

# Making Cheshire Safer: Our Plans for 2019/20

**C**heshire Fire Authority is the public body responsible for ensuring local communities are protected by an effective fire and rescue service.

In 2015 the Authority approved a five year strategy, 'Planning for a Safer Cheshire', that outlined challenges facing the organisation and set out the principles it would adopt in responding. This is supported by a series of annual action plans or Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) as they are also known.

Our draft action plan, *Making Cheshire Safer: Our Plans for 2019-2020*, is the final action plan under this strategy and we would like your views on your fire and rescue service and our plans for the future. A full version of the IRMP and further information can be viewed on the Service's website

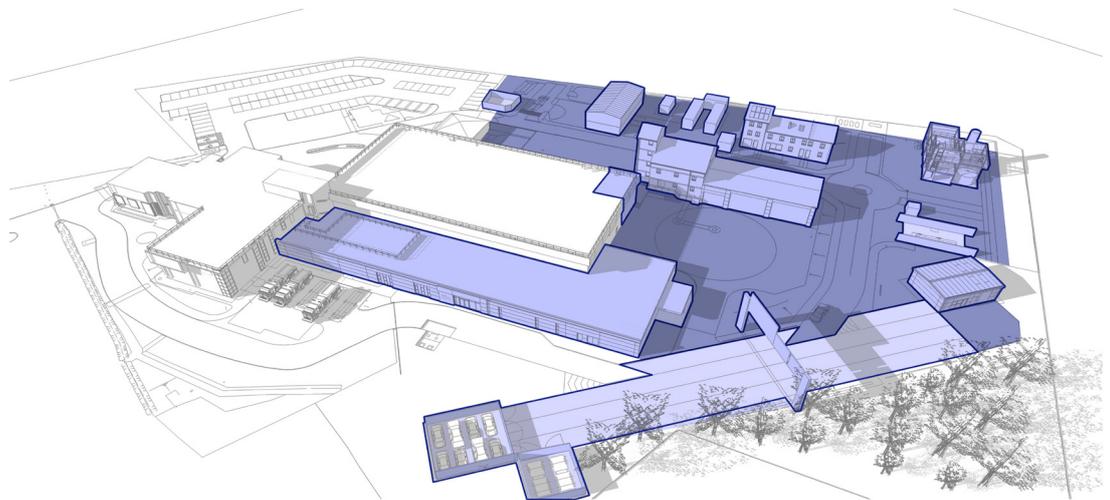
[www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

## Focus on the future

Five years ago the Authority embarked on its Emergency Response Review to ensure it was able to respond to future demands in light of reduced central funding. This resulted in the implementation of a huge programme of activity; including changes to the way some stations were staffed; a new 10 minute response standard; the introduction of 12 hour firefighter shifts and the building of new fire stations in Alsager, Penketh and Mollington as well as a fire station and innovative safety and life skills centre at Lymm, Safety Central.

This work has ensured that the organisation has been able to make required revenue savings of £7.7m and continue to develop its fire prevention work and provide firefighters with the best equipment to protect both them and the communities they serve.

Looking forward, the Authority has commenced work on a 'Whole Service Review' to align the provision of services to future resources and priorities. This review will set the direction of the Service for the period 2020-2024, with outcomes subject to consultation in future IRMPs.



*Architect's drawing of the proposed new operational training centre at Sadler Road, Winsford*

This review will incorporate the outcomes of previous reviews including the crewing arrangements at Wilmslow and Penketh fire stations; the provision of the Authority's third aerial appliance; the second fire engine at Ellesmere Port fire station and the outcomes of the review of the Protection department. It will also be informed by incident and risk data, statistics, the outlook for public finances and feedback from consultation processes such as this.

As the Authority develops this review, we'd like you to let us know what you think our priorities should be and which activities you would like your fire and rescue service to undertake to improve the local community.

In addition to reviewing the way services are provided by the Fire Authority, we are proposing to increase our share of council tax (called its precept) for 2019/2020 by 2.99% to help balance its budget and want you to let us know your views.

Council tax currently accounts for about 65% of the Fire Authority's funding, with the remaining 35% consisting of central government funding. The Authority levies £75.48 per year (£1.45 per week) in council tax on a Band D equivalent property in Cheshire. It has a four-year financial settlement with the Government in place until 2020/21. While this provides some certainty over the level of central funding up to 2020/2021, the Authority needs to make revenue savings of £1.4m from its day-to-day operations by that point.

Additionally, during 2019/2020 the Authority will continue its programme of work to improve the duty system for on-call firefighters and conduct an engagement survey of its staff. Subject to planning permission, it will commence building of a replacement, fit for purpose fire station in Chester on the site of the existing building on St Anne Street.

The Authority will also progress the development of a new operational training centre on its Sadler Road site in Winsford and commence a programme of modernising some of its fire stations and other properties. It will also start plans to construct a new joint fire and police facility on the site of the existing fire station in Macon Way, Crewe, alongside Cheshire Constabulary and the Police and Crime Commissioner. These capital programmes will be funded by using the Authority's reserves and borrowing where required.

## Have Your Say

We are currently consulting on our draft IRMP for 2019/2020, so please take the opportunity to have your say and help shape the future of your fire and rescue service.

Our consultation is open until Friday 4th January 2019, so if you were given this form at one of our consultation roadshows, please fill in the survey accompanying this summary and post it (no stamp required) to FREEPOST CHESHIRE FIRE CONSULTATION before then. Alternatively, you can fill out our consultation survey online by visiting our website [www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk).

You can also contact us via Twitter ([@CheshireFire](https://twitter.com/CheshireFire)), Facebook ([Cheshire FRS](https://www.facebook.com/CheshireFRS)), by emailing [consultation@cheshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@cheshirefire.gov.uk) or calling 01606 868700.

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