE RIGHT OUTCOME

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## Part 2 – Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

The IRMP is the statutory document which all fire and rescue services are required to publish each year to demonstrate how they have analysed local risk and how they intend to deploy their resources as a result.

In Section One of our IRMP 2006/07 we set out our approach to risk management including the methodology we use and how we intend to refine this in the future.

Section Two looks at some of the Service's achievements from our first two IRMPs to demonstrate our progress. In particular it highlights how as a learning organisation we have reflected on specific projects and used the lessons to influence and improve our future developments.

In Section Three of this IRMP we outline the new and emerging risks facing the Service as a whole, and then set out specifically how both our Emergency Response and Community Risk Reduction functions intend to address these issues. Our corporate objectives that support the IRMP are set out in Part 3 of the main Plan.

### Section one - How we assess risk

For over fifty years, since the Second World War, the emergency response times and emergency response standards which (old) fire brigades were expected to achieve were based on the concept of fire cover, rather than any real consideration of the frequency or likelihood of actual incidents. They were also determined nationally, and were (virtually) exclusively concerned with property cover. Moreover, they took no account at all of emergencies other than fire.

That changed, however, with the Independent Review of the Fire Service conducted in 2002<sup>1</sup>.

While the commissioning of the Review was a result of the industrial relations conflict that prevailed at the time, it nevertheless went much further than merely seeking a resolution of that conflict.

The Review considered what the fundamental role of fire brigades ought to be and, in doing so, exposed the nature and the scale of change that had taken place in the way people live in a modern society. The Review recognised that change had brought with it fresh risks and different hazards that required a transformation of fire brigades to become Fire and Rescue Services, equipped and

prepared to manage the new risks faced by society. Most importantly, the Review determined that it was no longer sufficient for Fire and Rescue Services merely to react and provide an emergency response when incidents occur - as important as that is. Rather, it should be part of the function of a modern Fire and Rescue Service to be proactive and use its own resources, and also to integrate and work with other bodies and agencies, to prevent incidents from taking place at all. In other words, to reduce or mitigate the risks faced by local communities.

The publication of a subsequent Government White Paper, "Our Fire and Rescue Service" (2003)<sup>2</sup> was the forerunner for new legislation to put this major shift in emphasis of the work of the Service on to a new statutory footing through the **Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004)** and the **Civil Contingencies Act (2004)**.

Several other national guidance documents have also been published, reinforcing the wider roles of modern Fire and Rescue Services.

The National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service<sup>3</sup> represents the most significant of these documents. The Framework provides a consistent method of continually reviewing and laying out the Government's expectations of Fire Authorities and Fire and Rescue Services. The latest draft Framework was published in November 2005 and is intended to run from 2006 – 08.

Collectively, this package of legislation and guidance has given individual fire authorities greater responsibilities but also greater flexibility to identify, plan and respond to risk, with an emphasis on finding the best, local solutions to reducing risk. In doing so, we must also have regard to the national PSA targets for the reduction of fire deaths and deliberate fires:

- **Reduce the number of accidental fire-related deaths in the home by 20% averaged over the period 1999-2010.**
- **Achieve a 10% reduction in deliberate fires by 31 March 2010.**

<sup>1</sup> Independent Review of the Fire Service (2002), Professor Sir George Bain.

<sup>2</sup> White Paper – Our Fire and Rescue Service (June 2003)

<sup>3</sup> The requirement for the relevant Minister to publish a national framework is set out in the Fire and Rescue Service Act (2004) and there have now been three versions - the first two spanning one year and the latest proposed to span two years.

## National / Regional response

It has also been recognised that, in the modern world and particularly in light of the terrorist threat and climate change already mentioned in the introduction to the Corporate Plan, there are risks and incidents that transcend boundaries. These incidents are regional, national and, potentially, even international in their context; the Boscawen floods in 2004, the Cumbrian Floods, the London Bombings and the Buncefield Oil Depot all in 2005 provide stark illustrations and examples.

Accordingly, fire authorities must now operate at a macro level (regional and national) in addition to their local commitment.

## Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs)

To ensure that local risks have been properly examined, the National Framework requires all Fire Authorities to publish an annual document known as an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The IRMP must explain how the Fire Authority has reached its decisions on risk-based activity and, similarly, how it has used its assessment of risk to support decisions about the use of resources.

Thus, an IRMP has six key purposes:

- **To reduce the number of fires and emergency incidents;**
- **To reduce the loss of life in fires and other emergencies;**
- **To reduce the number and severity of injuries in fires and other emergency incidents;**
- **To reduce the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergencies;**
- **To safeguard the environment and heritage (both built and natural); and**
- **To ensure that council tax collected is used to address local priority risks.**

Cheshire Fire Authority published a draft IRMP in 2003 and carried out extensive consultation before publishing its first IRMP in 2004. That document set out in detail the way in which the Authority had evaluated the risks facing local communities and businesses. In particular, it introduced the basis upon which we had used the flexibility we had been given to draw up new Cheshire Standards of Emergency Response as well as standards of safety response appropriate for the risks local communities now face.



Greenalls incident

We further developed our risk assessment and evaluation methods in our second IRMP in 2005 and this latest document, IRMP 3, 2006, sets out how we have continued to refine and improve our approach. The development of our thinking is evident through these documents.

## Risk Management

Our approach to risk management covers all the steps involved in identifying, assessing and judging risks, taking actions to reduce or anticipate them, and monitoring and reviewing progress.

Handling risk is always, ultimately, about professional judgement. But, a robust framework of risk analysis and evaluation is essential to ensure that the Authority can make informed decisions when changing the way it delivers its emergency response and safety services, as risks evolve and change.

The key objectives in our approach to risk management, therefore, are to:

- **prevent fire and other emergencies through our own efforts and those of our partners**
- **secure a safe, built environment that protects people and property when emergencies occur**
- **provide an emergency response that is appropriate and proportionate to the expected risk.**

Accordingly, we look at risk in two ways:

1. **By using our local knowledge, as well as examining past incidents and occurrences over a number of years. We cluster these in to the eight most common types of incident to assess the levels of risk. We then use this data to understand (predict) trends for the immediate future. This helps us to plan our emergency response, protection and our prevention activity.**

While we cannot say precisely where and when incidents will occur – we can discern clear patterns (discrete areas) based upon social, economic and temporal factors as well as previous occurrences and geographical factors. From this data and analysis we can also produce what we call risk planes as a means of applying and measuring our response standards in each station area.

2. **By the use of community profiling and looking in detail at the social, economic and other factors - through associated research - to help us predict what might happen in the future.**

This assists us to plan our work to reduce the risk by understanding the socio-economic factors we know to be significant and likely to lead to more incidents if not addressed through prevention and protection activity.

These two aspects of our approach to risk are expanded upon and explained more fully below.

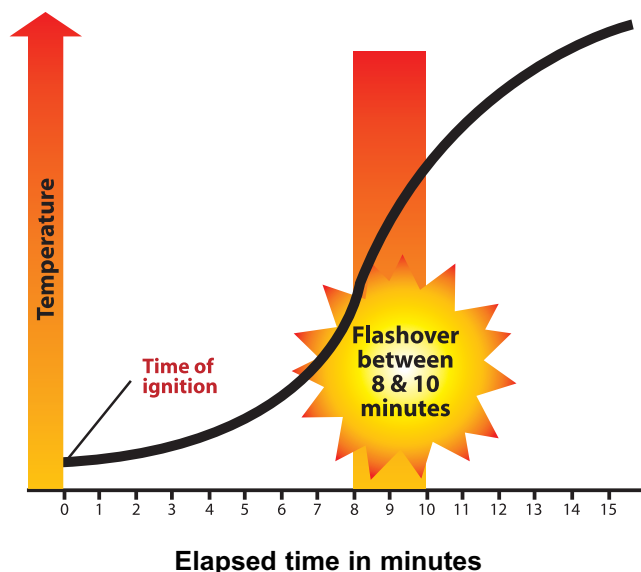
In addition, though, we have also drawn on research from the UK into fire injury and fatality rates, as well as detailed research by the US National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The research is concerned not just with how people react and behave in a fire, but also the physics and combustion processes of fire spread in the context of the built environment. This research identifies that prevention of fire must be the ultimate goal.

However, the research also identifies, not surprisingly, that to reduce death, injury and loss from fire, it is crucial to try to stop the fire from spreading beyond the room where it started. Equally crucial is an early detection (smoke alarm) and a swift fire attack, ideally through a fixed installation (a sprinkler system) or through the efforts of the person discovering the fire (if safe to

do so) or/and in the final event, by an effective emergency response by the Fire and Rescue Service.

In fact, the consequence of how fire now behaves in a modern setting is that there is less than ten minutes before a fire is so well developed that it represents a real risk of flashover<sup>4</sup>.

Clearly, time is the critical success factor - hence our new call handling, turn out and Emergency Response standards which reflect this.



## Risk Assessment Model

We have used data of the last few years, and we have adopted the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Risk Assessment Methodology of multiplying how likely an incident is to occur by the seriousness of the outcome to determine new risk levels.

<sup>4</sup> Flashover is the term used to describe the phenomenon of the contents of a room simultaneously bursting in to flame.

