



A Stitch in Time...

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Loughborough University

BRIDGE STREET, CHESTER.

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A City Tale

- A serious fire
- The response to the fire
- An analysis of the response
- Some questions to be asked



"The centre of Chester could be devastated by a serious fire. The financial implications of some of the issues are massive".

Councillor: Doug Haynes

Credit: The Flintshire Chronicle: 23 May 2003

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"There is insufficient emphasis on fire protection in historic buildings. Fire in one can readily transfer to another. There is no detailed map of the centre of Chester."

David Hosker

Environmental Protection Officer

Credit: The Flintshire Chronicle: 23 May 2003

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A historical black and white photograph of Bridge Street in Chester, England. The street is lined with tall, timber-framed buildings. In the foreground, several people are walking on the sidewalks, and a few vintage cars and a cyclist are on the road. The scene is captured from a street-level perspective, looking down the length of the street.

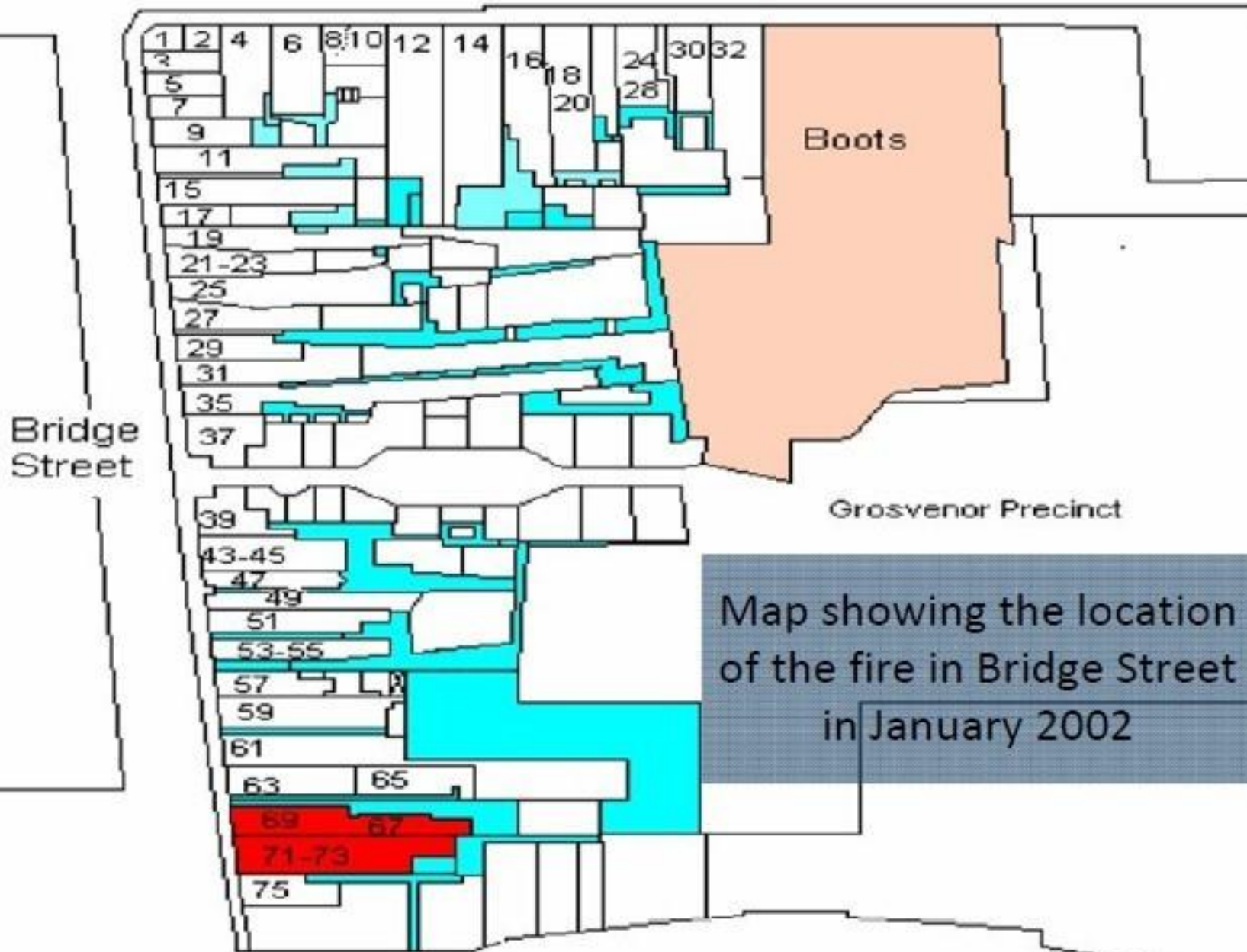
THE FIRE

BRIDGE STREET, CHESTER.



