

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Director of Legal & Governance, Graham Britten
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
Brigade HQ, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1BD
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Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Jason Thelwell

To: The Members of the Executive Committee

14 November 2016

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS
AND PUBLIC**

**Please note the content of
Page 2 of this Agenda Pack**

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** to be held in Meeting Room 1, Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1BD on **WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2016 at 10.00 am** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Britten".

Graham Britten
Director of Legal and Governance

Chairman: Councillor Busby
Councillors: Carroll, Gomm, Lambert, Marland, Reed and Schofield



MAKING YOU SAFER

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Recording of the Meeting

The Authority supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. Requests to take photographs or undertake audio or visual recordings either by members of the public or by the media should wherever possible be made to enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk at least two working days before the meeting.

The Authority also allows the use of social networking websites and blogging to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens.

Adjournment and Rights to Speak – Public

The Authority may, when members of the public are present, adjourn a Meeting to hear the views of the public on a particular agenda item. The proposal to adjourn must be moved by a Member, seconded and agreed by a majority of the Members present and voting.

Prior to inviting the public to speak, the Chairman should advise that they:

- (a) raise their hands to indicate their wish to speak at the invitation of the Chairman,
- (b) speak for no more than four minutes,
- (c) should only speak once unless the Chairman agrees otherwise.

The Chairman should resume the Meeting as soon as possible, with the agreement of the other Members present.

Adjournments do not form part of the Meeting and should be confined to times when the views of the public need to be heard.

Rights to Speak - Members

A Member of the constituent Councils who is not a Member of the Authority may attend Meetings of the Authority or its Committees to make a statement on behalf of the Member's constituents in the case of any item under discussion which directly affects the Member's division, with the prior consent of the Chairman of the Meeting which will not be unreasonably withheld. The Member's statement will not last longer than four minutes.

Where the Chairman of a Committee has agreed to extend an invitation to all Members of the Authority to attend when major matters of policy are being considered, a Member who is not a member of the Committee may attend and speak at such Meetings at the invitation of the Chairman of that Committee.

Questions

Members of the Authority, or its constituent councils, District, or Parish Councils may submit written questions prior to the Meeting to allow their full and proper consideration. Such questions shall be received by the Monitoring Officer to the Authority, *in writing or by fax*, at least two clear working days before the day of the Meeting of the Authority or the Committee.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To make all decisions on behalf of the Authority, except in so far as reserved to the full Authority by law or by these Terms of Reference.
2. To assess performance of the Authority against agreed organisational targets.
3. To determine matters relating to pay and remuneration where required by collective agreements or legislation.
4. To select on behalf of the Authority—the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, and deputy to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, or equivalent , taking advice from suitable advisers and to make recommendations to the Authority as to the terms of appointment or dismissal.
5. To consider and make decisions on behalf of the Authority in respect of the appointment of a statutory finance officer; a statutory monitoring officer; and any post to be contracted to “Gold Book” terms and conditions in whole or in part taking advice from the Chief Fire Officer and suitable advisers.
6. To act as the Employers’ Side of a negotiating and consultation forum for all matters relating to the employment contracts of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, deputy to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, or equivalent; and where relevant, employees contracted to “Gold Book” terms and conditions in whole or in part.
7. To hear appeals if required to do so in accordance with the Authority’s Policies.
8. To determine any human resources issues arising from the Authority’s budget process and improvement programme.
9. To determine policies, codes or guidance:
 - (a) after considering recommendations from the Overview and Audit Committee in respect of:
 - (i) regulating working relationships between members and co-opted members of the Authority and the employees of the Authority; and
 - (ii) governing the conduct of employees of the Authority
 - (b) relating to grievance, disciplinary, conduct, capability, dismissals and appeals relating to employees contracted to “Gold Book” terms and conditions in whole or in part.
10. To form a Human Resources Sub-Committee as it deems appropriate.

AGENDA

Item No:

1. Apologies

2. Minutes

To approve, and sign as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 September 2016 (Item 2) **(Pages 5 - 12)**

3. Disclosure of Interests

Members to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in any matter being considered which are not entered onto the Authority's Register, and officers to disclose any interests they may have in any contract to be considered.

4. Questions

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order S0A7.

5. Budget Monitoring Performance and Debt Management April - September 2016

To consider Item 5 **(Pages 13 - 26)**

6. Annual Report on Partnerships

To consider Item 6 **(Pages 27 - 40)**

7. Members' Allowances

To consider Item 7 **(Pages 41 - 74)**

8. ICT Disaster Recovery Plan

To consider Item 8 **(Pages 75 - 86)**

9. Independent Review of Conditions of Service for Fire and Rescue Staff in England

To consider Item 9 **(Pages 87 - 184)**

10. Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 8 February 2017 at 10am

If you have any enquiries about this agenda please contact: Katie Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) – Tel: (01296) 744633 email: knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk

Minutes of the meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY held on WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2016 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillors Busby (Chairman), Gomm, Marland, Reed and Schofield

Officers: J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer), M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), L Swift (Director of People and Organisational Development), M Hemming (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets), K McCafferty (Head of Human Resources), N Boustred (Head of Service Delivery), P Holland (Head of Service Transformation), M Stevens (Management Accountant), S Wells (Group Commander Training Learning and Development), S Grosse (Station Commander Training Quality Assurance), F Mansfield (Human Resources Development Manager), F Pearson (Communication and Consultation Manager), K Williams (Prevention Policy Manager) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Carroll and Lambert

EX11 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Wednesday 13 July 2016, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX12 BUDGET MONITORING PERFORMANCE AND DEBT MANAGEMENT APRIL-JUNE 2016

The Committee considered an update of the provisional revenue and capital outturn position and debt management performance to 30 June 2016.

The Management Accountant advised Members that managers had positively and proactively controlled spending and forecast an under-spend of £668k, against a revenue budget of £28.3m. The main area of underspend was in Service Delivery. Staffing levels were lower than budgeted in this area due to retirements and leavers in previous years and on-call firefighter employment was significantly below budgeted establishment levels. The underspend which resulted from this was then being utilised for the 'bank' system, non-grey book staffing initiative and apprenticeships.

The Management Accountant advised Members that there was a pressure on funding as the Government had only guaranteed six months of USAR funding so far this financial year.

RESOLVED –

1. That the latest projected outturn forecast for the Authority as at 30 June 2016 be noted.
2. That £500k of the projected underspend for 2016/17 be transferred to a reserve to help fund the apprenticeship initiative in future years.
3. That the budget virement as detailed in Appendix B be authorised.

EX13

FOUR YEAR SETTLEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PLAN

The Chairman advised Members that the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service had recently visited the Service. He also advised that the Home Office were looking to get some clarity in terms of future funding issues and this report addresses the issue around the Authority having a four year settlement and efficiency plan.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that as announced at last year's spending review, the Government would offer a four year settlement to authorities in exchange for a robust efficiency plan which also set out the savings planned over that period. The efficiencies and initiatives contained within the Authority's plan were based heavily on the Public Safety Plan which was subject to public consultation and had been approved by Members.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that the Authority was in a strong financial position. The efficiency requirements were almost exactly offset by the planned savings, with a difference of only about £30k over the four year period, which would only require minor additional savings. There were a number of risks that were noted in the report, one of which was the USAR funding which was not guaranteed going forward. One of the key assumptions contained within the report was the need to raise Council Tax by 1.99% each and every year over the period and this was to help offset the 57% reduction the Authority was seeing in the Revenue Support Grant over the same period.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that last week the Government released a consultation which included referendum principles for Council Tax for 2017/18 and whilst shire districts and lower quartile Police and Crime Commissioners were able to raise Council Tax by up to £5.00, it appeared that at present this didn't extend to fire authorities. A Consultation response would be brought to the Fire Authority at its October meeting, seeking the freedom for fire authorities to raise Council Tax by up to £5.00, rather than being capped at 1.99%. This might help negate the risk should USAR funding cease and help fund any other initiatives as required within the community.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Government's offer of a guaranteed four year settlement be accepted; and
2. the Efficiency Plan be approved.

EX14

OPTIONS FOR DECOMMISSIONING OF THE INCIDENT RESPONSE UNIT

The Lead Member for Property and Resource Management advised Members that on the 9 December 2015 the Service was informed by CFOA National Resilience of the decision to reduce the national provision of Incident Response Units (IRU) from 65 to 43. The IRU based at Broughton was one of 22 that would be decommissioned effective from 31 December 2015.

The Head of Service Delivery advised Members that the Authority had operational support units at Milton Keynes and Great Missenden, as well as an environmental protection unit and this was the reason why there was a need to keep some of the items of equipment. The Authority also had mutual regional and national support if required, as Royal Berkshire, Northants, Bedfordshire and London fire and rescue services were still keeping their Incident Response Units.

RESOLVED –

1. That the rigid frame MAN chassis vehicle complete with forklift truck be decommissioned and sold;
2. that the identified specific equipment be retained within the Service and placed on appliances;
3. that other equipment and stocks be stored within Brigade stores to replace consumables; and
4. that any remaining equipment be sold off or donated to another service which has been allowed to retain an IRU.

EX15

FIRE REFORM – DELIVERING THE AUTHORITY'S WORKFORCE REFORM PROGRAMME

The Lead Member for Human Resources and Equality and Diversity advised Members that the report summarises the workforce reform that the Authority had delivered to date since embarking on a Service wide integrated continuous improvement and transformation programme in 2010.

The Director of People and Organisational Development advised Members that the report also set out the Authority's current and future programme for innovative, cultural reform to support delivery of the 2015-2020 Corporate and Public Safety plans. This programme had been developed and continually reviewed in order to deliver the Authority's strategic aim to 'optimise the contribution and well-being of its people' and to ensure that the workforce reform priorities were aligned with those set out in the Home Secretary's speech on Fire Reform delivered on 24 May 2016.

The Director of People and Organisation Development also advised Members that the programme included anticipated outcomes of the Adrian Thomas 'Conditions of Service' review, which would be reviewed again once the Thomas report was published.

The Chairman advised Members that the Authority was well ahead of any other fire and rescue service in England, in terms of the way the staff had embraced workforce reform. If some of the innovative ideas and different ways of working had not been embraced, the Authority would have been faced with even tougher decisions than those already taken.

RESOLVED-

1. That the significant progress on workforce reform from 2010 to date as outlined in Annex A be noted; and
2. that the current and future workforce reform programme 2016 to 2020 which incorporates the Fire Reform Agenda, as outlined in Annex B be noted.

EX16

PENSIONS UPDATE

The Lead Member for Human Resources and Equality and Diversity advised Members that this report provided an update on the various pension related activities currently being managed by the Authority and the impact for the Service.

The Human Resources Development Manager advised Members that this report followed the last pension update presented to the Executive Committee on 18 November 2015. The Authority continued to be subject to five different pension schemes, which were split between two Pension Administrators, the West Yorkshire Pension Fund and Buckinghamshire County Council.

The Human Resources Development Manager advised Members of a few other points of note:

- The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) Ombudsman Case was concluded in December 2015 with Buckinghamshire County Council, who were the administrators for the Authority at the time, making payments to the affected individuals, well ahead of the scheduled date of April 2016. The funding was made available by DCLG to the Authority to enable it to make the necessary payments to affected individuals;
- in collaboration with Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and following a joint tender process, West Yorkshire Pension Fund was awarded the pension administration contract in December 2015. Following the award, work started to seamlessly transfer the pension administration from Buckinghamshire County Council for a 'go live' date of 1 April 2016. The project completed on time with no major issues or additional expenditure;

- the Authority had used internal audit as a 'critical friend' to support the transition to the new pension administrator, providing an evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the transfer arrangements and governance. The audit review found the governance arrangements to be robust, with the transfer run as a project with all expected documentation in place;
- all LGPS members received their Annual Benefit statements in July 2016. Due to issues with West Yorkshire Pension Fund's software provider there was a slight delay with the issuing of statements to firefighters. West Yorkshire Pension Fund had notified the pension regulator and the Authority had advised staff of this delay;
- West Yorkshire Pension Fund would complete the guaranteed minimum pension reconciliation exercise on behalf of the Authority. This was a lengthy project with a number of key steps, with all data required to be reconciled by December 2018;
- the Local Pension Board had been established since July 2015 and quarterly meetings continued to be held. The Authority had recently recruited a third scheme member representative after one board member had resigned from their post. The Scheme Advisory Board had now been established and would provide support and advice to the local pension boards;
- the training school and turntable ladder allowances were now pensionable and the Authority continued to progress the historical impact on this amendment;
- the Authority had a position on the pension discretions that were required to be in place and was working with Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for a position on the remaining 49 discretions for the 2015 firefighter pension scheme;
- the Authority's re-enrolment date was later this year and the Authority was working with Buckinghamshire Country Council and West Yorkshire Pension Fund on completing this piece of work.

The Chairman thanked the Human Resources Development Manager for the clarity of the report.

RESOLVED –

That the update on pension matters within the Authority be noted.

EX17

WATER RESCUE TRAINING AND CAPABILITY

The Lead Member for Human Resources and Equality and Diversity introduced the report and advised Members that the report provided an update on the notable developments that had come about following the external review conducted by subject matter experts into the Authority's water rescue training and capability, during early 2015.

The Group Commander, Training Learning and Development advised Members that:

- this was a very exciting piece of work that captured some of the many strengths within the organisation and perhaps most notably the decision to continually invest financially in our water rescue capability during a period of austerity;
- it showed a willingness to invite external bodies to challenge and scrutinise and this had allowed the Authority to continue a cycle of improvement;
- the report recognised the skills currently in the workforce and provided opportunities from a promotional perspective, that would allow firefighters with a passion for water rescue to deliver training to other operational employees.

The Station Commander Training Quality Assurance gave Members a presentation on the Authority's water rescue capabilities which include the Authority's water rescue instructors and joining the national flood rescue asset register.

RESOLVED –

1. That the investment toward enhancing and up skilling the competencies of selected staff, in becoming water rescue instructors, whose responsibility it is will then be, to deliver in-house an externally verified and accredited Level 2 First Responder course be noted; and
2. that the successful outcome of the recent submission to DEFRA that has resulted in one of the BFRS water rescue teams being accepted onto the National Flood Rescue Asset Register be noted.

EX18

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED -

By virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the minutes contains information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the minutes contains information relating to the financial or business

affairs of a person (including the Authority); and on these grounds it is considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Director of Legal and Governance, Director of People and Organisational Development, Deputy Director of Finance and Assets, Head of Human Resources, Head of Service Delivery, Head of Service Transformation, Management Accountant, Group Commander Training Learning and Development, Station Commander Training Quality Assurance, Human Resources Development Manager, Communication and Consultation Manager, Prevention Policy Manager and the Head of Service Transformation left the meeting.

EX19 EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Wednesday 13 July 2016, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the date of the next Executive Committee meeting would be held on Wednesday 23 November 2016 at 10.00am.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11.05AM.

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

| | |
|---|---|
| MEETING | Executive Committee |
| DATE OF MEETING | 23 November 2016 |
| OFFICER | David Sutherland, Director of Finance and Assets |
| LEAD MEMBER | Councillor Adrian Busby |
| SUBJECT OF THE REPORT | Budget Monitoring Performance and Debt Management April – September 2016 |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | <p>To present the provisional revenue and capital outturn position and debt management performance to 30 September 2016.</p> <p>The report in Appendix A sets out the Authority's revenue and capital spending position as at 30 September 2016, together with the projected outturn position for the financial year.</p> <p>Managers have positively and proactively controlled spend and forecast an underspend of £655k, against a revenue budget of £28.3m.</p> |
| ACTION | Decision/Information. |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the latest projected outturn forecast for the Authority as at 30 September 2016 be noted. 2. That £200k of the projected underspend for 2016/17 is transferred to a reserve to help fund the sprinklers initiative in future years. |
| RISK MANAGEMENT | Management of our financial resources is a key risk to the Authority and the performance reports to Committee inform Members of the main financial risks facing the Authority in year. |
| FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | As set out in the main body of the report. |
| LEGAL IMPLICATIONS | None. |
| CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION | None. |
| HEALTH AND SAFETY | None. |

| | |
|---|--|
| EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY | None. |
| USE OF RESOURCES | The paper sets out how work has been progressing for achieving greater financial ownership and accountability for resources attached to the delivery of specific aims and objectives of the Authority. |
| PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS | <p>Background</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 to 2019/20, CFA Meeting 10 February 2016: http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/4614/5459/6672/Fire_Authority_Summons_and_Agenda_100216_72dpi.pdf</p> <p>Budget Monitoring Performance and Debt Management April - June 2016: http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/9314/7333/8024/ITEM_5_Q1_2016-17_Budget_Monitoring_Performance_Debt_Management_-_SMB_Unlinked.pdf</p> |
| APPENDICES | Appendix A – Budget Monitoring Performance and Debt Management April – September 2016 |
| TIME REQUIRED | 10 Minutes. |
| REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT | <p>Mark Stevens (Revenue) and Asif Hussain (Capital)</p> <p>mstevens@bucksfire.gov.uk ahussain@bucksfire.gov.uk</p> <p>01296 744425 and 01296 744421</p> |

Appendix A

1. Revenue Forecasts by Service Area

Table 1 The table below shows the budget and actual expenditure for each directorate as at the end of September 2016. The budget of £28.3m is compared to the forecast outturn to give a forecast year-end underspend of £655k.

| Directorate | Area Manager | Total Budget | Actual Year to Date | Forecast Outturn | Projected Year End Variance |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Corporate Core | Corporate Core | 913,260 | 536,323 | 867,234 | -46,026 |
| | Legal & Governance | 84,350 | 32,085 | 84,350 | 0 |
| Corporate Core Total | | 997,610 | 568,408 | 951,584 | -46,026 |
| Finance & Assets | Finance & Procurement | 972,490 | 575,003 | 965,697 | -6,793 |
| | Resource Management | 2,111,760 | 1,117,274 | 2,020,400 | -91,360 |
| Finance & Assets Total | | 3,084,250 | 1,692,276 | 2,986,097 | -98,153 |
| People & Organisation Development | Training & Development | 1,757,610 | 769,933 | 1,903,454 | 145,844 |
| | Operations & Services | 760,410 | 417,330 | 800,440 | 40,030 |
| People & Organisation Development Total | | 2,518,020 | 1,187,264 | 2,703,894 | 185,874 |
| Delivery, Corporate Development & Planning | Service Delivery | 15,367,830 | 6,903,632 | 14,699,711 | -668,119 |
| | Service Development | 467,725 | 362,093 | 451,874 | -15,851 |
| | Service Transformation | 1,269,970 | 484,943 | 1,790,209 | 520,239 |
| | IT and Communications | 1,423,630 | 664,112 | 1,339,118 | -84,512 |
| Delivery, Corporate Development & Planning Total | | 18,529,155 | 8,414,781 | 18,280,912 | -248,243 |
| Statutory Accounting & Contingency | Capital Charges | 873,886 | -1,112,199 | 833,886 | -40,000 |
| | Direct Revenue Financing | 1,290,114 | 1,290,114 | 1,290,114 | 0 |
| | Contingency | 814,495 | 17,186 | 403,881 | -410,614 |
| | Non Distributed Costs | 215,170 | 99,158 | 216,966 | 1,796 |
| Statutory Accounting & Contingency Total | | 3,193,665 | 294,259 | 2,744,847 | -448,818 |
| Total Expenditure | | 28,322,700 | 12,156,987 | 27,667,334 | -655,366 |
| Total Funding | | -28,322,700 | -17,565,554 | -28,322,700 | 0 |
| Net Position | | 0 | -5,408,566 | -655,366 | -655,366 |

The key variations in directorate budgets compared to year-end outturn shown above in Table 1 are:

Finance & Assets £98k under – This variance relates to the vacant Resource Manager post and unbudgeted income received from aerial sites. Employment agency payments in Workshops and more minor overspends across the directorate then bring the favourable variance down to the headline figure that is being seen here.

People & Organisation Development £186k over – An overspend is being seen in this directorate because the costs of the apprenticeship scheme are being picked up here, while being funded from underspends elsewhere in the organisation. The overall adverse variance is then reduced by under establishments in the POD directorate.

Delivery, Corporate Development & Planning £248k under –

Service Delivery: Staffing levels are lower than budgeted in this area due to retirements and leavers in previous years, while on-call firefighter employment is significantly below budgeted establishment levels. The underspends which result from this are then utilised for apprenticeships seen in POD, the 'bank' system seen under this directorate and non-grey book staffing seen below. £500k has been set aside to create a reserve for the apprenticeship scheme, while budgets relating to the sprinkler initiative are currently underspent by £200k due to changes in legislative requirements and the current reluctance of partner organisations to commit to joint funding schemes. It is recommended that this underspend is transferred into a reserve as the Authority will continue to proactively work to find suitable partners for this scheme in future years (see Recommendation 2).

Service Transformation: The bulk of overspends in this area relate to the non-grey book staffing initiative alluded to above, with temporary service transformation posts also contributing to overspends.

Statutory Accounting & Contingency £449k under - The contingency fund makes provision for any pay award and pay protection arrangements as well as exceptional items for which no budget has been approved during the budget setting process. The current level of the fund was reduced as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2016/17, however, in-year savings are also held here as part of a new program of centralising budgets once they have been identified as bearing consistent underspends.

2. Direct Employee Costs

Table 2 shows the budget and provisional outturn for each sub-heading within the direct employees subjective as at the end of September 2016.

| Staffing | Total Budget | Actual Year to Date | Forecast Outturn | Variance |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Members of the Brigade | 12,716,410 | 6,076,450 | 12,373,199 | -343,211 |
| Retained Duty System | 1,686,830 | 583,977 | 1,298,641 | -388,189 |
| Administrative Staff | 3,884,015 | 1,869,253 | 3,793,065 | -90,950 |
| Control Room Staff | 0 | 25,544 | 0 | 0 |
| Casual Employees | 61,450 | 27,643 | 69,391 | 7,941 |
| Technicians | 244,120 | 127,207 | 253,584 | 9,464 |
| Members Allowances | 72,780 | 30,085 | 72,780 | 0 |
| Allowances | 747,330 | 335,046 | 692,582 | -54,748 |
| Agency Staff | 99,640 | 105,832 | 289,879 | 190,239 |
| Grand Total | 19,512,575 | 9,181,038 | 18,843,121 | -669,454 |

Members of the Brigade – this relates to lower staffing levels than budgeted, however, the cost of the bank system in 2016/17 can be seen to offset these favourable variances to a degree.

Retained Duty System – on-call firefighter employment is currently significantly under budgeted establishment levels.

Administrative Staff – Underspends in Finance, KIS, the driving school, Fire Protection, Staff Development, Corporate and Forward Planning and in relation to the Resource Manager post can be seen to outweigh overspends in this area. With regard to overspends, elements include a Programme Manager and work placement role assigned to facilitate service transformation, while a Business and Systems Integration Project Manager post will be funded from earmarked reserves as planned.

Agency Staff – agency staff have been used to cover interim vacancies in the Finance and Procurement team as well as to support projects in Property and short-term resourcing in Workshops.

