



Creating safer communities Our plan 2016-2021





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Glossary

We hope this glossary helps you to understand some of the terms used in the fire and rescue service.

Co-responders – on-call firefighters based in their community who work in partnership with the ambulance service to provide a quick medical response.

Prevention – our community-safety work which aims to reduce fire and other incidents by providing advice and education.

Protection – our work with businesses and organisations to make sure they keep to the Fire Safety Order and keep you safe when you visit businesses for work or pleasure.

Tiered response – using the most appropriate vehicles and equipment depending on the calculated risks, and firefighters and command officers with the right skills to deal with each emergency.

Partners – other organisations we work with to deliver our services. This could be other public-sector organisations such as councils, police or other fire and rescue services, private-sector or voluntary-sector organisations, or charities.

Integrated Risk Management Plan – integrated risk-management planning is designed to give individual fire and rescue services (FRS) the flexibility to provide the right resources at the right time in the right place and to improve community safety and make a more effective use of FRS resources. Our Integrated Risk Management Plan sets out how we do this.

Home fire safety check – you call us or speak to us at one of our events to discuss your safety. This may result in us giving you advice or, if we feel you are at risk, we will carry out a home fire safety visit.

Home fire safety visit – we come to your home to talk to you about how to keep safe. We will also install safety equipment if necessary.

Aerial appliance – an appliance with a hydraulic platform usually used for incidents at height.

Water carriers – appliances which carry high volumes of water when extra supplies are needed.

Incident command unit – specialist vehicle used to co-ordinate larger incidents.

Environmental protection unit – used for incidents which affect the environment, often working with the Environment Agency.

Light rescue pump – smaller, more responsive appliance, typically used in rural locations.

On-call firefighter – a firefighter who carries a pager and responds to the station when needed. They usually have another job as their main employment.

Wholetime firefighter – a firefighter who works full-time for our service and works a shift pattern.

Operational licence – our operational licence is the minimum standard a firefighter has to reach to be considered available to respond to incidents. Without a licence they cannot carry out their role. The licence means they have kept up to date with their training and skills.

Support function – these are all the support departments that help to keep the service operating. This includes mechanics, breathing-apparatus technicians, HR, administration, health and safety and much more.

Operational staff – our staff who deal with emergencies, emergency calls and rescues.

Creating safer communities

It is a privilege to be part of Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, an organisation with the responsibility for protecting 1.7 million people living in rural and urban communities as well as the many visitors to the two counties each year.

Our focus is on creating safer communities, for which we have a successful record. Our Community Safety strategies, targeted approach to preventing fires and adapting to changes in society, such as the reduced number of smokers, the introduction of regulations relating to foam-filled furnishings, and an increase in the number of smoke detectors, have all contributed to a 50% reduction in the number of fires, people killed in fires and fire-related injuries in recent years. This is great news and could not be achieved without our operational and support staff, who are dedicated to improving your safety.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, emergency incidents will still happen. When they do, we must be able to respond with the skills and resources needed to deal safely and effectively with the range of incidents and challenges we meet.

All public services will have to operate with less money and we are no exception.



Lee Howell QFSM FIFireE
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Significant financial pressures mean we must review every part of our business to make sure that it meets our objective of creating safer communities. At the same time, we must make sure our staff's skills are used effectively to support communities in becoming stronger, improving their own safety and reducing the demand on public resources.

We will continue to develop a more adaptable service that is even better equipped to respond. We will match our resources to local risks and be innovative in using new and emerging approaches and technologies.

This document sets out 'our plan' to make the people who live in, work in and visit our area safer from fire, road collisions and other emergency incidents, while reducing costs and increasing income.

There are plenty of opportunities for communities and people to get involved in our work. These opportunities include volunteering, working as a part-time or on-call firefighter or joining our staff, who support our front-line crews in making the public safer. Get in touch – there may be a role for you.



Councillor Mark Healy
Chairman
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority

Our vision and mission

Our vision is to make Devon and Somerset a 'safer place to live, work and visit'.

Our mission is to 'Act to Protect and Save – to prevent emergencies, create safer communities and respond, when required, in order to save life.'

