Fire and Rescue: Future Service Provision

Have your say
1. Background

In April 2015 Gloucestershire County Council approved the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2015-18 put forward by Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Local Authority has a legal duty to provide a fire and rescue service for the County. Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service deliver this duty on behalf of the County Council through focused prevention and protection work combined with response to emergencies in times of need.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service is committed to involving all sections of the community across Gloucestershire in the decisions that need to be made about future service provision and how best to protect the most vulnerable in the communities we serve.

Safer communities

Gloucestshire Fire and Rescue Service’s stated aim is that by ‘working together we will provide the highest standard of community safety and emergency response services to the communities of Gloucestershire’.

To ensure the very best levels of safety in our communities and to protect those most vulnerable among us we need to work closely with all aspects of our communities. By doing this, we can help prevent emergencies before they happen, build community resilience and deliver a more effective and efficient fire and rescue service for the future.

Service provision – past and present

Gloucestshire Fire and Rescue Service has traditionally focused on providing an emergency response, fire prevention activities that cover commercial buildings and community safety initiatives.

The traditional view of the fire and rescue service has been one of an organisation that responds to an emergency, saving life and preventing further damage.

We believe that the best way of protecting communities from fire and other emergencies is to focus on people with the aim of preventing emergencies before they happen and this is our key priority.

Not only does prevention avoid suffering and harm, it also reduces demand on essential and critical services which ultimately saves the community money, while still delivering an effective emergency response.

Preventing emergencies – how do we do this?

Safe and Well Checks

We will carry out by request (or referral by a partner agency), a free Safe and Well Check to talk you through a safety plan in your home and fit free smoke detectors where they are needed. We can also provide specialist equipment e.g. hearing impaired alarms and linked alarms for people with memory issues.

These visits are particularly important where any of the following factors are evident:

- Sensory Impairment
- Mental health needs
- Poor housekeeping (including poor electrics and hoarding)
- Alcohol dependency
- Smoking
- Use of drugs (including prescription drugs that result in drowsiness)
- Limited or poor mobility
- Living alone
- Over 65
- Memory impairments

Other Initiatives:

We have linked with a number of other organisations such as Public Health England, Gloucestershire Police, Road Safety Partnership, Trading Standards and the South West Ambulance Service Trust, to help deliver an even wider range of community safety initiatives to those most in need.

Some specific examples of this community based work are:

- **Winter Pressures** – developed to support a reduction in social isolation, a reduction in falls and a reduction in the impact of cold homes for adults identified as at risk of winter pressures.
- **Drive IQ** – young driver and passenger safety for 16 – 26 year olds
- **Drinking and Drug Driving** – education and awareness programs for all drivers
- **In Car Safety Seat Checking Scheme** – offered to parents to ensure child seats are fitted correctly
- **New Journey’s Scheme** – safety awareness for children and young people when changing schools and taking different routes
- **Co-responding** – immediate first response to identified medical emergencies in conjunction with the South West Ambulance Service Trust
- **Telecare** – fire fighters act as identified ‘responders’ for vulnerable individuals with assistive technologies enabling them to remain in the home environment for longer
As a result of working alongside other partners, we are able to check fire safety during Safe and Well visits and can also check for other risks including slips, trips and falls, making sure the home environment is warm and signposting to other organisations for additional services like flu jabs where these would be of benefit.

This combination of activities will help to keep people safe in the home and other environments by preventing avoidable emergencies from occurring, thus helping to reduce demand on limited resources and provide increased value for money.

**Significant reduction in demand for our emergency response**

As a result of the increased focus on prevention and protection activities there has been a significant reduction in the numbers of incidents that we have been called upon to attend over the last ten years.

Despite this we will always aim to reach an emergency as safely and quickly as possible.

