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Portfolio Holder for Community Services - Jeremy Hilton

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The Government’s recently published white paper “Our Fire and Rescue Service” signals a fundamental change in the focus of fire service activity across the country. Local communities should no longer be satisfied with just a reactive response to emergencies, but instead should expect a more positive, multi-dimensional approach - more in tune with the complex realities of the 21st Century. Importantly, brigades should be equally committed to reducing fires and other emergency incidents in their area, as well as responding to a whole range of incidents, both large and small, in a timely and professional manner when needed.

With this in mind, the Government has asked local fire authorities to develop Integrated Risk Management Plans that match their brigades’ resources to identified risks to life, property and the environment - as well as to places of cultural and historical significance - whilst at the same time, providing local council taxpayers with value for money.

However, with the on-going support of Gloucestershire County Council as the county’s fire authority, Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service (GFRS) has been actively engaged in this ‘modernisation’ process for some years now and it has been paying dividends, both in terms of the level of service it delivers and its costs. Something that Government recognised last year when it awarded it Charter Mark status for excellence in service delivery. For instance, although GFRS is one of the smaller brigades in the UK, year-on-year it is also one of the most financially efficient.

What’s more, unlike many fire brigades, GFRS is already providing a true fire and rescue service, as it strives to meet the diverse risks across our county. For example, not only do your firefighters respond to fire-related emergencies, they also help people involved in car crashes, stuck on cliff faces, trapped in collapsed structures, stranded by flood water or those who have fallen into rivers, lakes and canals - to name but a few.

On the prevention side too, the Service is forward-thinking and innovative in its approach, with free expert advice and local education initiatives aimed at people of all ages, families and the business community already well-established. More recently, it has gone into partnership with other agencies and organisations such as the Police to research and tackle arson, with the aims of reducing anti-social behaviour and improving the quality of life for people who live, work and visit Gloucestershire.

To put this in context, under the old performance standards based solely on property risk, GFRS has only ever been required to get one fire engine to a fire incident within 20 minutes throughout most parts of the county - the minimum national level of emergency response - because of its rural nature. Today, both the Chief Fire Officer and myself feel there is no significant evidence to expose our communities to response times any longer than this.

In the future, I see your fire and rescue service playing a pivotal role in safeguarding and promoting public and business safety throughout all our communities. But in order to get there, first a great deal of hard work still needs to be done to meet the local challenges that lie ahead. In addition, the Service will also have to manage and resource the growing regional and national responsibilities now incumbent upon it as the threat of global terrorism increases.

Therefore, this first year’s plan will be a cautious one. Not because of a lack of ambition but because of other, as yet, undefined factors – such as the continuing national negotiations after the industrial dispute and the Government’s white paper proposals having yet to become law.

Please take time to scrutinise this plan and we look forward to hearing your comments, since I believe constructive input from the start by the people who actually use the services can only shape the future of your fire and rescue service for the better.

Cllr Jeremy Hilton
Cabinet Member for Community Services

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Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service, Waterwells Drive, Quedgeley, Gloucestershire. GL2 2AX
why do we need an integrated risk plan?

In June 2003, the Government’s White Paper “Our Fire and Rescue Service” stated its intention to establish a new national statutory framework for the fire service. Locally, this will place a legal responsibility on Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) - as the county’s Fire Authority - to plan for and organise appropriate responses to a broad range of emergencies, such as road traffic accidents, water rescues and major incidents, as well as fires.

As a fully-fledged fire and rescue service, GFRS has been doing much of this work for a number of years, even though we have never been required to do so by law or been compelled to meet any national performance standards other than those set out by the Government relating to fire.

We have always tried to balance our resources to our community needs - particularly in the areas of road traffic accidents and flooding. For example, at least one fire engine at every station in the county has specialist cutting equipment and our three dedicated rescue units are situated strategically to respond across the county as quickly as possible. Furthermore, we have to deal with a county that is made up of geographical extremes, whether it is from the dense urban environment of Gloucester and Cheltenham to the remote rural communities of the Cotswolds - or from the hills and valleys of the Forest of Dean and Stroud to the flood plain and tidal estuary of the River Severn.