3. Major Risk Areas

The monitoring process will focus more attention on areas identified by management as high risk. An initial assessment of the main financial risks faced has been undertaken by Finance against the following categories:

- High value budgets
- Historically volatile budgets
- Demand led income and expenditure budgets

| | | Total Budget | Actual Year to Date | Forecast Outturn | Projected Year End Variance |
|----|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A. | Employee Direct Costs | 19,512,575 | 9,181,038 | 18,843,121 | -669,454 |
| B. | Knowledge & Information Services | 1,309,360 | 647,796 | 1,253,131 | -56,229 |
| C. | Fuel Charges | 280,760 | 123,980 | 218,000 | -62,760 |
| D. | Energy/Utilities | 277,670 | 69,096 | 273,437 | -4,233 |
| E. | Employment Agencies/Consultants | 99,640 | 105,832 | 289,879 | 190,239 |

- The variances for A. B. and E. are as noted in Section 2 above, while fuel is underspent as both usage and cost per litre are currently lower than budgeted.

4. Funding

The table below details the budget and forecast outturn for each category of funding.

| | Govt Funding £000 | Business Rates £000 | NNDR Pooling £000 | Specific Grants £000 | Council Tax Receipts (incl. 15/16 surplus) £000 | Total Funding £000 |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Budget 2016/17 | -4,507 | -4,874 | -164 | -1,099 | -17,679 | -28,323 |
| Budget Year to Date | -2,811 | -3,040 | -102 | -686 | -11,028 | -17,668 |
| Actual to Date | -2,811 | -3,040 | 0 | -686 | -11,028 | -17,566 |
| Variance Year to Date | 0 | 0 | 102 | 0 | 0 | 102 |
| Forecast Outturn | -4,507 | -4,874 | -164 | -1,099 | -17,679 | -28,323 |
| Projected Year End Variance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Current projections show funding to budget. However, this may change in future periods as the Home Office have only committed to six months of New Dimensions funding, with remaining commitments dependent on a review of national mass decontamination capabilities.

In addition to this, exact funding levels resulting from NNDR pooling arrangements are uncertain at this stage.

5. Savings and efficiencies

Of the £559k savings offered up in the 2016/17 Medium Term Financial Plan, £17k is from Corporate Core, £21k from Finance & Assets, £44k from POD and £476k from Delivery, Corporate Development and Planning.

| Directorate | Target Saving £0 | Forecast Actual Saving £0 | Under/ (Over) Recovery £0 |
|--|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Corporate Core | 16,779 | 16,779 | - |
| Finance & Assets | 21,335 | 21,335 | - |
| People & Organisation Development | 44,394 | 44,394 | - |
| Delivery, Corporate Development and Planning | 476,492 | 476,492 | - |
| Total Savings | 559,000 | 559,000 | - |

Corporate Core, Finance and Assets and POD – Supplies and services budgets have been reduced based on historical analysis of actual spend in this area.

Delivery, Corporate Development and Planning – The new firefighter pension scheme has been modelled into the budgeted establishment to reflect the lower cost of the 2015 scheme.

6. Capital Forecasts

The capital programme for 2016/17 is £3.236m which together with a number of carry-forward schemes totals £9.688m.

| Project Name | Original Budget 2016-17 | Agreed 15-16 Carry Forwards | Revised Budget 2015-16 | Actual Year to Date | Commitments 2015/16 | Forecast Outturn | Year End Variance |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Property | 500,000 | 194,615 | 694,615 | 223,515 | 96,761 | 694,615 | 0 |
| Property Review | 0 | 5,161,125 | 5,161,125 | 650,521 | 143,613 | 5,161,125 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 500,000 | 5,355,740 | 5,855,740 | 874,037 | 240,374 | 5,855,740 | 0 |
| CCTV Cameras | 45,000 | 50,000 | 95,000 | 35,000 | 4,125 | 95,000 | 0 |
| Operational Vehicles Red Fleet | 2,300,000 | 696,000 | 2,996,000 | 463,920 | 2,121,590 | 2,996,000 | 0 |
| Operational Vehicles White Fleet | 132,000 | 0 | 132,000 | 67,979 | 39,545 | 132,000 | 0 |
| Hydraulic Equipment | 56,000 | 0 | 56,000 | 0 | 0 | 56,000 | 0 |
| Water Tankers | 0 | 80,000 | 80,000 | 0 | 80,000 | 80,000 | 0 |
| Operational Equipment | 93,000 | 66,263 | 159,263 | 21,129 | 51,013 | 159,263 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 2,626,000 | 892,263 | 3,518,263 | 588,028 | 2,296,273 | 3,518,263 | 0 |
| ICT | 110,000 | 203,503 | 313,503 | 89,384 | 180,535 | 313,503 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 110,000 | 203,503 | 313,503 | 89,384 | 180,535 | 313,503 | 0 |
| Total | 3,236,000 | 6,451,506 | 9,687,506 | 1,551,448 | 2,717,181 | 9,687,506 | 0 |

Funding

The capital programme will be funded as follows:

| Funding Source | £ |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Capital Receipts | 1,246,000 |
| Unapplied/Unused Capital Grant | 2,840,687 |
| Transfer from RCCO Reserve | 5,600,819 |
| Total Funding | 9,687,506 |

Property Portfolio

The Property team have been allocated £500k for 2015/16, which relates to priority 2 repairs as identified in the condition survey and other priorities identified within the property strategy. A slippage amount of £5.356m has been carried over from 2015/16 with the majority of the slippage relating to the property review.

The majority of the works completed to date relate to the installation of the modular building at Beaconsfield and Newport Pagnell station refurbishment. Currently works are being carried out in several stations, in particular Beaconsfield station is replacing doors and windows and installing a new boiler system. Stokenchurch stations heating system is also being replaced and a refurbishment taking place at Haddenham station. Further works are due at several stations which are out for quotation with works planned to take place during the year.

At present, the Milton Keynes (MK) review is projecting a full spend but it is very unlikely this will be the case. We would anticipate majority of the budget to slip into next financial year when actual construction works are expected to commence.

Fire Appliances & Equipment

A budget of £2.3m and £132k was allocated to purchase several red and white fleet vehicles. The orders for the red fleet appliances have been placed with the first set of appliances expected to be delivered in February. The remaining appliances will be delivered from April 2017 onwards. White fleet orders have been placed and are expected to be delivered by the end of the financial year. A slippage of £696k relates to four red fleet vehicles (part of 2015/16 capital programme) which were expected to be delivered by December 2016. However a further delay in the build caused by the supplier may push this date back further. On-going discussions are taking place between the Fleet Manager and the supplier to discuss a way forward.

CCTV installation is progressing well with all vehicle installations expected to be completed by the end of the financial year. The budget for the water tanker has slipped from last year but an order has now been placed. Hydraulic equipment and operational equipment orders will be placed throughout the year.

Support

ICT was allocated a budget of £110k which is for the Wi-Fi upgrade and the replacement of hardware. A balance of £204k has been brought forward from the previous year with majority of the slippage relating to the telephony project and the server upgrade. The server upgrade is now complete with the telephony project likely to commence in quarter four. The delay in commencement has been caused by the supplier who is unable to start the telephony project until they have completed a similar installation at a neighboring council.

7. Reserves

The table below shows the projected movement in reserves during the year.

| | Balance at start of year £000 | Projected Additions £000 | Projected Use of £000 | Projected year-end balance £000 |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| General Fund | -2,165 | -168 | | -2,333 |
| Earmarked Reserves (Revenue) | -2,037 | -550* | | -2,587** |
| Earmarked Reserves (Capital) | -6,961 | -2,983 | 6,847 | -3,097 |

* This figure includes the £500k underspend to be transferred to a reserve to help fund the apprenticeship initiative in future years.

** This figure includes £369k, which represents this Authority's share of the joint control room renewals fund (which is held by Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service)

8. Performance Indicators

The table below shows the performance targets and actuals (rolling averages) for the year to date.

| Description | 2015-16 Actual | 2016/17 Target | 2016/17 Actual (rolling average) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Budget Monitoring Training | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100% |
| Managers accessing SAP Cost Centre Report | 100% | 100.0% | 100% |
| % invoices paid within 30 days` | 99.67% | 99% | 99.82% |
| Budget Mon. Report turn-around (working days) | 7 days | 7 days | 7 days |

Budget monitoring training is provided to managers assuming responsibility for budget management and control. A risk based approach is applied to budget monitoring with resources allocated to high risk areas. This supports a proactive challenge role for Finance and budget holder engagement. Compliance to date has been at 100%.

Invoices paid within 30 days has a rolling average of 99.82% for quarter 2.

9. Debt Management

The table below shows the key debtor performance figures for the quarter 1 2016/17:

| DEBTOR KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2016/17 | Q1 | Q2 |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Debts over 60 days overdue | £54,098 | £29,132 |
| Total Debt outstanding | £119,382 | £70,786 |
| Debts over 60 days overdue as a % of total debt outstanding | 43.42% | 37.72% |
| Debts over 60 days overdue as a % of total income to date | 2.64% | 1.33% |
| Average days from raising invoices to receipt of income | 65 days | 37 days |

The above figures show the quarterly average of debt during 2016/17. For quarter 2, the average total debt outstanding was £71k, of which £29k relates to debt 60 days overdue. Total debt outstanding as at the end of September 2016 was £30k, with the actual

value of debts over 60 days overdue being £8k. September 2016 saw a reduction in this area, resulting in a significant decrease in average debt during quarter 2.

The decrease in total debt outstanding is mainly due to the collection of income relating to officers seconded to the Home Office.

All the debt over 60 days relates to compensation received in favour of Bucks Fire & Rescue Service for breaches to the fire safety regulations. The Authority has no control over the timing of these payments.

The 'average days' taken to raise an invoice and then receipt income for quarter 2 is 37 days.

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| MEETING | Executive Committee |
| DATE OF MEETING | 23 November 2016 |
| OFFICER | David Sutherland, Director of Finance and Assets |
| LEAD MEMBER | Councillor David Carroll |
| SUBJECT OF THE REPORT | Annual Report on Partnerships |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | <p>In May 2014, the Executive Committee approved a partnership strategy including a set of 9 key principles that need to be determined in order to justify any relationship with another body as a true partnership.</p> <p>In carrying out this review a formal Partnership Register was established together with a separate list of joint working groups and other fora attended either by officers and/or Members of the Authority that do not meet the fuller criteria for a true partnership.</p> <p>The Executive Committee agreed at their meeting in July 2015 to receive an annual report on Partnerships and this is the first of those reports.</p> <p>Appendix 1 provides an update on participation for those partnerships identified on the agreed Partnership Register in 2015, along with suggested additions to both the Partnership Register and joint working groups list.</p> <p>Appendix 2 shows the Partnership Register with suggested addition in red and Appendix 3 shows the separate list of joint working groups also with suggested additions in red.</p> <p>Appendix 4 shows the ongoing collaborative work being undertaken by officers, which may in due course lead to some formal partnerships in the future, or may become more embedded working groups for future consideration by Members.</p> |
| ACTION | Decision. |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | <p>It is recommended that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the revised Partnership Register, including suggested additions, set out in Appendix 2 be approved. 2. the separate list of joint working groups where |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>the Authority has an interest, including suggested additions, set out in Appendix 3 be noted.</p> <p>3. the content of Appendix 4 be noted.</p> |
| RISK MANAGEMENT | <p>As set out in Section 20 of the Financial Instructions:</p> <p>Each partnership should have a defined responsible manager within the Authority. This person is responsible for ensuring that:</p> <p>The partnership is appraised for financial viability in both the current and future years;</p> <p>The financial risk to the Authority is assessed;</p> <p>Appropriate resources are assigned to the governance of the partnership;</p> <p>The partnership is supported by an appropriate documented agreement which outlines the financial liabilities and accountabilities of the partners, together with procedures for financial transactions and monitoring, and which has been agreed in writing by all partners; and</p> <p>The accounting arrangements are satisfactory.</p> <p>The Director of Finance & Assets must be consulted and their agreement obtained to the acceptability of the details in respect of the above prior to commencement of the Partnership.</p> |
| FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | <p>There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.</p> |
| LEGAL IMPLICATIONS | <p>The Authority's Financial Regulations (E.2) provide that "The Executive is responsible for approving partnership arrangements/joint working initiatives with other local public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to address local needs."</p> |
| CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION | <p>The partnership and working group arrangements set out within this document are a strong indication in themselves of the Authority's willingness and ability to engage in a collaborative spirit with organisations across a wide spectrum of issues within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.</p> |
| HEALTH AND SAFETY | <p>There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.</p> |
| EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY | <p>There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.</p> |
| USE OF RESOURCES | <p>Any existing partnerships have been reviewed for use</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | resource utilisation and new partnerships are considered against the criteria set out in the strategy. |
| PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS | <p>Background</p> <p>O&A 9/12/10 Update - Significant Governance Issues 2009/10 Internal Audit Report: Review of progress on internal audit recommendations from previous audits</p> <p>O&A 12/5/11 Internal Audit Report: Review of progress on internal audit recommendations from previous audits</p> <p>O&A 22/6/11 Review of Progress on Internal Audit Recommendations Annex</p> <p>O&A 25/9/13 Annual Governance Statement 2012/13. Internal Audit Report: Update of progress of Audit Recommendations</p> <p>Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority Financial Regulations http://www.bucksfire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F5A74AFB-37F7-42D0-9B07-B29E98DF789D/0/08FINANCIALREGULATIONS.pdf</p> <p><i>Evaluating Partnerships, An Overview and Compendium of Approaches</i> CIPFA May 2009 (Copyrighted material) http://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/publications/e/evaluating-partnerships-an-overview-and-compendium-of-approaches</p> <p>Executive 14/5/14 Min EX46 http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/6714/0602/9795/ITEM_4_14-05-14_MINUTES_-_DRAFT_V3_FINAL.pdf</p> <p>Executive 29/7/15 Min EX06 http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/9614/4161/6387/ITEM_2_290715_Executive_Committee_Draft_Minutesv1.pdf</p> <p>Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority Financial Instructions</p> |
| APPENDICES | <p>Appendix 1: Review of Member and Officer participation in Partnerships</p> <p>Appendix 2: Partnership Register</p> |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| | Appendix 3: List of joint working groups / fora attended by the Authority Appendix 4: Ongoing collaborative work |
| TIME REQUIRED | 10 minutes. |
| REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT | Richard Priest rpriest@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744480 |

Partnership Participation Review 2016

The rationale for inclusion of all partnerships was established in the paper to the Executive in July 2015. The updates below are to inform Members of developments since the last paper.

1. Safer MK and Safer & Stronger Bucks

In relation to Safer MK Partnership Board, the Area Commander for Service Delivery (Neil Boustred) is the appointed lead and one of the five members with voting rights. The Service Delivery Manager North (Calum Bell) is the nominated deputy.

The appointed lead for the Safer & Stronger Bucks Board is the Area Commander for Service Delivery (Neil Boustred), with the Service Delivery Manager South (Gary Taylor) the nominated deputy.

2. MK Safety Centre

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the MK Safety Centre was reviewed and has been renewed.

3. Oxfordshire FS and Royal Berkshire FS

Collaboration between the three FRSs continues and has been strengthened recently with the decision to agree a joint specification for future fire engines. This will deliver direct financial savings as well as pave the way for future joint equipment procurement and aligned training across the Thames Valley.

4. USAR Canine – Hampshire FRS

This MoU remains in force and will be reviewed in 2019.

5. Fire Co-Responder – South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS)

This partnership with SCAS is progressing and is increasing opportunities to identify further opportunities for interoperability.

6. British Red Cross

The MOU is planned to be reviewed again early next year.

7. Training Partnership – Fire Service College

This partnership will be reviewed early next year.

8. Bucks Law Plus

The Board of the company, on which BMKFA has a director, is due meet to decide the future of the company in light of the decision taken by Buckinghamshire County Council to terminate the employment of all of the company's lawyers on 30 June 2016

9. TVFCS

This partnership with Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Services is in place and work is progressing aligned with the transition plan.

10. Primary Authority Scheme – Yumm!

The Primary Authority Scheme partnership with Yumm (KFC) is progressing in agreement with both parties

Suggested addition to the Partnership Register

Cineworld - Primary Authority Advice

In January 2016 the Authority reached agreement with Cineworld to set up a primary authority relationship between the Authority and Cineworld such that Cineworld will request 'Primary Authority Advice' as defined in the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008.

In effect this means that B&MKFA will provide advice and guidance to, and on behalf of Cineworld in the in the UK, for all matters relating to fire safety. The cost of providing the service is recovered by the Authority.

This is a joint Primary Authority Scheme initiative, with Milton Keynes Council providing Cineworld with Primary Authority Advice for Trading Standards.

Suggested additions to the Joint Working Groups

Bucks - Dignity in Care

This is a multi-agency group comprising voluntary groups and care providers who work together to optimize the support given to those in care.

Bucks – Risk Assessment Multi-agency Partnership

This is a police-led multi-agency group which meets to agree collective support for the most complex social care cases. The intention is to agree a plan which includes the detailed simultaneous activities required by all parties. This approach has had success in dealing with cases of hoarding, where traditionally no single organisation would have the ability to bring a safe and effective conclusion.

MK – Healthy Living Group

This group is chaired by the MK Clinical Commissioning Group and comprises Public Health staff, voluntary groups as well as the Fire and Rescue Service. The intention is to co-ordinate and jointly evaluate healthy living initiatives across MK. As a consequence, the Fire Service was asked to Chair a prevention sub-group to collate and co-ordinate all health messages issued by all agencies across MK.

MK – Older People’s Group

This is a relatively new group comprising of a number of voluntary interest groups as well as health providers, local authority agencies and service commissioners. The intention is to ensure older people’s views are included in service provision.

Appendix 2 - Partnership Register

| Partnership Name | Original Signing Date | Is the partnership legally defined and agreed by all partners | Where does it fit within the Fire Authority plan? | Are there clear aims and outcomes for the Partnership | Are the outcomes measurable and agreed by all partners | Is the risk shared as well as the resources | Date of last review by all partners | Could the outcomes be achieved in any other manner | Is there an exit strategy/ Should the Authority require one |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Safer MK | N/K | Crime & Disorder Act 1998 | Vision & Strategic Objectives | Yes | In Part | Yes | Annual | No | No/No |
| Safer & Stronger Bucks | N/K | Crime & Disorder Act 1998 | Vision & Strategic Objectives | Yes | In Part | Yes | Annual | No | No/No |
| MK Safety Centre | 2010 | Yes | Strategic Objectives & Local Plan | Yes | Yes, Activity Outcomes, No | Yes (Limited) | Annual | Potentially | Yes/Yes |
| Oxon FRS/RBFRS | 2013 | Yes | Protection – Cross Border arrangements | Yes | Yes | Yes | Annual | Yes, but at greater cost | Yes/Yes |
| USAR Canine Hampshire FRS | Feb 2009 | Yes | Response/ National Resilience | Yes | Yes | Yes | Feb 2014 (new agreement drafted) | Yes – own canine provision but at greater cost | Yes/Yes |
| Fire Co-Responder | 1/03/14 | Yes | Vision & Strategic Objectives | Yes | Yes | Yes | 1/06/14 | Not by using fire crews as co- | Yes/Yes |

Partnership Governance Framework

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-----|---|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|-----------|---|---------|
| | | | | | | | | responders | |
| British Red Cross | 2012 | No | Prevention | Yes | N/A | Yes | 2014 | Yes, but at greater cost | Yes/Yes |
| Training Partnership – Fire Service College | 2015 | Yes | Vision & Strategic Objectives | Yes | Yes | Yes | Quarterly | Yes, but it would be more costly | Yes/Yes |
| Bucks Law Plus | 2014 | Yes | Improvement (Encourage innovation and creativity) | Yes | Yes | Yes | N/A | No | Yes/Yes |
| Thames Valley Fire Control Service | 2015 | Yes | Response – Steady state operation of the TVFCS | Yes | Yes, as set out in primary objectives | Yes | N/A | Yes, but it would be more costly | Yes/Yes |
| KFC - Primary Authority Advice | 2014 | Yes | Protection Policy – Fire Safety | Yes | Yes | N/A | N/A | Yes, bit less efficiently at national level | Yes/Yes |

Recommended Addition

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|-----|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|---------|
| Cineworld – Primary Authority Advice | 2016 | Yes | Protection Policy – Fire Safety | Yes | Yes | N/A | N/A | Yes, bit less efficiently at national level | Yes/Yes |
|--------------------------------------|------|-----|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|---------|

Appendix 3 - List of joint working groups attended by the Authority

| District | Group |
|----------|---|
| AVD | AV CSP Strategy Group |
| AVD | Aylesbury Vale Local Strategic Partnership |
| AVD | AV CSP (Implementation) |
| AVD | AV Community Cohesion Delivery Group |
| AVD | AVDC ASB Tactical Action Group (TAG) |
| AVD | AVDC Joint Action Group (JAG) |
| AVD | Aylesbury LSP |
| BFRS | Building Control Liaison |
| BFRS | Fire and Emergency Support Services |
| BFRS | Safety Advisory Groups |
| Bucks | Bucks CC Road Safety Team |
| Bucks | BSP Policy Officers Group |
| Bucks | Bucks ASB Strategy Group |
| Bucks | Bucks Equalities Network |
| Bucks | Chinese Business Community Partnership |
| Bucks | Community Cohesion & Equalities Forum |
| Bucks | Bucks Community Safety partnership |
| Bucks | Bucks Resilience Group |
| Bucks | Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee (MARAC) |
| Bucks | Youth Inclusion and Support Panels |
| Bucks | Safeguarding Adults Board |
| Bucks | Safeguarding Children Board |
| C/SB | Chiltern and South Bucks Strategic Partnership |
| C/SB | Chiltern and South Bucks Partnership Steering Group |
| C/SB | Chiltern and South Bucks Community Safety Partnership |
| C/SB | Chiltern and South Bucks – Joint Action Groups |
| MK | Milton Keynes Council Road Safety Team |
| MK | Safe at Home Scheme |
| MK | Safer MK Performance Group |
| MK | Safer MK Public Safety |
| MK | Joint Area Tasking and Coordination (JATAC) |
| MK | Joint Emergency Services Group |
| MK | MK Safety Advisory Group (MK SAG) |
| MK | MK Prevent Board |
| MK | Adults Safeguarding Board |
| MK | Children’s Safeguarding Board |
| WD | Wycombe CSP (Strategy Group) |
| WD | Wycombe CSP (Implementation) |
| WD | Wycombe Community Cohesion Delivery Group |
| WD | Wycombe Community Cohesion Strategy Group |

| | |
|----|-------------------------------------|
| WD | Wycombe Joint Action Group |
| WD | Wycombe Partnership (LSP) Executive |
| WD | Wycombe Partnership (LSP) Full |

| FRS Area | Group |
|-----------|--|
| SE Region | CFOA SE Protection Strategy Group |
| SE Region | Environment Agency South East (EASE) and FRSS |
| TV | Local Resilience Forum Regional Contingency Group |
| SE Region | South East Operational Response & Resilience Group |
| TV | Local Resilience Forum Communications Group |
| TV | Thames Valley Cross Border Group |
| TV | Thames Valley NVQ Centre |
| SE Region | South East Operational Policy & Procedure (SEOPAP) |
| FRS | Silverstone Major event group |
| SE Region | CFOA SE Prevention Strategy Group |
| SE Region | Employee Development Group |

Recommended Additions

| | |
|-------|---|
| Bucks | Dignity In Care Group |
| Bucks | Risk Assessment Multi-agency Partnership (RAMP) |
| MK | Healthy Living Group |
| MK | Older People's Group |

Appendix 4 – Ongoing Collaborative Work

Supporting the Wider Health Agenda – Older People

Aligned to the Authority's Prevention Strategy, collaborative work has started in the following areas:

- **Falls Prevention – MK Council, AgeUK:MK & NHS MK**

Working with the NHS Falls Prevention team and AgeUK:MK, joint training has been undertaken between all three organisations to better understand how each supports those in the community at risk from falling. This has resulted in BFRS staff referring people at risk of falling, with reciprocal referrals being made by the other organisations relating to those at risk from fire, who were previously unknown to BFRS.

