Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Analysis of External Drivers (PESTLE Analysis) 2012/13

2012-13 Analysis of External Drivers - PESTLE

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Fire and Rescue Spending = £3bn
Equivalent to the circle below
2012-13 Analysis of External Drivers (PESTLE)

The Analysis of External Drivers is a document published on an annual basis by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and updated throughout the year. The document provides a comprehensive and forward-looking assessment of the political, economic, socio-cultural, technical, legal and environmental/ethical drivers that will both impact upon and shape service delivery over the next twelve months.

In 2010, the Service published a substantial analysis that looked forward, over the medium term, to 2015. This tied-in with the economic and political programme of the Coalition Government, which was formed after the General Election in May 2010 and has supported the development of the Fire Authority’s Four Year Strategy and the annual action plans – the Integrated Risk Management Plans for 2010-11 (IRMP8) and 2011-12 (IRMP9).

This updated document seeks to build upon previous analyses and outline how and where the external context has changed. As will be explained later in the main body of the analysis this is particularly relevant to the field of local government, which continues to go through a period of significant change.

This includes the introduction of overarching policies such as the embedding of the localism agenda, the diversification of public service provision and, specifically for fire and rescue services, the development of a new national framework.

Going forward, Fire Authorities and other local government bodies will need to contend with significant change to the way in which local government is funded as well as adapt to a continuing programme of austerity.

In analysing these external influences, the PESTLE should help to shape both the proposals being developed by the Authority for inclusion in IRMP10 and also enable agreed projects to be implemented effectively; having regard to relevant local and national issues.

The Analysis of External Drivers is a tool that has been used by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service for a number of years, developed by a small in-house team, to drive policy and aid implementation. The analysis is now available for other services to purchase in a localised format.

At the time of writing, much of the data from the 2011 census has not yet become available, though a small number of key datasets have been released and are included where relevant. Other datasets are scheduled to be released over this summer and will be factored into the refresh of the PESTLE analysis that will take place later this year.
Contents

Cheshire: An Overview ........................................................................................................ 7

Political Analysis .................................................................................................................... 16
  Local Politics, local identities ............................................................................................. 17
  Community Budgets ........................................................................................................ 18
  A New National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services .............................................. 20
  Police and Crime Commissioners .................................................................................... 21
  Health and Wellbeing Boards .......................................................................................... 22
  Public service reform ....................................................................................................... 22
  Reform of public sector pensions .................................................................................... 23
  Road safety ........................................................................................................................ 23
  A continuing Coalition? .................................................................................................... 24

Economic Analysis ................................................................................................................ 25
  Spending Review: Cuts still to come .................................................................................. 26
  Austerity, Part II ................................................................................................................ 27
  Business Rate Retention and Formula Grant ................................................................. 27
  Precepting arrangements ................................................................................................... 28
  Recession and the Euro question ....................................................................................... 29
  The cost of fuel .................................................................................................................... 30
  Growth and red tape .......................................................................................................... 30

Socio-cultural Analysis ........................................................................................................ 31
  An ageing society ............................................................................................................... 32
  Unemployment .................................................................................................................... 33
  Social unrest ....................................................................................................................... 34
  Fuel poverty ....................................................................................................................... 34

Technological Analysis ........................................................................................................ 40
  Social media ...................................................................................................................... 41
  Post FiReControl ............................................................................................................. 42
  Cyber security .................................................................................................................... 43
  Information technology ...................................................................................................... 43

Legal Analysis ........................................................................................................................ 47
  Warwickshire review and Hampshire inquest .................................................................. 48
  Health and safety regulations ......................................................................................... 48
  Employment legislation reform ....................................................................................... 48
  Regional pay ...................................................................................................................... 49
  The Working Time Directive ............................................................................................ 49

Environmental Analysis ...................................................................................................... 50
  Green energy and future capacity .................................................................................... 51
  The built environment ....................................................................................................... 51
  Severe weather .................................................................................................................. 52
  Flooding .............................................................................................................................. 53
  The risk of terrorism ......................................................................................................... 54
  Natural disasters ................................................................................................................ 55

Annex 1: Risk Assessment of Key Issues ........................................................................... 60
Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Analysis of External Drivers (PESTLE Analysis) 2012/13

Annex 2: 2012/13 Cheshire Fire Authority ........................................64
Annex 3: Timeline of next electoral cycle ........................................68
Annex 4: Planned developments in local unitary areas ..........69

Graphs, maps and charts

Cheshire population, 2011.............................................................10
2011 general population and 65+, by unitary authority ..........10
Index of Multiple Deprivation map, Halton and Warrington ....11
Index of Multiple Deprivation map, Cheshire East and West ..12
Households in Cheshire by unitary authority ..................13
National Insurance Number (NiNo) registrations, 2002-11 ...13
Top 5 Nationalities for NiNo registrations 2010/11 ........13
Cheshire enterprises by industry sector, 2011 ..................14
Cheshire enterprises by turnover, 2011 ..................14
Cheshire enterprises by employment size, 2011 ........15
Cheshire enterprises by employment size by authority, 2011 ..15
Political control of local unitary authorities ...................17
Estimated UK population aged 65+ and 80+ by 2035 ........36
Increase in Cheshire elderly population 2035 vs 2010 ..........36
Estimated increase in population with dementia to 2026 ....37
Projected cost of dementia care to 2026 ..................37
Unemployment rate by local authority, 2009-12 ..........38
Claimant rate by duration by unitary authority, May 2012 ....38
Fuel poverty in England by local authority area, 2010 ..........39
Fuel poverty trends 1992-2010 ...............................................39
Households in fuel poverty before /after housing costs ..........39
Number of active Facebook users 2004-12 ......................45
Number of Twitter account registrations 2006-12 ............45
UK Facebook users by demography and gender, 2012 ..........46
Activities conducted on smartphones by UK adults, 2012 ....46
Projected increase in passenger throughput at Manchester
Airport to 2030 ........................................................56
Projected increase in passenger throughput at Liverpool John
Lennon Airport to 2030 ..................................................56
Projected change in UK summer and winter average
temperatures to 2050 ................................................57
Projected change in UK summer and winter average precipitation
to 2050 ..............................................................58
National Risk Register 2012: Risk Matrices ....................59
Political composition of 2012/13 Cheshire Fire Authority .....64
Map of Cheshire Fire Authority Members ......................66
Map of Cheshire Fire Authority Members, by ward ..........67
Electoral timeline to 2020 ................................................68
Map of Cheshire Members of Parliament ......................69
Map of Cheshire Members of the House of Lords ..........70
Cheshire: An Overview

Cheshire as a whole encompasses four unitary authority areas; Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington. As a county, Cheshire covers an area of 2,343 square kilometres (905 square miles), split by the four unitary authority areas:

- Cheshire East: 1,116km²
- Cheshire West and Chester: 918.28km²
- Halton: 79.09km²
- Warrington: 180.65km²

Population

According to the 2011 census, the population of Cheshire is just over one million (1,027,700).

- 0-14 yrs: 175,000 (17.03%)
- 15-24 yrs: 121,000 (11.78%)
- 25-49 yrs: 343,200 (33.40%)
- 50-64 yrs: 205,200 (19.97%)
- 65-79 yrs: 134,100 (13.05%)
- 80+ yrs: 48,800 (4.67%)

In the decade between this census (2011) and the 2001 census, the population in Cheshire as a whole has increased by 44,264 (or +4.39%). The rate of population growth in each of the unitary areas is as follows:

- Cheshire East: +18,282 (+5.20%)
- Cheshire West and Chester: +7,641 (+2.37%)
- Halton: +7,585 (+6.42%)
- Warrington: +11,116 (+5.82%)

The proportion of the population aged 65 years and over has risen. In Cheshire this age group has from 15.81% of the population in 2001 to 17.8% in 2011. In contrast, the population aged from 0-24 years old as a percentage fell by 1% in the past decade.

Taken in a national context it is important to note that in Cheshire, the growth in the over 65 population is not as pronounced as other areas of the country, particularly in relation to parts of East Anglia, Yorkshire and the coastal South East, as well as much of Wales and the South West of England.

However, the growing number of people aged over 65 presents a problem for all agencies and organisations affected by related societal issues.

Demography
As a whole, the vast majority of the population of Cheshire identify themselves as being White British (93%). However there are a number of other ethnic groups that make up the population of the area, notably:

White Other (22,400); White Irish (7,700); Asian/British Asian Indians (6,700); Asian/British Asian Pakistanis (4,600) and Mixed White/Asian (3,200).

As with a number of areas across the country, Cheshire has seen a net increase in migration over the past decade, although the number of migrants settling in the area has dropped since the onset of the financial crisis.

Historically, Polish and other Eastern European nationalities have comprised the majority of migrants coming into Cheshire, in addition to communities from India, the Philippines and South Africa. This is partly mirrored in the latest migration data (covering 2010/11), with Polish and Slovakian nationals the two largest migrant communities, followed by Indian and Hungarian nationals.

However, it is important to note that while there are some long standing communities within areas of Cheshire, migrant populations can be fairly transient in nature and may fluctuate according to political and economic factors.

Housing

As of 2011, there are 439,200 dwellings within the Cheshire area, split as follows:

- Cheshire East: 159,400.
- Cheshire West and Chester: 141,400.
- Warrington: 85,100.

Virtually half (49.9%) of dwellings within Cheshire are rated either A or B in the Council Tax banding system.

As of July 2012, there are a total of 43 COMAH sites situated within Cheshire, which is among the highest number of industrial risk sites in any fire authority area of the country.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation

While Cheshire may be viewed stereotypically as an affluent, largely rural (and flat) landscape, the reality is somewhat more complex.

