



Annual Report

For 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014



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Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken when completing this plan. This is available on our website www.dorsetfire.gov.uk, or by contacting Robert Ford, Our Head of Corporate Planning on **01305 252615**

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Foreword

We are pleased to introduce our Annual Report for 2013/14.

Over the last year, we have focused considerable effort to improve safety in Dorset, and we are pleased to tell you that there has been a reduction in the number of deaths caused by fire and the number of accidental fires in the homes is reducing still further. Where we have needed to respond to an incident in the home, our crews have arrived within 10 minutes of the call on over 84% of occasions. When you consider the diverse nature of the area we cover, from the rural county of Dorset to the urban centres in Bournemouth and Poole, this is an excellent achievement. We have improved the safety of our communities by:

- reducing accidental fires in the home by further strengthening our community safety task teams through the use of volunteers to help deliver over 10,000 home safety checks
- actively supporting the creation of 'Safewise' a premier regional safety charity for people of all ages
- dealing with the very difficult financial position that all public sector bodies have had to face by working with our colleagues in Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority to consider options for the future
- achieving British Standard BS18001 for our Health and Safety processes, one of the few fire and rescue services to achieve this

- changing the way in which our on-call firefighters respond to calls
- commissioning an exciting initiative to explore new ways in which we could use domestic sprinklers in our prevention activities, helping us to meet the ever evolving needs of Dorset's communities.
- continuing with our full range of prevention programmes

Despite the many successes this year which are outlined within this Annual Report, there is still much to do. The number of deliberate fires has increased, as has the number of fires in non-domestic premises and we have to find more innovative ways of helping business reduce the impacts of fire. Our work in the future has to be done in the light of reduced budget, which is why, during the Summer 2014, we will be asking how you want us to strengthen our fire and rescue service.

Our vision is to work in partnership to make Dorset safer. Our Community Safety Plan 2014-2019 sets out how we intend to deliver on this vision and this can be found on our website at www.dorsetfire.gov.uk. We hope you enjoy reading this Annual Report and seeing what we have achieved. If you have any comments, good or bad, please let us know.



Rebecca Knox
Chairman
Dorset Fire Authority

Darran Gunter
Chief Fire Officer
Dorset Fire & Rescue
Service

What we have achieved in 2013/14

Our approach

The Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) created a statutory duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities to promote fire safety, placing the prevention of fires at the heart of their activity. We deliver this through our first three strategic aims:



Prevention

Reducing risk by educating our communities to prevent fires and other incidents occurring



Protection

Ensuring buildings are well regulated and can offer a safe means of escape in the case of fire



Response

Ensuring our response delivers a swift and professional service in an emergency

The following are some of our key achievements in 2013/14:

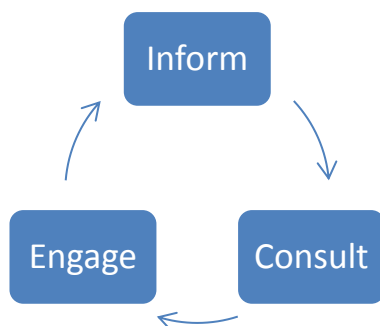


Prevention

Reducing risk by educating our communities to prevent fires and other incidents occurring

Working with and within the community

We are proud of the efforts we put in to prevent incidents from happening in the first place and we use the following model to help us engage with you:



Inform: We provide you with guidance to promote safer living and more information generally on how we are doing. We use a variety of channels to do this including our website, social media including twitter and facebook, promotional material, leaflets and press releases.

Consult: We listen to you to both develop our understanding of your wants, needs and issues and also to allow you the real opportunity to influence the way in which your fire service is managed. This includes, satisfaction surveys, focus groups and more formal consultation to inform significant changes to the service.

Engage: We will work directly with you to ensure more formal consultation to inform significant service delivery changes.

Over the last year we have strengthened this approach by developing our Community Engagement and Inclusion Team to:

- strengthen our partnership working at a local level
- highlight new opportunities to reduce risk to our communities
- help to deliver real change in the behaviours of some of our residents
- sharing data with our partners more effectively
- ensure that we remain known as an excellent organisation in how we deal with diversity and inclusion.

