

Oxfordshire County Council
Fire and Rescue Service

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Statement of Assurance

2013-14



Securing a safer Oxfordshire

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Welcome and foreword by Councillor Louise Chapman



Cabinet member with responsibility for the fire and rescue service

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority are extremely proud of our fire and rescue service which is a high performing, integrated part of the county council, delivering far more than just an effective response service. We ensure that our proactive approach focussed on preventative activities leads to a safer and healthier thriving Oxfordshire, by working in partnership with other county council teams and key partners. The service also works with business through its protection activities and response to incidents, helping to assist in securing a world class economy and protecting the environment.

Our integrated approach helps the most vulnerable in Oxfordshire to gain access to the support and services that are available, and assists individuals and families to help themselves. There are many challenges that are facing our communities and we can assist in areas beyond the traditional role of a firefighter, such as working with our partners to ensure the safeguarding of adults and children.

The fire and rescue service maintained effective emergency cover throughout the county during periods of national industrial action in 2013-14. We also experienced periods of wide area flooding and severe weather and the joined up approach of the fire service, working closely with other county council teams and responders, enabled us to reduce the impact of the flooding on Oxfordshire residents and speed up recovery.

I am immensely proud of what we have achieved during 2013-14. Our personnel are our most important resource and it is through them, with the support of our county councillors and our partner agencies that we will continue to deliver an excellent service to the people of Oxfordshire.

Foreword by Chief Fire Officer David Etheridge



Welcome to Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's Statement of Assurance. As the Chief Fire Officer for Oxfordshire I am pleased to be able to provide assurance to the community on financial, governance and operational matters, through this report which makes reference to public webpages, existing reports and documents.

As part of the county council we are committed to delivering an integrated, high performing fire and rescue service which provides excellent value for money to the tax payers of this county. Our integration within the wider county council enables us to ensure that we are joined up in delivering solutions to the key issues affecting our communities, whilst providing the economic benefits of a shared services approach.

We have already exceeded the targets set in our 365alive 10 year vision 2006-16, but we will continue with this vision until 2016 in order to compare our results to the previous 10 year period.

We faced a number of challenges during 2013-14 such as periods of national industrial action, during which we implemented contingency plans to ensure resilient emergency cover was maintained throughout the county. Oxfordshire was also affected by wide scale flooding and severe weather during January and February 2014. The service worked hard with our partners to reduce the impact on our community and used high volume pumps to assist in keeping major arterial roads into Oxford open, which was praised by MP Eric Pickles during his ministerial visit.

The fire and rescue service faces further challenges over the next few years in continuing to deliver the same level of high quality service with a developing built environment. Our integrated risk management planning will enable us to focus our priorities on the current and future risks within the county and continue to provide assurance to the people of Oxfordshire that we continue to be a cost effective, well governed and a well-managed organisation.



Communities we serve

Our community

Oxfordshire is home to around 655,000 people. The population is increasing and is forecast to rise to 748,000 residents by 2026, with the biggest increases expected around Bicester, Didcot, Carterton, Harwell and Wantage. In addition the largest rises are expected within the older population groups, meaning the 75+ group will increase by 66 per cent to 82,000 people by 2026.

Our natural environment

Despite the forecast population increases, Oxfordshire remains the most rural county in the south east as well as being a popular visitor destination renowned for its rural beauty covering 260,595 hectares. The provision of additional 4x4 response vehicles and partnership work through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) will assist in managing the risk from adverse weather.

Our built environment

Oxfordshire has significant plans for future economic and housing growth, with a focus on the Local Enterprise Partnership Hubs – the Science Vale UK Area (a Local Enterprise Zone), Bicester and Oxford City. There will be smaller but still significant developments at other locations including Banbury, Carterton and Wantage.

As we develop our service we will consider residential and commercial areas that are growing, to ensure that we can continue to provide an excellent prevention, protection and response service to all areas of a changing county. We will, therefore, continue to engage early in any planning processes throughout the county to address any areas of concern and give specialist advice where necessary.

Our heritage

Oxfordshire has over 12,000 listed buildings, including many sites of importance to the country's national heritage. The city of Oxford is internationally famous for its university and college buildings. Blenheim Palace heads a list of nationally important stately homes and is one of 390 grade I listed buildings in the county. We will continue to work with owners and occupiers to ensure plans, risks, training and information is reviewed to safeguard our heritage.

The risks we face

The Community Risk Management Plan is Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service's (OFRS) analysis of the county's community risk profile, together with our strategic approach of how we intend to effectively manage those risks over the period.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (the framework) requires us to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), known as Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), that identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risk that could affect its community, including those of a cross border, multi authority and / or national nature.

