



Integrated Risk Management Plan 2013 - 2014 Consultation



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Welcome to our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2013/14.

Welcome and Foreword

This plan complements our Community Safety Strategy and sets out how we are performing and what we propose to do to make sure our local communities in County Durham and Darlington are safe.

We are a forward looking Fire and Rescue Authority and we want to ensure that we provide excellent services and offer value for money to our local communities and council tax payers.

The projects we have worked on during 2012/13 set the foundations for making our fire and rescue service one of the most efficient and effective in the country and our plans for 2013/14 are aimed at further improving our prevention, protection and response services.

Our overall strategy is focused on ensuring people and communities are safe and that risks do not increase in County Durham and Darlington. Our challenge is to do this when financial resources are reducing over the medium to longer term. To ensure we realise our vision of safest people, safest places, we need to work in partnership with local communities.

This IRMP sets out details of how you can be more involved with developing our plans for the future and how you can help to shape your fire and rescue service in the years ahead.

If you are interested in helping us to achieve our vision, we would like to hear from you. Details are on page 29

This plan also includes a small number of consultation questions on the projects we are proposing to implement in 2013/14 to further improve our performance and to help make County Durham and Darlington a safe place to live and work.

We look forward to receiving your views.

“We are a forward looking Fire and Rescue Authority and we want to ensure that we provide excellent services and offer value for money to our local communities and council tax payers.”



Councillor Gordon Tennant
Chairman
County Durham Fire and Rescue Authority



Susan Johnson
Chief Executive
County Durham Fire and Rescue Authority



01 | Safer Communities

We will attend
70%

of all house fires
within 8 minutes

Safer Communities

Our approach to keeping communities safe is set out in our Community Safety Strategy. This IRMP demonstrates how we manage risk and how this ensures we have a balanced approach to preventing fires and emergencies, protecting our local communities and businesses and responding when incidents occur.

Our community fire stations and resources are strategically placed across the County and Borough to ensure we can provide the right balance of services. Our local risk registers record details of the risks that we manage on a local basis and we have District Plans that determine our approach to prevention, protection and response in each locality. These plans are available at www.ddfire.gov.uk

"Our community fire stations and resources are strategically placed across the county and borough to ensure we can provide the right balance of services."

Identifying and Assessing Risks

Local Risks in County Durham and Darlington

We operate our services from six districts across the County Durham and Darlington area. This structure enables us to work closely with our communities at a local level to understand the issues that they face and ensure that we can deliver the services that they need. Our District based staff work closely with our key partners to ensure that our services complement the work of other organisations meaning that local communities get the maximum benefit from the work undertaken.

The Risks We Face

There are a number of specific risks within the area that could significantly impact on local communities. There are industrial sites which fall under the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations, an ethylene pipeline entering the northern end of County Durham and passing south-west into Cleveland, National and Local Transmission natural gas pipelines crossing the county, Durham Tees Valley International Airport, a small port (Seaham), major road routes (A1M, A19 and A66) as well as the East Coast Mainline railway.



Climate change has also increased the risk of wild fires occurring during lengthy spells of dry weather.

Over the last few years County Durham and Darlington has experienced severe weather over the winter months leading to an increased risk to vulnerable people in our communities and presenting a challenge in the way critical services are delivered. The impact of climate change has also led to an increase in fluvial and flash flooding with the potential to cause widespread damage and disruption. The impact of flooding on communities was demonstrated graphically throughout the country in 2007 and more recently at Morpeth, in Northumberland, during 2008 and Cumbria in 2009. Increasingly flooding is impacting on the local communities in Durham and Darlington.

Climate change has also increased the risk of wild fires occurring during lengthy spells of dry weather. Wildfires can have a dramatic impact on the local economy, impacting on farming, tourism and the environment. Whilst 2012 was a particularly wet year we need to remain vigilant and ensure that plans are in place and resources available to deal with a large wild fire in our area.

Wider Risk Analysis

We are also required to identify all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect our community, including those of a cross-border, multi-authority and / or national nature.

We have good working relationships with our neighbouring fire and rescue services and share information at strategic and operational levels. This ensures that there is an understanding of the cross border risks that may occur where we need to deploy our resources in emergency situations or where the impact of an accident in another Service's area could impact on our communities.

We have specific arrangements in place with our neighbouring services to share resources and provide mutual support to each other. Information on operational policies and procedures is shared to ensure that should this mutual assistance be required it can happen effectively.

Other Risks

There are some risks and threats that need to be addressed across a number of agencies such as the Fire and Rescue Service, Police, Local Authorities and Ambulance Service. We play a leading role in the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) who consider these risks and ensure that plans are in place to avoid them occurring or to mitigate the impact they will have on the community should they occur. The Community Risk Register takes account of the risks that are faced by our neighbouring LRF's, especially those that have the potential to impact either on our communities or on the resources we have available. The Community Risk Register can be accessed at www.ddfire.gov.uk

The Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) is implemented in County Durham and Darlington through multi-agency working groups. Whilst these groups are led by Durham Constabulary we play an active role in supporting their work and ensuring that everything possible is being done to protect the community. We take full account of the work of these groups when we design our operational strategies and determine the resources we need.

The contents of the Community Risk Register are regularly reviewed to take full account of the national risks which exist which are published in the National Risk Register. The National Risk Register is available at www.ddfire.gov.uk

The Service plays a full part in the National Resilience Programme which makes resources from across the entire country available to deal with major emergencies, wherever they occur. The resources we maintain to support this programme include High Volume Pumps, Mass Decontamination Equipment and hazardous materials specialists who are trained to detect, identify and monitor chemicals at major incidents.

We will attend
70%

of all non-domestic fires within 8 minutes

Prevention, Protection and Response

Our approach to keeping local communities safe is focused around the prevention, protection and response arrangements that we put in place. These arrangements take account of the risks that we have identified and which we need to address. A balanced approach to prevention, protection and response is crucial to ensuring the safety of local communities and in meeting our statutory responsibilities.

