



DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Community Risk Management Plan - Consultation Overview

This report outlines the key findings from the online survey, focus groups and email feedback received as part of the consultation.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

January 2022

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Appendices (separate, supporting documents)

- A. Online survey findings report
- B. Email response summary
- C. Focus group report (Devon Communities Together)
- D. Focus group report (Consultation and Engagement team)

1. Introduction

The Service is seeking to understand the views of our communities, residents, businesses, staff and visitors, regarding this draft Community Risk Management Plan on behalf of the Authority.

Recommendations will be presented to the Fire Authority members so they can make an informed decision when approving the Community Risk Management Plan at the full meeting in February 2022.

This Community Risk Management Plan is a five-year strategic plan and is supported by a Strategic Risk Analysis and an Equalities Impact Assessment.

The Community Risk Management Plan needs to be agreed and in place in April 2022.

2. Methodology

The consultation for the draft Community Risk Management Plan started on 15 November 2021 and closed on 14 January 2022. A mid-term and closing review were undertaken to monitor responses from identified stakeholders and quality of response.

How we captured feedback to the consultation

Online survey:

- Responses were captured through an online survey which received 241 completed responses with 246 responses in total.
- The survey was responsive to devices so that it could be easily accessed from a mobile phone or tablet.
- Paper copies have been offered by request. One paper copy of the document was requested and no surveys.
- The responses to the survey have been reported by an independent third party, BMG (full report appendix A).

Dedicated email address:

- Eight individuals or organisations chose to respond by email.
- Themes from these responses have been included in this executive summary (full detail in appendix B).

Engagement events:

- Three public and three staff question and answer sessions have been hosted virtually with some before and some after Christmas.
- 53 members of staff and 13 members of the public attended. Most members of the public represented a local parish council.
- Themes that came from these sessions has been considered by the Service.

Focus groups:

- It was acknowledged that an online survey and engagement events may not enable us to hear from all audiences. Specific audiences were identified for focus groups to ensure that we heard from these communities.
- Focus groups have taken place involving people with mobility loss, from ethnic minorities, age 75+, people living alone, business representatives and people living with sensory loss.
- Focus groups with the specific audiences were outsourced to third party Devon Communities Together except business representatives which was hosted by the consultation and engagement team. Full reports appendix C and D.

3. Promotional communication channels

- The consultation featured on the homepage of our website throughout with regular social media content throughout the period.
- Stakeholders: personal letter from Chief Fire Officer to key stakeholders, including blue light partners, Police and Crime Commissioners, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Constituent Authority Chief Executives. Also emailed letter from the Chief Fire Officer to parish clerks, community partners and business groups such as Better Business for All and the Federation of Small Businesses.
- Non-digital audience: Posters, leaflets, and radio and print advertising. Neighbourhood Watch contacts, partners and parish councils have received the poster to display and share with their networks. Postcards promoting the consultation were handed out at events by community safety teams.
- Targeted advertising: social media adverts responsive to the profile of people who had responded, print adverts in publications where there was low engagement with the pre-engagement work, radio advertising in Exeter and Somerset areas.
- Internal: regularly featured in the weekly e-update (Shout Out), message from the Chief Fire Officer, Yammer posts promoting the consultation, Business Change Managers conducted virtual station visits. Service Intranet homepage had a banner at the top of the page. Emails to Senior Leadership Team sent requesting support and promotion of the consultation. Link on DS Connect for ease of access to operational staff. Poster and hard copy of the plan.

4. Profile of respondents

Almost 250 responses to the consultation were received, 241 completed responses by online survey and 8 responses received by email. A further 35 individuals were engaged through focus groups. 53 members of staff and 13 members of the public engaged through the virtual events. Most members of the public represented a local parish council.

Detailed demographic information was collected only for online survey respondents.

Online survey respondents:

- Almost two-thirds (61%) were from residents, a fifth (21%) from either operational or support staff, and the remainder of the responses (17%) came from businesses, council members, or organisations with partnerships¹.
- A third (33%) of respondents were female, and 55% male (1% identified as non-binary and the remaining 12% chose not to say).
- The majority of responses were from age 45-64 (47%). Those aged between 65-74 made up 18% of respondents, with 6% age 75+. 14% comprised of 35–44-year-olds, and 9% were aged 34 or under.
- Over half (54%) of respondents are from rural area, 29% from urban areas, and 15% from coastal areas.
- 8% of respondents have said they have a disability. Those who answered yes were asked more about their disability and most have a physical disability. Focus groups are planned for people.

Focus groups:

Participants to the focus groups self-identified. Attendance was:

Target Group	Number of participants
75+	9
Ethnic minorities	11
Limited mobility	6
Rented accommodation /C2DE	11
Additional sensory needs	9
Living alone	6
Business representative	4

¹ These came from Devon and Cornwall Police (n=1), Fire and Rescue Service Association (n=1), and South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (n=1). The remaining three respondents who said they are from a partner organisation or are a stakeholder did not disclose which one.

