



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 24/27

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	12 June 2024
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority's Community Safety Plan 2024-28 consultation outcomes
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	To note and approve
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>In line with the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2018, the Service has developed the Community Safety Plan 2024-2028 (CSP). The Plan also conforms national expectations issued by the Fire Standards Board. The CSP is principally written with the public as the primary audience. It is a non-technical overview of the strategic intent of the Authority and work of its Service.</p> <p>At its February Authority meeting, Members approved the draft CSP and its 12-week consultation programme. Following the completion of this consultation exercise, the draft CSP has been updated taking account of feedback. The Plan now awaits the final approval from Members before being published on the Service's website.</p> <p>As Members are aware, the Authority continues to be in a challenging financial position. This is made more difficult through the continued announcements of single year financial settlements, an increasing reliance on grant funding mechanisms and the lack of flexibility over the fire-precept.</p> <p>This challenging position and levels of uncertainty hinders the ability to sensibly plan over the medium term. It should therefore be expected that any plan will need to be subject to regular reviews of financial planning assumptions.</p>

RISK ASSESSMENT	Failure to maintain an up-to-date corporate plan will undermine the reputation of the Authority and its compliance with the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2018.
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	A community impact assessment was completed as part of the development of the consultation programme. This has sought to ensure Service wide engagement, particularly with the seldom heard groups.
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	An environmental impact assessment was undertaken in the development of the consultation programme. This has indicated, where possible, for the programme to be electronic and to limit the requirement for printed versions of the documents.
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	This Plan is underpinned by the annually reviewed Medium Term Finance Plan.
RECOMMENDATIONS	Members are asked to: 1. Consider and approve the Community Safety Plan 2024-2028, following consultation.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Fire & Rescue National Framework (2018) CRMP Fire Standard Strategic Assessment of Risk
APPENDICES	Appendix A – Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority's Community Safety Plan 2024-28. Appendix B – Equality Data
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework (2018) requires fire and rescue authorities to produce a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) covering at least a three-year period. The Authority fulfils this requirement through the Community Safety Plan (CSP).
- 1.2 In April 2021, the Fire Standards board published its CRMP Fire Standard, providing fire and rescue services with direction into how a CRMP should be developed and delivered.

- 1.3 To ensure that our CSP is relevant and reflective of the wider landscape in which the Service operates, biennially the Service undertakes a Strategic Assessment of Risk. The current Strategic Assessment of Risk 2023-2025 is published on the Service's website. It is also reflective of both the sector and Service reviews on Culture.
- 1.4 During 2023 the Service undertook its first full and comprehensive Fire Cover Review since combination in April 2016. This provided a Service wide review of existing fire cover and response arrangements. This has been a key document used to aid the development of the CSP.
- 1.5 The Plan has been broadly referenced to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) methodology, which is in accordance with the Service's wider approach to performance reporting and assurance arrangements. The CSP is aligned to the Authority's Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP) and its delivery will be supported by a number of more technical strategies and a delivery plan. Members scrutinise progress the plan through their quarterly meetings and the reports provided to the Finance & Audit Committee and Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees. This is further supplemented by the six-monthly presentations to the Authority, by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, along with the publication of an Annual report, presented to the Authority each September.
- 1.6 As Members are aware, the Service continues to be in a challenging financial position, particularly with the continued one-year financial settlements and the disappointing news regarding the lack of flexibility granted over the council tax referendum principles to be applied to the fire-precept. There continues to be significant unknowns and most notably around business rates funding and associated governance grants.
- 1.7 The funding position for future years remains a serious concern, with significant levels of uncertainty hindering the ability to sensibly plan over the medium term. It should therefore be expected that the CSP will need to be subjected to an annual review of financial planning assumptions.
- 1.8 The CSP (Appendix A) is principally written with the public as the primary audience. It is a non-technical overview of the strategic intent of the Authority and work of its Service.