## Risk Levels

The risk levels we now apply to our approach to planning, therefore, are:

<b>Very High</b>	It is certain or very likely that there will be multiple deaths or a single death
<b>High</b>	It is certain that there will be a major injury, very likely that there will be a single death and likely that there may be multiple deaths
<b>Medium</b>	It is certain that there will be a major injury, very likely that there will be an injury and there may be a single death
<b>Low</b>	There will be some disruption with a moderate chance of an injury or loss occurring
<b>Very Low</b>	There is a reduced chance of disruption with a moderate chance of an injury or loss

## Risk Planes

The approach to utilising risk planes has proved to be very effective in helping us plan. We have set out below the way the planes have changed over the last few years across the eight most common

incident types, emphasising the point that risk changes. This reality supports the need for flexibility in the way we use our resources.

It will be noted that currently there are no areas assessed as very high risk in Cheshire. That said, it will also be observed that there are noticeable changes to risk levels for different types of incidents in different station areas over the last few years, each of which can be clearly audited. Small fires, for example, have increased significantly. These represent not just a “nuisance”, but a significant aspect of anti-social behaviour and a major demand on our resources.

This understanding means we can undertake further analysis and investigation into how and why the risk has changed. If significant trends emerge, we can come forward with both local and Service-wide projects to reduce risks to tolerable levels, as well as modify our emergency response as appropriate.

Details of our proposals to address these latest changes are set out in Section Three of the IRMP.

## Risk planes in 2004/05

STATION OR WARDS		Residential Property	Business Property	Small Fires	SSC - Life Risk	SSC - Non Urgent	Road Traffic Collisions	Spillages Leaks	UwFDS
01 WARRINGTON	110,760								
02 BIRCHWOOD	42,010								
03 STOCKTON HEATH	39,040								
04 WIDNES	55,410								
05 RUNCORN	63,720								
06 FRODSHAM	19,180								
08 E PORT & NESTON	86,640								
09 CHESTER	95,140								
10 TARPORLEY	16,710								
11 MALPAS	8,460								
12 NANTWICH	20,270								
13 AUDLEM	4,320								
15 CREWE	94,640								
16 SANDBACH	20,340								
17 HOLMES CHAPEL	12,260								
18 CONGLETON	35,590								
19 MACCLESFIELD	57,340								
20 BOLLINGTON	10,540								
22 POYNTON	19,890								
23 WILMSLOW	39,060								
24 KNUTSFORD	21,390								
25 NORTHWICH	64,440								
26 MIDDLEWICH	12,920								
27 WINSFORD	33,230								

## Risk planes for 2005/06

STATION OR WARDS		Residential Property	Business Property	Small Fires	SSC - Life Risk	SSC - Non Urgent	Road Traffic Collisions	Spillages Leaks	UwFDS
01 WARRINGTON	110,760								
02 BIRCHWOOD	42,010								
03 STOCKTON HEATH	39,040								
04 WIDNES	55,410								
05 RUNCORN	63,720								
06 FRODSHAM	19,180								
08 E PORT & NESTON	86,640								
09 CHESTER	95,140								
10 TARPORLEY	16,710								
11 MALPAS	8,460								
12 NANTWICH	20,270								
13 AUDLEM	4,320								
15 CREWE	94,640								
16 SANDBACH	20,340								
17 HOLMES CHAPEL	12,260								
18 CONGLETON	35,590								
19 MACCLESFIELD	57,340								
20 BOLLINGTON	10,540								
22 POYNTON	19,890								
23 WILMSLOW	39,060								
24 KNUTSFORD	21,390								
25 NORTHWICH	64,440								
26 MIDDLEWICH	12,920								
27 WINSFORD	33,230								

## Risk planes for 2006/07

STATION OR WARDS		Residential Property	Business Property	Small Fires	SSC - Life Risk	SSC - Non Urgent	Road Traffic Collisions	Spillages Leaks	UwFDS
01 WARRINGTON	110,760								
02 BIRCHWOOD	42,010								
03 STOCKTON HEATH	39,040								
04 WIDNES	55,410								
05 RUNCORN	63,720								
06 FRODSHAM	19,180								
08 E PORT & NESTON	86,640								
09 CHESTER	95,140								
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19 MACCLESFIELD	57,340								
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23 WILMSLOW	39,060								
24 KNUTSFORD	21,390								
25 NORTHWICH	64,440								
26 MIDDLEWICH	12,920								
27 WINSFORD	33,230								

## Community profiling

We have invested in specialised computer software packages that allow us to combine a range of data about the nature and composition of our communities and to highlight the key factors which affect people’s safety. We know, for example that:

- Children in the lowest socio-economic group have a death rate 16 times higher than children in the highest group
- People in the poorest 10% of wards are 5 times more likely to be injured in a fire than those in the wealthiest 10%
- The rate of arson is 31 times higher for those on lowest incomes

This knowledge has already helped us to target our community safety and prevention work in the areas where we know it will have greatest impact.

Despite this, our aim is to become more sophisticated in the analysis of past incidents and in our use of community profiling.

We believe we can further improve by making better use of data and information from other sources by moving down to another level of detail (granularity). In other words, we can break down the risk information to a truly local level – ward level or census “super output” level. We need to use the level of data that is common and used by our key partners for census and other planning purposes. This approach - which we will develop during the life of this IRMP - will allow us to formulate integrated and multi-faceted risk maps that can be used to help us, and partners who act on our behalf - to target emergency response and community safety work where it will be most effective. In addition, we can then further refine our emergency response standards, our safety standards and create a virtuous circle of improvement.

This risk assessment methodology has been refined over three years. However, during that period, we have made significant progress in utilising integrated risk management methodology (as detailed in our previous IRMPs) to make changes which have assisted us in achieving our objectives. These are summarised in the next section of the plan.

## 2. How we have responded to risk

### A) Emergency Response

Our research has allowed us to develop our own Cheshire Emergency Response (ER) standards to match the anticipated level of risk to the need to tackle the incident. These standards also provide a key building block in addressing our two ER Corporate Objectives.



### Emergency Response standards

How quickly do we respond to incidents?

The table below sets out the Cheshire Standards of Emergency Response including call handling, turnout and attendance standards:

- Where risk is Very high: We will respond to an emergency and aim to arrive within 1 to 5 minutes of the turnout on 90% of all occasions
- Where risk is High: We will respond to an emergency and aim to arrive within 6 to 10 minutes of the turnout on 90% of all occasions
- Where risk is Medium: We will respond to an emergency and aim to arrive within 11 to 15 minutes of the turnout on 90% of all occasions
- Where risk is Low: We will respond to an emergency and aim to arrive within 16 to 20 minutes of the turnout on 90% of all occasions
- Where risk is Very low: We will respond to an emergency and aim to arrive within 21 minutes of the turnout on 90% of all occasions
- Our target for answering all “999” calls is 6 seconds
- Our target for processing all “999” calls and sending a turnout to stations and/or appliances is as follows:
  - 55% of all calls handled in < 45 secs
  - 75% of all calls handled in < 60 secs
  - 90% of all calls handled in < 90 secs
  - 99% of all calls handled in < 120 secs <sup>5</sup>
- Our target for turning out appliances is an average of 40 seconds from the time the call has been passed to the station/ appliance.

<sup>5</sup> We reserve the option – as we always have – for our trained control operators to make a determination of whether a call constitutes an emergency. This is to avoid unnecessary risk and danger for the public and our personnel driving under blue light conditions if they are responding to something when life or property are not in jeopardy.

## How have we performed against these new standards?

We have been utilising these new standards for two years now, and our performance so far, is extremely good against our target of 90%. There have only been a few instances when these targets have not been met and each of these has been audited and investigated in detail.

Our investigations have identified that these failures, in very large measure, are for what we term second calls.

In reality, there are sometimes occasions when the resources provided for incidents in one area are already attending an incident when another emergency occurs in the same area. This is different to receiving many calls for the same incident, which is a consequence of the prevalence of mobile telephones. There is a need, therefore, to provide some assurance that the resilience exists to address this necessity of more than one incident in close succession. Accordingly, in this IRMP one of the innovations we are now introducing is a new Resilience Standard.

## Resilience Standard

If appliances are already committed to incidents in a given area, we aim to get an emergency response to second incidents within the time of the next (lower) standard but in any event within 21 minutes. In normal circumstances this will be by Cheshire resources but may, on occasions, involve appliances and resources from neighbouring fire and rescue services – if those resources can attend more swiftly.

## Achievements and lessons from previous IRMPs

### Evolution of Cheshire Standards

Following public consultation, the Authority took the decision that it had over capacity at Ellesmere Port fire station relative to the risk and, accordingly, removed the third appliance and personnel from that station in April 2005.

A six month review of the effects of that change was undertaken and a presentation made to the Fire Authority and to the Scrutiny Panel of the Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council in October 2005. A further review will be undertaken and reported upon at the one year stage (April 2006).

The Fire Authority has called for a new resilience standard (covered earlier) as part of the “lessons learned” from the Best Value Review of “types of incident we respond to”.