As a local authority area, Halton is ranked nationally as the 27th most deprived out of 326 areas. Warrington and Cheshire West are ranked 153rd and 171st respectively, while Cheshire East lies further down at 226th.

There are also a number of pockets of deprivation throughout each of the four authorities, with 16 lower super output areas (LSOAs) in Cheshire East, 34 LSOAs in Cheshire West and
Chester, 39 in Halton and 20 in Warrington falling within the 20% most deprived areas of the country. The maps below provide an overview of the indices of multiple deprivation by local authority area.

Businesses

As of 2011, Cheshire is home to nearly 44,000 VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses and commercial organisations, ranging from self-employed individuals and small micro-businesses to large internationally recognised organisations such as Bentley Motors, General Motors (Vauxhall) and Astra-Zeneca.

The recently formed Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) covers Cheshire and Warrington, though Halton is part of the Merseyside LEP.

Key employment sectors within Cheshire include:

- Professional, scientific and technical industries: 16% of all businesses
- Retail: 11%
- Construction: 9%
- Public services (public administration, defence, education and health): 9%
- Business administration and support services: 8%

Notable local industries include:

- 2,820 professional, scientific and technical units within the Macclesfield, Tatton and Warrington South constituencies, accommodating and supporting Astra Zeneca and the science park at Daresbury.
- Over 800 agriculture, forestry and fishing units in the Eddisbury Parliamentary constituency – reflecting the importance of the local rural economy.
- 680 retail and 365 accommodation and food units in the City of Chester constituency, reflecting Chester’s popularity as a shopping and tourist destination.
- 345 financial and insurance units in Chester and Wilmslow

The majority (71%) of business are small to medium sized enterprises with a turnover of up to £249,000 each and the vast majority (89%) of businesses within Cheshire operate with fewer than 10 employees.

Nearly half (42%) of business have been established for over ten years, with a further 29% in operation for between four and nine years. This suggests that businesses within Cheshire – at least those that are fairly well established – have been able to weather the economic climate.
Cheshire Population, 2011
(Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census)

General Population and Over 65’s by Unitary Authority
(Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census)
Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2010) by Unitary Authority: Halton and Warrington
(Source: DORIC)
Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2010) by Unitary Authority: Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester
(Source: DORIC)
Households in Cheshire by Unitary Authority

(Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2011)


(Source: Department for Work and Pensions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>Slovakia</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire East</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheshire West</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halton</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Cheshire Enterprises by Industry Sector, 2011
(Source: Annual Business Survey)

Cheshire Enterprises by Turnover, 2011
(Source: Annual Business Survey)
Cheshire Enterprises by Employment Size, 2011
(Source: Annual Business Survey)

Enterprises by Employment Size by Unitary Authority
(Source: Annual Business Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unitary Authority</th>
<th>Micro-businesses 0-9 employees</th>
<th>Small businesses 10-49 employees</th>
<th>Medium businesses 50-249 employees</th>
<th>Large businesses 250+ employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire East</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire West and Chester</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halton</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Political Analysis

Local politics and local identities
The impact of financial pressures and the evolving localism agenda will see an increased feeling of local identity and an awareness of the resources and assets within local communities and neighbourhoods.

Community Budgets
The introduction of four Community Budget pilots, including Cheshire West and Chester’s Altogether Better programme, requires local authorities to work collaboratively to redesign the provision and funding of local services.

New National Framework
The introduction of the new National Framework sets out a number of requirements for Fire Authorities around ensuring resilience, working collaboratively and delivering against the transparency agenda.

Police and Crime Commissioners
Police and Crime Commissioners will see the introduction of a single figure able to commission a range of community safety services and will lead to changes in the partnership landscape.

Road Safety
The first rise in road deaths since 2003 has led to calls for the Government to provide stronger leadership, including highlighting local authority best practice and to take more radical action to reduce fatalities amongst younger drivers.
Local politics, local identities

The change in the political composition of unitary authorities as a result of local elections has seen Labour increase its majority on both Halton and Warrington Borough Councils.

This, coupled with a larger Labour presence on both Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils from election in 2010, will lead to a greater focus on urban areas and tensions with more rural areas as many of the now larger conurbations or industrial areas within Cheshire are represented by a majority of Labour Members.

The table below shows the political composition of all four unitary authorities following this May’s local elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Authority</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Liberal Democrat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire East</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire West</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halton</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrington</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The change in political composition could also lead to tension within sub-regional (Cheshire-wide) structures as authorities look further afield to places such as Liverpool, St. Helens, North Wales, Greater Manchester and the Midlands rather than working through Cheshire partners.

However, in seeing the influence that the city regions of Liverpool and Manchester can wield, along with the freedoms in areas such as economic development, transport and infrastructure that local areas can enjoy under city-deals, the sub-region may investigate the possibility of negotiating a ‘county deal’ with Government. This would see the sub-region potentially given many of the freedoms around policies that cities such as Manchester and Leeds have taken advantage of.

It is important that the Service continues to play a part in structures such as the sub-region, and also new arrangements such as Police and Crime Commissioners and Health Wellbeing Boards, in order to continue to shape the priorities of the local area.

In the past year, spending decisions, coupled with the localism agenda, has seen town and parish councils become more prominent and active within the local political landscape.

The transfer of community assets by unitary authorities to parish and town councils and the introduction of new neighbourhood planning powers will ensure that parishes continue to grow in importance.
Local authorities, including Fire and Rescue Services, will need to provide effective methods of engagement and consultation with parish and town councils in the coming years.

This is particularly true when authorities are considering options to modify or even remove the provision of services in an area. Local parishes may often be fiercely protective of their community and be in a strong position to mobilise local public opinion. Local councils may be reluctant to commit to what they see as significant change or a loss of local provision.

This is especially evident and likely in small market towns, where town or parish councils maintain a strong influence over local issues through the local media. This was recently highlighted in Nantwich when the community was mobilised in protest at proposed changes to the town’s first responder service.

Also, given the financial climate and the pressures on the distribution of resources, local councillors will be acutely interested in plans or decisions that may affect the provision of services or amenities within their ward or town – especially where any such action would leave their locality at a perceived disadvantage.

For the Fire Authority, the next twelve months will provide some stability in membership given the absence of local authority elections across the whole of Cheshire.

The electoral cycle restarts in 2014 (thirds elections in Halton and Warrington), and continues to 2015 (Halton and Warrington thirds plus all out elections in Cheshire East and Cheshire West) and 2016 (Halton and Warrington thirds).

Annexes 2 and 3 show the current political composition of the Fire Authority and also outlines the next electoral cycles.

**Community Budgets**

The introduction of four Community Budget pilots, including Cheshire West and Chester’s Altogether Better programme, requires local authorities to work collaboratively to redesign the provision and funding of local services.

For Fire and Rescue Services this presents both risks and opportunities, as it will allow for Services to highlight prevention and youth engagement activities that are already delivered.

The pilots provide a platform for developing a collaborative model for joint working and present commissioning opportunities and other funding streams that may secure the sustainability of community safety interventions.
Certainly when considering future plans it will be necessary to see where different agencies can work collaboratively and particularly in Cheshire West and Chester, to work within the Altogether Better Framework. This may involve developing fire stations and other locations as multi-agency hubs or through the development of collaborative models like co-responders with other emergency providers such as local ambulance and police services.

A similar initiative has been trialled within the community budget pilot in Essex, where a Police Community Support Officer also acts as a retained firefighter and a community first responder.

However community budgets may also present issues, such as apportioning budgets over a single local authority area, which presents significant challenges for a Combined Fire Authority, given the need to serve a wider geographic area.

Additionally, it will be important that FRSs and the services they provide are not engulfed by the work streams of traditionally ‘bigger’ authorities such as councils, health services or police authorities.

The initial progress reports into the pilot schemes are due to be released in November and if the indications are that where schemes deliver savings it is likely that the Government will roll out community budgeting on a wider basis. Certainly the
Treasury has already indicated that the outcomes will feed into the next Comprehensive Spending review beyond 2015.

**A new National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services**

The Department for Communities and Local Government has now published the new National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services.

The new framework outlines the Government’s priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, which are:

- Identifying and assessing the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks in each Authority area and making provision for prevention and protection activities and appropriate emergency response.
- Working in partnership with their communities and a range of partners at a local and national level.
- Being accountable to their local communities.

The framework specifies that FRAs must ensure that their Integrated Risk Management Plans reflect effective consultation (including in the development of proposals) and are easily accessible and available to the public.

Authorities must collaborate with other Fire and Rescue Services to deliver intra-operability and also inter-operability with other emergency responders.

FRAs must also engage with the newly established Strategic Resilience Board to support decision making in relation to national resilience. Authorities are required to conduct an analysis into any gaps in their capability to respond to national resilience risks and any gaps that are highlighted will be required to be addressed through discussion with the board and CLG.

Authorities will also be required to act transparently through ensuring that local communities are made aware of how they can access data and performances statistics and that Authorities ensure they have arrangements in place to allow decisions to be open to scrutiny and challenge.

The framework states that FRAs must approve and publish an annual statement of assurance on financial, operational and governance matters. Further guidance on the content required in the statement will be published by CLG in the near future.

There is still some disagreement in relation to some parts of the framework, particularly over how local authorities will be required to feed into decisions over national resilience and the requirement to produce a statement of assurance.
Police and Crime Commissioners

Elected Police and Crime Commissioners will take up their post in November and will have responsibility for holding the Chief Constable to account and can also commission a range of community safety services in their local area.

The Government’s key reform to policing is the proposal to introduce elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), which will replace existing Police Authority structures. The Government believes the introduction of the model will introduce greater transparency and local accountability to policing.

