

WEST HUB LOCAL SAFETY PLAN 2018- 2019

Serving Reading Borough and
West Berkshire



Background

The Fire and Rescue Service national framework document provides overarching guidance for England's Fire and Rescue Services. The guidance requires all Fire and Rescue Services to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), which provides detail on how it aims to improve public safety, reduce the number of emergency incidents, how it will work with partners and use resources in the most efficient way.

In 2015 Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service published the [Corporate Plan and IRMP 2015-19](#), demonstrating changes we will need to make in the way it is set up, how it delivers services and the six strategic commitments made by the Fire Authority. Each year, the strategic objectives and performance measures are refreshed and published in the Annual Plan, which then feed into service plans.

Local Safety Plans support the delivery of these service plans to identify local risks and appropriate actions within each of its operational 'hub' areas. This document sets these out in respect of the West Hub, which covers the unitary authority areas of Reading Borough and West Berkshire.

One of our key focus areas is ensuring that our Fire Stations are at the heart of the community. This runs throughout the core of our community based activities and is evidenced in the sections that follow.

Key service objectives

Our teams will develop individual action plans in pursuit of our strategic objectives and in particular the following key objectives:

Prevention – we will educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies, and what to do when they happen

- » Deliver an effective fire, road and water safety education programme to schools.

Prevention – we will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda

- » Deliver prevention initiatives for young people on a cost recovery basis.
- » Implement and deliver Safe and Well visits for the most vulnerable in Berkshire.

Protection – we will ensure appropriate fire safety standards in buildings

- » Promote and influence the fitting of appropriate sprinkler systems in residential and commercial properties.

- » Embed the risk-based inspection programme for fire safety audits, ensuring resources are focused where fire risk is greatest and there is evidence of continued non-compliance.
- » Work with our unitary authority partners to promote public confidence and provide reassurance by ensuring that building owners comply with Government guidance.

Response – we will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies

Key performance indicators

To monitor our performance across Berkshire, we will use the following measures:

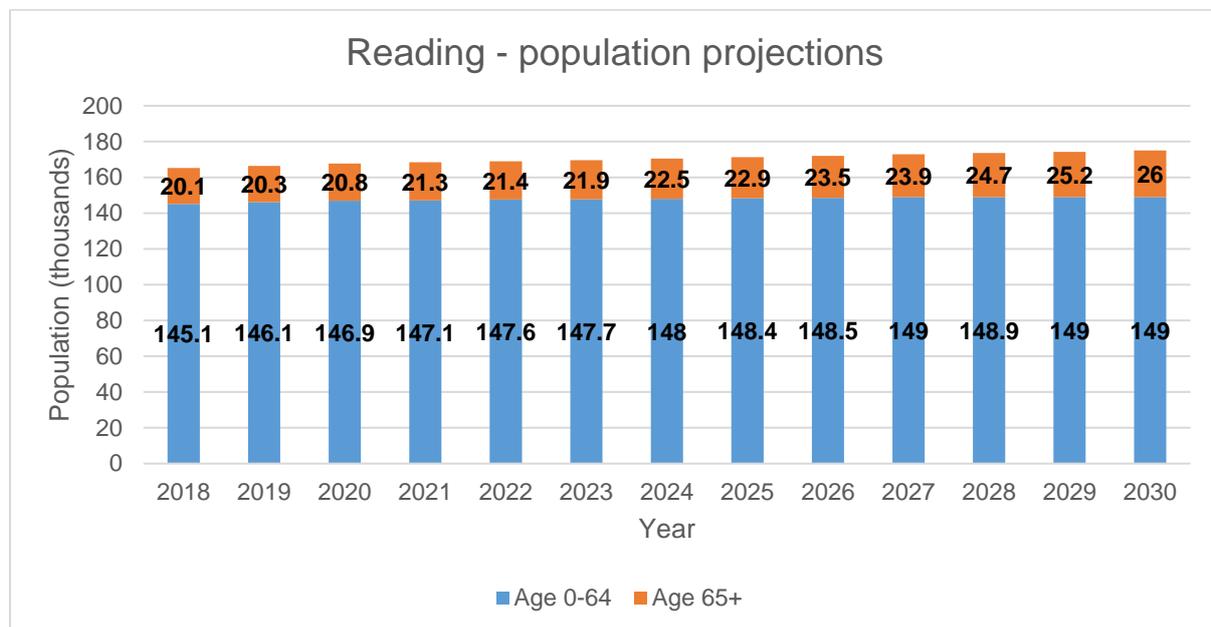
1. By April 2019 we aim to have delivered 10,700 Safe and Well visits to those who are at heightened risk of dying and/or being injured in the event of an accidental dwelling fire.
2. By April 2019 we aim to have completed 1,400 full fire safety audits, which will be carried out by our team of Fire Safety Inspecting Officers.
3. As a minimum, on 75% of occasions, we will strive to ensure our fire engines arrive at emergency incidents within 10 minutes of a call being received.
4. We aim to provide a suitably qualified crew for all our whole-time fire engines 100% of the time and will strive for 60% availability at our 'on-call' stations.