Additionally, the Authority has also called for further response standards to be drawn up detailing how ‘special service’ incidents, such as gas leaks, will be dealt with in future. This review was subject to extensive public consultation and its findings will be published in 2006.

Our approach and methodology for devising the Cheshire Standards has also been externally challenged in a number of ways. This has included a review by external risk assessment consultants. It has also encompassed a critical review by a number of other fire and rescue services, who have sought to build on the work of Cheshire by adopting the Standards themselves. At the time of publication, Somerset Fire and Rescue Service has already adopted the Cheshire Standards and a number of other fire and rescue services in the South West are also actively pursuing their development.

## How we now respond to emergencies

We are now able to use the incident data and risk information alongside specialist computer packages such as the Fire Service Emergency Cover Toolkit (FSEC), to model alternative approaches to our emergency response. These map-based systems graphically display how and where we can best place different types of appliances to keep the risks facing our communities to a minimum. This enables us to plan to use our resources to maximum effect day and night as we know that risk changes in this temporal way.



This greater flexibility means we can ensure we also address other organisational needs, for example training and testing operational procedures (exercises), at the same time as releasing resources during quiet periods of operational activity to support community safety work. It also makes it easier to ensure we send the optimum number of personnel and the most suitable type of vehicle to deal with a particular incident, rather than the automatic or pre-determined turnout levels which used to be set in advance. This approach ensures we are more likely to have staff and structural fire fighting appliances ready to respond to serious, life-threatening emergencies in the right locations, rather than have them committed elsewhere on relatively small incidents.



That is one of the key reasons why a new fleet of smaller, “midi” fire engines is being brought into service to deal with smaller, nuisance incidents such as bin, rubbish and car fires. These types of fires account for around 60% of all fire incidents and using our new, **Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV)** fleet is a far more effective use of both our appliances and staff in conjunction with our existing fleet of appliances.

## Major Incidents

We must also have the capability to handle major incidents in Cheshire, and to support other fire and rescue services in the management of major incidents across the region, as well as in a national context. Our planning, therefore, supports this goal and has proved very effective in recent months, as highlighted earlier with the deployment of teams and equipment from Cheshire to Glasgow (building collapse), Cumbria (floods) and the Oil Depot fire at Buncefield, Hemel Hempstead. We have also successfully handled major incidents in Cheshire.

## Optimum Crewing

Traditionally, a standard fire appliance was staffed or crewed by either four or five firefighters. This figure was based on historical equipment, appliance design and old standard operating procedures rather than a rigorous task analysis of what needs to be done at an emergency incident, in what order and by how many personnel. Predominantly, it was the size and weight of the ladders that set the context and, as more modern equipment was developed, for example breathing apparatus, the operating procedures were shaped around the number of personnel that were already there.

More recent research has affirmed that, broadly speaking, eight to nine firefighters remains the optimum number of personnel needed to tackle most property fires. Self evidently, much depends on the growth of the fire up until the point fire crews arrive and also the time or lag between different crews arriving. But, through a risk-assessed approach to task analysis, we can now send a smaller number of firefighters on different vehicles to lower risk incidents such as rubbish fires, car fires, flooding etc – and still provide for a safe system of work.

Under this approach of ‘Optimum Crewing’ we have also looked at when and where the demand for our operational resources is greatest. Late afternoons and early evenings are consistently and universally the peak periods. This means that we can put the extra appliances (TRVs) on the run during these peak periods. It also means we do not need to maintain exactly the same number of appliances waiting for an immediate response at other times of the day, when we know that the chances of a true emergency call out being received are remote. It is a clear waste of resource to have personnel waiting for incidents that are almost certainly not going to happen, and reinforces the old, negative image of firefighters hanging around their stations – when nothing could now be further from the truth.



## Strategic Reserve

Thus, by using our risk assessments and the FSEC modelling systems together, we know that during these off peak hours we can create a strategic reserve and switch at least three appliances and crews to standby response, rather than immediate response, without affecting public safety. This concept of the strategic reserve liberates time and resources so we can improve the way we train our staff and undertake exercises at major risk sites. It also provides more opportunities for operational personnel to support community safety staff and volunteers and to carry out preventative community safety work. If a serious incident does occur we are in permanent contact with the appliances and personnel and both can immediately be brought back in to service and deployed within minutes.

merely as heroic figures emerging from fire stations from time to time when an emergency occurs. We must be prepared to tackle head on some of the negative images some members of the community hold about firefighters, partly as a legacy of the industrial disputes of a few years ago and partly because of the way society has changed with the times. We have worked closely with local staff representatives, therefore, to develop and bring in new duty systems for staff at all levels. We have also introduced new, modern work practices that remove the outdated imagery and achieve the objectives the Authority set out in previous IRMPs.

A key element of this is a new duty system and a new staffing model operational from 1st January 2006, which provides for 95 personnel on each of the four colour watches at 24/7 stations across the organisation, with an optimum crew of 76 on duty at any one time. While it is true that this represents less firefighters than was the case a number of years ago, this has been achieved by managing issues such as leave and attendance levels differently and more efficiently. The number of personnel remains adequate to address our optimum crewing requirements.

We have also introduced revised officer duty systems, which have achieved greater efficiency and a higher level of availability of specialist personnel.

## Mass Decontamination/ New Dimension

The National New Dimension Programme was set up after the events of Sept 11th, 2001 to review and improve the capability of the UK to respond to the new terrorist threat and to other strategic risks such as climate change. The government has committed significant funding for resources, training and equipment in this area. The programme itself is structured around distinct but intertwined projects.

## New duty system / working practices

As part of our commitment to modernise and improve the flexibility and value of our services, we have recognised the need to change the image of the Service in the eyes of the general public. We want the service to continue to be viewed in a positive light and as a succeeding service but, importantly, be seen more as an integral component of the fabric of local communities. This means we must be "out there" in communities much more frequently, with an obvious and visible presence in those communities; and not to be seen



This programme may be seen as an effective partnership between central and local government and the professional managers and leaders of the service. It has already proved its worth on a national stage - obviously in London on 7/7. Some of the new equipment, for example high volume pumping units, has also been used to great effect in the North West at the Carlisle floods and most recently at a major incident in Warrington, the Greenalls Distillery fire. These pumping units were also used at the Buncefield Oil Depot fire and are proving an invaluable resource for the service, with Cheshire receiving its unit in March 2006.

In terms of mass decontamination, there have been 80 Incident Response Units procured nationally, deployed regionally, and the training has been completed with relevant plans and procedures in place.

Two of these units are now located in Cheshire with crews ready to respond in the event of an attack; but also in the event of a major accident where there is a need to decontaminate large numbers of people.

### Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team

We have built on our vast experience as part of the UK Search and Rescue Team (UKFSSART) in support of our approach to becoming members of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team within the New Dimension programme.

We have now put in place the team itself (comprising 18 members), the training of staff and the associated equipment to form part of the North West USAR team and we are working in partnership with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. Again the USAR – and Cheshire specifically - have already proved their worth in the deployments already identified ( Glasgow in 2004 and Cumbria in 2005).

### Review of Fire Stations

In previous IRMPs we have said that we would review the provision of stations at Northwich, Middlewich and Winsford and examine in detail the staffing at Birchwood and Wilmslow. These proposals were prompted by the need to ensure that our resources continue to be deployed consistently across the county to match local risks.

Since then, however, there have been a number of major changes, with the Authority committing to a major redevelopment package, including the construction of a new station and facilities at Runcorn in 2006/07. In addition, there is major redevelopment taking place in Warrington Town Centre and the expansion and growth of Manchester Airport.

As a result, during 2006/07 we will use the FSEC and other computer models to carry out a fundamental review of the provision of all of our stations and appliances.

### B) Community Risk Reduction

In line with being clear about our response standards, we have also sought to be clear about our approach to achieving our two CRR objectives and what we are trying to achieve with our standards of community safety.

**CRR 1**  
Prevent dangerous anti-social and careless behaviour

**CRR 2**  
Protect life, property and other interests

### Community Profile - Home Safety Assessment (HSA) Standards

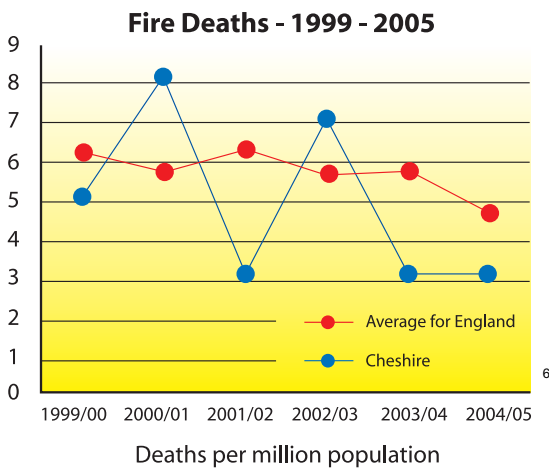
Home Safety Assessments (HSA) represent a central plank of our approach to reducing risk by visiting and engaging people in their own home. They also represent an important element of our partnership activity. Much more is discussed on this important work later in this IRMP but set out below are our Home Safety Assessment Standards:

- We will respond to all requests for HSAs within 24 hours on 90% of all occasions
- Initially this response will be a preliminary assessment conducted via telephone or email
- From this information an initial assessment of risk will be made
- Where risk is considered to be very high or high - a HSA will be undertaken within 24 hrs
- Where risk is medium or low a HSA will be undertaken within 28 days. In the case of low or very low an information pack sent to enable the occupier to carry out a self assessment followed up later by the Fire Service
- HSAs will include, where appropriate, the fitting of a free smoke alarm (s)

## How are we performing in relation to reducing fire deaths?

We have seen a steady reduction in fire deaths in recent years as we have taken forward our community safety agenda. The graph below highlights that we have been proved right in our planning assumptions and our understanding of risk, though with such small numbers one serious incident can have a dramatic effect.