At the time of writing, some candidates have been formally selected while other potential candidates are still deciding whether to stand. PCC elections are scheduled to take place in November 2012. In Cheshire, the Labour candidate is the current Halton Councillor John Stockton, while the Conservative candidate is John Dwyer, a former Assistant Chief Constable.

The introduction of elected commissioners will lead to significant changes in the focus and priorities of local Police forces and affect the relationships between Fire, Police and other agencies.

While PCCs must have regard to the strategic policing framework, they will have the power to direct resources towards neighbourhood policing and community safety initiatives as they see appropriate.

As a key element of the partnership landscape, fire services will need to engage early on with Commissioners across a range of community safety workstreams, as well as work with partners to secure available funding.

It will also be advantageous to highlight the range of interventions that are currently undertaken to ensure that Commissioners are aware of the community safety activities that FRSs can provide locally.

The Government is considering expanding the role of PCCs in the future to encompass probation services. It is not inconceivable to imagine that this could possibly be extended
to Fire and Rescue as well at some future point as part of a wider community safety remit.

**Health and Wellbeing Boards**

The Health and Social Care Act provides the responsibility for public health and health improvement functions with local government. This will be driven through the creation of Health and Wellbeing Boards within each local authority area (one for each unitary in Cheshire).

The Boards will lead on the production of local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs), support and co-ordinate joint commissioning and also promote partnership working across a local area.

The Board will comprise of elected Members from each unitary authority, as well as heads of local clinical commissioning groups and directors of public health.

For Fire and Rescue Services it will be important to demonstrate the role that the sector plays in the wider public health and health improvement arenas through community safety and prevention activities, in order to ensure they can continue to influence the health and wellbeing agenda.

However Fire and Police Authorities are not statutory members of Health and Wellbeing Boards, though local authorities do have the ability to extend board membership to local bodies as they see fit.

**Public service reform**

The Government remains committed to reform of the public sector, with the Prime Minister recently re-launching an updated Open Public Services White Paper and reconfirming his commitment to ending the “old-fashioned, top down, take what you’re given model of public services”

Some of the Government’s key policies to diversify the provision of public services will take effect from the summer, including the Right To Bid, Right To Build and Right To Challenge, which were outlined within the Localism Act.

The introduction of these rights will provide further avenues for local communities to challenge proposals and may increase the difficulty that local services will have to push through controversial plans.

The Government is keen to diversify the provision of public services and these new rights for community and voluntary groups could see local authorities, including Fire Authorities, procuring more services or commissioning the delivery of some non-statutory functions from third sector and voluntary groups.
The diversification of public service provision, particularly the development of the mutualisation agenda, may have a considerable impact on Fire and Rescue Services given the amount of work that is being undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to consider the mutual model adopted by Cleveland Fire Brigade and make this a workable model for the operation of FRSs.

To reflect the growing influence of voluntary and community groups on the local political landscape, local authorities will also need to ensure that such groups are consulted and able to buy into proposals to alter the provision of services in their area.

Reforming public sector pensions

The Government is committed to pushing forward plans to reform the provision of public sector pensions, based on proposals as outlined in the report published by the Hutton Commission last year.

The Public Service Pensions Bill will be tabled in Parliament over the coming year and will contain proposals to introduce career average schemes and raise the age at which employees can draw down their pension.

Representative bodies within the public sector have already demonstrated against the proposed changes to pension arrangements, with large scale strike action last year and further smaller scale action throughout this year. More protests are likely as the Bill progresses through Parliament.

The pensions issue carries with it a risk of several trade unions undertaking co-ordinated strike action in protest against planned changes, though this appears to be waning as a number of unions have agreed to reforms on a sector by sector basis. It is also worth noting the shift in public opinion as seen over industrial action taken by doctors and the ongoing transport disputes in relation to the Olympics.

While the Fire Brigades Union negotiated separately with the Government over reforming the Firefighter pension schemes, these discussions have yet to reach an agreement and thus there is the possibility that the FBU may still look to strike action as a last resort.

Fire and Rescue Services will need to be aware of this risk and ensure that adequate plans are in place to continue to provide emergency cover within their local area.

Road safety

After a continued downward trend, the latest road casualty figures revealed the first increase in the number of road fatalities since 2003.

The subsequent report by the Transport Select Committee has called on the Government to show more leadership over
road safety and take more radical action over addressing road safety amongst young drivers (road traffic collisions are the leading cause of death amongst 16-24 year olds).

The committee also recommended highlighting innovation and best practice at local authority level - particularly in relation to partnership working – and naming and shaming the worst performing local authorities.

The Government has announced that it will consult on plans to give local authorities more freedom to reduce the speed limit on roads to suit local conditions, including plans to reduce limits on some rural roads from 60 miles per hour (mph) to 40 mph. There are also plans to make it easier to introduce 20mph zones in urban areas.

More freedom for local partners to alter speed limits to suit local conditions and risks may help to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions, particularly in areas - such as Cheshire East - where this is a key issue.

**A continuing Coalition?**

The previous year has seen more tension between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats within the Coalition Government. While both parties have agreed to continue to prioritise the need to restore the health of the nation’s finances, there is some disagreement around other parts of the Coalition programme such as how to achieve reform of the House of Lords, reform of employment regulations and also the Government’s approach to the European Union.

It is likely that compromises over policy will be hard fought and may increase tensions between the two parties and strain personal relationships within the Government.

Rather atypically when compared to previous administrations, there has yet to be a major Cabinet reshuffle since the present Government was formed. If there is to be one in the near future, some Cheshire MPs might be in the frame for promotion to junior Ministerial posts and there is a risk that the current Fire Minister might move to a different post.

There is also a risk from the continued downgrade of Fire and Resilience within CLG as part of the reductions to the Civil Service, which means that there will be less exposure for the FRS to discuss issues and for the sector to have its opinions heard.

The office of Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser (CFRA) may undergo changes following the Olympic Games, when it is expected that the current adviser Sir Ken knight will step down. While still being developed, the national structure being introduced in Scotland may lead to questions over what FRS functions are delivered at a local and a national level in other parts of the UK, particularly in the next Parliament.
Economic Analysis

Spending Review: cuts still to come
The Chancellor announced in the 2010 Spending review that cuts in grants to the Fire and Rescue Service would reduce by an average of 25% over the course of the spending round. Half way into the spending review period there is still an average of 16.5% of cuts yet to emerge, meaning that years three and four of this review (2013/14 and 2014/15) will see services faced with a significant financial challenge.

Austerity Part II
It is likely that public spending will be reduced further in the next spending round that will start from 2015/16, with key figures stating that the period of austerity will last beyond this current spending review period. This will become more likely should the Government struggle to achieve its targets for reducing the budget deficit and restoring economic growth.

Reforming Local Government Finance
The reform of local government finance, such as the business rates retention scheme, in-year changes to precepts and the localisation of council tax support, will make FRSs more dependent on constituent unitary authorities and will increase the level of financial uncertainty faced by the service – especially single-purpose fire authorities.

Growth and the burden of regulation
The focus on restoring economic growth may lead to more pressure on enforcement bodies to integrate inspection regimes and to review how enforcement activity – in the case of FRSs, the auditing of commercial and non-residential properties - can be delivered so it is seen as an aid to business as opposed to an extra burden.
Spending Review: cuts still to come

As the Chancellor of the Exchequer indicated when he announced the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) to Parliament in 2010, budget reductions for Fire and Rescue Services will be back-loaded, that is to say the largest reductions to funding will come in the later years (2013/14 and 2014/15) of the settlement.

For Fire Authorities, the reduction in formula grant through the spending review period will be 25% and given the more favourable settlements that Cheshire received in the first two years of the CSR round, grant reductions are expected to be significant. Nationally, it is estimated that there is still an average of 16.5% of cuts to formula grant still to emerge in years three and four.

Financial scenario planning is not helped by the fact that CLG will not confirm final settlement figures for a financial year until the December preceding it, which leaves Fire Authorities having to make educated guesses as opposed to dealing with definite numbers.

There are factors which could magnify the affect of cuts in relation to combined authorities, such as further lobbying undertaken by metropolitan services over the weighting of formula grant and also the ability of county fire authorities to absorb some pressure within the wider county council structure.

In his 2010 Spending Review statement, the Chancellor announced that grant funding to Fire and Rescue Services would be cut by 25% on average. So far only 16.5% of those cuts have been announced.

Lobbying by metropolitan Fire and Rescue Services, including Greater Manchester and Merseyside FRSs, has highlighted what some have seen as unfair grant settlements in comparison to combined areas. A sustained lobbying campaign launched to attempt to persuade the Department for Communities and Local Government to review the formula has had some success.

The Fire Minister confirmed to Parliament that the Government has indeed updated the formula to give more weighting to population density and factors affecting urban areas.
These factors may see considerable pressure being placed on combined authorities in particular and there will likely be pressure to increase collaboration with other Fire and Rescue Services through sharing of senior staff or back office functions, as well as special or strategic appliances.

It is also highly likely for Fire Authorities, especially stand alone authorities, to merge fully as the budgetary squeeze increases although these endeavours are not without their significant challenges – as the attempted merger of East and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services demonstrated.

Given the progress that North West has made in areas such as North West Fire Control, the region may be a focal point for further mergers or sharing of services.

**Austerity Part II**

A number of public sector bodies are already considering the impact of a continued programme of austerity following on from the current spending round. This has been hinted at by some Ministers and more recently Sir Jeremy Heywood, who stated that spending cuts will continue for eight to ten years (possibly up to 2020). As the Government struggles to hit targets for both economic growth and deficit reduction, it becomes more likely that a second austere spending review is in development.

