



Police, Fire and Crime Panel – 13th July 2020

**SFRS Corporate Safety Plan 2020/23 – Update on
consultation/preparation**

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is for information. The purpose of this report is to provide detail about the consultation undertaken in developing the scope and context of the Safety Plan 2020-2024.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Panel note the contents of the report and the preparation of the Safety Plan 2020-2024

3. Background

- 3.1 As a public sector organisation we have duties derived from legislation and a number of frameworks in order to ensure that we engage with our stakeholders on key decisions and developments or changes to the Service.
- 3.2 Alongside our statutory requirements is our own priority to understand our communities, businesses and partners in order to improve quality of life by delivering the highest quality, most fit-for-purpose public service possible. Doing so will enable us to adapt to the needs of our communities in order to provide the most effective and efficient services for those communities.
- 3.3 We recognise that it makes good business sense to involve our stakeholders, people and our communities in shaping the future direction of the Service. Therefore, we have invested in, and enhanced, our consultation, engagement and involvement with local communities, partners and businesses with the aim of clearly establishing 'customer' expectations.
- 3.4 The objectives of the Safety Plan 2020-2024 consultation were:
- to engage with our people, our communities and other stakeholders and give them the opportunity to have a say in the future of the Service,
 - to raise awareness of our priorities and proposed changes to service delivery

- to gather feedback that can be used to support the direction and drafting of the Safety Plan 2020-2024
- to ensure that the consultation is as inclusive as possible
- to communicate our intention of consulting with our communities on more specific proposals moving forward.

3.5 This approach was adopted as to consolidate best practice and previous learning to design and deliver a stakeholder and staff consultation programme that would involve a broad and diverse cross section of the demographics of the community of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

4. Progress/action to Date

4.1 Consultation involved multiple internal and external stakeholders and was supported by Shared Service's Safety Plan Communication Strategy:

- our staff, including Shared Service staff and Fire Control
- rep. bodies
- volunteers
- Staffordshire Commissioner's Office
- Councillors, MPs
- other Fire and Rescue Services
- Local Authorities (City, County, Borough/District, Town/Parish)
- partner organisations
- businesses and business groups
- community groups

4.2 Establishing contact with these groups enabled a well-rounded approach to consultation, covering a comprehensive range of individuals and groups that are key in delivering the Service, be it through service users, partnership and collaboration, or otherwise.

4.3 In order to effectively recruit participants, targeted promotion and publicity channels were used, tailoring our approaches dependent on the stakeholder group being targeted for participation

4.4 This process included:

External

- Draft Safety Plan documents were prepared, incorporating the consultation questions to assist participants in focussing on the main proposals for consultation. Copies were provided to all fire stations
- An on-line survey was developed (SurveyMonkey). Printed copies were available from the Shared Services Communications team on request. Copies were provided to all fire stations
- Dedicated web pages on the Service's website were published, containing links to the online survey and the draft Safety Plan
- Twitter Updates and reminders were tweeted to followers, Facebook updates and reminders were posted to followers and both formats were used to post questions/themes online to encourage discussion/feedback.

- Letters and emails were written and sent to key stakeholders as contact initiation and engagement
- Media releases/activity about the consultation and events to raise awareness and encourage participation were published and provided to partner organisations

Internal

- Intranet updates, iNews and reminders were published on a regular basis to encourage participation in the consultation with the use of internal Screensavers.
- Focus groups and meetings were undertaken involving the various delivery groups, operational crews/watches and support and shared services.

4.5 With regards to the online survey, a 22 question survey was developed and communicated using the online survey software SurveyMonkey. 10 questions were mandatory focussing on our priorities and the proposals set out in the draft Safety Plan. The remaining 12 questions were voluntary and focussed on Participant Demographics – Characteristics, Location, Communication and Contact.

4.6 Links to the draft plan and survey were communicated to interested parties using the methods set out above. In order to ensure key stakeholders and hard to reach groups were included a number direct communications were sent to:

Parish Councils:	174	
Other fire and rescue services:	48	
Main Councils:	10	
'Other' Partners:	32	(e.g. NHS, Chambers, Police etc.)
Member Support depts.	9	(who acted as conduit to their members)

4.7 There were also 22 direct communications sent to religious and cultural contacts – the details of which were provided by the Equality and Diversity Manager. The majority were places of worship. The survey ran from February 17 to March 22, 2020. Using a mixed method design of both quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for the capture of great detail that may have been otherwise missed, whilst also providing quantifiable numbers on opinions and thoughts. 239 responses were received via the online survey.

4.8 Once obtained, the qualitative data was prepared for thematic analysis. This involved digitizing the data, securely storing it in an active spreadsheet, which was then sorted into emerging themes. Each theme being counted for frequency to give initial impressions of opinion prevalence. Key quotes were then highlighted within the spreadsheet, and utilised in this summary report describing general and poignant opinions and suggestions.