Prevention

Our prevention work is focused on using the resources we have available on those members of the community who are most at risk from fires or road traffic collisions. We use a range of information and data to identify the most vulnerable people and most vulnerable communities in our area. We then identify schemes and initiatives to help keep them safe. Some of the key areas of our prevention work include:

Improving Safety in the Home

We currently carry out approximately 12,000 home fire safety visits to all households in our area and we actively target those houses or those people who are most at risk. We aim to deliver at least 70% of our visits to vulnerable people or vulnerable areas. Over the next 2 years we will increase the amount of time dedicated to prevention activities and increase the number of home fire safety visits we undertake. We plan to visit 18,000 properties per year by 2014/15, whilst still maintaining our focus on those most at risk from fires. This increase in prevention work will help us to further reduce risks in local communities.

Reducing Deliberate Fires

Deliberate fires account for a large proportion of what we do. Our prevention strategy is focused on working with partners including the Police, Local Authorities and other agencies to understand where the areas of greatest risk are and to work together to reduce the number of deliberate fires that occur. This approach allows us to share information, analyse data and investigate fire related crimes to ensure appropriate action is taken against offenders.



A third of all people killed or seriously injured on the roads are aged 17-24

We also deliver targeted educational activities to change the behaviours of those people who are likely to commit arson.

Reducing Road Traffic Collisions

A third of all people killed or seriously injured on the roads are aged 17-24. This is our highest risk age group and our work will focus on targeting road safety education and intervention at these young people. We will work with young people through local schools, colleges and universities as well as visiting workplaces to undertake our road safety education work. The extra capacity we created by changing the shift systems for our operational staff has ensured that we can increase the work we do in this important area.

Protecting Young People

Our longer term prevention strategy is focused on young people. The earlier we can begin educating young people in keeping themselves safe, the more chance there is of our community safety messages making a difference in the longer term. As positive role models, our professional firefighters and community safety staff can assist young people to make a positive contribution to society and improve their life skills.

In 2013/14 we are aiming to visit every school in County Durham and Darlington to deliver a range of focused educational packages aimed at ensuring young people are more aware of their own responsibilities and helping them to take steps to reduce their risk of injury or harm. We will also continue to work with some of our most disadvantaged young people through specific educational programmes such as our Fire Break course.

Protection

Protecting local communities and the businesses that provide economic prosperity in County Durham and Darlington is a key role for our Service. Our prevention work is aimed at keeping people safe and our protection work is focused on ensuring that commercial and industrial premises are safe places for people to work and visit. We have recently changed the way we provide our protection services and local station based staff are now involved in working with businesses in our area. We have invested a significant amount of time and resource in to delivering specialist training to station based staff to ensure that we can increase the amount of protection work undertaken whilst protecting the number of frontline firefighting staff we have to respond to emergencies.

Risk Based Programme of Safety Inspections

The type of premises inspected and the frequency that this is carried out is determined by the level of risk it poses to the occupiers and the community.

The factors that are taken into account when calculating this are:

- Use of the building and the number of people who may be in it
- The fire safety awareness of the people in it and their ability to escape should a fire occur
- The safety features within the building such as alarms and sprinklers and how well these are maintained
- How well the building is managed

Our risk based management programme ensures that those premises most at risk of fire are targeted by our protection activities.

The changes we have made to shift systems will allow our operational staff to carry out inspections of low and medium risk premises. Our dedicated fire safety officers focus on premises that are more complex and which represent a higher risk. This is the most appropriate use of the resources we have available and enables us to ensure we allocate resources according to risk.

We will attend
75%

of all road traffic accidents within 11 minutes

Fire Investigations

We work closely with the police to gain a detailed understanding of why and how fires start. This helps us to shape future strategies by learning from experience and reviewing our prevention strategies to take account of a wider appreciation of how fires start and spread. We have developed Fire Investigation training programmes that we offer to our own staff and those from other Fire and Rescue Services across the country.

Automatic Fire Alarms

It is important that our response resources are available to attend emergencies and that our staff are utilised efficiently and effectively. Approximately 25% of our calls are to automatic fire alarm systems. We consulted last year on revising our response standards to this type of call in low risk premises which will release time for operational staff to undertake prevention and protection activities and to carry out important operational training. The new standards will be in place from April 2013 and will improve the overall service we provide.

Business Engagement

We will continue to engage with local businesses through the established fire liaison groups and the North East Chamber of Commerce.

We will also be engaging with enforcement agencies to share good practice and to help reduce the burden of inspection on local businesses. We will work in partnership with these agencies to ensure we have a balanced approach that allows us to meet our statutory responsibilities whilst helping local businesses to ensure they do not face significant fire related risks.

Response

We are fully committed to prevention and protection activities to keep our local communities safe and to ensure our local businesses provide safe working facilities for staff and customers. Our response strategy is designed to provide a resilient emergency response if an incident does occur. We are aiming to do this in the most efficient and effective way possible and many of the proposals we consulted on last year were designed to help us to achieve this.

Response Standards

In 2013/14 we will be operating new crewing arrangements in Newton Aycliffe and Seaham fire stations and we will have introduced new working patterns and routines for our firefighters.



6 Emergency calls will be answered within Seconds

These changes make us more efficient and help us to deal with reducing funding, however, we are committed to maintaining our current response standards and ensuring risks do not increase in local communities. Our rounded approach to prevention, protection and response helps us to maintain these standards. Our response standards are set out below.

Our Standards and Commitments

Emergency Response:

- We will attend 70% of all dwelling fires within 8 minutes and 90% within 11 minutes
- We will attend 70% of all non-domestic fires within 8 minutes and 90% within 11 minutes
- We will attend 75% of all road traffic accidents within 11 minutes and 90% within 15 minutes
- Emergency calls will be answered within 6 seconds

