



Making Cheshire Safer

Our plans for 2018-19



Annual Action Plan (IRMP 15) 2018-19

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Introduction

Over the past five years the Fire Authority has overseen a significant transformation in how its fire and rescue services are provided across Cheshire. This has seen changes in how emergency cover is provided, including the introduction of a ten-minute response standard for life risk incidents; changes to the way fire engines are crewed, the building of four new fire stations and the construction of an innovative and interactive safety and lifeskills centre, Safety Central.

This period has also fostered new initiatives in conjunction with health partners and the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) to deliver 'Safe and Well' assessments – staff delivering health and wellbeing information alongside fire safety advice – and assisting paramedics in responding to cardiac arrests or requests to force entry into premises to assist those in need. The Fire Authority has also embarked upon a significant collaboration programme with Cheshire Constabulary and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to develop a shared headquarters and joint corporate services to serve both organisations.

Despite the changes over the previous five years, there remain a number of challenges ahead. The recently agreed four-year financial settlement with the Government will require the Fire Authority to save a further £2.4m by 2020/21.

In addition, the Government's fire reform agenda, which is outlined in more detail later in this document, sets out a direction of travel and challenges for the fire sector to meet to ensure services are effective, accountable, transparent and reflective of the diverse communities it serves. The recent tragedy at Grenfell Tower poses some particular challenges to the sector and while the outcomes of the Public Inquiry into the fire will not be known for some time, it is likely that the incident will lead to a number of changes that fire and rescue services will need to consider and implement.

This plan, therefore, sets out some short, medium and longer-term proposals aimed at ensuring the Fire Authority is best placed to provide the communities it serves with a first-class fire and rescue service up to 2020 and beyond. Achieving this will require the support, involvement and awareness of staff, partners and communities.



Paul Hancock
Chief Fire Officer
and Chief Executive



Cllr. Bob Rudd
Fire Authority Chair

Your Service

Overview

Cheshire Fire Authority is the publicly accountable body consisting of 23 elected councillors from the four council areas of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington. The Authority manages the fire and rescue service on behalf of the communities of Cheshire. You can find details of the Fire Authority Members via the following link www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/about-us/fire-authority

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service is led by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and the Service Management Team. You can find out who the Service Management Team are through this link <http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/contact-us/management-information>

The Service operates from 28 fire stations across Cheshire which are staffed in a number of different ways to reflect local risks and demands. The centre spread of this document contains a map showing where the stations are located across the county and how they are currently staffed. The way the Service is structured is explained over the next page.

The Service also operates three community safety centres; three fire protection offices; a joint headquarters with Cheshire Police, a training centre and workshops in Winsford, and the new safety and lifeskills centre in Lymm, Safety Central.

The Service's emergency call handling function is provided by North West Fire Control, based in Lingley Mere in Warrington. This is a collaboration between four fire and rescue services providing a control room function for Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester and Lancashire.



Service Delivery and Operational Policy and Assurance



The Service Delivery department encompasses the organisations' frontline emergency response functions. Further details on how the Service provides emergency cover across Cheshire can be found at the centre of this document or on our website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk. The Service Delivery department is supported by the Operational Policy and Assurance department, which oversees the operational training of firefighters, management of the Service's fleet of vehicles, testing and developing new equipment as well as the provision of health, safety and wellbeing for the organisation.

Prevention



The Prevention department oversees much of the community based work undertaken by the Service. This includes delivering fire safety and health and wellbeing advice to residents across Cheshire through our Safe and Well programme.

The department undertakes a number of activities to positively engage with young people aged 9 to 25. This is facilitated through our fire cadet units, RESPECT programmes, and courses run in conjunction with The Princes' Trust. The department also works to promote safety on the roads and co-ordinates the work of our cohort of volunteers.