4.9 Focus groups and staff meetings were organised to encourage engagement during the development of the new Safety Plan and findings from these sessions were taken into account when preparing the draft plan. At least 29 focus groups took place comprising members of operational crews, Prevent

& Protect, and other support and Shared Services teams. The numbers of participants was not recorded in every instance, but confirmed figures indicate a minimum of 203 people took part in these sessions.

4.10 The dedicated Safety Plan web-page received 941 page views – of which:

280 from Facebook
113 from Twitter
15 from Instagram
84 from intranet
175 from search engine
57 from email.

4.11 In total, a minimum of 1,678 instances of individual contact initiation were made across the various approaches. This figure includes focus groups, direct communications being sent to relevant and identified organisations/individuals, survey responses, social media, emails/correspondence received.

4.12 The above figures, however, do not include the individuals made aware of the plan by the word of mouth through the Service Delivery Groups, team meetings, Social Media engagement and the people who came into contact with the idea of the Safety Plan through other, more passive, means of advertisement such as local press, links on partner websites, etc.

4.13 Appendix A, Contains the full report on the consultation process. Appendix B Contains the Draft Safety Plan 2020-2024

5. Conclusion

5.1 A large amount of both qualitative and quantitative data was recorded over the course of the Service's consultation period. These have been interpreted through thematic analysis and descriptive statistics respectively.

5.2 The findings of the consultation were taken into account when further developing the Safety Plan for final sign-off. Many of the comments received will help to inform us of those areas where we may need to provide more information or adapt the way we communicate to provide greater understanding. They also give us an indication of those areas where support is perhaps not as strong and in those instances we need to ensure that we are open and transparent and engage in further detail when we have specific proposals to discuss with local communities and groups who may be directly affected by any changes we make

5.3 Our communities have responded that:

- they would like more information and detail about our review of the way we use and crew our vehicles
- they are supportive of us collaborating with partners with particular support for working with the ambulance service
- whilst they strongly support our desire to increase the diversity across the Service, over a third of respondents stated that merit should not be overlooked

- there is concern that any changes to our on-call crewing system may lead to greater response times suggesting we will need to clearly communicate the benefit of any changes we make to improve understanding
- they are apprehensive about the impact of reduced funding and that this may lead to job losses and closure of fire stations
- any changes we make should be to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our Services rather than simply to cut costs.

Matthew Ellis
Staffordshire Commissioner

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Safety Plan 2020-2024 Consultation report

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1. Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide detail about the consultation undertaken in developing the scope and context of the Safety Plan 2020-2024.

Whether it be preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks, or responding effectively to the incidents and emergencies that occur the government's [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) recognises that local fire and rescue services are best placed to identify, plan, prepare, and deliver a suitable service to make communities safer. The National Framework requires us to provide an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks across Staffordshire, make provision for our prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately. This assessment takes the form of an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), which we call our *Safety Plan*.

The framework states that an IRMP should cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that we are able to deliver an effective service. Whilst our previous IRMP covered a three-year period (Corporate Safety Plan 2017-2020), we have agreed that the current Safety Plan would cover a four period (2020-2024) to tie in with the Staffordshire Commissioner's term of office.

The Commissioner's plan and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's Safety Plan are subject to scrutiny by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel. Whilst these plans can be combined, we have agreed to develop separate plans. However, in developing our Safety Plan we have taken into account the four strategic priorities set out in the Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan and the detailed requirements of the National Framework:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Protecting Staffordshire and its people
- Public Confidence
- Service Reform.

The Safety Plan sets out our intentions and a broad outline of our activities which will support these priorities and are driven by our assessment of the risks across the county.

The development of the new Safety Plan 2020-2024 began in the summer of 2019, with the formal public consultation period running from February 17 until March 22, 2020. The consultation period enabled the fulfilment of both our statutory and moral duties to consult, ensuring that suitable and appropriate information was provided to a wide ranging and representative sample of the populations within Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

We want our communities to help us to shape, improve and transform our prevention, protection and response activities to make Staffordshire safer, meet the challenges of reduced public sector funding and reflect the changing demands and risks placed on the Service. Feedback and opinion about our priorities has been sought through a process of ongoing consultation and engagement detailed later within this report.

As we are operating in a period of unprecedented challenge we acknowledge that, more than ever, our plans need to be flexible and the way we operate may need to change. We have been open and honest with our communities about this and, as our plans develop over the next four years we propose that we will consult with them about specific proposals in more detail, so that we can continue to ensure that our activities continue to reflect what they expect from their local fire and rescue service.