Our journey towards creating safer communities

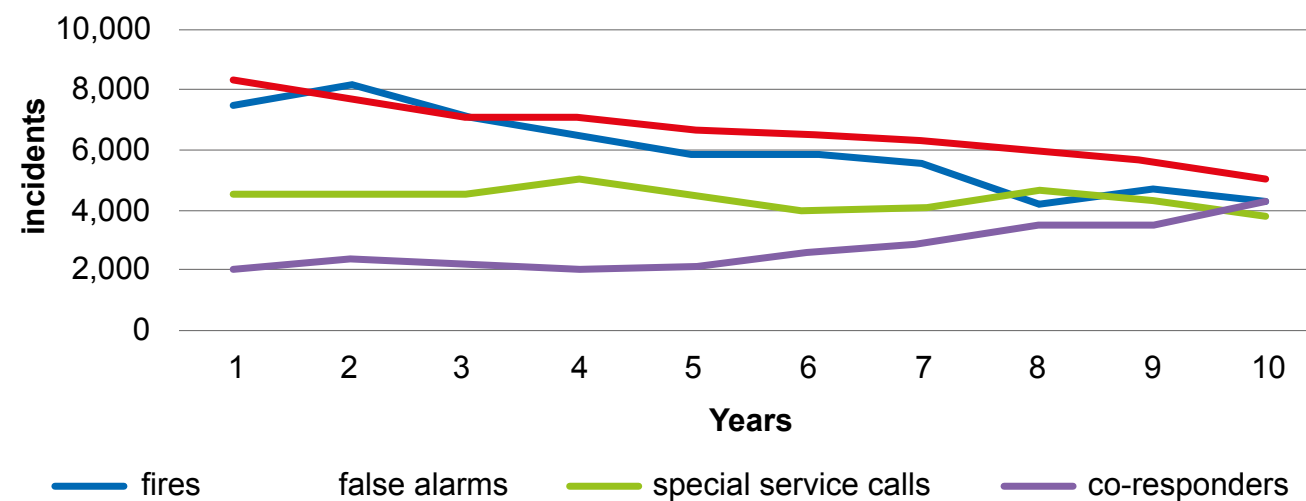
As a public service we continue to face budget reductions, just like other public-sector organisations. To adapt to these budget reductions we will continue with our plan of changing the way we work to match local risk.

emergencies through our co-responder service - see note below. At the same time, we need to make sure we are able to deal with new and different challenges such as those related to severe weather, complex non-fire-related rescues, the threat of terrorism and the changing population of our communities.

The service will need to reflect the changes in the types of incident we attend. It is good news that the number of fire-related incidents has reduced significantly, as this means our communities are safer from fire. However, we now attend more medical

The graph below shows how demand for our services has changed over the last 10 years.

Service demand over 10 years (2005/2006 to 2014/2015)



'The future service will need to reflect the changes in the types of incident we attend'

Note 1: our co-responders work in partnership with the ambulance service providing a quick medical response.

We have already made changes that have created significant financial savings, for example in recent years we have changed the crewing arrangement at a number of our fire stations, but we need to make substantial further savings.

Our values guide us in the way we approach these challenges. Our values are honesty, clarity and accountability, respect for each other, working together to improve, and a 'can do' attitude. We understand that change creates uncertainty for both our staff and our communities, but we also know that some of this uncertainty comes from a lack of understanding of how the environment in which we operate has changed. By analysing in detail existing and emerging risks, communicating this effectively and making sure we have the right resources in the right place at the right time, we know we will be able to keep our communities safe.

We need to reduce any potential negative effect on our services by reviewing the changes before they are made. We are confident that we can make changes in a sensible way that will improve our service and deliver savings. We also need to increase and improve our work with communities and to understand how we can provide the best advice, support and response to make sure you live a safer life.

Our priorities

We have three main priorities. We use these priorities to guide how we use our reduced resources and assess the importance of new work.