**Facts and figures**

- 63% less fires now than 10 years ago with 20 less casualties every year
- 39% reduction in serious injuries or fatalities on our roads in the last 10 years
- 20% reduction in the total number of incidents attended over the last five years
- Only 6.5% of all incidents attended in 2014/15 were Primary Dwelling Fires
- Over a 12 month period fire fighters were only required to take action at dwelling fires on 155 occasions.
- 4,145 Safe and Well visits undertaken in 2014/15 to help improve safety in the home
- Skillzone provided education and training opportunities for:
  - 5,771 Key Stage 2 children (7-11 year olds)
  - A further 3,964 opportunities for ages ranging from 11 to 65+

**The future**

The number of emergencies that we are called upon to attend is decreasing year by year. To remain effective, efficient and deliver value for money, we want to match our resources to community risk. This will enable us to prevent accidents and emergencies before they occur and in doing so, do more for the most vulnerable in our communities.

To support this focus on risk we have undertaken an operational response review to identify where we can match resources to identified risk. This review has been supported by external, independent analysis and verification of our response data (taken from the last five years), to provide a sound evidence base. This has helped us to identify areas where the service can be more efficient.

The review has helped us to identify areas of our business where with the right approach, we can enhance the prevention and protection activities we are engaged in and enable us to achieve improved levels of service to the community without increasing costs; in essence do more with less and do it more effectively.

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### 2. What people have told us: Key messages from the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015-18 Consultation relating to service provision

**Key messages from the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015-18 Consultation relating to service provision**

- The areas where respondents felt we should most focus our review of operational response was prevention and education and how we work with our partners and other emergency services
- Other ideas on reducing the demand on the service included more local community engagement events and activities
- Some respondents felt that local plans should make the best use of local resources and link closely with other agencies, including road safety and health.

**In response to the feedback received we have:**

- Increased our focus on prevention and protection with greater numbers of Safe and Well visits being carried out in the home environment
- Refocused home visits to incorporate fire safety advice, smoke detector fitting and other risk elements that can affect vulnerable persons in the home
- Enhanced links with existing partner organisations to deliver increased levels of safety information and education
- Sought to build links with new partner organisations to help develop our focus on prevention and protection initiatives
- Commenced programmed locally focused community engagement events with a focus on prevention and protection for individuals and the community as a whole
- Delivered local risk plans that focus on partnership working and how local resources can be closely matched to local risk

### 3. What Other Fire and Rescue Services are doing

As part of our review we looked at how other Fire and Rescue Services are responding to the need for change.

Fire and Rescue Services across England are facing similar challenges and experiencing reductions in the level of incidents that they attend. This has led them to look at how they make the best use of the available resources to meet identified risks and deliver value for money.

Most have, or are in the process of making alterations to shift systems to increase capacity, reducing the overall number of resources where they are no longer needed due to reducing risks and incident numbers or are amalgamating or closing stations where there are low activity levels, low risk and where cover can be provided more effectively from an alternative location in similar timescales.
Proposal 1

To reduce risk and deliver additional prevention and protection activities in Painswick and the surrounding communities enabling us to provide future emergency response from Stroud and close Painswick Fire Station.

Painswick has been identified and evidenced as a low activity, low risk area with ever decreasing demand in terms of emergency response. There are difficulties in recruiting new personnel on a part-time basis to serve at the station and this means that the emergency response cover can be difficult to achieve on all occasions.

Here are some facts:

- Number of high risk residential areas in Painswick – none
- Number of identified high risk commercial premises in Painswick - none
- 6% reduction in incidents in Painswick over the last 5 years
- 34 incidents in total for 2014/15
- 2 primary dwelling fires in 2014/15
- Stroud attended alongside Painswick on one of these occasions and arrived nearly one minute ahead of Painswick
- 9 primary dwelling fires across the last five years; on four occasions the emergency response came from Stroud or Gloucester as Painswick had insufficient crew
- 83% overall availability for the fire engine and crew
- 73% availability for the fire engine and crew on weekdays (between 08:00 and 18:00 hours)
- £52,282 is the annual cost of running Painswick Fire Station
- Future replacement costs for a fully equipped fire engine and protective clothing for the crew will be in excess of £242,844

In our professional opinion this proposal is being put forward because:

- It allows the service to match resources to meet current and future risks, developments and challenges in Painswick
- It is an ideal opportunity to build capacity in the service to further develop and enhance the prevention and protection agenda in Painswick and the wider County by reallocating existing resources
- It will significantly reduce cost whilst still maintaining the existing standards of service.