Each year OFRS produces an action plan based on the CRMP which sets out a number of priorities and projects to ensure that residents and businesses are safer, whilst at the same time delivering an efficient and effective emergency response when necessary.

- [National Framework Document Published July 2012](#)
- [Community Risk Management Plans and Annual Action Plans](#)

Social risk

People in Oxfordshire are living longer. The number of people aged 75 and over is projected to grow by 66 per cent between 2011 and 2026. Historical data shows that older people are at a greater risk from suffering serious injuries or death from accidental fires. Our Home and Community Safety Department, through partnership working, will continue to target the people most at risk through home fire risk checks and education.

Environmental risk

Oxfordshire has many waterways, which have associated risks of flooding and drowning. We have firefighters trained to rescue people from both moving and still water, including faster moving 'white water'. They will also respond to national emergencies resulting from large-scale flooding. Our firefighters identify potential areas of danger on our waterways and develop procedures to ensure they can respond both quickly and effectively when an emergency occurs.

Economic risk

The county is home to a number of nationally and internationally recognised businesses such as ISIS, Oxford Instruments, BMW Mini and Williams, Caterham and Lotus Formula One Teams, the city's two universities and a number of important military establishments. Our operational and fire protection teams work with businesses to plan for emergencies and carry out fire protection enforcement and advice.

Risks beyond our borders

Over the border mutual aid arrangements

Through sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 OFRS has set up reinforcement schemes for securing mutual assistance with Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Authorities to provide and utilise resources such as fire engines.

Plans are also in place, through the National Resilience Advisory Team (NRAT), to provide specialist appliances and crews for mass decontamination, urban search and rescue, water and high volume pumping, hazardous chemical analysis and command and control across England and Wales.

Standard Operating Procedures

OFRS have been engaged in the National Fire and Rescue Service Collaborative Partnership Programme to promote a common approach when working across borders. We are also building a joint fire control with two of our neighbour fire and rescue services, Royal Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, known as the Thames Valley Fire Control Service, which is planned to go live in December 2014.

We have a team responsible for developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The SOP information is carried on fire engines and accessed via on-board computers known as Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's). It enables all operational staff to access the most up to date guidance and information at the scene of an emergency with neighbouring authorities working to the same procedures.

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Project (JESIP) has also been formed to enhance joint working further across blue light services and collaborate where possible. Training across Police, Fire and Ambulance services has taken place in 2014.

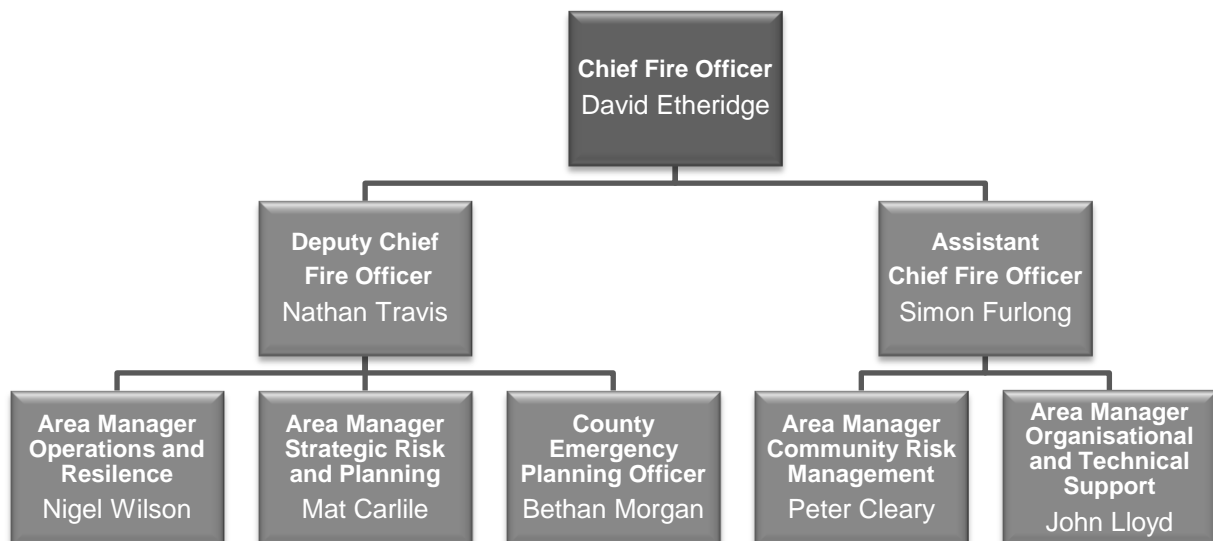
Overview of fire and rescue service

Overview of our structure

OFRS is governed by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) whose full members are listed below. Full SLT meetings are held monthly with fortnightly meetings to discuss specific issues. SLT reports to County Council Management Team (CCMT).