Safewise



In 2013 DFRS began discussions with the LV=Streetwise Trustees and the Trustees of the Weymouth Community Safety Centre on merging the two charities to add strength and sustainability to them. In April 2014 this work was completed and **LV=Streetwise** in Bournemouth and the **Weymouth Community Safety Centre** came proudly together to form **SafeWise**: a premier regional safety charity for people of all ages with

enhanced reach, influence and opportunities to save lives throughout the county. DFRS was a founder supporter of LV=Streetwise in 1998 and WCSC in 2011 and has continued its invaluable support ever since.

The SafeWise charity works in partnership with the emergency services, local authorities, business community and voluntary sectors to give children a head start in their safety education, supporting parents and schools in providing them with essential skills for life: it offers memorable and exciting opportunities for people of all ages to learn about staying safe and healthy at home, on the roads and at play. The unique life-sized environments help people to spot the potential for danger, learn about risk and consequence and how to take responsibility for their actions – all in a safe and controlled environment. 2,203 children and young people have already visited this exciting safety facility and another 7,342 have visited the LV=Streetwise facility in Poole.

Fire Cadets



This programme promotes physical, mental and emotional wellbeing through an exciting range of team activities and community events. The programme is

aimed at 14 to 17yr olds from three different groups: those who have successfully completed the Safer People and Responsible Communities (SPARC) course and continue to perform positively, those who have been referred by teachers who feel they would benefit from the positive influences and outcomes and those who wish to broaden their skills and horizons.

Students complete a Level 2 BTEC qualification and inputs on first aid and road safety.

Recently our cadets took part in an exchange with French and German cadets hosted by the French Fire service in Cherbourg. They undertook many activities such as a combination of water rescues, a visit to their helicopter rescue centre and a morning spent at their new training centre. There was also a visit to the St Mere Eglise War Museum which gave the Cadets time to reflect on the recent history of the three countries and an opportunity for everyone to appreciate the value of peace.

Our retention rates for this programme remain around 90% and the accreditation rate for the BTEC qualification remains at 100%.

Safe Drive Stay Alive

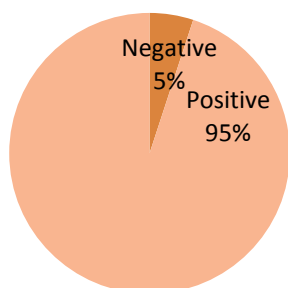


This programme is a high impact, interactive and dynamic training sessions that aims to influence the driving behaviour of young drivers and passengers to save lives on the road. The training focuses on how poor choices made by drivers and passengers can devastate lives.

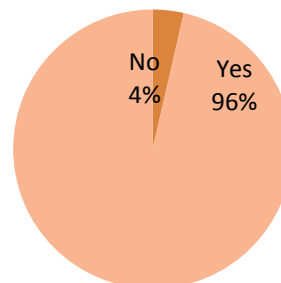
The course is presented by members of the community safety partnership which includes DFRS, Dorset Police, South West Ambulance, Dorset NHS Trust medical professionals and volunteers. Video clips are interspersed with on stage real life testimonies by serving emergency service staff and medical professionals. Input is also given by a member of the community who has experienced personal loss in a road traffic collision.

We focus on delivering to all year 12 and 13 students in schools and colleges across the County. Pre and post evaluation of this programme shows what an impact it has on changing behaviours as a driver and a passenger.

Effect of Safe Drive Stay Alive on respondents



Respondents who felt Safe Drive Stay Alive should be shown to all young people in Dorset



Firesetter intervention Scheme



A Firesetter is a child or young person who is habitually setting fires, playing with fire or showing an unhealthy interest in fire. It is critical that this behaviour is addressed as early as possible. By working with the child and their family we aim to reduce the risk of fire in the home and community. Two trained advisors attend the home and deliver a personalised programme depending on the severity of firesetting and the age of the child. By using a range of age appropriate materials they discuss the consequences of fire setting and where necessary fit smoke detectors.

In the past year 99% of parents and carers rated the outcome of this service as “very satisfied” one being “fairly satisfied”. Recidivism rates are low parents, carers and partners who refer feel the programme has helped their child to understand the consequences of firesetting.

“I was extremely impressed by the scheme, both helpful and informative and extremely nice people. It has made an impact on Oliver and he has been much more aware. Thank you.”

“They really made my son feel comfortable and at ease whilst at the same time showed the importance and realisation of his behaviour with fire and the risks of his actions. The staff were very easy to talk to.”

