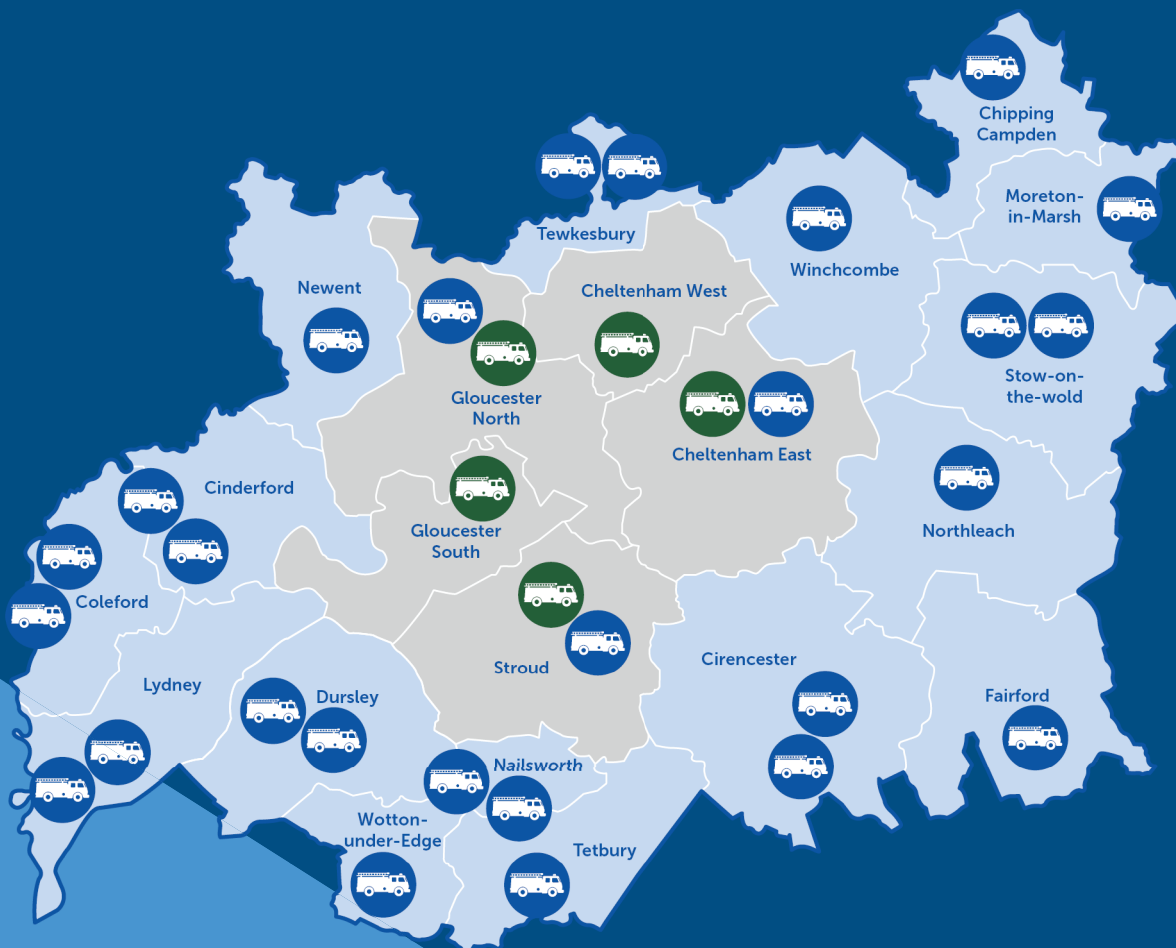


Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service

Shaping a safer county consultation



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL



Gloucestershire
Fire and Rescue Service
Working together for a safer Gloucestershire

More info gloucestershire.gov.uk/glosfire

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service

Shaping a safer county consultation

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) plays a vital role in keeping our communities safe. As risks and demands on the Service continue to change, it is essential that we regularly review how we use our resources to ensure we are providing the best possible protection to the people of Gloucestershire.

This consultation sets out proposals to change how some of our fire engines are crewed. These proposals are based on detailed analysis of risk, incident data, and response times across the county. They are designed to ensure that our firefighters are in the right place, at the right time, to respond to emergencies and support our communities.

We know that these are significant proposals, particularly for our staff and the communities directly affected. We must make sure that the resources we have are used in the most effective way to meet current and future risks.

Our priority is, and always will be, the safety of the public and our firefighters. These proposals aim to improve overall response across Gloucestershire by better aligning our resources to where demand and risk are greatest.

We are committed to listening to the views of our communities, our staff, and our partners. This consultation is an opportunity for you to share your feedback, which will be carefully considered before any final decisions are made.

Please note: a glossary of key terms and abbreviations is provided at the end of this document for reference.



Mark Preece
Executive Director of
Community Safety and
Chief Fire Officer



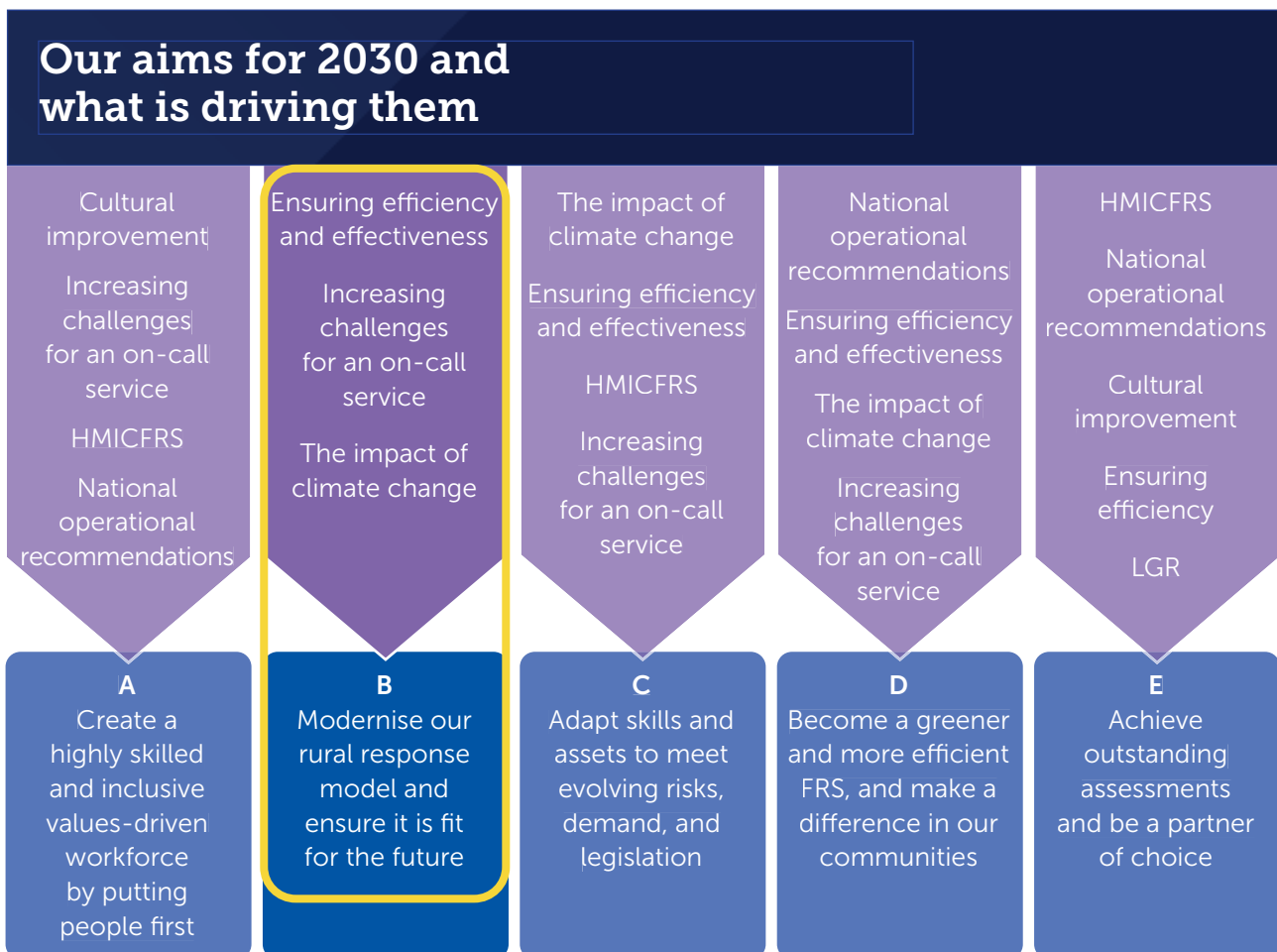
Councillor Paul Hodgkinson
Cabinet Member for Public Health,
Communities and Fire,
Gloucestershire County Council