- Chief Fire Officer — David Etheridge
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer — Nathan Travis
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer — Simon Furlong
- Area Manager Operations and Resilience — Nigel Wilson
- Area Manager Strategic Risk and Planning — Mat Carlile
- Area Manager Community Risk Management — Pete Cleary
- Area Manager Organisational and Technical Support — John Lloyd
- Human Resources Business Partner — Kim Terry
- Finance Business Partner — Sarah Fogden.

Strategic Leadership Team



Our people

At the end of March 2014 there was a total of 22 control room staff, 246 whole-time firefighters and 79 support staff. We also had 334 people working as on-call firefighters in Oxfordshire's local communities.

Our resources

There are currently 24 fire stations in Oxfordshire, which are staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by a mix of full time and on-call firefighters. They offer safety advice, education and a response to emergencies calls.

We have a front-line fleet of 34 fire engines and a number of specialist vehicles. This includes an aerial ladder platform, a specialist rescue vehicle for attending road traffic collisions and other specialist rescues, an environmental protection unit (provided in partnership with the Environment Agency) and two mobile command units. Fire engines at Didcot and Banbury have been upgraded to enhanced rescue vehicles (ERV's) and the service is currently introducing rapid response vehicles which will be on trial during 2014-15.

Our values

OFRS fully supports the underpinning values of the county council, as well as those agreed nationally by the Chief Fire Officers' Association, the Fire Brigades' Union, UNISON and a number of other fire and rescue services. These combined values provide a central focus on the standards and principles we expect our employees to promote, uphold and maintain.

We value **service to the community** by:

- focusing on our customers' needs
- working with all groups to reduce risks
- treating everyone fairly and with respect
- being accountable to those we serve
- striving for excellence in all we do.

We value **diversity** in the Service and community by:

- treating everyone with dignity and respect
- providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- promoting equality of opportunity in employment and progression within the service
- challenging prejudice and discrimination.



We value **each other** by practising and promoting:

- fairness and respect
- recognition of merit
- honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- personal development
- 'can-do' attitude, co-operative and inclusive working
- one-team approach.

We value **improvement** at all levels of the Service by:

- taking responsibility for our performance
- promoting and supporting innovation
- embedding efficiency and effectiveness in all we do
- being open-minded
- responding positively to feedback
- learning from others
- consulting others.

Chief Fire Officer's statement on equality and diversity

Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service recognises that all individuals have fundamental human rights and, therefore, adopts a rights-based approach to equality. Practices will be developed that promote the right for everyone to participate in all aspects of life by promoting initiatives that remove barriers to participation and by actively promoting equality and social inclusion. We will have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other unacceptable conduct, to promote equality of opportunity and to promote good relations between all persons with respect to their disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, transgender status or gender reassignment, age, marital status and pregnancy or maternity.

We seek to develop and provide relevant, appropriate and accessible services that meet the needs of our diverse population. The service will eliminate unlawful or otherwise unjustifiable discrimination and promote equality in the provision of our services. As an employer we value the contribution that every employee makes and respect individual differences, utilising the diversity of our workforce as a positive benefit.

Chief Fire Officer, David Etheridge

The service fully supports the OCC Equality Policy and its objectives and publishes case studies to demonstrate how these objectives are met.

- [Equality and inclusion case studies](#)

Our services to the community

The Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is OFRS's analysis of the county's community risk profile, together with our strategic approach of how we intend to effectively manage those risks over the period. Each year OFRS produces an action plan based on the CRMP that sets out a number of priorities and projects to ensure that residents and businesses are safer, whilst at the same time delivering an efficient and effective emergency response when necessary.

We consulted with the community on the four projects in the CRMP 2014-15 action plan. The plan then considers how each of these risks could affect the public and firefighters and explains what we currently do to manage these risks under the headings:

- Prevention — eliminating or reducing the likelihood of the risk occurring
 - Protection — reducing the impact of the risk should it occur
 - Response — providing a rapid and effective response should an incident happen.
- [Community Risk Management Plans and Annual Action Plans](#)

Governance arrangements

OFRS is an integral part of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), who are responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. OCC is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

OCC has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance that is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. The OCC Annual Governance Statement enables the fire and rescue service to demonstrate that it has fulfilled its obligations under the framework. Full details can be found in the OCC Annual Governance Statement, which is included in our 'Statement of Accounts' publication at the end of the document.