2. About the consultation and communication programme

- 2.1 The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2018 requires fire and rescue authorities to undertake effective consultation with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners. Following Authority approval of the draft CSP, at its meeting in February 2024, the Service has undertaken a 12-week consultation programme, which commenced on the 9 February and ran until the 3 May 2024.
- 2.2 The development of the consultation programme, and process undertaken, was developed considerate of the round 3 HMICFRS service reports that were published prior to the consultation. The programme also was reflective of learning from our last consultation programme along with the experiences from other fire and rescue services who had recently undertaken consultations. Furthermore, impact assessments were

undertaken to ensure the approach was inclusive and considerate of environmental impacts.

2.3 The consultation programme comprised of:

- An introductory video to support understanding of the CSP
- Advertising of the consultation programme and draft CSP through posters in public premises
- A website consultation page incl. feedback forms (electric and to download)
- Distribution to all four Local Authority Community Forums and the two Police Community Alert Systems.
- Distribution by email to:
 - a) Community and charity groups
 - b) Home Office
 - c) Local Area Boards
 - d) Local business forums
 - e) Local Resilience Forums and other community safety partners
 - f) Members of Parliament within the Fire and Rescue Authority area
 - g) Neighbouring fire and rescue services
 - h) Parish Councils
 - i) Police and Crime Commissioners
- A social media campaign including X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and NextDoor. This was supported by our local authority partners who also shared this information online
- Use of social media polls
- Press releases highlighting the consultation
- A dedicated email address to promote two-way engagement and a phone number available to take feedback for those who are uncomfortable with technology
- Internal briefings to:
 - a) Staff
 - b) Managers
 - c) Representative bodies
- Email distribution to a large number of underrepresented groups, schools and businesses who engage with our Fire Safety teams
- Email to all schools who have contact with the Service's Education team
- Engagement through our Safe and Well visits and other public face to face interactions and already organised events

3. Consultation response and final draft

- 3.1 Through the consultation programme the Service had over 5,400 engagements. This was 4,654 through social media polls, 266 online responses, 28 email contacts and 491 Safe and Well visits.
- 3.2 Visits to targeted groups and station events allowed the opportunity to present and discuss the CSP with members of the public. The consultation period saw a total of 15 groups and events attended with 725 members of the public engaged in discussions on the CSP. The range of events included recruitment events and business fire safety checks and station car washes. Station staff also attended a range of our targeted 'seldom heard' groups, including an Over 50's Club, Feed Those in Need, and a Baby Bank.
- 3.3 Of the 266 responses received through the online processes, 25.5% of the responses were received as a result of a direct email from the Service and 25.1% as a result of our social media campaign. In addition, 65.7% of respondents were residents of Dorset and Wiltshire, and 22.1% were members of staff.
- 3.4 The online consultation and engagement programme sought to reach a diverse audience, from across our communities. To enable the Service to identify if the approach undertaken successfully encouraged a diverse response a number of equality questions were asked through the online form.
- 3.5 Equality data was requested on our online form.
- 3.6 Overall it is pleasing to note that more than 83% of online respondents found the CSP clear and over 65% found the supporting video useful. Of those respondents 62% were happy to share their equality data, which is detailed within appendix B.
- 3.7 Following the online feedback, the CSP has been revised in the following manner:
 - More detail has been provided about the desire to have more diversity within the workforce. The feedback from stakeholders often highlighted a lack of understanding around the positive effects of greater diversity for an organisation and a concern that recruitment standards may not be equally applied.
 - Stronger links have now been added to the UK Government's Resilience Framework to highlight the Service's proactive and continued involvement in the Dorset and Wiltshire & Swindon Local Resilience Forums
 - The emerging risk of electric car fires has been added to highlight to the public the Service's awareness of this issue and the training undertaken by our firefighters
 - The front cover of the plan has been adjusted to be more overt that this is the Community Safety Plan for Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority, to remove any confusion with the Community Safety Partnerships

- Further commentary has been added to highlight the focus of the Service's delivery programme, following the completion of the Fire Cover Review. Any changes to frontline delivery will involve subsequent engagement with stakeholders over specific proposals.

3.8 The updated Community Safety Plan is provided as Appendix A, for Member's consideration and approval.

4. Summary and next steps

4.1 Following the conclusion of the consultation programme the Plan, has been updated to include the key themes raised by those responding to the consultation exercise. The Community Safety Plan is provided within Appendix A and Members are asked to review and approve it. Upon approval the plan will be published on the Service's website.