Protection and Organisational Performance



The Protection and Organisational Performance department is responsible for the Service's fire protection activities and ensuring non-residential premises comply with fire safety legislation. This includes working with businesses across Cheshire to promote fire safety in the workplace and inspecting premises to ensure they comply with fire safety laws. The department also investigate the cause of fires, work to reduce the impact of deliberate fires on the community and leads on the work with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Corporate Services



All of the functions provided by the Service are assisted by a range of corporate services including human resources, communications and engagement, finance, procurement, stores and legal services. Most of this will be delivered to both Cheshire Police and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service through joint teams based at the shared Police and Fire headquarters at Clemonds Hey.

Our Journey

Over the past five years the Authority has made a number of significant changes to the way fire and rescue services are delivered across Cheshire, to improve the efficiency of the organisation and to achieve £7.7m in savings.

This has involved the following:

- Introducing a 10 minute response standard for life-risk incidents with a target to achieve this on 80% of occasions.
- Building four new fire stations at Alsager, Lymm, Penketh and Powey Lane.
- Building a state of the art safety and lifeskills centre adjoining the fire station at Lymm.
- Introducing 12 hour shifts at our wholetime duty system stations.
- Implementing a new day crewing duty system at stations in Congleton, Northwich and Winsford.
- Establishing a nucleus duty system at Macclesfield.
- Reviewing the staffing and location of the Service's specialist vehicles.
- Riding with four firefighters on all fire engines.
- Conducting value for money reviews across the organisation's support functions.
- Introducing a new response policy for Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs).
- Assisting NWAS in responding to cardiac arrests and requests to force entry to properties in order to provide assistance.
- Transferring control room functions to North West Fire Control.
- Successfully campaigning to introduce a legal requirement on private landlords in England to install smoke alarms.
- Providing funding for housing providers to install sprinkler systems in high-rise properties.
- Recruiting a cohort of firefighter and community safety apprentices.
- Recruiting new intakes of wholetime firefighters.
- Working with partners to deliver 'Safe and Well' assessments.
- Undertaking a collaboration programme with Cheshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner to deliver joint corporate services from a shared headquarters site.



Our Performance

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England provides overall strategic direction from the Government regarding fire and rescue authorities. Within the Framework, each Authority is required to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), which identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community. Each IRMP must demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities. The Authority's five year strategy, Planning for a Safer Cheshire 2015-20, provides this detail and annual action plans (like this one) support the delivery of these activities.

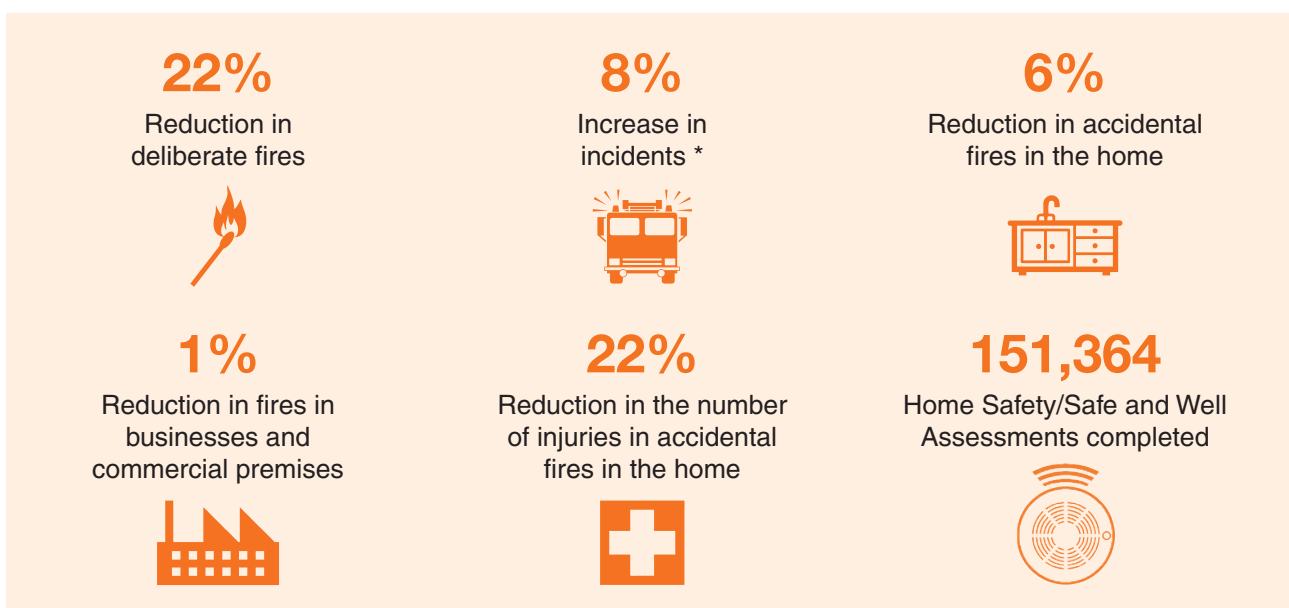
The Community Risk Management (CRM) model is the Service's way of monitoring risk levels so that it can target its resources effectively in the most appropriate areas. The CRM ensures data and information is used to support the delivery of the organisation's fire prevention, community protection and emergency response activity.