Princes Trust



Prince's Trust

This unique 12 week programme is designed to help unemployed and employed young people aged between 16 and 25yrs old. DFRS has been working with the Princes Trust Charity since 1997. The programme helps to raise self-esteem, build confidence and develop personal and social skills for the young people. Team members are also supported with their progression, looking at what they will do after the

programme and helping to achieve that aspiration. A number of partners support the programme by delivering career and life style days and taking young people on work experience.

The young people achieve accreditation and DFRS continues to achieve high levels of achievement in both accreditations gained, of which we have a 100% record for learners, and positive outcomes for the young people of 82% during the last year.



Protection

Ensuring buildings are well regulated and can offer a safe means of escape in the case of fire

Retrofit Sprinklers Grant Funding



Dorset Fire & Rescue Service's vision is working in partnership to make Dorset safer.

Last year we commissioned the Domestic Sprinkler Project to explore new ways in which we could use sprinklers in our prevention activities, helping us to meet the ever evolving needs of Dorset's communities.

A grant funding initiative was developed within the Project which has allowed Dorset Fire and Rescue Service the opportunity to show its strength of commitment to the promotion and use of sprinklers within Dorset's buildings. We also undertook a large number of fire safety inspections and made responses to consultations on new developments and conversions. By working in partnership with Magna Housing, a premises providing supported accommodation for up to 7 young people, needing help to live independently and get their lives back on track, is now fully protected with life-saving sprinklers.

The premises suffered a fire in 2012 in a bedroom, the occupant of the room was lucky to escape and was treated on the scene for smoke inhalation. Because the emergency evacuation procedures were followed correctly, all other occupants were able to leave the building safely and whilst no one was seriously injured, the fire damage was severe. This resulted in the occupants belongings being destroyed and left Magna with a refurbishment bill worth thousands of pounds.

Having provided 50% of the sprinkler installation costs each, Dorset Fire & Rescue Service and Magna are now confident that should a fire occur in the premises in the future, the sprinkler system will provide the necessary life safety protection for the occupants as well as helping Magna ensure that any damage caused is significantly limited.



Response

Ensuring our response delivers a swift and professional service in an emergency

Standard Operating Procedures



Standard operating procedures allow us to play a key role in the production of national procedures that ensure consistency in fighting fires and attending incidents from one fire and rescue service to another. This is already allowing us to make significant improvements in safety for our firefighters and improved service delivery to our community.

mobilise our fire engines and staff to an incident and track their progress using advanced satellite navigation systems. We have improved the transmission of messages using data as opposed to voice and we lead our neighbouring fire and rescue services in providing risk information direct to the incident ground using improvements to our mobile data terminals in the cabs.

Wildfire Project



BBC.co.uk

New technology



We extensively use new technology in everything that we do. For example, we

We have fundamental changed the way that we attack fires in the open over the last year by working with our partners. Increasing temperatures caused by climate change increases the risks of these fires, which are often called 'Wildfires', spreading very rapidly and they can have a devastating impact on heathland, crops and forests. Dorset has some internationally renowned areas of heathland and this risk is rated extremely highly on the Community Risk Register. Dorset Fire & Rescue Service manages this risk on behalf of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). More information on the role of the LRF

is contained in our Community Safety Plan 2014/19 which you can find on our website www.dorsetfire.gov.uk.

Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Project (JESIP)



We have played a pivotal role in organising and delivering JESIP training throughout the year across Dorset, involving, fire, police, ambulance and coastguard. This will ensure that our initial response to major and complex incidents is more organised, structured and practised. We have been selected to represent JESIP at this year's Emergency Services Show to profile our achievements.

Severe Weather



We have had to deal with an unprecedented level of storms over the last year. Our operational staff have responded to, and protected, Dorset communities in one of the worst winters

in living memory. Crews were deployed across the County to numerous floodings, people reported lost in rivers and were also called upon to take high volume pumps to the Somerset levels and beyond to help with incidents elsewhere in the county. We attended 163 incidents that were flooding or rescues from water and rescued 25 people.

On-Call Firefighters



Dorset has one of the highest proportions of on-call firefighters in the country, with 165 on-call firefighters (or 64% of our workforce). This makes us, both extremely efficient as an organisation, but also reduces the costs to you as we are one of the lowest fire services to run per head of population. We could not do this without the dedication and commitment of our on-call firefighters who give up their free time and energy to keep you safe. We have supported this through the year by introducing revised contracts and strengthening our recruitment of on-call staff which has led to an increase in our retained duty staff and a consistently high level of availability of our on-call fire engines.

