

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



REPORT REFERENCE NO.	CSCP/11/4
MEETING	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CORPORATE PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	31 AUGUST 2011
SUBJECT OF REPORT	LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANS
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>To note the report.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The Local Community Plan was introduced as part of a new planning structure for service delivery upon the combination of Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Services in 2007. Since then it has improved through incremental steps to the publicly available format we have today. The calculation of activity costs have been introduced into the development of the most recent versions of the plans. The future of community planning is considered to be the increased empowerment of local communities to identify and deliver activities to reduce risk and improve safety.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	None
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A new planning structure to support service delivery was developed during the process of combining Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Services. The principle behind the new approach was that of Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP). IRMP seeks to provide a more flexible, locally determined risk-based approach that will improve community safety through more effective targeting of resources and more dynamic, flexible, and appropriate levels of emergency response to incidents. The provision of resources will be effectively targeted to save lives and reduce injuries.
- 1.2 The core of this planning structure is the Local Community Plan. The Local Community Plan is based on the concept of planning service delivery activity to reduce community risk. These plans introduced a new way of thinking that places the community as the central focus of the plan. Historically, planned activity has been focused on what can be achieved with the local station personnel. By focusing on the needs of the community it removes this constraint and empowers service delivery managers to direct prevention and protection activity to those areas where they are required most. This often means that Service staff providing prevention and protection activity are not from the nearest station. In practice, each Local Community Plan is unique to a specific area. The new structure was introduced on 1 April 2007.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY PLAN (LOCAL COMMUNITY PLAN)

- 2.1 The Local Community Plan has evolved with many improvements since its introduction. The quality of the plans has also increased to a stage where each Local Community Plan is now publicly available on the Service's website. The importance of the plans in reducing community risk and planning our activity is reflected in the corporate target of publishing the annual Local Community Plans by 1 April each year.
- 2.2 The greatest advancement in the Local Community Plan has been the introduction of calculating the budget requirements for each activity. This was a significant change in practice and has only been achieved with the patience and support of the service delivery managers who prepare the plans. To support the service delivery managers in preparing their plans, an electronic planning tool has been developed to assist with calculating the budget requirements and also available work capacity. The continued development of this planning tool and the plan template has been enabled through the temporary appointment of a Planning and Consultation Officer. This officer also provides on-site support to the service delivery managers to assist them in completing their plans.

3. FUTURE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

- 3.1 The future of community planning is to increase the involvement of members of the public in determining what activity is required to meet the risks in their area. This Service is a national leader amongst fire and rescue services in one approach to achieve this, namely Participatory Budgeting. The Service is piloting Participatory Budgeting in four areas – Honicknowle in Plymouth, Beacon Heath in Exeter; Hele in Torquay and Minehead. These pilots will be conducted in the Autumn of 2011 and will invite community groups to bid for a small sum of money for activities they propose will reduce risks and improve community safety in their area. The intended benefit of increasing involvement is to empower communities in the planning and delivery of activities.

LEE HOWELL
Chief Fire Officer