The organisation prioritises key issues identified through a variety of internal and external intelligence sources including specialist computer modelling software, Geographic Information Systems, demographic data and historical incident information and trends.

The CRM model involves the monitoring of intelligence and performance at least quarterly through structures such as the Service's Performance and Programme Board and also Unitary Performance Groups. This ensures that the Service's activity is delivered according to local risk issues and ensures community safety initiatives can be targeted effectively.

The Fire Authority regularly monitors the performance of the organisation through its Performance and Overview Committee. Members of the Authority also monitor performance through Member/Officer buddying arrangements and the use of Member Champions for thematic issues such as health and safety or equality and inclusion.

Performance is tracked using a mix of agreed performance indicators and local targets. The infographics below show how Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has performed against some of its key targets over the past five years.



* This increase in incidents has been driven by attending more incidents to assist other agencies, such as cardiac arrests or being called to gain entry to a property in order to assist people.



Penketh Fire Station

Penketh Fire Station was officially opened in February 2017 and currently houses both wholetime firefighters and an on-call crew, who have been recruited from the local area.

As well as providing an emergency response, the station also contains rooms available for use by the local community.

Powey Lane Fire Station

The station at Powey Lane, just off the M56 in Mollington, opened in May 2017.

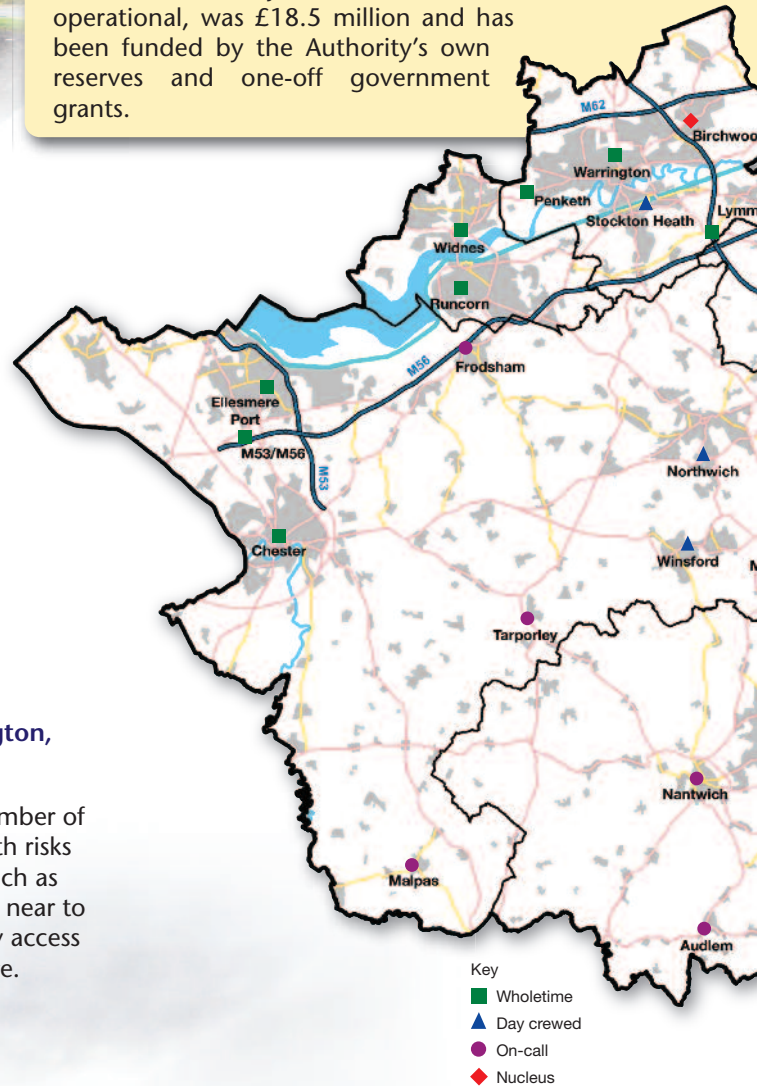
As well as traditional fire engines, the station houses a number of the Service's specialist vehicles and equipment to deal with risks specific to the local area in Chester and Ellesmere Port, such as heritage buildings and industrial complexes. The location near to the motorway network provides these vehicles with ready access to respond to other incidents across the whole of Cheshire.