Until now, emergency response has been based on national standards devised before the Second World War that focused solely on property risks and only took into account fire-related incidents. This new planning framework will aim to identify resources - from both the fire service and its partners - to meet the actual risks, with the risk to life being the most important factor.

As a fully-fledged fire and rescue service, GFRS has been doing much of this work for a number of years, even though we have never been required to do so by law.
what is the plan all about?

In broad terms the objectives of the IRMP are to:-

- reduce the incidence of fire
- reduce loss of life in fires and accidents
- reduce the number and severity of injuries occurring in fires and other emergencies
- safeguard the environment and protect the National Heritage
- To provide the community of Gloucestershire with value for money

These new requirements will be brought together in an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for the county and will be the first time the Fire Authority has been required to devise emergency response standards locally - not just for fires, but for all emergencies GFRS attend.

However, emergency response is only one element of the planning process, with the aim being to bring about improved community safety throughout the county. GFRS will do this through a combination of prevention, protection and intervention, which will involve education and awareness initiatives, research, partnership working, enforcement and emergency response. It will also involve making more productive and targeted use of the organisation’s resources.

The IRMP will also need to take into account regional and national responsibilities being placed upon us in response to the growing threat of terrorist attacks and major incidents. In simple terms, this will broadly focus on mass decontamination of the public in the event the release of a chemical, nuclear or biological agent as well as helping those trapped in collapsed buildings or structures - either in Gloucestershire or elsewhere in the country. It should be appreciated, however, that this responsibility adds significant demands on GFRS resources since the staffing of the one mass decontamination unit based in the county, for example, requires at least 8 fire crews - almost a quarter of all fire crews currently available in Gloucestershire on a normal daily basis.

Overall, I welcome this new approach, as it supports the way we have been working for the last decade. As for the future, I see GFRS continuing to adapt, evolve and reshape itself - rather than going through any radical transformation - as it focuses on making Gloucestershire safer for those who live, work in and visit the county.

Peter Jones
Chief Fire Officer
Our analysis will need to have certain core elements that will not only ensure current, new and changing risks across the county are met but also guarantee any future plan is robust, sustainable and delivers a safer Gloucestershire.

- All measures in the plan should combine to make Gloucestershire safer (10)
- An effective, resilient and safe emergency response must be maintained (11)
- Primarily aim to reduce the loss of life and injuries, but also endeavour to reduce property and environmental damage, protect our heritage, preserve business continuity and support the local economy (12)
- Develop a more flexible service - one which can respond to changing patterns of risk across the county at different times of the day, week or year (13)
- Continue to develop the ability to handle major and prolonged incidents including terrorist attacks (14)
- Provide support and advice after an incident to avoid unnecessary suffering and economic loss (15)
- Invest in resources to help reduce risk and improve community safety (16)
- Continue to involve community leaders, business leaders and the public in decisions about how to organise and prioritise the use of resources (17)
- Continue to work closely with partner agencies and organisations to produce a truly integrated risk management plan (18)
- Maintain and develop safer systems of work for all our firefighters (19)
- Continue to secure best value in all activities, by skilful use of taxpayers’ money (20)
who is at risk from fire and other hazards in Gloucestershire?

In simple terms, we already have a lot of information about the fire risks in the county, but we still want to find out more so that we can continuously improve our prevention work and target our emergency response to where and when it is most needed.

Overall, national research (supported by our own evidence) suggests a close relationship between fire deaths/injuries and a complex combination of factors such as age, socio-economic status, social exclusion, impaired mobility, drug and alcohol abuse. A number these factors seem to be linked to increased risk from fire and other accidents but casual links are not so clear.

For example, are elderly people more at risk because of their age, or because they are more likely to live on a limited income - or from a mixture of the two? To try and address this, we intend to work with our partners to bring together the relevant information relating to those factors as well as analyse the effectiveness of different methods, which seek to reduce those risks. (21)

In fact, this is already happening with our fire safety campaign Caring Together - in partnership with other organisations - targeting the elderly in their own homes. By comparing the numbers of fires this group of people have in their homes across the county, we intend to assess the campaign’s impact.