Command and Control

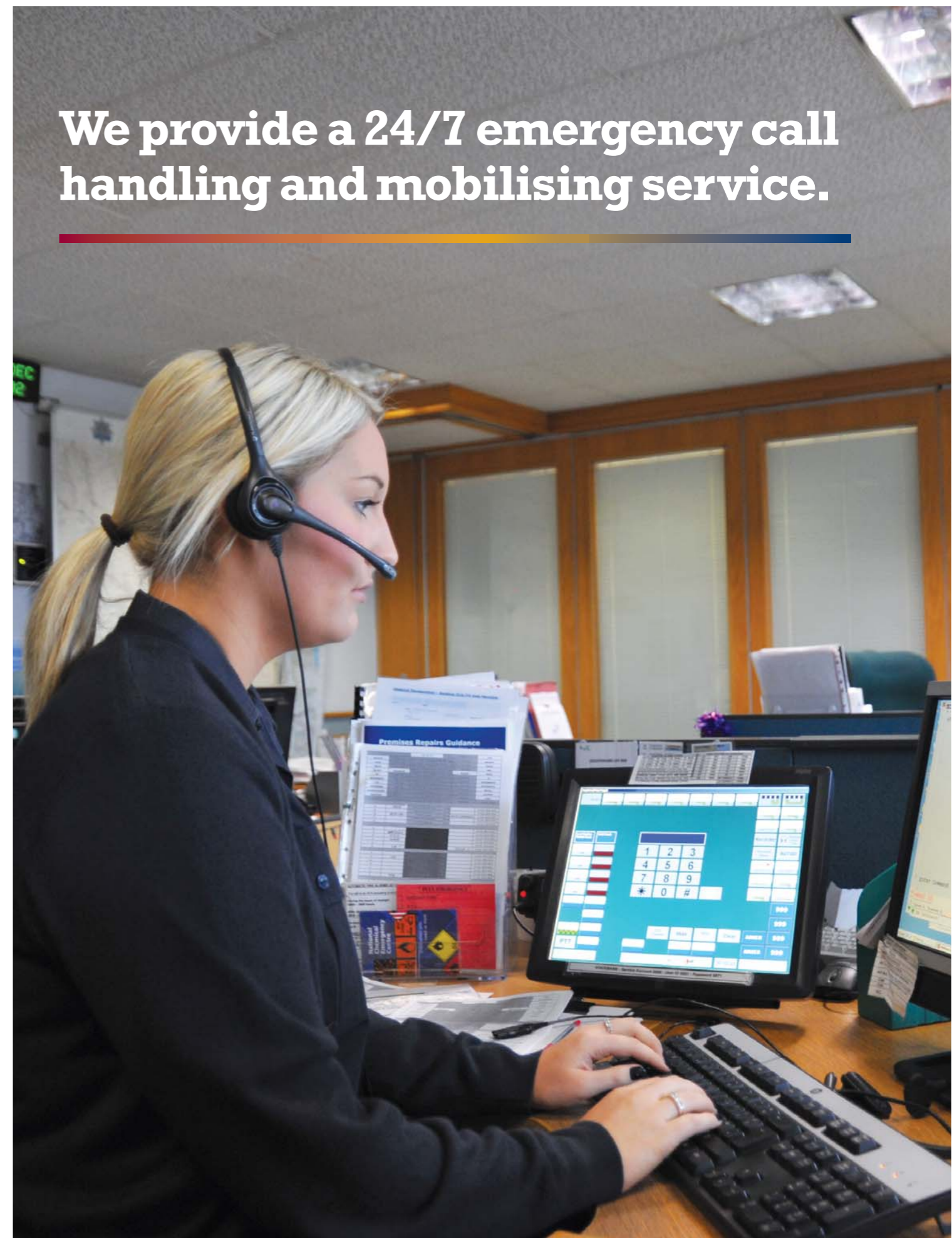
We provide a 24/7 emergency call handling and mobilising service which ensures we send the right vehicles, equipment and staff to emergencies promptly.

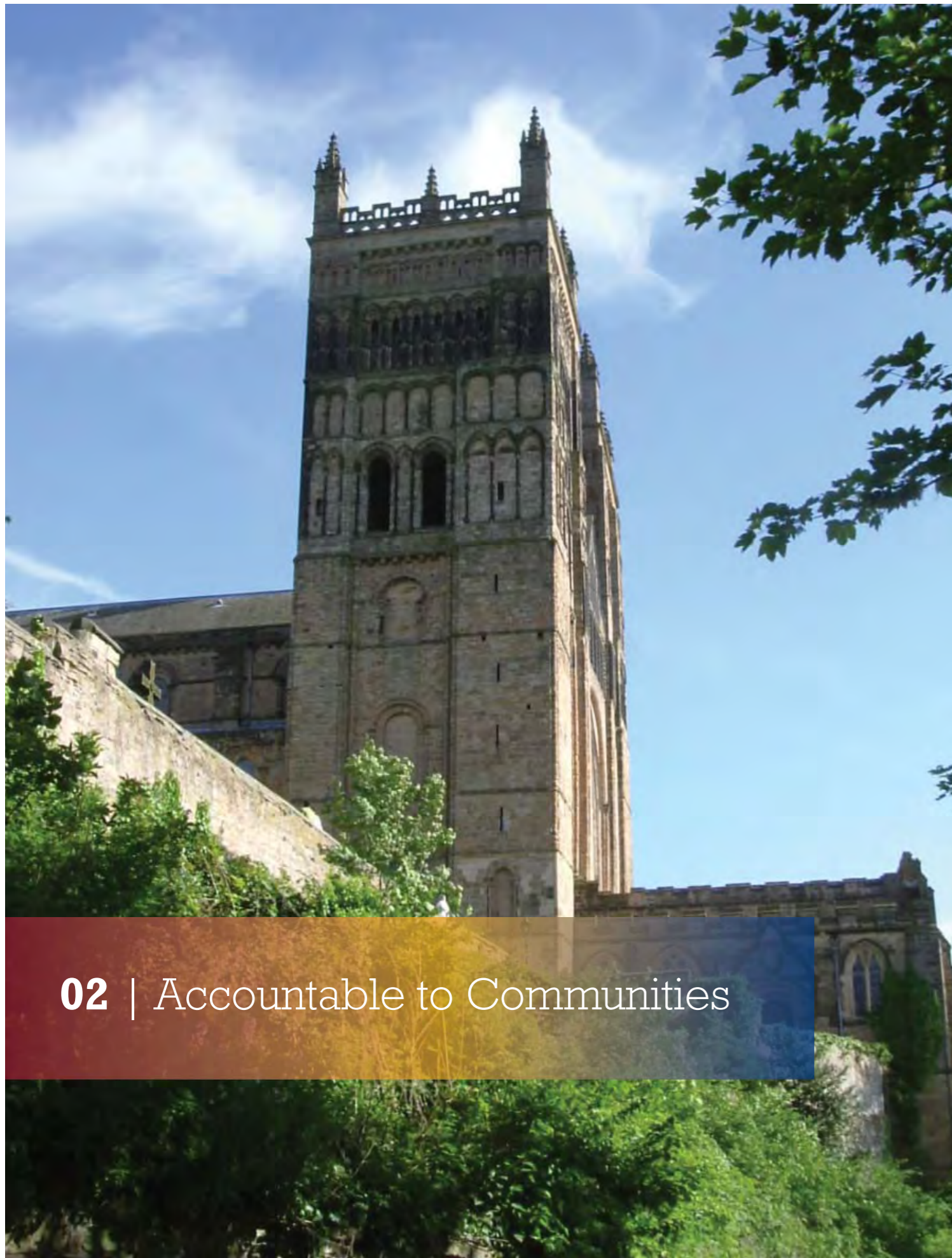
In 2013/14 we will be implementing a new command and control system to provide us with state of the art technology to ensure our control room service is as efficient and effective as possible. We are also intending to introduce a new shift system for our control room staff which will improve resilience and allow additional work to be undertaken within the control room. This maximises the capacity of our staff, helps protect the vital resources we need in this area and improves value for money and performance.