Impact of COVID19

The consultation period for the Safety Plan 2020-2024 ran from February 17 until March 22, 2020, during which time national and local government have had to adapt and react to the emerging global COVID19 flu pandemic. Part of these measures at a local level has seen the elections for the new Staffordshire Commissioner, which were scheduled for May 2020, postponed until May 2021. Matthew Ellis, the current Commissioner, will remain in office until the new Commissioner is elected in 2021.

The Commissioner is required to approve the Safety Plan and it was agreed at Service Governance Board on January 30, 2020 that the current Corporate Safety Plan 2017-2020 would remain in place until August 2020 to allow time for the new Commissioner to take office and fully understand the plan and amend as they see necessary. The new Safety Plan was set to be approved by the new Commissioner in the summer of 2020, however in light of the current restrictions and interim measures that have been put in place the Safety Plan will now be formally signed-off by Matthew Ellis instead.

It is difficult to tell what (if any) impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the level of response to the Safety Plan Consultation. As the formal consultation period overlapped with the emerging crisis it is highly likely that focus of our people, partners and communities was diverted and engagement dropped off.

2. Our Consultation Duties

As a public sector organisation we have duties derived from legislation and a number of frameworks in order to ensure that we engage with our stakeholders on key decisions and developments or changes to the Service.

The current Government provides the Revised Best Value Statutory Guidance, a framework that guides the Service in making “arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. This Guidance re-enforces the duty to consult set out in Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999. The Guidance states that consultation with “representatives of a wide range of local persons” is “not optional”.

First published in July 2012, and revised in 2018, the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services sets out clear expectations that “Fire and Rescue Authorities are accountable to their communities for their actions and decision making. They need to have transparent processes in place to deliver this and engage with their communities to provide them with the opportunity to influence their local Service. Local accountability is a vital check on the services provided by Fire and Rescue Authorities”.

Alongside our statutory requirements is our own priority to understand our communities, businesses and partners in order to improve quality of life by delivering the highest quality, most fit-for-purpose public service possible. Doing so will enable us to adapt to the needs of our communities in order to provide the most effective and efficient services for those communities.

We recognise that it makes good business sense to involve our stakeholders, people and our communities in shaping the future direction of the Service. Therefore, we have invested in, and enhanced, our consultation, engagement and involvement with local communities, partners and businesses with the aim of clearly establishing ‘customer’ expectations.

3. Consultation Objectives

The objectives of the Safety Plan 2020-2024 consultation were:

- to engage with our people, our communities and other stakeholders and give them the opportunity to have a say in the future of the Service;
- to raise awareness of our priorities and proposed changes to service delivery;
- to gather feedback that can be used to support the direction and drafting of the Safety Plan 2020-2024;
- to ensure that the consultation is as inclusive as possible; and
- to communicate our intention of consulting with our communities on more specific proposals moving forward.

This approach was adopted as to consolidate best practice and previous learning to design and deliver a stakeholder and staff consultation programme that would involve a broad and diverse cross section of the demographics of the community of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Considerations

People Impact Assessments are also being developed as part of the development of the Safety Plan priority areas to ensure that all our services are delivered in a manner that meets the needs of our diverse communities. The People Impact Assessments will remain 'live' documents, amended and expanded in line with the Safety Plan as it also develops as a 'live' document. This will allow us to continue to adapt our services to meet the needs of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent's broad and diverse communities, and allow us to apply due regard to the groups within those communities.

The Equality and Diversity Manager has been an integral part of the consultation process. Insight and direction has been offered ensuring that due consideration was paid to equal, diverse, fair, and inclusive consultation, as is set out by national guidelines. Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service are committed to maintaining the Excellent Level of the Fire and Rescue Equality Framework.

5. Consultation and Communication Strategy

Consultation involved multiple internal and external stakeholders and was supported by Shared Service's Safety Plan Communication Strategy:

- our staff, including Shared Service staff and Fire Control
- rep. bodies
- volunteers
- Staffordshire Commissioner's Office
- Police Fire and Crime Panel
- Councillors, MPs
- other Fire and Rescue Services
- Local Authorities (City, County, Borough/District, Town/Parish)
- partner organisations
- businesses and business groups
- community groups

Establishing contact with these groups enabled a well-rounded approach to consultation, covering a comprehensive range of individuals and groups that are key in delivering the Service, be it through service users, partnership and collaboration, or otherwise.

In order to effectively recruit participants, targeted promotion and publicity channels were used, tailoring our approaches dependent on the stakeholder group being targeted for participation.

External

- Draft Safety Plan documents were prepared, incorporating the consultation questions to assist participants in focussing on the main proposals for consultation. Copies were provided to all fire stations
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- Intranet updates, iNews and reminders were published on a regular basis to encourage participation in the consultation with the use of internal Screensavers.
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- 239 responses were received via the online survey.