Unfortunately, we do not know as much as we would like about the other types of risks in the county - such as road and water risks - because, in the past, fire brigades have been compelled to concentrate their efforts exclusively on analysing fire-related incidents, since that has been their primary purpose in both the eyes of the public and the Government.

There is a pressing need, therefore, to expand our information gathering to include other type of risks. This is self-evident when you realise that although one or two people a year die from fire in Gloucestershire, around 40 die from accidents on our roads and we rescue hundreds more who are trapped and injured.

Over the next few years, we intend once again to work with our partners to develop robust risk and prevention analysis for these types of incident in a similar way to how we will approach fires.

national research suggests a close relationship between fire deaths/injuries and a complex combination of factors such as age, socio-economic status, social exclusion, impaired mobility, drug and alcohol abuse.
emergencies we attended during 2002 - 2003

The Service is already able to gather some information about the incidents we attend. However, in the future we will need to identify new systems and equipment with our partners, to store, analyse and report on data in order to improve our new risk-based decision making process.

13953 emergency calls and attended 7737 emergency incidents

121 incidents relating to flooding
406 house fires
31 fires in derelict buildings
487 traffic accidents
121 smaller fire incidents
522 vehicle fires
out of 843 were arson

2058 false alarms
(23) from automatic fire alarm

141 hoax calls
(24)

GFRS costs just £24.14 per head of population per year, this is the second lowest in the Country
(CIPFA 2002)

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47 others who were injured

4 people who died in incidents involving fire
984 other non-fire related emergencies

(22) (23) (24) (25)
our plan for 2004 - 2005

One of our main priorities is to clearly identify the risks facing us and with the help of our partners assess what those risks will mean in terms of community safety.

Therefore our first year action plan will be:-

prevention and education - research the effectiveness of the current education and community programmes (26)

protection - develop further initiatives to make our communities a safer place to live and work (27)

risk identification - review all relevant risks to ensure they have been fully identified and quantified

risk assessment - assess the exact extent and nature of incidents the service attends, in order to better understand the resources required to deal with them effectively (28)

environmental protection - assess the extent to which priorities for protecting the environment will impact on service resources (29)

medical services assistance - assess the need or otherwise to support health professionals by providing advanced first aid to members of the public until paramedics arrive (30)

changes to the law - assess the impact of new Fire Safety Legislation due in November 2004 (31)

Current uncertainty about the extent of any new legal responsibilities coupled with our commitment to regional and national resilience relating to terrorist attack, means that assessing future resource levels would be inappropriate in the short term. Therefore, until these elements are more defined, it would be unwise to consider any major shifting of current resources.
Cheltenham Borough

Current emergency response resources situated in the district:-
- 3 fire engines based in Cheltenham
- strategically sited special rescue unit and water carrier
- aerial platform

Risk Profile:-
Urban District with a mixture of housing, commercial/industrial and shopping/entertainment facilities. Also exhibits areas of urban deprivation.

- population 110,013
- higher than average number of 20-29 year olds
- higher than average number of single person households
- higher than average number of lone parent households

major risks - GCHQ, Cheltenham General Hospital, Cheltenham Town Football Stadium, Cheltenham Racecourse, M5, Commercial/Industrial Districts

heritage risk - regency town centre

Incident Profile 2002/03:-
- high incidence of house fires
- high incidence of vehicle fires
- high incidence of automatic fire alarms
Gloucester City

**Risk Profile:**
*(32)*

Urban District with a mixture of housing, commercial/industrial and shopping/entertainment facilities. Also exhibits areas of urban deprivation.