Identifying and understanding local risk – Reading Borough

Reading Borough is home to around 165,000 people and the population is expected to continue growing for the foreseeable future.

Our research indicates that those over 65 are at higher risk from fire and by far the largest long-term growth in population is predicted in this age group.

As mortality rates decline in future the number of older adults can be expected to increase. The number aged over 65 years is estimated to increase to 26,000 in Reading by 2030.



(Source: Office for National Statistics)

Other factors affecting the risk profile of the Reading area include the forecast rise in those with dementia and those with a learning disability, both of which are contributing fire risk factors. (Source – Predicting Older People Population Information POPPI – Oxford Brookes University data 2014 and Reading Borough Council Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities).

The [Indices of Multiple Deprivation](#)¹ indicate that there are areas of Reading that fall into the top 10% of most deprived areas in the country. We know that people and communities facing health, financial and housing challenges are more likely to have fires in their homes and become casualties.

¹ The Indices of Multiple Deprivation, published by Government, is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (or neighbourhoods) in England.

In relation to business and commerce Reading is the largest town in the South-East and has been a magnet for many international companies in recent years, attracted by the central location and the excellent business facilities available. As with much of the Thames Valley, the business landscape is dominated by the service industry in Reading, far from its manufacturing heritage of beer, biscuits and bulbs. It is also a retail hub and will remain so as development work continues to improve Reading's retail prospects.

Fire safety legislation requires those that are responsible for commercial premises to risk assess those premises and put in place adequate fire safety measures. The significant commercial environment in Reading creates a need for us to maintain a protection function adequately resourced to support local businesses and ensure compliance with fire safety legislation.

The above paragraphs provide an illustrative profile outline of the area. We will continue to further develop our understanding of the area, to enable us to accurately direct our resources to areas within the community of greatest need.

We recognise that people and communities facing health, wellbeing and other challenges are more likely to have fires in their homes and become casualties. Consequently, we will align our activities and initiatives with an aim to reduce risk in these areas and address community based needs, as identified above. The sections that follow explain how we will endeavour to achieve this.

Local Safety Plan – Reading

Prevention objectives

- » We aim to deliver over 2,000 Safe and Well visits for those at heightened risk of dying in a fire in 2018-19. We will work with partner agencies to refine the data we use to reach those at highest risk.
- » We aim to deliver over 300 Safe and Well visits for those at heightened risk of having a fire in their home in 2018-19. We will continue to analyse the information and data available to us such as our own incident data, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, and population information; allowing us to identify the areas and households in this category.
- » Using the NHS concept of 'Making Every Contact Count' as a guiding principle we will work with other services to identify ways in which we can add value to our home safety visits. During these visits, our staff will consider wider potential risks to residents, such as falling, and work with partner agencies to develop appropriate referral pathways, to ensure help and assistance is forthcoming.
- » Across the Borough, our Safety Education Team supported by our firefighters will offer fire safety education sessions for all school children in Year 5, and water safety and road safety education to those in Year 7.