Industrial action

A number of our representative bodies have taken various forms of industrial action aimed at central government. We hope that these disputes can be resolved as soon as possible, but we

are required to ensure that you are protected during these periods of strikes. We are lucky in Dorset in that we have good relationships with all our representative bodies, such as FBU and Unison and we would look for this to continue.

Selective Alerting



Traditionally, when an incident occurs that affects an on-call fire station we have always alerted by pager all available on-call fire fighters to attend. On a two pump fire station, this could have resulted in 20 staff turning-in for an incident that needed just 5 to crew the fire engine. The first five to the station got on the fire engine, this could be the same five, or a slightly larger group for a significant amount of the time. Those that lived or worked furthest away had much less chance of getting on the fire engine and to be exposed to an operational environment. This is a critical requirement in making our fire fighters safe. Because of this the levels of pay for attending were also unfairly distributed. Employers (and families) were disrupted every time on-call firefighters were called to the station – a critical issue in terms of future recruitment and the willingness of employers to release staff. This year we have introduced a system of selective (or phased) alerting where we only call on a small group of fire fighters to attend in the first instance, unless there is a reported risk to life when we call

everyone to the station as before. This has resulted in an ability to spend our money on improved training and safety initiatives and less disruption to employers and family.

BS 18001

We take the health and safety of our firefighters very seriously. To demonstrate this commitment we adopted British Standard 18001 - Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems - as our strategic target with the intent of achieving certification by the end of 2013. On 3 July 2013 we are pleased to tell you that we were formally notified that we were awarded our certificate. We are one a very few fire and rescue services to achieve this standard.

Over the next two years, we are in a phase where we will look to continually improve and are subjected to six monthly on site audits while we choose whether to maintain certification.

As a result of our Health and Safety processes we have introduced over the years and strengthened again over the last year, the auditor made the following comments:

“An example of good practice is the Health and Safety Assurance Framework that has examined each of the statements made in the policy, each statement having a desired outcome and provides detail of how the outcomes are measured. These outcomes are monitored to ensure that high risk standards of occupational health and safety are being met”.

This has provided a level of confidence previously unavailable to

us in relation to the application of the framework to the management of health and safety of our staff and we are very proud of this achievement.

Strengthening our fire and rescue service



Since 2011, central government funding to many public bodies has been reduced – by an average of about 25% over four years- and council tax increases have been frozen or restricted to small amounts.

We currently have a budget of £30 million and since 2005 we are on track to have saved over £4 million per year and avoided cuts to front-line services, but we still have to make further ongoing savings of between £2.3 - £3.2 million each year, by the end of March 2018, to be able to maintain current services levels.

In December 2013, Dorset Fire Authority agreed to develop a business case to support a possible combination with Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority.

From 21 July to 20 October we will be running a consultation to get your opinions on important choices that we have to make.

In summary, the main choices we have are to what extent we should collaborate with Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority or whether the two authorities should merge in a single combined fire authority covering the constituent areas of Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole, Swindon and Wiltshire. There are also opportunities for increased collaboration of some fire and rescue support functions with local authorities, the police and the ambulance service. All of these choices involve working differently. However, we believe the right one or indeed mix will help protect our front line services we provide to you.

We will carefully consider the outcomes of the consultation process when we make our decision in November 2014.

You can take part in the consultation by visiting our website and completing our questionnaire online at <http://www.dorsetfire.gov.uk/working-with-us/about-us/strengthening-our-fire-and-rescue-service/> or picking up a copy of the consultation leaflet at your local library.



Performance at a glance

It is important that we are clear to you about how we are performing against a basket of performance measures. Our performance reporting covers the financial year and this report is therefore from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. Set out below is a quick guide to our performance against our main indicators.