Making Che

The construction of four new fire stations was part of the organisations' programme to improve emergency response across Cheshire.

The programme, which was subject to comprehensive public consultation, followed an in depth review of emergency cover across the Service. The total cost of building the fire stations and safety centre, all of which are now operational, was £18.5 million and has been funded by the Authority's own reserves and one-off government grants.



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Lymm Fire Station and Safety Central

Lymm Fire Station became operational in Summer 2017 and houses wholtime firefighters and specialist appliances such as an aerial ladder platform and the Service's technical rescue unit.

In addition, Safety Central, the area's first purpose-built education and lifeskills facility, will deliver educational programmes in an interactive way to ensure visitors take away important safety information. The programmes are devised and written with the aim of reducing accidental deaths and injuries from fire, at home, on the road and in the community.

Learning will take place in a series of life-size, purpose built scenarios designed to be realistic, immersive and interactive, including:

- A three bedroom home
- A typical A-road which takes in both urban and rural settings
- A courtroom, cyber-safety classroom, shop and police custody suite
- A farm, railway station, urban park, forest, canal side and open water
- An immersive virtual learning zone

Please visit www.safetycentral.org.uk for more information.



Alsager Fire Station

Alsager Fire Station was opened in August 2015 and is an on-call station, staffed by local firefighters who live or work nearby and respond to emergencies via an alerter.

The station has already cemented itself as an important part of the community and the crew have attended many local events as well as holding the Station's first open day. Recently, a fire cadet unit was established at the station for young people aged 13-17. More information on the cadet unit can be found at www.cheshirefire.gov.uk.



Our Finances

Cheshire Fire Authority is funded through two main sources of income; a grant from central government and through its share of council tax. Council tax makes up around 65% of the Authority's funding, with government grant composing the other 35%.