Once obtained, the qualitative data was prepared for thematic analysis. This involved digitizing the data, securely storing it in an active spreadsheet, which was then sorted into emerging themes:

- *Development of diversity across the Service*
- *Use, development and location of vehicles and achievement of response times*
- *Delivering improvements in efficiency, use of targeting and delivering prevention work*
- *Staffing issues, including recruitment, retention and availability levels*
- *Collaboration and partnership working*
- *Concern over cuts and reductions in service provision*
- *Issues relating to access to the Safety Plan*
- *Delivery of support to businesses and protection work*

- *Environmental issues and how the Service should deal with them*

Each theme being counted for frequency to give initial impressions of opinion prevalence. Key quotes were then highlighted within the spreadsheet, and utilised in this summary report describing general and poignant opinions and suggestions.

Focus groups and staff meetings were organised to encourage engagement during the development of the new Safety Plan and findings from these sessions were taken into account when preparing the draft plan. At least 29 focus groups took place comprising members of operational crews, Prevent & Protect, and other support and Shared Services teams. The numbers of participants was not recorded in every instance, but confirmed figures indicate a minimum of 203 people took part in these sessions.

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8. Results of the Consultation

A large amount of both qualitative and quantitative data was recorded over the course of the Service's consultation period. These have been interpreted through thematic analysis and descriptive statistics respectively.

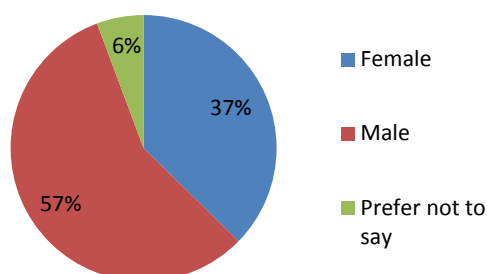
8.1. Participant Demographics

Participant demographics were recorded for those that engaged with the online survey, showing a snapshot of the people across the county. The figures recorded aligned similarly with the population demographics seen across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, showing a representative sample of both areas, and paying close mind to equality, diversity, and inclusion efforts in accordance with Local Government Act 1999.

The following charts and figures describe the 158 people that responded to the voluntary respondent characteristics section of the online survey:

Respondent Characteristics

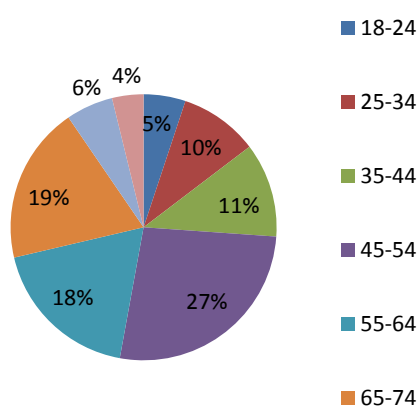
Gender



Response Rate: 66%

Response	Number
Female	59
Male	90
Prefer not to say	9
Total	158

Age



Response Rate: 66%

Response	Number
18-24	8
25-34	15
35-44	18
45-54	42
55-64	29
65-74	30
75+	9
Prefer not to say	6
Total	157

Ethnicity

Response	Number
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Asian/Asian British	2
Black/African/Caribbean/black British	1

Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	1
Other (please specify)	1
Prefer not to say	7
White British or Irish	145
Total	157

Response Rate: 66%

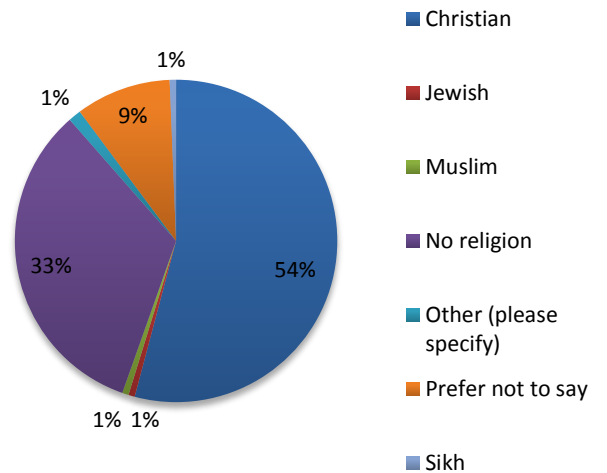
Not graphed, due to the disparity of response levels