Fire related deaths and injuries



Accidental fires in the home



Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions



Percentage of properties reached by a pump within 10 minutes



Working days lost to sickness



Performance against the following key indicators is better than last year

Number of fire related deaths (down 1 from last year to 4)

Number of fire related deaths in accidental dwelling fires (down 1 from last year to 3)

Number of fire related injuries (down 6 from last year to 30)

Number of fire related injuries in accidental dwelling fires (down 7 from last year to 16)

Number of accidental dwelling fires (down 49 from last year to 438)

Number of primary fires (down 40 from last year to 1049)

Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions (down 31 from last year to 362)

Number of Significant fires in non-domestic properties (down 1 from last year to 33)

Attended false alarms caused by automatic fire detection equipment in non-domestic premises (down 173 from last year to 851)

Percentage of properties with sleeping risk where the first appliance met the response standard (up to 84.5%)

Percentage of properties with sleeping risk where the second appliance met the response standard (up to 78.9%)

Percentage of calls where resources are alerted within 90 seconds (up to 82.2%)

Percentage of working days lost to sickness (whole time uniformed) (down to 8.83)

Percentage of working days lost to sickness (all staff) (down to 8.73)



Performance exceeded the target set for the year

Number of home safety checks (10,723)

Number of deliberate fires (539)

Number of fires (1936)

Percentage of positive outcomes for young people (81.8%)

Number of fires in non-domestic properties (206)

Percentage of road traffic collisions where the first appliance met the response standard (86.6%)

Percentage of incidents with a response standard where the number of fire fighters 'riding' the appliance met the standard (86.9%)

Percentage of times a co-responder vehicle is mobile within 5 minutes of being alerted (87.6%)



Performance against the following key indicators is worse than last year

Number of children (0 – 15) who are killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions (27)

Percentage of other properties where the first appliance met the response standard (72.3%)

Percentage of other properties where the second appliance met the response standard (71.0%)

Percentage of time that RDS front line pumping appliances are available to respond to incidents (88.6%)

Percentage turnout times met by ALL front line pumping appliances (77.2%)

Percentage of malicious calls not attended (50.7%)

Information on all our incidents is shown on our website. Although overall our performance was good in a number of key areas we cannot be complacent. Our Community Safety Plan and Community Safety Strategy, which you can find on our website at www.dorsetfire.gov.uk, sets out what we are doing to improve your safety over the next year.

Financial Performance 2013-14

Revenue Spending Plans

The Fire Authority's revenue budget for 2013/14 was £30.2 million and the fire share of council tax increased to £65.34 (for a Band D property), having been frozen at £60.39 since 2010/11. The Government allowed a small number of fire and rescue authorities, those whose Band D council tax for 2012/13 was in the lowest 25%, to increase their share of council tax by up to £5 per year. Dorset's council tax was the 5th lowest out of 24 combined fire authorities. Whilst the Authority recognised the need to keep household bills as low as possible it decided that without the additional precept funding, 9.5 pence per week, per household, that the fire and rescue service in Dorset would find it difficult to maintain the essential services it provides. Despite the increase in our share of council tax, it remained below average nationally, with the average level of council tax for combined fire authorities for 2013/14 being £69.56.

The budget for 2013/14 included over £1m in cumulative savings flowing from the introduction of Service changes through the Resourcing and Reform Programme, a comprehensive review of the Service designed to help to address the significant financial challenge ahead and the cuts in public funding being delivered by the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010. Together with previous savings this means that the Service is on track to exceed over £4m savings per year by 2015/16

(representing an ongoing annual saving of 14% in the budget) and cumulative savings of more than £29m by 2016/17. Senior management posts have been reduced and many support functions have been downsized or outsourced leaving little room for further savings.

The budget included £1.5m of additional funding to help fund future changes to the Service and reduce long term debt. A provisional sum of £1m was included towards two regional projects; the Networked Fire Control Service Partnership and the South West Secure Information Services Project, with both projects being funded by external grants.

Comparison of Actual Expenditure with Budget

(Please note that the following information is based on our draft annual statement of accounts. These draft accounts are subject to audit and the full financial statement of accounts will be published on our website from 30 September 2014.)

Table 1 shows that actual net spending for the year was £30.176m, in line with our approved revised budget. This is after the transfer of additional sums to specific reserves totalling £1.512m. Variances occurred in a number of budget areas and details are included below.