Why is Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service consulting?

GFRS and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) are committed to providing the best services to our communities. Our job is to keep people safe, and to improve our community prevention and protection activities across the county.

Risk, incident patterns, populations, and community needs change over time. To ensure we are delivering an effective and efficient service, we are constantly reviewing our response to these changes through our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). When producing our CRMP, we reviewed our data and carried out independent modelling to evaluate the service we provide and ensure our resources are aligned to current and future risk, demand, and response performance.

Our CRMP 2026-30 sets out the following aims, which received support from internal and external stakeholders during public consultation.



Our aims, and the objectives for achieving these

A Create a highly skilled and inclusive values-driven workforce by putting people first	B Modernise our rural response model and ensure it is fit for the future	C Adapt skills and assets to meet evolving risks, demand, and legislation	D Become a greener and more efficient FRS, and make a difference in our communities	E Achieve outstanding assessments and be a partner of choice
A1 Continue our cultural transformation journey, and successfully deliver the 2024 Independent Review recommendations	B1 Carry out an in-depth review to ensure the number, distribution and staffing of stations aligns with demand and shows efficient use of resources	C1 Meet challenge of increasing road traffic collisions and incidents involving alternative energy supply by adapting fleet, equipment and skills	D1 Invest in greener and more efficient fleet and equipment that improves safety, capability, and reduces our environmental footprint	E1 Deliver our Transformation Programme and achieve outstanding government assessments
A2 Develop modern training facilities and ensure firefighters can meet current and emerging risks and keep themselves and others safe	B2 Introduce a flexible crewing model at on-call stations to increase availability, reduce turn out times during busy periods and use resources efficiently	C2 Meet the challenges of climate-driven changes to flooding and wildfires by adapting type and distribution of fleet, equipment and skills	D2 Support communities to become stronger and more resilient to improve quality of life of residents	E2 Support local government reorganisation outcomes and maximise opportunity and minimise risk
A3 Refresh our on-call firefighter role, listen to our employees' voices, and make GFRS an employer of choice	B3 Investigate sector-specific software to improve how efficiently and effectively we deploy available resources to live risks	C3 Enhance protection activities to ensure safer buildings, businesses, and communities, and maintain compliance with emerging legislation	D3 Realise efficiencies, for example through appropriate changes to fire cover/shifts and numbers of firefighters responding to incidents	E3 Develop new process and reporting to ensure national recommendations are identified and implemented effectively
A4 Redesign our workforce planning approach to make it increasingly data-led and responsive to improve capacity and operational resilience	B4 Establish a new day crewing model at Cinderford station and consider the potential for the same model at other stations	C4 Increase productivity of firefighters and increase number and quality of prevention activities where we can make the most difference	D4 Leverage efficiencies from rationalised and increasingly interconnected IT systems and intelligent use of data	E4 Improve collaboration and data sharing with partners to support shared aims and increase effectiveness

B Modernise our rural response model and ensure it is fit for the future

B1 Carry out an in-depth review to ensure the number, distribution and staffing of stations aligns with demand and shows efficient use of resources

B4 Establish a new day crewing model at Cinderford station and consider the potential for the same model at other stations

We now want to consult with our communities, workforce, and other stakeholders about the following key proposal:

- Provide a day crew at Cinderford Fire Station by moving 14 existing posts from the night shift at Cheltenham West Fire Station

This is your fire and rescue service, and we want to hear what you think.

Please read this document which explains the context and reasoning for the changes being considered and then fill out our short survey. Your feedback will help the GCC Cabinet decide on the proposed changes in December 2026.

About Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS)

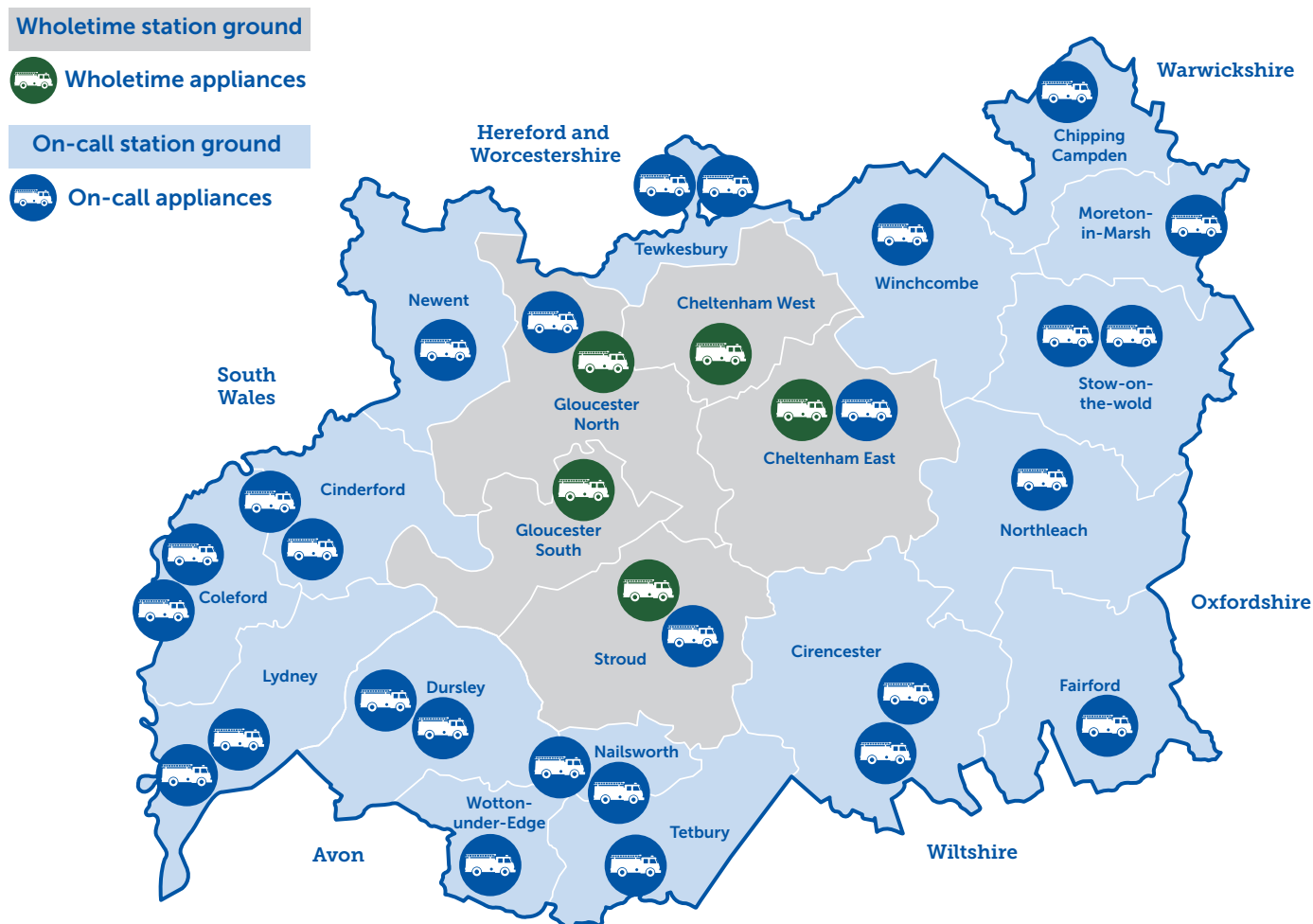
Gloucestershire is a diverse county covering 1,044 square miles and with a population of approximately 662,000. The county is divided into six districts: Gloucester, Cheltenham, Forest of Dean, Tewkesbury, Cotswolds and Stroud. 88% of Gloucestershire is classified as rural using Office of National Statistics definitions.