-  **Public safety**
-  **Staff safety**
-  **Effectiveness and efficiency**

Priority 1

Public safety

'Focused on improving public safety'



We believe it is better to prevent an emergency from happening in the first place rather than deal with it when it does. To support this belief we work with local communities and partners to educate them in how to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies and do all we can to help prevent crime and disorder through, for example, our work on reducing incidents of arson.

If a fire does start, we want to make sure people have the best chance of escape and that the disruption to business and the community is kept to a minimum. We will work with businesses to influence and regulate the built environment to protect people, property and the natural environment from harm.

In situations when an emergency response is needed, we will make sure that our resources are appropriately located, reflecting our Integrated Risk Management Plan, so that we have the right resources in the right place at the right time.

The outcomes we expect to see

1. A reduction in the number of emergency calls.
2. A reduction in the number of deaths and injuries from fires and other emergencies.
3. A reduction in the number of fires started deliberately (arson).
4. A reduction in economic loss and damage to property and the environment.
5. Heritage properties and items of historical value are protected from fires and other emergencies.
6. People are rescued from harm.
7. We are prepared to provide a high-quality response in an emergency.

How we will achieve our outcomes

We will provide community-safety services

Our community-safety services will continue to reduce the number of incidents and help create safer communities. We will achieve this by focusing on targeted home safety checks, educating people on the dangers of fires and other emergencies (and what they can do to make themselves safe) and working with businesses to make commercial and other non-domestic premises safe places to work and visit.

As a result of our services, communities and individuals will be able to make more informed decisions about their own safety in the home, at work or when visiting buildings.

Our community-safety work will be better targeted to the most vulnerable members of society. This targeting will help people live in safer homes where the number of preventable deaths or injuries from fires will be reduced and kept at the lowest levels possible. We know that providing advice to our communities, particularly our most vulnerable groups through home fire safety visits, is very effective and our research clearly shows this to be the case. Last year we carried out approximately 4,600 home fire safety visits and we plan to do many more in future years.

We will continue to support safer business and community sectors where fire losses are reduced to the lowest levels possible where we have seen no preventable deaths or injuries in fires in the last five years. Businesses will receive the same advice and information to help make sure they can remain open and, where issues arise, we will be consistent in how we enforce our work.

We will continue to work with partners to deliver joint road-safety education and action which result in safer roads throughout Devon and Somerset.

Our community-safety activities include:

- home fire safety checks and visits
- education packages for children and young people from early years settings through to universities aimed at developing young people who are aware of fire and road safety
- targeted action to support those at risk in our communities
- working in partnership with others to support our communities to be safer
- supporting businesses by providing safety advice, and
- making sure businesses are keeping to fire safety legislation.

We will provide an emergency response

Emergencies

We attend a wide range of emergencies to save lives, limit damage to property and protect the natural environment. The emergencies we are ready to respond to include:

- fires
- road traffic collisions
- rescues
- collapsed structures
- hazardous chemical spills
- flooding
- medical emergencies (co-responding), and
- chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear events.

Vehicles and equipment

Operating from our 85 fire stations we have 121 fire engines and 64 special appliances, including aerial appliances, water carriers, incident command units, 4x4s and environmental protection units. This is the largest vehicle fleet of any fire service outside of London.

The reduction in the number of incidents and the significant differences in calls between our stations have led to a review of how we provide our emergency response. For example, we know that 80% of our stations attend fewer than two incidents per week and 56% attend fewer than one incident per week (incidents in the area covered by the station, not including co-responding and false alarms). Most of our fire engines are broadly similar and are usually crewed by five staff who are all trained in the same way, regardless of the risks they face and the demand for their services. Last year, 72% of all incidents could have been dealt with using much smaller vehicles and some of the new technological advances in firefighting and rescue techniques.

As the community risk changes, we will consider altering the type of vehicle provided. We have already moved away from the traditional 'one size fits all' approach and are currently introducing smaller light rescue pumps into our fleet. As well as providing more vehicles, this also helps us save money, as light rescue pumps have lower running costs than traditional vehicles.

We are considering new technological developments that will further improve community and firefighter safety. We are investigating whether it is possible to introduce a new range of smaller response vehicles, which use the latest advances in firefighting technology to provide an

even more rapid and effective response to emergencies.