- [Annual accounts and audit](#)

Your fire and rescue authority

Oxfordshire County Council is a county authority and is the fire authority for Oxfordshire represented by full council with all members. All the key decisions are made by cabinet members, meeting either jointly as the cabinet or as individual cabinet members, taking delegated decisions within their own responsibilities.

We now have two cabinet members overseeing our service areas:

- Councillor Louise Chapman has responsibility for fire and rescue and trading standards plus cross-council responsibility for policy coordination, equalities, localities and community cohesion.
- Councillor Rodney Rose has responsibility for Emergency Planning Unit, Thames Valley Fire Control Project, South East Fire Improvement Partnership (SEFIP) plus cross-council responsibility for internal management, human resources, industrial relations and strategic rail issues.

The performance of the fire and rescue service is overseen by the Performance Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee. Cabinet meetings are held once a month and are attended by all cabinet members. The cabinet is also responsible for preparing the budget and policies to propose to the full council. The scrutiny committees provide advice to the cabinet on major policy issues and may review its decisions. Details of how the community can attend meetings and access agendas and reports can be found at:

- [Meetings and decisions web page](#)

Our legal responsibilities

Responsibilities under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 sets out the duties and powers of fire and rescue authorities. Under the Act, the Fire Authority has a number of core functions:

- Fire safety - promoting fire safety - including the provision of information and publicity on steps to be taken to prevent fires and the giving of advice on how to prevent fires and on the means of escape from buildings in case of fire.
- Firefighting - extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in the event of fires.
- To respond to and rescue people from road traffic collisions (RTCs) and protecting people from serious harm in the event of RTCs.
- Emergencies - when necessary deal with emergencies other than fires and road traffic accidents.

We address these core functions in our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect our community. Each year we produce an action plan based on the CRMP that sets out a number of priorities.

- [Community Risk Management Plans and Annual Action Plans](#)
- [The Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004](#)

Responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) places certain duties on all Category 1 Responders as defined by the Act, including OFRS. One of these duties is the formation of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF). The purpose of this forum is to ensure that there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi agency response to emergencies that may have a significant impact on the communities OFRS serve.

TVLRF is a partnership consisting of representatives from police, local authorities, fire, ambulance, environment agency, health and the military as well as utility and transport companies. The Act requires Category 1 Responders to maintain the plans for preventing emergencies; reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of emergencies; and taking other action in the event of emergencies. Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations regarding business continuity management.

These plans are drawn from risk assessments and have regard for the arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public at the time of an emergency. The Emergency Planning Unit, of which OFRS has overall responsibility, is key to helping the council meet these duties.

- [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)
- [Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum website](#)

Responsibilities under the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007

The Fire & Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007 instructs fire authorities to make provision for:

- Decontamination of people and to limit harm to the environment at chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear emergencies.
- The rescue of people at emergencies involving collapse of building, structures, incidents involving trains, trams or aircraft, and where resources are required beyond the scope of day to day operations.
- Personnel, services and training and make arrangements to carry out these above functions.
- Response to emergencies outside the fire authorities' area.

We make provision for these requirements through operational planning and procedures as part of our involvement with the New Dimensions Programme. Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) National Resilience Limited is the organisation that provides assurance to Government through the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) that National Resilience capabilities provided under the New Dimension Programme continue to be fit for purpose.

- [Fire resilience website](#)
- [The Fire & Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order](#)

Responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service enforces general fire safety legislation on behalf of the county council. Other related legislation the authority enforces includes:

- The Dangerous Substances (Notification & Marking of Sites) Regulations 1990
- The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007.

Our enforcement activities adhere to the principles of 'better regulation' contained in the Enforcement Concordat and Regulators Compliance Code and we aim to support business and other responsible persons through education and the provision of advice and guidance. Where it is absolutely necessary, we will take enforcement action and will only consider prosecution where it is in the public's best interest.

Full details of how we discharge our responsibilities under fire safety legislation can be found at:

- [Fire safety advice for businesses web page](#)

Responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

OFRS operates within the county council's management framework which incorporates the provisions of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the responsibility to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy working environment for all employees.

Our health and safety policy documents explain how we discharge our responsibilities under health and safety legislation.

We undertook a full internal Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Quality Safety Audit (QSA) of our Health and Safety management systems in August 2013, achieving an 85 per cent score. The service is due to undertake an external QSA audit in June 2014.

- [Audit reports | Oxfordshire County Council Intranet](#)
- [Fire and Rescue Service Health and Safety Policy Part 2](#)
- [Fire and Rescue Service Health and Safety Policy Part 3](#)

Responsibilities under the Road Traffic Act 1988 section 39

Oxfordshire County Council as the local authority has a statutory responsibility under section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 for road safety engineering, education, training and publicity (ETP) that are discharged through both the Environment and Economy and fire and rescue service, as part of Social and Community Services Directorates.