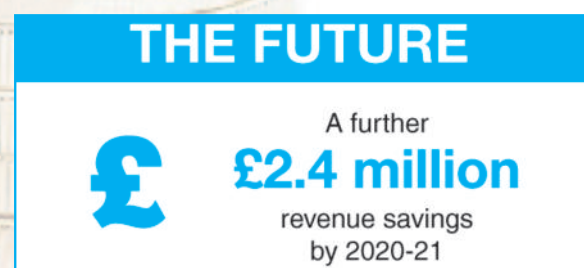
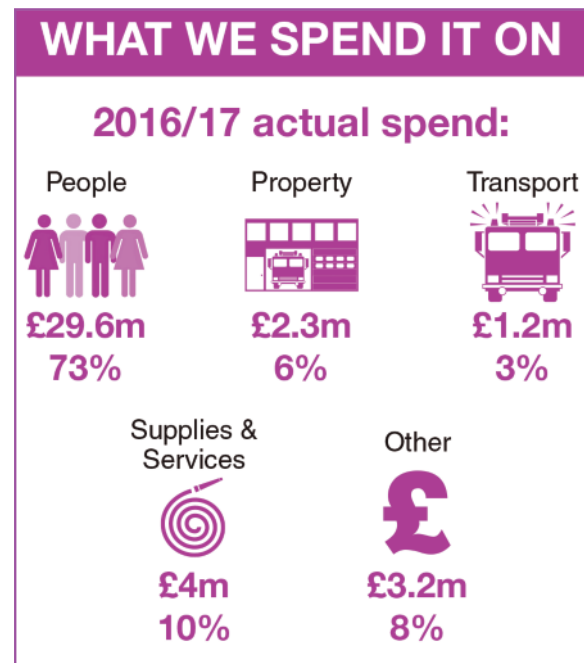
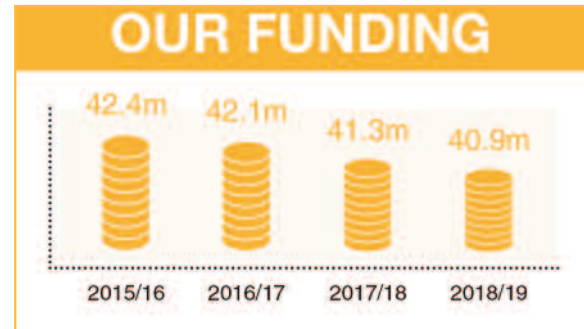
As part of its budget management, the Authority produces a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), covering a five year period. The MTFP is updated regularly to reflect emerging local, regional and national issues and makes informed assumptions about issues such as future pay, inflation, government funding and council tax levels. The MTFP can be viewed on our website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

The Fire Authority recently agreed a four-year funding settlement with the Government, which provides some certainty on the amount of central funding available up to 2020/2021. Additionally, the Authority has assumed within its financial planning an annual 2.99% increase in its share of council tax; an annual 2% increase in pay for staff and a 2% allowance each year for non-pay inflation. However, these are subject to change and are regularly reviewed by the Authority.

Taking together the funding settlement and assumptions described above, the Fire Authority will need to make £2.4m in revenue savings in the period to 2020/21.

The Fire Authority also maintains a capital spending programme. This is separate from revenue spending (which covers the day-to-day running costs of the organisation), instead capital relates to things such as investing in new buildings, fire engines and specialist equipment.

Despite the requirements to make £7.7m in revenue savings over the past five years; during the same period the Fire Authority has spent over £25m in capital – funded primarily through its own reserves and grants from central funding. This has enabled the building of four new fire stations and the innovative Safety Central; the purchase of new fire engines and specialist hydraulic platforms, as well as replacement breathing apparatus, fire kit and other equipment to improve emergency response and the safety of firefighters.



Our Key Drivers

This section will examine the main external influences upon the Fire Authority. As explained in the previous section, while internal performance is monitored and acted upon regularly, there are also a number of issues that influence the decisions and actions of the Fire Authority. These issues, and the response to them, are regularly discussed by both Fire Authority Members and senior officers from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

As well as the issues detailed specifically within this document, as part of its planning process the Fire Authority regularly considers a range of other external issues covering political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, environmental, legal and organisational (PESTELO) themes at a local, regional and national level. This is considered alongside analysis of past incidents and activity to inform the development of future emergency response arrangements so that the Authority can fulfil its requirements under the Government's National Framework.

The latest PESTELO analysis (2015) considered by the Authority can be found on its website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

One of the most significant drivers for change is the Government's fire reform programme, which was announced by the then Home Secretary (now Prime Minister) Theresa May in 2016. Following key reviews of the fire and rescue service by Sir Ken Knight in 2012 and Adrian Thomas in 2015, the fire reform programme focuses on three pillars, which are explored in more detail on the following pages:

- Accountability and transparency
- Efficiency and collaboration
- Workforce reform

Accountability and Transparency



The Fire Authority has continually looked to review its performance and compare itself with others. It was among the first to successfully go through the national Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge review in 2012; and it is committed to supporting the introduction of a new inspection regime, with the framework currently being developed by the Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

The Fire Authority continues to seek external accreditation for its work, such as entering the annual Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, where it is currently ranked fourth and the best performing emergency service in the country. It will also seek re-accreditation for its 'Excellent' rating under the successor to the national Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework that emerges as part of a new inspection regime.