Taking the Tiered Response Model forward, we will continue to better match our resources to risk. Our Tiered Response Model, which was previously consulted on and agreed, allocates the most appropriate mix of vehicles and equipment together with firefighters and command officers with the necessary specialist skills to deal with each type of emergency.

Fire stations

We have 85 fire stations, which is the largest number of fire stations outside of London. At present, we believe most of our fire stations are in the right place, being centred on heavily populated areas or located to provide emergency cover across Devon and Somerset.

However, we understand that community risk may change over time, so we will continue our analysis and constantly review the position of and the service provided by our stations. Based on evidence, we may need to change the resources we have available at each fire station. With this in mind we may need to build new fire stations in better locations or close some of our existing stations, or both. If we want to propose closing some fire stations, there will be a full and separate public consultation.

Staff

We have over 2,000 members of staff in operational and support roles who work a range of shift or duty systems.

Most of our firefighters work on an on-call basis, making us the largest employer of on-call firefighters in the country. The contracts we have in place with our on-call (retained duty system) staff do not always meet our needs of maintaining emergency cover. We are currently working with a trade

union to introduce agreed changes that will reduce the cost of providing on-call cover. Our aim is to look for the best solution for improving emergency cover at a price that we can afford while meeting the needs of our on-call staff at the same time.

Staff at all our wholetime stations work the same shift pattern. This shift pattern aims to provide appropriate crewing levels 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, we know that the current 2-2-4 system (work two days, then two nights, then have a four-day break) is inflexible and not as efficient as it could be. There are other types of shift systems, including those used by other emergency services, that we can consider. Rather than impose shift change, we hope to improve the current arrangement by asking staff to be more flexible, which will lead to significant savings. We recognise the current shift system is important to our staff but, given the scale of the financial challenges ahead, we need to make it more efficient.

We will also reduce the number of officers by not replacing staff as they leave. And we will consider alternative approaches for those officers, to provide 'out of hours' supervisory cover.

Discussions with staff and trade unions about finding solutions that we and our staff are satisfied with are ongoing. We welcome and encourage this approach.

In summary, we will:

- target our prevention activities to high-risk communities, working closely with partners to provide advice and support
- work with partners to involve the community in planning for, responding to and recovering from local emergencies
- support businesses to reduce arson and accidental fires and help make sure businesses can remain open through our risk-based audit and inspection programme
- effectively manage calls to fires and other emergency incidents
- make sure that we have the right number of stations in the right locations and the right number of vehicles, equipment and staff available to match local risk and demand, and
- work with the community and the voluntary sector to help identify and manage risk.

Our key plans for improvement include:

- improving the process for home fire safety checks and visits
- developing road-safety strategies with partners to improve education and action taken
- developing a new and resilient 999 service
- investigating whether to introduce different response vehicles which use the latest advances in firefighting technology
- improving our staffing arrangements, and
- working with other blue-light and voluntary-sector agencies to develop appropriate fire and non-fire response arrangements.

Priority 2

Staff safety

‘Passionate about improving staff safety’



As our work evolves due to the changing demands on our service, we need to make sure that we develop our staff so they have the right skills and values to deliver our services to the community. Our staff need to operate in a safe and supportive working environment and we will provide them with the most appropriate vehicles, equipment and information relevant to the risks they are likely to face.

The outcomes we expect to see

8. A highly skilled and competent workforce.
9. A high-performing, motivated and healthy workforce.
10. A safe workforce with low rates of accidents and injuries.
11. A workforce that is representative of our communities.

How we will achieve our outcomes

We will focus on firefighter safety and training

Attending emergency incidents is dangerous, so creating a safe working environment and safety culture is at the heart of everything we do. We know that most of the equipment that we currently carry on our fire engines is rarely used. In fact, for 80% of the incidents we attend, less than half of our equipment is used. Yet we expect our staff to maintain their knowledge and skills on how to use this equipment even though we know that they will rarely, if ever, need to use it.

