



Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

Community Risk Management Plan consultation

Online survey findings report

January 2022

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Executive summary

Background and methodology

- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service commissioned BMG to analyse and report on the results of an online public consultation survey to gather feedback on their draft Community Risk Management Plan. This plan outlines the actions the Service plans to take over the next five years (2022-2027) to help keep residents, their home, community and environment safe from fire and other emergencies.
- The online survey was launched on 15 November 2021 and closed on 14 January 2022. In total, 241¹ individual responses to the consultation survey were received, with almost two-thirds of these (61%) being from residents, a fifth (21%) from either operational or support staff, and the remainder of the responses (17%) came from businesses, council members, or partner organisations. Paper copies were available by request; however, no paper copies of the survey were requested.
- Posters, leaflets and radio, social media and print advertising was used to promote the consultation to non-digital audiences. Neighbourhood Watch contacts, partners and parish councils were also asked to share with their networks. The consultation also featured on the home page of the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service website, and it was also promoted to staff through internal communication channels.
- A third (33%) of respondents are female, and 55% male (1% identify as non-binary and the remaining 12% chose not to say). A quarter (25%) of respondents are aged between 45-54, with a further 22% aged between 55-64. Those aged between 65-74 make up 18% of respondents, with a further 14% comprised of 35–44-year-olds, and 9% are aged 34 or under.
- Over half (54%) of respondents are from rural area, 29% from urban areas, and 15% from coastal areas.
- Other protected characteristics such as disability, identity, and ethnicity have not been included in the analysis owing to the low number of responses for certain groups.

¹ 246 respondents started the survey; however, five respondents did not progress beyond the introduction and so for the purpose of analysis a total of 241 is used.

Identification of major risks

- The majority of respondents feel that the Service has identified all of the major risks (71%).
- This is slightly more pronounced for women (79%, compared to 73% of men) and those aged between 55-64 (81%, compared to 57% for 45–54-year-olds).
- Respondents in rural areas are less likely to agree that major risks had been identified (68%), compared to 73% in urban areas and 79% for those in coastal areas.
- Respondents who are residents are less likely to agree that the plan identifies all major risks (66%), compared to 88% of support staff*, 77% of operational staff, and 78% of council workers.
- The most common issues raised were concerning missed or underrepresented risk in the plan, and this included references to, for instance, high rise or old building, hazardous events, concerns around terrorism, and risks associated with modern buildings. Respondents also commonly cited issues in specific areas, such as towns, particular roads or incident hotspots.

Activities in response to risks

- A majority also agreed that the proposed activities are appropriate to the risks identified (63%).
- Again, this was higher amongst women (74%, compared to 65% of men) and those aged 65-74 (74%, compared to 59% for both 45-54-year-olds and 35-44-year-olds, and 47% for 25-34-year-olds*).
- Three quarters (74%) of respondents in coastal areas agree that the activities are appropriate to the risks, compared to 67% in urban areas, and 60% in rural areas.
- Six in ten (61%) respondents who are residents agreed that the activities are appropriate to the risks, which was lower compared to support staff* (88%) and council members* (78%).

Equality impact assessment

- Most respondents (57%) do not think the activities impact anyone disproportionately, however, a quarter (24%) remain unsure.

- Just over half (53%) of those living in rural areas agree that the activities do not impact anyone disproportionately, which is lower in comparison to those in urban areas (66%).

Notes on this report

The following points should be noted when reading this report:

- This was an open consultation to which anyone could respond rather than a sample survey, therefore results are not intended to be wholly representative of the population.
- A respondent profile has been described in the report, however base sizes for key demographic questions can be found in Appendix A: Demographic profile of respondents.
- Questionnaire wording and base sizes for the data used in the figures can be found in Appendix B: Question wording and base descriptions for figures.
- Maps which detail where respondents live can be found in Appendix C: Respondent maps.
- Details about open text comments can be found in Appendix D: Comments on identification of, and response to, major risk
- Details of the councils and partner organisations that responded to the survey can be found in Appendix E: Council and partner organisations that responded.
- A * denotes a base size less than 30
- Where results do not sum to 100 percent, this is either due to rounding or due to multiple responses being allowed for the question.

Identification and response to major risks

This section covers respondents' thoughts on the analysis of risk undertaken by the Service, as well as the explanation of what is being done about those risks.