Credit: Chester City Council

Eastgate Street





Credit: Steve Emery

THE 'STITCH'

BRIDGE STREET, CHESTER.

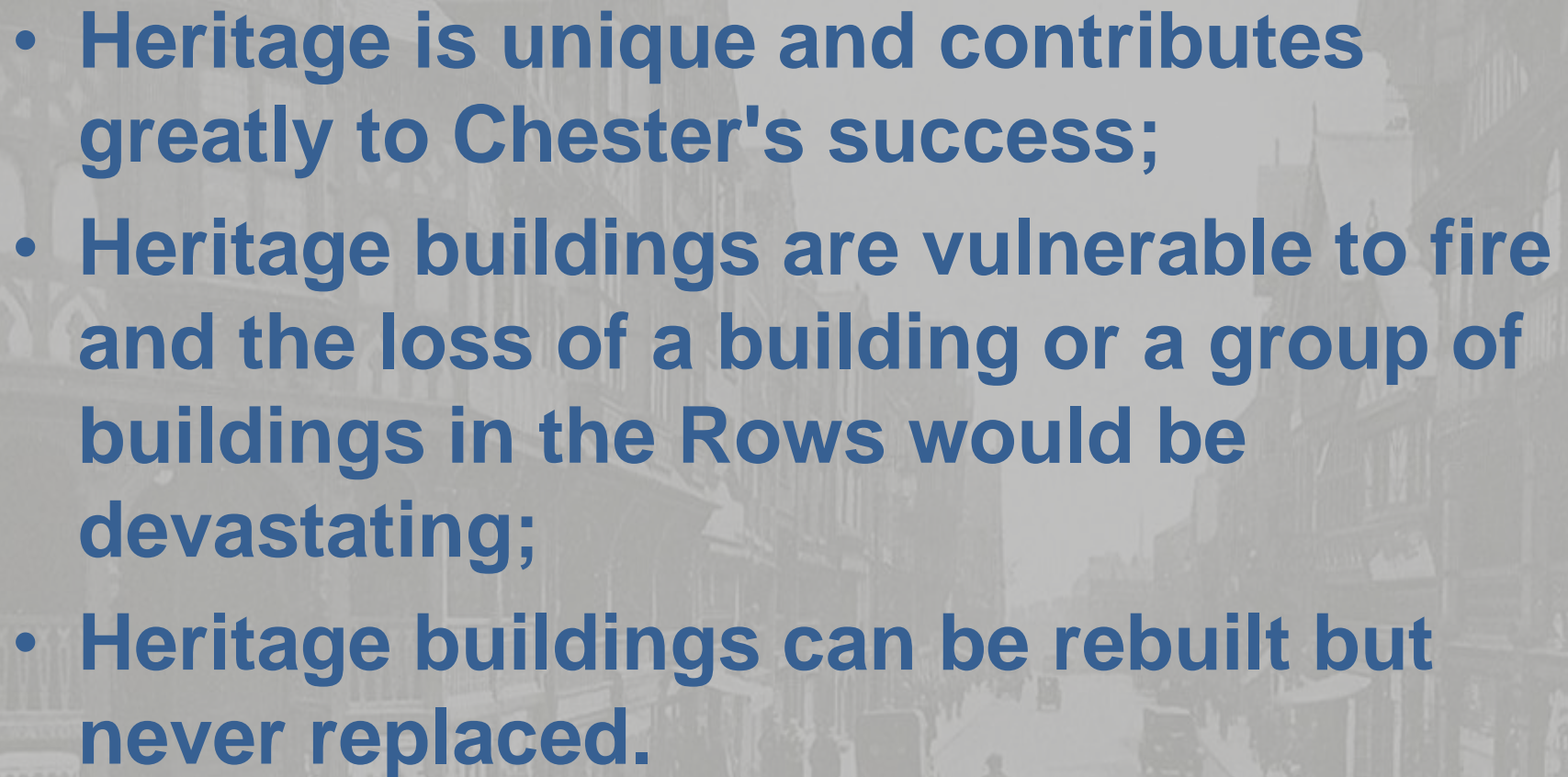
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"The consequences of a major fire within the historic core of the City would be incalculable; both in terms of its effect on the built environment but also to the economic prosperity of the centre itself. The responsibility for fire prevention and detection rests with a variety of agencies, individual owners and occupiers as well as corporate owners and investment companies. Ultimately the Council believes that it is the owners of these buildings who have to take responsibility for these measures."