We also know that the time available for training at our on-call stations is very limited. Our on-call staff have, on average, only 90 hours of training time available to them each year. It is clear that training time should not be spent on equipment that is rarely used. We believe that the Tiered Response Model will have a positive effect on firefighter safety. It will make sure that our training is focused only on the risks that staff are most likely to face.

Our training of operational staff will be designed to focus on the specific risks for each area or station. We need to train staff according to risk, so some of this training will be delivered centrally at one of our training venues or at an external venue. However, we will extend local station-based training, taking our training to staff rather than expecting staff to travel to training.

At the same time, we will make sure that risk information is up to date, and that crews train against site-specific risks and plans. The way that the information from fire control is made available to operational staff is a key part of supporting safety.

We have recently carried out a full firefighter safety audit which identified improvements to better manage the safety of our firefighters. We will use the results of this audit to target improvements in our procedures.

In summary, we will:

- follow best practice when recruiting and retaining the right people
- provide a joint approach to workforce planning, succession planning (recruiting and developing employees to fill key roles) and career development
- make sure safety is at the heart of everything we do, and
- train in a realistic way that reflects the risks our staff face and allows them to use the skills they will need at emergency incidents.



Our key plans for improvement include:

- aligning our competency-based training to the Chief Fire Officers Association Fire Professional Framework (our 'operational licence'), which is the minimum standard we expect our operational staff to be trained to in order to be available for action
- using the results of the firefighter safety audit to prioritise improvement work
- looking into opportunities for more locally based training
- developing a detailed organisational development framework that will apply to all staff
- introducing a new system for recording all training activities using a competency-based approach
- reviewing the process for making sure our staff maintain their training and skills across the range of activities we expect them to carry out
- reviewing the support and ongoing development that we provide for our officers who are expected to take control of emergency incidents
- reviewing the way we gather and provide information relating to risk, which our staff need to be able to make correct and informed decisions at emergency incidents, and
- improving working arrangements to support a flexible, adaptable and responsive workforce which meets the operational and non-operational demands on our service.



Priority 3

Effectiveness and efficiency

'Continuously improve the organisation's effectiveness and efficiency'



We will aim to continuously improve our effectiveness and efficiency. This means that we are working to improve, while at the same time spending less money. To achieve this, we will need to transform the way we work through continuous long-term improvement. We will promote this transformation by involving staff and the community, encouraging innovation and change, and looking for opportunities to do things differently for the benefit of the community. We will learn from other high-performing organisations and focus on activities that support effectiveness and efficiency.

The outcomes we expect to see

12. A continuously improving service which provides value for money and a balanced budget in line with future financial reductions.
13. Economically strong businesses.
14. A reduction in our carbon footprint, including delivering our services in an effective way, which can be maintained over the long term.
15. A high level of satisfaction with our service.

How we will achieve our outcomes

We will transform the way we work

While our main business is to keep communities and the environment safe from fires and other emergencies, our supporting systems and processes must be fit for purpose. We need to make sure we deliver our service in a way that provides best value for taxpayers in Devon and Somerset and allows us to invest in our main services while meeting the challenges of a reducing budget.

We have already made significant changes to our support functions and we are seeing the benefits of this work. Over the coming years we will focus on continuing to improve the way we work. One option would be to cut front-line services, but we know that this would not support our priorities and would not be popular with our communities. So our approach is to improve the way our front-line and support services work. This will deliver savings and mean we can continue to offer the excellent service that our communities expect.

Transforming the service will help us to:

- move away from doing things a certain way because they've always been done that way
- reduce wasted effort and deliver efficiencies
- free up staff time to focus on our main priorities and support front-line staff
- provide a service which is led by demand and meets public safety needs, and
- release resources to help us make savings as well as redirect some resources to further support our prevention and protection activities.

We will focus on our stakeholders

The support and involvement of our staff and communities will be crucial in helping to generate ideas for driving ongoing improvement. We will continue to encourage them to work with us, to develop a culture of involvement, innovation and continuous improvement. We will be using several tools to support this priority which will help us to react to what our customers need and provide a service that supports the demand placed upon us, rather than providing a service based on what we think our customers want from us.

