

Investing in staff and communities

Major investments to protect both local communities and frontline firefighters are planned by Cheshire Fire Authority over the next 12 months – despite limiting the increase needed in its Council Tax level to under three per cent.

New state-of-the-art protective clothing for firefighters and a complete replacement of breathing apparatus sets are planned, together with £150,000 to maintain the highly successful home safety assessment programme which offers life-saving advice and free smoke alarms to residents.

These and a range of other safety proposals are set out in the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2010/11, with over £800,000 of the funding coming from efficiencies across the organisation, half of them from back office services.



Key proposals scheduled for the next 12 months include:

- **Better facilities on stations** – £110,000 to improve training facilities and £150,000 to refurbish Wilmslow and Frodsham Community Fire Stations
- **Environment** – a near £100,000 programme to make energy improvements on stations and to create an 'eco station'. This will support the Service's commitment to cut its carbon footprint by 30% compared to 2008
- **New operational kit** – nearly £1 million to provide all firefighters with the highest-rated protective clothing and to replace all breathing apparatus sets
- **Equality and Diversity** – aim to become an 'excellent' Authority under the Equality Framework for Local Government, including a £100,000 schedule of improvements to tackle access and equality issues at stations
- **Volunteers** – increasing the range of activities that volunteers can become involved with across the Service
- **Shared Services** – investigate opportunities to work with partners on sharing services, particularly in back office areas, to improve value for money
- **Operational working arrangements** – review shift and management arrangements to increase the flexibility and capacity of the workforce, including 12-hour shifts.

Full details of the Plan are on the Service's website.

Safety at Home

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service aims to offer a free home safety assessment and free smoke detectors to every home across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.

Make sure you get your free check – it could save your life.

Call 0800 389 0053 or complete the online form on the website.

Safety at Work

Fire safety legislation now covers over 30,000 businesses across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.

Owners are responsible for carrying out effective risk assessments. Make sure you know what you have to do, call 0800 389 0053 and ask for business advice or visit our website.



Cheshire Fire Authority

The Authority manages the local fire and rescue service on behalf the community. It comprises 23 councillors – eight each from Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils, four from Warrington and three from Halton.

Representing

Cheshire West and Chester

Cllr Pam Booher

Cllr Brian Crowe

Cllr Eleanor Johnson

Cllr Keith Musgrave

Cllr Andrew Needham

Cllr Tony Sherlock

Cllr Graham Smith

Cllr Norman Wright

Meeting dates



Wed	14	April	2010
Wed	2	June	2010
Wed	15	September	2010
Wed	15	December	2010
Wed	9	February	2011
Wed	13	April	2011

All meetings are open to the public, start at 10.30am and are held at the Service Headquarters in Winsford.

Facts and figures

Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service operates:

- **24** Fire Stations
- **4** Community Safety Centres
- **3** Community Fire Protection Offices
- A Headquarters and training facility.

The Authority provides a 24 hour service to just over 1 million people and employs some:

- **716** operational staff
- **27** control room operators
- **259** community safety and other support staff.

Fire budget 2010/11

The Fire Authority has agreed that a budget of £43.4m is required for the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington areas for 2010/11. This will ensure that £24.9m will be raised from local Council Tax, which is equivalent to £66.43 for each Band D dwelling.

This compares with £64.53 for 2009/10 and represents an increase of £1.90 (2.94%). The budget equates to a cost per person of less than 83p per week.

Efficiency savings

The Fire Authority declared cumulative efficiency savings of £1.55 million for 2009/10. This equated to a reduction of £4 on Council Tax per Band D household, which is the same as the average for all Fire Authorities.

For 2010/11 the Fire Authority is forecasting further efficiency savings of £801,000 which equates to an additional reduction of £2.14 on Council Tax per Band D household.

Estimated expenditure and income

	2010/11 £m	2009/10 £m
Firefighters	27.5	27.7
Other staff	6.3	6.2
Non-pay expenditure	14.3	13.1
Gross revenue expenditure	48.1	47.0
LESS Income	(1.5)	(1.7)
Capital adjustments	(3.2)	(3.2)
Budget requirement	43.4	42.1

How the budget compared with last year

The Fire Authority budget requirement for 2010/11 is £43.4m compared with a budget of £42.1m for last year. The reasons for the 3.2% increase in the overall budget are as follows:

	£m	% increase
Last year's budget	42.07	
Pay and price inflation	0.71	1.7
Essential growth	1.30	3.1
Efficiencies and Savings	(0.80)	(1.9)
Other*	0.14	0.3
Total	43.42	3.2

*Other includes:
Revenue costs of capital programme 0.10
Allocation of second homes precept 0.04

Where the money will come from

	£m	£ Per Resident	£ Band D Equivalent
This year's budget	43.42	42.94	116.04
Less Government grants	(18.62)	(18.42)	(49.77)
Plus Collection Fund deficit	0.06	0.06	0.16
Local Council Tax	24.86	24.58	66.43