Specialist Vehicles

We continually review the resources we need to respond to emergencies. In 2013/14 we will introduce specialist wildfire vehicles to help mitigate the increasing risk of this type of fire occurring due to climate change. In order to gain the maximum value from the investment we are making in these specialist vehicles we intend to make them multi-functional so that they can respond to smaller fires independently and be available to transport extra staff to larger incidents in rural areas. The vehicles can also be used to support our prevention and protection activities which will help ensure fire engines are more readily available for more serious emergencies.

We provide a 24/7 emergency call handling and mobilising service.





02 | Accountable to Communities

More than 70% of responses to last year's consultation supported our plans to improve services and increase the capacity of our staff to undertake more prevention work.

Accountability to Local Communities

We are committed to sharing the information we hold in relation to risks facing local communities and businesses so that we can further learn from the experience of people that live and work in our area. We are also looking at working even more closely with local communities to ensure that we engage with local people in the way our services are provided.

In order to ensure that the information we publish is accessible, relevant and timely we make our risk information available on-line. We will also provide specific information in other formats should it be requested.

Transparency

Accessing our information

If you wish to access the information we use to make decisions and run the Service it is available via our website www.ddfire.gov.uk. We can also supply information in alternative formats and our staff are available to help the public with any queries they may have.

Our Fire Authority meeting information and reports are also available on-line and members of the public are welcome to attend Fire Authority meetings as observers to see how we manage the Service. All of our financial and performance information is available via the website.

In 2013/14 we will review the way we present and publish information. We will work with local communities to gain a better understanding of the type of information that is useful to them and how we can improve our transparency.

Consultation

Effective consultation helps us to deliver the right services taking account of local views. We always consult on our IRMP proposals and on any significant decisions. We are keen to ensure that our consultation methods are appropriate and provide local communities with the opportunity to have their say.

In 2013/14 we are going to introduce a new way of consulting on our plans and we will be seeking community representatives to work with us throughout the year as we develop our key projects and initiatives.

“Effective consultation helps us to deliver the right services taking account of local views.”



We have focused our prevention work on our home fire safety visit programme.

Update on last year's IRMP consultation

Last year we consulted on a number of key projects that were designed to save money, make us more efficient and generate income without increasing risk in local communities. We consulted on four key projects:

Implementing New Crewing Arrangements (Day Crewing Plus)

We consulted on implementing a new crewing system at Newton Aycliffe and Seaham fire stations as the number of calls we receive in these locations has been reducing because of our prevention and education work. Over 70% of responses to the IRMP supported the implementation of day crewing plus at these locations.

We are now progressing our plans for building the accommodation for the staff that will work this new crewing system and we have applied for capital grant from the government to help to finance the costs of the new facilities. The day crewing plus system will go live in July 2013 and will continue to provide local communities with a first class response to emergencies.

Implementing New Shift Systems

We need to ensure that our resources are used efficiently and effectively, and on the front line this means that our shift systems need to allow us to make the best use of the capacity that we have available. We consulted on implementing a new shift system for our full time firefighters and more than 75% of responses supported changing the way we work.

The new shift system was agreed in July 2012 following negotiations with the relevant trade unions and this will allow us to undertake more of our protection and prevention work as set out in the Community Safety Strategy. The new shift system will become operational in January 2013. Local people will not notice any difference – the new system will not impact on the number and type of resources we have available to send to emergencies. Our staff will have more time available to undertake community safety work in local communities to prevent fires from occurring.

Reducing Road Traffic Collisions

We have committed to working in partnership to reduce the number of road traffic collisions in our area. When we consulted on this proposal 72% supported the suggested approach.

We have significantly increased the educational work we carry out with children and young adults. Young adults in the 17 - 24 age group are more likely to become a casualty at a road traffic collision. We deliver a series of educational programmes aimed at a range of different age groups from 10 year olds through to people at sixth form colleges and universities. Once the new shift system is operational in January 2013, we will have further opportunities to increase the work we do in this area.

Generating Income

We have staff that are highly trained and who are well respected in local communities. We have an opportunity to generate income through selling some of our services. Over 82% of responses to last year's consultation supported the Service generating income through trading activities.

We are finalising proposals for setting up a trading company that we will use to market our skills and experience in a way that enables us to generate additional income and help balance future year's budgets.

These IRMP projects do not increase risk in local communities but do provide services in a different way and at a lower cost.

Accidental dwelling fires have reduced by

36%

over the last 5 years

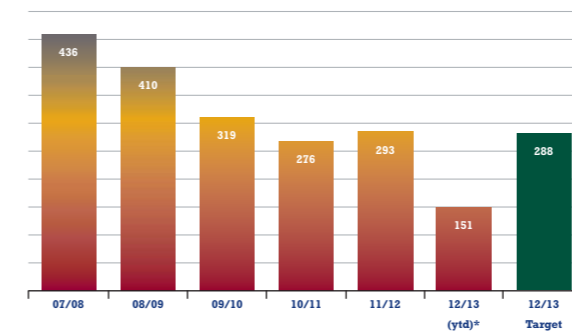
Performance

As an emergency service it is extremely important that we regularly review our performance across a range of performance measures. We look closely at performance trends to see how well we are doing and we compare our performance against other fire and rescue services on a regular basis.