Given the controversy around the reforms and financial challenges facing other sectors such the police, health services and armed forces, it may be more politically feasible to direct a significant portion of renewed budget reductions towards local government – despite local government facing the largest reduction in budget of any government department in the current spending review.

While capital funding was largely untouched in this review compared to revenue funding, it is likely that the next review period will see a considerable cut in capital grant allocations for public services.

This may impact on capital bids and plans for capital spending, such as replacements within the vehicle fleet or the development of new station locations.

**Business Rate Retention and Formula Grant**

The Government are in the process of establishing a scheme to allow councils to retain a proportion of locally raised business rates in order to boost economic growth. The current proposal is to legislate for a 50:50 split in the share of rates between central and local government.

All authorities under the scheme will be subject to tariffs or top-ups to ensure no single authority ends up worse off at the start of the scheme. Authorities that have received more grant than they raise in rates will receive a top-up, funded through
the distribution of tariffs placed on authorities who raise more rates than they receive in grant.

Following consultation, all Fire Authorities have been designated as top-up authorities within the new system, despite many combined fire authorities being in favour of receiving fixed funding allocations for the remainder of the current spending round, as per Police Authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners.

Therefore Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) will in future receive the National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) element of formula grant via a mix of distributed top up funding and a percentage share of each billing authorities’ business rate baseline (the Pre-Tier Split Share).

CLG has stated that the percentage share that FRAs receive will provide some protection to reflect the fact they have few direct levers to encourage business growth.

Agreement on the percentage share that will apply to FRAs is yet to be agreed, which leaves a degree of risk and uncertainty. A larger share of the rates will result in a bigger risk (or opportunity) in the event of an increase or decrease in the amount of rates collected. A smaller share – or even a share near 0% - will provide protection as the majority of income will be received via index-linked top up grants.

It will be extremely important for the Authority to maintain close links with billing authorities to ensure that there is a full understanding of the scheme implementation and the in-year collection rates and forecasts as there are likely to be variances in the funding allocations of each authority, particularly when comparing high resource / low need authorities with those with a high needs element, such as Halton.

The design of a new funding model calls into question the future of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) as RSG will now be a discretionary fund that might only be used to fund and adjust for new burdens as they arise within the scheme. This funding may potentially be at risk of reducing or being removed. For 2012/13 the RSG (or Relative Needs Amount) element of funding for the Fire Authority totalled £5.5m.

**Precepting arrangements**

Changes to precepting arrangements will leave authorities such as Police and Fire and Rescue more dependant on relationships with local unitary authorities when negotiating grant allocations.

Changes outlined within the Local Government Finance Bill will enable billing authorities to make in-year changes to the amount of precept distributed to precepting authorities in order to address any potential deficit in the collection of council tax. Current regulations allow for precepting authorities to pay their
share of a deficit or receive any surplus at the end of the following financial year.

Reform to the financing of local government such as the Business Rates Retention scheme and the localisation of Council Tax support will increase the risk and uncertainty facing Fire and Rescue Services.

The new arrangement may result in unexpected reductions in the amount of council tax revenue that a fire authority receives and could increase the level of uncertainty around financial management and budget preparations.

The potential impact of this is compounded as the Government is changing the way in which Council Tax Benefit operates, which will require billing Local Authorities to develop local schemes. Funding will transfer from Government, but this will be subject to budget reductions. Each billing Local Authority will need to decide how this impacts on their budgets and the collectability of Council Tax, and how any impacts may be shared with precepting authorities.

The introduction of a power under the Localism Act for voters to hold a referendum when a rise in council tax is set above a threshold limit (4% for fire and rescue authorities) will place further restrictions on local authorities. For precepting authorities in particular, there may also be pressure from billing authorities to keep potential rises down in order to prevent having to hold and organise a referendum.

Recession and the Euro question

The UK economy has re-entered recession and growth in the economy remains fragile. Key economic indicators suggest that economic recovery will be sluggish – interest rates are being kept at historically low rates (with rate rises not expected until 2014/15), weak consumer demand and house prices unlikely to return to the level they were before the credit crunch for some time.

There are also fears about the future of the Euro. If the UK economy is unable to recover, or recovery is fragile, further contractions within the Eurozone area will have a significant effect consumer demand and trade, which may lead to more
businesses closing and an increase in vacated business premises, leading to an increased risk of arson.

The Euro crisis has arguably become the largest economic issue facing Governments today. A collapse of the Euro or a prolonged recession due to continuing problems within the Eurozone will have a considerable impact as the European Union area is one of the UK’s main trading partners.

**The cost of fuel**

The cost of energy has continued to rise over the medium term and is set to continue on an upward trajectory. This will compound the issue of fuel poverty (see next section) but will also increase the operating costs of the Service. In light of this many organisations are exploring avenues to reduce the amount of mileage undertaken through business use and also through employees commuting.

Some consumer groups, and energy suppliers themselves, have warned of price increases for electricity and gas over the winter. For consumers not part of the national grid or in rural areas, the cost of heating oil has also increased as the overall cost of oil has increased.

In addition, the increasing cost of energy will lead to an increased cost to Fire Authorities in fuelling and maintaining sites and appliances. It will be necessary to explore methods and tools that will increase fuel and energy efficiency, such as energy efficient building design, energy monitoring, using alternative energy sources and using products such as insulation. This will also contribute towards a reduction in carbon emissions, which is explored in the Environmental Analysis.

**Growth and red tape**

The Government has placed considerable focus on efforts to restore economic growth, with a major principle being reducing the regulatory burden that businesses must contend with. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills lists a number of areas for review on its website, including recently announced reviews into COMAH regulations and the enforcement of regulation.

This agenda could lead to pressure to reduce the amount of inspections that businesses face, or at least to increase collaborative inspection arrangements. Additionally, there may be calls from business leaders and groups for the Government to repeal certain regulations where they are perceived as placing excessive burdens upon businesses.

For the Service, this agenda will need to be considered when undertaking campaigns that will seek changes to legislation or regulation, particularly if the result would be the imposition of additional regulations.
Socio-Cultural Analysis

Ageing society
All public services, including Fire and Rescue Services, will need to adapt to demographic changes and an increasingly ageing population. An older population will also lead to an increase in age-related illnesses such as dementia and mobility problems, which when coupled with a focus on ensuring people can remain in their homes for as long as possible, may lead to an increased risk of fire and also an increasing risk of slips, trips and falls.

Unemployment
Despite recent falls in the level of unemployment, it remains at a historically high level. This is especially true of youth unemployment, which currently stands around 20%.

Social unrest
Studies into last year's civil unrest have indicated concern over possible repeats, particularly if economic and social conditions deteriorate further.

Fuel poverty
Fuel poverty is set to continue to rise as a result of increasing energy costs, which may increase the risk of fire. This may also be compounded by future policy decisions that could be taken in relation to the eligibility of age related benefits, such as the winter fuel allowance, or energy saving home improvement grants.
An ageing society

Society as a whole is ageing, with the proportion of the population aged over 65 expected to increase and the population aged over 80 set to double by 2035. An older society will bring with it some significant challenges for public services, particularly around the provision and funding of health and social care.

It is also relevant to highlight recent reports by the Audit Commission and others that show the increasing costs in dealing with dementia. According to a recent report by the health think tank the King’s Fund, the cost of dementia care is expected to rise exponentially from £15bn in 2007 to £35bn a year by 2026, with the additional costs borne by many agencies.

The financial climate will necessitate increased collaboration between service providers across both the public and third sectors in order to maintain levels of provision.

This could also include third sector or private providers being commissioned to deliver services on behalf of other organisations, or increased sharing of data and joint working to reduce the cost of social care and other services.

On a practical level for this could see Fire & Rescue Services being commissioned to provide signposting or referral services and provide a greater scope for joint advocacy in partnership with organisations such as Age UK.

Additionally, it will be increasingly necessary to ensure that effective data sharing agreements are in place to enable targeted prevention activities aimed at reducing the risks faced by older people and those with age-related illnesses such as dementia or mobility problems.

With the cost of care set to increase considerably, there is a growing focus on embracing the prevention agenda to allow older people to stay in their homes for as long as possible, through the use of technology such as tele-care and trip monitors.
Clearly more patients with mental health or mobility problems being treated or cared for at home will lead to an increased risk of fire at those premises which will need to be considered when planning future activities and effective partnership arrangements will be required to ensure at risk groups are accounted for.

**Unemployment**

Unemployment remains at historically high levels, though it has begun to fall slightly over the past six months.

At a local level, the rate of unemployment varies from authority to authority and from ward to ward – even within ward areas.

For example, two neighbouring Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs – small geographical areas) can show very different unemployment rates. In Crewe, the West Coppenhall and Grosvenor L4 LSOA had a claimant rate of 11.9% as of April 2012, while the adjacent L3 LSOA had a rate of 3.6%.

For the Service it will be necessary to identify the wards and areas that suffer from higher levels of unemployment and deprivation and to target resources appropriately.

These wards are areas that have higher levels of longer term and embedded unemployment and often home the most vulnerable residents and those most at risk from fire within the community such as, for example, a higher number of residents claiming out of work benefits, therefore there may also exist several interlinked factors increasing the risk of fire that will mean the individual could require support and assistance from not only the Fire & Rescue Service but also partners such as local authority social services, or other agencies such as Connexions.

However the economic climate has had a significant impact on levels of youth unemployment, which remains around the one million mark.

The recession caused a marked rise in unemployment across a range of industry sectors and age groups, but the increase in worklessness was (and remains) higher among the under-25s, where the unemployment rate stands at 21.9% (as of March 2012).