GFRS is an integral part of the county council's community safety directorate. We respond to a wide range of emergencies, including fires, road traffic collisions, rescues from water, specialist rescues such as people trapped in confined spaces or at height, and hazardous materials incidents.

We also help to prevent fires and other emergencies through visiting homes and schools; community safety education around fire, road and water safety; targeted interventions such as working with children who start fires; and giving safety advice to businesses. We also carry out audits and regulatory enforcement work to help make sure buildings comply with fire safety law and that responsible persons meet their legal duties. When fires do happen, we investigate the causes and share learning to help prevent similar incidents in future. We work closely with other services and partners to deliver this work.

We have 32 fire engines across 21 stations throughout Gloucestershire, and as the county is largely rural, 16 of these are staffed entirely by on-call firefighters (Figure 1). Of the remaining five stations, two are staffed by wholetime firefighters and three have a mixture of both wholetime and on-call firefighters.

Figure 1: GFRS's fire stations and fire engines



Background to the proposed changes

In December 2024, GCC Cabinet approved the introduction of a new day-crewed model at Cinderford Fire Station, supported by an increase of 14 new wholetime posts as well as upgrades to Cinderford Fire Station*. The decision was informed by independent data modelling carried out by a specialist company, Operational Research in Health Ltd (ORH) in 2023 and public consultation undertaken in 2024, to improve alignment between fire cover and community risk.

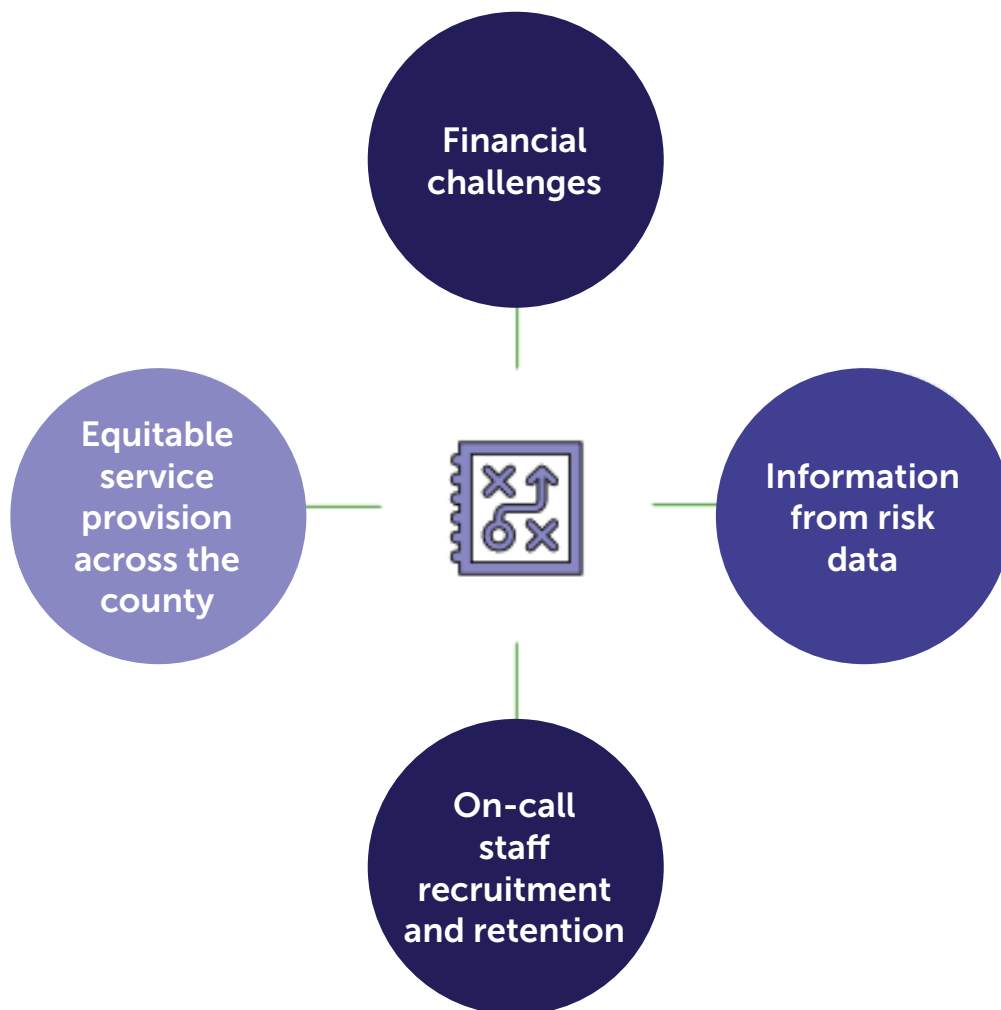
Since this decision was taken, GFRS has experienced increasing financial challenges, reflecting the wider pressures facing public services. Consequently, the Service must maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of its resources to ensure it continues to provide the best possible service while achieving the necessary savings. More recent data modelling from 2025-26** maintains that Cinderford is still the area that will provide greatest potential for targeted prevention activities and reducing response times in more rural areas. However, due to the requirement to make financial savings we believe this can be done more efficiently by moving existing staff without having to create 14 new posts.

Recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters is a national and local challenge. As a service that relies heavily on on-call firefighters, we must adapt to these changing circumstances and consider how we use our wholetime resources most effectively. By doing so, we can help ensure that communities across Gloucestershire receive a more consistent and equitable level of service, regardless of where they live, while making the best use of the resources available to us.