Protection objectives

- » We will continue to deliver our risk based inspection programme focusing on the buildings that pose the highest risk, for example unlicensed houses in multiple occupation², care homes and sleeping accommodation above commercial premises. We are aware that there are a large number of properties that fall into these categories in Reading. We aim to conduct 400 fire safety inspections in the Reading area by April 2019.
- » Following the Grenfell incident in June 2017 and given the number of high-rise premises in the town there will be a focus on these types of buildings. We will conduct a joint visit with the local housing authority to the highest risk high-rise buildings in Reading by the end of September 2018.
- » We will continue to develop relationships with partner agencies such as Reading Borough Council to help us identify the highest risk premises for inspections.
- » We will continue to maintain an awareness of future commercial development to ensure that our local resources are allocated appropriately.
- » We will continue to analyse fire risk data to ensure that our inspectors focus their efforts on the premises that cause us the greatest concern.

Response objectives

- » Using historical incident data and through continual analysis of our response performance we will identify and implement changes to improve our attendance at incidents within our target time of 10 minutes.

Community support initiatives

- » We will continue to host NHS Blood and Transplant sessions at our Caversham Road and Whitley Wood Fire Stations in Reading.
- » We will continue to run our Young Firefighters scheme from Whitley Wood Fire Station.

² In simple terms houses in multiple occupation are single residences that have been subdivided into separate households (not from the same family) but retain shared amenities such as bathrooms, toilets or kitchens.

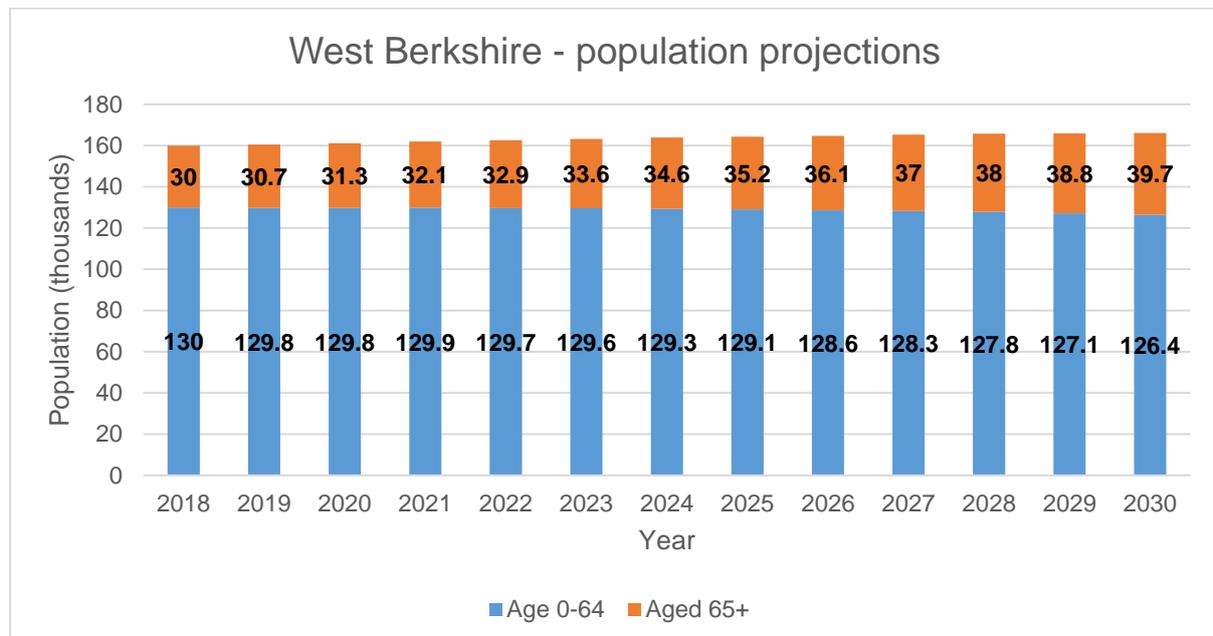
Identifying and understanding local risk – West Berkshire

Around 160,000 people live in West Berkshire, 70% living in settlements along the Kennet valley and in the suburban areas just to the west of Reading Borough.

