

Safety projects despite tax freeze

New fire engines and specialist systems to help identify and protect vulnerable residents are among investments planned by Cheshire Fire Authority over the next 12 months – despite freezing its Council Tax level.

Two new standard fire engines and a specialist midi appliance with 4 wheel drive are planned at a cost of over £700,000 to keep its emergency fleet up to date and provide a better response during bad winter weather.

Other plans include:

- £122,000 to maintain use of the new radio system for operational crews
- £100,000 to improve facilities at fire stations for firefighters and the community in line with new legislation
- A £29,500 annual programme to replace the specialist thermal image cameras carried on every fire engine
- £12,000 for using technology which will help further improve how staff can identify and support at risk households.

The projects for 2011-12 follow a near £1 million investment by the Fire Authority over the last 12 months which has seen new state-of-the-art protective clothing provided for all firefighters and a complete replacement of breathing apparatus sets.



This continuing investment in improving the safety of staff and communities without any increase in Council Tax has been achieved through a programme of major efficiencies.

Savings of £1.9 million have been made for 2011-12 while no staff will receive an annual pay increase following the national public sector freeze.

Most of the efficiencies have been achieved through restructuring and reducing posts and budgets in a number of support services.

More details about how Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service aims to protect local communities over the next 12 months are set out in 'Making Cheshire Safer'.

This annual publication, also referred to as the Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2011-12, is on the Service's website.

Safety at Home

Our new Home Safety Direct system can protect you and your home - at the click of a button.

Take the quick online test at cheshirefire.gov.uk/5mins – it could save your life.

If you or a relative need us to visit to give safety advice and fit free smoke detectors call **0800 389 0053**.

Safety at Work

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

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

Cheshire Fire Authority

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

Representing

Warrington

Cllr Mike Biggin
Cllr John Joyce
Cllr Hans Mundry
Cllr Colin Oliver

Meeting dates



Wed	8	June	2011
Wed	14	September	2011
Wed	14	December	2011
Wed	8	February	2012
Wed	14	March	2012
Wed	18	April	2012

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

Facts and figures

Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service operates:

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

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

- 712 operational staff
- 25 control room operators
- 265 community safety and other support staff.

Fire budget 2011/12

The Fire Authority has agreed that a budget of £43.7m is required for the Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington areas for 2011-12.

This will ensure that £25.0m will be raised from local Council Tax, which is equivalent to £66.43 for each Band D dwelling. This is the same charge as for 2010-11.

The budget equates to a cost per person of less than 83p per week.

Estimated expenditure and income

	2011/12 £m	2010/11 £m
Firefighters	27.0	27.5
Other staff	6.1	6.3
Non-pay expenditure	14.0	14.3
Gross revenue expenditure	47.1	48.1
LESS Income	(1.5)	(1.5)
Capital adjustments*	(1.9)	(3.2)
Budget requirement	43.7	43.4

* Capital Adjustments include the repayment of £1m in loans

How the budget compared with last year

The Fire Authority budget requirement for 2011-12 is £43.7m compared with a budget of £43.4m for last year. The reasons for the 0.6% increase in the overall budget are as follows:

	£m	% increase
Last year's budget	43.42	
Pay and price inflation	0.39	0.9
Essential growth	0.48	1.1
Efficiencies and Savings	(1.90)	(4.4)
Transfer to capital	1.90	4.4
Other*	(0.59)	(1.4)
Total	43.70	0.6

*Other includes:

Allocation of second homes precept	0.04
Council Tax grant	(0.63)

Where the money will come from

	£m	£ Per Resident	£ Band D Equivalent
This year's budget	43.70	43.14	115.98
Less Government grants	(18.67)	(18.43)	(49.55)
Local Council Tax	25.03	24.71	66.43