We will do this by reinvestment in enhanced prevention and protection measures to further promote and increase the safety of the community of Painswick. Emergency response cover for Painswick can be provided from either Stroud or Gloucester by full time fire fighters who are available 365 days a year.

If we close Painswick Fire Station, post implementation we will continually monitor and review performance to ensure that prevention and protection measures are working and that emergency response remains at all times within acceptable levels.
Proposal 2

To change the way in which we provide staff at Cirencester Fire Station to deliver prevention, protection and emergency response using the two fire engines currently based at the station.

Cirencester is identified and evidenced as a low activity area with ever decreasing demand in terms of emergency response. The current duty system where full time fire fighters are expected to provide continual cover for seventy two hours per shift no longer meets the requirements of employment legislation (Working Time Directive) and must change. In achieving this change, to staff the station using solely full time fire fighters would incur a significant increase in cost (approximately ten times the amount), especially when compared to a station with similar demographics and call profile that utilises only retained fire fighters (on call).

Furthermore, successive attempts to recruit full time fire fighters internally to serve at the station has proved extremely difficult due to the nature of the shift system.

Here are some facts:

- Only 1 high risk residential area in Cirencester
- 12 identified commercial risk premises
- 33% reduction in incidents in Cirencester over the last 5 years
- 257 incidents in total for 2014/15
- 35 primary dwelling fires in 2014/15 of which 11 were chimneys
- 2 fire engines currently provide emergency response cover from the station
- No interest received internally for vacancies advertised on two separate occasions
- £723,126.36 would be the additional cost of complying with employment legislation using full time fire fighters (this includes wages and protective clothing)
- £1.14 million would be the cost of running the station on a full time only basis.
- In comparison, Tewkesbury Fire Station which has a similar emergency call profile costs the County of Gloucestershire £97,823 per year to run using only retained fire fighters.

In our professional opinion this proposal is being put forward because:

- There is already a well developed Retained (on call) group of fire fighters established at Cirencester Fire Station
- This would allow the service to continue to maintain 2 fire engines at Cirencester Fire Station without incurring any significant increase in cost
- It would enable the Service to comply with current employment legislation
- It is an opportunity to build capacity in the service to further develop and enhance the prevention and protection agenda in Cirencester and the wider County by reallocating existing staff resources (full time fire fighters will be redeployed elsewhere)
- It provides an ability to focus on local prevention and protection initiatives through enhanced involvement from Retained personnel

• Gives control of resources at Cirencester to people in the local area increasing local employment
• £157,269 would be the cost of running the station using retained fire fighters

Currently staffing at the station is a mixture of full time (day cover with a commitment to cover night shifts), and retained (on call only) fire fighters. We want to change this model so that we use locally based retained fire fighters (where levels of recruitment are historically good), to help deliver focussed prevention and protection activities within their own communities using their extensive local knowledge of those most vulnerable and at risk. This will also provide employment opportunities for local people in their own area.

Tell us what you think about these proposals

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service is committed to involving all aspects of our community in the decisions we need to make about how we deliver our Service in the future.

The purpose of the consultation is to make sure that we have a full understanding of what these proposals would have on you, and what your views and ideas are. We will consider your views before making decisions about what we do.

The consultation will run between 1st October and 4th January 2016 with public drop in sessions being held in mid November. (Please see www.glosfire.gov.uk for more information).

To give us your feedback, please read all the information and complete the questions in the following section.

