

# Multi-million pound 'new stations for old' programme

A MULTI-MILLION pound programme which will provide up to four new fire stations and ensure improvements at four existing stations across Cheshire will get underway in 2007.

The package has been approved by Members of the Fire Authority who insist the new stations will have better facilities for both communities and staff and will be on sites guaranteed to

ensure existing safety standards are maintained if not significantly improved.

The programme is being funded from the sale of existing stations at Chester and Runcorn. The Runcorn station will be replaced with a new facility near Hallwood Link Road, while in Chester there will be a new fire station in the city centre as well as a second community fire safety facility on the outskirts.

Officers predict there will be sufficient funds left over to refurbish existing stations at Ellesmere Port, Widnes, Birchwood and Wilmslow and to provide additional accommodation at the Winsford Headquarters.

"This is an extremely exciting programme which promises to provide both our communities and our firefighters with modern facilities at no direct extra cost to taxpayers," said Fire

Authority Chairman Tony Hooton.

"A number of existing stations were built in the 60's and 70's and are not in the best location or condition but this package means we can modernise and improve access without entering into private finance initiative deals."

Developers are interested in the Crewe station, but Members have insisted that any scheme will depend on finding a suitable replacement site.

## 'Fire and flu'

A PIONEERING project between the Service and health staff which offered older people free protection from fire and 'flu has been praised by the country's top medical expert as an example of best practice.

In his 2006 Annual Report published in July, Chief Medical Officer Sir Liam Donaldson said Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's work with local primary care trusts was 'innovative' and was making a 'significant contribution' to public health.

Now the Service is hoping to renew the campaign this year with the new Central and Eastern Primary Care Trust which covers around 400,000 residents.

The original project involved the Service linking up with Central Cheshire Primary Care Trust to offer home fire safety assessments to residents over-65 when they received their annual flu jabs.

A mobile 'fire station' was parked in town centres and local supermarkets, with nurses providing free flu jabs before firefighters encouraged residents to book their free safety checks.

## Seasonal safety

WITH Summer over, the clocks going back on 29 October and Bonfire Night just round the corner, the Service would like to remind residents of some key safety messages:

**Clocks** – check your smoke alarms are working as you put the clocks back

**Keeping warm** - ensure electric blankets are working properly, any heaters are not obstructed and don't leave fires on overnight

### Bonfire Night

- Store and use fireworks responsibly
- Light fireworks at arm's length using a safety lighter, stand well back and never return once lit.
- Keep a bucket of water handy.
- Take care of children and pets.
- Try and go to an organised bonfire.
- If you must light your own bonfire, don't use flammable liquids and site away from buildings and trees.



● Jubeyar Ahmed, the Service's first Muslim volunteer.

## Volunteers help to Make Cheshire Safer

BUILDING strong links with the community is a key priority for the Service and over the last year, it has worked closely with local businesses like ASDA to establish the Safety Volunteer Scheme.

There are now almost 100 volunteers who regularly give up their time to help meet the objectives of Cheshire Fire and

Rescue Service and give something back to the community.

Among the volunteers are people who speak foreign languages, health and safety professionals, fully trained entertainers and those who work with young people.

Every volunteer attends an induction programme which includes extensive training in fire

awareness and health and safety. The long-term aim is to fully train every volunteer so that they can go and carry out home safety assessments.

Volunteer Scheme Manager Harry Nelson said, "The programme has grown from strength to strength but we still need more people to join and would welcome applications from anyone who has

the time and commitment to help their local fire service.

"We also want to thank the many volunteers who are already part of the scheme as they are an integral part of our vision to 'Make Cheshire Safer'."

Anyone who wants to join can complete an online application form by visiting [www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)



● The Mayor of Warrington, Councillor Linda Dirir, Consort Mr Allin Dirir, 'Best Cadet' Siraj Momin and his family at the initial Thorn Cross presentation day.

## Fire cadets make a world of difference

ENGAGING with young people is vitally important to the Service and the fire cadet programme and its strong partnership with Thorn Cross Young Offenders Institute in Warrington are real success stories.

The activity of the cadets in the community is significant. Last year for example, the cadets helped raise funds to build a school in Akrofu, a village in the Volta region of Ghana in West Africa.

The cadets were chosen to work with the villagers in the final stages of the building work after raising money for their travel, accommodation and towards the building materials. The youngsters also collected books, pens, paper and sports equipment to

ensure the school was ready to open as soon as it was finished.

The Impact Project with Thorn Cross is similar to the fire cadet programme and is an innovative and exciting new partnership which gives up to 12 cadets at the Institute the opportunity to attend a 12 week full-time course.

The aim is to develop the cadets' confidence and life skills, teach them to work as part of a team and prepare them for employment. They also receive basic fire fighting training and learn about the structure and ranks within the Service with the aim of achieving qualifications such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the Community Sports Leader Award.

## The road to recruitment

STAFF from the Service took to the road this summer as part of a new recruitment campaign.

Using one of the organisation's 'mobile fire stations' staff visited venues across the area including Crewe, Chester, Macclesfield, Northwich, Warrington and Runcorn.

The sessions allowed people in different sections of the community the chance to find out about work within the Service at first hand.

The Service is intending to ultimately have a 'shortlist' of around 80 people who will attend a series of recruits courses running into 2007.

This will help to address both vacancies and projected retirements and is one of a series of initiatives by the Service to ensure it continues to have the right numbers of staff with relevant skills to address the risks facing local communities.

"We want to recruit people with a real commitment to improving the safety of local residents and as a major employer we want to ensure that our workforce is genuinely representative of all of the communities we aim to protect," said Kathryn Foreman, Deputy Chief Fire Officer – Brigade Manager for Corporate Services.

"We are also committed to the principle that a fire fighter is a fire fighter, irrespective of the role and duty system on which they are employed.

"That has been shown by the fact that, even though there are no national systems in place, we have been able to bring in a local process to enable some of the firefighters on our retained duty system to migrate across to our whole time and day crewing staff."