Overall agreement with identification of major risks

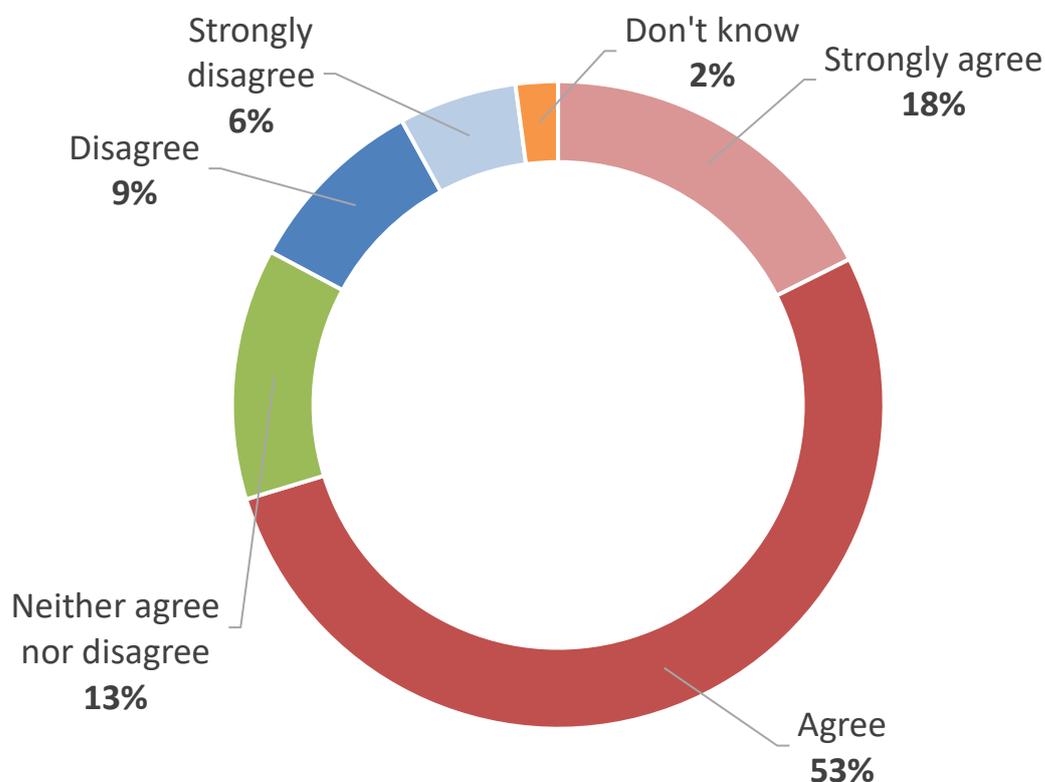
Around seven in ten respondents (71%) feel that the Service has identified all of the major risks it is responsible for, with 18% saying they "strongly" agree:

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

However, 15% disagree to some degree, with 6% of those "strongly" disagreeing.

"Certain areas have been overlooked, this is not a comprehensive plan."

Figure 1: Agreement with the identification of major risks



Women feel more positive about the identification of these risks; 79% agree overall, with 29% saying they "strongly" agree. Men on the other hand were less inclined to think this way, although three quarters (73%) agree to some degree with 15% "strongly" agreeing. Men are also more likely to feel ambivalent when asked about

the identification of major risks; 13% neither agree nor disagree, compared to just 4% of women. Overall levels of disagreement are similar for both women and men (12% and 15% respectively).

There are some notable differences across age groups, with those aged between 45-54 less likely to agree that the Service has identified all major risks (57%), compared to those aged 25-34* (68%), 35-44 (75%), 55-64 (81%), and 65-74 (76%)².

The area in which a respondent lives also appears to have some influence over sentiment. Those living in coastal areas are more likely to agree that the Service has identified all major risks, compared to other areas: 79% agree to some extent, with 15% saying they “strongly” agree. Encouragingly, a quarter (26%) of respondents in urban areas strongly agree that the Service has identified all of the major risks, with 73% agreeing overall.

This was comparatively lower for those in rural areas (68% agreed overall):

"[There is a risk in] leaving large rural areas with poor road system with minimal DSFRS coverage."

"There are lots of older properties in the local area with unknown problems that can potentially pose fire risks."

There are no notable differences in the number of respondents who disagree across geographical areas.

Respondents who are residents are less inclined to agree that the plan identifies all major risks; two thirds (66%) agree to some degree, whilst this is higher for support* and operational staff (88% and 77% respectively) and council workers (78%).

Around two thirds feel the proposed activities are suitable to the identified risks

Around two thirds (63%) agree that the activities the Service continues to and proposes to deliver are appropriate to these identified risks:

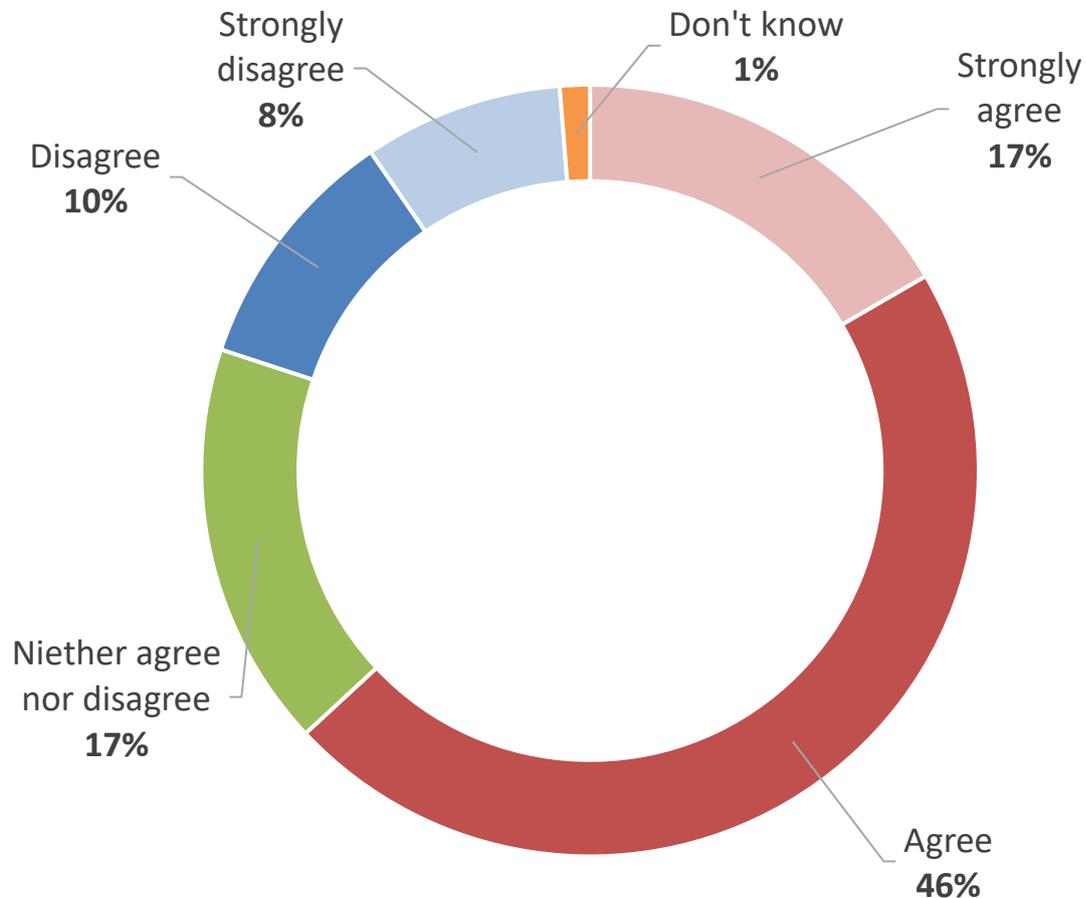
"Our parish benefits from the co-responder service which is an important service. We value the service you provide and are pleased to see it has been given weight in the plan."

A fifth of respondents (19%) disagree, with 8% saying they “strongly” disagree.

² All respondents aged 17-24 and 85+ agreed to some degree however they have been omitted owing to low number of responses (n=3 and n=1, respectively).

"The analysis is generic for the entire area as are the appropriate responses to the identified risk. However, it does not take into account very specific local differences, 'hot spots' of the elderly, slow response times, RTA increases due to massive increases in visitor traffic, increased wildfire issues from BBQs to global warming. These are particularly apparent in Porlock and the surrounding villages."

Figure 2: Appropriateness of activities



Women are more inclined to feel positively about the proposed activities being appropriate to the identified risks: almost three quarters (74%) agree to some degree, compared to 65% of men. Again, men are more likely to feel uncertain about whether activities are appropriate to risks, with nearly a fifth (20%) saying they neither agree nor disagree.

There are some differences across age groups. Respondents aged between 55-64 are more inclined to agree that the activities proposed are appropriate to the risk (71%), compared to younger people aged between 25-34*, of whom less than half agreed (47%).

As with overall identification of risk, there are differences depending on type of area, with coastal respondents being more positive and rural residents less so. Around three quarters (74%) of respondents in coastal areas agree that the activities are

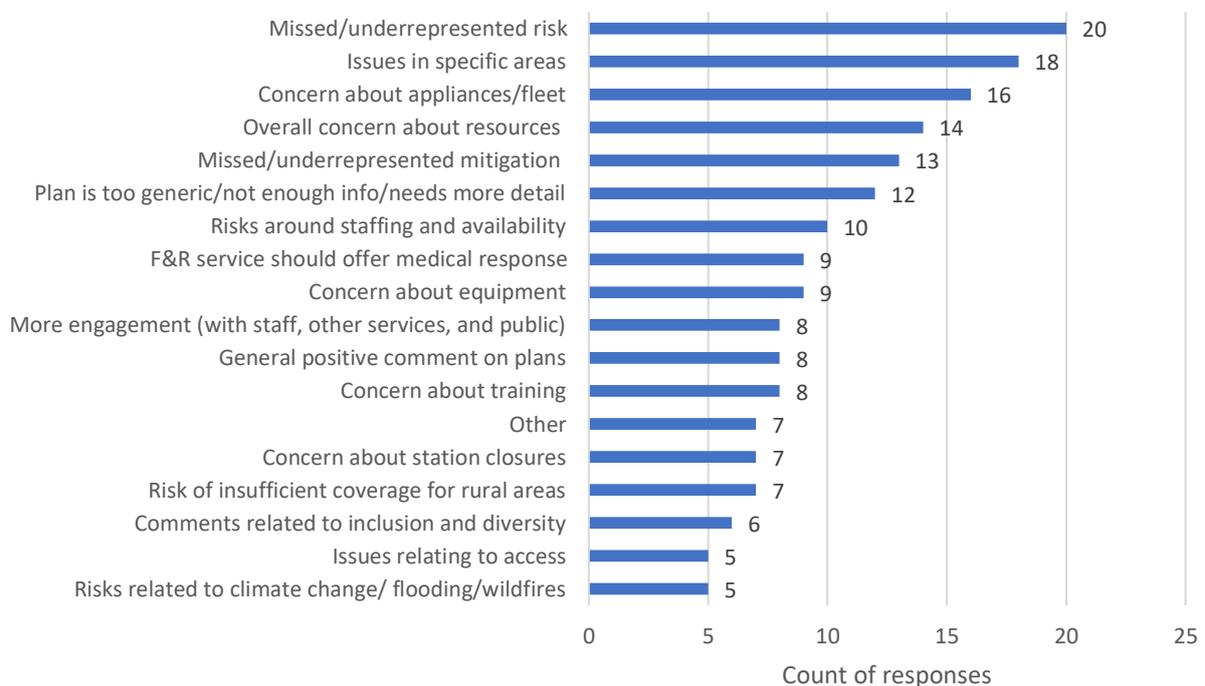
appropriate to the risks, with 17% saying they strongly agree. However, this was lower for respondents in urban areas (67%) and rural areas (60%). There are no notable differences amongst those who disagree.