The fact that youth unemployment is around the 1,000,000 mark has lead to some commentators to speak of a ‘lost generation’ of young people who become entrenched within the welfare system and suffer long term unemployment.

While this may be somewhat of an exaggeration, the issue of youth unemployment – at this level – brings its own risks, not just for partners but for Fire & Rescue Services as well.

Effective youth engagement activities and initiatives, including initiatives undertaken with partners, will be needed to address
these risks and assist young people in developing their skills to enable them to either return to employment for education. FRSs are particularly well placed to lead on such issues given their use of existing youth engagement activities, as well as their positive brand reputation.

It is important to note that youth unemployment is not limited to individuals with few formal qualifications or those who may be deemed at risk of social exclusion. Recent data has shown that the number of unemployed graduates (those who have graduated within two years ago) has doubled during the recession to 20%.

While financial constraints may place limitations on the ability of the Service to employ young people who have the necessary skills and abilities, it may be worthwhile to open up volunteering opportunities in areas across the organisation in order to capture the skills of the individual, even for a short period of time. This could benefit both the organisation and the individual, through providing them with productive outlets while they look for paid work.

**Social unrest**

Riots across some English cities during last summer led to some FRSs having to cope with unprecedented levels of demand as some rioters set fire to businesses and other property such as cars, skips and wheelie bins. Metropolitan FRSs in particular have highlighted the influx of calls and incidents attended during the disturbances.

While it is hoped that these occurrences are one off events, it should be noted that a recent report by the United Nations International Labour Organisation (ILO) has conducted a study which concludes that a further global recession could cause more instances of social unrest.

Additionally, a number of police officers interviewed as part of a study into the riots by the Guardian newspaper felt that it was likely further disturbances will occur and that cuts to police forces may impact on their ability to effectively respond to incidents.

Emergency services will need to be mindful of the potential of, and may need to plan for, a repeat of such action.

**Fuel poverty**

Levels of fuel poverty have continued to rise over the past five years in parallel with the increase in the cost of energy. Despite a surprise drop in levels of fuel poverty in 2010 (latest available data), it is projected that fuel poverty levels will rise even further.
Already it is estimated that up to 25%\(^1\) of all households are classed as being in fuel poverty, where more than 10% of income is spent on heating and lighting.

As the chart below shows, lone residents, single parents and those over 60 are the groups most affected by fuel poverty. When taking into account housing costs, the impact on lone parents and single residents under 60 increases, while the impact on one-person households over 60 decreases as their housing costs are assumed to be less due to a higher proportion of home ownership.

These households may be at an increased risk of fire through using non-conventional methods to heat their homes and also through the storage of fuel in the home.

As mentioned above, with the cost of petroleum rising as well, there may be an increase in individuals storing petrol in the home in order to offset against anticipated rises in fuel costs or any potential action taken in protest at fuel costs.

This was demonstrated earlier in the year after a woman in York was badly injured following a fire that broke out in her home as she was decanting petrol.

It is worth noting that recently hauliers have again begun protesting outside oil refineries in an attempt to force action to lower fuel prices.

While this doesn’t indicate a return to the large scale fuel protests seen in 2001/02 this is an issue that could particularly impact upon Cheshire given the oil refinery situated at Stanlow, which is likely to become a focal point of protest action.

Despite a small drop in 2010, long term estimates suggest that fuel poverty will continue to rise as a result of higher energy costs. This may contribute to households being at a higher risk of fire.

\(^1\) [http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/dec/01/fuel-poverty-affects-quarter-households](http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/dec/01/fuel-poverty-affects-quarter-households)
Estimated UK Population Aged 65+ and 80+ by 2035
(Source: Office for National Statistics)

Increase in Cheshire Elderly Population 2035 vs 2010
(Source: Office for National Statistics)
Estimated Increase in Number of People with Dementia to 2026  
(Source: King’s Fund)

Projected Cost of Dementia Care to 2026  
(Source: King’s Fund)
Unemployment Rate by Local Authority 2009-2012
(Source: DORIC)

Claimant Rate by Duration by Local Authority, May 2012
(Source: DORIC)
Technological Analysis

Social Media
The growth of social media and mobile technology presents Fire and Rescue Services with opportunities to engage with a wider audience and to communicate more quickly compared to traditional media outlets such as newspapers, but also presents reputational risks.

Post Fire-Control
Following the cancellation of the FiReControl project, a number of Fire and rescue Services are developing collaborative control arrangements either with neighbouring and nearby services or with other local partners. There will also be an expectation for Services to explore further opportunities for collaboration and sharing services such as sharing premises and special appliances or the merging of support functions.

Information Technology
Increasing use of information technology will provide opportunities for local authorities to share data and re-engineer business processes in order to reduce the cost of service provision and to ensure that public services are provided effectively and are targeted towards those most at risk. Additionally the transparency agenda will mean that public authorities will be expected to publish a range of material online so that is accessible to the public.

Cyber Security
With the use of information technology increasing, it is increasingly important to ensure that the handling of data is conducted according to best practice and systems, processes and datasets are protected from the threat of cyber-threats such as hacking.
Social media

The growth of social media has allowed for public services to connect with an ever wider range of people than has traditionally been the case, particularly younger service users, or those who do not access more traditional forms of media and information, such as printed newspapers.

Government and other public bodies are increasingly turning to ‘new media’ in order to connect with their communities, while key political figures are using their own social media sites (such as Twitter) to foster debate and comment on/launch departmental policies or guidance, which may be relevant to the work of the FRS.

The effective use of social media, by FRSs in particular, can lead to a greater awareness of fire safety, road safety or other key messages among members of the community, particularly younger generations. From an internal context, the use of social media, such as blogs or Twitter, by senior management can allow for a faster and more effective flow of information to staff, including Government announcements or news about Service issues and campaigns.

Developments in technology also increasingly allow incidents to be recorded/broadcast in real time through personal videos websites such as YouTube, or be commented upon in sites such as Facebook or Twitter. Such sites can pose a significant reputational risk to Fire & Rescue Services. As social media becomes more integral to the organisation and mobilisation of people over political and social causes/issues (even on a very large scale) it is important that Fire & Rescue Services are able to effectively respond to the risks posed by such sites, and more importantly plan for them.

Local authorities must be prepared to respond quickly to the issues that such tools present and ensure strategies are in place for effective reputation management. Given the proposals that are being considered for implementation in the next couple of years, it is likely that social media will be a major platform for the public and interested groups to express their views.
their support or opposition for plans that the Service takes forward.

It is likely that there will be a continued drive for public bodies and services to use media such as the internet, blogging or video websites such as YouTube when consulting the local population. Additionally there has recently been a drive to promote the use of blogging and internet video technology to publicise meetings of local authorities, in order to increase transparency. Cheshire West and Chester Council regularly use live webcasts of council meetings and more authorities are looking at utilising online technology to increase transparency and accountability.

This mirrors the development of local social media news networks, with blog sites and social media feeds being seen as news sources in place of the more traditional news outlets. It will become increasingly important for local FRSs to link into these networks to deliver key safety messages and to address reputational risks, particularly where plans and proposals formulated by the Service have an impact upon a particular locality.

Effective engagement with these local networks will also require the Service to develop positive enabling ICT policies.

**Post-FiReControl**

Following the cancellation of the FiReControl project, a number of Fire and Rescue Services are exploring locally driven collaborative arrangements with neighbouring services - such the projects involving several North West services and the shared control facility between Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Additionally there are collaborative projects involving single services and local partners, such as the single emergency call centre project in Merseyside.

As savings requirements increase towards the end of this spending review period, there may be more pressure for services to consider other arrangements such as shared premises and services or sharing special appliances.

Local discussions are already underway to explore areas of opportunity, particularly around the co-location of emergency services. It is likely that pressure to investigate shared locations and services will increase as reductions to budgets in years three and four of the current spending review period - the largest reductions for FRSs – begin to take effect.

However, specifically for Cheshire and neighbouring Services, the roll-out and the delivery of the Cumbria Control project within Cheshire will help to build the case and deliver confidence in the prospects for the introduction of the North West Fire Control Project in 2014.
Cyber-security

The threat of cyber terrorism has now been declared a ‘tier one’ threat in the National Risk Register, highlighting the increased dependence of modern society in technology and also the potential for disruption to normal activity through ‘cyber-threats’. Cyber crime is also a growing industry, estimated to be worth £27 billion in the UK alone² and ranges from threats to individuals (e.g. identify theft) to large businesses and government (e.g. industrial espionage, cyber-terrorism).

For public services such as FRSs, it will become increasingly important to ensure that systems and networks are protected from such threats, which have the potential to cause severe disruption to operations. There is also greater potential for the accessibility, storage and delivery of information through mobile devices such as USB sticks and flash drives. This provides the Service with more flexibility but also increases the risk of significant and sensitive data loss. It should also be noted that with the increasing use of online and electronic means of data collection and public interaction it will be increasingly important to ensure that Service personnel are aware of data protection regulations and guidelines.

Information Technology

Increased migration from paper based records to electronic storage of information provides the Service with opportunities to develop partnership arrangements with various agencies and to enable effective targeting of high-risk individuals, such as oxygen users or dementia sufferers. As public services adjust to reduced levels of funding, the use of partnership arrangements to integrate service delivery can be an important factor in reducing the cost of service provision and also ensuring resources are targeted at the highest risk and most vulnerable groups in society.