We will manage our assets

We have many assets within the service, ranging from fire stations, fire engines, boats, cars, rescue equipment and computers to personal protective equipment. All of our assets must meet our needs in the most cost-effective way. We will use a 'whole life cycle' approach to asset management that starts from understanding our needs, includes buying assets and managing contracts, and ends in disposing of assets when they are no longer needed. We will know our operating costs over the whole life of an asset and be clear that our maintenance and replacement timescales are fit for purpose and are flexible enough to meet both the changing demands we face and industry good practice. We will look at opportunities for reducing costs by sharing assets and, where possible, put these into practice.



We will sell our services to provide an income

Through our commercial trading company, **Red One Limited**, we are able to work with local, national and international businesses, providing fire safety support, specialist training services, consultancy and fire cover for events. We use the profits we make from this to financially support our service. We will further develop this activity across all support departments and, where appropriate, generating income will become another fundamental part of our daily working activities.

In summary, we will:

- manage our assets to make sure they are efficient and that they effectively support public and staff safety
- manage projects so we deliver them on time and within budget
- work with others to save time and money
- use advances in technology to reduce costs and improve public and staff safety
- continue our approach to buying and managing assets effectively
- work within an agreed governance framework, putting performance management at the heart of our work
- use accurate and high-quality data to drive improvements, including sharing information with partners to reduce risk
- encourage a culture of staff and community involvement when developing new approaches to managing risk, communicating clearly and effectively
- provide our services in a way that can be maintained over the long term

- generate money through commercial activities that contribute to our main objectives, and
- continue to design our service based on our customers' needs.

Our key plans for improvement include:

- improving our business processes to reduce costs without reducing public and staff safety
- reviewing our properties to make sure we are making the most of the value of our property assets
- refining our financial-planning, budgeting and monitoring processes to support decision-making
- making sure long-term continuous improvement is at the heart of our work
- introducing a revised performance-management framework
- introducing new performance measures to support decision-making at the appropriate level, and
- developing methods for generating income across support departments where appropriate.



Our financial future

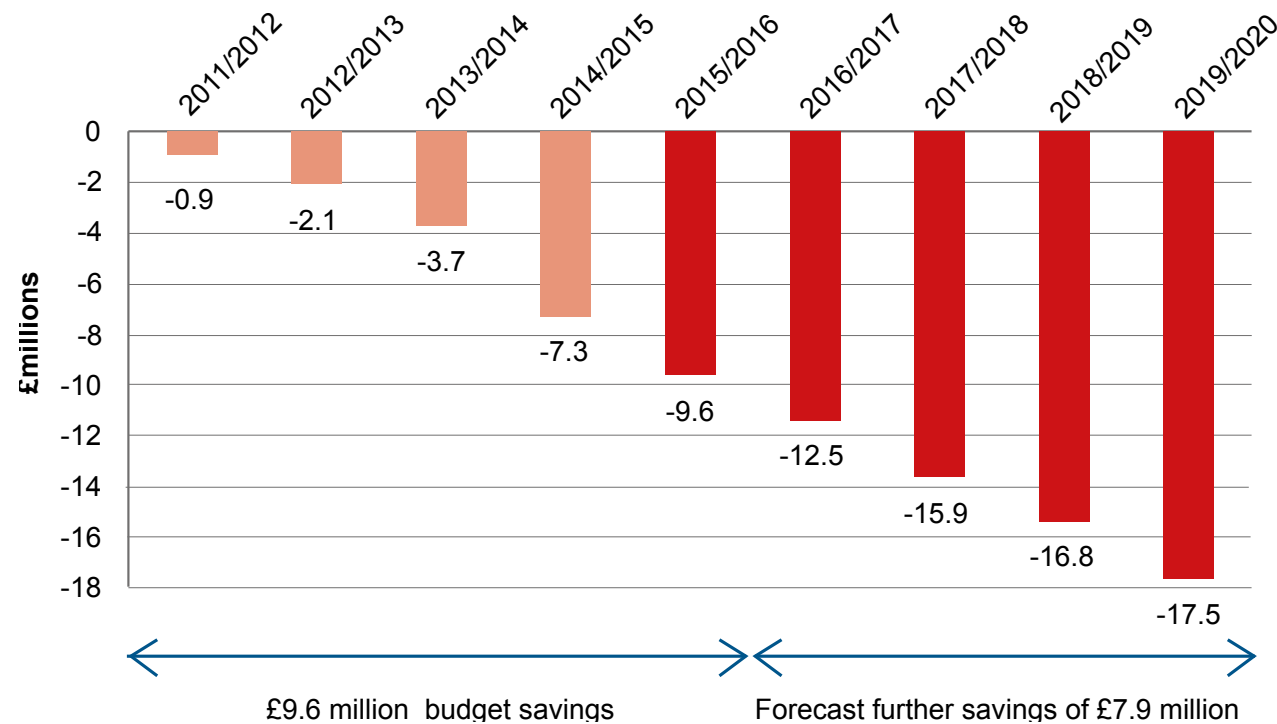
We continue to face a difficult financial future as a result of significant reductions in government funding. In the last four years, from 2012/2013 to 2015/2016, we have seen our revenue support grant reduce by 23%.