Other respondent specified English

Religion

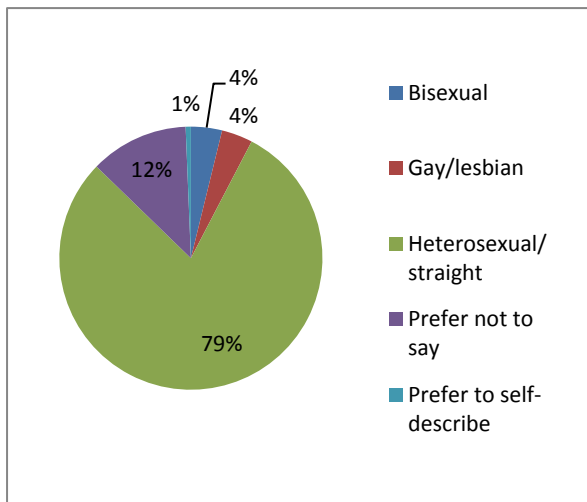
Response Rate: 66%

Response	Number
Christian	85
Jewish	1
Muslim	1
No religion	52
Other (please specify)	2
Prefer not to say	15
Sikh	1
Total	157



Other Responses: Secularist, Jedi

Sexual Orientation



Response	Number
Bisexual	6
Gay/Lesbian	6
Heterosexual/straight	126
Prefer not to say	19
Prefer to self-describe	1
Total	158

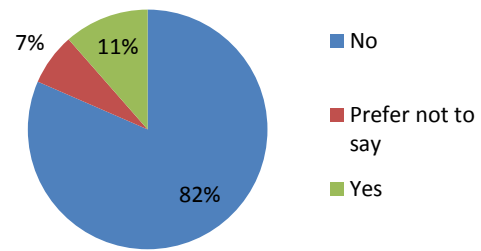
Response Rate: 66%

Prefer to self-describe Cisfemale

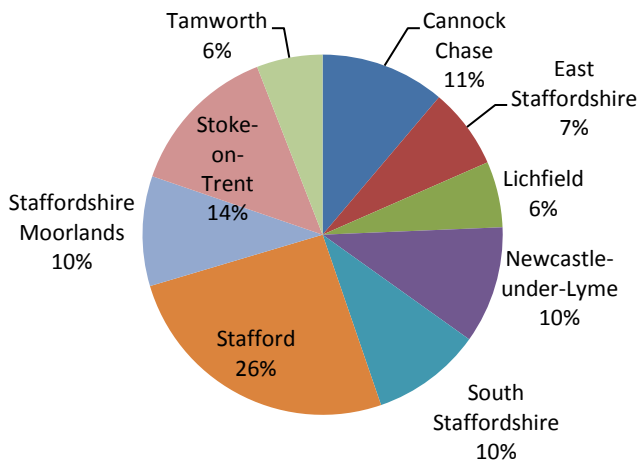
Disability

Response	Number
No	128
Prefer not to say	11
Yes	18
Total	157

Response Rate: 66%



Residence Location



Response	Number
Cannock Chase	17
East Staffordshire	11
Lichfield	9
Newcastle-under-Lyme	16
South Staffordshire	15
Stafford	39
Staffordshire Moorlands	15
Stoke-on-Trent	21
Tamworth	9
Total	152

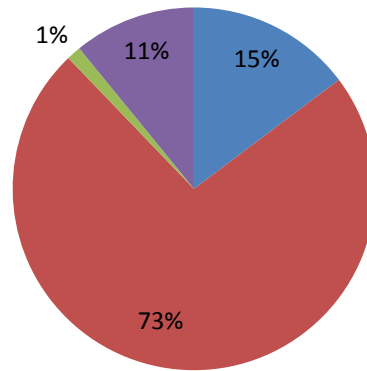
Response Rate: 64%

Respondent Type

Response	Number
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service employee	23
An individual	114
A relative of an employee of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service	2
An organisation	17
Total	156

Response Rate: 65%

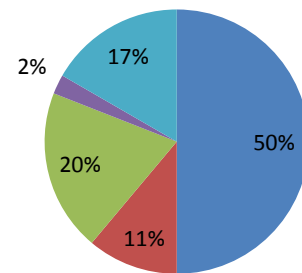
- An employee of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- An individual
- A relative of an employee of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- An organisation



Communication and contact

Contact with us

Contact Type	Number
Community event / group meeting	63
Fire incident	14
Fire station open day / event	25
Road traffic incident	21
Safe and Well visit	21
Total	126



- Community event / group meeting
- Fire incident
- Fire station open day / event
- Road traffic incident
- Safe and Well visit

Respondents citing contact with us: 53%

Contact: Other Contact Types Cited

Other (Contact Type)	Number
Audits, familiarisation visits, crews carrying out exercises.	1
Central Heating Boiler.	1
Community Room/Site User	8
Councillor and volunteer	1
Drill nights	1
Employee	12
Ex-Employee	3
Fire risk assessment assistance	1
Fire safety professional	1
Firefighter	1
General Interest	1
Huntington Parish Council	1
<i>"I am a member of bloodbikes"</i>	1
Scene of incident	1
<i>"I work in Fire control"</i>	1
Kier Workplace Services Employee	1
Engage at Community Events	1
Observed via social media	1
Prefer not to say	1
Fire Station visit	1
Prevent visit	2
Partner Engagement	2
Through Staffordshire Commissioner's Office	1
Volunteer	1