*supporting documents can be accessed <https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2351> (For Cabinet – GFRS Cabinet Report Final draft 21.11.24)

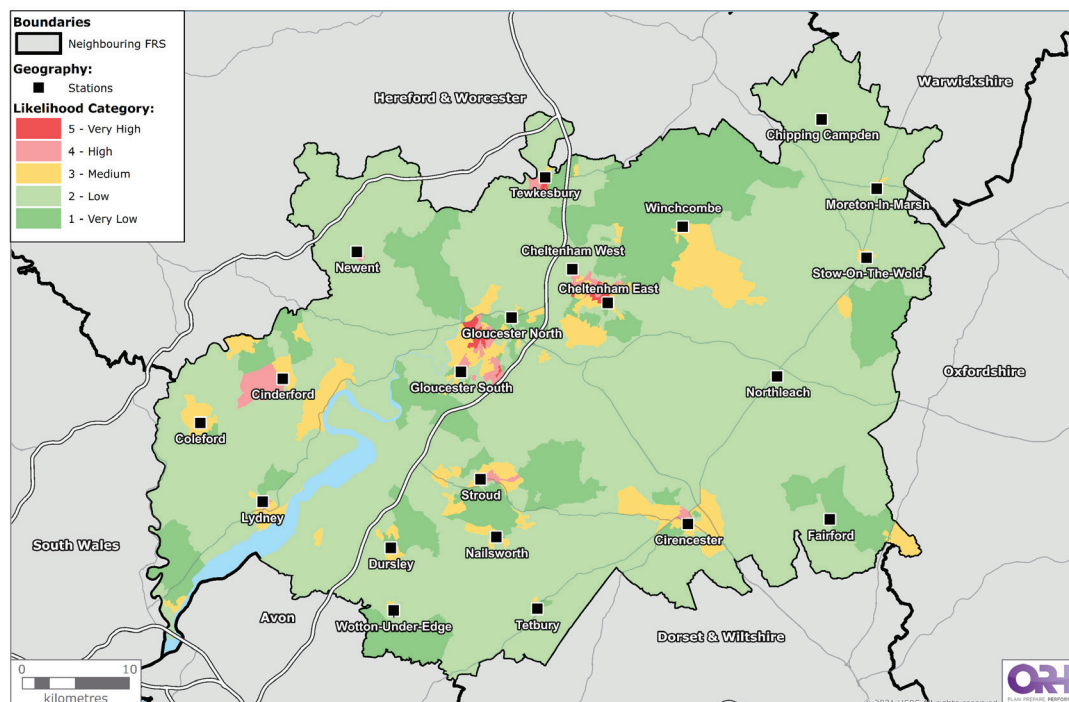
** supporting documents can be accessed <https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2687> (For Cabinet – Appendix 1 – ORH Data Modelling Summary Report 2026)

Emerging challenges



The 2024 decision to introduce day crewing at Cinderford was based on an assessment of community risk, service demand, and the availability of fire cover across the county. The change would see a significant improvement to how quickly we can respond to incidents in the Forest of Dean area. We use data from small neighbourhood areas, known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), to understand where factors linked to increased vulnerability and fire risk are concentrated. This analysis shows that Cinderford and surrounding parts of the Forest of Dean contain some of the county's high risk for fire-related emergencies (Figure 2). As a result, introducing day crewing at Cinderford would provide more reliable fire cover and a quicker response to where it is needed most, helping to better match resources to local risk and demand.

Figure 2: Risk likelihood by LSOA



Why we reviewed fire cover

Given the financial challenges facing GFRS, senior officers reviewed fire cover arrangements to identify whether efficiencies could be made elsewhere in the organisation while maintaining an effective service and supporting the proposed changes at Cinderford.

What does the data show

Analysis shows that GFRS already operates efficiently compared with other similar fire and rescue services. The chart opposite (Figure 3) shows the breakdown of our staff by role: we have fewer wholetime firefighters than most comparable services and rely more on on-call firefighters, which is typical for a mainly rural area like ours.

This mix of wholetime and on-call staff provides good fire cover in areas where incident numbers are lower, while keeping costs down. However, because we are already operating in this cost-effective way, there is limited opportunity to make further savings by reducing staff and/or fire station numbers.

In late 2025, we asked Operational Research in Health Ltd (ORH), an independent data modelling specialist to review five years of incident and performance data to review how our fire and rescue resources are used across Gloucestershire. They considered whether our resources are in the right places to meet risks, demand and emergency response needs, compared our current fire station and fire engine locations with a range of possible alternatives***. GFRS also considered the external factor of levels of deprivation in the Forest of Dean district (Figure 4).

Figure 3

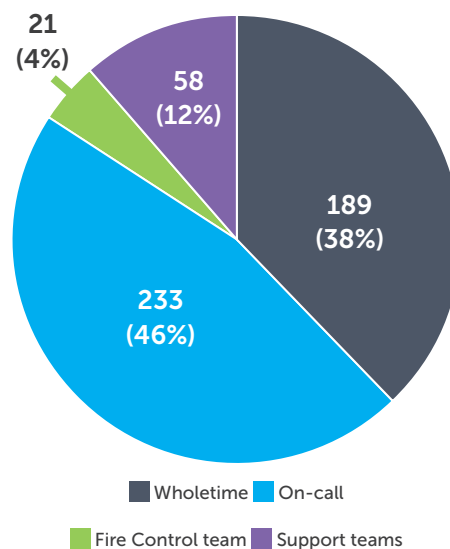
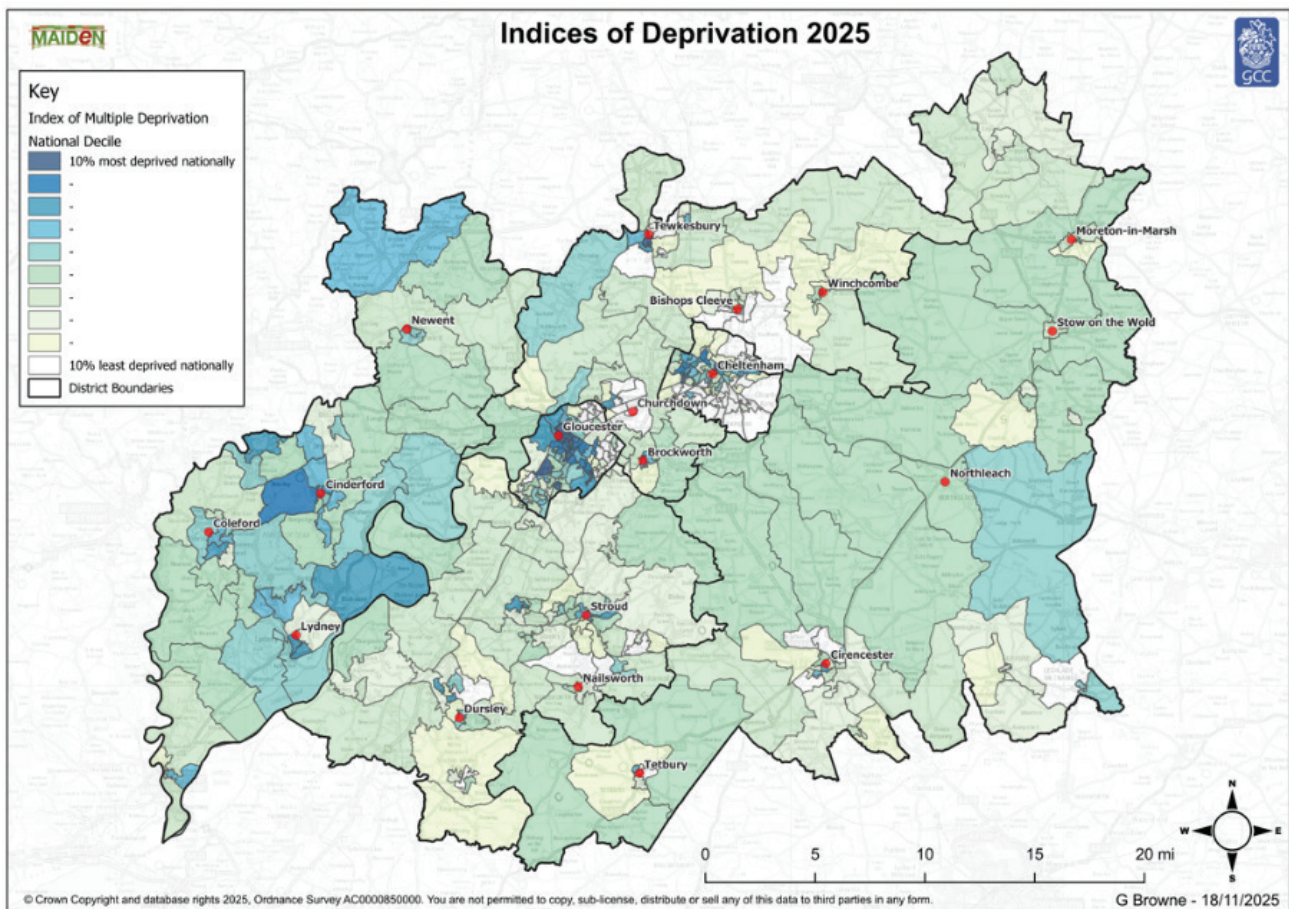


Figure 4: Indices of Deprivation 2025



The findings confirmed that introducing a day-crewed station at Cinderford by moving existing staff would provide benefits to the county.