The intention is for BFRS staff to start fitting falls mitigation apparatus to add more value to our work and to reduce the workload and cost of another agency.

- **Falls Prevention – Bucks NHS**

BFRS staff work with the NHS Falls prevention team to deliver stability classes to those most at risk from falls. These classes have been held within office space at BFRS Headquarters for local residents to prevent them from having to travel further afield to local hospitals.

- **Walking Groups – Bucks County Council**

An extension of the stability classes has been BFRS staff becoming walk leaders as part of the Bucks County Council 'Simply Walk' initiative. The BFRS staff, mostly during their lunch hours, have led walks in Waddesdon, Winslow and Aylesbury.

Primarily this has been to encourage older people to become more active and to prevent them becoming at risk of falling in later years, but this has had the additional benefit of helping prevent people from becoming socially isolated. As a direct result, BFRS staff conducted Home Fire Risk Checks at the request of a number of the walkers, resulting in very high fire risks being mitigated; people with whom BFRS had not had any previous interaction.

The intention is that once the walks are established, local volunteers will be left to continue leading them aligned to the needs of the walkers.

- **Exercise Classes – LEAP**

LEAP has started delivering physical activity classes at Princes Risborough Fire Station, using the drill yard, at no cost to either organisation. These accessible

classes are aimed at all adults in the local area to support increasing activity and reducing social isolation. The intention is to run these from more fire stations across Bucks and MK.

- **Dementia Awareness – Dementia Society**

Supported by the Dementia Society, all frontline BFRS staff have undertaken dementia awareness training to make them better understand those in the community who have this condition.

Supporting the Wider Health Agenda – Youth Engagement

- **Junior Firefit (High Wycombe) – LEAP & Sport England**

Working with LEAP, who support increasing public physical activity, BFRS staff have run two programmes aimed at increasing the physical activity and self-confidence of schoolchildren from Cressex School. This is being evaluated and staff at Aylesbury Fire Station are looking to use the model for schoolchildren in their local area.

- **Team Fire HOSE (Buckingham) – St. John Ambulance & Tesco**

This is a similar programme delivered by Buckingham Fire Station staff intended to support healthy living and self-esteem. The course was run with support from St. John Ambulance, Buckingham School and the local Tesco store.

- **Duke of Edinburgh (Aylesbury) – Bucks County Council**

Working alongside the Bucks County Council Youth Team, Aylesbury Fire Station staff successfully delivered the service element of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Whilst this course has now finished, staff are looking at ways to work together on a different course based around employability.

- **Sustainable Tenancies (Broughton) – MK Council**

The community co-ordinator for MK has created a brand new initiative aimed at supporting those young people moving from living in care to independent living. Working with the MK Council Corporate Parenting Team, who have identified suitable young people, the co-ordinator supported by staff at Broughton Fire Station deliver life skills courses to the young people.

The attendees learn basic DIY, practise their cooking skills, are given financial advice, encouraged to be a good neighbour and are also encouraged to call back to the station regularly for more support and guidance if this is needed.

This has been supported by the local Tesco store.

Other Collaborative Work

- **Bucks Business First - Buckinghamshire & Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership**

BFRS is keen to explore how it can play a part in supporting young people to find employment in Bucks and also to support businesses in finding the right kind of youngster to help their business grow.

- **Missing Persons – Thames Valley Police**

BFRS is looking at ways it can support Thames Valley Police in finding missing persons. This is resource-intensive for the police and support from BFRS could take the form of the drone, crews to aid searching, or the use of fire stations to provide command and control centres for search teams.

- **Working with the Voluntary & Charitable Sector - MK Community Action & MK Community Foundation**

BFRS is working closely with MK: Community Action and MK: Community Foundation. These groups support the funding of charities and voluntary groups as well as helping them with their governance arrangements. These organisations are key to helping BFRS understand how it can work more effectively in the future with these key groups.

Future Collaboration Considerations

- **Working with People with Physical and Mental Impairments**

Although BFRS is developing a youth engagement structure to help youngsters develop their life skills, it is clear that not all young people can access this support. BFRS will look for ways to ensure we can work with as many people in the community as possible.

This could be extended to adults as well as we must ensure that Home Fire Risk Checks are both available and suitable to all people in our communities.



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| MEETING | Executive Committee |
| DATE OF MEETING | 23 November 2016 |
| OFFICER | Graham Britten, Director of Legal and Governance |
| LEAD MEMBER | Councillor Adrian Busby, Chairman |
| SUBJECT OF THE REPORT | Members' Allowances |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | <p>The Authority is required to adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowances before 1 April each year and, in so doing, have due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panels of the constituent authorities when considering its own Scheme of Members' Allowances and confirm that it has done so when it gives public notice of the Scheme of Allowances.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire County Council's terms of reference require a review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances to be undertaken every four years and this was carried out in January 2015 following a part review which was undertaken in 2013. The review carried out in January 2015 is attached at Appendix A.</p> <p>The Independent Remuneration Panel of the scheme for Milton Keynes Council undertook a review in March 2014 and this is attached at Appendix B.</p> <p>Previously the Authority agreed at its meeting on 14 December 2011 that the index linking for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15 – for basic and special responsibility (and co-optee) allowances – be the pay award for the Authority's staff on National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book).</p> <p>It is recommended that the Authority continue this indexation for the period 2017/18.</p> <p>The NJC agreed an increase of 1% with effect from 1 July 2016 for 'Grey Book' staff for 2016/17.</p> |
| ACTION | Decision. |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | That the Authority be recommended to adopt the Scheme for Members' Allowances for 2017/18 (Appendix C). |

| | |
|---|--|
| RISK MANAGEMENT | The recommendation will have no adverse effect on the Authority's business. |
| FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | <p>The current budget for Members' Allowances (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances) is £72,780, including National Insurance.</p> <p>Costs will be incurred in publishing a notice that the Authority has made a Scheme of Members' Allowances in a newspaper circulating in its area. The cost is estimated to be in the region of £800.</p> |
| LEGAL IMPLICATIONS | Set out above. |
| CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION | The making of a scheme of allowances is the responsibility of each individual authority defined in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The methodology for doing so is prescribed exclusively by those regulations. |
| HEALTH AND SAFETY | Not applicable. |
| EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY | <p>The Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances does not include any element for meeting costs incurred by a Member who has to arrange care in order to carry out their function as a Member of the Fire Authority.</p> <p>The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 exclude the Authority from including such a provision in its Scheme. However, with the exception of co-opted members, all Members are appointed by either Buckinghamshire County Council or Milton Keynes Council and are entitled to claim "dependent carers' allowances" from their appointing authority. There are currently no co-opted members on the Authority.</p> |
| USE OF RESOURCES | The recommendation is consistent with the extant Scheme of Allowances. |
| PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS | <p>BMKFA Scheme for Members' Allowances 2016/17:</p> <p>http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/8814/5795/9302/MEMBERS_ALLOWANCES_2016_17.compressed.pdf</p> |
| APPENDICES | <p>Appendix A: Report of the Independent Panel on Member Allowances for Buckinghamshire County Council January 2015.</p> <p>Appendix B: Milton Keynes Council report of the Independent Panel of Members' Allowances March 2014.</p> <p>Appendix C: Draft Scheme for Members' Allowances 2017/18.</p> |
| TIME REQUIRED | 10 minutes. |

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| REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT | Katie Nellist Knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744633 |
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5. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON MEMBER ALLOWANCES FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Introduction: The Regulatory Context

1. The following report notes the proceedings and recommendations made by Buckinghamshire County Council's Independent Panel on Member Allowances.

2 The Panel was established under Regulation 20 of the Local Authorities (Member Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003 No 1021) to produce a report and make recommendations as required by Regulation 21. These regulations, made under relevant provisions in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government Act 2000, require all local authorities to maintain an Independent Panel on Member Allowances to review and make recommendations in respect of member allowances.

3. Councils are required to have regard to the recommendations of their Independent Panel before they make or amend a Member Allowances Scheme.

The Panel

Richard Benz, Partner, Kidd Rapinet, Solicitors, Aylesbury and founding Director and initial Chairman of Bucks Economic Partnership Alex Pratt JP BSc OBE, Managing Director, Serious Brands Ltd, and Chairman of Bucks Business First Lisa Williams, Managing Director of John Lewis, High Wycombe.

Terms of Reference

This review by the Panel is a whole-scheme review which has to be undertaken at least every four years. A part review was undertaken in 2012 and revisions made to the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) after approval of the Panel's recommendations by full Council. The County Council also accepted the following Recommendations from the Panel in July 2013:

1 That the changes to the Scheme of Allowances mentioned above, and outlined in detail in Appendix 1 to this Report, be approved;

2 That an appropriate system of performance management for members be considered.

Interviews conducted by the Panel

The Panel met with the Party Group Leaders and the Chief Executive, individually, during the summer and invited comments from members of the Council on the Scheme and any changes that might be made. The Panel particularly invited comments on their recommendation from 2013 that a system of performance management for members should be developed.

Mr Martin Tett, Leader of the Council, and Mr Mike Appleyard, Deputy Leader of the Council.

Martin Tett and Mike Appleyard informed the Panel that, following the changes made in July last year, they were not proposing any further changes to the Member Allowances Scheme. They felt that the annual increase in rates linked previously to any officer pay award should be discontinued and the current rates of Special Responsibility Allowances, as outlined in Appendix 1 to this Report, should, therefore, be maintained. Other allowances in the Scheme should also continue at the current levels.

The Leader and Deputy Leader discussed their views on performance management of members with the Panel. In summary:-

They fully supported the principle but felt the development of a comprehensive system was not easy to achieve in practice. Members of the Council are elected every four years and this is a judgement in itself. Performance could not simply be gauged on the number of meetings a member attended, work in the community was as important. How would 'excellence' be judged and by whom? In the past when similar schemes have been discussed, the view has been that Group Leaders are not well placed to know what members do and contribute locally? How would contributions be 'moderated' between Groups? e.g. if one Group Leader thought his/her Group were all 'excellent' but another Group Leader were more challenging and rated his/her Group as only 'satisfactory'? No budget exists for further rewards and, in the light of the county's financial situation; the Council would probably have to reduce the standard Allowance to fund it. When services are being reduced and higher charges being made it is not an appropriate time to consider increasing allowances.

Mr Andy Huxley, Leader of the UKIP and Independent Group

Although he had some concerns over the number of SRAs paid, and felt that travel expenses paid were rather generous, Mr Huxley felt that the current system of Allowances works well. Whilst he supported the principle of performance management of members he was unsure how it could be applied in practice. Who would judge and on what criteria?

Mrs Avril Davies, Leader of the Liberal Democrat with Buckingham Labour Group

Mrs Davies felt that the existing rates in the Member Allowances Scheme were reasonable but expressed similar concerns about the number of SRAs paid. Travel expenses should be at paid at lowest petrol rate she felt. Mrs Davies supported the concept of performance management and shared with the Panel the performance management and review template that she uses with her Group. Mrs Davies wouldn't be against reward for excellence but was mindful of the budget implications. Money would be better spent on administrative support to her group, she felt.

Mrs Davies considered that the Council should pursue an accredited modular course of member development.

Mr Chris Williams, Chief Executive

Mr Williams explained the Council's Delivering Successful Performance (DSP) system of performance management for officers. It would be possible for a system of performance management to be developed for members, perhaps with a lower basic allowance and

then an "earned amount", but he appreciated all the issues mentioned by others that would make a system difficult to achieve.

Other Members of the Council

The Panel invited comments from all members of the Council on the current Allowances Scheme generally and, specifically, whether an element could possibly be built into the Scheme to reward excellence. In terms of the number of SRAs, and the levels of the allowances, there were no comments recommending that they be increased. There has been a historic link between the allowance rates and the annual officers pay award. The Council will need to decide whether the current rates of allowances should remain unchanged this year and, in future, how and when they are reviewed. The Council need to have "regard to" the views of the Panel before making changes to the Scheme of Allowances. The view of the Panel is that they should be delinked.

On the subject of "rewarding excellence", members were generally against this. Reasons such as budgetary implications, potential difficulties of fair and effective implementation (i.e. no "level playing field"), particularly in a political organisation, were mentioned.

Views of the Panel

The Panel are grateful to those members who gave up their time to meet with them and to the members who expressed their views in writing.

Contributors made the Panel aware of the Council's "Future Shape" proposals and for the Council to be more commercially aware in its approach. The Panel welcome this business-centred drive, particularly given the pressures local authorities are under in delivering quality services to the public with diminishing budgets. The ramifications of the "Future Shape" proposals are such that an even greater focus on a commercial approach and performance management is likely to be needed.

The Panel is aware that the Council will be under even more pressure, budget-wise, over the years ahead. Discussions will doubtless continue at national and local level about possible devolution of functions from central to local government and the debate about re-structuring local government in Buckinghamshire will gather pace. As a result of this, the Panel believes that the Council, as part of its business-centred approach, will need to give further consideration to performance management at all levels of the organisation. The Panel is disappointed that the Council has not yet acted on the recommendations it accepted in July 2013 and would urge the Council to act on them. In the view of the Panel, objections raised are not insurmountable and with careful thought and planning can be worked through and resolved. The Panel understands that other Councils are exploring the use of such a system and believes the Council should take the lead. The Panel notes that the Council uses it to measure the performance of its own staff.

The Panel consider that the "Future Shape" proposals are likely to require a reconsideration of the roles of elected members on the one hand and officers on the other- including (1) the traditional approach of elected members setting policy which is then implemented by officers and (2) in a cabinet-style system those involved in what could amount to a virtually full-time executive role being remunerated on a proper basis

for the time and effort put in, as opposed to simply receiving allowances. The Panel appreciates that these matters are outside of its terms of reference but proper consideration of them is, in its view, essential.

The Panel noted that the Council had recently been successful in achieving a refresh of the South-East Employers' (SEEMP) Member Development Charter. They congratulate the Council on this award and in their continuing commitment to member development. The Panel support the views of the SEEMP Panel judging the Award that the Council should, particularly, pursue the following areas of improvement:-

- All Members of Cabinet should be encouraged to have a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and a target of 80% of all members having a PDP should also be set
- All elected members be invited to prepare an Annual Report setting out their achievements for the year which could be uploaded to the Council's website. This would increase the visibility and accountability for each individual member. The Council should also re-visit and use the role profiles for all elected members as part of the PDP discussion. The role profiles will need to be reviewed to reflect the changing role of the member.
- The provision of leadership development particularly for members of the Cabinet
- The Council's Member Development Working Group should pilot and implement a 360 degree process to assist with the support for individual members.

With regard to POPs, the Panel see the following headings as being useful:-

Performance against (Strategic Plan) objectives

- What has worked particularly well in performing your role?
- What has worked less well and what have you learned from this?
- Attendance and contribution at Scrutiny and Committee Meetings?
- Attendance and contribution at Council?
- Attendance and contribution at Group Meetings?
- Representing constituents through Casework?
- Performance as a Deputy Cabinet Member Spokesperson?

Setting Objectives for next 12 months

Objectives should cover the period from April to March.

Learning and Development Needs

How are you seeking to develop your role and how will you acquire the required skills and experience? What support from the group and council would help?

In addition to the above, the Panel feels that the Council could add the 360 degree process to the template.

The Panel believes that a system of performance does not necessarily mean that the total spend on allowances would increase. Even if it did, the increased performance in delivery of Council activities could result in efficiency savings outweighing any increased allowances.

The Panel considers that, as part of any future structural review of local government in Buckinghamshire, central government should look again at the way local councillors are remunerated to ensure that the rewards are sufficient to attract the calibre of people who will be needed to run a different type of organisation.

THE PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

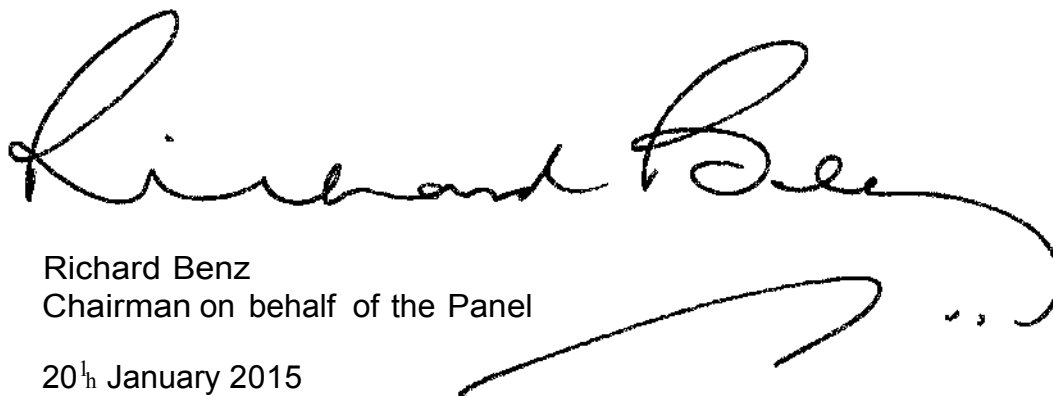
Following the four-yearly review the Panel recommends:-

1 That (having regard to the views of the Panel) the Council should decide whether the current rates of all Allowances in the Scheme should remain unchanged this year and, in future, how and when they are reviewed.

2 That the Council should take steps to implement the Panel's recommendations in its July 2013 report and continue to give due consideration to the development of a system of performance management for members starting with the initiatives outlined above.

3 That the Council should address in a timely way issues likely to result from the "Future Shape" proposals, having regard to the comments made in this report.

4 That the Council should invite the Panel to present and speak to this report.



Richard Benz
Chairman on behalf of the Panel

20th January 2015

APPENDIX 1

CURRENT SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

| Post | SR Allowance (pa) | Total |
|---|-------------------|----------------|
| Leader | £39,709 | £39,709 |
| Deputy leader | £26,473 | £26,473 |
| Cabinet Member (6) | £20,172 | £121,032 |
| Select Committee (Ch) x 4 | £10,092 | £40,368 |
| Statutory Committee (Ch) x 4 | £5046 | £20184 |
| Deputy Cabinet Members (7) | £5,046 | £35,322 |
| Group Leaders * | | |
| Conservative (36) | £10,948 | £10948 |
| Liberal Democrat (6) (5 Lib Dem /1 Labour | £2,938 | £2,938 |
| UKIP (7) (6 UKIP /1 Independent) | £3,205 | £3,205 |
| Chairman of the Council | £12,610 | £12,610 |
| Vice-Chairman of the Council | £3,156 | £3,156 |
| Chairman of Police & Crime Panel ** | £10,092 | £10,092 |
| Police and Crime Panel Representative | £1,500 | £1,500 |
| Basic Allowance x 49 | £10,718 | £525,182 |
| TOTAL | | £852719 |

*Allowances derived from formula: £1,336 basic plus £267 per member

** This is only payable in the case where the Panel elects the Buckinghamshire County Council's representative as its Chairman

**MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL - REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES:
MARCH 2014****Introduction.**

1. The Independent Panel on Members' Allowances met on Tuesday 18th February and Friday 7th March to make recommendations about the allowances to be paid to elected members. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 requires councils to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The Council's existing scheme was approved by Council in 2009 and the Panel's most recent work was in 2010 when it was tasked with reviewing the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs). It is for each local authority to decide its scheme and the amounts to be paid under that scheme but the Panel provides advice on the amounts to be paid and the Council must have regard to this advice. The Panel comprised:

Don Latham, Private Local Government Consultant (Chair)
John Moffoot, former Assistant Director Democratic Services
Julie Mills, Principal at MK College
Ruth Stone, Director of Community Action MK
Paul Griffiths, Chief Executive MK Chamber of Commerce
Helen Davies, Resident of MK

2. The Panel was made aware that the Council currently faces a significant budget shortfall and that in a time of austerity it is vital to ensure that public money is well spent and that all allowances are justified and merited. We noted that in line with staff pay there has been no increase in allowances in 2010/11/12 and only 1% in 2013. Nevertheless the Panel recognises that the allowances awarded to Members of Milton Keynes Council are above average when compared to other similar Councils and that the number of Councillors is being increased from 51 to 57 from May 2014 as recommended by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

3. Given the financial situation being faced by the Council the Panels overarching discussion was about the appropriateness of recommending an increase, albeit a small one, at a time when frontline services are being cut. The level of allowances did not appear to be a barrier to recruiting councillors but time commitment was the prime argument presented for increasing allowances. This is exacerbated by the specific structure and chair/vice chair scheme operated, through choice, by councillors. Caseload/constituency work was not presented to us as the real issue. Members seemed much more concerned about the workload linked to committees and other formal meetings. Nevertheless the overall financial package is being stretched by £60,000 (8.4%) on the appointment of 6 additional members and we considered, but have not recommended, that this be absorbed by reducing the Basic Allowance to £9,000 so that there would be no overall increase in the members' allowances budget.

4. The Panel considered the published material and comparisons with other Councils similar to Milton Keynes Council concerning remuneration of councillors. We were made aware of the National Census of Local Authority Councillors and also took into consideration the requirements of Government Regulations on Member Allowances. For reasons set out in our report we consider that the existing scheme is soundly structured and consider that the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) are set at an appropriate level so would not recommend new allowances being introduced other than to provide an extra £60,000 required to fund the additional six Councillors

5. The Panel reviewed the National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2010 and noted that

Councillors have various roles and work to carry out. Also councils have different decision making structures. The census information was considered in the changing context in which local government works, with economic and social pressures, and a growing public scrutiny in a time of austerity. There is now an increasing focus on councillors as community leaders and the main findings of the census showed that councillors as individuals are dedicated people who devote a great deal of their own time to serving their communities. Councillors spend on average 23 hours per week on Council business and this is consistent with surveys previously undertaken in both 2004 and 2006. The Panel believes that the situation in Milton Keynes Council reflects this national position.

6. The Panel would especially like to record its thanks to June Allen, Corporate Leadership Team Support Manager, who supported the Panel throughout the review; also to the Leader of the Council, Group Leaders and other Members who presented their views verbally or in writing to the Panel. Careful consideration was given to all the points raised.