Supplementary Planning Guidance: PLANNING for COMMUNITY SAFETY (2005)

"The recent fire on Bridge St Row is just one very real example of the potentially devastating consequences for the city if appropriate prevention measures are not put in place. The implementation of the Rows Fire Prevention Plan is an urgent priority which will need the support of private property owners and a variety of public agencies if the very existence of the unique, but vulnerable historic core is to be secured."

Taken from the Single Action Plan for Chester City Centre (2005)

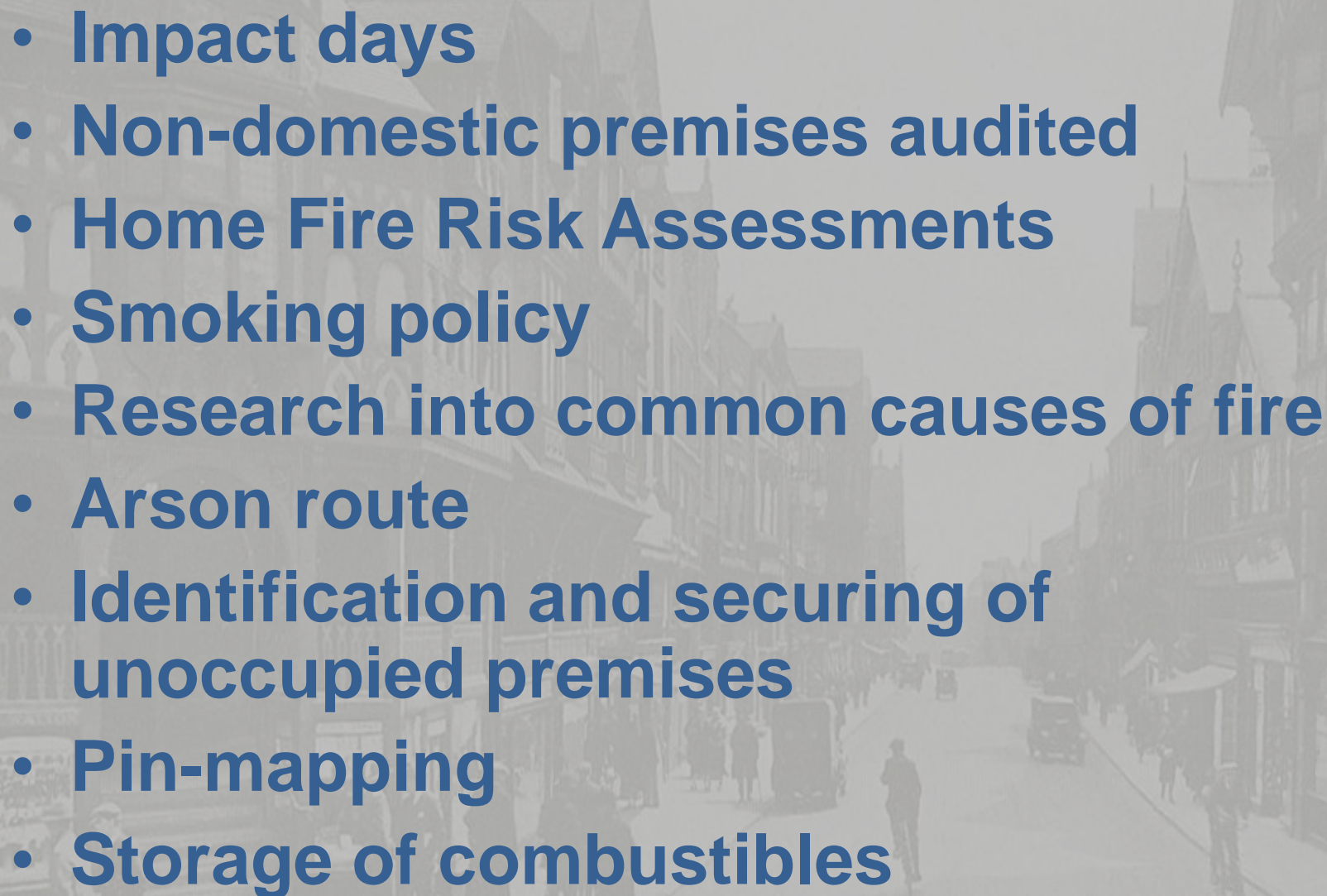
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- **Heritage is unique and contributes greatly to Chester's success;**
 - **Heritage buildings are vulnerable to fire and the loss of a building or a group of buildings in the Rows would be devastating;**
 - **Heritage buildings can be rebuilt but never replaced.**