We remain convinced, however, that our vision of “zero preventable fire deaths” is achievable and this IRMP very much continues to take us forward towards this goal.



## Home Safety Assessments (HSAs) Policy - Mixed Economy Approach

We have now fundamentally reviewed our HSA policy against our HSA Standard. We have consequently put in place the necessary financial and people resources to ensure that we can achieve our standard and that we can carry out our objective of offering a home safety assessment to every household in Cheshire over the next five years.

The HSA itself goes beyond just fire safety to encompass partners’ needs as well as our own. A HSA also now includes for example, crime prevention and “slips, trips and falls” advice. Moving this work forward is an important undertaking and has already included a financial investment of around £600,000 from the Fire Authority, as well as nearly £400,000 over three years from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). This funding has helped to create a “community safety reserve” that can be used to buy smoke alarms and fire safety resources in support of the smoke alarm installation programme and outreach work. Our Medium Term Financial Plan projects an enhancement of this reserve over the coming years to ensure we have the resources to achieve our target.

In support of our goal of “zero preventable fire deaths”, we aim to complete over 40,000 HSAs a year - one of the most demanding HSA targets of any service in the country. Details of how we intend to deliver this are set out later in this IRMP.

The demand and volume of HSA work means we need to be more creative and innovative, so we have adopted a “mixed economy” approach by using the resources and capacity of our partners alongside our own. We have also recruited teams of community volunteers as well as creating new roles of full and part-time community safety advocates. Details of how we intend to develop and grow our capacity in this area are outlined in the next section of the IRMP.

We are continuing to evaluate the impact of the HSA programme and we already have a number of powerful case studies of lives that have been saved and property losses that have been averted as a direct result of alarms we have fitted, and the advice and support to vulnerable people which we have provided.



## Local Performance Delivery Groups (PDGs) / Arson Reduction

Arson - the deliberate setting of fires to destroy property or to injure people - is an increasing and significant problem for some of our communities. We need to target our resources in this area to achieve the greatest impact.

Accordingly, we have restructured to provide local service delivery groups which cover the same areas as local strategic partnerships and crime and disorder reduction partnerships (based upon District Council boundaries). This has allowed the establishment of local Arson Task Forces (ATF) to address this problem in a multi agency approach.

<sup>6</sup> Source: ODPM Fire Death Statistics January 2006

## Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005

This new Fire Safety Order, which comes in to force in October, 2006, represents what is arguably the most significant change in safety legislation for business and commerce since the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act. The new Order rationalises and harmonises over 100 separate pieces of fire safety legislation into one, new approach with the emphasis very much on risk assessment and the responsibility for the owner/occupier to undertake this assessment. This is a fundamental change in terms of the role of the Service.

The Fire Authority has an agreed strategy and timetable for the local implementation of this major change which includes raising the profile of the Order within the Service and in the wider business community, as well as developing a risk-based and a priority-based programme of inspection, audit and enforcement. We intend to continue to follow government guidance as published in IRMP Guidance Note No 4, and Fire Service Circular 2/2004.

## Fire Safety Enforcement Risk Assessed Approach

To enforce the Fire Safety Order, the Fire Authority has started to audit all nondomestic premises and will continue to do so. The outcomes of the audits will determine any enforcement action that is needed, the overall level of risk and the frequency of future audits.

Managers will review premises that are due for audit on a regular basis and programme visits by selecting from the higher risk groups. Lower risk premises will be sampled and selected for audit as local needs and issues demand e.g. arson incidents.

Audit intervals will vary according to the risk level for that specific group; in all cases, those with better

Hospitals  
Fire Safety Management Status

Risk Level	A Best	B	C	D	E Worst
Very High	24	18	12	6	3
High	30	24	18	12	3
Medium	42	30	24	18	3
Low	48	42	30	24	3
Very Low	54	48	42	30	3

Table 1: showing the monthly period between audits

fire safety management and fire precautions, will benefit from extended periods between audits.

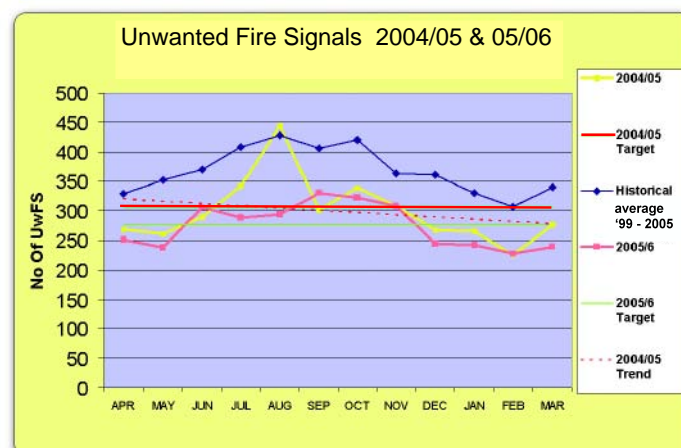
Table 1 Illustrates how audit frequencies can vary by risk level and management status, using the risk group of Hospitals as an example.

## Unwanted Fire Signals

We have continued to reduce the number of unwanted calls from automatic fire alarm systems. We have achieved this by implementing a new policy that has followed the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) guidance as well as listening and responding to the concerns of the business sector.

The Policy involves a graduated approach to dealing with recurring instances of false alarms with the ultimate sanction of withdrawing an emergency response.

It is pleasing that, so far, we have managed to avoid taking this last step by the early intervention of local managers and fire safety officers working with the businesses and premises concerned.



## Road Traffic Collision (RTC) reduction

The Authority is now taking the lead on this community priority through Cheshire's new Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA). We have employed a full time, project co-ordinator to ensure the five strands of the accident and injury reduction programme are delivered. In partnership with others, we will seek to improve road safety and casualty care and recovery.

Taking on this co-ordinating, lead role demonstrates that the Fire and Rescue Service can play its full part in the wider community safety agenda and shows that this is recognised by key partners, particularly the Police and Cheshire County Council.

We have procured one "fire motorbike" and we are in the process of evaluating the potential benefits in relation to operational use and delivering safety messages to a large group of road users (motor cyclists).

We are also continuing to explore the potential for an emergency response vehicle crewed by all three emergency services together known as 'Rescue 1.'

## Develop and buy an outreach fire station

Three units have now been bought. These units allow us to set up temporary community safety centres in the heart of a local community to deliver our home safety assessments more efficiently and raise the profile of our preventative work. We are also gaining maximum use of the units by using them for promotional purposes, to support the command of major incidents and to enable our public sector partners to use them as a local base for their own outreach work.

## 3. New risk changes and our response

Our risk assessment methodology and our community profiling, detailed earlier, have been used to assist us in considering risk changes which will impact on prioritising service delivery in 06/07.

This section sets out the issues which we know need to be addressed in the short-term to maintain and improve our service.

It is also important, however, that we continue to look ahead at other changes locally, regionally and nationally which could affect our risk models and analysis over the next few years.

## Demographic changes

We will continue to monitor the trends and changes in the structure of our local population so we can anticipate the potential impact on our services in the future.

Key issues include an ageing population with a significant, projected growth in pensioner households, as well as more members of the community with physical or sensory disabilities. Additionally, there will be a continuation of the present percentage of single parent households. Our experience has shown that these groups of people are vulnerable and more susceptible to fire dangers and we need to factor this knowledge into our thinking about risk. There will also be an increase in single person households.



## Civil contingencies and the terrorist threat

The Authority will continue to carry out its new duties and responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004. In particular, the Authority has taken a leading role in the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Local Resilience Forum – a new body set up to co-ordinate the plans and activities of all of the key ‘Category One’ public authorities involved in any major incident. It has already led the project to establish the area’s first Community Risk Register. The Register has been compiled by the Forum in accordance with the CCA and its associated statutory guidance on emergency preparedness.



The purpose of the register is to reassure the communities of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington that potential hazards have been identified and assessed, and steps taken to reduce the risks or to put effective emergency response plans in place. Full details of the Register are available via the Service’s website - [www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

The Authority continues to be a key partner in the testing, validation and revision of local emergency plans through regular exercises. The recent “Exercise November” at Halton Stadium involving over 100 personnel from both voluntary and statutory agencies was a good example.

We are also a partner in the regional, Media Emergency Forum which aims to ensure closer working between agencies and the media during major incidents and improving public information systems.