The following section of the IRMP sets out a snapshot of our performance in a number of key areas. Further information is available from the website or by contacting us – see page 31 for details of how to do this. We will be producing an annual report at the end of 2013/14 which will set out our performance against a wider set of performance measures. The annual report will be available from the website or you can request a copy to be sent to you.

"As an emergency service it is extremely important that we regularly review our performance."

Figure 1



Accidental House Fires

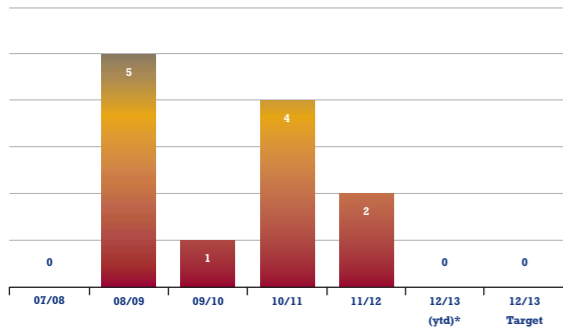
Accidental dwelling fires have reduced by 36% over the last five years due to the increased prevention work that our staff have undertaken.

In order to achieve these reductions we have focused our prevention work on our Home Fire Safety visit programme. Whilst the long term trend shows a significant reduction, we experienced an increase in the number of accidental house fires last year.



Reducing the number of people who die in a house fire remains our priority.

Figure 2

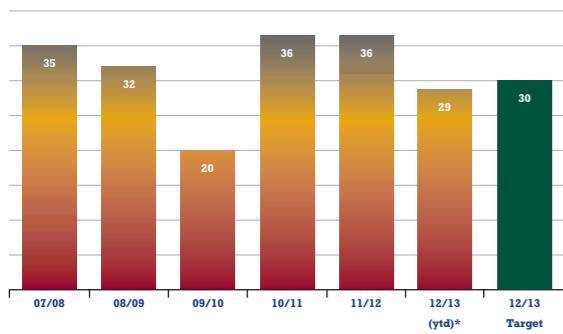


Fire Fatalities

The approach to focusing on prevention activities has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of fire fatalities in our area. Reducing the number of people who die in a house fire remains our priority. We have developed a separate strand to our prevention strategy to ensure we focus on continuing to improve in this area.



Figure 3



Injuries to the Public in Accidental House Fires

Whilst we have reduced the number of accidental house fires, the number of injuries to the public has remained generally static. We have undertaken an analysis of where injuries are occurring and we will use this information to inform the prevention work that we undertake in future years.

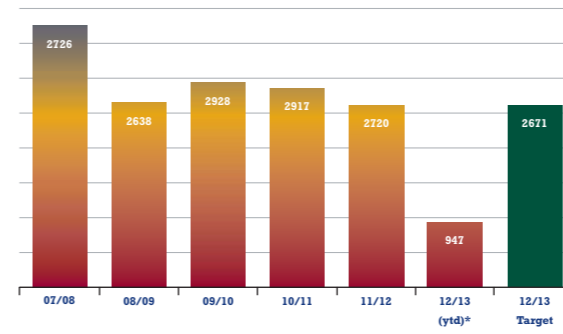


Small fires have reduced by

27%

over the last 5 years

Figure 4

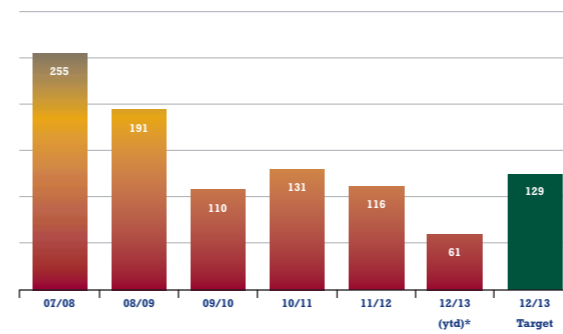


Small Fires

We attend a significant number of smaller fires in our area which include rubbish fires, grass and gorse fires and other low monetary value fires. Small fires have reduced by 27% over the last five years and whilst these types of fire do not pose a significant risk to the public, they divert our resources away from other key activities and therefore we will continue to work to achieve further reductions in this area.



Figure 5



Non Domestic Property Fires

These fires include fires in public, commercial and industrial premises. Our performance has improved significantly over the last 5 years, and we have seen a 46% reduction over this period. We aim to continue to improve our performance in this key area as this type of fire can have a significant impact on our local economy.



We have, and will continue to develop innovative solutions to ensure we can maintain our response performance.

Response Standard	2012/13 Target	2012/13 (ytd) Actual
% of house fires attended within 8 minutes	70%	75%
% of house fires attended within 11 minutes	90%	94%
% of non-domestic property fires attended within 8 minutes	70%	81%
% of non-domestic property fires attended within 11 minutes	90%	93%
% of road traffic collisions attended within 11 minutes	75%	91%
% of road traffic collisions attended within 15 minutes	90%	97%

Response Standards

Achievement of our response standards helps us to guarantee a first class response service to our local communities. Meeting these standards over the medium term will be extremely challenging given the anticipated on-going reductions in funding. We have, and will continue to develop innovative solutions to ensure we can maintain our response performance.

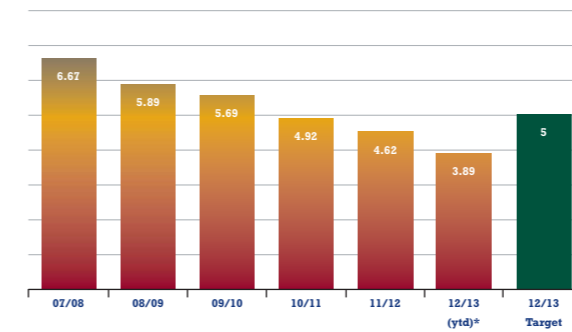


We have reduced vehicle accidents by

60%

over the last 5 years

Figure 6



Staff Sickness

Our staff have some of the lowest absence levels of any fire and rescue service in the country. Over the last 5 years we have reduced sickness by more than 30% and these low absence rates have also helped us to make financial savings in our corporate services and introduce more efficient crewing arrangements.