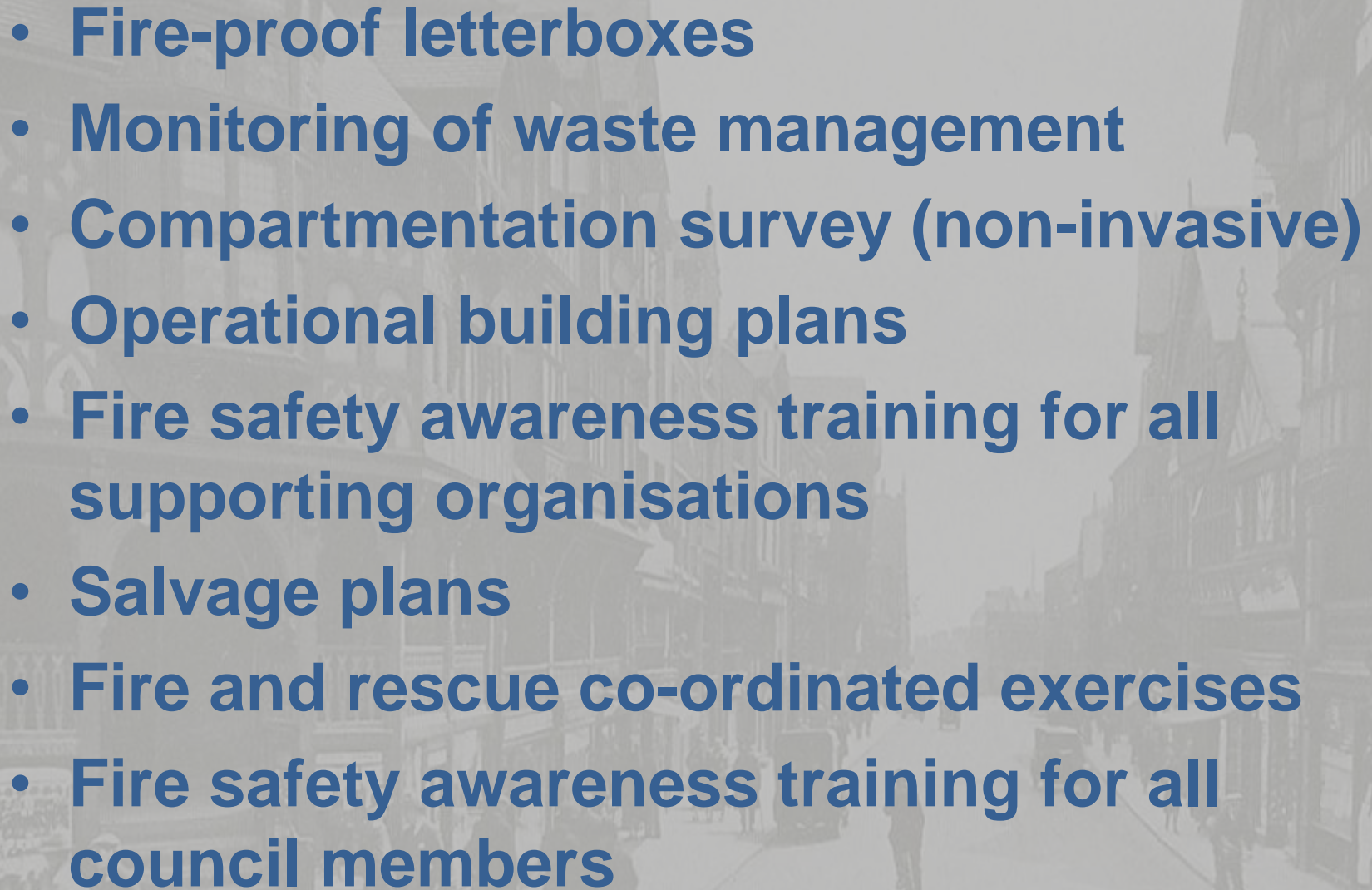
Taken from the Single Action Plan for Chester City Centre (2005)