The most recent Local Government Finance Settlement in December 2015 reduced our government funding by 8.6% for 2016/2017, a reduction of £2.5million. For the three years from 2017/2018 to 2019/2020, further funding reductions of 10.2%, 4.3% and 1.8% are expected. In total, our government grant funding will

reduce by £7.3million over the next four years to 2019/2020. The service has already identified £9.6million of efficiency savings since 2011, and will continue to meet the ongoing financial challenge of reductions in funding.

The chart below provides a summary of the savings we have achieved to date (2015/2016) and the forecast savings required up to (2019/2020).

Summary of savings made to date and predicted savings



* This forecast is dated 21/12/15 and may change following confirmation of council tax and business rate income from billing authorities.

We have made some challenging decisions to reduce the number of wholetime firefighters because we recognised that it would take a number of years for natural turnover to reduce staff numbers enough to meet the budget gap. If we had waited to make these decisions, compulsory redundancies would have been more likely.

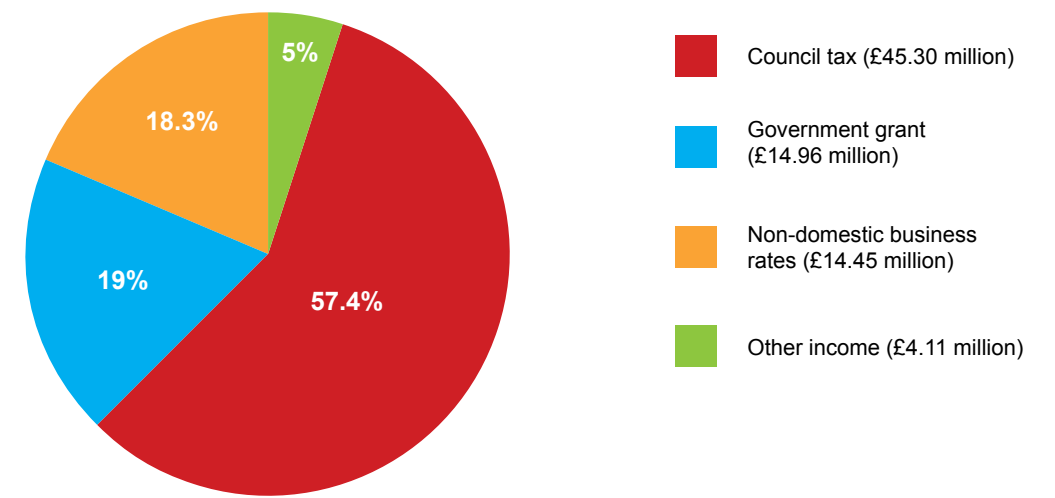
To meet the ongoing financial challenges, we know that we have to plan an approach

to make sure that savings can be maintained over the longer term. We will need to change the way we do business and the approach outlined earlier in this document will help us to do this. Decisions on council tax will continue to be taken by members of the Fire Authority, informed by public and business consultations. Using council tax, generating income and making savings are the only options we have to limit the effect of government grant reductions.