Full details of how we discharge our responsibilities to provide road safety information, advice and training under the Road Traffic Act 1988 can be found at:

- [Road safety web page](#)

Responsibilities under the Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act 2011 gives fire authorities powers of competence to:

- Carry out its functions so that it will be able to do anything they consider appropriate for purposes linked to their statutory responsibilities to help deliver innovative and more personalised services to their communities.
- Make charges for certain services. These powers enable both councils and fire and rescue authorities to act innovatively to generate efficiencies and secure value for money outcomes.

Full details of the of the Localism Act 2011 and community right to challenge and right to bid for community assets can be found at:

- [Community Rights and Localism Act web page](#)
- [Localism Act 2011 document](#)

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework

The latest Fire and Rescue National Framework for England published in 2012 sets out the government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England to:

- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately.
- Work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service.
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.

A gap analysis has been completed to ensure that OFRS has met the requirements of the framework document and an action plan has been established.

- [National Framework Document Published July 2012](#)
- [National Framework Requirements Gap Analysis](#)

Full details of how OFRS assesses the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks our areas face, makes provision for prevention and protection activities and responds to incidents appropriately, can be found at:

- [Community Risk Management Plans and Annual Action Plans](#)

Management of risk

The county council has a risk management strategy which aims to ensure that there is continuous improvement in the arrangements for managing risk across the directorates.

Full details can be found in the OCC Annual Governance Statement which is included in our 'Statement of Accounts' publication at the end of the document. These are published each year, on the Council's website at:

- [Annual accounts and audit web page](#)

OFRS risk management strategy follows the principles of the Office of Government Commerce's Management of Risk Framework. All members of staff work to identify threats and opportunities to the service and our communities.

Once a risk has been identified we decide how we want to deal with it then monitor it closely. Risk registers are maintained for strategic risk, operational risk, community incident and firefighter safety risk and a business and resident profile risk report is kept. The nature of certain risks means that not all records will be accessible to all.

The county council's Internal Audit Team undertook an audit of our risk management systems in March 2014 and reported to the OCC Audit and Governance Committee that they were '*happy with the governance in place and the assurance it provides over the risk management process.*'

- [Risk Management Strategy](#)

Our purpose

Our vision

OFRS is proud of the quality of the services that it delivers to the public. We have a clear vision and strive to recognise and respond to the key issues and challenges. These combine to create our ten year vision for a safer Oxfordshire. This commenced in 2006 and is called 365alive.

This vision sets three challenging targets for us.

By 2016, thanks to the emergency response and the community and partnership work of Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service, there will be:

- 365 more people alive¹
- £100 Million saved to the economy of Oxfordshire
- 840,000 safety messages delivered to the community.

We have already exceeded the targets set in our 365 Alive 10 year vision 2006-2016, but we will continue with this vision until 2016 in order to compare our results to the previous ten year period.

For more details visit the website at: 365alive.co.uk

Our aims and objectives

Safer by design

The 'Safer by Design' Business Strategy covers the fire and rescue service, emergency planning unit and community safety services. The strategy has been updated in order to capture the medium term (3-5 year) vision for all of the services identified, as well as where their aims support the priorities of the wider county council. In addition, this strategy also highlights how the various services add extra value to local communities above and beyond their traditional role by becoming more 'integrated', i.e. proactively assisting other directorates and partners in delivering their community safety objectives.

¹ By looking at the reduction in the number of people who die as a result of fires and road traffic collisions and the number of rescues we perform, we calculate the number of people who are still alive as a result of our work.

In particular, the 'Safer by Design' vision for the fire and rescue service has four main strands of activity, which are:

- Growing in confidence – a strategy for safer young people
 - Living in confidence – a strategy for the residents of Oxfordshire
 - Travelling in confidence – a strategy for those on the move
 - Working in confidence – a strategy for business.
-
- [Fire and Rescue, Emergency Planning and Community Safety Business Strategy 2011-12 to 2014-15.](#)

Our challenges and priorities during 2013-14

The OFRS Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2013-14 formed part of our approach to mitigate risk within Oxfordshire through prevention, protection and intervention strategies. The CRMP 2013-14 Action Plan identified the following priorities:

- Project 1: Implement the services road safety strategy as an integral part of its prevention and protection activities.
 - Project 2: Implement opportunities for technological advancements – following a review of fleet, equipment and working practices – to further support and enhance public and firefighter safety.
 - Project 3: Review and revise the services learning and development strategy to further support and enhance public and firefighter safety.
 - Project 4: Deliver the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) programme.
 - Project 5: Implement further collaborative opportunities with other Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) Category 1 & 2 responders and align working practices to improve our provision of multi-agency prevention, protection and response services.
 - Project 6: Review and revise the services strategy for effective management of operational incidents in order to further support and enhance public and firefighter safety.
-
- [Community Risk Management Plans and Annual Action Plans](#)

Our collaborative arrangements

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) exist between other agencies such as Highways Authority, Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service and the Defence Fire and Rescue Service.