By continuing to review and test our joint plans we can ensure that we are as prepared as possible in the event of having to respond to a major terrorist threat such as the London bombings or a major incident such as Buncefield.

## COMAH sites

Cheshire has one of the highest concentration of chemical and petrochemical sites (Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) sites) in the country. We have 54 “top tier” and “lower tier” sites and a number of major pipeline distribution networks above and below ground.

The need to plan, exercise and manage risk in relation to these sites continues to bring with it significant resource and capacity implications. The HSE investigation into the Buncefield fire may well bring out lessons we need to learn and apply in Cheshire for the future. We have always sought to learn lessons from major incidents anywhere in the world to ensure we provide a world-class service and will continue to do so.

## Climate Change

The changing climate makes natural disasters like flooding and extremes of weather more likely, and so we will continue to work closely with the Environment Agency to review the environmental risk in Cheshire. This is likely to increase the need for water rescue capability. Climate change, because it is so unpredictable, further reinforces the need for fire and rescue services to be able to deploy their resources in a much more flexible way.



## Housing and transport

Key areas which we will build into our future analysis include housing and transport and developments, proposed in the strategic documents of a number of key partners in Cheshire, Halton, Warrington and the North West region. There are more examples later in this document but the key issues are set out below.

Cheshire County Council's Draft Structure Plan 2016 identifies a need to build 1,630 homes a year over the next 10 years, while Halton Borough Council's Unitary Development Plan proposes 8,150 houses during the same period and Warrington's a maximum of 5,320.

These extra homes clearly have the potential to influence where we need to position our appliances and staff in future, while the developments themselves offer us the opportunity to maximise built in fire safety measures such as promoting the inclusion of domestic sprinkler systems.

There are also a number of major transport proposals which we will monitor closely because of their implications for the positioning of our resources and the potential impact on our response standards during construction.

### Key issues include:

- **The M6 widening project**
- **Improvements to the Silver Jubilee Bridge Complex in Halton scheduled over the next 10 years**
- **The Mersey Gateway scheme to build a new bridge in Halton by 2012**
- **Bypass proposals for Alderley Edge, Nether Alderley, and Poynton.**

## Structural/organisational changes

Clearly, we will also continue to gather intelligence about the changing risks facing local communities through our involvement in Local Strategic Partnerships and the Crime Reduction Partnerships. In addition, we will closely monitor the implications for the future delivery of our services arising from current national proposals to change the structure of our key emergency partners including the police, ambulance and local primary care trusts. We will also need to monitor the continuing debate around local government structures.

## Air traffic

While there is no major airport actually in Cheshire, the runway of John Lennon Airport borders the county. Runway 2 of Manchester Airport is in Cheshire and there are major flight paths over the area. There is also a private airfield at Broughton.

Cheshire may, therefore, be considered an aeronautical "cross-roads". As the number of passengers and flights increases, with the planned expansion of both airports over the next few years, the Service will continue to develop its joint planning with key emergency personnel at both airports; and with our colleagues in Merseyside and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Services.

## Building design

While nationally and regionally there has been a decline in manufacturing industries, there has been considerable growth in storage and distribution services along the major transport corridors, which Cheshire has in abundance. Cheshire has five Trans European Networks. Characteristically, these distribution services encompass very large warehouse facilities with a massive fire loading and, typically, do not tend to have sprinkler systems installed. While we will support campaigns to extend the use of sprinkler systems, we also remain committed to working closely with businesses in Cheshire to limit the risk and impact of fire losses on them and the local community.

We view the growth of what may be considered almost "disposable" buildings with concern because the nature and high level of the risk of collapse prevents firefighters tackling incidents from within, and we are limited to attacking these fires from outside the building.



"The Greenalls distillery blaze at Warrington in October, 2005 resulted in losses estimated at over £40 million. However, by working with the company Cheshire firefighters saved the key offices and main still and ensured the company was able to stay in business in the town."



## Pace of change

We stated earlier that the pace of change in Cheshire has been rapid. This is a matter of public record and reflects the commentary of our assessors under Comprehensive Performance Assessment (covered below).

We are widely seen as being at the leading edge of most developments in the fire and rescue sector, and were the first non local authority to win Beacon Council status. In the last two years, we have been ambitious in our objectives and actions, the vast majority of which have been delivered. While we do not intend to slow down the pace of change over the next few months, we do see the next period as one of being able to consolidate some of our thinking. We also want to realise the benefits and opportunities that now present themselves, as a consequence of the tough decisions we have already taken. Importantly, we need to give our staff the opportunity to absorb the changes a little more and for them to see the benefits come to fruition.

In the light of our analysis of the risk changes, our priorities to address those risks and meet our objectives in 06/07 are summarised below. A detailed action plan for 06/07 is appended to this plan.

### A) Emergency Response (ER) Objectives

This section sets out the actions the Service plans to take to support the Emergency Response objectives and to achieve the ER targets identified in the first section of the Plan.



### Response standards and risk levels

We will continue to review our emergency response standards, as outlined earlier, and we will also monitor and report on the introduction of the new resilience standard.

We will review our approach to the need for response standards for special appliances. In particular, we will review the way we staff our working at height vehicles (aerials) at Macclesfield, Stockton Heath and Chester, in the context of their need to respond to incidents within an appropriate time.

Now we have had a number of years experience in using risk management, and we have also had experience with the FSEC modelling software, we intend to review the overall distribution and coverage of our stations and facilities. This will inform decisions about station locations in the context of the station replacement issues mentioned later, and it will also inform thinking for IRMP 4. We will also consider the use of other modelling tools to ensure we take as rounded a perspective as possible.

One of our most important innovations in this 06/07 IRMP will be the creation of the country's first, **virtual fire station – Station 29**.

### Virtual fire station

Station 29 will be a mixed crewed station, with a “station ground” that covers the whole of Cheshire, providing a virtual base for a number of wholetime staff in the form of a central resource. This resource was formed through the review of duty systems and will be used to backfill vacancies created by staff on long term sick or maternity leave as well as supporting community safety activities. It will also have a bank of staff on retained (hourly) rates of pay, all of whom will be existing firefighters on second contracts.

The appliances aligned to Station 29, in the first instance, will include the Service's Reserve Fleet (when not in use), three Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs), and the fire bike; but this complement of appliances can easily be changed as demand dictates. If there are spate conditions - a very high call volume of grass fires or floodings (likely to increase given climate change) – different appliances can be brought online daily. Initially, the TRVs will be deployed as if they were from Station 29, and will adopt the relevant call signs for that station, but will be a mobile resource.

The creation of Station 29 is an innovative approach to dealing with fluctuating operational demand, as well as fluctuating demand in relation to staffing levels.

### New appliances

We intend to investigate the implications and risks associated with expanding the use of our smaller, Targeted Response Vehicles as a second appliance on at least one station. It is most likely that this will be a day crewing station.

To support this, we will undertake an updated analysis of current fire fighting tasks in tackling 'typical incidents' to ensure that we have fully assessed safe systems of working within our levels of response.

We will take full account of firefighter safety and our approach to optimum crewing in undertaking this task analysis.

We will draw upon the work done by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) on what they call Critical Attendance Standards (CAST), as well as the experience of other fire and rescue services. Some colleagues have already done work in this area – notably Lancashire, Merseyside and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Services. In doing so, though, we will take a proper balanced view about community and firefighter safety, recognising that firefighting is a hazardous occupation and risks cannot be removed completely.

We also intend to re-visit the issue of dual purpose aerial appliances and this will feature in the work on response standards.

We will conclude the work on "fire bikes" and the joint road traffic unit 'Rescue 1' and decide whether or how to proceed.

## **CCTV on appliances – attacks on firefighters and appliances**

We are already taking action to protect any of our staff who are threatened or attacked. This includes a programme of installing CCTV cameras on specific appliances. We will advance the programme over the next two months. We will also work with the police to prosecute offenders, using our footage as evidence in relation to attacks on staff, and also arson.

## **Inland water rescue**

The Service currently uses two, powered boats which are primarily to ensure the safety of firefighters when close to water. The recent Government consultation document on Emergencies for Fire and Rescue Authorities has made it clear there will be a duty in the future to rescue people in the event of major flooding and major accidents involving boats on inland waterways. This was also reflected in our own Best Value Review of incidents we respond to.

During 2006/07, therefore, the Authority will formally review both the resources and the working arrangements for its water rescue service and

establish new standards. We see this as a natural extension of our rescue work and believe it is something our staff will be keen to support.

## **Operational rigour and assurance**

A new approach is being developed within the service to test the effectiveness of all aspects of frontline emergency services. The new audit and inspection system makes use of the specialist skills of staff across the Service and looks in detail at areas such as staff competence and operational preparedness. Crucially, it will lead to an assessment of operational assurance against the national model and ensure that our systems and procedures are appropriate and that all relevant officers are trained and experienced in the command of major incidents.

This work is also important to inform the new "Service Assessment" that will feature in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the organisation in 2006.

## **Innovations in emergency response**

We have said in previous IRMP's that we would like to explore the potential for other partners to be trained in some aspects of emergency response. This is not, in any way, to reduce our own ability to respond. Rather it is to recognise the changes in other sectors and the possible opportunities these bring. For example, the Ambulance Service uses First Responder as well as Co-Responder. The Police Service utilises Community Safety Officers (CSOs) as well as Highways Agency Transport Officers (HATOs). The mixed economy model is therefore well used elsewhere.