Closest Fire Station

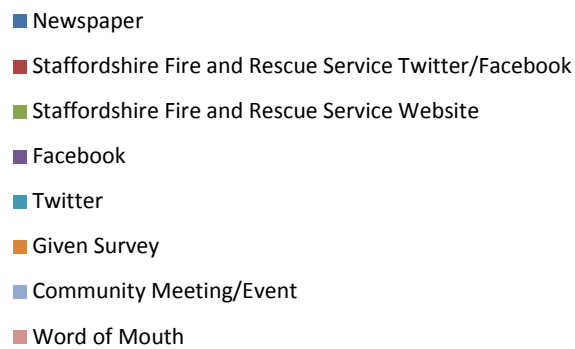
Station	Number
Abbots Bromley	2
Barton-under-Needwood	1
Biddulph	4
Billbrook and Codsall	3
Brewood	1
Burslem	1
Burton	10
Cannock	8
Chase Terrace	7
Cheadle	7
Eccleshall	5
Gnosall	6
Hanley	8
Ipstones	1
Kidsgrove	5
Kinver	4
Leek	3
Lichfield	4
Loggerheads	2
Longton	8
Newcastle	11
Penkridge	2
Rising Brook	3
Rugeley	7
Sandyford	1
Stafford	9
Stone	10
Tamworth	7
Tamworth Mercia	3
Uttoxeter	1
Wombourne	2
Total	146

Response rate: 61%

How did you hear about the Consultation?

Response	Number
Newspaper	1
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Twitter/Facebook	17
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Website	36
Facebook	14
Twitter	9
Given Survey	34
Community Meeting/Event	6
Word of Mouth	9
Total	126

Response Rate: 53%



How did you hear about the Consultation: Other?

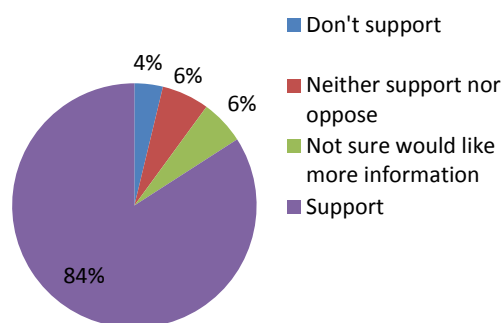
Response	Number
As part of Parish Council consultation	1
Cannock Chase District Council	1
Cannock SNP	1
Council	1
Council meeting	1
Email	24
Email from Council	1
Email from Stoke.gov	1
Email received as a councillor	1
Emailed following job application	1
Employee	1
Instagram	1
Parish council	3
Prefer not to say	1
<i>"Sent to me by Andrew Bailey SBC"</i>	1
Stoke North Safe Neighbour Panel - Police	1
Text Message	1
Through Council as a local Councillor	1
UHNM Staff Bulletin	1
Total	44

8.2. Quantitative Results

The following charts show the breakdown of responses received from the online survey. The charts will be followed by a brief description of their results:

Each year we visit approximately 25,000 homes to deliver Safe and Well visits. We also visit around 400 business and other non-domestic premises to enforce fire safety legislation. This helps keep people safe in their homes and in the buildings that they work and visit. We would like to target the most vulnerable people to visit and support them with our Safe and Well visits and increase the number of premises we visit to help with their fire safety procedures. How do you feel about us balancing the prevention work we do between keeping buildings and vulnerable people safe?

Response	Number
Don't support	9
Neither support nor oppose	15
Not sure would like more information	14
Support	201
Total	239



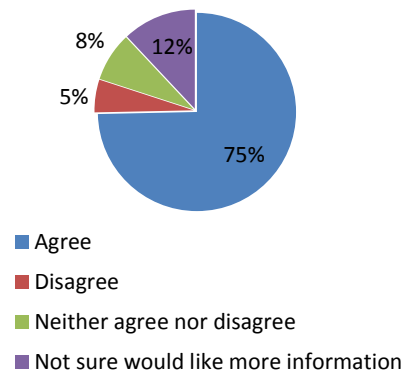
Response Rate: 100%

- There is strong support for this proposal with well over three-quarters of respondents in favour of the way we intend to balance our prevention and protection activities.

We currently have a range of different vehicles, equipment and crewing systems. We would like to increase the range of options available to us so that we can tailor our approach to best suit each emergency. We believe this would make us more efficient and effective. Do you agree?