Table 1 – Comparison of outturn with budget	2013/14 Revised Budget £'000	2013/14 Actual Outturn £'000	2013/14 Variance £'000s
Employees	21,421	21,196	225
Pensions	866	865	1
Premises	1,485	1,469	16
Transport	836	755	81
Supplies, Services and Other Payments	4,470	4,367	103
Capital financing, leasing and repayment of debt	2,549	2,548	1
Total expenditure	31,627	31,200	427
Income	2,511	2,536	25
Transfer from specific reserves	1,405	1,512	(107)
Net expenditure	30,521	30,176	345
<i>Financed by:</i>			
Revenue Support Grant	7,513	7,553	40
Non Domestic Rates	4,781	4,729	(52)
Council Tax	17,894	17,894	0
Total funding	30,188	30,176	(12)
Overall (over) / underspend	(333)	0	333

Pay and other employee costs were £225k less than planned

Savings on pay costs for operational staff (wholetime and retained duty system staff) make up £199k of this saving and reflect the effects of vacancy management and reductions in operational calls.

Ill health retirement costs and injury allowance payments were in line with the budget

During the year one member of operational staff retired due to ill-health at a cost to the Authority of £38k. This led to a saving of £62k which has been added to our Pensions Reserve to help fund future costs. The costs of injury allowance payments were in line with those expected.

The costs of running, repairing and maintaining our buildings was £16k less than budgeted

Spending on our buildings (e.g. repairs and maintenance, cleaning, utility charges, business rates) was slightly less than expected. The budget was increased by £49k during the year including an additional £20k allocated for urgent reactive maintenance works and £10k for additional business rates costs. The final outturn shows expenditure £16k less than budget.

Vehicle and equipment maintenance and other transport costs were £81k less than anticipated

Reduced costs for maintaining our vehicle fleet and operational equipment, together with the lower fuel costs contributed £68k to this saving. Staff travel costs were also £19k less than budgeted.

We spent £81k less than planned on supplies, services and other payments

This includes £58k less spent than expected on resources to support home fire safety checks, such as the purchase of smoke alarms.

We saved £134k on the cost of financing the Authority's long-term debt

The overall cost of financing the Authority's long-term debt was £1,099k. This compares to a revised budget estimate of £1,233k. The Authority is managing its cash flow and delaying borrowing whilst there is a significant disparity between the cost of borrowing and interest rates on investments. £345k of revenue funding has been used during the year to directly fund capital expenditure.

Grant funding

Grant funding of £2.37m was brought forward from 2012/13. This included £1.63m for the Networking Fire Control Services Partnership (NFCSP) and



£324k for the regional Secure Information Interchange project. The funding for NFCSP and Secure Information is meeting costs being incurred in 2013/14 and future years. In 2013/14 we spent £287k on the NFCSP and £174k on the Secure Information project.

During the year, specific grants totalling £2.89m were received from the Department for Communities and Local Government. This included £1.627m of ongoing support for the DESPI PFI scheme, £0.9m of fire capital grant, £193k for Firelink, £120k of New Burdens funding to support the new business rates retention scheme and £48k to support New Dimensions activity.



The Authority's general balances now stand at £2.18m. This includes our risk-assessed general reserve of £1.5m and £0.682m of cost centre balances.

In previous years we have charged £195k (called an impairment charge) to our accounts for potential losses following the collapse of Icelandic banks in October 2008. £1m had been deposited with Heritable Bank, a UK subsidiary of an Icelandic bank, in June 2008. We have now recovered just over £940k of the original deposit and the value of the impairment charge is now assessed as £176k, adding £19k back to the accounts this year.

In 2013/14, the Authority did not undertake any tendering activity that involved the transfer of staff.

Dorset Emergency Services Partnership Initiative (DESPI)

DESPI is a joint PFI funded project between Dorset Fire Authority and Dorset Police Authority. The project has providing new facilities in the Poole and Dorchester areas. The new Poole Fire Station and new Service Headquarters and Dorchester Fire Station, sited at Poundbury in Dorchester, opened in 2008. The final facility, a new area command, opened in December 2009 on the site of the former Poole Fire Station. This is a joint emergency services centre shared with Dorset Police. The PFI contract will finish in December 2034, 25 years after this final site is opened.

During 2013/14 the authority received £1.627m of financial support from the Department for Communities and Local Government in the form of a PFI grant. Unitary charge payments, made to the PFI contractor totalled £2.354m.