We already use volunteers and an extended fire family for our own safety activity, but believe there is now scope for working more closely with the agencies mentioned above in areas of low risk firefighting.

In this IRMP, therefore, we want to evaluate the ability to use CSOs, HATOs and community wardens as "small fire responders".

There are clear financial implications, not to mention training and risk assessment, but given our knowledge that time is the critical factor in emergency response, we are prepared to keep an open mind and explore the opportunity.

## Co-Responding

Work in this area has included putting defibrillators on all appliances together with an agreement with Mersey Regional Ambulance Service on the siting of ambulances at up to six fire stations. This will assist in improving ambulance response times to road traffic collisions and other emergencies.

However, in the life of this IRMP we will enhance the level of training in trauma care as a necessary step towards co-responding with colleagues in the Ambulance Service. Our expectation is that we will go live with a co-responding pilot within the next year.

## Working with commercial partners after a fire

We intend to evaluate a partnership with a commercial partner to provide a better service for the clean up operation after a serious fire in a commercial premises.

Our appliances and staff have only limited capacity and facilities to undertake the clean up - because they must be available as soon as possible for other emergencies. This has always been a difficult balance to strike. However, the use of a commercial partner, an organisation funded by the insurance sector, will greatly assist. This organisation has the equipment and resources to be able to respond to serious incidents, complement the work and support we can provide after a fire and assist businesses to return to normality as quickly as possible.

## Regional Control Centre (RCC) and new national radio scheme (Firelink)

Cheshire, like all other fire authorities in England is now part of the national project for nine regional fire control centres. The new site for the North West Control Centre will be in Cheshire Fire Authority's area, at Warrington. Similarly, Cheshire is part of the national programme for replacing the communications infrastructure, the 'Firelink' project. While the 'go-live' schedule for both these projects is some way off, there is a large amount of preparing work necessary and there are also implications to our existing systems and resilience in the meantime. We have established a local project team to manage these throughout this period.

## B) Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Objectives

This section sets out the actions the Service plans to take to support the Community Risk Reduction objectives and to achieve the CRR targets identified in the first section of the Plan.

**CRR 1**  
Prevent dangerous anti-social and careless behaviour

**CRR 2**  
Protect life, property and other interests

## Community Profiling - Integrated Risk Assessment Model

Our existing Community Profiling and Targeting model (CPT) has already helped us to decide where we should target our prevention and protection work.

There is a constant need, however, to re-evaluate the information on which the CPT model is based and to explore additional sources of data. Accordingly, we have recently purchased additional data sets and we have embarked upon a data sharing project with the Cheshire and Warrington Information Consortium (CWIC) and we will continue to explore options to further refine our analysis.

However, the community profile is – or ought to be - more closely aligned to the levels of risk we experience “for real”, and through our analysis of operational incidents and the production of our risk planes each year.

We intend to rationalise and harmonise our risk assessment approaches, therefore, using the new level of detail (granularity) outlined already - i.e. the super –output area level (the smallest area as used by our partners). We also intend to increase the frequency of our risk analysis so we improve our understanding of how risk changes.

To achieve this, we will move the responsibility for consolidated risk assessment under our Community Risk Reduction function - though clearly there will need to be close working relationships maintained with our Emergency Response function.

We will also participate in new academic research that we are exploring in partnership with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, the ODPM and Manchester Metropolitan University on risk models and the relationship to social circumstances and social policy.

## Post incident scene management

We are developing a more sophisticated approach to the way we collect and interpret information during our investigations after fires and other emergencies. If we make better use of technology it will speed up our analysis and make it easier to identify possible trends in fire and other risks – potentially helping us to protect more people. For example, over the last three years, an average of 38% of all domestic accidental fires we responded to were caused by unattended cookers and electrical appliances. Clearly, this helps us to target our community safety prevention work around the issues of most importance. It also helps us understand the chain of events that lead up to an event/incident and, thus, seek to make an intervention earlier in the causal chain either through our own resources or those of our partners.

We will also participate in the North West Review of Fire Investigation (which we expect to see concluded by Summer 06) at the same time as developing and enhancing our own approach and resources to support post incident scene management.



The Post Incident Scene Management information is also used to identify where we are succeeding with current interventions. For example, between the 1st January 2002 and the 30th September 2004, there were 24 occasions when a smoke alarm, fitted by Fire Service employees, initially raised the alarm. These incidents involved a total of 47 people, who would have all become fire

casualties without our intervention. This equates to a total potential saving of £53.58 million based on the ODPM figure which puts the cost of a human life at £1.4 million.

In future we will ensure this information is used more proactively by demonstrating to our communities the value we add through our prevention and protection activities in terms of death, injury and property loss averted and how these represent value for money.

## Partnership working

The scale and complexity of the inter-relationships in delivering community safety interventions manifestly requires extensive partnership working. Over the years we have developed a strong partnership ethos and a reputation of being a valuable partner. This has enabled the Service to deliver safety initiatives that not only satisfy our own corporate objectives but also those of our partners (particularly in the area of youth engagement, crime and disorder and anti social behaviour). We will continue to develop and grow in this area.

## Home Safety Assessments (HSAs) - High Impact Events

In order to maximise the use of finite resources 'at risk' wards, or super output areas, will be tackled through a concentrated campaign utilising the mixed economy approach of fire fighters, safety advocates, volunteers and partners, working in an outreach way. Specific 'at risk groups' will be targeted by location.

Between 2006 and 2008 the Service and our partners, will concentrate on the over 65's in this group.

The specific 'at risk' wards have been identified through the Community Profiling and Targeting model and a programme of 'high impact events' developed. These involve all homes not previously visited being targeted, and clustered for HSAs. This targeting and clustering enables 'teams' of assessors to concentrate on a larger number of deliverable assessments, than was previously the case with a scatter gun or voluntary approach. The 'outreach fire stations' will provide the platform for these teams to operate in the field for extended periods, again maximising the numbers of HSAs that can be conducted. The duration of the 'high impact event' will be entirely dependant upon the numbers of properties and the size of the teams deployed, but could run from a day to several days, and involve in the region of 20-30 people. This approach has enabled the service to increase the numbers of HSAs conducted by a factor of 5.

## Outreach fire station

We plan to extend the use of our three units in enabling us to reach out into communities and to deliver joined up initiatives.

We also intend to build on the success of joint initiatives - outside of a pure fire and rescue domain - such as the recent "Fire and Flu" campaign.

This initiative involved firefighters and health staff, working together, and using the outreach unit to deliver both fire safety advice and flu jabs to residents aged 65 and over. These targeted campaigns will involve us using the outreach stations as a base in the community where we can pool our resources and those of our partners.



Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire Services, Sir Graham Meldrum receives his flu jab at a recent multi-agency campaign.

## Developing our volunteer strategy and widening the "Fire Family"

We believe that our engagement with volunteers has been one of the most important and significant developments of our IRMP approach. As well as the willingness and enthusiasm of members of the community in coming forward, there has also been significant interest from large, corporate organisations who have been extremely supportive of their staff to volunteer and to work with us. The MBNA Bank has led the way but we intend to develop the interest shown by other significant local organisations.

We intend to build on the success of our volunteer programme by a 100% increase in the number of volunteers engaged. We recognise that the growth here - as with our young people programmes - brings with it a need to support volunteers and to ensure appropriate governance arrangements are put in place. Some of the work of volunteers extends into sensitive areas that need effective management and pose a potential risk to the reputation and image of the Service. We now do extensive work with disadvantaged and sometimes problematic young people where there are obvious child protection issues and arrangements necessary. Consequently, our Corporate Support Services will work to ensure this is managed effectively and consistently, so that we can maximise the benefit to our community safety programme while protecting the image and reputation of the Service.

In addition to our area based safety teams, we also intend to look in 2006/07 at engaging volunteers in a thematic way to help us reach specific sections of our local communities. This will be through the appointment of co-ordinators and volunteers for issues such as disability groups, minority communities and older people.

## Deliberate fires ( Arson)

As detailed, we have had some major successes in reducing the number of deliberate small fires and in securing convictions for serious arson cases through our dedicated police liaison post, funded through the national Arson Control Forum. There are concerns however, that the funding to this position is time-limited and so in this IRMP we will explore how we achieve sustainability of this important initiative.

We are also going to look more closely at the way we collect and use information. In addition we aim to separate incidents we can truly classify as arson from those that are more accurately described as nuisance incidents. This will enable us to target our resources and efforts more efficiently, in partnership with others.

## Kooldown/Get Up and Get Out (GUGO)

As part of our work with disaffected young people, we have successfully run initiatives called Kooldown and Get Up and Get Out, in partnership with Halton and Crewe and Nantwich Borough Councils. The schemes take young people excluded, or at risk of exclusion, from school and use fire and rescue facilities, programmes and training methods to prepare them to return to education.