Additionally, the development of a new-look website will enable the Fire Authority to publish more details of both its current and past performance online, making it easier to find key information and inviting scrutiny of its performance by the communities it serves.

Efficiency and Collaboration



The drive to work collaboratively has already seen the Fire Authority transform its Home Safety Assessments to become 'Safe and Well' assessments, offering health information and referral pathways for specific concerns as well as providing fire safety advice to residents.

The Fire Authority will also continue to employ staff as part of multi-agency teams working with local partners under the Complex Dependencies Programme, which streamlines support for those needing help from a number of local agencies.

Additionally the Fire Authority will continue to work together with local authorities across the sub-region to improve the efficiency of public services, through programmes such as managing estates collectively to reduce the cost of running properties or releasing land to bolster economic growth.

Operational crews have been part of a national trial in conjunction with ambulance trusts to respond to cardiac arrests and to attend properties on request to gain entry to assist those in need.

The Fire Authority has also partnered with Hydes Brewery and Certas Energy under the Government's Primary Authority Scheme, which sees officers provide fire safety advice across all of the partner companies' premises. This ensures that the partner company receives an efficient and standardised approach to fire safety.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 enables Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to take responsibility for the governance of fire and rescue services where a local case is made. In Cheshire, the Fire Authority and the PCC work closely together, embarking upon a major programme of collaboration with Cheshire Constabulary to provide joint corporate services to both organisations from a shared headquarters. The project is scheduled to be completed by October 2018. The PCC also attends meetings of the Fire Authority with a view to fostering greater collaboration and joint working.

Workforce Reform

The Government's focus on workforce reform has raised questions about the culture of the fire and rescue service workforce and the scale of engagement with staff and minority communities.

The independent review into fire service terms and conditions undertaken by Adrian Thomas in 2015 and published in November 2016, sets out a number of recommendations that have been used by Ministers as a blueprint for reform.



Key elements of reform announced by the Government include the introduction of a national professional standards body to sit alongside the new inspectorate and a drive to improve recruitment, training, development and leadership across the fire sector.

The Fire Authority will progress a 'Service Transformation Plan' and staff engagement survey action plans, that will address a number of issues around improving workplace culture, engaging with and developing staff and creating an open, inclusive and diverse workforce. The Fire Authority has also supported positive action events to help encourage recruitment from under-represented groups and will continue to do so, to make the Service more representative of the community it serves.



Devolution

The push for the devolution of decision making power to local areas has resulted in the introduction of directly elected mayors in certain areas, who have greater powers to direct public services and improve their locality. The recently elected mayor in Greater Manchester for example, exercises direction over the local policing and fire and rescue services. The mayor for the Liverpool City Region (which includes Halton) also has extended responsibilities, though these do not currently cover policing or fire and rescue.