Capital Expenditure

During 2013/14 we spent a total of £1.466m on capital projects. Two MAN fire appliances and 6 off road light vehicles were purchased at a total cost of £796k. £106k was spent on the purchase 5 fire appliances that we previously leased, but where the leases were ending. This is part of our strategy to extend vehicle lives and reduce future capital costs. We also completed the purchase of a number of smaller vehicles at a total cost of £112k. £247k has been invested in essential maintenance and improvement of our building stock and spending on essential ICT and operational equipment totalled £205k.



Table 2 - Capital Expenditure**2013/14
£'000**

Property Works	247
Vehicles	1,014
Equipment	205
Total	1,466

The capital programme is financed by external borrowing, use of capital receipts generated from the sale of surplus assets, from specific grants provided by government and some direct revenue financing. Fire capital grant funding of £1.121m and direct revenue financing of £0.345m were used to fund the total capital spending amount of £1.466m. We currently have unfinanced capital expenditure from previous years totalling £4.933m.

The Authority's operational vehicles acquired prior to 2005/06 were financed through operating lease arrangements, and therefore are not the property of the Authority. The amount charged to the 2013/14 revenue budget under these arrangements totalled £375k, compared to £651k the previous year.

Future plans

For 2014/15 the Fire Authority has set a net revenue budget requirement of £29.8m. This required a small increase in the local fire share of council tax, just under 2.5 pence per week, taking the average Band D Council tax to £66.60. Despite this increase Dorset's level of council tax is still well below the £70.48 average for combined fire authorities.

Our Medium Term Finance Plan projects a budget deficit of almost £2.3m by 2017/18 based on our expectation of further cuts in government funding and continuing pressure to minimise council tax increases. If council tax were to be frozen again in future years then our predicted funding gap in 2017/18 could rise to more than £3m.

The Authority is managing this future funding gap through a Change Programme overseen by elected members. In recent months much of this work has focused on collaborative working with Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority. The priority for both authorities is to protect the services that are provided to the public, but as individual, relatively small fire and rescue services, this is becoming more and more difficult to sustain, with continued reductions in Government funding. Outline proposals have shown that annual savings of at least £2m should be achievable across the two Authorities.

Both Authorities have agreed to develop a business case that will identify savings and resilience improvements from a combination of

the two authorities and their respective fire and rescue services. We will be consulting on these proposals in Summer 2014 and the final business case document will be considered at Fire Authority meetings in November 2014.

Members of the two authorities have also approved the establishment of a Joint Command and Control Centre, to be located at Wiltshire's headquarters. This is a new purpose built facility, and will provide fire control and mobilising services to both Services, through the sub-regional Networked Fire Control Services Partnership with our neighbours in Devon and Somerset and Hampshire.

Further information

Further details about our financial management and the budget are contained within the Community Safety Plan and Medium Term Finance Plan, both of which are available on our website or by writing to Service Headquarters (see Contacting Us for the address).

Full details of our financial performance for 2013-14 will be included in the Authority's annual statement of accounts, which will be available on our website at www.dorsetfire.gov.uk/our-budget from 30 September 2014.



Corporate Governance

The Dorset Fire Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. It also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, effectiveness and efficiency. Under the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework, we are also required to provide an annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters.

How we ‘govern’ the service

The Authority has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government* and is supported by a Governance Strategy. A copy of the code and the Governance Strategy is available on our website at www.dorsetfire.gov.uk.

The key elements of the Authority’s governance arrangements are:

Developing, communicating and reviewing the Authority’s vision and purpose

The Authority’s Community Safety Plan is a five-year strategic document setting clear corporate aims, targets and objectives and supporting annual priorities. This has been strengthened through revisions to its strategic aims, priorities and the introduction of key strategies and plans. The corporate plan is informed by Community Strategies for Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth and other requirements such as the National Framework. A range of consultation exercises, including a significant partnership-led strategic analysis exploring issues facing Dorset in 2020 and supported by annual strategic assessments also underpins it. The plan is monitored by the Authority on a quarterly basis and is reviewed annually. An Annual Report is published each year.

Monitoring the quality of service and ensuring value for money

The Authority has sound planning, performance, risk and financial frameworks in place that are often highlighted as best practice. Each year elements of them are reviewed by internal audit and a comprehensive assessment made by external auditors.