Response	Number
Agree	168
Disagree	12
Neither agree nor disagree	18
Not sure would like more information	27
Total	225

Response Rate: 94%

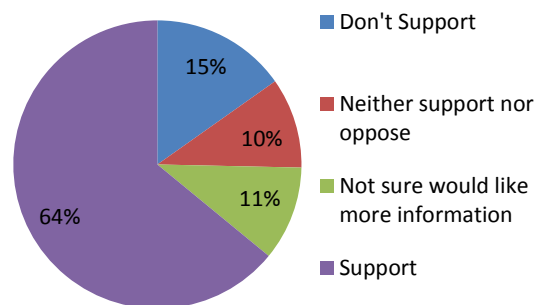


- Once again there is strong support for this proposal to review the way we use our vehicles and crew them to ensure we are more efficient and effective. Whilst there is very little objection to this suggestion, a number of respondents indicated they would like additional information to be able to make a more informed decision.

We propose to look at the way we crew our fire engines and review our on-call fire fighter duty system to see how we can maximise our availability for responding to emergency calls. Currently, we require on-call firefighters to live or remain within five minutes of a fire station whilst on-call. This restricts the pool of talented people we can recruit. We would like to expand the areas we recruit from, as this will help us to keep our fire engines available. How do you feel about this?

Response	Number
Don't support	33
Neither support nor oppose	22
Not sure would like more information	23
Support	139
Total	217

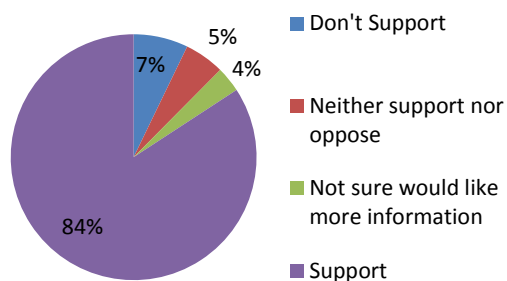
Response Rate: 91%



- This question whilst still supported by over half of respondents saw a more marked deviation in response with almost one-fifth of respondents not supportive of this proposal. Also, a quarter of respondents were either negative or wanting more information - this could be indicative of a lack of a wider understanding of our duty systems which suggests there is perhaps more we need to do to improve awareness around this topic to gain more support. As this is an anonymous survey, it is unclear whether those respondents who do not support this proposal are members of the public or employees of the Service.

We propose to continue exploring ways of working collaboratively with partners, such as police and health, to improve our effectiveness and efficiency. The focus of this work will be to improve the

safety, health and wellbeing of our people and our communities rather than looking primarily to save money. How do you feel about this?

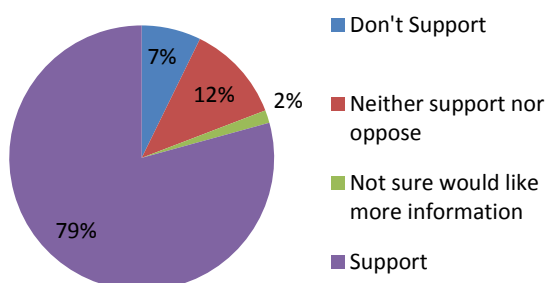


Response	Number
Don't support	15
Neither support nor oppose	11
Not sure would like more information	7
Support	176
Total	209

Response Rate: 87%

- There was a largely positive response with the majority of respondents supportive of this proposal.

We propose to publish our Safety Plan as a live document on our website rather than publish in printed format, as this is more efficient and better for the environment. Readers will be able to print their own hard copy for reference if they wish to do so. By doing this we will also be able to demonstrate the clear links between the priorities in our Safety Plan, the risks we face across Staffordshire and how our local station plans support our prevention, protection, and response activities. This means we can also adapt our plan in line with the changing needs of our communities and clearly show you the impact or effect of any changes we make. Do you support this idea?



Response	Number
Don't support	13
Neither support nor oppose	24
Not sure would like more information	3
Support	153
Total	193

Response Rate: 81%

- Once again respondents were on the whole supportive of this proposal, with a slightly greater number being indifferent. The question is perhaps less open to controversial response being focussed on the way we communicate our plans and intentions, rather than the way we deliver our Services.

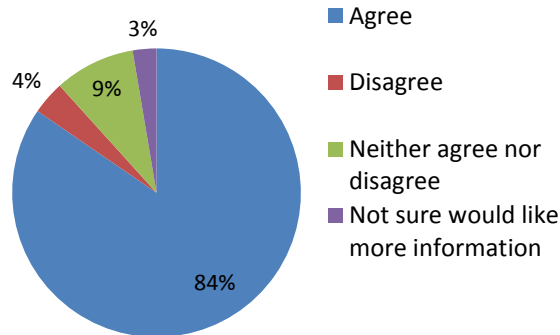
As our plans develop over the next four years we want you to help us shape, improve and transform our prevention, protection and response activities to make Staffordshire safer, meet the challenges of reduced public sector funding and reflect the changing demands and risks placed on the Service. When we have specific proposals to discuss, we propose that we will consult with you in more detail. We will do so in a way that helps us understand the effects of such proposals whilst making best use of our resources. Do you agree with this approach?