- population 109,885
- higher than average number of 0-14 year olds
- higher than average number of households with someone with long term limiting illness
- higher than average number of lone parent households

**Major Risks** - Gloucester Royal Hospital, Gloucester Prison, Gloucester Rugby Club, M5, River Severn, Commercial/Industrial Districts

**Heritage Risk** - Gloucester Cathedral and Docks, historic city centre

**Incident Profile 2002/03:**

- high incidence of house fires
- high incidence of vehicle fires
- high incidence of automatic fire alarms

Current emergency response resources situated in the district

- 3 fire engines based in Gloucester
- strategically sited special rescue unit and incident command unit
- aerial platform
- strategically sited boat rescue team

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Current emergency response resources situated in the district
- 9 fire engines based in communities throughout the district
- strategically sited mass decontamination unit

Risk Profile:- (32)
Rural District consisting of a collection of small separate communities many dependent on the local environment.
- population 80,376
- higher than average number of elderly people
- high number of people who travel to work by road
- high number of farms

major risks - A417/419, A46, RAF Fairford

heritage risk - historic Cirencester town centre, royal country residences

Incident Profile 2002/03:-
- high incidence of vehicle fires
- high incidence of serious road traffic accidents
Forest of Dean

Risk Profile:-(32)
Rural District with large areas of woodland consisting of a collection of small communities including areas of light industrial activity. Also exhibits areas of rural deprivation.

- population 79,982
- high number of people who travel to work by road
- highest unemployment levels in the county
- higher than average number of households with someone with long term limiting illness
- higher than average number of lone parent households

major risks - River Severn, River Wye and surrounding cliffs.

heritage risk - Royal Forest of Dean, Victorian industrial heritage sites

Incident Profile 2002/03:-
- high incidence of house fires
- high incidence of serious road traffic accidents
- seasonal incidence of cliff rescues

Current emergency response resources situated in the district
- 7 fire engines based in communities throughout the district
- strategically sited cliff rescue teams

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Stroud

Current emergency response resources situated in the district

- 8 fire engines based in communities throughout the district
- strategically sited special rescue unit
- strategically sited damage control unit
- strategically sited environmental protection unit

Risk Profile:-
Combination of urban and rural communities with housing, light industry and a number of small shopping centres.

- population 107,898
- high number of people who travel to work by road
- higher than average number of 0-14 year olds
- higher than average number of elderly people

major risks - Berkeley Power Station, River Severn, Sharpness Canal, M5, A38, A46, Sapperton Railway Tunnel

heritage risk - Berkeley Castle, royal residence, Victorian mill heritage sites

Incident Profile 2002/03:-
- high incidence of vehicle fires
- high incidence of serious road traffic accidents
Tewkesbury Borough

Risk Profile:-

Rural District with expanding areas of housing and commercial/industrial districts.

- population 76,405
- high number of people who travel to work by road
- higher than average number of elderly people

major risks - Gloucestershire Airport, M5, RAF Innsworth, River Severn, River Avon

heritage risk - Historic Tewkesbury town centre and Abbey, Sudeley Castle

Incident Profile 2002/03:-

- high incidence of house fires
- high incidence of serious road traffic accidents
- high incidence of vehicle fires

Current emergency response resources situated in the district

- 3 fire engines based in communities throughout the district
- strategically sited boat rescue team

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Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service, Waterwells Drive, Quedgeley, Gloucestershire. GL2 2AX
our fire safety campaigns

We engage in many initiatives and partnership working schemes to deal with a whole range of community and safety issues. Some of our current activities are identified below and demonstrate our desire to provide a complete package of care.

Firesafe

Firesafe is an initiative aimed at driving down the fire deaths and injuries in the home. The scheme involves all local fire crews visiting homes throughout the county to deliver simple advice on preventing fire, escaping from fire, and providing early warning through fitting smoke alarms. The project serves to promote both firefighter and public safety through reducing those occasions where people are trapped by fire and in need of rescue.

Caring Together

The Caring Together scheme was launched to help us to reach the following three vulnerable groups in the community and has been funded through a county-wide initiative:

- Elderly people returning to their homes following a period of treatment and being looked after by carers
- Young children. The average age of children injured in fire related incidents in the home is only 3.
- People suffering from mental health problems and those with addictions to drugs or alcohol.

Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service provide the packs and training to a wide variety of caring organisations including the health service, social services, higher education establishments, community safety wardens, housing, the police and voluntary organisations.

To date, over 650 carers have been trained and we are optimistic that the coming years will see the scheme develop and ultimately, a reduction in the numbers of fire injuries and deaths within these targeted groups.

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FireScape
The FireScape programme is a series of courses aimed at young people who are in the last two years of compulsory education. The courses target teenagers with challenging behaviour who have been nominated by their head teacher. It provides an opportunity for them to take part in a learning experience outside the normal school environment and teaches them about the three fundamental fire service principles of leadership, teamwork and discipline - by using exciting and interesting practical team activities.

Sparky the Spider
Launched in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council’s Education Service, Sparky the Spider is aimed at reducing the level of burns, scalds and fire related injuries amongst pre-school and key stage one children. The teacher-led resource packs include lesson plans covering attitude, information and skills as well as books and Sparky Spider puppets aimed to educate younger children about the dangers of fire in a fun way. The entire project was funded by a government grant initiative.

Learn not to Burn
The Learn Not to Burn programme is a fully co-ordinated schools fire safety programme that includes all the core subjects of the national curriculum which provides a basic understanding of the nature and dangers of fire. Its main aim is to reduce the number and severity of fires and therefore reduce the number of subsequent deaths and injuries. Its overall objective is to educate children to take personal responsibility for the protection of themselves, their homes and the property of others. Around 35,000 students participate each year and it is financially supported by local business sponsorship.

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Future Factors

Our plans will also set long-term targets and objectives, again aimed at improving both community safety and service delivery. By adopting this approach, we will be able to respond to the future needs of our communities both flexibly and efficiently.

Future factors affecting our plans:-

- more elderly people - the county has a higher than national average ageing population
- larger communities - the population is also expanding, particularly around the Cheltenham and Gloucester area.
- more people living alone - single person households are on the increase
- more traffic - the numbers of vehicles on our roads is growing
- more need to safeguard the environment - people’s priorities are changing and concern for our environment is becoming more important
- more anti-social behaviour - this has exhibited itself in a gradual increase in arson related incidents
- more need to protect key sites - attacks on nationally important sites are a growing threat

As our communities develop we are committed to working with our partners to meet these changing needs.
This will involve establishing prevention, protection and intervention strategies aimed at the specific areas of concern highlighted above.
For example, with the continued expansion of Cheltenham and Gloucester, our fire stations may need to be relocated in order to maintain the high standards of services we already deliver.
Overall, our most important partnerships are with the communities themselves and, therefore, we would also like to hear your views on these issues.
Consultation Questions

To help us to determine our future plans we asked for your opinion in a number of areas. Your comments are appreciated and have been considered in finalising this plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No view either way</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service should be actively involved in reducing risks to its communities</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<td>Question 2</td>
<td>Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service should focus on reducing risk to people as well as to property</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<td>Question 3</td>
<td>Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service has an important role in protecting the environment</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service should be trying to prevent loss of life and injury from non fire emergencies (eg, road traffic accidents, flooding, chemical spills)</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<td>Question 5</td>
<td>Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service should carry out a full review of the County Risk area to determine the resources and local response requirements to meet the risk</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 6</td>
<td>Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service should continue to deliver home risk assessments for those people who are known to face higher risks from fire, and for those who have suffered loss due to fire recently in their homes</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 7</td>
<td>Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service should continue to arrange for smoke detectors to be fitted in the homes of people most at risk from fire</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Question 8</td>
<td>Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service should continue to work actively with young people to engender better citizenship</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 9</td>
<td>Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service in conjunction with Gloucestershire Ambulance Service, should research the need for providing advanced first aid to members of the public until Ambulance personnel arrive</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Question 10</td>
<td>Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service should work closely with the business community to assess the impact of new fire safety legislation and duties, due for introduction in late 2004</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you wish to make any other comments which could help improve our service, please contact us by letter, email or telephone.