² http://www.continuityforum.org/content/news/160744/foreign-secretary-william-hague-addresses-london-conference-cyberspace
Likewise the greater and smarter use of all forms of technology can deliver real savings and efficiencies by streamlining processes and reducing bureaucracy. Super-fast broadband is being rolled out across Cheshire (jointly led by both Cheshire East and Cheshire West) and there may be opportunities to collaborate with local partners to reduce the cost of improving technology infrastructures.

While the use of technology provides opportunities for data sharing and cost reductions, public bodies such as FRSs, need to be mindful of potential conflicts of interests concerning the use and sharing of public datasets with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), which comprise of private sector organisations. This is particularly relevant to FRSs as the datasets could include either sensitive personal data or sensitive commercial data deriving from audits and inspection.
Number of Active Facebook Users, 2004-12
(Source: Facebook)

Number of Twitter Account Registrations, 2006-12
(Source: RAAK London)

Number of Facebook Users as of March 2012:
901,000,000

Number of UK Facebook Users as of March 2012:
30,595,980

Number of Twitter Accounts as of May 2012:
613,000,000

Number of UK Twitter Accounts as of May 2012:
10,000,000
UK Facebook Users by Demography and Gender, 2012
(Male = Blue, Female = Pink. Source: Clicky Media)

Activities conducted on Smartphones by UK Adults, 2012
(Source: Ofcom)
Legal Analysis

Warwickshire review and Hampshire inquest
The outcomes of the review into the trial of three Warwickshire firefighters and the inquest into the deaths of two Hampshire firefighters may have implications for incident command and training procedures.

Reviewing Health and Safety regulations
The Young Review of Health and Safety legislation may impact on operational procedures.

Employment Legislation Reform
Planned reforms to employment legalisation, such as reforming collective redundancy rules and some of the proposals within the Beecroft Report, may impact on workforce planning.

Regional Pay
The Government has announced that it will begin to trial regional pay arrangements within some Whitehall departments. If introduced a regional pay model across the public sector will impact upon the current negotiation structures that are used by Fire and Rescue Services.

The Working Time Directive
The Government has announced an audit of current European Union regulation, with a focus on limiting/relaxing the application of the Working Time Directive.
Warwickshire Review and Hampshire Inquest

While the defendants in the Atherstone-on-Stour case have now been acquitted, the Chief Fire Officers’ Association have written to the Home Secretary to request a review into the police investigation and the decision to bring charges against the three Warwickshire firefighters.

The findings and conclusions of any subsequent review that takes place may have implications for FRS training and incident command procedures.

Additionally, the outcomes of the inquest into the deaths of two Hampshire firefighters at a high-rise fire in Southampton may have an impact on incident command and operational training procedures.

Health and Safety regulations

The Government is committed to implementing the recommendations of the Young review into Health and Safety regulations, with the aim of reducing the regulatory burden on organisations. Specifically in relation to Fire and Rescue Services, the review recommends that “firefighters should not be at risk of investigation or prosecution under health and safety legislation when engaged in the course of their duties if they have put themselves at risk as a result of committing a heroic act”.

Additionally, the review of health and safety regulation coupled with the policy of ‘one in, one out’ on new regulation will mean that passing new legislation, such as requiring sprinkler systems in new build properties (as passed in the Welsh Assembly) will be difficult; being seen as an additional regulatory cost and burden.

Fire and Rescue Services will need to make best use of research, such as studies undertaken by the Building Research Establishment that highlights the affordability of installing sprinkler systems in housing developments, in order to effectively lobby and influence politicians.

Employment legislation reform

The Government is trialling the introduction of regional pay bargaining in some public sector areas, with the intention of a wider rolling out of the initiative. If the scheme is rolled out wider it will impact upon current pay negotiation structures that are in place for FRSs.

Additionally, the Government is considering reforming employment regulations in order to boost economic growth. Proposals like changing collective redundancy rules, along with other recommendations in the Beecroft Report on employment regulation will impact on workforce planning processes.
Regional Pay

The Government will begin to pilot regionalised pay models within some areas of the central civil service from this summer, with a view to a wider roll-out over the next 12 to 18 months. This has met with considerable resistance from representative bodies across the public sector and significant lobbying on the issue has been undertaken which may ultimately affect the decision to implement the policy.

Should it be introduced, a regional pay model across the public sector will significantly impact upon the current national pay negotiation structures that are used by Fire and Rescue Services and other local authorities. It is also likely that the introduction of regional pay schemes will spark further industrial relations issues.

The Working Time Directive

The Government is committed to maintain the U.K.’s opt-out of the European Working Time Directive. Any changes to the current opt-out arrangements could have a significant impact upon working arrangements for FRS staff, particularly on-call firefighters, who (depending on their other occupation) may subsequently become in breach of regulations.

While the U.K. opt-out has often been the source of debate between Britain and other European neighbours, given the crisis within the Eurozone and the focus on the growth agenda there may be calls for the directive to be relaxed or even removed. Following the announcement of a review into how European Union law impacts on the UK, there is likely to be more pressure placed on the EU by the UK Government either to limit or relax the application of the directive.

3 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-18810566
Environmental Analysis

Meeting Future Energy Needs
There is concern over the ability of the UK’s energy infrastructure to meet future demand, particularly as the current generation of power stations are coming to the end of their commissioned life cycle.

The Built Environment
Over 47,000 new homes are planned for development across Cheshire by 2030, in addition to economic regeneration projects and infrastructure projects such as the new Mersey crossing and the Peel Ports development at Warrington.

Severe Weather
Incidents of severe weather such as droughts, heat waves or flash floods are expected to become more frequent.

Risk of Terrorism
This year’s Olympic Games and Diamond Jubilee celebrations have provided a considerable test for ensuring national security. While these events will have passed by the end of summer, the UK remains a significant target for acts of terrorism.

Natural Disasters
Though unpredictable in nature, natural disasters such as earthquakes may require the resources of UK Fire and Rescue Services.
Green Energy and Future Capacity

There is concern over insufficient investment in Britain's ageing energy infrastructure in order to meet future consumer demand. It has been speculated that the gap between supply and demand could lead to the introduction of periodic rolling blackouts by 2016.

This will lead to more pressure to install ‘green’ technologies and there is certainly an expectation that the public sector is as green as possible in order for the UK to meet legally binding carbon emissions targets. However, it is not clear how far the Government will invest in alternative sources to meet growing energy needs.

It is also unclear what level of support the Coalition would give to the building of new nuclear power stations, leaving the situation at somewhat of an impasse. Industry analysts have forecast that short-term options to bridge gap in supply and demand will lead to a considerable increase in energy bills.

Any rationing of energy supplies could have a significant impact on the provision of a range of public services, including emergency services, while an increase in energy bills will add extra cost onto operating and maintaining local services. It should also be noted that a considerable increase in fuel bills will impact on levels of fuel poverty.

The Built Environment

Over 47,000 new homes are planned to be built across Cheshire in the period up to 2030 (see Annex 3 for more detail by unitary area). As further neighbourhood plans are developed, particularly those for Crewe and Macclesfield, this number is likely to increase.

There are also planned major infrastructure projects such as the new crossing of the River Mersey (the Mersey Gateway),
a new link road bypass at Mere/Knutsford and the completion of the Crewe Green link road. These developments may also be followed by the construction of the High speed 2 rail line across the county and a possible HS2 stop at Crewe.

Two international airports border the Cheshire area – Manchester Airport to the North East just outside Wilmslow and Liverpool John Lennon Airport to the North West, beyond Widnes. A number of flight paths to both airports criss-cross the county. Long term plans for both destinations mirror the predicted growth in air travel and an increased use of existing flight paths and the introduction of new paths are to be expected.

The number of passengers served by Manchester per year is set to rise from around 30 million in 2010 to 50 million by 2030 along with an increase in cargo haulage and related facilities. The number of passengers per year that use Liverpool is set to rise to 12.3 million by 2030, including the addition of several long haul routes.

In addition, the planned development along the Manchester Ship Canal as part of the Peel Ports project for Liverpool, along with activity around the Mersey Multi Modal Gateway, may lead to a considerable increase in the amount of traffic using the canal. If the Peel Ports project continues as planned, two inland ports will be developed in Cheshire - at Ince and Warrington - to handle the increase in boat traffic.

**Severe weather**

Research conducted by the Met Office has indicated that the future trend of heat-wave occurrence is set to increase, due to climate change. Additionally, average temperatures are set to increase through the course of the century. The maps below show estimated increases in temperature and also the predicted change in rainfall over summer and winter by 2050.

The current death rate from heat-waves is predicted to increase by as much as five times above its current level over the next 70 years, particularly in urban conurbations.

A prolonged period of hot weather could have a significant impact on the safety of key groups, such as elderly people and individuals in need of home care or assistance. There may also be an increased risk of fires in areas of woodland or grassland.

This is of particular relevance to certain areas of Cheshire such as upland locations in Cheshire East, around Macclesfield and Congleton that contain peat and heath land, or rural parts of Cheshire West. More generally across the county, in periods of hot, dry weather there could potentially be an increased risk of fire due to deliberate fire setting and controlled burning escalating into larger incidents.

There is also the need to ensure equal preparedness for severe winter weather, similar to that seen in December 2010.
when much of the UK was affected by record low temperatures and heavy snowfall. Heavy snowfall could lead to severe logistical problems such as staff absence due to individuals becoming stuck at home.

The adverse weather could also impact upon the effective mobilisation of appliances and subsequent response times as some roads, particularly rural roads, become impassable. It is likely that in such conditions the Service could be called to assist other emergency services, such as the ambulance service and local councils, by using vehicles such as RRRUs.

**Flooding**

The impact of climate change does not rule out wet summers or heavy rainfall, and the impact of climate change will mean that such weather events may become more extreme in their nature. This could lead to dry periods becoming droughts or heat-waves or wet periods leading to rapid (flash) flooding.