We also have MOU's with other local organisations such as RAF Brize Norton, Emergency Planning Unit, British Red Cross, HMP Huntercombe, Emergency Response Team Search and Rescue and Oxfordshire Lowland Search and Rescue.

A full list of Memorandums of Understanding can be found on the website at:

- [Memorandums of understanding document](#)

Reinforcement schemes

Under sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, OFRS have a duty to enter into reinforcement schemes with other fire and rescue authorities. A list of these schemes can be viewed at:

- [Memorandums of understanding document](#)

How we secure business continuity

Business continuity management is a series of processes and plans that identify risk and develop OFRS resilience to ensure that adverse events cause minimal disruption to the services provided and that critical services are maintained.

OFRS business continuity management was satisfactorily audited in January 2013 by OCC Internal Audit Team. During 2013-14, continuing progress has been made in improving business continuity management within the organisation with increased training and awareness at all levels and all departments carrying out reviews to identify areas of weakness. Plans have been developed for all sites and critical functional departments, and these plans have been tested and exercised. The plans were implemented during the recent periods of national industrial action.

Our performance

How we performed during 2013-14

A description of the fire authority's key performance indicators and targets against which the service is measured can be found in Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service Annual Report for 2013-14.

This report reviews our performance over the last financial year, April 2013 to March 2014, and shows the headline statistics and trends in incidents and emergencies that we have attended. This allows us to recognise areas where we have done well, identify where we can improve our service and trends in specific incidents and emergency types. It helps us decide where to focus our efforts and resources to reduce threats and explore opportunities. The report contributes to our future planning and is essential to our process of integrated risk management.

- [Performance information - Annual Reports](#)

Performance data demonstrating how we have exceeded our 365alive targets can be found on 365alive.co.uk.

Response standards performance

Since April 2005 OFRS has had local response standards for attending emergency incidents in the county. The Chief Fire Officer is required to report annually on the fire and rescue service's performance against these standards and bring forward any recommendations as appropriate. Our response targets remain stretching, yet over recent years we have achieved levels within a few percent of the target.

Local response standards are:

- 80 per cent of all emergency incidents will be responded to within 11 minutes
- 95 per cent of all emergency incidents will be responded to within 14 minutes.

The above is measured by the time it takes to get the first fire appliance to the scene from the time at which the fire station is first alerted.

Response standards performance 2013/14	Total emergency incidents in scope	Incidents responded to <11mins	per cent response standards <11mins	Incidents responded to <14mins	per cent response standards <14mins
Totals	3689	2837	76.9	3399	92.14

Response standards performance is detailed in the Annual Report 2013-14, which can be found at:

- [Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service performance web page](#)

Benchmarking

We use national benchmarking reports and tools. We are also part of a [Chief Fire Officers Association](#) (CFOA) family group to facilitate benchmarking against fire and rescue services of similar size and demographics and to promote best practice.

- [Fire statistics monitor: April 2012 to March 2013 - Publications - GOV.UK](#)

What others have said about our performance

Operational Assessment (OpA) Peer Challenge

The OpA peer challenge of OFRS was successfully completed in May 2014 and resulted in positive feedback from the peers, which can be seen in their presentation delivered at the close of the review. An action plan will be produced and published, once the final report is received. The May 2014 peer's presentation and previous 2010 OpA report can be found on the link below:

- [Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service performance web page](#)

The OpA peer challenge was originally scheduled to take place in December 2013 but was postponed, due to national industrial action. An initial self-assessment was completed to establish a benchmark against the seven Key Assessment Areas (KAA's). This has fed action plans to improve performance and deliver a successful peer review with improved performance against the KAA's. The KAA's include community risk management, prevention, protection, response, health & safety, training & development and call management & incident support.

Customer Service Excellence

The government wants services for all that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering with the citizen always at the heart of service provision. With this in mind, Customer Service Excellence was developed to offer services a practical tool for driving customer focused change within their organisation. OFRS have maintained the Customer Service Excellence award and will be re-assessed in June / July 2014.

