

Views sought on new plans

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

Over the past few years residents, businesses, partners and staff have all helped the Authority to develop plans so it can continue to deliver that service despite major cuts to its funding.

This summary outlines progress on its existing proposals to transform frontline services as well as a number of new projects planned for the next financial year.

Key proposals include:

- joining up the organisation's back offices with those at Cheshire Constabulary
- transforming the Service's Home Safety Assessments into 'Safe and Well' visits
- launching a pilot project for responding to cardiac incidents in some areas
- delivering annual savings of £2 million a year through efficiencies and limited increases in Council Tax.

Please read this document and take a few minutes to share your views using the questionnaire and Freepost envelope provided or use the online survey at www.cheshirefire.gov.uk Call 01606 868407 if you have any questions. The full draft plan for 2016-17 is on the website.

Blue Light Collaboration



Given that major annual cuts to its Government funding are due to continue up to 2020, the Authority is committed to maximising the efficiency of all aspects of the organisation.

There is an ongoing Emergency Response Programme to ensure the most efficient use of frontline services, while options for further efficiencies in emergency response will be the subject of a major public consultation from September 2016.

A previous review of support services has already saved £1.3 million, however, further savings are required and a collaboration project with Cheshire Constabulary is being explored. While each organisation would keep its own identity, frontline emergency response services and governance arrangements, many support services could be delivered by a single team from a shared headquarters site based at the Constabulary's existing Clemonds Hey site in Winsford.

'Safe and Well' visits

The Authority has always regarded prevention as the best way of protecting and improving the safety of local residents. Key to this has been its Home Safety Assessment (HSA) programme which has helped to deliver major improvements in fire safety and contributed to a 29% reduction in incidents attended by the Service over the last five years.

While the Service will continue to focus its HSAs on those most at risk from fire in 2016-17 the Service plans to relaunch them as 'Safe and Well' visits, with firefighters and community safety advocates carrying out additional basic health checks.

These are likely to focus on preventing falls, providing cancer screening information and drug, alcohol and smoking cessation support and referral. In addition, the Service will also support those who have recently been discharged from hospital.

Cardiac response

The Service will also explore a pilot scheme to support the North West Ambulance Service by mobilising its resources as well as theirs to cardiac incidents. If approved the scheme would see both services being mobilised, whoever reaches the casualty first will start providing treatment and once the patient is stabilised they will be taken to hospital by ambulance.

Budget

This Authority's latest financial plans anticipate having to make annual savings of £2million up to 2020. While efficiencies across all aspects of the organisation will make up the bulk of the savings, the budget assumes a 1.99% annual increase in the Authority's Council Tax precept to provide a balanced budget.

Projects and proposals 2016-17 – summary

Developing the organisation

- Complete preparations for phase one of the blue light collaboration programme with Cheshire Constabulary and develop an implementation plan for phase two
- Launch value for money reviews on all support areas of the Service not covered under the blue light collaboration programme
- Develop action plans to respond to the independent Operational Assessment and Peer Review of the organisation and the reaccreditation under the national Fire and Rescue Service Equality framework
- Implement a staff engagement plan in response to the Service's fourth staff attitude survey
- Launch a new two-year firefighter apprentice scheme



Protecting local communities

- Launch Safety Central – the Authority's new dedicated safety centre at Lymm
- Transform the Service's Home Safety Assessment programme into Safe and Well visits and increase the annual target to 40,000
- Support the Government's revised 'Primary Authority Scheme' aimed at streamlining fire safety processes for businesses



Responding to emergencies

- The new on-call fire station at Alsager becomes fully operational
- Go live for the new fire station at Penketh, using the second fire engine from Warrington and removing the second fire engine from Widnes
- Launch of the new fire station at Powey Lane, near M56, using the second fire engine from Chester. Transfer the Foam and Environmental Protection Units at Ellesmere Port, the Incident Response Unit from Chester and the High Volume Pump from Congleton to the new station
- Go live for the new fire station at Lymm, with Technical Rescue Unit transferred there from Knutsford as well as the Incident Response Unit from Winsford
- Transfer the hydraulic platform from Stockton Heath to Warrington
- Introduce on-call model for Stockton Heath and Knutsford
- Review the Service's Nucleus Duty System
- Launch a pilot project with NWS to mobilise our resources to cardiac incidents in certain areas
- Launch a comprehensive public consultation on options identified during the Authority's second major review of emergency response services