***supporting documents can be accessed
<https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2687> (For Cabinet – Appendix 1 – ORH Data Modelling Summary Report 2026)

What does this mean for Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service

The review considered a range of factors, including the lower number of incidents that occur at night and the generally higher availability of on-call firefighters between the hours of 6pm and 6am. It aimed to identify changes to fire station resources that would have the least impact on overall service delivery. The review found that moving existing staff from Cheltenham West, which is currently a permanently crewed wholetime station, would have the smallest overall impact, mainly because overnight fire cover will continue to be provided from Cheltenham East Fire Station, with both a wholetime and an on-call fire engine availability.

This approach could allow the 14 posts currently used to maintain overnight cover at Cheltenham West to be reallocated to Cinderford, where data demonstrates they could provide a greater overall benefit in addressing community risk.

Why Cinderford?

We are proposing to introduce a wholetime day crew at Cinderford.

What the data shows

- There is a higher demand for fire and rescue services during the day in the Cinderford area.
- The Forest of Dean has several risks, its rurality makes travel time more challenging, and there is increased vulnerability in some areas in the district.
- Current cover in this area relies heavily on on-call firefighters, whose availability can vary.

What would this mean in practice

- A fire engine would be immediately available during the day from Cinderford Fire Station, meaning a faster and more reliable response to emergencies.
- Increased capacity for GFRS to engage with and support vulnerable members of the community by conducting targeted prevention activity e.g. Home Fire Safety Visits and protection activity e.g. Business Fire Safety Checks.

Benefits of the proposed change

- Improved response times across the Forest of Dean.
- Reduced pressure on neighbouring stations to respond into the area.
- Better overall balance of resources across the county, with additional resource targeted where it will have the greatest positive impact.

Why Cheltenham West?

We are proposing to remove the wholetime night crew at Cheltenham West.

What the data shows

- Incident demand in Cheltenham is significantly lower at night than during the day.
- In Cheltenham, night-time fire cover would be provided by Cheltenham East Fire Station, where there is both a wholetime and an on-call fire engine at night.
- Other neighbouring stations also provide fire and rescue cover in Cheltenham.
- There would be a small overall increase in first fire engine response times of 25 seconds in some areas of Cheltenham, which would still meet our Service attendance standard for dwelling fires of 9mins on average.

What does this mean in practice?

- Fire engines would still be available in Cheltenham overnight.
- In Cheltenham, overnight fire cover will continue to be provided from Cheltenham East Fire Station, with both a wholetime and an on-call fire engines available during night-time hours.

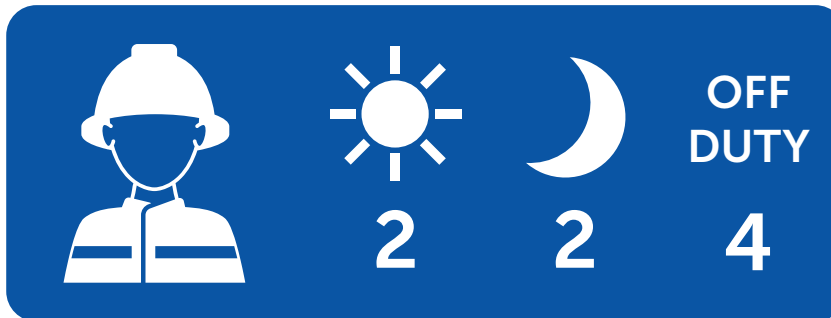
Why has this option been put forward?

The data considered a range of options across the county. This option was identified as having the lowest overall impact when assessed against other changes; and would allow us to move existing staff resources to where they will have a greater impact on public safety.

What is day crewing?

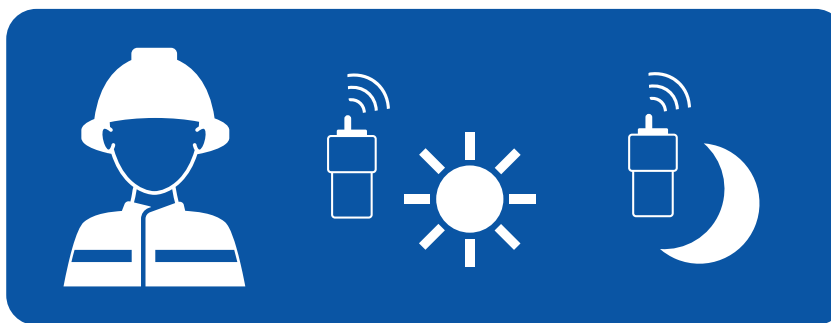
Currently GFRS has two models:-

Wholetime - 2,2,4 shift pattern



The 2 2 4 shift pattern, (on duty on a fire station for two day shifts, two night shifts and four days off duty) requires four watches to provide an on duty immediately available crew 24/7 365 days a year. Currently all GFRS wholetime stations operate on this model.

On-call



An on-call firefighter lives or work within five minutes of their fire station and usually have alternative employment away from the service (although some are employed by GFRS in another capacity). They carry an alerter for when they are required to respond to an emergency call.

Day crewing



This option would introduce day crewing

The day crewing shift pattern uses two shifts (known as watches) who work on the fire station during the day.

The potential options

We are seeking your views on two potential options which are explained in detail in the table below.

Option 1 - do nothing: Retain current arrangements. This would not address the levels of risk identified in the Forest of Dean and would require equivalent savings to be found through other measures that could have a greater impact elsewhere in the Service.

Option 2 - redeployment of resources: Redeploy 14 wholetime firefighter posts from Cheltenham West to establish a day-crewed fire engine at Cinderford. This would address the identified risk in the Forest of Dean while delivering the required financial savings through a redistribution of resources.