How we review the effectiveness of our Governance arrangements

Dorset Fire Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the

system of internal control. It publishes the results within the Annual Governance Statement. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the senior managers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Internal Audit's Annual Report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

In addition to this annual review, all ongoing activities, including activities to strengthen governance, are integrated into the planning, performance and risk management arrangements. The delivery of these activities is reviewed monthly by managers and reviewed quarterly by Directors, Forums and a quarterly assurance statement produced for the Strategic Management Team. A quarterly report highlighting progress, key issues and risks is considered by the Authority and reviewed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee as necessary. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee advises us on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework. Activities to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system are in place.

The National Framework requires the Authority to publish an annual Statement of Assurance. The guidance published in May 2013 allows considerable flexibility over their format and it is expected that existing documents be referenced to avoid duplication. One of the principal aims of the Statement is to provide an 'accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment

of their local authority's performance'. With such a breadth of audience, a very simple, Plain English assurance statement accompanies this Annual Report. The Statement makes reference to a number of key documents and assurance assessments undertaken by the Authority that are hyperlinked and made available in paper copy upon request.

A copy of the code, the Annual Governance Statement and the Statement of Assurance are all on our website at www.dorsetfire.gov.uk or can be obtained from our Head of Corporate Planning by telephoning 01305 252615.

Contacting us



In writing

Dorset Fire and Rescue Service HQ, Peverell Avenue West, Poundbury, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 3SU



email

Enquiries on this plan: robert.ford@dorsetfire.gov.uk

General Enquiries: vikki.shearing@dorsetfire.gov.uk



Website

www.dorsetfire.gov.uk



Telephone

Dorset Fire and Rescue Service HQ – Switchboard: 01305 252600

Dorset Area: **01305 252600**; for a home safety check call: **01305 252786**

(incorporating the areas of West Dorset District Council, Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, Purbeck District Council, East and North Dorset District Councils)

Poole Area: **01305 252600**; for a home safety check call: **01305 753018**

(incorporating the areas of the Borough of Poole unitary authority)

Bournemouth Area: **01305 252600**; for a home safety check call: **01305 753018**

(incorporating the areas of Bournemouth unitary authority and Christchurch Borough Council)

Complaints and Compliments

We would like you to tell us when you have received especially good service. Equally, sometimes things go wrong and mistakes are made. If this happens, we would like you to tell us so that we can put things right and learn to do things differently. More information on how to send us compliments and complaints is set out on our website

www.dorsetfire.gov.uk

Contact our Stations

The location of our fire stations is shown on our website

www.dorsetfire.gov.uk

Feedback Form

This feedback form is available to be completed electronically at www.dorsetfire.gov.uk

This is your opportunity to let us know what you think about this report. Please spend a few minutes answering these questions to help us improve the report.

Please answer each question by putting an **X** in the box which most accurately reflects your views.

	Poor	Fairly Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good
How easy was the report to read?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the content of the report clear?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, does the report clearly show how we spent the resources allocated to us?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, does the report show how we made you safer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you want to make any additional comments on the report or what we intend to do please use the space below. If you would like a reply please add your name and address

Please return this form free of charge to: FREEPOST PLUS, RRZB-CUTT-HSGK, Corporate Planning, Dorset Fire and Rescue Service, Peverell Avenue West, Poundbury, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 3SU

Dorset Fire Authority is responsible for the preparation of this report and for the results, information and assessments set out within it, and the assumptions and estimates on which it is based. The Authority is also responsible for setting in place appropriate performance management and data quality control systems from which the results, information and assessments in this report have been created. The Authority is satisfied that the information included in this report is, in all material aspects, accurate and complete.

We place a great deal of importance on data accuracy when writing this report. Dorset Fire and Rescue Service has an information and data management policy and quality control processes in place to maintain accurate information.

Dorset Fire and Rescue Service HQ

Peverell Avenue West

Poundbury

Dorchester

Dorset

DT1 3SU

www.dorsetfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01305 252600



Want to be a volunteer?

Dorset Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) is now actively engaging with volunteers from our local communities in order to enhance our community safety delivery.

A volunteer is someone who, through personal choice, commits time and energy to perform a task at the direction and on behalf of DFRS. Volunteers are a valued and integral part of DFRS, however they are not employees, have no employment status and do not hold a contract of employment.

The initial focus of volunteer engagement is to strengthen home safety activities by:

- Gathering referrals
- Delivering home safety checks
- Supporting public targeted risk reduction activities

For more information on becoming a volunteer, please see our website www.dorsetfire.gov.uk.