7. In the light of the information provided by members the Panel discussed four options:

a) That there be no increase in the Council budget for Member allowances in 2014/15 and that the additional cost of six additional members be absorbed by a reduction in existing allowances and that the workload of members be reduced by a streamlining of the democratic process.

b) That the existing scheme be updated from April by the increase in the NJC pay award. (This is the approved Index used in the existing scheme of allowances). Councillors expressed the view that particularly in the financial circumstances being faced by the Council that it would not be acceptable to increase allowances at a rate in excess of that applied to staff pay.

c) That after years of indexing, the scheme be consolidated (Annex 1) by rounding up allowances and simplifying expenses in a way to ensure control, ease administration and encourage transparency. Expressing the levels of SRAs in a way which makes their basis more evident may encourage future evaluation of performance for which, the Panel were pleased to note, job descriptions are already in place.

d) **That the new Council, to be elected in May, be encouraged to make urgent changes in the democratic process to reduce demands on Members' time** which was the prime argument presented to us for increasing allowances. This streamlining may well include Scrutiny. We consider this to be an early essential to avoid the Council falling back into existing patterns and make desired changes more difficult to achieve. The Panel did consider a reduction in allowances as a result of streamlining the democratic decision making process which could greatly reduce the demands on members' time. It could also be argued that six additional councillors will decrease workload for the extant 51 – an 11% increase in headcount with no increase in workload.

Panel Recommendations.

8. In the light of evidence examined and the input of Members **the Panel recommends that the existing Scheme be updated in April by the consolidation recommended in our report (Annex 1) and that £60,000 be added to the budget to fund six new councillors.**

Consolidated (updated) Scheme.

9. The Panel's recommendations for consolidation (the third option) are as follows :

- That £60,000 be added to the Budget to fund six new Councillors
- That the Basic Allowance be set at £10,000 for 2014 - 15. (Annex 2)
- That SRAs be updated and expressed as a % of the Basic Allowance. (Annex 3)
- The Civic Allowances paid to the Mayor be set at £11,000 and Deputy Mayor £5,500.
- That Members should continue to be restricted to one SRA.
- That the Co-opted Members allowance be set at £640.
- That the SRA for Chair of Budget Review be reduced by £868 to bring it into line with Chair of Audit Committee.
- That no changes be made to other aspects of the existing scheme other than for indexing where appropriate.
- That the Council takes appropriate action on the results of the current Government/Treasury consultation exercise on pensions - which is anticipated to happen in 2014. (Annex 4)
- That the costs of telephone and broadband be met by Members from their Basic Allowance from 1st April 2014.
- That the consolidated Basic and SRA allowances remain unchanged i.e. not indexed for three years until the Panel meets again.
- That the new Council, to be elected in May, be encouraged to make urgent changes in the democratic process to reduce demands on Members' time.

Basic Allowance.

10. **The Panel recommends that the Basic Allowance (including inflation) be set at £10,000 for 2014/2015.** (See Annex 2) It was suggested by the Labour Group that if some 'disentanglement' between remuneration and expenses could be made and discussed with HMRC that this could be helpful to members. The Panel takes the view that allowances compensate for expenses and are not intended to be a form of salary. (See Annex 4). This would be a matter for the Council to discuss with HMRC.

11. Members of Milton Keynes Council also receive reimbursement of telephone and broadband costs at a current annual cost of £7,700. We recommend that the Council streamlines the administration of the scheme, reduces costs and makes it more transparent by withdrawing this additional support with Members meeting these costs directly from their Basic Allowance from 1st April 2014. We were made aware, during our Member consultation that this could create problems for some low income earning Members but we believe with the Council under pressure to reduce costs of administration it should take this step that would also bring it into line with best practice. It would save costs and simplify administration.

Special Responsibility Allowances.

12. The Council also pays Special Responsibility Allowances to those councillors it considers to have *significant, additional responsibilities* over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor. These special responsibilities are related to the discharge of the Council's functions.

13. The most significant is the Leader of the Council and the Panel recommend that the allowance be increased by £668 to £30,000 (3 x basic allowance). The Panel considered the current practice

of ring-fencing a total sum for the Cabinet, which is distributed per Cabinet Member. This has the benefit of enabling the Leader to determine the Cabinet structure without increasing the cost. The Cabinet Members are currently being paid £10,647, a total of £74,529 and the Panel recommends that this be rounded to and capped at £77,000. If the current Cabinet structure continues, the SRA per Cabinet Member, excluding the Leader, would be £11,000.

14. We were requested by a number of Members to consider additional SRAs but the Panel were totally agreed that there should be no additional SRAs. The Regulations make it clear that only *significant additional responsibilities* should be recognised and only a *minority of members* should receive an SRA. Our recommendations would result in 39% of the new Council receiving a SRA which would be in line with good practice. A case was made by a number of members for the introduction of SRAs for Vice Chairs. The reasons the Panel would not support this are set out in Annex 5. We do recommend that the SRA for Chair of Budget Review be reduced by £868 to bring it into line with Chair of Audit Committee.

15. We believe that SRAs are soundly structured but recommend that the use of the Basic Allowance as a bench mark for SRA calculations should be made explicit and that figures should be rounded as after a time of indexing they appear to have a degree of accuracy that cannot be justified. In other words we can re-establish a fresh baseline for the scheme which we believe, based on the work of previous Panels, establishes SRAs at an appropriate level.

16. It was suggested that consideration should be given to a "*de minimus*" payment for Group Leaders and the Panel recommend this should be £2,480 (i.e., £620 per Member for a notional minimum of 4 Members). The full details of our recommended changes are set out in Annex 3. This would produce an increase, including inflation, of £2,583 (1.2%) on the SRA budget of £211,713.

17. The Panel recommends, in line with current practice, that Members should continue to be restricted to one SRA. We do not support arguments for exceptions to this rule and we would not recommend the practice of transferability of allowances.

Co-opted Members of Committees

18. Persons co-opted to serve on Committees, Sub Committees or Panels, and who have voting rights, receive an allowance currently £634. This is paid in 12 equal, monthly instalments and will be liable for tax and National Insurance. All co-optees are eligible for travel and subsistence at the Members' rate when carrying out the duties for which they are co-opted. If the co-opted person ceases to serve the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of this allowance. **The Panel recommends that the Co-opted Members' allowance be increased to £640.**

Civic Allowances.

19. Currently the Mayor of Milton Keynes receives a civic allowance of £10,647 per annum, in line with that paid to Cabinet Members, paid in two equal instalments of £5,323 in May and November. The Deputy Mayor receives a civic allowance of 50% of the Mayor's allowance, i.e. £5,324 per annum, payable in two equal instalments of £2,662 in May and November. As part of a local agreement with HM Inspector of Taxes, these civic allowances are not liable for tax or National insurance contributions. In the event of a Mayor or Deputy Mayor ceasing to hold office the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of the Civic Allowance.

The Panel is recommending that Cabinet SRAs be increased to £11,000 and if this increase were also applied to Civic Allowances there would be a budget increase of £529 (3%). **The Panel recommends that the allowances paid to the Mayor be increased to £11,000 and Deputy Mayor to £5,500.**

Travel and Subsistence.

20. The Panel fully endorses the Council's existing arrangements for travel and subsistence. Reimbursement to councillors for travel and subsistence is paid at the current rates agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for the reimbursement of Council officers. In some instances Mileage claims may be liable for tax and National Insurance contributions. Councillors are reimbursed the full cost of travel by the most appropriate means of transport at standard class rates whilst carrying out Approved Duties, provided a valid receipt (bus ticket etc) is produced to substantiate the claim. All reasonable claims for subsistence are paid for carrying out Approved Duties and as there is no profit element in the payment of subsistence, this allowance is not subject to tax or National Insurance contributions.

Child Care and Dependent Carer's Allowance.

21. The Panel recommends that the scheme should continue unchanged except that for child care the minimum wage rate applicable to the age of the carer should be updated to October 2013 wage rates, and should continue to be adjusted to meet any future changes in the applicable minimum wage:

£6.31 per hour (21 years and over)

£5.03 per hour (18 -20 year olds)

£3.72 per hour (for workers under 18 who are above compulsory school leaving age)

Some Members suggested that the Council should adopt the Living Wage but the Panel received no evidence that the allowance set at the present level discourages people standing.

Claimable Allowances.

22. The Panel noted and endorsed the Council's current scheme. There is a 3 month time limit for submitting claims i.e. Child Care and Dependent Carers Allowance and Travel and Subsistence Allowances. Any claims made outside of this limit will only be paid in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Service Manager, Legal and Democratic Services and the Service Manager Audit and Risk Management.

Dual Authority roles.

23. The Panel notes the Council's decision that Councillors should not receive an allowance for more than one authority (e.g. Fire Authority) for the same duties. The Panel support the continuation of this position.

Forgoing Allowances.

24. A councillor may forgo all or part of any allowances to which he or she is entitled, provided he or she has given notice in writing to the Service Manager, Legal and Democratic Services.

Suspension and Withholding Allowances.

25. The Panel confirms the existing arrangements. In the event of a councillor being suspended from duty following an investigation by the Council's Standards Committee allowances will not be paid to the councillor concerned during the period of suspension. If necessary, a pro rata calculation will be made based on the number of days in the Council year concerned to determine if an adjustment for under or overpayment needs to be made to ensure that the correct amount is withheld during the suspension period. The Council should reserve the right to recover any overpayments.

Approved Duties.

26. The Panel endorses the list of 'Approved Duties' under the regulations and note that these include attendance at conferences, seminars and other Member Development and training events as approved by the Council or Service Manager, Legal and Democratic Services. The Panel was mindful of the training costs of a new Council with the prospect of many new Councillors and for Member Development training being a priority. We understand that appropriate budget provision has been made. We also discussed how appraisal of performance could play an important role in a situation where Members work under great pressures.

We noted that attendance at casework surgeries organised at advertised times and venues within the Member's own ward is an Approved Duty. The Panel considered recommending that this cost should in future be incurred as part of the Basic Allowance. However, in the light of the answers to our questions by Members and the low cost, we are not recommending change. We do not agree with the request that general casework should be included. We considered other issues raised by the Leader of the Council but we do not propose changes to Approved Duties.

Indexing.

27. The Panel considered recommending that the NJC award for staff pay should continue to be used as the basis for updating allowances but that having set a new baseline for allowances in our report we recommend that there should be no indexation for three years of the Basic Allowance and SRAs until the Panel meets again. But we recommend that the Dependent Carer's allowance should continue to be indexed to the maximum hourly rates for minimum wage for age of carer/average hourly cost of Milton Keynes Council. Travel and Subsistence allowances should be paid at the same rates and conditions applicable to Officer and HMRC rates where applicable.

Pensions.

28. All Councillors are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Both Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance will be taken into account when calculating pension entitlement. The Panel noted that on 19th December 2012 the Local Government Minister, Mike Brandon Lewis, made a statement to the House of Commons setting out the Department's intention to remove access for councillors to the LGPS in England from April 2014 (Annex 4) and that a separate paper be issued as part of the planned consultation on the wider reform of the LGPS - which is anticipated to be completed in 2014.

Basic Allowance

1. The Statutory Guidance is very specific on the questions a Panel must consider when arriving at the recommended Basic Allowance:

'Having established what Councillors do, and the hours which are devoted to these tasks the local authorities will need to take a view on the rate at which, and the number of hours for which, Councillors ought to be remunerated.'

2. The underlying approach in setting the recommended Basic Allowance is based on the above statutory guidance as published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), par.67. As a result, the Panel is under a duty to arrive at answers for the following three variables when setting and recommending an appropriate Basic Allowance:

- a) Time required to fulfil roles of ordinary Members
- b) The voluntary principle, the notion that part of the time put in by a Member in their back bench roles should be unremunerated, often known as the Public Service Discount (PSD)
- c) The worth of a backbench Member's time, or rate of remuneration.

3. **Time required to fulfil back bench roles = 140 days annual equivalent.** The 2003 Panel acknowledged that the role of the back bench councillor was at least 60 hours per month, or at least 90 - 95 days per year. The 2010 Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) census of Councillors shows that Councillors not in senior positions put in at least 23 hours per week, but that includes all types of councils. The Panel has translated this research by the IDeA into just over half a working week, or equivalent of 140 days per year.

4. **Public Service Discount: = 30%.** The previous Panel made the assumption that anything over 60 hours per month was the voluntary element or public service. However the common discount applied to English authorities is around 30%. In other words, of the 142 days expected time input, one third has been determined as public service, say 42 days, with 98 being left as the remunerated time.

5. **Rate for the job = £102 per day.** The Local Government Association no longer provides advice on a recommended daily session rate. The annual average wage/salary in the UK is £26,500 which the Panel have translated into £102 per day.

6. Thus, following the statutory guidance with the variables outlined above produces the following Basic Allowance:

- Time for the job: 140 equivalent days per year
- Public Service 30% (42 days)
- Rate for the job £102 per day

98 remunerated days x £102 = £9,996 say £10,000 Basic Allowance 2014 - 2015.

7. This is paid in 12 equal instalments and is subject to both tax and National Insurance contributions where applicable. If a councillor ceases to be a councillor before the end of his or her term of office, payment of the allowance ceases and a pro rata calculation is made to ensure that the councillor receives the right amount of allowance. The Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of Basic Allowance.

8. The Basic Allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time at meetings with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs, such as the use of their homes for council business.

Special Responsibility Allowances

The Panel believes that SRAs are soundly structured but recommend, in line with good practice, that the use of the Basic Allowance as a bench mark for SRA calculations be made explicit and that figures should be rounded as, after a time of indexing, they appear to have a degree of accuracy that cannot be justified. We did not have evidence to justify a significant increase or proposal for change in the existing scheme. We do recommend that the SRA for Chair of Budget Review be reduced by £1,000 to bring it into line with Chair of Audit Committee. What is set out below is a fresh baseline for the scheme which we believe, based on the work of previous Panels, sets SRAs at an appropriate level.

| | Current £ | Revised £ | +/- £ |
|---|--------------|--------------|----------|
| Leader of the Council (300% basic allowance) | 29,332 | 30,000 | 668+ |
| Main Opposition Group Leader - per Group Member (16) (£614 increased to £620) | 9,824 | 9,920 | 96+ |
| Smaller Opposition Group Leader - per Group Member (15) (£614 increased to £620) | 9,210 | 9,300 | 90+ |
| Cabinet Members (7) - (Pool Cap of £77,000) (110% basic allowance) | 10,647 | 11,000 | 2,471+ |
| Chair of Development Control Committee (80% basic allowance) | 8,051 | 8,000 | 51- |
| Chair of Licensing & Regulation Committees (80% basic allowance) | 8,051 | 8,000 | 51- |
| Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (75% basic allowance) | 7,368 | 7,500 | 132+ |
| Chair of Budget Review Group (55% basic allowance) | 6,368 | 5,500 | 868- |
| Chair of Audit Committee (55% basic allowance) | 5,368 | 5,500 | 132+ |
| Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Select Committee (5) (45% basic allowance) | 4,549 | 4,500 | 245- |
| Chair of Executive Scrutiny Panel (45% basic allowance) | 4,368 | 4,500 | 132+ |
| Chair of Standards Committee (30% basic allowance) | 2,933 | 3,000 | 77+ |

This would increase the SRA budget (including inflation) of £211,713 by £2,583 (1.2%).

Written Ministerial statement of 19 December 2012 on Councillors Pensions.

On 12 September 2001, the then Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions announced plans to give taxpayer - funded pensions to councillors, through access to the LGPS. The proposals came into force in 2003. The Councillors' Commission report of the last administration noted that 912 councillors in England had joined that pension scheme by 2004. A Taxpayers' Alliance survey in February 2009, across the whole United Kingdom, found that 3,527 councillors had pensions as of 2007 to 2008; a further survey in January 2012 found that figure had increased to 4,548 councillors by 2010 to 2011. The trend is clear.

Abolition of taxpayer-funded pensions

Ministers in this government take a fundamentally different view from the last administration. We do not believe that taxpayer-funded pensions are justified. Councillors are volunteers undertaking public service; they are not and should not be employees of the council and on the municipal payroll. They are not professional, full-time politicians, nor should they be encouraged to become so. Councillors do not receive a salary; rather, they receive allowances to compensate for their out-of-pocket expenses. Yet following changes made by the last administration, allowances have slowly become a form of salary, a situation worsened by the state-funded pensions. This is a corrosive influence on local democracy and independent thought, blurring the distinction between council staff and councillors. Every bit of the public sector needs to do its bit to help pay off the deficit inherited from the last administration. Local government grants are being reduced. Ministers have cut and then frozen their salaries. Public sector pensions, including parliamentary pensions, are being reformed to reduce the burden on taxpayers. It is only right that councillors do their bit as well. We do not believe that an occupational pension scheme intended for employees, and paid for by taxpayers, is an appropriate vehicle for councillors.

Existing pension rights

Subject to consultation, we propose that there will be no access for councillors to the LGPS in England from April 2014. In the interests of fairness, those councillors already in the scheme would have their accrued rights up to April 2014 fully protected, but would not be able to accrue any further benefits after that date in the existing scheme. This will not prevent councillors contributing to a personal pension: if they put aside part of their (taxable) allowances into such a pension, then that is a matter for them; they will continue to receive income tax relief like any ordinary member of the population, subject to the prevailing tax rules. Although central records on councillors' participation in the scheme are not held by my department, initial rough estimates suggest that this could save £7 million a year in taxpayers' money. There is absolutely no case for increasing councillor allowances to compensate. Instead, councils may want to consider earlier, voluntary closure of the scheme to their councillors as a sensible saving.

Civic duty

Eligibility regulations for the LGPS are overseen by my department. Although this is a centrally mandated change (as was its original introduction), we believe these reforms will assist localism and local democracy by encouraging a greater separation between councillors and officers. Robust local scrutiny of council spending requires councillors to be substantively independent of means and of thought from the body they are overseeing. Civic duty should not be bought. We do not believe it will have any detrimental effect on people choosing to become councillors. The best thing we can do to encourage more people to take part in municipal public life is to decentralise power to local communities so being a councillor is a meaningful and rewarding role.

Elected mayors

We recognise that there is a greater expectation that an elected mayor is a full-time position. We therefore propose to consult on allowing elected mayors to remain in the scheme as a voluntary option (but not as an expectation), subject to local scrutiny, challenge and determination. The salaries of the mayor of London, members of the Greater London Assembly and police and crime commissioners will remain pensionable.

Timing

Statutory consultation is required and will commence in due course, as part of the planned consultation on the wider reform of the LGPS. We will consult with the Welsh Assembly government in respect of access to the LGPS for councillors in Wales.

As a former councillor myself, I would like to pay tribute to their often unsung and on-going work in standing up for their local residents. We hope these reforms will further strengthen the integrity and independence of councillors and increase the respect within their communities for the voluntary work they undertake as champions of the people.

Vice Chair Allowances

1) A number of Councillors including the Leader and in particular the Labour Group, in a written submission, made the argument for payment of Vice Chairs as follows:

'For some years now, it has been the practice of the Council to have two Vice-Chairs of each Select Committee, one each from the parties not holding the Chair. This, we feel, can ensure cross-party buy-in to the Select Committee process, a factor that we think is specifically important for the Administration Party. The effectiveness of the scrutiny system relies on effective planning meetings, which involves the vice chairs every bit as much as the Chair. This is not an assertion we make wildly - the planning meetings are documented and I am sure agendas, and notes, will be made available to the Panel by Officers. It has been said, perhaps with some justification that the only thing the Chair does which the Vice-Chairs don't, is to chair the meetings. We feel that this situation should again be reflected in the Allowance system, as it was for some years in the past.

We feel there is a particular injustice with respects the Vice-Chairs of the Licensing and Regulatory Committees. Here also, the bi-party arrangement re Vice Chairs operates. The Vice-Chairs are constitutionally required to chair hearings panels in the absence of the Chair. They frequently do this and we can supply supporting evidence if this is required. There must be an injustice here and we invite the Panel to consider it.'

2. There are a number of reasons why the Panel would not support in principle the payment of SRAs to Vice Chairs.

Basic Allowance. Setting the Basic Allowance at an above average rate of £10,000 implies that the whole membership is widely engaged in the work of the Council. For some members fulfilment, satisfaction, training and experience can be gained through a vice chair role. For others it may be joint working, task and finish groups, working with other agencies or a priority for community engagement. The Basic Allowance set at this level assumes all those activities are covered. Some Councils will have a lower Basic Allowance and more Members on SRAs. But it is regarded as bad practice to pay the majority of members a SRA.

Significant Additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor is the clear guidance of the Regulations. The Panel has an obligation to take heed of the New Constitutions: Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances, republished by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 5th May 2006.

Can a small allowance - even if it were allowed to be taken out of the Chair's allowance - be an indicator of significant additional responsibilities? The Panel was informed that for this reason it was, in the experience of the Chairman, common for Panels not to recommend such payments. The Panel were made aware of the challenge that had been made previously to such payments and the response of the District Auditor. We were aware of the legal arguments but our decision is based solely on the merits of the case and the principle of keeping SRA payments to the minimum (1/3rd) in line with best practice.

Minimum number of Councillors should be receiving a SRA. If the majority of members of a council receive a SRA the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified. Indeed this was questioned on the audit of another authority on the Audit of Accounts and the District Auditor supported the member of the public in their challenge and the allowances were withdrawn.

The current scheme provides for 22 allowances in a membership of 51 shortly to increase to 57 (39%). Vice chair allowances would have the potential to double the number of SRAs being paid. The reality is that 6 should be a maximum additional allowances to keep within the spirit of the Regulations. If they are small they can be challenged and they would add to the overall budget cost in a time of austerity when staff and services are being reduced.

Cost of politics is a matter of concern to the Panel. Recognising the challenges of being in a 'hung council' we do not believe that the additional costs of being in that position should fall on the community. We believe that political balance can be achieved without it having to be built in at Vice Chair level. We would much prefer to have a realistic Basic Allowance. Indeed, with the 'non-political' roles of the Regulatory Committees, it could be seen to be more above politics not to have politically defined Vice Chairs. We were pleased to note that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels were chaired by members of the minority parties. Sometimes the hidden agenda may be to find ways of financially rewarding those members of minority groups who are not the Administration. The move to vice chair allowances can be used as a mechanism to get the majority of members on a SRA. This can be the 'hidden agenda' but we believe is not the case in Milton Keynes where there is a history of parties working together for the benefit of the community.

Summary

The arguments against making provision for SRAs for Vice Chairs have been set out clearly by previous Panels and we concur with their views. We strongly believe that the existing scheme provides allowances at the right level and would not recommend a proliferation of smaller SRAs. In the end this is a matter for the Council to determine but the Panel would strongly recommend against such a move.



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON
KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY**

***MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES
2017/18***

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

Introduction

1. This Scheme is governed by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 – “the regulations.”
2. Elected Members of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Combined Fire Authority may claim basic allowances, special responsibility allowances, travelling allowances and subsistence allowances for approved duties in accordance with the provisions of this scheme.
3. Appointed (non elected) members may claim co-optees allowance, travelling allowances and subsistence allowances for approved duties specified in this scheme.
4. "Year" means the 12 months ending with 31 March.
5. The Scheme has four Schedules attached which are:
 - (a) Schedule 1 - Special Responsibility Allowances
 - (b) Schedule 2 - Payment of Travelling and Subsistence Allowances
 - (c) Schedule 3 - Duties Excluded from the Allowances Scheme
 - (d) Schedule 4 - Rates of Allowances

Creation and Amendment of the Scheme

6. This scheme comes into effect on 1 April 2017.
7. For subsequent changes in basic allowances, special responsibility allowances and co-optees allowances, new rates will be payable from the date the amendment takes effect as set out either in this scheme or the Regulations.
8. The Fire Authority will be responsible for amending the scheme and in doing so will have regard to any recommendations to its constituent councils of the independent remuneration panels set up by them.