Option 1 – Do nothing and continue with current crewing model (status quo).	
No changes to current crewing arrangements. Cinderford would continue operating with on-call crews only, and Cheltenham West would remain a 24/7 wholetime fire station. This would not address the levels of risk identified in the Forest of Dean.	
Potential advantages	Stability. No additional financial costs; no impact on staff; existing response coverage in Cheltenham maintained.
Potential disadvantages	Daytime coverage gap in Forest of Dean. Cinderford - and the wider Forest of Dean district - lacks wholetime cover, meaning slower daytime response times. On average in 2025, on-call first fire engines in Forest of Dean took around 14½ minutes to arrive. This is above the average response time for the county and means the risk to residents in and around Cinderford remains disproportionately higher than for residents elsewhere.
	Failure to meet CRMP objectives. The CRMP identifies sets out the main risks facing the service and how we plan to manage them. If we do not take action on Cinderford, it could make it harder for us to achieve our priorities, reduce confidence in our ability to deliver them, and leave existing differences in emergency response times and service unresolved.
	Financial risk. Keeping the current staffing arrangements means we would continue to use our full-time firefighters at Cheltenham West less efficiently than we could, as highlighted by the review. As we need to make significant savings, not addressing this issue would increase financial pressures on the Service and could make it more difficult to balance resources against operational priorities in the future.
	Availability and regulatory risk. The ongoing challenges of recruiting and retaining on-call firefighters, and of having enough on-call staff available to respond to incidents, would remain unresolved. This could lead to a further decline in fire and rescue cover in Forest of Dean district. Keeping things as they are could also attract criticism from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), who may question why we have not taken steps to improve efficiency, make better use of our resources based on risk, and act on the professional advice of the Chief Fire Officer and the evidence from our data and reviews.

Option 2 – Provide a day crew at Cinderford Fire Station by moving 14 existing posts from the night shift at Cheltenham West Fire Station.

This would mean there would no longer be a full-time crew at Cheltenham West overnight, the station would become day crewed and emergency cover at night would instead be provided by nearby fire stations. This would address the identified risk in the Forest of Dean while delivering the required financial savings through a redistribution of resources.

Potential advantages	Faster response in the Forest of Dean and enhanced prevention and community presence. Independent data modelling shows that the mean average time for the first fire engine attending all incidents in the Forest of Dean would improve by 1 minute 16 seconds; and the second fire engine attending all incidents by 1 minute 23 seconds. For dwelling fires, it would improve by 1 minute 11 seconds. Workforce and productivity. Makes better use of resources by moving firefighters from a less busy night-time role to where they are needed more during the day. Supports our CRMP by modernising our approach to providing fire cover in rural areas and making sure resources are used where they can make the biggest difference. Keeps the same number of full-time firefighter roles, helping to maintain the Service's resilience and allowing us to continue delivering prevention and protection work, while also supporting staff development and career opportunities. Gives us more flexibility to consider different working patterns that better match demand and the expectations of today's workforce. By increasing the amount of useful work carried out during the day - across prevention, protection and emergency response activities - we can improve making better use of staff time without increasing staff numbers. Financial and resource considerations. By moving the equivalent of 14 full-time firefighter posts from Cheltenham West, where there is currently relatively little activity at night, and can be covered by neighbouring stations including Cheltenham East, we can avoid the significant ongoing cost of creating new posts. This means we can make the required savings without increasing financial pressures on the Service, that could make it more difficult to balance resources against operational priorities in the future.
Potential disadvantages	Impacts on communities served by Cheltenham West Fire Station. Removing the full-time overnight crew from Cheltenham West may lead to concerns that the level of service is being reduced, particularly during the night. However, Independent data modelling shows that the impact on emergency response and overall service performance would be limited: first fire engine response times would increase by 25 seconds in Cheltenham and 20 seconds in Tewkesbury on average; and second fire engines response times by 40 seconds and 30 seconds respectively on average. Impacts on staff. Changes to working patterns and where staff are based would need to be carefully managed. We would need to consult staff properly, communicate clearly, and provide support to help reduce any impacts on wellbeing, work-life balance, morale and working relationships.

Working with our staff

We recognise that these proposals will directly affect our staff, if these changes are agreed, we are committed to working closely with our staff and their representative bodies to design and introduce any new duty arrangements. This would include:

- Developing a day-crewed duty system in collaboration with affected staff and representative bodies.
- Ensuring that duty systems are safe, fair, and support delivering services effectively.
- Considering the wellbeing, work-life balance, and professional needs of our people.
- providing clear information, support, and appropriate time to prepare for any changes.
- We would follow established consultation and negotiation processes and ensure that staff views are fully considered as part of introducing these changes.
- Our aim is to introduce any changes in a way that maintains the safety, professionalism, and wellbeing of our workforce, while continuing to deliver the best possible service to the communities of Gloucestershire.

When would these changes happen?

This is a consultation. No decisions have been made. All feedback received will be independently analysed and reported back to Cabinet before any future decision is considered. It is important to us that we seek our communities', workforce and stakeholders' views as part of the decision-making process and to help inform the outcome.

The Cabinet will consider the findings at its meeting in December 2026, at which point it will decide whether to approve the proposed changes, approve them with amendments, or not to proceed. If they are approved, it is anticipated that the new crewing model would be introduced during 2027.

Have your say

Consultation opens: 3 August 2026

Consultation closes: 28 September 2026

Complete the survey:
www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/glosfireconsultation

Request a paper copy:
firecoverreview@glosfire.gov.uk.



www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/glosfireconsultation

Glossary

Term / abbreviation	Meaning
Capital investment	One-off funds required, for example to refurbish Cinderford Fire Station to ensure it is fit for purpose.
Chief Fire Officer	A Chief Fire Officer (CFO) is the head of a fire and rescue service. They are responsible for the daily command of emergency operations, strategic risk management, and the overall statutory delivery of the service.
Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)	A document that sets out how the Service will identify and manage risks in local communities. It's a legal requirement and ensures resources are targeted where they're needed most.
Day-crewed	Firefighters are on-station during the daytime (exact hours to be confirmed). Outside the daytime hours, the station will be crewed by On-call firefighters.
Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet	A body made up of the Leader of the Council and nine other county councillors with wide-ranging responsibilities. A Cabinet's role is mainly to formulate detailed policies and proposals for service delivery within the policy and budgetary framework set by the full Council.
His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)	A regulatory body that independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services, in the public interest.
Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs)	Visits by firefighters and community safety staff to offer fire safety advice as well as guidance on general wellbeing. If the fitting of smoke alarms is recommended during a HFSV, these are supplied and fitted free of charge.
Index of Multiple Deprivation	The official relative measure of deprivation for small neighbourhoods across the UK. It aggregates dozens of indicators across seven domains - including income, employment, health, education, and crime - to rank areas.
Local Government Finance Settlement Fair Funding Review	Reform to local authority allocations in England through the multi-year Local Government Finance Settlement.
Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)	A small geographic unit used for statistical analysis in England and Wales comprising between 400 and 1200 households and usually a resident population between 1000 and 3000 persons.
Medium-term financial strategy (MTFS)	Outlines the Council's financial plans and priorities for the next four years.
On-call	On-call firefighters usually have another job. They are employed on flexible contracts and must live within a specified time, responding to incidents via pager from their home address or place of work. On-call fire stations are typically found in smaller towns and villages.
Prevention	Stopping emergencies before they happen. Services educate communities and engage with at-risk individuals through initiatives like free Home Fire Safety Checks.
Protection	Ensuring buildings and public spaces are safe and compliant with fire regulations. Teams inspect premises, audit fire safety systems, and enforce regulations.
Response	Getting resources to the right place at the right time during an emergency. Fire control operators handle 999 calls, and crews fight fires, conduct rescues, and manage hazardous incidents.
Revenue expenditure	The funds required on an on-going basis to cover the cost of providing a service; including firefighter salaries, training, uniforms, and personal protective equipment.
Wholetime	Wholetime firefighters are full-time firefighters who work in shifts to ensure a fire engine can leave straight away, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Wholetime stations are usually in larger cities and towns.



Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service

Shaping a safer county

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) plays a vital role in keeping communities safe. As risks and demands on the Service continue to change, it is essential that it regularly reviews how it uses its resources to ensure it is providing the best possible protection to the people of Gloucestershire.