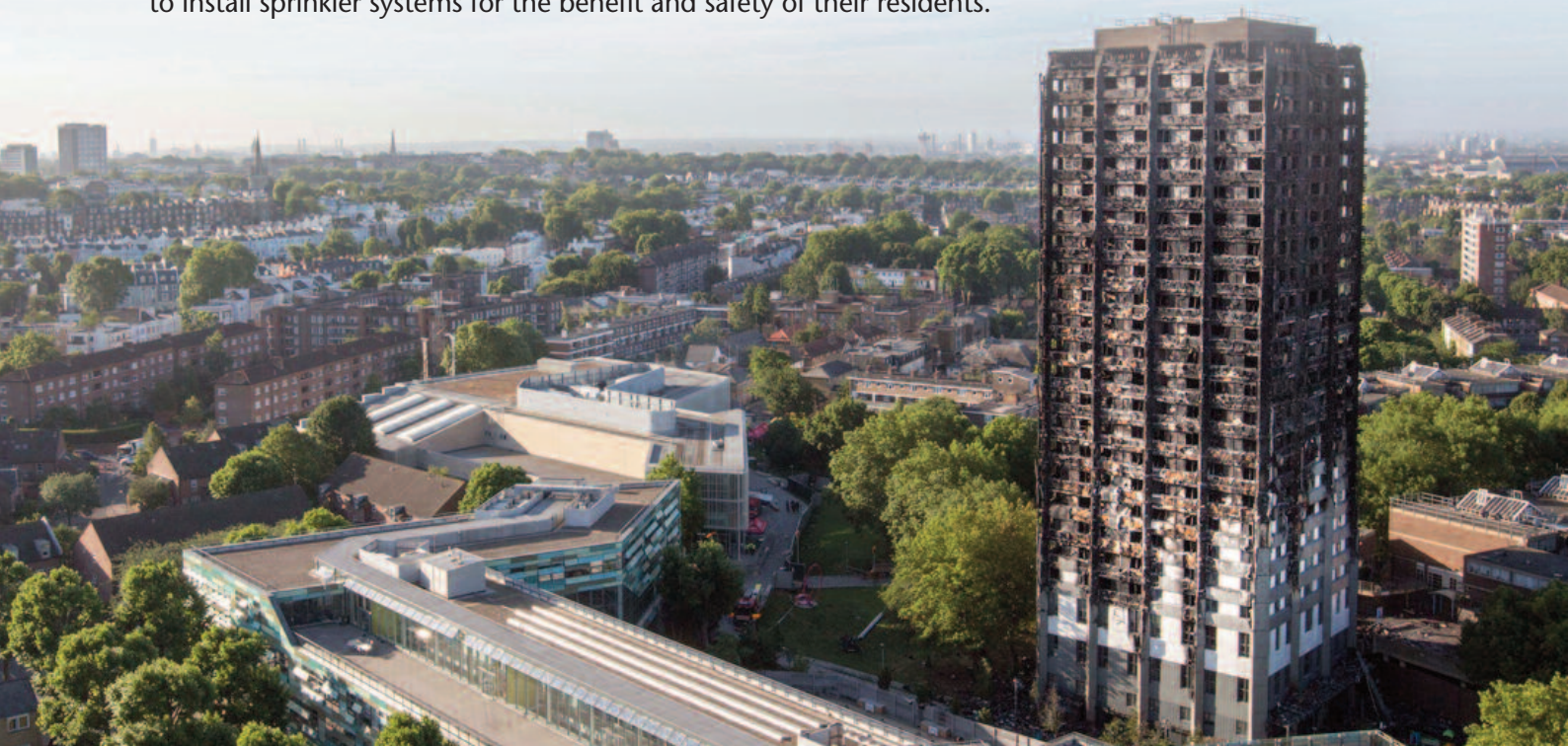
Locally, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Borough Councils have agreed to put a proposed devolution deal before a public referendum. The Authority will engage with our partners across the sub-region to help support the development of a combined authority covering Cheshire and Warrington.

Post Grenfell Tower

The tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, a high-rise tower block in West London, raised several significant questions over how fire safety regulations are enforced in such premises. While the public inquiry into the fire has only recently been launched, the outcomes and findings are likely to have a significant impact upon the fire sector as a whole.

Since the incident, the Fire Authority has been liaising with local housing providers and councils to ensure the safety of residents in specific premises and will continue to work with authorities both locally and nationally to enforce fire safety in the areas where it is responsible and to help inform the emerging national picture regarding fire safety in high-rise and other premises.

Over recent years, the Authority has been proactive in encouraging the use of sprinkler systems to help minimise damage from fire and to save lives. Going forward, the Authority will provide additional funding to assist and encourage local housing providers, such as those operating high-rise tower blocks, to install sprinkler systems for the benefit and safety of their residents.