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Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service, Waterwells Drive, Quedgeley, Gloucestershire, GL2 2AX
Footnotes to Community Safety Plan 2004-2005:

1. GFRS is a service provided by Gloucestershire County Council, and is fully integrated into its corporate and financial planning system. We produce an annual Level 2 Integrated Service Performance Plan (Service Plan) and are subject to the GCC corporate medium term financial strategy. As a result, our plans are well-established, but opportunities for short-term flexibility are dependent on shifting medium-term priorities.

2. GFRS has been modernising for many years, evidenced by our well-established commercial and community fire safety initiatives. We have had an automatic fire alarm reduction policy in place since 1998, targeting the top 20 commercial ‘offenders’ in the county. Not only does this work improve the fire safety of these targeted companies, but it also reduces the number of times fire engines are dispatched from station unnecessarily.

3. Last year, GFRS commissioned a research report in conjunction with the Police Service to identify the estimated cost of arson throughout the county and explore ways we can improve the way we work together to tackle this serious crime. It is now thought that a single deliberate vehicle fire costs the county in the region of £4000 - and GFRS responded to nearly 800 of them last year. As a result, we have teamed up with local district councils and the county council to remove abandoned vehicles quickly and safely off our streets, before they become a target for arsonists.

4. Prevention targets have always been of high importance to the Service, coupled with an active performance management strategy. In terms of national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI’s), you can view how well we have performed in relation to fire-related emergency response and safety by visiting:

   http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_fire/documents/downloadable/odpm_fire_609529.xls

Alternatively if you wish to find out more about how we have performed in our major local projects visit our website: www.glosfire.gov.uk and look at our latest Service Plan.

5. Although the government wants us to move away from set attendance times based simply on property value to a more flexible system that gauges complete community risk (and includes such risk reduction elements as prevention initiatives and built-in protection systems like sprinklers and automatic fire alarms), currently, GFRS does not have the detailed geographical/historical risk data management system in place to make these qualified judgements. Therefore, one of our priorities in 2004 is to establish a geographical information system (GIS) that can help us log and identify areas of high risk in our communities. This will then be used to enhance our well-established risk management systems - such as special risk site identification, major incident pre-planning, fire safety inspections and the targeting of high risk groups with tailored prevention activities.

6. GFRS has forged numerous partnerships with agencies and community groups across the county in our efforts to make Gloucestershire a safer place to live, work and visit. Whereas many brigades can react to prevent small-scale chemical leaks and spillages, for example, GFRS is one of the few that works on a larger scale with the Environment Agency to tackle major spills, with its joint-funded Environment Protection Unit.

7. Since the events of September 11th 2001, the UK government has invested heavily in a network of national resilience to respond to terrorist incidents, which includes the use of fire and rescue service skills and resources. As a result, GFRS now has responsibility for a government-funded Incident Response Unit (IRU), which carries mass decontamination showers to wash chemical, biological and radioactive contamination off large numbers of people. In the future, GFRS is also set to take up the South West regional lead on Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), which involves rescuing people from collapsed buildings and structures.

8. In the current absence of electronic Geographical Information System (GIS) within the Service, we have still been actively identifying and assessing high risk areas across the county. For example, putting specialist cutting equipment on each of our 20 fire stations is in direct response to the county-wide risk of road traffic accidents. We also have strategically sited boat rescue teams covering the major water risks at Tewkesbury and Gloucester, as well as our cliff rescue teams based in the Forest of Dean, able to respond quickly to cliff faces of the Wye and the disused mines in the district.

9. As part of the Service’s continuing modernisation programme, we have taken on board the major issues set out in the government’s White Paper “Our Fire & Rescue Service” (as well as subsequent legislation) and are planning to review all of our relevant policies. It must be noted, however, that we have one of the leanest management structures of any brigade in the country, which - coupled with our current project and workload commitments - restricts our ability to undertake extensive policy review and implementation within short timescales without significantly compromising the ability of our managers to function efficiently and effectively.