Around six in ten (61%) respondents who are residents agreed, which is lower than support staff* (88%), and council members (78%). A quarter of residents (24%) disagree, with one in ten "strongly" disagreeing.

Respondents are most concerned about issues in specific areas, and risks which have been missed

Respondents were asked if they would like to make any further comments about the identification of risk and the appropriateness of plans. A total of 88 respondents provided additional comments which have been analysed thematically³, and are represented in Figure 3, below. The number of counts for each code can also be found in Appendix D.

Figure 3: Count of open text responses related to the identification of and response to major risks



³ The thematic analysis has produced 18 codes. Some of the comments provided by a single respondent fall into multiple categories, in some cases with up to five codes per comment. As such the total number of coded responses (182) has been used for the analysis of this question. Given the large number of codes, there is no analysis against demographic questions owing to very small sample sizes, and the possibility of identifying respondents.

The following explains the meaning behind these codes in more detail:

- Issues in specific areas can include comments relating to certain towns, or particular landmarks or roads:

"I am concerned about the access road to Icy Park and Glebelands estates from the village. The road is very steep and wall crumbling. If the wall collapses with tree weight or wet behind it, this road will be blocked and difficult to clear. There are no other emergency ways in or out. It needs looking at with a view to creating a new emergency access."

- Missed or underrepresented can refer to things such as high rise or old buildings, hazardous events, terrorism, or wildfire issues. It also includes comments around emerging technologies, such as fire risks related to modern buildings, or electric cars:

"The Service does not appear to address the estuarial risk of fires on board vessels which does go beyond the stated statutory duty... There are some significant vessels and risk within the estuarial waters of the Service area that might be seen to have an expected response."

- Concern about appliances/fleet, can refer to concerns with change to vehicles and concern about cuts to the number of fire engines. Respondents also mentioned inappropriate or inadequate vehicles being used:

"LRPs replacing MRPs at stations positioned in high risk RTC areas does not support the proposal to cover identified risks."

- Overall concern about resources, can include comments around how the activities will all be delivered within the financial constraints and around the ordering of the strategic priorities:

"I think you will not have the resources to manage this. Mainly financial for equipment, staffing and training."

- Missed or underrepresented mitigation can refer to comments related to better risk assessments being needed, such as drought hotspots:

"Climate change risk. Hotter summers, global warming. Risks - forest fires, heathland fires, business fires. Should have the capability to get access to water and lack of it in drought situations, so risk assessment of the Devon and Somerset hot spots and future hot spots and planning for water access."

- Risk around staffing and availability, can refer to, for instance, investing in more fire fighters, or concerns around the availability of staff following cuts:

"Like policing, too few stations and staff. Staff will be run ragged and burn out rates will increase."

- Concern about equipment can include comments relating to the need for better provisions in certain areas, or a need for a specific type of equipment, such as medical equipment:

"Some aspects are addressed however we are not investing in training equipment enough which makes it difficult to train against specified risks."

- F&R service should offer medical response can refer to comments related to the need for fire fighters to be trained in casualty care if they are first on scene, an increase co-responder stations, or better support for the ambulance service, for example by offering medical assistance wherever they can:

"As well as fire and motor accidents they are also trained first aiders who turn up in all kind of emergencies before the ambulance. If we lose them, you are putting all of our lives at risk."

- Concern about training can refer to better maintenance of skills training, such as providing more comprehensive training, increasing the frequency of training, or a lack of investment in training equipment:

"The level of response competence does not match the risk in the two counties. Further time and money must be spent on training front line operational staff."

- More engagement includes comments which relate to consulting with stations, building community resilience, or engaging more with partners:

"The Service needs to allow crews to identify and target risks locally. Centralising everything has removed ownership and direction massively. A graph doesn't identify the correct risks, local knowledge does."

- Risk of insufficient coverage in rural areas can refer to the need to increase co-responder stations in rural areas, or having the right equipment and appliances to deal with fires in thatched houses or farms:

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

- Concern about station closures can include comments which relate to the provision of staff if a station is closed, or stations adapting to changing risks rather than closing:

"After the recent station closure proposals throughout DSFRS I would hope this plan is not suggesting to close stations again as I think it has been proved that all these stations were needed."

- Comments related to inclusion and diversity can refer to the inclusion of schools and young people, or better provisions for the elderly:

"I feel you are missing the best prevention opportunity that exists - by not prioritising the education of future generations. Getting involved with schools to make fire, and the other forms of safety for which you are trained, as part of the school education programme is I believe the best form of prevention."

- Risks related to climate change/ flooding/ wildfires can refer to the removal of special appliances in flood prone areas, fires as a result of hotter summers, or the need for a wildlife strategy:

"Saying that flood related incidents are going to become more common yet you're removing front line MRP appliances in most recent flood hit areas to replace them with LRPs which aren't sufficient in the flood plains."