Organisational Assurance Team

The Organisational Assurance Team was established following a re-structure of the service in 2013 and the role of the team is to ensure consistently high performance throughout the organisation by conducting quality assurance audits. The Organisational Assurance Policy outlines how the service is assured and the Procedure on Organisational Assurance Audits details the audit process. We have undertaken the following audits have been undertaken:

- Operational audit, debrief, monitoring and feedback systems and processes
- Review of Operational Information Systems
- RoSPA Quality Safety Audit of Health & Safety
- Equipment Management System (EMS) Redkite.

Lessons learnt

Operational debriefs

Operational debriefs are used at both incidents and exercises and form part of a quality control system to ensure effectiveness of core activities at a tactical level. They help ensure that any lessons learnt can be actioned and improve the service we provide. Outcomes and actions taken from previous debriefs are made available to all personnel. Recent examples include the planning for industrial action and multi-agency response to the 2014 severe weather and wide area flooding.

Coroners Rule 43 notices

Coroners have recently issued two Rule 43 notices. The purpose of a Rule 43 notice is that the coroner will inform persons or authorities that they believe a similar incident can be prevented by taking certain actions.

The coroner issued a Rule 43 notice following the inquest into a fatal fire at Lakanal House, Camberwell, London on 3 July 2009.

A Rule 43 notice was also issued by the Coroner following the inquest into the tragic deaths of two Firefighters at Shirley Towers, Hampshire on 6 April 2010.

It is important that fire and rescue services learn from these tragic incidents and implements changes to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future. As a result, we have conducted a review of the recommendations against our current policies, procedures and training programmes and produced action plans for improvement.

The Shirley Towers and Lakanal House Rule 43 notices can be found on the links below:

- [Letter to London Fire Brigade pursuant to Rule 43 - 28 March 2013](#)
- [Rule 43 letter](#)

Financial performance

Statement of accounts

Our budget for 2013-14

OFRS are an integral part of OCC who provide the statement of accounts and audit that can be found on the OCC public website:

- [Annual accounts and audit](#)

Revenue expenditure

The budget for the Fire and Rescue Service for 2013-14 was £24,941,368. A summary of OFRS expenditure can be found in the Annual Report 2013-14 at:

- [Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service performance web page.](#)

Where our money came from

Expenditure per head of population²

The cost of providing the fire and rescue service is approximately 11p per day for each person within Oxfordshire.

The cost per head of population for 2012-13 was £41.80 compared to the average cost of:

- South east region fire and rescue services - £42.35
- Family group fire and rescue services - £36.36
- All English fire and rescue services - £41.37.

What your money was spent on

Expenditure per member of staff

We provided a service at a cost of £44,387 per member of staff in 2012-13 compared to the average cost of:

- South east region fire and rescue services - £46,225
- Family group fire and rescue services - £40,737
- All English fire and rescue services - £44,768.

- [Pay Policy Statement](#)

² Financial data is taken from the CIPFA Fire and Rescue Statistics 2012/13, (excluding Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Cambridge due to incomplete or no data sent to CIPFA).

Expenditure per incident

Our overall expenditure against the number of incidents we attend is £5,528 per incident in 2012-13 compared to the average of:

- South east region fire and rescue services - £4,749
- Family group fire and rescue services - £4,141
- All English fire and rescue services - £4,527.

This is primarily due to the success of our prevention work. By using our resources effectively to deliver prevention work we are reducing the number of incidents that occur and, therefore, our costs appear larger in comparison. Another key factor is that to provide an effective response, across the county, we need to maintain operational resources in rural areas where the call rates are low as well as the urban areas where incidents are more frequent. This is why our on-call firefighters are so important in delivering an excellent and cost effective service.

How we provide value for money

Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan sets out the key objectives and priorities for action for the council. It is a key document and sets out the broad strategic direction, as well as the council's values and principles that guide all of our work. We have an absolute focus on ensuring services are efficient and delivering value for money for local people.

- [Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan](#)

Auditors findings

A summary of auditors' reports and findings can be found in the Annual Audit Letter 2012-13 on the link below. The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 require local authorities, including fire and rescue authorities, to prepare an annual governance statement in support of the annual statement of accounts. Full details can be found in the OCC Annual Governance Statement, which is included in our 'Statement of Accounts' publication at the end of the document.

- [Annual accounts and audit | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Our future plans

OFRS overarching plan 2014-15

This plan is a précis of each of the functional plans drawn up for 2014-15. We will always maintain a reactive 999 response to calls for assistance. The main emphasis of OCC's approach towards delivering a safer society will be via preventative and educational measures delivered by multi-skilled employees, voluntary agencies and other partners. These groups are able to take practical actions on behalf of the County Council by promoting risk awareness, self-help, safeguarding, and sign-posting specialist assistance and support when required.