10. This is consistent with the Service’s mission statement “Working together for a safer Gloucestershire” and complements the overarching aims of GCC.

11. Until local risks have been analysed, we are committed to our current standards of emergency response.

12. We will continue to build on our partnerships with community groups, businesses, local councils, the Environment Agency and the county’s Emergency Management Service to promote prevention, protection, mitigation and business continuity.
13. We are currently undertaking a wide-ranging staffing review that will include operational crewing. It is set to make its recommendations in September 2004.

14. We are an active member of the County’s Major Incident Co-ordinating Group, which includes the Police and Ambulance Services, county and district councils, local NHS trusts and the Environment Agency. The county’s Tri-Service Control room allows rapid and co-ordinated sharing of information during major incidents and complements government aspirations for regional and national resilience networks.

15. We have a well-established ‘after the fire’ policy, which provides support and guidance to both householders and businesses who have suffered losses and trauma as a result of fire. This also extends beyond the immediate victims to both their neighbours and/or associated businesses. The Service is also working closely with the county’s Emergency Management Service to promote and develop business continuity in the event of major incidents.

16. See our current fire safety initiatives on pages 13/14.

17. GFRS has representation on all six district Local Strategic Partnerships and their associated Crime and Disorder Groups. Furthermore, we liaise regularly with local chambers of commerce as well as the county’s Business Link and the Gloucestershire Business Partnership, in order to identify local priorities and offer assistance and advice where appropriate.

18. The county’s Major Incident Co-ordinating Group has been established since 1990 and has contributed significantly to efficient collaboration between agencies on a number of major incidents (such as CSG and the Foot & Mouth Crisis) as well as becoming the forum for contingency planning for large public events (such as Fairford RIAT and Cheltenham races). As the role of the group develops, GFRS will continue to be a major influence in its direction and scope of activity.

19. GFRS is always striving to ensure our firefighters work safely and effectively by providing a combination of high quality training, modern equipment and risk-assessed operating procedures. Most recently, GFRS upgraded our firefighters’ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and we have invested in a state-of-the-art training centre.

20. GFRS cost £24.14 per head of population, according to the latest statistics from CIPFA (2002).

21. Our emergency response standards will only be revised once the county’s risk profile has been established using the government’s Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) toolkit – a Geographical Information System (GIS) computer programme that combines the last three years of the county’s incident data with 2001 Census information and predictive risk modelling based on current academic research.

22. This is a reduction on the 2001/2002 figure of 421.

23. This is a reduction on 2001/2002 figure of 2074.

24. This is a reduction on 2001/2002 figure of 151.

25. Both of these figures are some of the lowest in the country.

26. A structured review of current programmes has been put in place, to be completed by April 2004.

27. To develop initiatives to improve community safety, GFRS is working with Gloucestershire Community Safety Partnership to reduce arson through the county’s Arson Task Force. In its first action plan the task force is targeting abandoned vehicles, derelict properties and rubbish fires as well as detection and investigation.

28. In conjunction with the FSEC analysis of the county’s risk profile, the Service has instigated a complete analysis of its current and anticipated resource requirements. This is scheduled for completion in September 2004.

29. We are reviewing our partnership working with the Environment Agency, to explore the community benefits of developing this area of its activities. The review is due for completion by December 2004.

30. This project is dependent on the Ambulance Service securing funding.

31. As guidance emerges from government relating to the new Fire & Rescue Services Bill and the fire safety regulatory reform order, the Service is currently planning training and policy review to meet the changing workloads. The first stage of this preparatory work should be completed by October 2004.

32. Based on Census 2001 data, identified major risks, heritage sites and historical incident data (compared between district areas).
Our aims are to:

Protect and serve the community of Gloucestershire and its adjacent areas

Save life and property and render humanitarian services

Reduce suffering and fire losses and educate about the dangers of fire

Treat all with whom we serve or work with fairness, dignity and respect

Ensure the highest standards of service are provided by the skilful and cost effective use of resources

“Working Together for a Safer Gloucestershire”