- Issues relating to access can refer to things such as narrow lanes, or cars parked on the street:

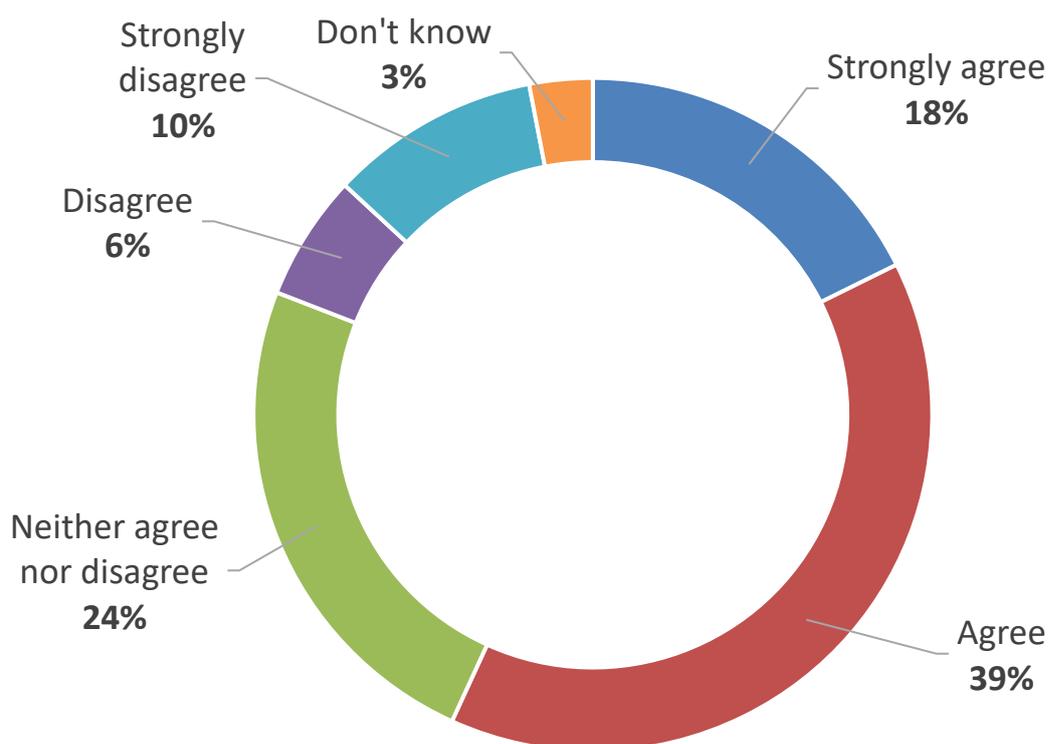
"The risks are very generic and don't seem to address the rural dispersed communities with limited access".

Equality impact assessment

Most respondents do not think the activities impact anyone disproportionately, yet a quarter remain ambivalent

Over half (57%) of respondents agree that the activities the Service continues to and proposes to deliver do not affect them or anyone else more positively or negatively than other people, whilst a quarter (24%) remain ambivalent, answering that they neither agree nor disagree.

Figure 4: Equality impact assessment



Around two thirds (64%) of women agree that the activities the Service continues to and proposes to deliver do not affect them or anyone else more positively or negatively than other people. Comparatively, 60% of men agree, and are more likely to feel uncertain, with over a quarter (27%) saying they neither agree nor disagree.

Levels of agreement also vary across age groups. Those aged between 45-54 are less likely to agree that the activities do not affect them or anyone else more positively or negatively than other people (47%) compared to those aged 65-74 (70%). For the 45-54-year-olds, over a quarter (28%) disagree with this, 16% of whom "strongly" disagree. Whilst around two thirds (68%) of 25-34-year-olds* agree with this sentiment, 26% "strongly" disagree which is higher compared to other groups.

Around two thirds of respondents in both coastal and urban areas agree with this (63% and 66% respectively), however those in rural areas were less likely to feel the same (53%), with a third of respondents (33%) disagreeing to some degree (17% "strongly" disagree).

Just over half (54%) of respondents who are residents agree with this, which was lower compared to 88% of support staff* and 74% of council members*. A further 25% of residents neither agree nor disagree, which was the same for operational staff.

Respondents were given the opportunity to elaborate on their responses to this question. Some thought it was unclear if or how the Service is engaging with members of the community and felt they couldn't accurately answer the question. This can likely explain the relatively high number of respondents who answered neither agree nor disagree (24%):

"I like that you do this and think about everyone but I don't see it entirely reflected in the plans you have put forward. It would be more understandable to see the links between the proposed actions and the people or groups you have written about in the assessment."

"There is no detail about how the service makes adjustments to ensure equal access of its services to all members of the community. Are they supporting deprived areas? Are they engaging effectively with ethnic minority groups? I have no idea?"

Some raised concern for those living in rural areas, because of inappropriate appliances or the distance from a fire station:

"Living in a rural area leaves me at higher risk than if I lived in an urban area due to where you have located your full-time stations."

Others mentioned those with less money and the elderly as being at greater risk:

"My only comment would be those whom are less disadvantaged monetary wise being more at risk and therefore would naturally be targeted more, everyone should be targeted regardless of wealth."