This consultation sets out proposals to change how some of GFRS's fire engines are crewed. These proposals are based on detailed analysis of risk, incident data, and response times across the county. They are designed to ensure that the Service's firefighters are in the right place, at the right time, to respond to emergencies and support communities.

GFRS knows that these are significant proposals, particularly for its staff and the communities directly affected. The Service must make sure that the resources it has are used in the most effective way to meet current and future risks. Its priority is, and always will be, the safety of the public and firefighters. These proposals aim to improve overall response across Gloucestershire by better aligning GFRS resources to where demand and risk are greatest.

GFRS is committed to listening to the views of its communities, staff, and partners. This consultation is an opportunity for you to share your feedback, which will be carefully considered before any final decisions are made.

There is an online version of this questionnaire which we encourage you to complete. Please do so by visiting www.opinionresearch.co.uk/GFRS by **28 September 2026**; or you can complete this paper questionnaire and return it FREEPOST to arrive by the same date. It should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete and we welcome responses from everyone, including members of the public, organisations, and GFRS employees.

Completed questionnaires will be processed by Opinion Research Services (ORS), an independent specialist research practice. All personal information will be kept securely, in accordance with latest data protection laws, and anonymised no more than one year after any decisions have been finalised. In the reports, feedback from individuals will be completely anonymous, but views from organisations or people acting in their official capacity may be attributed. ORS may use automated AI solutions to assist in the analysis of responses, and therefore you should ensure that you do not include any identifying information in your feedback. For further information, please see <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/data-protection/service-specific-privacy-notices> or www.ors.org.uk/privacy.

If you have any queries about the consultation, email GFRS on firecoverreview@glosfire.gov.uk; or if you have any difficulties taking part, email ORS on surveys@ors.org.uk.

Consultation document

We have summarised the main consultation issues within this questionnaire to help you answer the questions. However, you can access the full consultation document, and more detailed information, supporting data and analysis at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/glosfire/about-us/gfrs-shaping-a-safer-county-consultation-2026/. The consultation document also includes a glossary of terms used in the questionnaire.

You can request a paper copy of any documents by emailing firecoverreview@glosfire.gov.uk.

How would you describe your connection to this consultation? Please tick ✓ **all** that apply

I am a resident	☐
I have a connection to GFRS or another Fire and Rescue Service	☐
I represent a community group, business, or organisation	☐
Other (please specify)	
Prefer not to say	☐

A note on terminology

This questionnaire talks about wholetime, on-call, and day-crewed crewing systems. These are explained below.

- **Wholetime:** Wholetime firefighters are full-time firefighters who work in shifts (two-day shifts, two-night shifts, four days off) to ensure a fire engine can leave straight away, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Four watches (designated teams of firefighters) are needed to provide an immediately available crew 24/7, 365 days a year.
- **On-call:** On-call firefighters usually have another job. They are employed on flexible contracts and must live within five minutes of their fire station, responding to incidents via an alerter from their home address or place of work.
- **Day-crewed:** Firefighters are on-station in the daytime (exact hours to be confirmed). Outside the daytime hours, the station will be crewed by on-call firefighters

A new crewing system at Cinderford

In December 2024, following a formal consultation process, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC)'s Cabinet approved a new day-crewed model at Cinderford Fire Station (currently an on-call station), supported by an increase of 14 new wholetime posts. The decision was based on an analysis of community risk, service demand, and the availability of fire and rescue cover across Forest of Dean district. This showed that:

- Cinderford and its surrounding areas contain some of the county's highest-risk areas when considering factors such as health, employment, housing, transport and crime; its rurality makes travel time more challenging, and there is increased vulnerability in some areas
- there is higher demand for fire and rescue services during the day in the Cinderford area
- the district's fire and rescue cover is provided by on-call firefighters, whose availability can vary.

As a result, it was agreed that introducing day crewing at Cinderford would provide more reliable fire cover where it is needed most, helping to better match resources to local risk and demand.

Challenges to introducing a new crewing system at Cinderford

Please refer to pages 7 to 9 of the consultation document.

Like all public services, GFRS is facing significant financial challenges. Since the decision was made in 2024 to introduce a new day crew at Cinderford Fire Station, the funding for this change is no longer available, and other approaches need to be considered.

Recent analysis shows there is still a level of risk within the Forest of Dean that GFRS believes should be addressed. This is reflected in the Service’s Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2026-30, which explains how the Service will identify and manage risk and target resources where they are needed most. The CRMP includes plans to modernise the GFRS response model in rural areas by:

- reviewing the number, distribution, and staffing of fire stations to ensure this matches demand
- introducing a new day-crewed model at Cinderford Fire Station.

To explore how this could be achieved, GFRS commissioned Operational Research in Health Ltd (ORH), an independent data modelling specialist, to review how fire and rescue resources are used across Gloucestershire and whether they are in the right locations to meet risks, demand and emergency response needs. The review looked at several ways of making the change to identify the option that would have the least impact on fire and rescue services across the county. It found that providing a day crew at Cinderford Fire Station by moving 14 existing posts from the night shift at Cheltenham West Fire Station would have the smallest overall impact across the county because:

- there are far fewer incidents in Cheltenham at night than during the day
- night-time fire cover in Cheltenham would continue to be provided by Cheltenham East Fire Station, which has both a wholetime and an on-call fire engine overnight, with additional support from neighbouring stations
- the average response time for the first fire engine in the Cheltenham West area would increase by only 25 seconds.

In principle, to what extent do you agree or disagree that GFRS should regularly review how its resources are used and, where it is safe and appropriate to do so, redeploy them to better reflect local risks, demand and operational needs?

Please tick ✓ **one** box only

Strongly agree ☐	Tend to agree ☐	Neither agree nor disagree ☐	Tend to disagree ☐	Strongly disagree ☐	Don't know ☐
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Potential advantages and disadvantages

Please refer to page 10 of the consultation document.

The key potential advantages and disadvantages of both the current arrangements and providing a day crew at Cinderford Fire Station by moving 14 existing posts from the night shift at Cheltenham West Fire Station are outlined in the table overleaf. However, given that the impact of any changes on response times are likely to be a key concern, these are outlined in detail first.

GFRS’s county response standards are nine minutes for dwelling fires and 10 minutes for all other incidents. Due to a national and local decline in on-call firefighter availability, turnout times, and the need to use wholetime fire engines to cover on-call areas during peak daytime hours, the Service faces systemic challenges in meeting these targets equitably.

On average in 2025, on-call first fire engines in Forest of Dean took around 14½ minutes to arrive. This is above the average response time for the county and means the risk to residents in and around Cinderford remains disproportionately higher than for residents elsewhere.

ORH's independent data modelling shows that:

- moving 14 wholetime night-time firefighter posts from Cheltenham West to establish a day-crewed fire engine at Cinderford would mean the average time for the first fire engine attending all incidents in the Forest of Dean would improve by 1 minute 16 seconds; and the second fire engine attending all incidents by 1 minute 23 seconds. For dwelling fires, it would improve by 1 minute 11 seconds.
- the impact on emergency response and overall service performance of moving the 14 wholetime night-time firefighter posts from Cheltenham West would be limited. First fire engine response times would increase by 25 seconds in Cheltenham and 20 seconds in Tewkesbury on average; and second fire engines response times by 40 seconds and 30 seconds respectively on average.

The introduction of a day-crewed fire engine at Cinderford Fire Station would also provide capacity for GFRS to engage and support vulnerable members of the community through targeted prevention activity (e.g. Home Fire Safety Visits) and protection activity (e.g. Business Fire Safety Checks).