Please return your questionnaire either by 4th January 2016 at the latest:

- At one of the drop in sessions
- At your local fire station or library
- Post to: Communications, Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 2TG
- Alternatively on-line at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/consultglosfire

Some Frequently Asked Questions and further information can be found on our website by going to: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/consultglosfire

If you have any questions or would like information please email us at: irmp@glosfire.gov.uk
**Questionnaire**

**Question 1:**
When we spoke to Gloucestershire residents about the Integrated Risk Management Plan, they told us to focus our review on prevention and protection to help to further reduce the need for emergency response. Through our review we have identified a need to create additional capacity within our existing workforce to deliver prevention and protection initiatives to help keep the people of Gloucestershire safe.

To what extent do you agree that we should create additional capacity within our existing workforce to deliver prevention and protection initiatives?

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

**Question 2:**
Do you agree that Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service should continue to review the allocation of response resources in line with new technological solutions and delivery models?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**Proposal 1**

**Question 3:**
We know that we need to match our resources to the levels of risk to ensure we have the right resources in the right place at the right time. The independent review has identified Painswick as an area where Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service resources could be better used to enhance their prevention work and be able to provide a reliable emergency response from Stroud Fire Station.

Having read the supporting information, please rate on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree, your views on the following statements:

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<tr>
<td>Working closely with the community, we should deliver enhanced safety initiatives in Painswick</td>
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<td>Delivering enhanced safety initiatives in Painswick such as Safe and Well will increase the safety of the community of Painswick</td>
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<td>I understand the reasons why Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service are proposing to better use resources to ensure the safe and wellbeing of people living and working in Painswick</td>
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**Question 4:**
To what extent do you agree with the proposal to deliver additional prevention and protection activities in Painswick enabling Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service to provide future emergency response cover from Stroud and close Painswick Fire Station?

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

**Question 5:**
Is there anything which you feel we haven’t considered, and should take into account, when making a decision around proposal 1? Please provide all comments below:

**Question 6:**
Do you feel that Proposal 1 would have any particular or additional adverse/negative impact on you, as opposed to any other section of the community? (It is particularly important that we consider the impact on all sections of the community and would be interested in any feedback you have including any suggestions on how any impact could be reduced)
Proposal 2

Following an independent review, we propose to change the way we staff Cirencester Fire Station from Wholetime to Retained, to enable us to respond to emergencies using the two fire engines currently at the fire station.

Question 7:
Having read the supporting information, please rate on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree, your views on the following statements:

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
---|---|---|---|---|
The use of retained fire fighters at Cirencester is the most cost effective way to maintain the level of emergency response

The use of retained fire fighters will offer good employment opportunities for local people

The local knowledge of retained fire fighters will benefit the local community and help Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service protect the most vulnerable through targeted prevention and protection work

I understand the reasons why Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service are proposing to change the way they provide staff at Cirencester Fire Station to respond to emergencies using the two fire engines currently based at the station

Question 8:
To what extent do you agree with the proposal to change the way we provide staff at Cirencester Fire Station?

☐ Strongly agree  ☐ Agree  ☐ Neither agree nor disagree  
☐ Disagree  ☐ Strongly disagree

Question 9:
Is there anything which you feel we haven’t considered, and should take into account, when making a decision around proposal 2? Please provide all comments below:

Question 10:
Do you feel that Proposal 2 would have any particular or additional adverse/negative impact on you, as opposed to any other section of the community? (It is particularly important that we consider the impact on all sections of the community and would be interested in any feedback you have including any suggestions on how any impact could be reduced)
About you

Question 1: Are you:
- a member of the public
- a member of Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Staff
- an organisation

Name of organisation .................................................................

Question 2: Do you live in:
- Painswick
- Cirencester
- Elsewhere in the County
- Outside of the County

Question 3: Age
- 0-17
- 25-39
- 65-74
- 18-24
- 40-64
- 75+

Question 4: Disability
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?
- Yes
- No

Question 5: Ethnic Origin
Do you consider yourself to be...
- White UK
- Black or Black British
- White Other
- Asian or Asian British

Other .................................................................