"There is much said about the increasing crisis in social care and from personal experience there is a chronic shortage of care services for elderly people living in their own homes no residential care options (cost or places) which means increasing vulnerability. Is the Service confident its prevention activities are investigative enough to identify people in this position? What lessons are being learnt from fatal fires that involve these vulnerable people?"

Respondent profile

- Over half of the survey respondents are male (55%), and 33% are female. The remaining 14% either identify as non-binary (1%) or prefer not to say (12%).
- Almost 4 in 5 respondents (79%) are between the ages of 35 and 74; 25% are 45-54, 22% 55-64, 18% 65-74, 14% 35-44, 9% 25 or under, and 5% 75+.
- Over half of respondents (54%) live in rural areas, 29% live in urban areas, and 15% in coastal.
- Nearly two thirds of respondents (61%) are residents, with a further fifth (21%) being a member of staff (operational or support). Council members made up 10% of responses, with businesses accounting for 3%. Respondents who are either an organisation with a partnership agreement or a stakeholder make up 2%.
- Just over three quarters of respondents (77%) identify as straight or heterosexual, with a fifth (20%) stating they'd prefer not to say.
- Eight percent of respondents have a disability, with just over half of these (56%) being a physical disability. Almost 8 in 10 (78%) report not having a disability.
- 7 in 10 respondents (71%) do not have caring responsibilities, whilst 15% do.
- Two thirds (69%) of respondents identify as being English, with 19% identifying as British. Welsh and Scottish respondents make up 2% of responses, and 9% prefer not to say.
- The majority of respondents (87%) are white, 3% comprise ethnic minority groups, with the remaining 9% choosing not to say.
- The most common platforms for hearing about the survey were Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service website and social media (For example Facebook or Twitter), or via other contact from Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (such as through work).

Appendix A: Demographic profile of respondents

This report focuses on key differences for specific sub-groups of the population. The table below outlines the number of surveys completed by each of these sub-groups.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Sub-group	Base
Gender	
Male	77
Female	128
Non-binary	2
Prefer not to say	27
Age	
Aged 17-24	3
Aged 25-34	19
Aged 35-44	32
Aged 45-54	58
Aged 55-64	52
Aged 65-74	43
Aged 75-84	12
Aged 85+	1
Prefer not to say	15
Ethnicity	
African background	1
Any other Mixed and Multiple background	4
Any other White background	2
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1

Sub-group	Base
Irish	1
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, White and Black Caribbean	2
Prefer not to say	22
White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	199
Prefer not to say	22
Disability	
Have a disability	18
Do not have a disability	182
Prefer not to say	34
Type of disability	
Physical disability	10
Learning disability	1
Loss of sight or hearing	1
Area	
Rural area	128
Urban area	70
Coastal	35
Other	6
Sexual orientation	
Heterosexual	179
Gay/Lesbian	2
Bisexual	4
Other sexual orientation	1
Prefer not to say	46

Sub-group	Base
Caring responsibilities	
Caring responsibilities	36
No caring responsibilities	165
Prefer not to say	33
Identity	
British	45
English	161
Scottish	2
Welsh	2
Other	3
Prefer not to say	22

Appendix B: Question wording and base descriptions for figures

Figure	Question text	Base description
Figure 1	Q2. We'd like to know to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. The Service has identified all of the major risks it is responsible for.	239
Figure 2	Q3. We'd like to know to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. The activities the Service continues to and proposes to deliver are appropriate to the identified risks.	All respondents (241)
Figure 3	Q4. Please use this space if you would like to make any comments about risks or the current and proposed activities to help explain your answer.	All respondents who provided additional comments (182)
Figure 4	Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement. The activities the Service continues to and proposes to deliver do not affect me or anyone else more positively or negatively than other people.	All respondents (241)