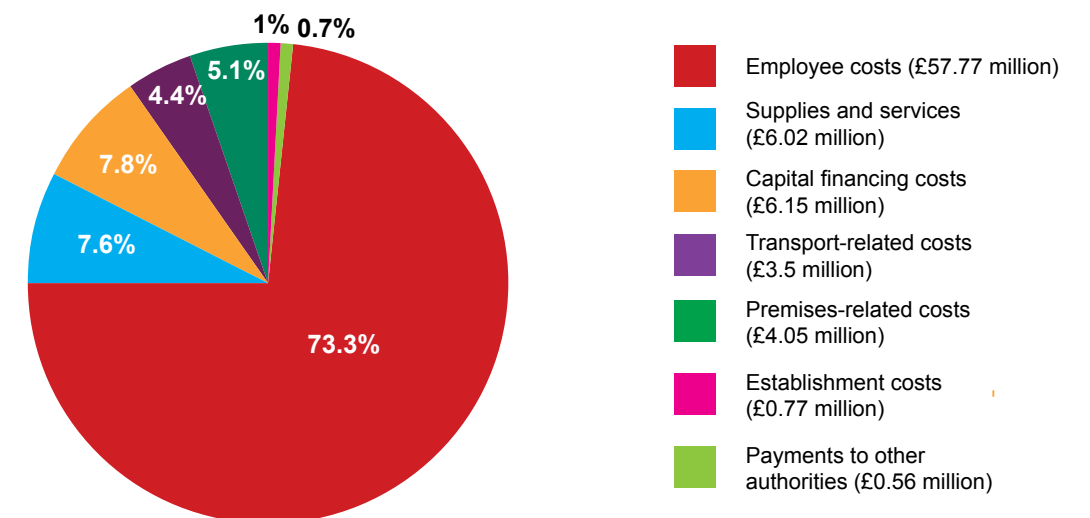
How our service is funded

Our funding for 2015/2016 is £78.82 million

For a 'Band D' property the 2015/16 council tax charge is £78.42



Our planned spending for 2015/2016



Measuring our success

We will achieve the outcomes we expect to see by effectively delivering the key services in each of our priorities – public safety, staff safety and effectiveness and efficiency. We will measure progress against these outcomes through a set of performance measures. Our performance will be reviewed each month by our Executive Board, and reported to the Fire Authority every three months. At the end of each year we will publish our Annual Report.



Outcomes

1. A reduction in the number of emergency calls.
2. A reduction in the number of deaths and injuries from fires and other emergencies.
3. A reduction in the number of fires started deliberately (arson).
4. A reduction in economic loss and damage to property and to the environment.
5. Heritage properties and items of historical value are protected from fires and other emergencies.
6. People are rescued from harm.
7. We are prepared to provide a high-quality response in an emergency.
8. A highly skilled and competent workforce.
9. A high-performing, motivated and healthy workforce.
10. A safe workforce with low rates of accidents and injuries.
11. A workforce that is representative of our communities.
12. A continuously improving service which provides value for money and a balanced budget in line with future financial reductions.
13. Economically strong businesses.
14. A reduction in our carbon footprint, including delivering our services in an effective way, which can be maintained over the long term.
15. A high level of satisfaction with our service.

Have your say

Your opinions on our plan are important and we want to hear your views. The comments we receive from you will influence the decisions Fire and Rescue Authority Members make when they consider the various parts of the plan.

Email: Email your comments or questions to consultationofficer@dsfire.gov.uk

Fax: Fax your comments to 01392 872300. Mark your fax for the attention of the Consultation Officer.

Post: Post your comments on the proposal to:

Consultation Officer

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue

Service HQ

FREEPOST

Clyst St George

Devon

EX3 0NW.

Phone: You can also phone the Consultation Officer on 01392 872354.



DEVON & SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Service Headquarters
The Knowle
Clyst St George
Exeter
EX3 0NW

Call for your free home fire safety check



Make the call!

0800 05 02 999



A third of fire deaths happen in properties without a working smoke alarm. If there is one thing you do after reading our plan, check your smoke alarm and if you don't have one, get one today.