Terms of reference for Chester Fire Board:

- To act as a consultant for planning applications;**
- To produce a Good Practice Guide for Fire Protection;**
- To make sure all City Council owned buildings are adequately protected;**
- To progress work on the provision of an integrated fire detection system;**
- To initiate a smoking ban in the Rows;**
- To lead on pressing Government for legislative change on the provision of adequate fire protection in listed buildings.**

Cabinet Working Group on Fire Protection (2005)

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- **Impact days**
 - **Non-domestic premises audited**
 - **Home Fire Risk Assessments**
 - **Smoking policy**
 - **Research into common causes of fire**
 - **Arson route**
 - **Identification and securing of unoccupied premises**
 - **Pin-mapping**
 - **Storage of combustibles**

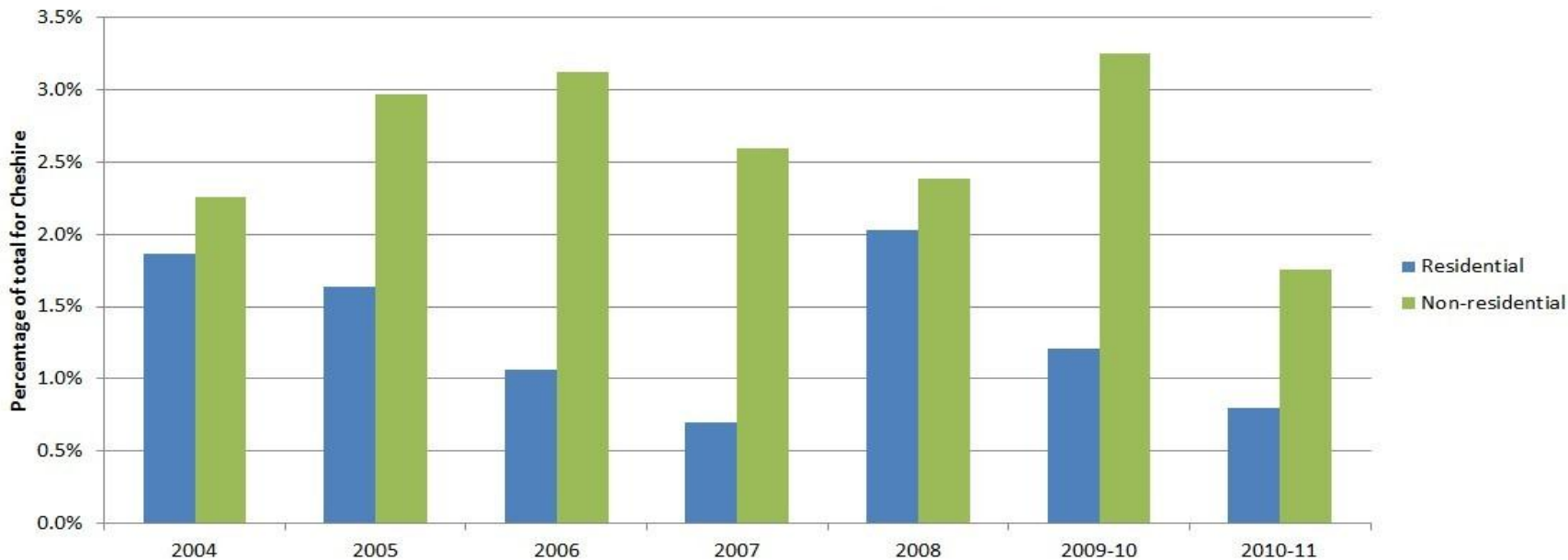
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- A historical black and white photograph of Bridge Street in Chester, showing a street with buildings, people, and a horse-drawn carriage. The image is faded and serves as a background for the text.
- **Fire-proof letterboxes**
 - **Monitoring of waste management**
 - **Compartmentation survey (non-invasive)**
 - **Operational building plans**
 - **Fire safety awareness training for all supporting organisations**
 - **Salvage plans**
 - **Fire and rescue co-ordinated exercises**
 - **Fire safety awareness training for all council members**