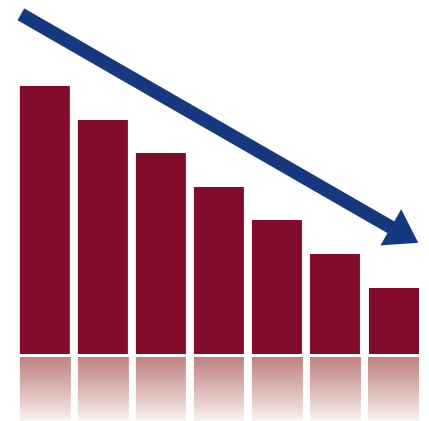
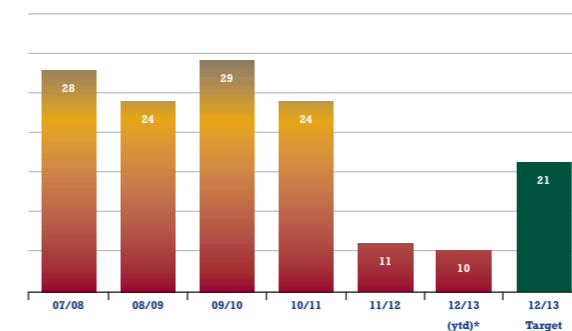


Figure 7



Vehicle Accidents

Our fleet of emergency vehicles travel thousands of miles every year, often in extremely challenging circumstances. As part of our health and safety management arrangements we invest a significant amount of time in training and developing our staff. The outcome of this investment has resulted in a 60% reduction in the number of vehicle accidents since 2007. Throughout the whole of 2011/12, only 12 vehicle accidents were recorded across the fleet, all of which were of a minor nature.

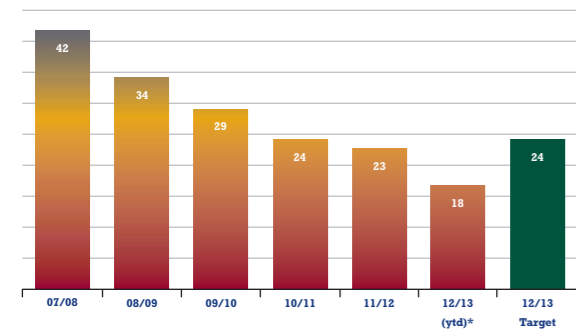


We have reduced staff accidents by

45%

over the last 5 years

Figure 8



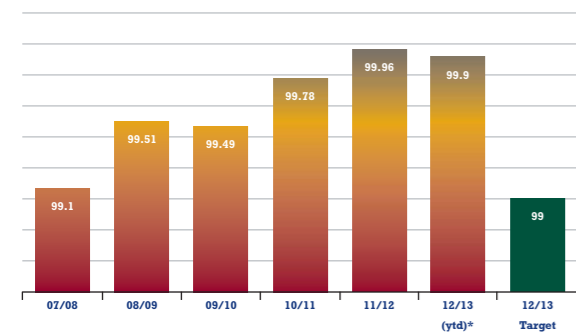
Staff Accidents

As an emergency service, the health and safety of our staff is a top priority. We are the only fire and rescue service in the country to have achieved the health and safety management standard OHSAS18001.

Our performance reflects the importance we place on health and safety and since 2007 we have reduced accidents by 45%



Figure 9



Appliance Availability

It is important that our fire appliances are available to respond to emergencies at all times. Our fleet management arrangements have enabled us to maintain an excellent and consistent level of performance in this important area, meaning that our fire appliances are ready to respond when they are needed.





03 | Assurance

Managing your fire and rescue service in line with the expectations of a modern public service.

Assurance

As an emergency service, we recognise that it is extremely important that we can demonstrate that we are operationally competent and that we manage the fire and rescue service in line with the expectations of a modern public service. We also need to ensure we can demonstrate that we provide value for money and that we spend public money in accordance with the expectations of local council tax payers.

Our operational staff are trained to exceptionally high standards to ensure that they can undertake their work to the standards that are expected of them.

In 2013/14 we will produce a self-assessment of our operational approach and will invite peer officers from other fire and rescue services to scrutinise our approach to gain a more informed understanding of our operational performance. The review will also look at whether there are any areas where we can make improvements. This peer review is part of a national programme that seeks to embed learning and best practice across the fire and rescue sector.

“We will publish a statement of assurance for 2013/14 that sets out the assurances we can provide in relation to operational service delivery.”

Operational Assurance

Demonstrating Operational Assurance

We have systems and standards in place that are designed to ensure that everything we do is in accordance with health and safety regulations. We have agreed ways of doing things and standard procedures so that we can address operational matters consistently and in accordance with recognised best practice.

Statement of Assurance

We will publish a Statement of Assurance for 2013/14 that sets out the assurances we can provide in relation to operational service delivery. This is a new statement that will set out how we have gained assurance so that local communities are aware of their fire and rescue service’s operational position.



A clean bill of financial health and value for money.

Financial and Governance Assurance

Financial Assurance

Our financial performance is considered on an annual basis by the external auditor who provides the Fire Authority with a report on the financial statements. Details of previous audit reports are available from the website or on request. The latest approved accounts were signed off by the Auditor on the 26 September 2012. The Auditor provided the Fire Authority with a clean bill of financial health and confirmed that value for money was being provided.