Basic Allowances

9. The Fire Authority will pay equally to each Member of the Authority a basic allowance of an amount specified in Schedule 4.
10. Where the term of office of a Member begins or ends in the course of a financial year entitlement will be apportioned in accordance with the Regulations. The apportionment will not take place where a Member's term of office lasts less than one month.
11. Basic Allowances are payable monthly and are subject to tax and national insurance deductions.

Special Responsibility Allowances

12. The Fire Authority will pay each year to the Members of the Fire Authority who have special responsibilities by reason of the office(s) they hold the special responsibility allowances set out in Schedule 1.
13. Where a Member takes up or relinquishes any post that carries a special responsibility allowance in the course of a financial year the entitlement will be apportioned in accordance with the Regulations. The apportionment will not take place where a Member's term of office lasts less than one month.
14. Special responsibility allowances are payable in monthly instalments and are subject to tax and national insurance deductions. Where a Member is eligible for more than one special responsibility allowance (whether payable by the Fire Authority or another authority for Fire Authority duties) only the highest one will be payable, with the exception that a Lead Member may claim one Lead Member's Allowance in addition to one other Special Responsibility Allowance payable.

Approved Duties

15. Travelling and Subsistence Allowances are payable monthly and are only payable to Elected Members of the Fire Authority for the approved duties set out in Schedule 2.

Co-optees Allowance

16. A Co-optees Allowance may be paid to appointed members (i.e. non-Elected Members whether voting or not) for the performance of any approved duty as defined by this document.
17. The allowance will be payable in monthly instalments and are subject to tax and national insurance deductions.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

18. The term "Member" for the purpose of travelling and subsistence allowances applies to any person who is a Member of the Fire Authority, or who is a member of any committee, sub-committee or panel of the Fire Authority, and so includes appointed non-elected members of those bodies. The payment of these allowances is dependent upon the performance of an "approved duty" which is an attendance as a member at a meeting, or the carrying on of a duty, set out in Schedule 2.
19. The rates for travel and subsistence allowances are specified in Schedule 4.

Allowances are Maxima

20. The scales for all allowances are maxima and there is no obligation on any Member to claim any or all of the allowances.
21. A Member shall give notice in writing to the Chief Finance Officer that he/she elects to forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under the scheme.

Social Functions and Occasions

22. Elected Members on occasions are invited, or feel it necessary to attend functions, or occasions which have a social element. No allowances are paid to Members of the Fire Authority on these occasions unless the Member is undertaking the performance of a positive duty and one of significant size, e.g. making a speech or distributing prizes when travel and subsistence allowances may be paid. Merely to attend because the member is interested or represents people in the district is insufficient to justify payment of any allowances.

Conference Expenses

23. If attendance at a conference has been approved by the Authority, conference expenses which are obligatory and outside the control of the Member, will be paid in advance on request or will be reimbursed. These expenses will include the conference fee. The actual cost of accommodation, meals and the like, will only be met or reimbursed if it is part of the inclusive charge for the conference or it is a requirement of the conference or its organisers that the Member should stay at a particular hotel.
24. Travel and subsistence allowances are payable where appropriate.

Telephones

25. A mobile phone will be provided to the Chairman of the Fire Authority, with the cost of supply, rental and business calls being met by the Fire Authority.

Avoidance of Duplication

26. A claim for an allowance under this scheme must include, or be accompanied by, a statement signed by the claimant that no other claim has been, or will be made for the matter to which the claim relates.

Records of Payments

27. Records of payments made to Members are available for inspection free of charge by any local government elector of the Fire Authority.
28. A person entitled to inspect a record may make a copy of any part of it.
29. Details of total payments made to each Member for allowances under this scheme will be published as soon as practicable after the end of the year to which they relate.

Claim Forms

30. All information requested on the claim form must be provided, including details of start and finish times, journeys made and meetings attended. (It is always advisable for Members to make contemporaneous notes in their diary to assist in the completion of claims).
31. Claims for expenses should only be made when actually incurred, ie rail/bus, taxis, hotel accommodation. Receipts should be provided.
32. Claims for the same expenses (mileage, travel and subsistence etc) must not be made from more than one body.
33. Claim forms should be completed and submitted to the Chief Finance Officer, preferably within seven working days after the end of each calendar month.
34. Payments for basic and special responsibility allowances will be paid monthly in arrears and travel and subsistence payments will be paid monthly in arrears on the submission of a claim form.
35. No claim from a Member for traveling or subsistence allowances which is submitted more than three months after the costs were incurred and no later than the end of April for the preceding financial year will be entertained.

SCHEDULE 1

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES FROM APRIL 2017

Special Responsibility Allowance per annum

| • Position | £ |
|--|--------|
| • Chairman | 12,094 |
| • Vice-Chairman | 4,052 |
| • Chairman – Executive Committee | 4,989 |
| • Chairman – Overview and Audit Committee | 3,268 |
| • Chairman – Human Resources Sub-Committee | 1,636 |
| • Group Leaders | 3,629 |
| • Lead Members | 3,153 |

SCHEDULE 2

PAYMENT OF TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

The duties in this Section have been approved for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances:

- (a) Attendance at a meeting of the Fire Authority;
- (b) Attendance at a meeting of any committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority;
- (c) Attendance at a meeting of any section, panel, working party or other meeting authorised by the Fire Authority or a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority or a joint committee of the Fire Authority and one or more other authorities to which the member has been specifically appointed provided that it is a meeting to which Members of at least two political groups have been invited.
- (d) Attendance at a meeting of an association of authorities of which the Fire Authority is a member and to which the member has been appointed by the Fire Authority to represent it.
- (e) Attendance at ad hoc meetings with other authorities, organisations or bodies authorised by a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable.
- (f) Attendance at briefing meetings to which Members of at least two political groups have been invited authorised by a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable.
- (g) Attendance at seminars and conferences arranged by the Fire Authority, a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable, about any of its functions.
- (h) Attendance at specific visits arranged by the Fire Authority, a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable, about any of its functions and where Members of at least two political groups have been invited.
- (i) Attendance at a meeting of any body or authority upon which the member has been appointed by the Fire Authority or a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority to represent it.

- (j) Attendance in connection with the discharge of any function of the Fire Authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the Fire Authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises.
- (k) Attendance at meetings of bodies where the Fire Authority makes appointments, where the Fire Authority has a major influence at national, regional, county or district level. These bodies are listed below:
- (i) Local Government Association
 - (ii) Fire Commission
- (l) Attendance at any disciplinary, grievance, dismissal or appeals sub-committee or panel.
- (m) The following duties if approved by the Fire Authority or a Committee:
- Attendance at briefing meetings held for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the Fire Authority or any of its committees or sub-committees.
 - Attendance at the official opening of new Fire Authority establishments or projects.
 - Attendance by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority and of committees at official functions in a representative capacity.
 - Duties undertaken by Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Fire Authority, committees or subcommittees acting in an official capacity.
 - Members' delegations to Government Departments.
 - Town Centre Management Meetings and Parishes.
- (n) Meetings organised by the Chief Fire Officer, Chief Finance Officer or Director of Legal and Governance or their nominated representatives with external bodies or persons to further the business and aims of the Fire Authority which the relevant officer certifies requires the attendance of members on the grounds of urgency which prevents approval being obtained from the Fire Authority, a committee or sub-committee

Note: In authorising attendances in accordance with the above, no member, official or officer of the Fire Authority shall act in a discriminatory manner reflecting party political preference. Members, officials and officers should take care to ensure that their actions can not be construed as having been discriminatory.

SCHEDULE 3

DUTIES EXCLUDED FROM THE ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The duties in this Section are those for which the Fire Authority has decided that no allowances will be paid.

- Members' surgeries
- Political activities

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SCHEDULE 4

RATES OF ALLOWANCES

From April 2017 the following rates of allowances will apply

Basic Allowance:

£1,211 per annum

Special Responsibility Allowances:

See Schedule 1

Co-optees Allowance

£303 per annum

Travel Allowances

(a) Car

The rate for travel by a Member's own private motor vehicle, or one belonging to a member of his/her family or otherwise provided for his/her use, other than a solo motor cycle, shall be 45 pence for the first 10,000 miles and 25 pence for each mile after that.

(b) Motorcycle

The rate for travel by a Member's own motorcycle, or one belonging to a member of his/her family, or otherwise provided for his/her use, shall be 24 pence per mile.

(c) Bicycle

The rate for travel by a Member's own bicycle, or one belonging to a member of his/her family, or otherwise provided for his/her use, shall not exceed 20p a mile.

(d) Public Transport

Members can claim the full cost of travelling on public transport at standard class rates whilst carrying out Approved Duties, provided a valid receipt, bus ticket etc is produced to substantiate the claim.

Subsistence

The rate of subsistence allowance shall not exceed the amounts which can be claimed under the Buckinghamshire County Council Members Allowances Scheme applicable at the time when the cost is incurred.

Uplift for Inflation

Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees allowances will be adjusted for inflation each year until, but not beyond 1 April 2018, in line with the pay award for the Authority's staff on National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book).

Travel and Subsistence allowances will be adjusted for inflation each year in line with the Buckinghamshire County Council Members Allowances Scheme applicable at the time when the cost is incurred.

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



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| MEETING | Executive Committee |
| DATE OF MEETING | 23 November 2016 |
| OFFICER | Julian Parsons, Head of Service Development |
| LEAD MEMBER | Councillor Adrian Busby |
| SUBJECT OF THE REPORT | ICT Disaster Recovery Plan |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | <p>Currently the Service holds a significant operating risk in that the disaster recovery (DR) servers and the business as usual servers for our ICT systems are in the same server room at BHQ. A fire, air conditioning failure or significant power outage could cause a total failure of the ICT systems across the Service, having a serious impact on both critical and business as usual functions.</p> <p>It was agreed at the Strategic Management Board (SMB) meeting on 25 October 2016 that rather than have our own DR servers, the data is replicated into a cloud based, hosted solution, with further supporting ancillary works.</p> <p>This is in accordance with the revised ICT Mission Statement.</p> <p>“The KIS department will deliver integrated solutions on robust, resilient and secure platforms. Wherever prudent, solutions should be remotely hosted or cloud-based...”</p> <p>This revision was agreed by this Committee during the meeting on 2 December 2015.</p> <p>This project is completely compliant with current HM Government policy to migrate solutions to the cloud, including most recently a major migration of the Ministry of Defence systems to Microsoft cloud solutions.</p> <p>A further risk is the emerging and growing threat of cyber-attacks. Due to recent experience and an ICT Health Check, a number of weaknesses have been identified which are in the process of being rectified based on the risk levels presented.</p> <p>The purpose of this paper is to inform the Executive Committee of the actions that are being taken to manage these risks. Appendix A is a copy of the report presented to SMB.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| ACTION | Information/Decision. |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the decision to move to cloud based technology to provide the basis of the Service’s ICT disaster recovery plan is noted. 2. That the Executive Committee agree that the progress in delivering this project is reported to the Overview & Audit Committee. |
| RISK MANAGEMENT | <p>Currently the Service has a significant business continuity risk with regard to ICT. Loss of the main and disaster recovery servers at the same time is possible. This loss would result in the complete disruption to the Service’s ICT network and therefore significant disruption to critical and usual business for a significant period of time.</p> <p>The proposals will all but eliminate this risk to the Service.</p> <p>The Service is also undertaking a number of actions to reduce our vulnerability from cyber-attacks and also improve our recovery time should one be effective in breaching our defences.</p> |
| FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | <p>The saving to the Authority for the first six years is £32k. One-off costs of £32k (plus 25% contingency) are to be funded by a one-off transfer from the contingency budget in 2016/17. The on-going revenue costs will be funded by reducing the revenue contribution to capital by £8k permanently (as less capital money will be required as transferring to the cloud removes the need to purchase a new server every six years).</p> <p>The savings in future six-year cycles will be even higher (c£72k) as implementation costs will not need to be paid again.</p> |
| LEGAL IMPLICATIONS | <p>Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Fire and Rescue Services are categorised as Category 1 responders and are therefore expected to be highly robust and able to maintain operations at all times. The business continuity and disaster recovery plan for the Service must be robust enough to deal with and maintain its statutory obligations throughout all reasonably foreseeable events.</p> <p>Many aspects of our ICT systems manages information that would be subject to the Data Protection act 1998. The security of our systems is paramount and the management of our data is intrinsically linked to our ICT business continuity arrangements.</p> |
| CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF | <p>In 2015 Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) explored opportunities to potential</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| COLLABORATION | collaborate in providing mutual resilience in relation to disaster recovery servers. This would effectively mean that each service would host the others back-up server arrays. Though technically very feasible and the geographical remoteness of the two services HQ was attractive, the costs of replicating the server arrays in each other's server rooms was cost prohibitive. |
| HEALTH AND SAFETY | There are no health, safety or well-being matters arising from this report. |
| EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY | There are no equality or diversity matters arising from this report. |
| USE OF RESOURCES | <p>Contribution to the achievement of strategic objectives;</p> <p>The ICT Strategy 2014-19 (revised 2/12/2015) is designed to modernise our ICT infrastructure to take in the latest technology and thinking. It is key in supporting the ICT strategic objective to move applications to the cloud and support initiatives such as the BASI project.</p> <p>Communication with stakeholders;</p> <p>Part of the plan for increasing the resilience of our ICT system and recovery from any future cyber-attacks is through education of our staff to minimise the data stored on our systems and also use email and the internet more safely and from a greater position of understanding and recognising cyber threats.</p> <p>The system of internal control;</p> <p>Agreed projects and initiatives will be captured in the ICT 2014-2019 project portfolio. Progress will be monitored at a departmental level and reported corporately through to Overview & Audit Committee.</p> <p>The medium term financial strategy;</p> <p>The projects required to improve our ICT business continuity and disaster planning will be financially supported through realignment of existing budgets.</p> |
| PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS | <p>Background</p> <p>As part of the revision of the ICT Strategy 2014-2019 it was identified that current HM Government policy is to encourage public sector organisations to explore the benefits of cloud hosting and reduce the public spend on internal ICT infrastructure.</p> <p>Background Papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O&A Meeting 2 December 2015 Minutes • ICT Strategy Review |
| APPENDICES | Appendix A: ICT Systems Disaster Recovery Review |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| TIME REQUIRED | 10 Minutes. |
| REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT | Dave Thexton dthexton@bucksfire.gov.uk 07876 448 744 |



ICT Systems Disaster Recovery Review
September 2016

Dave Thexton: ICT Manager

Keith Harding: Service Helpdesk Manager

Julian Parsons: Head of Service Development

1. Introduction

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service (BMKFRS) is categorised as a category 1 responder within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and is therefore expected to have developed robust business continuity plans to enable it to fulfil its statutory responsibilities for emergency response at all times.

The typical characteristics of High Reliability Organisations include:

- Problem Anticipation;
- Containment of Unexpected Events;
- Root Cause Analysis of Incidents/Accidents.

Using these three principals the BMKFRS ICT department has recently carried out a review of the vulnerability of the existing hardware and software systems. The timing of this review has been triggered by three events:

- A scheduled review of Disaster Recovery of ICT Infrastructure as a result of a recent review of BMKFRS wider business continuity plans;
- A recent increase in the number of cyber-attacks globally including a recent concerted attack on BMKFRS infrastructure.
- A recent ICT Health Check penetration test carried out in preparation for connection to the new Emergency Services network (due to go live in September 2017)

The review consisted of research of current best practice for resilient ICT infrastructure and consultation with the ICT personnel and the Information Governance Officer (IGO).

2. Executive Summary

It has been identified that a key vulnerability for the Service is the fact that the disaster recovery server array is contained within the same server room as the main server array. This was initially intended as a temporary arrangement but due to changes in the estate strategy this is liable to still be the case for the next two years. This presents an unacceptable risk to the Service.

By moving our disaster recovery to the Cloud will eliminate this risk and improve resilience. It will also allow a 'try before you buy' scenario for potentially moving our infrastructure to a Cloud host in its entirety, for sound business reasons and compliance with current Government policy.

It has been identified that there are some vulnerabilities for the Service through the increasing threat of cyber-attacks. The increasing sophistication of these attacks and the evolution of polymorphic viruses has highlighted this.

Through a combination of investment in the latest cyber-attack prevention software, staff education as to identification of suspicious emails and improved recovery time through better data management, the Service can improve its resilience to such attacks.

3. Hardware Systems Disaster Recovery

During the critical analysis of BMKFRS ICT systems the following hardware vulnerabilities have been identified:

- Co-location of the main server array and disaster recovery array in the same room (server room at Service Headquarters (SHQ));
- Main Data Feed Interruption;
- Failure of Back-Up tapes;
- 'Updata' connections.

3.1 Server Co-location

It has been common practice to back up the business as usual server array with a duplicate set of disaster recovery servers in a geographically separate location configured to automatically switch over when the main array fails. Previously the DR servers were located in the old control centre. We obviously had to decommission this facility after TVFCS came online. Initially the BMKFRS back up servers have been located in the same server room as the main servers. This was intended as a temporary arrangement until a second facility could be provided at a geographically remote location. Initially this was intended to be at Broughton Fire Station but this plan was changed with the successful bid for transformation funding for the Blue Light Hub in Milton Keynes. Currently, it is looking like at least another two years until the station is finally constructed and a new backup server array can be brought online. The current feeling in the ICT department is that this is an unacceptably long time to tolerate this risk.

The threat is that a fire, long-term power outage or air conditioning failure in the server room would cause both the main and back up servers to fail. Such a failure would be catastrophic to the service critical and routine operations. The current plan to recover from this disaster would be to buy new servers and use back up tapes to install the last saved data files. This would take weeks rather than days to achieve.

We currently have some mitigation for the above risk. The power supplies are protected through UPS / and then the station generator. The air conditioning systems are constantly monitored and has redundancy. One of the systems is protected through the stations standby generator.

However, any failure of these systems, a fire or loss of HQ (such as an event that happened to South Oxfordshire District Council) would cause total system failure.

There was a near miss earlier this year when the road works took out the main supply cables to HQ. The redundancy systems operated as anticipated but this put a tremendous strain on the remaining air conditioning unit to keep the servers cool. Had the power outage lasted a few more hours there was the risk of partial or total system failure.

Potential Solutions

Option 1. Create a new DR server facility at Broughton as originally planned. This is not likely to be feasible or desirable as it would mean alteration works at Broughton as some of the existing space/capacity has been leased to Thames Valley Police. This would mean potentially losing some of the revenue from TVP or the capital costs of developing a new facility. New servers and associated infrastructure would have to be purchased, as the current DR servers are due for replacement in 2017.

Option 2. Create a new DR server facility at the new site at Ashland. This is not likely to be online for another two years. This is currently deemed, by the ICT management, as an unacceptably high risk for BMKFRS. New servers and associated infrastructure would have to be purchased, as the current DR servers are due for replacement in 2017. Currently space for this facility has been identified on outline plans for the site but this floor area could be freed up for other use.

Option 3. Decommission the existing DR server and move our DR to the Cloud through a recognised third party provider that satisfies our DR recovery requirements and data protection needs.

Current government policy is to encourage public services to migrate services to the Cloud or remote hosting. BMKFRS has a current policy of migrating systems to remotely hosted solutions. The BASI project has been successful in achieving this with the new systems.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-adopts-cloud-first-policy-for-public-sector-it>

At the Audit and Overview meeting 2 December 2015 an updated revised ICT Strategy was presented and noted. Within the updated strategy the following mission statement was presented.

The KIS department will deliver integrated solutions on robust, resilient and secure platforms. Wherever prudent, solutions should be remotely hosted or cloud-based. The applications, where appropriate, should be accessible through a range of modern mobile technologies. KIS functions will be supported by a team of cross-skilled, well-trained, and continuously developing technicians with a strong customer focus. Where possible services will be delivered through collaboration.

Moving the DR Server to the cloud has a number of advantages:

- Completely eliminates the risk of collocated BAU and DR servers;
- Removes the need for imminent and future capital costs of replacing the DR servers;
- Reduces power costs and carbon footprint;
- Reduces the capital costs of adding extra servers to cope with the increasing data storage requirements;
- Fits in with current HMG policy;
- Transfers the costs of managing servers to a third party;
- Reduces the associated server licensing costs to us;
- Provides BMKFRS with the opportunity to experiment with Cloud hosting to enable a decision on whether we wish to go for complete migration of our ICT infrastructure.

Cost comparison of Option 3 and server replacement.

Using a cloud provider for our DR is categorised into three potential solutions.

- **Cold.** Our DR system is periodically updated with our data. When it is required due to a system failure the DR system is brought on line in a systematic and predetermined way which would lead to a gap in services in excess of 15 minutes.
- **Warm.** Some key systems will be replicated in real time while other periodically updated. This will reduce the time there will be a gap in services and the key services will be no different from the BAU systems.
- **Hot.** All key systems will be replicated in real time through a live link. In the event of system failure the transition to the DR system will be nearly instantaneous and appear virtually seamless to end users.

The costing for these options are as follows:

| | Monthly cost | Implementation |
|------|--------------|----------------|
| Cold | £478.00 | £22,260.00 |
| Warm | £975.47 | £27,030.00 |
| Hot | £1344.26 | £31,800.00 |

Our current disaster recovery servers have an estimated useful life of five years, although this tends to be stretched to about six years. The purchase cost of a new server is £120k. The cost of the ‘hot’ disaster recovery solution for six years is £88k (based on £32k [+ 25% contingency] one-off expenditure and then a net additional cost of £8k per annum [as the subscription is £16k p.a. but there are £8k worth of licensing savings]).

Over the first six year period, there is a net saving to the Authority of £32k. In future cycles the savings will be even higher (c£72k) as the one-off implementation cost is not re-incurred.

Recently the MOD has moved a significant part of its ICT operation to the new Microsoft data centres in the UK. Providing secure operating for both its BAU and DR systems.

<http://www.governmenttechnology.co.uk/news/07092016/microsoft-announces-operation-uk-cloud-data-centres>

Recommendation 1: That the DR servers are decommissioned and our DR functions are moved to a Cloud provider that satisfies our operating and data security needs. The most suitable option for BMKFRS is a Hot configuration. The budget for this is based on the costings indicated above plus a 25% contingency for unforeseen consultation or system configuration and data requirements. The implementation costs are provided through an in year virement from identified underspends in contingency.

3.2 Udata Connections.

Part of the ICT infrastructure for the service is provided through a company called Udata and in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC). This company provides interconnectivity for the Service’s different sites through a robust network. The resilience is achieved through Udata’s two network centres. One is located in Aylesbury and the other in Amersham.

To date this arrangement appears resilient and satisfies our needs. The arrangement is periodically reviewed through our partnership with BCC.

Recommendation 2: Our network arrangements with BCC, provided through Udata, continue to be satisfactory and should continue for the remainder of the contracted period.

3.3 Main Data Feed Interruption

Currently we have a vulnerability in that our network and data is supplied through to SHQ in a subterranean cable. It is a single cable and, like our power supply, is at the mercy of failure through a third party interrupting the supply (i.e. road works in the vicinity).