ANALYSIS

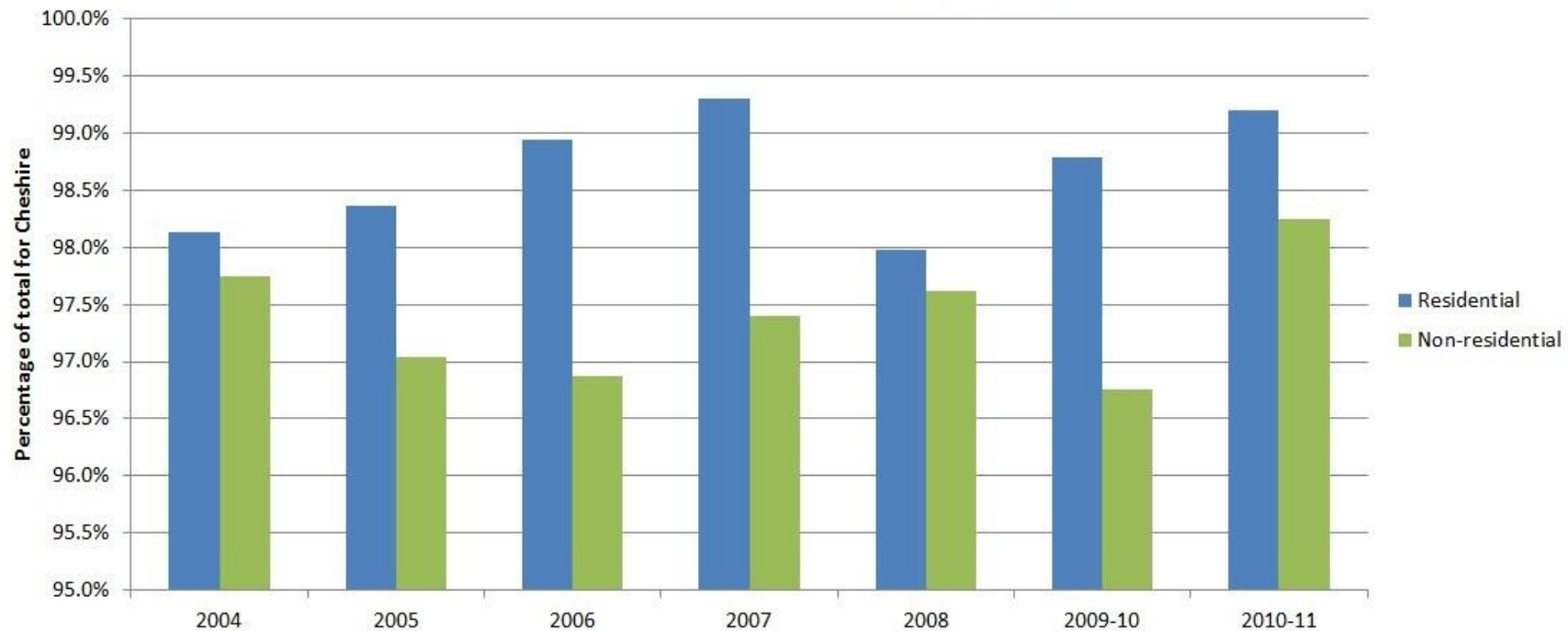
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Residential and non-residential incidents involving property damage in Chester



Residential and non-residential incidents involving property damage in Cheshire





IS IT 'A STITCH IN TIME'?

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Have Chester City responded appropriately to the fire in 2002?

Is the importance of the historic city centre recognised?

Is the fire safety management (fire safety initiatives etc.) being effective?



Will Chester City 'save nine'...?

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