The recent weather conditions have highlighted this trend, with drought conditions present in many areas of Southern and Eastern England up until June due to two consecutive dry winters. This was followed by record levels of precipitation in June which caused flooding in across England and Wales.

The Service will need to be prepared to deal with all such conditions as a long term risk, particularly flooding. Recent reports by the Environment Agency have highlighted that annual funding for flood protection will need to double by 2035, simply to maintain a similar level of protection to what is in place today.

The National Risk Register shows that the risk of flooding, whether coastal or inland (river or surface water), continues to be a key risk facing communities within the UK. Flooding events, such as those this summer, during summer 2007 and in winter 2009, are increasing in frequency and it important that emergency services and local authorities are effectively prepared to respond to such events.
Flooding risks will be particularly relevant in areas of Cheshire that are low lying or are situated on river flood plains such as Warrington, Chester, Northwich, Ellesmere Port and Wilmslow.

The Flood and Water Management Act places a duty on councils and the Environment Agency to produce strategies and plans to tackle local flooding risks. Local flooding within the definition of the Act includes surface and groundwater flooding, as well as flooding from water courses (lakes, ponds etc). This is of particular relevance within the Macclesfield area given the number of dams and reservoirs to the East and North of the town.

As the new duties are embedded within the authorities referred to above, Fire & Rescue Services will need to liaise effectively to ensure that plans to prevent; respond to and recover from flooding incidents are co-ordinated and integrated across a range of partners. The recent flooding in mid-Wales, which led to a large-scale multi-agency rescue operation, highlights the need for close partnership working across a range of agencies.

The need for a coherent flooding response is the focus of the Flood Rescue National Enhancement Project, initiated by the Pitt Review into the summer floods of 2007. It is still uncertain whether the Government will grant the Fire & Rescue Service with a fully funded statutory flooding duty (one of the recommendations of the Pitt Review) to respond to such incidents.

The response of the Government to the Fire Futures Review suggested that a statutory duty would be supported, however the new National Framework (still in draft form at the time of writing) does not make reference to the introduction of a duty for Fire and Rescue Services beyond the existing duties placed on Category 1 responders under the Civil contingencies Act 2004.

Risk of terrorism

This year’s Olympic Games and Diamond Jubilee celebrations have provided the security services with a considerable test of their preparedness for a terrorist attack. While these events will have concluded by the end of the summer; the threat of terrorism remains constant, particularly attacks on either transport or crowded places or transport networks.

The county contains a number of busy locations, such as Cheshire Oaks, Chester city centre and Warrington town centre. There are also major and strategic transport hubs either in the county (e.g. Crewe railway station/West Coast mainline, and the M6 & M56) or on the border of the county, such as Liverpool and Manchester Airports, whose flight paths cover significant portions of the county airspace.

The full National Risk Register is shown below.
Natural disasters

Natural disasters, by their very nature, are events that are unexpected or cause damage and/or loss of life on such a scale as to overwhelm local, or even national service providers. While the United Kingdom is perceived as being low-risk in terms of its susceptibility to such events, firefighters from the U.K. may be, and have been, required to assist in rescue efforts following a disaster, as seen following the New Zealand earthquake and the Japanese earthquake and tsunami last year.
Predicted increase in passenger throughput in Manchester Airport and Liverpool John Lennon Airport to 2030
(Source: Manchester Airport, Liverpool John Lennon Airport)

Figure 6.3: Liverpool John Lennon Airport: Forecast Traffic by Segment
Source: AviaSolutions Baseline Forecasts
Projected increase in UK Summer and Winter temperature, 2050
(Source: Met Office)
Projected change in UK Summer and Winter precipitation, 2050
(Source: Met Office)

Change in summer mean precipitation (%) for the 2050s, Medium emissions scenario

Change in winter mean precipitation (%) for the 2050s, Medium emissions scenario
National Risk Register 2012: Risk Matrices
(Source: Cabinet Office, HM Government)
Annex 1: Risk Assessment of Key Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity / Impact</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>POLITICAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The impact of financial pressures and the evolving localism agenda will see an increased feeling of local identity and an awareness of the resources and assets within local communities and neighbourhoods. This will need to be considered when considering changes to the allocation of resources across a service area and when engaging with the public and local stakeholders.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>The introduction of the new National Framework for FRSs will bring an expectation of an increasingly sector-led role (via the Chief Fire Officers Association and the Local Government Association) in policy development and organisational assurance and improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police and Crime Commissioners will see the introduction of a single figure able to commission a range of community safety services and will lead to changes in the partnership landscape. FRSs will need to work with partners to highlight the range of interventions that are currently provided, develop commissioning bids and make use of opportunities to mainstream community safety activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The first rise in road fatalities since 2003 has led to calls for more leadership from central Government and more radical action to be taken, especially in reducing deaths amongst young drivers. This may lead to more focus on, and increased scrutiny of, road safety partnerships and initiatives to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the road.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reforms to the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme have yet to be agreed, which means that the risk of industrial action remains. Given that reforms to other major schemes, such as the Local Government Pension Scheme, have now been agreed, the possibility of co-ordinated strike action</td>
<td>2</td>
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has reduced over the past six to eight months.

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<th><strong>ECONOMIC</strong></th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity / Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td>The majority of the 25% cut to formula grant as announced in the 2010 Spending Review has yet to take effect, which will likely result in especially tough settlements for years three and four of the current spending round. It is now expected that cuts to public spending will continue into the next spending round.</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>The reform of local government finance, such as the business rates retention scheme, in-year changes to precepts and the localisation of council tax support, will make FRSs more dependent on constituent unitary authorities and will increase the level of financial uncertainty faced by the service – especially single-purpose fire authorities.</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>The focus on restoring economic growth may lead to more pressure on enforcement bodies to integrate inspection regimes and to review how enforcement activity – in the case of FRSs, the auditing of commercial and non-residential properties - can be delivered so it is seen as an aid to business as opposed to an extra burden.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>SOCIO CULTURAL</strong></th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Severity / Impact</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>Despite small improvements in recent months, the level of unemployment remains at a historically high level – particularly youth unemployment which stands at a rate of 20%. In addition to placing more demand on resources such as youth engagement functions, high levels of unemployment, particularly for prolonged periods, risks contributing to the deprivation profile of local areas.</td>
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</table>
All public service providers will need to adapt to the demographic pressure caused by an increasingly ageing population and will need to work collaboratively to deliver effective prevention and community safety activities that address the needs of older people and vulnerable groups such as those with age-related illnesses, including dementia or mobility problems.

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There are concerns that a further deterioration in economic and social conditions will lead to a repeat of the civil unrest witnessed last summer, which saw some FRSs experience a significant increase in activity.

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The cost of fuel continues to increase and the long-term projection is for a further rise in levels of fuel poverty, which will place more households at a greater risk of fire. Higher fuel prices will also lead to an increase the Service’s operating costs.

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**TECHNOLOGICAL**

The growth of social media and mobile technology will allow FRSs to engage with a wider and more diverse audience than had traditionally been the case. However, social media will become a more influential platform for opposition to plans and proposals put forward by public services and can rapidly publicise any reputational issues.

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The development of shared control centres may also lead to further examination of other potential areas of collaboration both between FRSs and also other service providers, in areas such as support services, senior management and special appliances.

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The Government will expect public services to deliver against the transparency agenda and local authorities will need to make provision for publishing online a wide range of data and statistics. Additionally, there will be an expectation to use and share data to provide improved services.

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The outcomes of the review into the trial into the deaths of four Warwickshire firefighters and also the inquest into the deaths of two Hampshire firefighters may have an impact on future operational and training procedures.  

<table>
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<th>LEGAL</th>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Young Review of Health and Safety legislation may impact on operational procedures. The review itself recommends that firefighters should not be at risk of investigation or prosecution under health and safety legislation if they have put themselves at risk as a result of committing a heroic act in the course of their duties.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reducing the regulatory burden will make it more difficult to introduce regulatory change (such as the mandatory installation of sprinklers systems of smoke alarms). Policy makers will need to be convinced of the need to act and any related business cases will need to be solid and able to withstand scrutiny.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
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</table>

Economic regeneration and housing development is planned across all four unitary authority areas of Cheshire. Both airports on the Cheshire border have planned for significant growth in passenger volume over the long term, while a potential High Speed Rail spur at Crewe will also affect the risk profile of the local area.  