By moving the Services DR system to the Cloud would mean that our systems can be configured and our ICT systems can be operated independently from other FRS locations through the internet. This will provide greater resilience to the Service and eliminate this single point of failure.

Recommendation 3: By moving to a Cloud based DR arrangement our single point of failure in having a single data feed into SHQ will be eliminated.

3.4 Back-Up Tape Failure

Part of our recovery plan for loss of data due to system failure is that regular tape backups are made and then stored in a geographically remote location until needed.

After a recent system problem and subsequent data loss the backup files were discovered to have an unforeseen corruption which meant an earlier back up was required to be used.

Testing of back up tapes is extremely time consuming (typically two days) but a new schedule of testing will be undertaken to reduce the chances of this being an issue in future. From now on, once a quarter, a sample of the backup tapes will be tested. After three iterations of successful testing this will be reduced to six monthly.

It is possible to reduce the amount of time it takes to upload backups through reducing the amount of data stored on our systems. The amount of data being stored is growing rapidly. It is proposed that a programme of staff education and encouragement is devised to manage the data quantity. One option the service has is to automatically archive data from staff's folders after a given period. It is desired that this isn't done until we have a chance to reduce the quantity through encouraging more individual responsibility.

Recommendation 4: Quarterly testing of back up tapes will take place until full confidence is restored in the backup recording and retrieval process. The amount of data on systems is more closely managed through educating staff to take more responsibility for managing their data.

4. Cyber-Attack

Viral and Ransomware attacks

Cyber-attacks and in particular ransomware attacks have been on the increase globally. Recent estimates are that there has been a 400% increase in ransomware attacks since the start of this year. Ransomware attacks are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Those perpetrating these attacks use polymorphic viruses. These constantly evolve to prevent detection by software systems that protect networks from infection.

Our recent experience of these attacks has demonstrated the potential effectiveness of these viruses.

The first level of protection from such attacks is the email and web filters BMKFRS deploy.

Because of the nature and rapid development of viruses it is possible for them to penetrate these filters and find their way into individual's inboxes. Investigation has shown that there is better software for protecting our systems available on the market.

The second level of protection is therefore individuals.

A programme of reminders and education has started to highlight to staff the dangers of viruses and how to recognise suspicious emails and then what to do and what not to do with them.

Recommendation 5: That our first level of protection is enhanced by reconfiguring our existing anti-virus software by introducing stricter software protocols and devoting more processing power to scanning incoming data and website activity to prevent virus penetration. This may reduce system performance to a certain degree. That our current email and web filters are replaced with better software. We are currently awaiting costings from suppliers.

Recommendation 6: The programme of staff engagement and education is continued to ensure they have the best information to enable them to recognise threats.

ICT Health Check

BMKFRS recently had an ICT Health Check undertaken by a firm of consultants. This was commissioned in partnership with OFRS and RBFRS as part of the process for preparing for the Code of Connection for the new Emergency Services Network commissioned as part of the Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). The health check was funded by the Central Government Programme Board for the project.

The health check was a very in depth review of the security of our systems based through practical exercises by ICT security experts simulating attempted attacks on our systems. As expected prior to the health check, the exercise revealed a number of potential weakness in our infrastructure and systems. The in depth nature of the findings has given us a degree of confidence in both what they found and also where they weren't able to affect penetrations of our systems.

The consultants provided a very in depth report of every single potential and actual weakness they could expose. The report is in commercial confidence so has not been made available as part of this report. As previously requested legitimately by the ESMCP programme team the report has been copied to them.

It is estimated that the work to rectify these potential weaknesses will take until June 2017. The costs (which are being sought in partnership with BCC) are still being estimated by potential suppliers. The work is prioritised in line with the report's recommendations on risk rating. Much of the critical findings are already rectified.

Recommendation 7: The findings of the ICT Health Check are actioned by the ICT team. Any revenue shortfalls arising from requirements to purchase software upgrades will either be found from in year funding or through contingency and reported through our usual governance frameworks.

5. Summary of Recommendations

- Recommendation 1: That the DR servers are decommissioned and our DR functions are moved to a Cloud provider that satisfies our operating and data security needs. The most suitable option for BMKFRS is a Hot configuration. The budget for this is based on the costings indicated above plus a 25% contingency for unforeseen consultation or system configuration and data requirements. The implementation costs are provided through an in year virement from identified underspends elsewhere in the Service or contingency.
- Recommendation 2: Our network arrangements with BCC, provided through Updata, continue to be satisfactory and should continue for the remainder of the contracted period.
- Recommendation 3: By moving to a Cloud based DR arrangement our single point of failure in having a single data feed into SHQ will be eliminated.
- Recommendation 4: Quarterly testing of back up tapes will take place until full confidence is restored in the backup recording and retrieval process. The amount of data on systems is more closely managed through educating staff to take more responsibility for managing their data.
- Recommendation 5: That our first level of protection is enhanced by reconfiguring our existing anti-virus software by introducing stricter software protocols and devoting more processing power to scanning incoming data and website activity to prevent virus penetration. This may reduce system performance to a certain degree. That our current email and web filters are replaced with better software. We are currently awaiting costings from suppliers.
- Recommendation 6: The programme of staff engagement and education is continued to ensure they have the best information to enable them to recognise threats.
- Recommendation 7: The findings of the ICT Health Check are actioned by the ICT team. Any revenue shortfalls arising from requirements to purchase software upgrades will either be found from in year funding or through contingency and reported through our usual governance frameworks.

6. Conclusion

The ICT team has undertaken an in depth and technical review of some of the significant threats to our ICT infrastructure which is critical to the operation of BMKFRS. As a category 1 responder as defined in the CCA 2004, BMKFRS has a duty to ensure it is able to operate as a high reliability organisation. Therefore the findings and recommendations of this report are designed to ensure that BMKFRS can continue to utilise the latest technology to support its operations at all times.



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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| MEETING | Executive Committee |
| DATE OF MEETING | 23 November 2016 |
| OFFICER | Lynne Swift, Director of People and Organisational Development |
| LEAD MEMBER | Councillor Roger Reed |
| SUBJECT OF THE REPORT | Independent review of conditions of service for fire and rescue staff in England |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | <p>An independent review of conditions of service, to be undertaken by Adrian Thomas, was commissioned in August 2014 by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).</p> <p>Significant consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders as part of the review, and Adrian Thomas visited Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) as part of his research. In addition Adrian Thomas attended more recently to deliver a masterclass to members of the leadership group (further details below).</p> <p>The report was completed in 2015 however was not made public at the time.</p> <p>The report has now been released (3 November 2016) and is being brought to the attention of Members through this paper.</p> <p>The report makes a total of 45 recommendations, broken down into 5 main themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working environment • Documented conditions of service • Industrial relations • Retained Duty System • Management of fire and rescue services <p>We will carefully consider the recommendations in the report, and look to ensure they support and enhance the plans already set out in our People Strategy and workforce reform agenda.</p> <p>Significant progress has already been made on some of the recommendations within this service. For example we already plan for succession and resilience for management and staff at all levels, and have been developing our resourcing and response models in</p> |

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| | <p>order to meet 21st century demand and risk, taking into account future capacity issues for any new roles and responsibilities, such as medical emergencies. This includes reviewing resources across Thames Valley as part of the collaboration work to identify opportunities to share managers where possible.</p> <p>The report has been welcomed by the Local Government Association (LGA) who will also be considering recommendations which would require a national steer.</p> <p>The Fire Brigade Union's (FBU) initial response has not welcomed the report, and has considered it "irrelevant".</p> <p>For those recommendations which can be progressed locally, further updates will be provided to the Authority particularly as part of our extensive Workforce Reform plans, as presented to the Executive Committee in September 2016.</p> |
| ACTION | Information. |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | That the content of the report be noted. |
| RISK MANAGEMENT | <p>The report proposes recommendations that in the author's opinion will improve employment and practice in the Fire Service.</p> <p>The risk comes largely from matters that the national FBU will disagree on, and that may incur extra unplanned costs.</p> <p>Much work has already been completed on workforce reform locally, and local relationships with representative bodies is positive and engaging. We will continue to consult on workforce reform plans with staff directly and the representative bodies as this approach has proved to work during recent changes.</p> |
| FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | <p>The current workforce reform plans are factored into the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and we are in a secure financial position at this time.</p> <p>Any recommendations adopted from this report will need to be budgeted for if there are extra associated costs.</p> |
| LEGAL IMPLICATIONS | <p>None arising from the recommendations.</p> <p>Where the Authority is required to, or has yet to, take steps to implement any of the key findings from the independent review legal assurance will be obtained when and where appropriate.</p> |
| CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF | The Authority will work with Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services when considering the recommendations. Discussions are already scheduled |

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| <p>COLLABORATION</p> | <p>for the end November 2016 Thames Valley Collaboration Steering Group.</p> <p>The Authority is also well placed to support regional national initiatives through its workforce reform agenda.</p> |
| <p>HEALTH AND SAFETY</p> | <p>There are no obvious Health and Safety implications at this point.</p> |
| <p>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</p> | <p>Many of the report recommendations are related to equality, diversity and culture. These will be carefully considered, particularly in comparison to our four year Public Sector Duty related Equality Objectives agreed by the Authority in June 2016. If additional work is required this will be factored into the corporate and public safety plans 2015 to 2020.</p> <p>The report's author, Adrian Thomas attended the Service in September 2016 to deliver a masterclass to over 50 of the leadership group on unconscious bias. This masterclass was open to some other local services and a member of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service attended.</p> <p>The LGA will shortly be writing to special interest groups representing women and black and minority ethnic firefighters to invite them to discuss a memorandum of understanding in accordance with the review's recommendations.</p> |
| <p>USE OF RESOURCES</p> | <p>Contribution to the achievement of strategic objectives;</p> <p>Any recommendations that we propose to adopt will align to the strategic enabler to optimise the contribution and well-being of our people.</p> <p>Communication with stakeholders;</p> <p>A range of methods are used, depending on the proposed changes, level of impacts and stakeholders. Guidance is set out in each work programme plan, the Authority's 'Managing Business Change' policy and the Communications strategy and policy.</p> <p>The system of internal control;</p> <p>All recommended changes will sit within a planned work programme which has a Project Initiation Document (PID) which set outs progress monitoring, risk management and approval arrangements.</p> <p>The medium term financial strategy;</p> <p>Financial impacts, significant opportunities and risks are built into the MTFP on a rolling basis and recommendations adopted from this report will be handled in the same way.</p> |

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| <p>PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS</p> | <p>Background</p> <p>The Authority's People Strategy 2016 to 2020 - report February 2016: http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/3614/5528/0478/ITEM_8_People_Strategy_Executive_paper_final_Appendices_compressed.pdf</p> <p>Equality and Diversity (E&D) Objectives 2016-20, Public Sector Equality Duty and Review of 2012-15 Objectives - report June 2016: http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/5114/6427/5551/Fire_Authority_Agenda_Pack_8_June_2016.compressed.pdf</p> <p>Fire Reform – delivering the Authority's Workforce Reform Programme - report September 2016 http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/1814/7333/7087/Executive_Committee_Agenda_Pack_210916_compressed.pdf</p> <p>Fire Brigade Union Response to the Thomas Review https://www.fbu.org.uk/news/2016/11/03/thomas-review-paints-unrecognisable-picture-fire-and-rescue-service</p> <p>Chief Fire Officers Association responds to the Thomas Review http://www.cfoa.org.uk/21742</p> |
| <p>APPENDICES</p> | <p>Appendix 1 - Independent review of conditions of service for fire and rescue staff in England February 2015</p> |
| <p>TIME REQUIRED</p> | <p>15 Minutes.</p> |
| <p>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</p> | <p>Lynne Swift, Director of People and Organisational Development lswift@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744679</p> |

Independent review of conditions of service for fire and rescue staff in England February 2015

By Adrian Thomas

Adrian Thomas
February 2015

(amended where appropriate for passage of time)



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This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications

ISBN: 978-1-78655-270-9

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Foreword

I was delighted when Penny Mordaunt MP, the then Fire Minister endorsed my appointment to investigate further the barriers to change that had been suggested by Sir Ken Knight within his review of the efficiencies and operations of the fire and rescue authorities in England¹.

The review launched formally in October 2014, although I had the benefit of it being announced a little earlier in the year. This gave me time to read and become familiar with the fire and rescue service prior to launching the fieldwork phase of the review (terms of reference are shown as appendix 1).

I was appointed as an independent reviewer, not being linked to the Government, the fire and rescue service employers nor any of the representative bodies. This independence has been challenged by both the employers and the employee representatives – although I sensed most of the objection was more from having a review imposed with little consultation rather than an accusation of potential bias.

Independence also meant that there was only one of me! Combined with limited time (an average of two days per week over five months, equivalent to just two months' full time investigation) to deliver the report led to the practical decision to appoint a small secretariat and technical advisory support from the National Fire Policy team. Additionally, I appointed (on a pro bono basis) PwC, to provide specialist input to the section that looks at the evaluation of the role, and pay, of Principal Officers. I have included their report in full in the appendices and drawn extensively from it in the section on Gold Book pay.

The overriding first impression I received of the fire and rescue service was of the particular dedication towards being a firefighter. Whilst many conversations, especially with front line firefighters, started with an element of suspicion and a degree of awkwardness, these soon melted away and the sense of passion and concern for their role and the industry came flooding through.

It is clear that the history of the service and the public's appreciation of the role of firefighter play heavily on the many people I met. It was also clear that the industry has been extraordinarily successful. Reducing attendance at fires and false alarms

¹ Facing the Future, May 2013

by over 50 per cent in the last ten years², becoming increasingly more efficient and undertaking a much wider range of activity than simply (if you can say 'simply') responding to fire calls. Despite all of this change it was somewhat surprising to find that 'conditions of service' had not been reviewed for some time.

As I travelled between fire authorities I was struck by the very different cultures I encountered. I found examples of clear, arguably inspirational, leadership and in other places a management team that seemed to struggle with direction setting and dealing with resistance. The one thing that perhaps struck hardest, early in the review, was the language being used to describe the relationship between staff and various layers of management (and indeed government). Often 'fruity', it went beyond banter to, in some places, vitriolic comments about the management, leadership and direction of the service. It is against this combative environment that I set out to explore, to unearth, the barriers to change identified by the Knight review.

The small team supporting me did so in addition to their 'day job', working extremely long hours to support the various visits, note taking and checking back with contributors. I am indebted to them as I am to all the individuals who met with me or contributed to one of the several surveys that provided input to the review.

I believe that there is a clear direction of travel emerging from this review: one that balances the superb but ever changing contribution the fire industry (and the people within it) make to our society with the resources that are available.

The challenge for the Fire and Rescue Service is to continue to build upon the passion of the people within the industry, to accept and accelerate change, reach out to new technology and working practices and get in front of the change curve.

Adrian Thomas

Independent Reviewer for the conditions of service of fire and rescue staff in England

² Table 1.1 Fire Statistics Great Britain: 2013 to 2014

Approach to the review

It would have been easy to set myself up in London and taken evidence in a comfortable office environment. However I viewed this as a risk. It was clear to me that there were large differences in the scale and delivery of service of fire authorities and there was a risk that the review could be seen as being undertaken from a London/South east viewpoint and that the rank and file could be excluded from giving evidence unless I went to them.

As a result the fieldwork phase of data/evidence gathering reached out to 21 fire authorities, key players within government, the employers' representatives and all the employees' representative organisations. In addition I met with academic researchers, Skills for Justice, ACAS, the Fire Service College and diversity groups. I also wished to guard against evidence being gathered in a legalistic or court room environment – I wanted people to speak openly and my findings to reflect what I was hearing.

With this in mind I instigated a feature of this review, whereby when verbal evidence was gathered it was transcribed and returned to the individual for sense and accuracy checking and only then submitted to myself for inclusion in the review. As a result all the points I highlight within this review have come directly from within the industry (with the sole exception of the section on Gold Book pay).

It is clear that there has been a significant amount of change, particularly with reference to the declining number of fires attended around the various Fire and Rescue Authorities, with some instigating changes of approach and others maintaining a status quo in staffing and operational activity. This review had a clear mandate³ to look at barriers to change (rather than change itself) and why successful change in one authority is not a guarantee of successful change within another.

The need for a 'conditions of service' review arose from the Knight Review. During his review Sir Ken Knight found what he identified as inexplicable differences in the expenditure of different fire and rescue authorities in England with the net result that some authorities were spending almost twice as much as others with little relationship between that spend and any reduction in demand for operational response. Sir Ken went on to consider what the options may be available to deploy, in reducing expenditure (noting that he believed there were opportunities to change operational practice, including minimum crewing levels and the ratio of senior officers to firefighters) without reducing the quality of outcomes for the public.

³ Terms of Reference - Appendix 1

Having noted opportunities for efficiencies (in particular crewing levels, 'on-call' firefighters, lean management, conditions of service, merger, spend to save projects, duplication in evaluation and procurement) the Knight review left it to others to identify how those opportunities could be realised in practice.

Sir Ken argued⁴ that there were clearly barriers occurring that were hindering the progression of positive change and these should be investigated more fully, with the objective of unearthing the issues behind those barriers. Sir Ken clearly made those comments with 'conditions of service' in mind, however even a rudimentary evaluation of the evidence (previous research papers, submissions to the Knight review and initial desk research for this review) shows that some fire and rescue services/authorities seemed able to instigate change in this area successfully, whilst others appear to find excuses and reasons not to progress change. In particular the Grey Book, conditions of service and industrial relations are regularly cited as particular barriers to change.

It is now approaching 14 years since terms and conditions have been reviewed⁵, however arguably the need to consider changes to terms and conditions has been on the agenda since the review conducted by Sir Ronald Holroyd in 1970 over 40 years ago. Over this period a sizable library of studies and research papers has explored many aspects of the industry and yet there appears appetite to explore more. Sir Ken made the observation that there appeared to be little evidence of institutional learning and that as a result opportunities for replication and economies of scale are missed.

Clearly the time has come to move beyond research and reviews that identify/state the problem and look more closely at what is preventing positive change from occurring – to examine why change in one authority, which is described as common sense, doesn't spread through other authorities, becoming common practice. I make a differentiation between 'positive change' and 'change'. There is always suspicion around change and certainly I have regularly in my career come across the use of the words 'change management' as a euphemism for redundancies.

During my visits to Authorities and Fire and Rescue Services I was regularly informed that 'no good' will come out of this review. Any change will be bad for the workforce. In fact the level of noise and concern about change is such that I have included a section devoted to change. For the purposes of this review I use the word change in a sense where change is delivering the intended and clearly stated benefit

⁴ Chapter 2, paragraph 5: Facing the Future 2013.

⁵ The future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives - Professor Sir George Bain 2002

and is not change for the sake of change or for the purposes of weakening relationships.

The review confines itself to the 46 Fire and Rescue Authorities in England (as at March 2015) – see map and outline of their governance structure at appendix 2 and 3. I was able to visit 21 of them (appendix 4). Those visited represented a cross section of authorities in terms of size, governance and geographical position. Whilst the primary evidence has been taken from these visits I have avoided making authority specific finding and the report should be read as applying to all 46 authorities. However it must be noted that the current national negotiating arrangements impact beyond England. Any findings and/or recommendations in this review do not consider the wider impact on non-English jurisdictions and should not be seen as recommendations directed at those jurisdictions.

Why change at all?

Change and transformation in firefighting is something which has continued since its inception, and it has evolved to best support the order of the day. The modern day fire and rescue authorities are the product of many years of development and improvements. The first organised firefighting originated in Britain during the Roman invasion after AD 43, and we can be proud to say we have had firefighting in the UK for almost 2000 years.

During the Middle Ages, however, many towns and buildings simply burned down due to ineffective firefighting arrangements. Something needed to change. The catalyst was the Great Fire of London in 1666, leaving almost the whole of London smouldering in its aftermath.

The Great Fire had the effect of forcing change and helped to standardise urban firefighting. Never again would the fire service wait for devastation, but would adapt, plan and change in order to prevent catastrophe. That core mission of saving lives and preventing fires has never changed, but the way in which the service manages it has. Firefighters and the public want the service to be best equipped and managed in order to mitigate these risks. This has taken many guises in the fire service's history.

As is often the case, the next big catalyst for change was technology. In the 1850s the first reliable steam powered appliances were adopted by brigades which allowed a much greater quantity of water to be directed onto a fire. These were subsequently replaced by the introduction of the internal combustion engine in the early 1900s. In the UK firefighting came from volunteer brigades, town fire brigades, or private insurance companies, and it wasn't until 1938 that many of these were

amalgamated. Before 1938 there were between 1400 and 1500 small municipal fire brigades run by local councils in the UK. All local brigades and auxiliary fire service units in the UK were merged into the National Fire Service in 1941. The formation of the National Fire Service would ensure uniformity in much of the basic equipment used by the country's Fire Brigades during what was the busiest time ever in their history, the Second World War.

Following the end of the war the National Fire Service was taken over by local county authorities. The Fire Services Act (1947) became effective on the 1st of April 1948; this resulted in 148 county council and county borough run fire brigades. Change has therefore been at the heart of the fire service in the UK, and it has consistently stepped up to meet this head on to improve, for the benefit of all involved.

Since 1948 the fire service has adapted to external and internal variables. Change in technology, society, organisation, and even types of fires have all had their impact. The number of fire and rescue authorities now (February 2015) sits at 46 with London the largest and the Isles of Scilly the smallest.

But change is continuous and what I set out to achieve with this review is to ensure that fire and rescue authorities are best placed to meet the challenges of the 21st century. And that involves setting the best possible alignment between people, resources and demand for services. Conditions of service for staff are central to that requirement.

The Knight review⁶ identified significant and sustained reduction in fires across the whole country. This, combined with an increase in fire safety and prevention activity, non-fire rescue and other resilience based activities amounts to fundamental change in both the level and type of activity undertaken by the Fire Service. Activity which has both reduced and changed since the current terms and conditions and role maps were created and last reviewed.

The direction of change appears to be continuing, with the reduction in fires attended continuing year on year. This is clearly good news, however the changing workload (effectively both reducing some activity and increasing other activity) is not being accompanied by a corresponding change in the approach to conditions of service, recruitment, training and industrial relations. The changing nature of the work, from firefighting to fire prevention is creating new roles and tasks. The equipment and tactics available and/or deployed is also changing. However it was alarming the number of times I came across reports that change is slow, being resisted or not happening at all.

⁶ Chapter 1, paragraph 1: Facing the Future 2013

Given the impact the fire and rescue service has over safety within the community or the survivability of an incident it was a surprise that I did not experience an industry that felt it was at the cutting edge of change but rather where changing practice was slow at best and being resisted at worst.

It should be transparent to the taxpayer that the service delivered to them locally is appropriate to the needs of the community and provides value for the budget assigned. Sir Ken alluded to the public's unconditional attachment to the fire and rescue service as a barrier to change. This is a conclusion that could easily be misconstrued. Gaining and holding the public's trust is vital for any service that is accountable to the taxpayer. Many public services would value the recognition and support the fire and rescue service gets from the population it serves.

The barrier to be explored is why the fire and rescue service isn't exploiting this valuable position of trust to lead and influence the public in the way they provide, and intend to provide the service in the future.