Option 1: Do nothing and continue with current crewing model

No changes to current crewing arrangements. Cinderford would continue operating with on-call crews only, and Cheltenham West would remain a 24/7 wholetime fire station. This would not address the levels of risk identified in the Forest of Dean.

POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES	Stability No additional financial costs; no impact on staff; existing response coverage in Cheltenham maintained.
POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES	Daytime coverage gap in Forest of Dean Cinderford - and the wider Forest of Dean district - lacks wholetime cover, meaning slower daytime response times (as outlined above). Failure to meet CRMP objectives The CRMP sets out the main risks facing the Service and how it plans to manage them. Not taking action on Cinderford could make it harder for GFRS to achieve its priorities, reduce confidence in its ability to deliver them, and leave existing differences in emergency response times and service unresolved. Financial risk Keeping the current staffing arrangements means GFRS would continue to use full-time firefighters at Cheltenham West less efficiently than it could, as highlighted by the review. As the Service needs to make significant savings, not addressing this issue would increase its financial pressures and could make it more difficult to balance resources against operational priorities in the future. Availability and regulatory risk The ongoing challenges of recruiting and retaining on-call firefighters, and of having enough on-call staff available to respond to incidents, would remain unresolved. This could lead to a further decline in fire and rescue cover in Forest of Dean district. Keeping things as they are could also attract criticism from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), who may question why GFRS has not taken steps to improve efficiency, make better use of its resources based on risk, and act on the professional advice of the Chief Fire Officer and the evidence from data and reviews.

Option 2: Provide a day crew at Cinderford Fire Station by moving 14 existing posts from the night shift at Cheltenham West Fire Station.

There would no longer be a full-time crew at Cheltenham West overnight, the station would become day crewed and emergency cover at night would instead be provided by nearby fire stations. This would address the identified risk in the Forest of Dean while delivering the required financial savings through a redistribution of resources.

POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES	Faster response in the Forest of Dean and enhanced prevention and community presence As outlined above. Workforce and productivity The proposed change would: - make better use of resources by moving firefighters from a less busy night-time role to where they are needed more during the day - support the CRMP by modernising GFRS's approach to providing fire cover in rural areas and making sure resources are used where they can make the biggest difference - keep the same number of full-time firefighter roles, maintaining the Service's resilience and allowing it to continue delivering prevention and protection work, while supporting staff development and career opportunities - give GFRS more flexibility to consider different working patterns that better match demand and the expectations of today's workforce - enable an increase in the amount of useful work carried out during the day - across prevention, protection and emergency response activities - making better use of staff time without increasing staff numbers. Financial and resource considerations By moving the equivalent of 14 full-time firefighter posts from Cheltenham West, where there is currently relatively little activity at night and which can be covered by neighbouring stations including Cheltenham East, GFRS can avoid the significant ongoing cost of creating new posts. This means it can make the required savings without increasing financial pressures on the Service that could make it more difficult to balance resources against operational priorities in the future.
POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES	Impacts on communities served by Cheltenham West Fire Station Removing the full-time overnight crew from Cheltenham West may lead to concerns that the level of service is being reduced, particularly during the night. However, independent data modelling shows that the impact on emergency response and overall service performance would be limited (as outlined above). Impacts on staff Changes to working patterns and where staff are based would need to be carefully managed. GFRS would need to consult staff properly, communicate clearly, and provide support to help reduce any impacts on wellbeing, work-life balance, morale and working relationships.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that GFRS should move 14 existing posts from Cheltenham West Fire Station to introduce a day-crewed system at Cinderford Fire Station?

Please tick ✓ **one** box only

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Any further comments

Do you have any comments about GFRS's proposed changes and how they might affect you/your community; and/or any other alternative suggestions for how GFRS can address its challenges and ensure a resilient and sustainable fire and rescue service?

PLEASE WRITE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX, CONTINUING ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY. IF YOU ARE COMMENTING ABOUT A SPECIFIC FIRE STATION OR LOCALITY, PLEASE CLEARLY STATE WHICH.

Equalities Impacts

As a public body, GFRS has a duty to take into account the impact of its decisions on human rights, under the Human Rights Act 1998, and also on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation).

Are there any positive or negative impacts relating to equalities that you believe should be considered? If so, are you able to provide any supporting evidence and suggest any ways to reduce or remove any potential negative impact and increase any positive impact?

PLEASE ANSWER IN THE BOX BELOW AND CONTINUE ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

Any supporting evidence is welcome, but please avoid sharing any personal or sensitive data that could lead to someone being identified.

INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

If you are responding on behalf of an **ORGANISATION, COMMUNITY GROUP OR BUSINESS**, please provide the details here

Please give us the name of the business/organisation/community group and any specific group or department you represent. Please also tell us what the business entails or who the organisation/community group represents, what area it covers and (if applicable) how you gathered views of members. Please answer in the box below and continue on a separate sheet if necessary

If you are providing your own **PERSONAL RESPONSE** (including if you are a colleague at GFRS or another FRS), please answer the questions below.

GFRS has a duty to promote equality, and they want to make sure that we include all parts of the community in the consultation, but these questions are optional. We will take all responses fully into account, regardless of whether you provide your details.

What is your full postcode?

This will help us understand views from different areas

PLEASE TICK ✓ ONLY ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

How old are you?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ☐ 16-17 | ☐ 55-64 |
| ☐ 18-24 | ☐ 65-75 |
| ☐ 25-34 | ☐ 75+ |
| ☐ 35-44 | ☐ Prefer not to say |
| ☐ 45-54 | |

What gender do you identify as?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Another gender (please identify)
- _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Is the gender you identify as the same as your sex registered at birth?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Which race or ethnicity best describes you?

- ☐ Arabic
- ☐ Asian/British Asian: Bangladeshi
- ☐ Asian/British Asian: Chinese
- ☐ Asian/British Asian: Indian
- ☐ Asian/British Asian: Pakistani
- ☐ Asian/British Asian: Other
- ☐ Black/British Black: African
- ☐ Black/British Black: Caribbean
- ☐ Mixed Race: Black & White
- ☐ Mixed Race: Asian & White
- ☐ Mixed Race: Black & Asian
- ☐ Mixed Race: Other
- ☐ Traveller: Gypsy or Roma
- ☐ Traveller: Irish
- ☐ White - British
- ☐ White - Irish
- ☐ White - European
- ☐ White - Other
- ☐ Another race or ethnicity (please identify)
- _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you have a disability, long-term illness, or health condition?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

Which of the following terms best describes your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Asexual
☐ Bisexual
☐ Gay man
☐ Gay woman or lesbian
☐ Heterosexual or straight
☐ Other (please identify)

☐ Prefer not to say

Which do you consider your religion to be?

- ☐ Buddhist
☐ Christian
☐ Hindu
☐ Jewish
☐ Muslim
☐ Sikh
☐ No religion
☐ Other (please identify)

☐ Prefer not to say

What is your legal marital status?

- ☐ Single
☐ Cohabiting
☐ Married
☐ Divorced
☐ Separated
☐ Widowed
☐ Other (please identify)

☐ Prefer not to say

Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant in the past 12 months?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

Are you currently on maternity leave or have you taken maternity leave in the past 12 months?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

Do you work for GFRS, or another FRS?

- ☐ Yes, work for GFRS
☐ Yes, work for another FRS
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

How easy or difficult was the information provided in the consultation document/this questionnaire to understand?

Please tick ✓ **one** box only

Very easy	Fairly easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Fairly difficult	Very difficult	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for your time

Please return the questionnaire by **28 September 2026** to:

Opinion Research Services • FREEPOST SS1018 • PO Box 530 • Swansea • SA1 1ZL