- [OFRS Overarching Plan 2014-15](#)

Our future challenges

We regularly analyse the county's community risk profile and set out our strategic approach as to how we will effectively manage those risks.

This is detailed in our Community Risk Management Plan 2013 to 2018, which can be found on the link below. The government requires us, by law, to regularly produce and review our plan, which is also known as our 'Strategic Integrated Risk Management Plan'.

- [Community Risk Management Plan 2013-2018](#)

Our future commitments

The Community Risk Management Action Plan 2014-15 details the specific projects we will start in 2014.

- Project 1: Implement the training collaboration review carried out in 2013.
- Project 2: Review our aerial appliance capability and implement changes to staffing supported by that review.
- Project 3: Review of our light response vehicle capability and implement changes to staffing supported by that review.
- Project 4: Review of prevention, protection and response resources to meet the expansion and changing profile of Banbury, Carterton, Wantage and the south of the county.
- [Community Risk Management Plans and Annual Action Plans](#)

Our community engagement

In preparation for the CRMP for 2013-18, the OFRS consultation team devised a questionnaire for members of the public to give their views and to comment on the risk plan and the action plan before finalising the content, taking into consideration the replies and commentary.

OFRS sent out over 3,000 invitations to community groups, local representatives and people who had already expressed an interest, bringing in hundreds of unique responses and providing the service with constructive feedback.

The team also spent five days around the county with a mobile road show asking people to comment and give their input to the process.

- [Community Risk Management Plan Consultation](#)

Comments and compliments

The fire and rescue service is passionate about delivering top quality customer service. Delivering excellent customer service benefits us as individuals, our organisation and our customers. We also know that we need to continually adjust and improve our levels of customer service because we need to meet the changing needs and expectations of our customers.

If you have any comments, compliments, complaints or suggestions, please contact us using whichever of the following methods is most convenient to you:

- By phone – 01865 815906.
- By email – complaints@oxfordshire.gov.uk.
- Online – www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/complaints.
- By post – writing to: Complaints Team, FREEPOST (SCE 7709) Oxford OX1 1YA.

Comprehensive information is available in the following links:

- [How to make a complaint about Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- [Fire and rescue service comments, compliments and complaints](#)

How you can become involved

To make a request for a free Home Fire Risk check, call the community Safety Helpline free on 08000 325999 or visit the [365alive website](#) and complete our quick on-line questionnaire.

For fire and road safety advice, visit the [365alive website](#).

Follow us on Twitter at [@OxonFireRescue](#) or on Facebook at [Oxfordshirefireandrescueservice\(official\)](#).



Access to information

Details regarding the fire authority's arrangements in respect of access to data and information can be found on the council's [access data and information web page](#).

Signature

Signed on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council:

..... Date.....

Councillor Louise Chapman

Cabinet member with responsibility for the fire and rescue service

Do you want to become an on-call firefighter?

There is currently a shortage of on-call firefighters at some fire stations in OFRS. This is particularly the case in our small towns and rural areas because nowadays there are fewer people who live and work in their local towns and villages. You might be just the person to fill the gap.

Where do you work?

First of all, you need to live or work near to a fire station because you have to be able to get there within a few minutes of a call. Secondly, because we can't predict when you'll be called out, you have to be flexible in your work. The chances are that you'll be working at home, self-employed or for a community-minded employer who can let you off from time to time.

Are you fit for the job?

To apply to join the fire and rescue service you don't need any paper qualifications. You must be at least aged 18, with good all-round fitness. You will be asked to take a straightforward physical test as part of the process, and just as important are qualities like common sense, commitment and enthusiasm.

How often will you be needed?

On average, you will be called out two or three times a week for a couple of hours. If you cannot be available all the time, that's not a problem. You can be paid for being "on-call" for only part of the day or week. There is a particular shortage of people who are available during weekends, but you would have some evenings and weekends free if you need to, and still do a valuable and worthwhile job. If you really can't be on-call - for example because of a holiday or a deadline at work - you can take time off.

What do you get out of it?

Apart from the excitement, the challenge and the satisfaction of a job well done, your on-going training will assist you in becoming more self-reliant and confident. After all, if you can cope in a real emergency, you are ready for anything else that life might throw at you. You will meet a lot of people in your local community and earn their confidence and respect. You will also get continual, on-going training in the use of equipment and in other more general life skills including first aid. Added to all this, you get paid! You get paid a basic retainer, plus a fee for call-outs and another fee for going into action. You also get paid for training and duties like equipment maintenance.

If you think you've got what it takes to join the team, contact your local fire station for further information, or check out [our vacancies pages](#).