Accepting the need to change and the barriers to that change leads to a number of questions: -

- 1) Is the demand for services, the public's expectations of service and capability of the fire and rescue service clearly articulated and communicated?
- 2) Is the culture with the fire and rescue service conducive to change?
- 3) Is the current structure appropriate to the local fire authority requirements in terms of staffing (both whole-time and retained)?
- 4) Does the changed workload allow for increased training and remit and a wider deployment model – a good example being technology introduction or co-responding?
- 5) Are there real or imaginary barriers to change? If real what are they?
- 6) What measures are needed to enable necessary change?

Evidence into the review was pulled from four distinct sources

- 1) Questionnaires: Distributed to fire and rescue authorities, fire and rescue services and firefighters
- 2) Written submissions: Employee representative bodies, individuals, employer representatives
- 3) Desk research: Previous reports, studies and reviews
- 4) Visits: Personal visits to 21 Fire and Rescue Services with evidence received from elected members, principal officers, senior management, employee representatives, representative bodies and firefighters.

The decision on which fire and rescue authorities to visit was generated in part by the response to the initial questionnaire, in part by informed opinion/advice of the

Government's Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and in part by invitations received. The adoption of this approach enabled a representative cross section of fire authorities to be visited.

Executive summary and Key findings

Executive Summary

Conditions of service underpin the employment of the workforce. As employment costs typically make up a significant (and usually the majority) of any organisation's resources and budget it is unsurprising that focus should fall on the effectiveness of the workforce in delivering the strategic intent. If change needs to happen it usually needs to happen quickly so that systems and processes can be improved and benefits realised.

Conditions of service also affect people directly. Most people end up living, organising their life and spending in alignment to their work and income. Any change to this can be felt not just by the worker but their family as well. As such there is sensitivity, and much legality, around how conditions of service are deployed and any desire to change them.

In this report I have followed conditions of service and the areas of the employment and operational relationships that they impact. I have come to conclusions, findings and recommendations that impact on:

- The working environment
- Documented conditions of service
- Industrial relations
- Duty systems
- Management of the fire and rescue service

These conclusions, findings and recommendations are contained within the commentary of the review and extracted below. First, however I have extracted what I believe should be the initial priorities. These are: -

- I. There is much re-building to be done around **culture and trust**, including addressing the concerns around bullying and harassment. This also has an obvious relationship with equality and diversity. Everyone deserves a work place free from bullying where employment and progression is on merit and free from bias. The fire service needs inspirational leaders able to deliver a high performing, engaged workforce. Where I found these leaders during my fieldwork visits I also found positive industrial relations. Understanding and surfacing the differing levels of industrial relations

culture and trust is vital to moving forward in these areas. A service wide engagement survey focused on culture, equality and trust should be conducted on an annual basis. Management performance objectives should be 'hard wired' into this survey. Whilst embedding changes in management culture may take time, I believe the implementation of employee engagement surveys and amendments to management objectives could be taken forward by each fire and rescue authority and implemented relatively quickly.

- II. The **retained duty system** offers significant opportunity to align resources to risk at a significantly lower cost than maintaining full time cover at times of low level risk and activity. However the difficulties in recruiting retained duty system fire fighters were repeatedly communicated to me. In addition to supporting a national recruitment and communication programme Government should bring forward legislation that extends employment protection (as enjoyed by military reservists) to fire fighters engaged on retained duty systems and part-time contracts.
- III. Conditions of service are currently documented in the Green, Grey and Gold books. My review makes no recommendation as to the Green Book. However, I find very little value in capturing conditions of service in the **Gold and Grey Books**. I found the Gold Book to be redundant, unread and unused in virtually every authority I visited or which responded to my questionnaire. I recommend that the Gold Book is discontinued and that the employers and representative bodies implement this recommendation as soon as is reasonably practicable. The Grey Book is held by fire fighters as a key foundation or anchor for their conditions of service, even though in most fire and rescue services there are local derivations away from the national provisions contained within it. Employers repeatedly pointed out to me either that the Grey Book was a barrier to alignment of conditions of service with local delivery or that they had managed to change locally the conditions of service despite the Grey Book. Either way it appears to me that the Grey Book should be slimmed down. Consideration should be given by the employers, in consultation with representative bodies, as to replacing the Grey Book with a contract of employment at the local level, supported by an employee handbook. Base Pay (see section on training) should remain national but all other conditions of service should have a more regional/local flavour and I recommend that the national joint council takes action to explore how such a system could operate in practical terms.
- IV. The description of **role maps and duty systems** in the Grey Book creates inflexibility in the deployment of fire fighters in support of the local

Integrated Risk Management Plan. Roles maps are too restrictive and duty systems within the Grey Book in many fires and rescue services do not reflect the changing activity from response to prevention. Both the list of role maps and the pre-determined duty systems should be removed from the Grey Book by the employers, in consultation with representative bodies.

Key findings

These key findings are lifted from the end of each section and listed here for convenience and ease of reference. The evidence and context behind the recommendation is provided in the relevant section.

- **The working environment (section 4)**
 1. Culture and trust are at the centre of many of the changes required to create a high performing service aligned to the needs of the people it serves. A consistent employee engagement survey should be developed and deployed across the service (allowing inter authority comparisons) and 'hard wired' into management objectives.
 2. Early engagement with employee representatives at the earliest opportunity should be a feature of all change programmes.
 3. Fire and rescue services should deploy training in effective change management, leadership and employee engagement in addition to Industrial Relations.
 4. Increased importance should be placed by fire and rescue services on employee communication - appropriate management training and processes (direct to employee) should be implemented
 5. Fire and rescue services should instigate audits of the flow of management information reaching the workforce with the aim of improving the flow of information to the frontline firefighter
 6. Management performance objectives should be hard wired to the results of an annual employee engagement and communication survey.
 7. Unconscious bias training should be rolled out across the fire and rescue service.
 8. The leadership of the Fire and Rescue Service (represented by the Local Government Association and Chief Fire Officers Association) and the

employee representatives together with special interest groups representing woman and black and minority ethnic firefighters should publish a memorandum of understanding as to how people will be treated.

9. Research should be directed at how the cadet scheme could be utilised to widen the diversity of the service and how the interest in supporting the fire service can be maintained when the cadets leave the scheme (impacting both equality and potentially the retained duty system).
10. Each fire and rescue service should maintain an active register of firefighters with second jobs. A refusal or failure to declare a second job should be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.
11. Implement a single technological/equipment evaluation facility.

- **Documented conditions of service (section 5)**

12. The fire and rescue services in conjunction with the Government should create a national communication programme highlighting the range of activities and skills beyond fighting fires currently undertaken by firefighters. The aim of this would be to raise public awareness that creating a flexible fire and rescue service aligned to prevention is key to increasing safety in the local community.
13. Slim down and modernise the Grey Book, removing duty systems and reference to role maps and national occupational standards and replace with contracts of employment.
14. Minimum night time shift hours should be removed from the Grey Book
15. Disagreements regarding additional payments, collaborations or implementation of new technologies and working practices should be resolved locally without resort to the national advisory panels.
16. The national employers, government and employee representatives should, in support of establishing a changed culture (as detailed earlier), meet and agree a re-defined national joint protocol on industrial relations.
17. The ability to compulsorily move an individual from the flexible duty system should be introduced.

- **Industrial relations (section 6)**

18. The National Joint Council should be retained for the purposes of national pay bargaining for basic pay whilst reforming itself to represent employers and employees on a more local basis for all other conditions of service including incremental pay for acquiring competences beyond 'safe to ride'.
19. The National Joint Council should consider operating regionally to reflect the requirements of the different fire authorities whilst retaining a national umbrella with respect to basic pay
20. Remove Technical Advisory Panels and Resolution Advisory Panel and replace with a direct to ACAS approach. Fire and Rescue Authorities are undertaking a significant amount of local negotiation as they agree positions out with the Grey Book locally and this will not significantly increase workload or cost – in fact the Knight review suggested that local negotiations save money.
21. The Government should recognise the increasing view that the current right to withdraw labour (take strike action) is incompatible with the expectations that the public has of an emergency service. As such Government should bring forward appropriate legislation to remove the protection afforded under the Act to unions when their collective strike action, or action short of strike, impedes the fire and rescue service from making an emergency response. The right to strike being retained for non-emergency activities.
22. If the Government determines not to bring forward legislation to restrict the right to strike then Government should instigate consultation with a view to agreeing with employees impacted a no strike agreement in emergency situations. The right to strike being retained for non-emergency activities.
23. The chair of the National Joint Council should instigate an independent review of the structure and representative make-up of the National Joint Council to enable it to perform effectively at both a local and national level – noting that a number of contributors, from both the employers and the representatives, felt that they were excluded from the council.

- **Retained Duty systems (section 7)**

24. Fire and Rescue Authorities should adopt duty systems and staffing which align fire fighter availability to the planned work load (e.g. community safety) whilst providing response cover appropriate to the Integrated Risk Management plan should be encouraged.
25. Fire and rescue authorities should be required to provide an annual statement on the use of retained firefighters. Any decision not to use or to cease to use

retained firefighters should be communicated in this statement and underpinned with operational evidence provided by the fire and rescue service.

26. As part of the annual statement fire and rescue services should be required to provide an annual commentary on the number and use of retained firefighters. And in particular to report on the level of mixed crewing or co-working with wholetime personnel.
27. Legislation should be brought forward to provide employment protection to fire fighters employed on the Retained Duty System. This legislation is already in place for other groups (military reservists, magistrates and so on).
28. A national awareness programme for retained duty system personnel should be produced.
29. Trial and evaluate, in a limited number of fire and rescue services, the use of an annual bounty payment for employers of retained firefighters.

- **Management of the Fire and Rescue Service (section 8)**

30. Fire authorities should keep the number and level of commitment of fire authority elected members under review. The right number may differ by authority but should be large enough to allow scrutiny without becoming burdensome on operational delivery.
31. Recruitment and selection academic standards should be immediately raised.
32. Fire and rescue services should create critical mass by collaborating in recruitment including lateral recruitment into 'fast track' management programmes.
33. Fire and rescue services should explore a collaborative approach to the creation of succession plans and senior leader programmes with more cross authority developmental moves
34. Where collaboration could lead to more formal mergers, Government should find transformational funding to support the creation of larger fire and rescue services that offer critical mass in areas of technology introduction, recruitment, succession and development.
35. Fire and rescue services should maintain an up-to-date strategic workforce plan.

36. Fire and rescue services that cannot offer promotional opportunities away from the original place of work/watch then preparatory management training should be available as part of a strategic workforce development plan.
37. The expectation that all fire fighters attain the same, maximum, level of competency should be removed. The wide and increasing range of roles and activities undertaken by fire fighters calls for a more sophisticated alignment of capability with the activity required in support of the local Integrated Risk Management Plan than can be provided by the view that 'a fire fighter is a fire fighter'.
38. Training and pay should reflect a 'safe to ride' measure – basic core skills and core pay followed by competency based increments as required (which in the event of losing that competency means that the fire fighter retains their job albeit without that competency).
39. To create and maintain (in the face of decreasing numbers) a cadre of managers capable of becoming future fire and rescue service leaders, a standardised industry wide approach to leadership development should be adopted.
40. Fire and rescue services not using the Executive Leadership Programme should reconsider doing so.
41. A lateral, industry wide, recruitment scheme should be created. This will fast track managers through the experiential requirements and into senior roles.
42. The Gold Book (conditions of service for principal officers) should be removed along with that for Brigade Managers. With pay and conditions of service agreed locally subject to the introduction of a more sophisticated job evaluation programme that better reflects job size, role complexity and other duties in a way which allows inter authority comparison.
43. All fire and rescue services and fire authorities should review the accessibility of their pay policy statements.
44. The Chief Fire Officers Association should consider increasing the term of office for the role of president from 1 year to 2 or 3 years – to provide increased stability of leadership.
45. Finally all participants in the fire industry should adopt the principal of: -
 "Where change is **common sense** it should become **common practice**"

Chapter 1: The Working Environment

Section 1.1: The role of the customer in defining working practice

It was particularly interesting to ask 'who is the customer?' - The question was met often with astonishment, perhaps even incredulity, as I was told the answer is so obvious I shouldn't even be asking the question.

But the answer wasn't obvious and it wasn't even consistent.

Examples included: -

- The person dialling 999
- People who need us
- The public
- The fire authority
- The taxpayer
- Everyone
- The Government

Perhaps the confusion is explained more by the role the fire and rescue service is being asked to perform - or rather, the role they are seizing the opportunity to perform.

If the fire and rescue service is seen as a response service (emergency blue light response underpins the structure, training, equipment, shifts, conditions of service) then considering your customer and therefore your focus of activity in this light is entirely reasonable.

However if your day to day focus and energy is on wider community safety activities, it is not surprising that a wider concept of customer is utilised.

So the working environment becomes one of a choice between a 24/7 response that does community safety in so called 'spare' time or an organisation focused on increasing the community safety activity and providing a response if required. These two environments are not mutually exclusive but provide the extreme ends of a spectrum.

I have not tried to evaluate which is the best approach, rather I believe it explains the wide difference in approaches witnessed when visiting authorities and fire and rescue services and why some (for example Greater Manchester) are starting to think of themselves as an emergency service rather than a fire and rescue service. Of course both community safety activity (prevention) and emergency response are important but the focus that is applied to each can drive decisions that impact conditions of service.

An example of this is the approach to shift working. If the focus of the service is purely response then a shift pattern that provides equivalent resources day and night, seven days a week is a sensible approach (assuming call outs are evenly spread). However, if the focus is community safety then you need resources available for deployment when and where the community safety activity is undertaken – numbers are biased towards day time working, Monday to Friday. The consequences on the deployment of staff are clear to see.

Section 1.2: Change management

Overall, the ability to drive change is limited by the way fire and rescue authorities manage the change process – it is inconsistently applied between authorities and there is little evidence that successful change in one authority can be adopted and delivered in another. This problem is perhaps compounded by confusing relationships between national negotiating bodies, local management and central government.

Individual fire and rescue services are required to operate within the constraints of the local Integrated Risk Management Plan – changes to the plan are subject to public consultation. Unless the reasons for change are communicated in an effective and convincing manner the likely public response will always default to the status quo.

This is perhaps evidenced best when operational evidence points to a change in the number of fire engines required at a particular station (or even the re-designation of a station from whole time to retained) and yet a public campaign arises to ‘save’ the station. It was even put to me that it would be easier (from the perception of the general public) to close a children’s ward at a hospital than close a fire station. The apparent focus of the community being on the visibility of the appliances and the people rather than activity. Indeed a number of elected councillors suggested that they feared being voted out of office if they supported a station closure, regardless of the rationale behind the decision. Effectively, honestly and transparently communicating the reason for change is essential to gain the public’s support.

There was clear correlation between those authorities who were reporting that they could achieve change, despite the current conditions of service/Grey Book, and the point at which they appeared to engage with the employee representatives. Early positive engagement with the trades union was a precursor to a successful outcome. Across the authorities I visited it was not unusual for both the management and union representatives to argue how positive their relationship was whilst also recognising that there was a national dispute occurring. Understanding and appreciating the local conditions, finances and risks, I felt on many occasions that the employee representative was actually the project implementation manager.

“The attitude of some service management teams, who seem reluctant to engage with trade unions on a problem-solving basis. Proposals for change often appear as a ‘fait accompli’ after being developed without engagement or consultation with representative bodies”⁷

In many authorities, I found a great deal of resistance to change from both the employee representatives and firefighters themselves. The clear sense was that some of this resistance was ideological – coming from a political or even class standpoint. I found it very direct and pointed. Time and time again I was told that trust had been lost, that they (firefighters) were not prepared to undertake other workers’ jobs (a reference to co-responding with the ambulance service) and that it would take a generation to repair the damage of the latest dispute.

Despite these strong views I also found, surprisingly, acceptance that change would take place, recognition that there had been a great deal of change in the past twenty years and that change would continue. Indeed, on more than one occasion I was told that the firefighters expected that they would gain paramedical skills in the future. The resistance and concern appeared to centre around the way change was being introduced and the apparently continual “salami slicing” of resources (finance and people). There was a strong message of ‘tell me what you want to achieve and make it an end point’. The reluctance to move to agreement was simply because another request for efficiency, and another, and another would follow.

Whilst I found these views in a number of places, there was a change the further from London I travelled. It was also noticeable that it was usually the smaller authorities where change happened smoothly and employees seemed attuned to the need for change. Distance from London was by no means a rule but distance did seem to allow a greater degree of independent thinking, more flexible thinking, and acceptance of change, from the employee representatives.

More relevant perhaps was the ease and frequency of communication. The employee representative organisations, and in particular the Fire Brigades Union,

⁷ FRS Review of Pay and Conditions, Submission from the Fire Officers’ Association 2014

demonstrate excellent communication skills - in some instances exceeding the reach of the management teams.

Clear messaging is key in communicating any activity, whether it is information about the organisations finances, a management briefing or a trade union memorandum. Whilst it was clear to see the effort put into communications by the different trades unions I found a casual acceptance by senior management in some authorities that first or second line managers were not passing communications through to frontline firefighters and this was okay. Further examination would be necessary to understand if this was deliberate (as in managers not supporting the communication) or if it is simply poor administration. Where this was recognised as deliberate (for example the communication is contra to the position of the trade union) I saw senior managers establish alternative communication systems (circulars, brochures, direct to staff communications) in addition to relying on a traditional management cascade.

I also found a general acceptance that communication could be better. However I did not see the underlying issue being dealt with. This is a gap and should be addressed.

The question in my mind is not should change happen but rather why change in one authority is not happening in another? There are good summaries of changing working practices detailed in *Fire and Rescue Services: Going the extra mile*⁸. This 2011 report identified 19 case studies across 23 fire authorities, and yet none of these were mentioned (other than within the originating authority) when I completed my fieldwork in autumn 2014, some three years after publication.

The general acceptance that change requires duplication of the implementation process is wasteful, time consuming and difficult to understand.

Regardless of the many types of organisational change, the critical aspect will be the fire authority's ability to win the buy-in of their employees and the wider stakeholders on the change. Currently the culture is one of resistance to change. Multiple layers of employee representation and local fire authority committees question the 'need' for change rather than questioning 'how' the change will be delivered.

Effectively managing organisational change is a four-step process:

1. Recognising the changes in the broader environment that call for the change (for example the decreasing number of fires).
2. Developing the necessary response for the changed environment (for example a strategy on taking on wider activities – fire safety, co-responding

⁸ <http://www.fitting-in.com/reports/LGA%20going%20the%20extra%20mile.pdf>

and so on).

3. Winning the support of employees and stakeholders (a strong persuasive argument for the appropriate adjustments).
4. Implementing the appropriate training to support the change.

Change (of any type) should only require validation once prior to roll out.

Justifying change multiple times (and there are 46 authorities) will inevitably lead to inefficiency in implementing that change. The military has established effective decision making tools to assist in change management – see for example the Land Warfare Centre, Warminster where suppliers are challenged to demonstrate how effective any equipment change is compared to the current issue.

Where change is **common sense** it should become **common practice**.

Section 1.3: Culture and Trust

It was surprising to witness in so many places an aggressive resistance to change. Extremely combative language (the language of conflict – fight, strike, defend, slash, cut, stich-up – and the fruitier versions) were encountered during many visits. These seem to reflect the level of trust between the frontline workforce and management above. Not all visits were the same: some directed anger at the Government rather than their management, others seemed well informed of the local authorities' financial position and high levels of trust and respect for the management team was observed. The question here is why some fire and rescue authorities are in such a different place with respect to trust and when trust is in a good place, why the practices that generated that trust aren't being rolled out across those authorities who appear to have a less favourable climate.

In a similar vein to change management I found that the operational culture and levels of trust were often authority rather than industry specific. I found that there were vast differences in management/firefighter relationships. As reported above, some firefighters also took the opportunity to report a severe breakdown in trust, whilst others were able to demonstrate maintenance of harmonious local relationships despite the national dispute. Strength of representation and degree of early involvement of that representation especially in change also showed some correlation to the overall culture. Also identical to the change management comments above, the quality of management information reaching firefighters also varied by authority. In most cases the quality and speed of Fire Brigades Union communication was excellent.

Team working within the various levels (front line to senior management) also came across as excellent. The watch system clearly contributes to the strength of team working at the front line firefighter level (in the Fire Brigades Union YouGov survey, 96 per cent of respondents said the watch system is crucial to teamwork). However, in some authorities there did not appear to be a common thread of corporate information running down through the organisation - this was often manifested in communications not reaching front line firefighters.

Culture and trust is underpinned by effective communication and genuine employee involvement. Increased and genuine involvement by employee representative bodies (trades unions) early in any change process is essential not just to deliver that change but also to create the right environment for that change to be successful.

Culture and trust are at the centre of many of the changes required to create a high performing service aligned to the needs of the people it serves. A consistent employee engagement survey should be developed and deployed across the service (allowing inter authority comparisons) and 'hard wired' into management objectives

Section 1.4: Bullying & Harassment

Much has been made of the culture of bullying and harassment within the Fire and Rescue service.

During the fieldwork phase virtually all the conversations I had about bullying and harassment suggested it occurred elsewhere. Each authority (and representative bodies) were able to cite individual cases and I am in no doubt that there have been some serious instances of bullying and harassment but I was completely unable to align the number of people claiming to have been bullied or harassed with the number of actual complaints submitted under the relevant policy or directly to the police.

The variance in numbers is shocking. In both my survey and that conducted by the Fire Brigades Union around 40 per cent (that's equivalent to 2 in 5 firefighters responding to the survey) claim to have been bullied or harassed. Extrapolate that into a figure for the whole service and that would equate to around 16,000 firefighters saying that they have been bullied or harassed. However actual submitted complaints were dramatically lower, amounting to single figures in each authority.

So lots of noise about bullying and harassment but hardly any (relative to the noise) taking formal action.

Interestingly amongst Green Book staff UNISON in their submission to my review indicated a much lower figure of 16% of staff claiming to have been subjected to or witnessed bullying and harassment (although I do accept that UNISON asked for examples of such experiences within the last 12 months). Just 1 in 6 people felt that the management dealt with their complaint effectively.

During the fieldwork I spoke to firefighters, representatives and managers about these large numbers claiming bullying and harassment and what were the possible reasons behind the response. I formed the view that an extremely wide definition of bullying and harassment is needed even to comprehend the scale of the claims.

That definition needs to accommodate physical violence at one extreme and annoyance at legitimate management or union instruction at the other. Between these two extremes there is, effectively hidden within the numbers, a range of behaviours that is causing the level of response that is being reported in the surveys. This is particularly worrying and raises the possibility that genuine cases are not being recorded or that people do not feel raising a case formally will benefit them.

I heard from a number of people, not least a delegation of female firefighters who had also met with the Fire Minister, that bullying and harassment is a daily feature of being a firefighter. I was given examples of union members attempting to intimidate non-striking firefighters and also I was presented with claims that management were deliberately undermining and targeting union officials. Little wonder that 40 per cent claim there is bullying and harassment in the workplace.

As part of the information gathering phase I asked fire authorities to forward to me their policy documents that covered bullying and harassment. I have reviewed all the documents I received and found them current, comprehensive and consistent in stating that bullying and harassment has no place in the workplace. It is not the policies and procedures that are failing to deal with the issue of bullying and harassment.