Governance Assurance

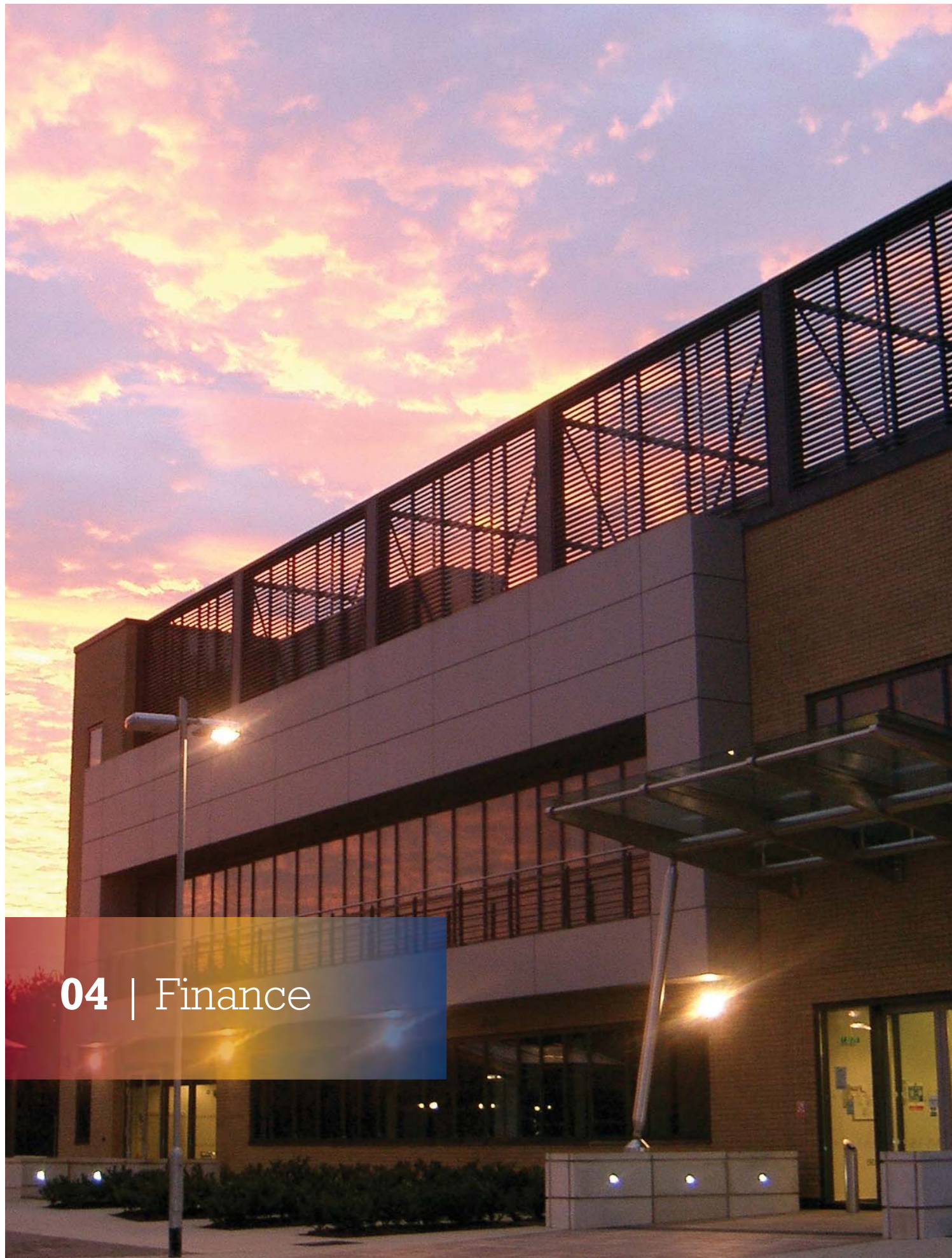
Our decision making processes are transparent and we consult on our key projects and initiatives prior to the Combined Fire Authority making final decisions.

Our structures reflect the requirement to ensure we have good governance processes in place and we employ qualified professional staff whose role is to ensure good governance is embedded throughout the organisation. The Authority prepares an Annual Governance Statement that details its approach to governance and the key risks that exist. This is available from the website at www.ddfire.gov.uk

In 2013/14 the Fire Authority is looking at new ways of involving local people to take an active part in helping to develop the fire and rescue service over the years ahead. We are looking for people to work with us during the year to help shape our plans and to act as sounding board for our ideas. If you are interested please let us know.

“In 2013/14 the Fire Authority is looking at new ways of involving local people to take an active part in helping to develop the Service.”





Reducing costs without increasing risk in local communities.

Finance and Resources

The Financial Climate

In the current economic climate it is extremely important that our financial position is robust and that we plan effectively over the medium to long term. Our approach to financial management is to ensure that we plan ahead to ensure that we can continue to provide first class services to local communities.

We are operating in an extremely uncertain period and we know that the financial resources we receive from government will reduce over the next few years. Our approach to balancing the budget is to look at reducing cost and generating income without increasing the risks to local communities. We have called this our Service Transformation programme and we will continue with this approach over the medium term.

If resources continue to reduce over the longer term, we may reach a point where savings cannot be made without increasing risk and we will need to have a discussion with local communities about increasing council tax or increasing risk. If we reach this point we will ensure that we consult extensively on the options that are available.

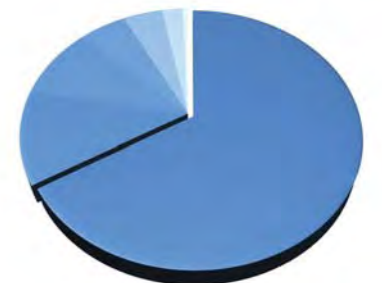
Financial Information

The Medium Term Financial Plan

The current Medium Term Financial Plan is shown over the page. This plan was approved in February 2012 and is currently being reviewed. We will not know whether our projections for further grant reductions are accurate until January 2013. Once we know our funding allocation from Government we will revise the medium term financial plan to take account of this and to reflect the work we have been doing during the year to identify savings to balance the budget.

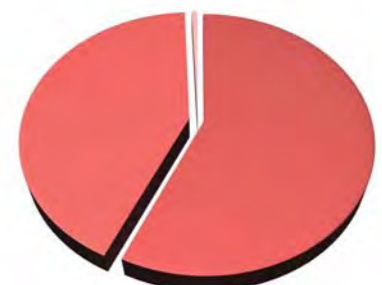
“We are operating in an extremely uncertain period. Our funding is expected to reduce year on year for the foreseeable future”

How the money is spent



Employee costs	£22.3m
Supplies & Services	£3.9m
Capital Financing	£3.1m
Premises	£1.8m
Income (Credit)	£1.5m
Transport	£0.8m
Contingencies	£0.2m

How the Service is funded



Council Tax	£17.4m
Non domestic rates	£13.0m
Revenue Support Grant	£0.2m



The majority of households in County Durham and Darlington are charged £60.30 a year for the fire and rescue service.