5. Executive summary of key themes identified

The online survey gathered feedback based on three quantitative questions and a series of open questions for respondents to explain their answer and add any further feedback.

The focus groups, online survey open questions, engagement sessions and email responses brought similar themes. Key themes are outlined below.

Quantitative question responses

- 71% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the Service had identified all the major risks it is responsible for. 9% have responded disagree and 6% strongly disagree.
- 63% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the activities the Service continues to and proposes to deliver are appropriate to the identified risks. 10% disagree and 8% strongly disagree.
- 57% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that 'the activities the Service continues to and proposes to deliver do not affect me or anyone else more positively or negatively than other people'. This question has seen more neutral responses with 23% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and 16% responding they disagree or strongly disagree. This is in line with the equality impact assessment which considers a positive or neutral impact. The question was edited to have 'do not' in bold following a response which selected 'strongly disagree' to this question but made a positive comment in the free text.

Key themes from the online survey, focus groups, engagement sessions and email responses include:

- The online survey, engagement sessions and email were used as an opportunity to raise localised queries or concerns, such as water access at Hartland, access to an estate in Aveton Gifford or equipment at Cheddar. Local issues were one of the most mentioned themes within the free text responses.
- Whilst almost three quarters of respondents agreed that the major risks had been identified, missing or underrepresented risks were one of the most common free text comments. This includes climate change, transport other than road traffic collision, electric vehicles and staff availability. This was also the same with the staff engagement sessions and some of the email responses. Missing or underrepresented risks identified through the online survey and email feedback

focused largely on local concerns rather than strategic level. Focus group participants did not raise new risks.

“Luccombe is surrounded by forest and moorland. In the past it has faced the real threat of a moorland fire spreading to ignite the houses in the village, many of which have thatched roofs.” Email response

- Risk around staffing and availability was raised in the online survey, email and in engagement sessions as something that had been underrepresented.

“The loss of experienced firefighters due to retirement represents a significant risk to Devon and Somerset fire and rescue service and needs addressing.” Email response

- Rural communities are less likely to agree that the risks have all been identified and that the activities are appropriate. Email responses and free text responses included comment about insufficient coverage in rural areas, such as the need to increase co-responder stations in rural areas, or having the right equipment and appliances to deal with fires in thatched houses or farms:

“If the fire appliance in Cheddar is reduced to a smaller one, I think that will affect fighting a fire in Wedmore. As a rural village a backup fire engine will take some time to get to there. The purposed smaller fire appliance might run out of water as the dwellings in the village are predominately large family homes.” Online survey

“As a rural area we need our emergency service, wherever we can get them, the fire service being the most important. Whether it’s out of control bonfires, property fire, car accidents or any incident, they know our area. They know how to help and what we need in those situations. We cannot be without them.” Online survey

- Overall people seemed to agree that the activities the Service propose are appropriate to the risks in the online survey and focus groups. Underrepresented mitigation activities feature as the fifth most mentioned theme in the online survey, including false alarms, nuclear risk, and education.
- Communication, both to and from the Service was discussed by all focus groups, with a recognition that education of the public was a core need for the Service. This education related both to risks and prevention matters (such as appliance care), and also education on the Service’s service provision itself (such as availability and cost, or lack of cost, of home safety visits).

Communication, and suitable language, was also discussed as essential in emergency response scenarios between crews and the people impacted by the incident. This came through in all focus groups but was particularly important to

people with additional sensory needs. Education was also raised in engagement sessions and the online survey.

“How do we communicate if you're being cut out of a car or crash? How do we communicate? And it's those sort of worries. You know whether people are trained in, just sort of, basic communications? We use gesture but obviously sometimes if you're in shock, you've been in a car crash. It's very rare. People are just sort of thrown into shock, can't move so it's how do we get over those communication issues?” (Participant, Additional Sensory Needs) focus group

- Concern about resources and priorities are mentioned frequently, making it one of the top five mentioned themes in the free text comments of the survey. The theme was also raised at staff engagement events. This includes comments about availability of staff, delivery within the financial constraints, fleet, first aid equipment and location of stations. Concern about fire engine type was particularly focused around Cheddar in the online survey and by email.

*“The planned reduction in firefighting capability at Cheddar with the replacement of the current appliance with a less capable LRP is putting my community at risk.”
Online survey*

- The level of detail within the plan was mentioned both on email and in response to the survey. People referred to the plan as vague and generic. It was clear in a staff engagement event that the Strategic Risk Analysis had been missed as a supporting document.
- Staff engagement events highlighted that staff wanted to see some detail about their area of work represented within the Community Risk Management Plan.