Response	Number
Agree	159
Disagree	7

Agree	159
Disagree	7

Neither agree nor disagree	17
Not sure would like more information	5
Total	188

Response Rate: 79%

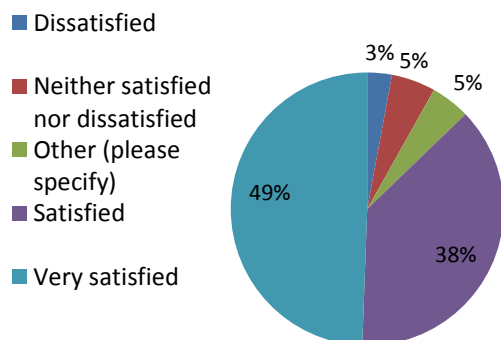


- This is supported overall, which when viewed with other questions around communication suggests that respondents on the whole welcome the chance to engage with us regarding future proposals so that they have a better understanding of any changes we may need to make.

Taking everything into account that you know about us, how satisfied are you with the services Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service provide?

Total	172
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Response Rate: 72%



Response	Number
Dissatisfied	5
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9
Other (please specify)	8
Satisfied	65
Very satisfied	85

- Almost 90% of respondents were either Very Satisfied or Satisfied with the services we provide.

8.3. Qualitative Data

Data was analysed using thematic analysis techniques, helping to establish nine overarching themes that all qualitative data could be categorised under. The key themes, a short summary of the theme, and their prominence in responses through their database entry count follow:

Development of diversity across the Service

- *The majority of responses support the Service's proposal to improve its diversity culture. Whilst 58% of these comments were agreeing that we should improve our diversity across the Service, 35% commented that the drive for diversity should not override merit*

The theme of diversity contained 81 entries.

Use, development and location of vehicles and achievement of response times

- *The question of increasing turn in areas produced various comments, predominantly concern over possible increased response times. Consideration of how operational vehicles might be developed and located to best effect was also included in a number of responses*

The theme of concern over costs contained 58 entries.

Delivering improvements in efficiency, use of targeting and delivering prevention work

- *Comments cite the importance of prevention and of effective targeting especially of vulnerable people. Also the need to develop efficient working practices and to use data to evaluate decisions and actions*

The theme of prevention and improving efficiency and effectiveness contained 45 entries.

Staffing issues, including recruitment, retention and availability levels

- *Responses include support for the use of volunteers, issues relating to crewing and the recruitment and retention of on-call fire fighters*

The theme of staffing issues contained 33 entries.

Collaboration and partnership working

- *Responses overall support the proposal to develop partnerships and collaborative working, with particular mention given to the benefits of collaborating with the ambulance service*

The theme of collaboration and partnership working contained 31 entries.

Concern over cuts and reductions in service provision

- *There were a number of comments expressing concern over any potential reduction in service provision due to reduced funding including fear of job cuts and closing fire stations. The most common comment was that any changes made should focus on making improvements rather than reducing costs*

The theme of concern over costs contained 27 entries.

Issues relating to access to the Safety Plan

Some comments expressed reservations that online publication may limit the availability of the plan to vulnerable groups or those without access to technology

The theme of concern over costs contained 27 entries.

Delivery of support to businesses and protection work

- *A number of comments favour the prioritisation of visits to businesses, particularly if this is based on risk*

The theme of protection work to support businesses contained 14 entries.

Environmental issues and how the Service should deal with them

- *Comments primarily support the Service planning its response to the demands posed by environment threats*

The theme of environmental issues contained 8 entries.

9. Consultation summary

The findings of the consultation will be taken into account when further developing the Safety Plan for final sign-off. Many of the comments received will help to inform us of those areas where we may need to provide more information or adapt the way we communicate to provide greater understanding. They also give us an indication of those areas where support is perhaps not as strong and in those instances we need to ensure that we are open and transparent and engage in further detail when we have specific proposals to discuss with local communities and groups who may be directly affected by any changes we make.

Our communities have responded that:

- they would like more information and detail about our review of the way we use and crew our vehicles
- they are supportive of us collaborating with partners with particular support for working with the ambulance service
- whilst they strongly support our desire to increase the diversity across the Service, over a third of respondents stated that merit should not be overlooked
- there is concern that any changes to our on-call crewing system may lead to greater response times suggesting we will need to clearly communicate the benefit of any changes we make to improve understanding
- they are apprehensive about the impact of reduced funding and that this may lead to job losses and closure of fire stations
- any changes we make should be to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our Services rather than simply to cut costs.