Our plans



- **Macclesfield Aerial Appliance** – during 2018/19 the Authority will review the provision of its third aerial appliance, currently based at Macclesfield Fire Station.
- **Reviewing Duty Systems** – the Authority will commence work on scoping reviews into crewing arrangements at Penketh and Wilmslow Fire Stations. While work will commence this year, any potential outcomes will be presented at a future date alongside a wider package of emergency response proposals which will be subject to public consultation.
- **Emergency Medical Response** – the Authority will seek to roll-out the cardiac response pilot, undertaken in conjunction with North West Ambulance Service, to all fire stations across Cheshire.
- **Protection Review** – during 2018/19 a review of the department will be undertaken to ensure that it has the resources required to meet emerging demands resulting from the Hackitt Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, as well as the Public Inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire.
- **Sprinkler Campaign** – the Authority will provide additional funding to promote the adoption of sprinkler systems by local housing providers.



- **Sadler Road Training Centre** – during 2018/19 the Authority will commence building the operational training centre at its Sadler Road site.

The centre redevelopment is a significant investment made by the Authority to ensure the safety of its firefighters, which will result in existing facilities being replaced to provide immersive and realistic training environments to ensure that firefighters can respond to a range of incidents confidently, competently and safely. The development of the training centre will also be coupled with the review of duty systems for the cohort of trainers, in order to make the most efficient use of the new facility.
- **Station Build Programme** – the Authority will commence work on a new Chester Fire Station on the existing St Anne Street site in 2018. Emergency response will continue to be delivered from the site during the construction period. The Authority will also consider options to develop new, replacement fire stations at Crewe and Warrington and will look to work collaboratively with partner agencies regarding future options where possible
- **Property Enhancement Programme** – the Authority will begin work on undertaking a programme of refurbishment to improve and modernise its fire stations and houses.



- **Service Transformation** – the Authority is due to be inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) during the summer of 2018 and will undertake work to both prepare for the inspection and respond to any recommendations made as a result.

It will also deliver against the Service Transformation Plan to reflect the requirements of other elements of the fire reform agenda.

Additionally, action plans to address outcomes of the 2017 staff survey will be developed and delivered against; and these will be monitored and reviewed by Fire Authority Members.

- **Blue Light Collaboration** - the Blue Light Collaboration programme with Cheshire Constabulary and the Police and Crime Commissioner will conclude in 2018/19. This will see the formal launch of a shared fire and police headquarters at Clemonds Hey as well as the establishment of the joint corporate services function, which will provide support services to both organisations. The Authority will also pursue other opportunities to collaborate with Cheshire Constabulary and the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- **Public Service Reform** – the Service will continue to contribute to the Complex Dependencies Programme, to provide a streamlined approach for those needing support from a number of different agencies.
- **Precept** – Cheshire Fire Authority will increase its share of council tax (its precept) by 2.99% in 2018/19. For a Band D equivalent property this increase amounts to £2.19 per year, taking the Authority's precept to £75.48.

Involving You

Consultation

This document sets out the Authority's plans for the forthcoming financial year in 2018/19. The proposals within the draft version of this Plan were consulted upon for 13 weeks between October 2017 and January 2018 and aimed at encouraging feedback on the draft plan from the public, members of staff and local stakeholders and partner organisations.

Extensive feedback was received across all channels. In total, 832 members of the public, 124 members of staff and 13 stakeholder groups or organisations formally responded to the consultation. Members of Cheshire Fire Authority have received emerging feedback throughout the consultation process and a full feedback report was considered by Members of Cheshire Fire Authority at their meeting on 14th February 2018, when Members also set the Authority's budget for 2018-19.

In addition, a separate consultation was held between January and February 2018 on proposals to increase the Authority's share of council tax (its precept) by 2.99% in 2018/19.

Copies of the full consultation report, precept consultation and minutes of the Fire Authority meeting of 14th February 2018 can be found online at www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/

If you would like to take part in future consultations regarding Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service then please check the consultation section of the Service's website or get in touch using the details below:

Email: consultation@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Tel: 01606 868700

Post: Cheshire Fire and Rescue Consultation, Joint Corporate Services, Clemonds Hey, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 2UA



How safe is your home?

The answer is at your fingertips



Online Home Safety questionnaire



Risk Rater app



Do our home safety check and get a personalised fire safety plan.

www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/homesafetycheck

There's lots of information on how to prevent fires in the home.



www.cheshirefire.gov.uk