<table>
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<th>ENVIRONMENTAL</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recent events have shown that instances of extreme weather are becoming more frequent. Services will need to be prepared to respond to spate weather conditions such as flash flooding or fires in the open during spells of hot and dry weather.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
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</table>
Annex 2: 2012/13 Cheshire Fire Authority Members

Political Composition

Cheshire East
Cllr David Brickhill (Independent)
Ward: Shavington

Cllr Dorothy Flude (Labour)
Ward: Crewe South

Cllr Bill Livesley (Conservative)
Ward: Bollington

Cllr Gillian Merry (Conservative)
Ward: Sandbach Elworth

Cllr Margaret Simon (Conservative)
Ward: Wistaston

Cllr Chris Thorley (Labour)
Ward: Crewe East

Cllr David Topping (Conservative)
Ward: Congleton West

Cllr Jacqui Weatherill (Conservative)
Ward: Wistaston

Cheshire West and Chester
Cllr Eleanor Johnson (Conservative)
Ward: Gowy
Cllr Lynda Jones (Conservative)
Ward: Winsford Over and Verdin

Cllr John Leather (Conservative)
Ward: Tarvin and Kelsall

Cllr Bob Rudd (Labour)
Ward: Garden Quarter

Cllr Tony Sherlock (Labour)
Ward: Grange

Cllr Alex Tate (Labour)
Ward: Lache

Cllr Norman Wright (Conservative)
Ward: Marbury

**Halton**

Cllr Phil Harris (Labour)
Ward: Hough Green

Cllr Stef Nelson (Labour, Vice Chair)
Ward: Halton Brook

Cllr Rob Polhill (Labour)
Ward: Halton View

**Warrington**

Cllr Mike Biggin (Liberal Democrat)
Ward: Grappenhall and Thelwell

Cllr Peter Carey (Labour)
Ward: Fairfield and Howley

Cllr John Joyce (Labour, Chair)
Ward: Burtonwood and Winwick

Cllr John Kerr-Brown (Labour)
Ward: Poplars and Hulme

Cllr Hans Mundry (Labour)
Ward: Latchford East
## Annex 3: Timeline of the next electoral cycles and MPs/Peers Maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Cheshire East</th>
<th>Cheshire West</th>
<th>Halton</th>
<th>Warrington</th>
<th>Fire Authority Members Up for Re-Election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phil Harris (Lab, Halton)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Peter Carey (Lab, Warrington)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>John Kerr-Brown (Lab, Warrington)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>All seats</td>
<td>All seats</td>
<td>1/3 seats</td>
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<td>All Cheshire East and Cheshire West &amp; Chester</td>
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<td>Mike Biggin (Lib Dem, Warrington)</td>
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<td>John Joyce (Lab, Warrington)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hans Mundry (Lab, Warrington)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>1/3 seats</td>
<td>1/3 seats</td>
<td>Stef Nelson (Lab, Halton)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rob Polhill (Lab, Halton)</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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<td>2019</td>
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<td>All seats</td>
<td>All seats</td>
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<td>All Cheshire East and Cheshire West &amp; Chester</td>
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<td></td>
<td>European Union Parliamentary Elections</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
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<td>1/3 seats</td>
<td>1/3 seats</td>
<td>UK Parliamentary Elections,</td>
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<td>Police and Crime Commissioner Elections</td>
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Annex 4: Planned Developments in Local Authority Areas

**Cheshire East**

Under powers outlined in the Localism Act, four Cheshire East towns have been selected to be part of a pilot scheme to implement Neighbourhood Planning. Town Strategies have been prepared for Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich, Sandbach and Wilmslow. Strategies will also be produced for Crewe, Macclesfield, Handforth, Knutsford, Nantwich and Poynton in due course.

**Crewe**

The ‘All Change for Crewe’ project is planning for a population growth of 20% by 2031 (+17,000 residents) and the creation of over 14,500 new jobs focused on the Basford East site and in the town centre. The West End area has been identified as a key area of housing regeneration.

Redevelopment of the railway station is also planned, which could be impacted by any High-Speed Rail decision. Further detail on development is expected to be included within the town strategy.

**Macclesfield**

Cheshire East council have recently published proposals for a major regeneration of Macclesfield town centre. The plans include the development of a new leisure quarter on Water Street encompassing a cinema, restaurants and a small number of houses. New retail units are also planned for the Town Square and Silk Street and a new mutli-storey car park is planned for the Park Lane/Samuel Street area. The forthcoming town strategy for Macclesfield is expected to provide further detail on planned housing developments.

Key objectives for the town strategies already published are listed below. Strategies for other areas will be included in subsequent refreshes of the analysis when they are published.

**Alsager**

The strategy commits to deliver in the order of 1,000 new homes by 2030, supporting development on previously developed land including the former Manchester Metropolitan University Campus and Twyfords.

Retail development will be focused within the town and there are plans to create a new sports hub at the former MMU Campus.

**Congleton**

Approximately 3,500 new homes are planned to be built by 2030. Key plans include enhancing the leisure offer and night time economy, including developing a new lifestyle centre.
Improvements are planned for railway station facilities, rail access and also improve accessibility to and within the town and develop foot / cycle links at key locations.

**Middlewich**
The strategy plans to deliver in the order of 1,600 new homes by 2030 and promote the economic potential and expansion of the Midpoint 18 employment site, including completion of the Middlewich Eastern 'Link Road'.
The feasibility of the creation of a new 'civic hub' adjacent to the canal and to the east of Lewin Street will be explored and role of the canal network and the Town Wharf. The reinstatement of the Middlewich Rail station and rail services between Sandbach and Northwich will be promoted.

**Sandbach**
The town plan commits to deliver in the order of 950 homes on new sites by 2030, in addition to the following sites that are regarded as housing commitments:
- Former Fodens Factory/Fodens Test Track and Rookery Bridge (500 homes)
- Former Albion Chemical Works, Moston (375 homes and other uses)

The use of venues in Sandbach for concerts will be encouraged. Improvements to railway station facilities and enhance connections from the railway station to the town centre are planned. The amount of traffic flowing through the town centre and improvements to M6 Junction 17 to address safety/congestion issues will be reviewed.

**Wilmslow**
Around 1,500 new homes are planned for development by 2030 in addition to new community facilities, including improved swimming and sports provision and a health ‘hub’ in the town centre.
Public transport along north-south routes from the town centre and from the town to other nearby centres will be improved.

**Cheshire West and Chester**
A new local plan is currently being developed that will serve the whole unitary area and eventually replace the existing development plans and the now revoked Regional Spatial Strategy.

The plan will be put out to consultation in Autumn 2012 and published in Summer 2013. The initial spatial allocation for housing was agreed by the Council’s Local Development Framework Panel last August and commits to the development of 19,750 new homes over the next 15 years together with 130 hectares of new land for employment. The base housing allocation in each area of the borough is set out below, along with other major regeneration activities.
Chester
Chester will be a focal point for development with 25% of the borough total for new housing. This amounts to 329 new homes per annum or 4,935 new homes in total.

The major regeneration scheme is the Chester Renaissance development project, which will see development activity across the city centre, including the development of a conference centre at the Roodee racecourse, the redevelopment of the Northgate area (the area that houses the fire station), enhancing the riverside as a tourist attraction, and the potential re-introduction of a hydro-electric station on the weir of the River Dee.

Further development is also planned through the Chester Rail Gateway (mixed use employment led regeneration) and the major project of development recently started by Chester Zoo.

Ellesmere Port
20% of new housing in the borough is planned for the Ellesmere Port area, equating to 3,945 new homes (263 p.a.). Planning applications have also been submitted for up to 2,000 new homes off Ledsham Road in Little Sutton.

There is also the possibility of further development of commercial and retail premises at the Cheshire Oaks outlet mall.

Northwich
15% of total new housing in the borough will be within the Northwich area. This equals 2,970 new homes in total (198 p.a.). A planning application has also been submitted for 1,050 new homes in Wincham.

Other developments include the promotion of the Lostock Triangle Business Park development and the Baron’s Quay regeneration scheme, which has superseded the previous ‘Northwich Vision’ scheme.

Winsford
As with Northwich, 2,970 new homes will be built in the town area (198 homes p.a.). this amounts to 15% of the total housing development in the unitary area.

Winsford Town Council is also progressing with the “Future of Winsford” neighbourhood plan. Initial public consultation has been undertaken, with firm proposals expected to be drafted over the next three months.

Proposals that are expected to feature within the plan include some redevelopment of the town centre and also the development of riverside area to make it more accessible and usable for the community.

Rural
The rural area encompasses a number of the smaller settlements in the borough such as market towns like Frodsham, Tarporley and Malpas.
In terms of housing this will be the second main housing growth point along with Chester. 25% of the total new build allocation will be in the rural area. This equals 4,935 new homes (329 p.a.), though it has not yet been fully determined how the allocation will be split between the various locations.

**Halton**

Halton Borough Council’s Core Strategy is the key strategic document that outlines the spatial planning objectives for the borough.

The strategy commits to delivering 8000 additional new homes by 2026, as well as 260 hectares of land for employment purposes, up to 35,000 square metres of town centre convenience /comparison goods retailing and up to 22,000 square metres of space for bulky goods retailing.

Of the planned new housing development, 400 new homes per annum are scheduled to be built until 2014/15, followed by 600 homes p.a. until 2019/20 and then 500 p.a. until 2025/26.

The majority of housing development is scheduled to take place within Runcorn, notably on the Waterfront, Daresbury and Sandymoor.

The majority of employment land release is planned for the Mersey Multi-Modal Gateway (3MG) and the Daresbury areas, while most of the retail space planned for development lies in South Widnes (Town Centre, Waterfront and West Bank).

The funding for the Mersey Gateway Bridge project has now been approved by the Government and work is scheduled to start in 2013 prior to scheduled completion in 2016.

**Warrington**

The Warrington Core Strategy commits to deliver a minimum of 10,500 new homes across the borough (equating to 500 per year) between 2006 and 2027.

This will be achieved through the completion of the development of housing sites at Greenalls Distillery, Walton Locks, Britannia Wire, Saxon Park East, the former Beers Timber yard, MSCC Thelwall Lane, Edgewater Park / New World and Eagle Ottowa.

The strategy also commits to providing 277 hectares of employment land between 2006 and 2027.

The main focus for business, general industrial and storage / distribution development will be the existing employment areas of the town such as Birchwood Park, Gemini & Winwick Quay and also sites at Woolston Grange, Omega and Lingley Mere.

Major Warehousing and distribution developments will be located away from areas sensitive to heavy vehicle
movements, with direct access to the Primary Road Network, and where possible with access to rail and/or the Ship Canal.

A significant development is the Peel Ports Port Warrington project, which will lead to an increase in the use of the Manchester Ship Canal and will see more ship traffic through Warrington and Stockton Heath.