Appendix C: Respondent maps

Image 1: Map of overall respondents

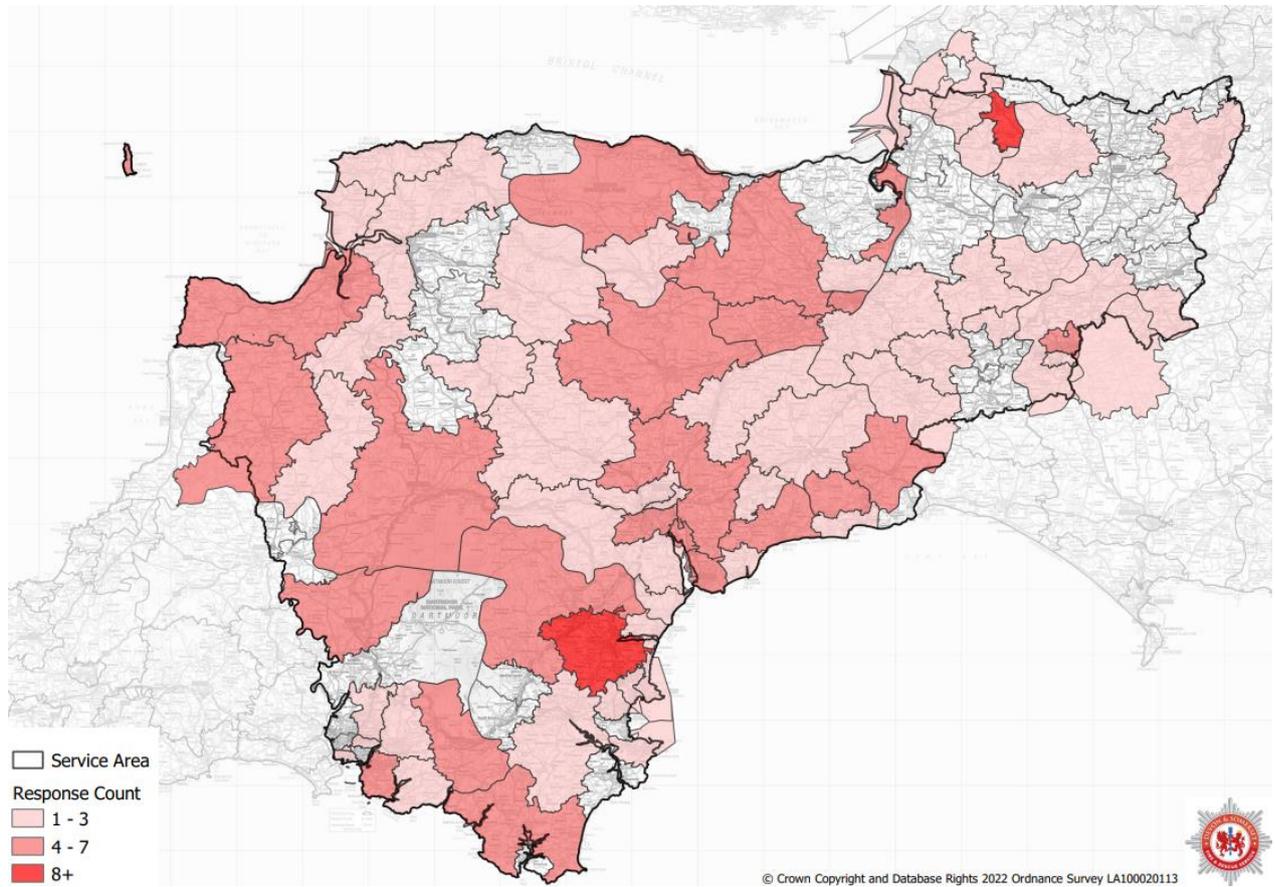


Image 2: Map of respondents who are residents

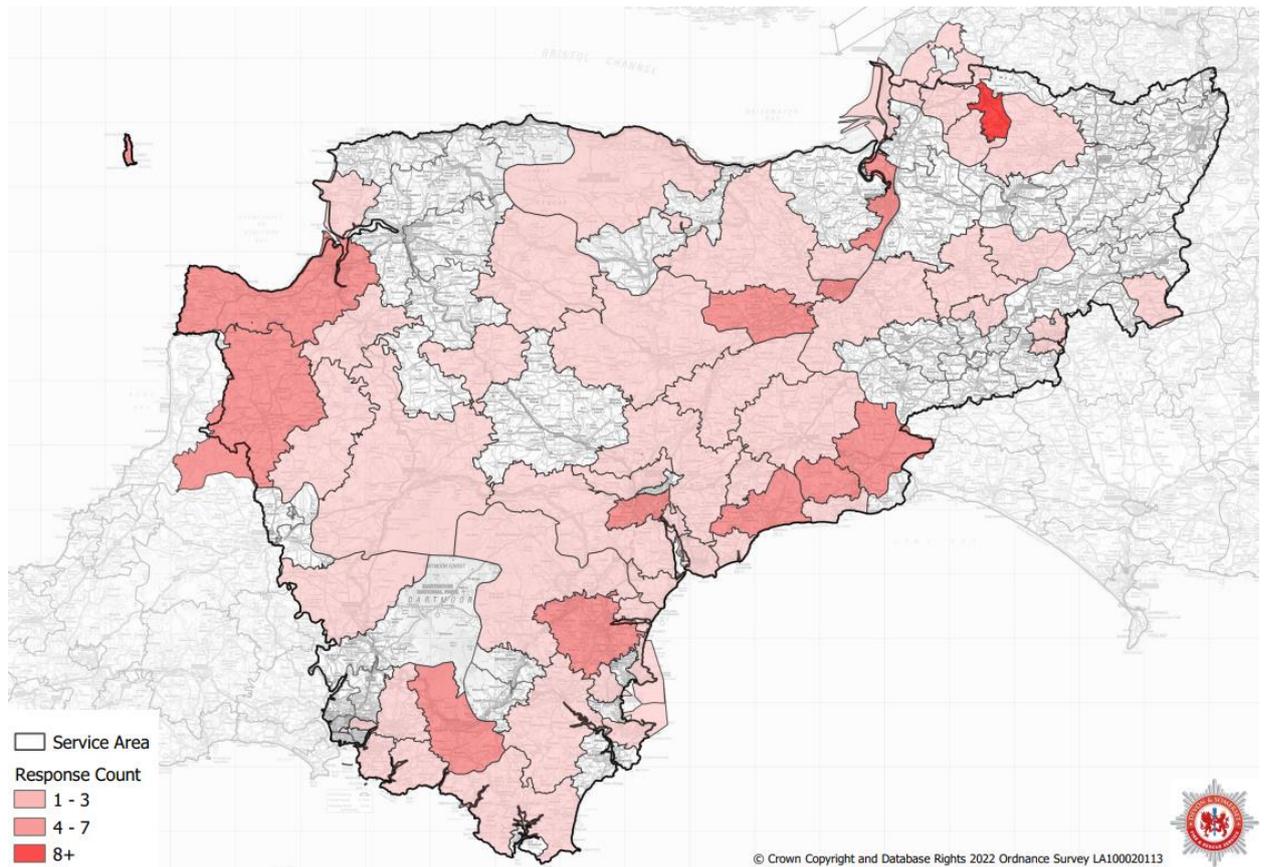
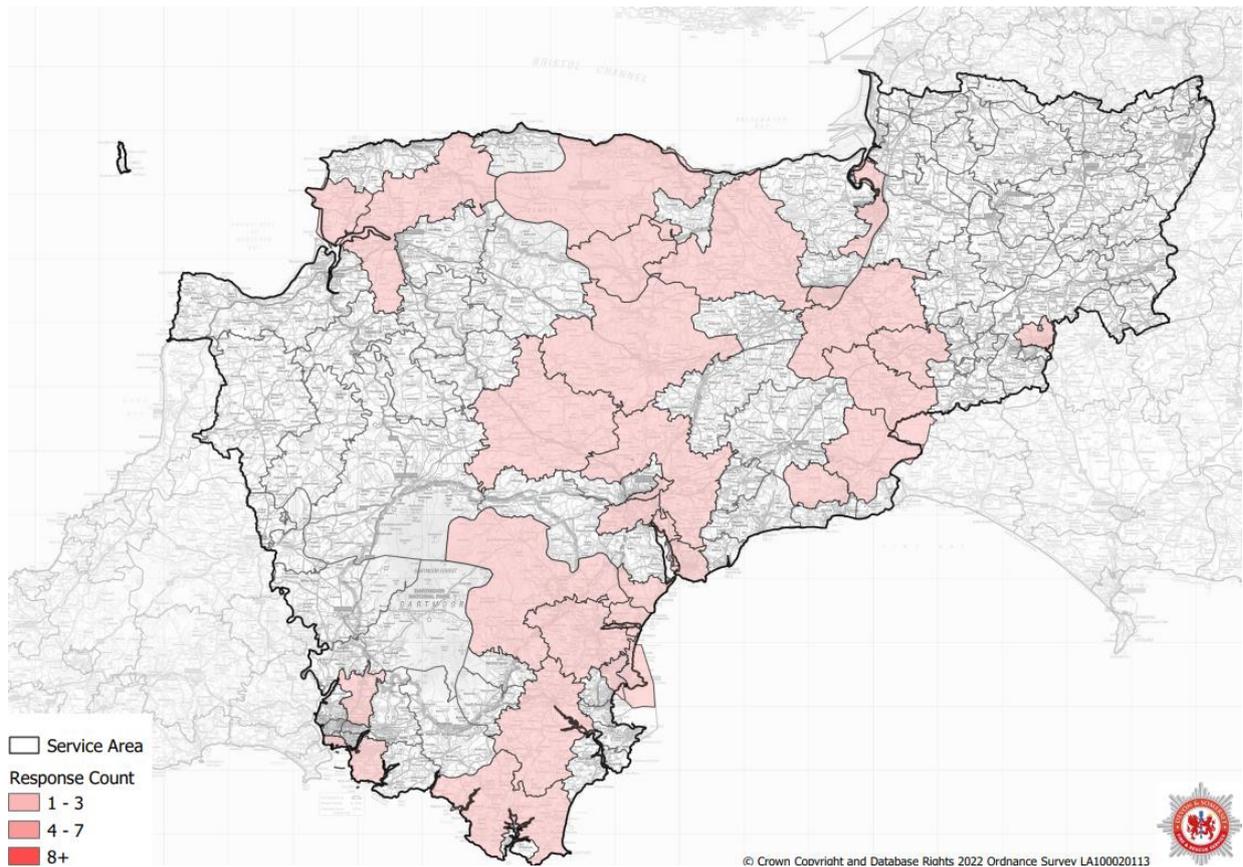


Image 3: Map of respondents who are staff



Appendix D: Comments on identification of risk

The table below shows the frequency of comments for each code related to the identification of major risks.

Comment	Frequency
Missed/underrepresented risk	20
Issues in specific areas	18
Concern about appliances/fleet	16
Overall concern about resources	14
Missed/underrepresented mitigation	13
Plan is too generic/not enough info/needs more detail	12
Risks around staffing and availability	10
Concern about equipment	9
F&R service should offer medical response	9
Concern about training	8
General positive comment on plans	8
More engagement (with staff, other services, and public)	8
Risk of insufficient coverage for rural areas	7
Concern about station closures	7
Other	7
Comments related to inclusion and diversity	6
Risks related to climate change/ flooding/wildfires	5
Issues relating to access	5

Appendix E: Council and partner organisations that responded

The table below shows the number of respondents from partner organisation and councils that responded to the survey.

Partner organisations	Base
Devon and Cornwall Police	1
Fire and Rescue Service Association	1
South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust	1
Councils	
Aveton Gifford PC	1
Cullompton Town Council	1
High Ham Parish Council	1
Kingsbridge Town Council	1
Morchard Bishop Parish Council	1
Moretonhampstead	1
North Tawton Town Council	1
Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council	1
Sampfurd Courtenay Parish Council	1
Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT)	1
Tiverton Town Council	1
Trudoxhill Parish	1
Trudoxhill Parish Council	1
Ugborough Parish Council	1
Washfield Parish	1