Feedback and evaluation from participants and partners has highlighted the positive impact of these projects. A partnership bid in conjunction with Cheshire County Council has recently won £1 million from the Government's Invest to Save Fund which will be used to develop a "Respect" programme of further work with young people.

The schemes have been evaluated using a model toolkit devised by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) which we launched at the annual Local Government Association Fire conference in March 2006.

### Princes Trust

We have been a partner of the Trust for over a decade and we have supported literally hundreds of young people. This year we have been compelled to reduce the number of teams we run through our Prince's Trust 'Team' programme as a consequence of major reductions in our external funding. However, we will continue to explore alternative funding opportunities and we will review the range of our young people's programmes to ensure they address local needs and satisfy national priorities.

### Smokebusters

We have had a long term and enduring partnership with the Bridgewater School of Performing Arts, Warrington in relation to the "Smokebusters" group.

Smokebusters is a team of young people, who are pursuing performing arts either as an interest or as a career, but who, in their spare time, attend shows and events to promote a fire safety message, using music as the medium to attract people. They have recently added a children's puppet theatre to the repertoire.

We intend to try to build on the success of Smokebusters by forming further partnerships with other performing arts schools and colleges across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington, using a variety of entertainment media to deliver safety messages.

### Young offenders cadet unit

Cheshire's pilot project to set up a fire cadet unit inside the Thorn Cross Young Offenders' Institute at Warrington is truly unique, the only one of its kind in Europe. It has already proved extremely successful and gained national recognition. A full-time post, funded by Thorn Cross, will continue to develop this initiative in 2006/07.

We also, in partnership with others, actively target anti-social offenders (ASC or ASBO) through our Youth Engagement programmes, and this is beginning to show a positive outcome.

### Fire Cadets

We believe that during the life of this IRMP we will achieve our major goal of a fire cadet unit at every single fire station. This is a significant achievement and shows Cheshire's leading role in connecting the Fire and Rescue Service with the young people of local communities. Furthermore, the Service is the only one in the country accredited to make its own awards under the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

The activity of our cadets in their local communities – urban as well as rural communities - is also significant. This year, for example, Cheshire fire cadets raised funds to build a school in Ghana. This was important in terms of their own personal development - but it also made a major impact on a small community in the developing world. We intend to support this growth by provision of administrative support in 06/07. In addition we want our cadets to support a similar community in Ghana by building another school in 2007.



### National young people strategies

We will continue to make sure that our extensive work with young people is complementary and in line with national policy objectives such as those set out in the Green Paper "Every Child Matters" and the "Strategy for Children and Young People – Fire and Rescue Service 2006 – 10". We particularly wish to focus on the fire outcomes in "Every Child Matters".

## Shift of resources to meet new priorities - "vulnerable people"

Our continuous review and evaluation of community risk profiles, supported by our own operational data and that of our partners has identified that we need to focus more on reducing risk to 'vulnerable people' within our communities. By 'vulnerable people' we are referring to older people (60yrs +) and people with sensory, physical or mental disabilities. In the early part of 2005, we noticed a significant number of incidents occurring within this community group and we plan to shift resources to address this need.

Currently, we engage a sizable resource to address children and young people issues. While this community group are still important to us in terms of risk reduction, we feel we are advanced enough to remove some of the 'support resources' dedicated to this area and redeploy these into supporting our work with 'vulnerable people'.

Youth engagement is now well enough established to allow front line personnel and our existing advocates and volunteers to carry on delivering successful and proven initiatives to meet the Children's and Young People agenda, including addressing crime and disorder issues, anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance in partnership with others.

During the life of this plan, we intend to redirect one station manager and two youth support officers and employ a new 'vulnerable persons' programme manager. This new team will research, develop and implement risk reduction interventions for delivery by the wider fire family, and in partnership with others to address specific needs of this 'at risk' group. It is anticipated that this new team will be in place and operating by the end of May 2006.

## Road traffic collision reduction

We intend to increase further the profile and activity of our Road Safety Unit, created from our first IRMP. We have now taken the lead role in delivering the Cheshire Partnership LPSA2 target of reducing death and injury from road collisions, a bold step. The target is a 44% reduction in people killed or seriously injured by 2008.

We have appointed a full-time project co-ordinator to support our Road Safety Unit, and will now actively promote specific educational joint campaigns in response to local community concerns over road deaths, using initiatives such as the "Drive Survive" programme to target young drivers – the key 'at risk' group.



## Working with Business and Commerce Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005

The introduction of the Fire Safety Order 2006 represents the biggest shake-up in fire safety legislation in over 50 years. As we stated earlier, over 100 pieces of legislation will be removed from statute, creating a single fire safety regime. This will significantly increase the number of business premises covered by the legislation and put the onus on owners to carry out effective risk assessments. It will have a major impact on the work of the Service's fire safety staff.

We recognise that as part of an integrated public sector we have a responsibility to enforce this legislation in a proportionate way, striking the balance between safety and the encouragement of economic development and enterprise.

### We need to:

- Assist businesses to comply with statutory responsibilities
- Audit self-assessment on a risk basis
- Rigorously enforce the legislation with those who elect not to comply
- Monitor the impact of self-assessment/regulations on fires/incidents
- Introduce arson prevention and business continuity into risk assessments to assist sustainability.

A prioritised programme has, therefore, been devised to raise awareness among the business community and to ensure that the introduction of the Fire Safety Order does not lead to increased fires and inevitable financial losses in Cheshire. The work involves making best use of new technology both locally and nationally to provide businesses with online access to help, support and guidance. In addition, the programme has already utilised a number of successful “safety days” at retail parks using our outreach facilities as bases and we will undertake more in 06/ 07.

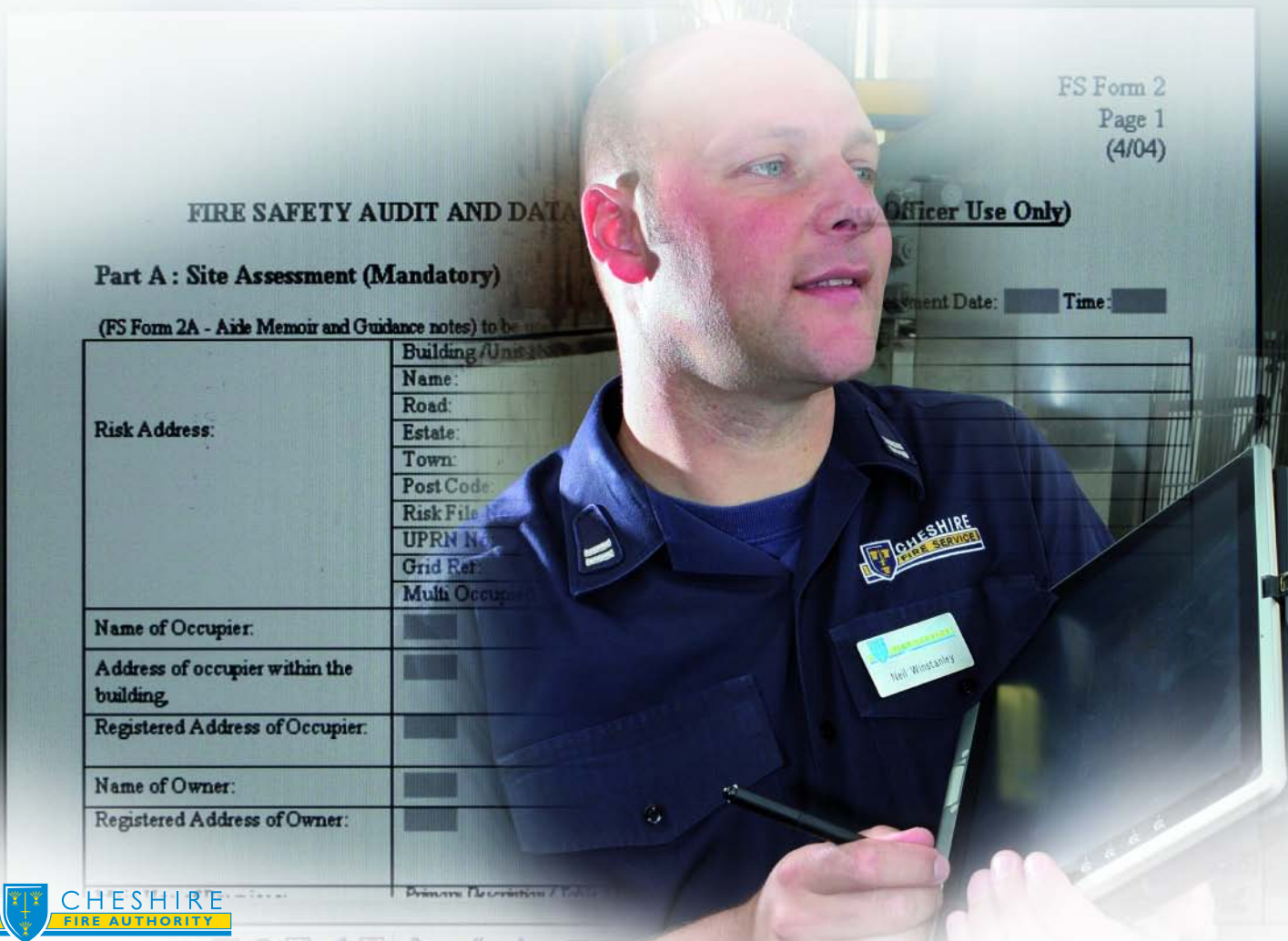
We will be assessing and enhancing the skills and qualifications of fire safety staff to carry out the necessary enforcement work required under the new legislation and, within this, we want to explore the implications of professional accreditation of all our fire safety staff within the framework that exists between the Engineering Council and the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE).