Funding and Council Tax

Medium Term Financial Plan	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m
Net Expenditure	30.589	30.107	30.491	30.718
Government Grant	12.851	11.097	10.582	10.236
2011/12 Council Tax Freeze Grant	0.417	0.417	0.417	0
Council Tax	17.379	17.559	17.734	17.911
Deficit on Collection Fund	-0.058	0	0	0
Total Funding	30.589	29.073	28.733	28.147
Required Savings	0	-1.034	-1.758	-2.571

Council Tax – What does it cost for your Fire and Rescue Service?

The majority of households in County Durham and Darlington are in Band A and are charged £60.30 per year for their Fire and Rescue Service. The charges for all property bands are set out below.

Property Band	Per annum £	Per week £
Band A	60.30	1.16
Band B	70.35	1.35
Band C	80.40	1.55
Band D	90.45	1.74
Band E	110.55	2.13
Band F	130.65	2.51
Band G	150.75	2.90
Band H	180.90	3.48

Council Tax Referendum

The Government has set a limit on the percentage that we can increase the council tax. For 2013/14 this limit is set at 2% which would amount to an increase of £1.21 per year for the majority of households in our area. If the Authority wanted to increase council tax by more than 2% we would need to hold a referendum and ask everyone to vote on the proposed increase. We have estimated the cost of a referendum at more than £500,000 which we would need to pay from our budgets. In order for a referendum to be a viable option it would need to raise significantly more than it costs to hold.

“If the Authority wanted to increase council tax by more than 2% we would need to hold a referendum and ask everyone to vote on the proposed increase.”

Council Tax Freeze Grant

The Government has offered Fire Authorities a council tax freeze grant if they decide not to increase council tax in 2013/14. This grant, equivalent to a 1% council tax increase, will only last for two years and will then be withdrawn. If the Authority agrees to accept the grant it will mean that your Fire Authority element of the council tax bill will not increase in 2013/14. Whilst this seems like an attractive proposition it could mean that the Authority will need to increase council tax by more than normal in future years to make up for the withdrawal of the grant.

Your Thoughts on Council Tax

We would like your views on council tax so that the Fire Authority can take them into account when setting the budget for 2013/14. We have asked a question on this on page 29.

Proposal 1

In 2010 the Service introduced Targeted Response Vehicles (TRV) at Durham and Darlington stations as part of its emergency response. The vehicles are crewed by two firefighters and they respond to small secondary fires such as rubbish and grass fires. This type of fire accounts for approximately 40% of the emergency incidents we attend. By sending a TRV the fire engines at these stations remain available to respond to large or life threatening incidents thereby reducing the risk to the communities. Currently TRV's only respond to small fires in their own station area, however if we extend their travel time the risk to communities would be reduced across other station areas. We intend to increase the number of TRV's and strategically position them across the service area. We do not intend to reduce the number or type of front line fire engines.

Proposal 2

Our Command and Control room is staffed 24/7 with the primary aim of receiving 999 calls and mobilising the appropriate number and type of fire engines to an emergency incident. Changing the way Control staff work will free up more time to enable them to undertake roles to support the delivery of community safety activity which will further reduce risk to local communities. The extra capacity created will also provide the opportunity for the Service to generate income by offering the skills and experience of our control staff to other organisations.

Proposal 3

Over the last 5 years the number of requests for assistance from agencies such as the ambulance service, care homes, undertakers etc to assist with bariatric (obese) patients has increased by 150%. Many of these requests are for non-life threatening situations and although our staff are trained and equipped to deal with the rapid extrications at emergency incidents, to provide assistance effectively in non-life threatening situations we will need to provide specialist equipment and training for our firefighters. Whilst we will always respond to life threatening emergency incidents, we are considering implementing a cost recovery scheme when there is no immediate risk to life. Even in these situations we will never charge a patient directly for this but we are proposing to seek to recover costs from the requesting agency.

Proposal 4

The cost of providing your Fire and Rescue Service for a Band A property is £60.30 per year. For every 1% we increase council tax the majority of households will pay an additional 60 pence per year for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Other Questions

Would you like to be more involved in shaping the future of your local fire and rescue service in County Durham and Darlington? If you live in County Durham or Darlington we are looking for local people to become more involved in working with us as we plan how to deliver our services.

Test your smoke alarm today!

We are asking six specific questions as part of our IRMP consultation this year.

Click here to take part in our online survey

We are also asking whether you want to get more involved with your fire and rescue service - there are a number of ways you can do this. Please take some time to answer the questions below as we do value your views and take them in to account when we make decisions.

Q1. We are proposing to increase the use of Targeted Response Vehicles for small fires. Do you agree with our proposals to do this? Yes No

Q2. We are proposing to increase the capacity of our control room staff by changing working routine and shift systems. Do you agree with this proposal? Yes No

Q3. We are considering changing our approach with the Ambulance Service and other agencies when dealing with bariatric patients in non-emergency situations. Do you agree with this approach? Yes No

Q4. Do you support increasing Council Tax to protect front line service provision, e.g. the number of fire stations and fire engines we have? Yes No
(every 1% council tax increase costs 60 pence per year for the majority of households)

Q5. Do you think the Authority should accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant and freeze council tax in 2013/14? Yes No
(this grant will last for two years only and will then be withdrawn. This could mean the Authority will need to increase council tax by a higher amount in future years)

Q6. Would you like to take part in a customer panel that will meet approximately four times a year and which will look at how Services are provided in County Durham and Darlington? Yes No

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Closing date for consultation 22nd March 2013

IRMP Team
County Durham and Darlington Fire and
Rescue Service
Framwellgate Moor
Durham
DH1 5BR



BUSINESS REPLY SERVICE
Licence No. DU 284

Safest People, Safest Places

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Contact Us

Your views

Your views are important and do matter. If you have any comments on this IRMP or wish to speak to someone about the content, please contact **0845 305 8383**

Alternative Formats

If you would like this document in an alternative format please contact **0845 305 8383**



07 | Notes

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