The remainder of the population are dispersed in small rural settlements across the district. West Berkshire has one of the most dispersed populations in the South East.

The population of West Berkshire is projected to increase by a further 4% over the next decade – similar to that modelled for elsewhere.

West Berkshire has a marginally smaller proportion of people aged over 65 compared to the South East or England and Wales as a whole. However, the number of people aged over 65 has increased by 23% since 2001, compared to a 13% increase regionally, and is expected to continue to rise. We know that the over 65s are at higher risk from fire.



Source: Office for National Statistics

West Berkshire is an integral part of one of the most prosperous sub regions in Europe, the 'Thames Valley Business Wedge' spans South Buckinghamshire, South Oxfordshire, through all of Berkshire, North Hampshire, and Surrey.

West Berkshire is a relatively prosperous area, however there are pockets of deprivation with some in the top 20% of deprived areas in the country. We know that people and communities facing health, financial and housing challenges are more likely to have fires in their homes and become casualties.

In relation to business and commerce West Berkshire is in a good location, with easy access. There has been a shift in emphasis in West Berkshire towards a more knowledge and service based economy, which has significantly contributed to economic prosperity. The district has excellent commuter links to London and to the

West via trunk roads, the M4 motorway and mainline railways. A strong industrial base, characterised by new technology industries with a strong service sector and several manufacturing and distribution firms, combine to give West Berkshire one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country.

Fire safety legislation requires those that are responsible for commercial premises to risk assess those premises and put in place adequate fire safety measures. The vibrant commercial environment in West Berkshire creates a need for us to maintain a protection function adequately resourced to support local businesses and ensure compliance with fire safety legislation.

The above paragraphs provide an illustrative profile outline of the area. We will continue to further develop our understanding of the area, to enable us to accurately direct our resources to areas within the community of greatest need.

People and communities facing health, wellbeing, financial and other challenges are more likely to have fires in their homes and become casualties. Consequently, we will align our prevention activities and initiatives to target risk in these areas.

Local Safety Plan – West Berkshire

Prevention objectives

- » We aim to deliver over 1000 Safe and Well visits for those at heightened risk of dying in a fire across West Berkshire in 2018-19.
- » We aim to deliver over 600 Safe and Well visits for those at heightened risk of having a fire in their home across West Berkshire in 2018-19. We will continue to analyse the information and data available to us such as our own incident data, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, and population information; to identify the areas and households in this category.
- » We will work with other services to identify ways in which we can add value to our Safe and Well visits. During these visits, our staff will consider wider potential risks to residents, such as falling, and work with partner agencies to develop appropriate referral pathways, to ensure help and assistance is forthcoming.
- » Across the Borough, our Safety Education Team supported by our firefighters will offer fire safety education sessions for all school children in Year 5, and water safety and road safety education to those in Year 7.

Protection objectives

- » We will continue to deliver our risk based inspection programme focusing on the buildings which pose the highest risk, for example unlicensed houses in multiple occupation, care homes and sleeping accommodation above commercial premises.

- » We aim to conduct 200 premises audits in West Berkshire by April 2019. This will include a joint visit with the local housing authority to the highest risk high-rise buildings in West Berkshire by the end of September 2018.
- » We will continue to develop relationships with partner agencies, such as West Berkshire Council, to help us identify the highest risk premises for audit.
- » We will continue to maintain an awareness of future commercial development to ensure that our local resources are allocated appropriately.

Response objectives

- » Using historical incident data and through continual analysis of our response performance we will identify and implement changes to improve our attendance at incidents within our target time of 10 minutes.
- » We will work with local communities to increase the recruitment of part-time firefighters at our retained duty system stations in West Berkshire and in turn increase the availability of the fire engines located at those stations.

Community support initiatives

- » We will continue to host NHS Blood and Transplant sessions at Newbury Fire Station.
- » We will continue to run our Young Firefighters Scheme from Newbury Fire Station.
- » We will continue to support South Central Ambulance Service with Firefighters providing a joint response to medical emergencies in the Hungerford area.