If the costs are not prohibitive, we want to ensure all our safety staff achieve their fire engineering qualifications and professional accreditation.

We recognise that as well as protecting lives, the protection of business properties is critical. The impact of a fire at a major employer can be devastating to the sustainability of a local community and the local economy.

Because of the impact and significance of our developing relationship with the business sector, we will now appoint a dedicated Business Liaison Officer to further improve our links in 2006/07 and beyond.

We will also create another “Non-Executive Director” position on our Independent Review Board (outlined elsewhere) for the commercial sector, focussing particularly on the insurance industry.



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## FIRE SAFETY AUDIT AND DATA

Officer Use Only

### Part A : Site Assessment (Mandatory)

(FS Form 2A - Aide Memoir and Guidance notes) to be used by...

Risk Address:	Building/Unit Name:	
	Name:	
	Road:	
	Estate:	
	Town:	
	Post Code:	
	Risk File No:	
	UPRN No:	
Name of Occupier:		Multi Occupancy: <input type="checkbox"/>
Address of occupier within the building:		
Registered Address of Occupier:		
Name of Owner:		
Registered Address of Owner:		



## Part 4 – Technical appendices

### Macro-Environment Analysis - PEIST

The FRS has entered a significant period of change since the industrial disputes of 2002/3 and the resulting Bain Review, Government White Paper and legislative change. It is useful to reflect in a more systematic manner, the key factors that influence the development of the huge agenda for change and modernisation.

### Political

For many years up to 2002, governments of all political parties had taken a benign but benevolent view of the Fire Service. The pay dispute of 2002/3 escalated the Service up the political agenda and led to the Independent Review to break the impasse reached in the pay dispute.

The Bain Review and Government White Paper that followed laid the foundation for the modernisation of the FRS with a fundamentally different philosophy to risk management that rated prevention/protection and emergency response as equally important. In addition, the FRS was seen as part of a wider approach to community safety and a partner to the other emergency services within the local government community.

The wisdom of the new philosophy was scrutinised through the ODPM Select Committee and endorsed by a number of stakeholders as a sound and progressive way forward.

The FRS Act 2004 placed this change on a statutory footing - but did not “quite” provide all the powers necessary to engage fully with the wider safety and partnership agenda (FRS’ for example, cannot rely upon the general power of “well being” - unless the FRS is part of a County Council).

Policy direction has, so far, been vested in the Fire Service Improvement Team within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) working closely with key stakeholders (LGA and CFA).

The implications of the Gershon Review, however suggest a need to “hand over” policy development in large measure to the professional and political leaders of the Service.

The need for local leaders to “take back” responsibility for strategic direction should also be seen as an important symbolic step in drawing a line under the period of industrial relations uncertainty, not least the criticisms of Bain, and a demonstration that the leaders of the service accept their leadership obligations.

In handing over policy development there remains a need to retain a mechanism of quality (operational) assurance and a check and balance of professional opinion - particularly in the world of risk management which has at its core, professional judgement. There is also a need to ensure that the Government, being responsible for overarching public policy, does not allow the FRS to fall back down the wider political agenda once more, becoming almost irrelevant.

The importance and legitimacy of key, political stakeholders, including the Local Government Association, the National Employers, needs to be fully recognised because the institutional arrangements that now prevail demand “collective leadership” with unity of purpose.

There remains ambiguity and tension between “central and local”, with Regional Management Boards (some way-off from being regional authorities) compromised through vagueness over rules, responsibilities and duties. It is not clear if they are a “collaborative enterprise” or a tier of planning and decision making. A clear framework needs to be developed.

The National Framework document is the tool through which the expectations of the modernisation programme are set by government and should link to wider public policy development.

The terrorist attacks in London on 7 July 2005 and the subsequent failed attacks on 21 July, coupled with intelligence of a continuing threat, serve to reinforce the essential role played by the FRS as part of the United Kingdom’s (UK) emergency response and civil contingency capability.

Resilience and New Dimension aspects have become a vital element in the modernisation programme for the FRS. In some cases, for example Regional Control Centres (RCCs), these aspects are also politically significant.

The various representative bodies are in a state of flux with some supportive of the modernisation agenda and others somewhat more selective.

The new industrial relations machinery should provide opportunities for change but when used and tested it is proving to be as protracted as the “old” machinery with “culture” still a significant stumbling block.

The disengagement of the FBU with the Labour Party removes much of the private access to elected members that often presented governance and ethical difficulties.

## **Economic**

The cost of running the FRS is estimated at around £1.7bn per annum and the predominant funding route remains through Local Authority Council Tax, with its attendant controls and limits. Public sector reform and value for money will remain key drivers.

Some additional funding has been made available for New Dimension projects. However, this will possibly have to be “repaid” at some future point. Certainly, sustainability remains a key issue.

The UK economy is still relatively buoyant with an average 2.5% growth forecast for each of the years to 2009 which should provide some funding stability to the FRS.

The UK is Europe’s strongest economy with growth and low inflation and unemployment at about 4% compared with Germany’s 12% and that of France at 10%. However, the UK budget has swung from a surplus of nearly 4% in 2000 to a deficit close to 3% in 2004.

But there is a widening gap between economic “haves and have nots” with implications for community cohesion and breakdown of order in local communities. This may, in part, be responsible for an increasing level of attacks on firefighters as figures of authority.

The economic costs of fire show a decrease in nearly all of the measures indicating the cost effectiveness of FRS funding.

The Gershon Review demands greater efficiencies from all government departments and agencies including Fire, and sets targets to achieve this.

The drive for efficiency is likely to increase the need to think seriously about mergers and better use of joint ventures with the Private Sector to deliver back-office services.

There remains a role for an “independent” fire adviser to central government and the wider FRS.

There is a need to consider further the role of the private sector in fire and rescue service provision, which has previously been seen as a “taboo” subject.

## **International**

There is a considerable International interest in Fire and Rescue.

As a member of the EC - with more accession countries - there is an opportunity to improve the safety of “European” citizens and to share good practice.

Climate change - increase in “natural disasters” floods and freak phenomenon - hurricanes and tornadoes - also brings challenges for new operational tactics and equipment.

Global terrorism is now a feature of today’s modern world, which leverages a heightened reliance on emergency service provision.

Alternative approaches to FRS activity allow the FRS to learn from good practice, including technology, tactics, management and the use of different sectors such as private, community and voluntary.

## **Social/Cultural**

There is a wide spread and continuing public support for the FRS who are perceived with high regard as an essential emergency service.

However, in some communities, particularly those socially and economically disadvantaged, the service may be seen as “establishment” leading to expressions of resentment such as attacks on firefighters.

The terrorist attacks in London are likely to polarise views of some British Minority and Ethnic (BME) communities, particularly where fire services have traditionally been poor in recruiting BME applicants and seen as a white organisation. This could lead to serious difficulties for the FRS in some communities with cohesion and order breaking down.

Public awareness of fire safety remains fickle and generally reflects the effort placed into prevention campaigns by the FRS.

As Society becomes more demanding and with a litigious culture, the implications for strategic decision makers are exacerbated, particularly in emergency situations.

Increasing expectations in terms of ethics and integrity place emphasis on the implications for risk management decision such as IRMP and RCCs.

Fire Statistics indicate a reducing trend in all fires, fire fatalities and arson.

Crime statistics suggest massive under-reporting of fires with the suggestion that approximately 80% of all fires are never reported and are extinguished by members of the local community.

The diversity and equality targets of the FRS are not yet being met.

The FRS responds to an increasing number of non-fire incidents.

Demographic change with an increasingly older population, potentially places more people "at risk".

The implications of health and safety and the expectations of the public, requires the FRS to look more closely at breaking down the barriers of service provision with activities such as co-responder schemes.

The managers of the service have little experience of grappling with major change and there is an institutional "nervousness" at progressing change - particularly change which may be "unpopular" with staff.

There is a culture of industrial relations that has 'skewed' the power and decision making relationships which will take some time to change.

Political and professional relationships need to mature from the previously adversarial or at least benign situation. Partnership arrangements need to be encouraged between local/national politicians and professionals to achieve common agendas.

## **Technological**

New developments in alarms and sprinkler systems continue to be made and need to be capitalised.

New Dimension equipment has been procured and is in the process of being deployed throughout the FRS.

Use of new techniques to improve firefighting tactics are now possible through advances in areas such as robotics, remote monitoring, telemetry, radar and thermal imaging.

Advances in clothing technology and respiratory protection equipment are being harnessed through national procurement.

The internet is changing the way people organise themselves in their personal and professional lives. The internet is also opening up new ways of interacting with communities - on a world wide basis.