The conclusion I draw from the range of conversations across multiple authorities was that a significant proportion (probably the majority) of the 40 per cent is unrelated to genuine bullying and harassment but rather unhappiness with relationships, with probably the largest proportion being firefighters viewing a management instruction as bullying behaviour.

However, even one person being bullied or harassed is one too many and whilst I was pleased that every authority contributing to the review was able to point to policies and procedures in place to manage allegations of bullying and harassment it

was disappointing not to find specific action to drive the cultural change clearly needed to bring down the numbers who 'feel' they are being bullied and harassed.

Improving the culture of the workplace and creating more respectful relationships, challenging the 'it's only banter' of the watch culture and replacing with 'everyone is valued' is critical to the future effectiveness of the fire and rescue service.

A more diverse, flexible, safe service needs everyone to respect each other. There is no place for bullying and harassment either between individuals, union to management or management to union.

The cost of 40 per cent of the workforce feeling undervalued by reason of bullying and harassment is not recorded, but likely to be huge. It will manifest itself in demotivation, sickness, frustration and formal proceedings. It is a cost that should be addressed and will allow the genuine cases of bullying and harassment to be dealt with without being hidden by the noise from the 40 per cent.

The leadership of the Fire and Rescue Service (represented by the Local Government Association and Chief Fire Officers Association) and the employee representatives together with special interest groups representing woman and black and minority ethnic firefighters should publish a memorandum of understanding as to how people will be treated. This should be supported by an annual engagement survey (see above) with results 'hard wired' into management performance objectives.

Section 1.5: Equality

There were a number of submissions and many conversations covering equality during the fieldwork phase. It is fair to say that the contributions primarily focused on gender and ethnicity; although I am aware of concerns being raised about sexuality⁹ these were not put to me during the data gathering phase of this review.

Despite an enormous amount of positive activity around equality since 2000 and the creation of multiple task forces, forums, interest groups and strategies there have only been small in-roads made in making the fire and rescue service representative of the populations it serves.

In the post war (World War II) period there were very few women operational firefighters until we reached the 1980s. But it wasn't until around 2000 (at which point women represented 1.4 per cent of the firefighting force) that progress to increase the proportion of female firefighters commenced in earnest reaching almost 4 per

⁹ <http://www.fbu.org.uk/news/2015/02/preliminary-agenda-fbu-conference-2015/>

cent by 2010 and 4.3 per cent now. Similarly back in 2000 1.5 per cent of firefighters defined themselves as from a minority ethnic community. By 2010 this had more than doubled, to 3.7 per cent of the workforce – not representative of the population but a move in the right direction. It has not improved since then.

Was the cause a failure to address the issue? In evidence submitted to me the employee representative organisations firmly laid the responsibility for the lack of progress at the feet of Government, quoting the abolition of the equality and diversity strategy for England early in this Parliament as the prime cause for failure to make progress. However, it seems to me that progress was slow both prior to and post 2010.

In the decade 2000 to 2010 we had (amongst other surveys and reports):-

- Equal Opportunities Task Group (2000)
- Toward Diversity 1 (2000)
- Toward Diversity 2 (2001)
- Equalities and Cultural Change Advisory Board (2001)
- Equality and Diversity Programme Board (2006)
- Equality and Diversity Stakeholders Group (2006)
- National Equality and Diversity Strategy (2008)
- Chief Fire Officers Association Equality Survey (2008)
- Equality and Diversity Report (2009)
- National Equality and Diversity Delivery Partnership (2009)
- 2010 Equality and Diversity Report

The Fire Brigades Union in its submission to me suggested that equality and diversity has been largely ignored by ministers, senior civil servants and others within the fire and rescue service. While some progress has indeed been made the evidence suggests that it is the failure to attract a diverse workforce and possibly the existence of sexist, racist and possibly homophobic bullying causing some (albeit small numbers) to leave the service that is the root cause behind the lack of growth in the diversity ratios. Indeed as evidence presented to the Fire Minister in late 2014, and presented to me as part of this review, has made clear sexist bullying is still a feature of the service.

The solution is not in the creation of committees, forums or papers – but rather a change in the culture and an acceptance that women, ethnic minorities together with all groups that make up the diversity of the working population have a place in the fire and rescue service. This acceptance needs also to extend to evaluation and suitability for promotion. The root cause of discrimination is not necessarily deliberate action by an individual but rather a level of unconscious bias that results in

impact that can be misunderstood or that the individual does not realise the impact of their actions.

Unconscious bias training should be rolled out across the fire and rescue service.

If the culture is right and recruitment and promotion prospects are fair then selection and progression will be on talent and ability alone and the percentages will eventually change.

Clearly, I accept it is difficult to change numbers when recruitment activity is low – this is covered in the section on recruitment. However preparations can be made for future change. I will cover recruitment in more detail later, but there is one section of the fire and rescue service that has a higher deliberate turnover of individuals (the cadet schemes) and these could be deployed in support of greater future equality in the service.

More research should be directed at how the cadet scheme could be utilised to widen the diversity of the service and how the interest in supporting the fire service can be maintained when the cadets leave the scheme (impacting both equality and potentially the retained duty system).

Section 1.6: Second jobs

During a number of the fieldwork visits the impact of second jobs on activities undertaken by firefighters was raised.

Second jobs appear to be defined as paid activity undertaken by whole time firefighters outside of normal working hours/shift systems. It is on a par with 'beds' as a reference to the amount a spare time available to a firefighter and is often used a 'jibe' or 'taunt' towards the fire and rescue service.

The Fire Brigades Union also specifically raised this point in their direct submission to the review when highlighting the difference between inflation and pay rises (from June 2009 to June 2014 wages have increased 3.25 per cent, whereas inflation, as measured by the Retail Price Index, is 17 per cent over the same period) and by inference suggesting that firefighters had taken second jobs to cover the reduction in purchasing power. However I believe this is a distraction. During my visits I did not encounter a single firefighter who suggested they were looking for or took second employment due to inflation exceeding pay rises. I was unable to test this further as I was not presented with equivalent evidence of second job rates decreasing when wage growth exceeded inflation.

The second job declaration rate was fairly consistent across all authorities at between 30 per cent - 40 per cent of staff stating that they had a second job (the

highest was 85 per cent). It was also generally accepted that this official declaration rate understated the true level of those with second jobs.

Regardless of whether the true figure is 40 or 80 per cent all firefighters are supposed to declare if they have a second job. I found very few examples of managers declining a firefighter's request to undertake a second job. Given that managers have this power and choose not to use it (and the insignificantly low number of occasions where it was reported to me that second jobs may have had an impact on operations) I do not propose that, currently, second jobs should be restricted any more than they are at the moment.

However fire and rescue services should seek to improve the quality of information on staff with a second job. Workplace change or re-structure should not be hindered by the fact that firefighters have second jobs. Managers must be prepared to refuse permission if a second job is seen to hinder the provision of fire and rescue duties.

It was also true that a significant number of personnel undertaking second jobs in each fire and rescue service were whole time firefighters undertaking a second job as a retained firefighter either in their own or neighbouring service.

The Fire Brigades Union also makes a very strong point about second jobs and retained firefighters in their submission to me:

“The ‘second job’ slur is particularly offensive to **retained firefighters**, whose fire service role is indeed their additional employment, which they have to fit around their primary career. Constant demagogic criticism of firefighters’ second jobs delegitimises the irreplaceable work retained firefighters do in serving their communities”

I am in general agreement with the points made on second jobs by the Fire Brigades Union. Allowing second jobs as retained firefighters is a crucial element in the tool kit for authorities to meet the Integrated Risk Management Plan with the resources they have available.

Later in the report we will look at the impact of Retained Duty Systems and the issues faced by fire and rescue services around the recruitment and retention of On-Call firefighters.

Utilising existing, trained, firefighters on second contracts in support of the retained duty system will enable cost effective shift systems whereby training can be accommodated during full time hours and response maintained on an On-Call basis. So rather than discourage second jobs I suggest that full time firefighters be encouraged to seek second jobs – as retained firefighters.

Given that the Fire Brigades YouGov survey indicated that the overwhelming majority (89 per cent) of firefighters with a second job would give it up – this is an

opportunity for employers to reflect the efficiencies indicated in the Knight review by increasing the numbers of Retained Duty System firefighters without incurring recruitment, training or retention costs.

Whilst many Retained Duty System firefighters are drawn from the ranks of the full time workforce it would be naive to believe that hundreds or thousands more will simply sign up. Given the financial benefit highlighted in the Knight review, Fire Authorities should consider a 'spend to save' approach around the remuneration of the retained duty system. Likewise the national employers should consider the re-introduction of a bounty payment (payable to both employee and employer) reflecting the commitment to hours on call and training.

Section 1.7: Technology

Many fire and rescue services presented evidence on innovation and change. Often this was linked to the introduction of new technology or systems of work (e.g. COBRA cold cut technology)¹⁰. The introduction of new technology or the exploitation of existing technology opens up new ways of working and can challenge existing assumptions, training and conditions of service.

It was very noticeable that there was a resistance to change in many of the conversations – albeit I believe for differing reasons.

In some cases the resistance felt more like a 'not invented here' mentality, or from a representative viewpoint the response was commonly 'it's not in the role map' or from many of the elected members "the time isn't right".

It was also clear that technology and equipment enhancements are evaluated multiple times and some services took pride in telling me about their evaluation procedure on something that had been operational elsewhere for many years.

However, I struggle with the concept that money and resources should be deployed to evaluate a product or practice that had already been through operational acceptance procedures in another fire and rescue service. Quite often, as I have stated before, the common sense solution is often the right solution and should become common practice. The common sense solution here is fire and rescue services and fire authorities accepting the professionalism of their colleagues in other services.

¹⁰ Cobra is a firefighting system developed by Cold Cut Systems of Sweden – see appendix 5

If resistance to using the best equipment for the job with the resources available is because the change could impact conditions of service then that resistance is wrong.

It would be bizarre if each hospital in the NHS undertook its own drug trials before prescribing to patients and yet this is effectively what happens, currently, in the Fire and Rescue Service.

There was a concern from some that centralised training or a centre of excellence for equipment evaluations would be a significant cost increase. Certainly the reducing level of support and usage for the Fire Service College from UK Fire and Rescue Services would allude to that. However the Knight report made reference to unfinished business¹¹ with respect to duplication of effort and subsequent conversations suggest that Sir Ken's vision of a 'no cost' centre of excellence is realistic.

Cost of duplicated equipment evaluation is significant on the fire industry and in reality these costs are passed on to the purchaser and therefore the tax payer. In addition each fire and rescue service undertakes its own evaluation and reporting procedures adding further indirect cost.

If the Fire Service College agreed availability for testing, at no cost, supported by the trade bodies, a centre of excellence could be established. Evaluation could be underpinned by a Chief Fire Officers Association endorsement via a 'Which magazine' type score.

Future funding would be achieved from savings, increased use of the Fire Service College, increased sales and an overseas shop window with potential support from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (UK Trade and Investment).

This would leave the issue of implementation and any impact on conditions of service to the local fire and rescue service, greatly simplifying the adoption of change.

- **The working environment recommendations**

- I. Culture and trust are at the centre of many of the changes required to create a high performing service aligned to the needs of the people it serves. A consistent employee engagement survey should be developed and deployed across the service (allowing inter authority comparisons) and 'hard wired' into management objectives.

¹¹ Knight review page 72

- II. Early engagement with employee representatives at the earliest opportunity should be a feature of all change programmes.
- III. Fire and rescue services should deploy training in effective change management, leadership and employee engagement in addition to Industrial Relations.
- IV. Increased importance should be placed by fire and rescue services on employee communication - appropriate management training and processes (direct to employee) should be implemented
- V. Fire and rescue services should instigate audits of the flow of management information reaching the workforce with the aim of improving the flow of information to the frontline firefighter
- VI. Management performance objectives should be hard wired to the results of an annual employee engagement and communication survey.
- VII. Unconscious bias training should be rolled out across the fire and rescue service.
- VIII. The leadership of the Fire and Rescue Service (represented by the Local Government Association and Chief Fire Officers Association) and the employee representatives together with special interest groups representing woman and black and minority ethnic firefighters should publish a memorandum of understanding as to how people will be treated.
- IX. Research should be directed at how the cadet scheme could be utilised to widen the diversity of the service and how the interest in supporting the fire service can be maintained when the cadets leave the scheme (impacting both equality and potentially the retained duty system).
- X. Second jobs, in themselves, are not the issue. It is the lack of transparency in the declaration of second jobs – therefore each fire and rescue service should maintain an active register of firefighters with second jobs. A refusal or failure to declare a second job should be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.
- XI. Implement a single technological/equipment evaluation facility.

Chapter 2: Documented Conditions of Service:

Section 2.1: Role of the firefighter – response vs prevention

The perception of the firefighter as the hero emerging from a burning, smoked filled house rescuing the occupier from certain death is the image most people have of the fire and rescue service. It's a dramatic picture and has been played out many times in the past and is one on which many people believe the structure of the fire and rescue service should be based.

It was, therefore, a surprise to me and I am sure it will surprise many others outside the industry, that in almost half (48%) of all cases¹² where there is a fire with a fatality – the person(s) was, in all probability, dead before the alarm was raised. In these cases the only way to 'save' the individual is through preventing the fire from occurring in the first place. Prevention activity needs to take place before the fire starts and has a wide definition. However what is certain is that the location of a fire station, the crewing levels, the turn out time (whilst important for a response) are all secondary to preventing the fire occurring in the first place.

This review also opened my eyes to the amount of activity fire and rescue services are now committing to prevention activity, both directly as a service and also indirectly via supporting the many charities operating to raise awareness of fire in the community.

I was fortunate to be able to fit into my schedule visits to the SafeWise project in Dorset and the Safeside project in the West Midlands – both fantastic examples of providing realistic education on the dangers of fire directly to the public and children in particular. Staff at the centres referenced the many thousands of visitors attending the facilities together with the wide range of support and funding provided by the fire and rescue service, other emergency services and local employers. I also visited a fire station in Merseyside which had a community sports centre and café attached. Again staff were able to allude to the impact within the community that the centre had. More of these facilities are needed.

¹² Derived from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-monitor-april-2013-to-march-2014> and DCLG department data shown in appendix 6

As many studies have shown the number of incidents requiring an emergency response (and in particular fire related incidents) is declining significantly. The reality of the role actually undertaken is becoming quite different from the view held by the public, and its changing nature is perhaps not as well understood as it should be. Better reflecting the current role and activity of a firefighter together with being honest that it is not all about adrenalin fuelled response, but also prevention and community safety will open up the attractiveness of the service to a much wider demographic. This could be key in the successful recruitment of retained fire fighters where currently 50 per cent of the population do not, in all probability, consider themselves as a potential candidate for the role. (See also the sections on equality and retained duty systems).

It is unfortunate that the majority of 'column inches' of publicity generated by both the employer and the employee sides are filled with negative images and hostile language (covered earlier). Whilst this is probably inevitable during a protracted dispute it overshadows the excellent work undertaken by the industry and by firefighters themselves to prevent fires occurring in the first place.

Great strides have taken place to influence various regulatory requirements (for example building regulations, fabric regulations, and landlord requirements and so on) which, together with thousands of hours of community fire safety work undertaken by firefighters, have contributed to the reduction in call outs and fires. Hardly any of this has been reported or communicated effectively.

Indeed it was a common theme put to me by many that firefighters are 'only' operational 5 – 10 per cent of the time. This inference that firefighters are not operational for over 90 per cent of their time is unhelpful. It suggests that numbers could be reduced tenfold with no impact on operational performance. Of course it does not take into account the amount and range of training undertaken by firefighters, nor does it recognise the contribution made to safety in the community by physically visiting vulnerable people, fitting smoke detectors, communicating on fire safety to schools and other groups. In fact I found firefighters undertaking a wide range of activity beyond that of fighting fires.

A great deal of the debate about response versus prevention is anchored in conditions of service. A majority of fire and rescue services raised with me the restrictions on the range of activity they could require firefighters to undertake as the Grey Book defines role maps describing what firefighters can and can't do. Some authorities suggested that they were able to implement wider working practices including different roles despite the Grey Book, but they had to do this locally because agreeing change nationally was time and resource consuming and unlikely to end in anything other than compromise.

The trade unions, and also the employers' representatives, disputed that the Grey Book was a source of restriction. Indeed they pointed to the fact that role maps are based on the National Occupational Standards and any role is able to be incorporated into the Grey Book. They point out that in reality occupational standards are not contained in the Grey Book but can be determined by the individual fire authority:

“The roles of fire and rescue service employees are those defined within the Integrated Personnel Development System and set out in accredited occupational standards determined by the Emergency Fire Services Vocational Standards Group. The roles used shall be as the fire and rescue authority considers necessary and specific activities within those roles will be determined by the authority to meet the local needs of the service based on risk”¹³

Perhaps even more of relevance is that the Integrated Personnel Development System is being replaced and the Vocational Standards Group no longer exists!

It became clear to me that there is consideration confusion about the status of the Grey Book and in particular the use of role maps within it. I decided that a closer examination of the Grey Book would be beneficial to the review.

Section 2.2: Grey Book

Wide and numerous derivations from the Grey Book are observed across many fire and rescue services. There is a pretence maintained (by both employers and unions) that the Grey Book is THE set of conditions of service, whereas in reality it is a collective agreement which forms a foundation of conditions of service which most fire and rescue services have to a greater or lesser extent moved away from.

This is mainly because the national nature of the conditions fails to recognise the variety of support required by local integrated risk management plans that individual fire and rescue services have to meet and the financial constraints that apply.

Some elements (flexibility of role maps - to incorporate co-responding) have been legally challenged whilst other areas of the Grey Book have been subject to variation following local negotiation or on a voluntary agreement basis (e.g. overtime rates).

Strong support for the Grey Book exists amongst firefighters and the Fire Brigades Union who see it as protection against 'cuts' and 'job change' by Government and, in some instances, by management. However, there was also a recognition amongst

¹³ Scheme of Conditions of Service Sixth Edition 2004 (updated 2009)

many firefighters that one size does not fit all. The challenge is how that local flexibility sits alongside the protection afforded by a national agreement and strong support from a national union.

The Grey Book is not a statutory instrument and there appears confusion over its legal status - is it a legally enforceable collective agreement (as recent co-responding legal challenge would suggest) or a set of agreed guidelines? In reality it is a national collective agreement which can be negotiated at local level – however I rarely found it understood in these terms.

Moving to completely local terms and conditions was not supported by most fire and rescue services and this was also the position of the employee representative bodies. A small number of fire and rescue services together with the Fire Brigades Union felt that the Grey Book worked well in its current form (although there was agreement that its language and distribution could be improved). It was noted that the current edition (sixth) was written in 2004, updated in 2009 and the last addendum circular appears to have been issued in April 2011.

Many fire and rescue authorities suggested that the Grey Book constrained their ability to implement working practice that was relevant to their locality (examples include duty systems, payments, collaboration and adopting new practice – for example dealing with marauding terrorist firearms attacks¹⁴).

It was suggested on multiple occasions that 'slimming down' the Grey Book by removing duty systems and the reference to Role Maps whilst maintaining national pay negotiations was the route forward, together with modernising the language used. It may well be that there is a tension between role maps not being flexible enough to deal with changing occupational standards being developed by Skills for Justice.

I will cover role maps and duty systems further in some depth shortly. However I do find the Grey Book inconsistent with modern industrial practice in most other industries.

The current edition of the Grey Book runs to a preface, seven sections, three appendices and a written protocol over 87 pages, of which one section and 20 pages covers 'conditions of service'. In reality, the whole Grey Book could be condensed

¹⁴ The Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack (MTFA) programme was developed in response to the Mumbai incident, and in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games. 13 fire and rescue services have the capability as part of the national programme and another three have developed, or are developing, their own capability. The role of the fire service is to support the ambulance service in dealing with casualties at the scene.

into a two or three page contract of employment with a supporting employee handbook.

In view of the feedback received, on the Grey Book, from individual fire and rescue services I have been able to summarise a number of areas where I have been able to draw out a clear majority view and these now form the backbone of my recommendations for the future of the Grey Book: -

- a. Role maps: inhibit greater flexibility and agility in responding to changing local risk as defined in the integrated risk management plan, and changing National Occupational Standards developed by Skills for Justice. A common example of inflexibility provided to support this claim is co-responding with the ambulance service.
- b. Duty systems: inflexible and unsupportive of aligning resources with need. Particular mention was made of the ‘ridiculous’ requirement of any duty system to “have regard to the special circumstances of individual employees and be family friendly” – it would be impossible for any duty system to have particular regard for over 40,000 employees and what constitutes ‘family friendly’ is open to wide interpretation. In my discussions with fire fighters there was a clear split with longer serving (hence older) fire fighters valuing fixed shifts whilst amongst younger fire fighters there was more enthusiasm for flexible shifts and self-rostering.
- c. Rates of pay: whilst the pay of fire fighters is outside of the terms of reference of the review it was put to me by many fire and rescue services that locally set pay has the potential to better motivate local workforces (by paying them fairly for the geographical region they live within, and rewarding them properly for more varied and potentially more challenging work). Nationally set core (basic) pay, with additional competency based or modular increments (possibly locally set) for attaining skills or undertaking wider activities was suggested by some fire and rescue services.
- d. Annual leave: the current arrangements with leave divided into Scale ‘A’, Scale ‘B’ and public holiday pay is confusing, complicated and unnecessary. The rules around taking leave should align with the shift systems deployed and if these are locally defined (as they should be) then the procedures around taking annual leave should also be locally defined.

- e. Sickness/absenteeism leave: extremely generous schemes which some fire and rescue services suggest make managing absence difficult. However, within physical environments where individuals depend on the health and fitness of others to support the role they undertake an appropriate absenteeism policy is required and I do not find that the current arrangements are unreasonable. There was some feedback that some individuals may take advantage of the generous arrangements – however I feel that is for the disciplinary policy (and management practice) not the sickness/absence policy.
- f. Discipline and Grievance: the current processes are more complicated than necessary. There is an interesting arrangement whereby the generous notice period for disciplinary hearings then increases during progression through the disciplinary stages – something I have not come across before and not part of any ACAS guideline that I am aware of. There are very inflexible requirements for levels of management to ‘hear’ different stages, requirements which will be increasingly difficult to meet as the service shrinks or the balance between whole time and retained changes. Simple next level management is all that is required (and that would be regardless of whether the next level manager is operational (Grey Book) or non-operational (Green Book)).

By and large the rest of the Grey Book is meaningless in the sense of describing ‘conditions of service’ of fire fighters. The references and provisions within it are all covered by existing employment law statutes or are part of codes of practice issued by ACAS.

The final section of the Grey Book covers the National Joint Protocol for Good Industrial Relations. I find this a useful document, albeit one that now dates back to 2007. The spirit of the protocol was certainly apparent when discussing industrial relations at a local level with fire authorities. However many of the words ring a little hollow with respect to the language and behaviour behind the current national dispute.

The national employers, government and employee representatives should, at an appropriate time following the current dispute and in support of establishing a changed culture (as detailed earlier) meet and agree a re-defined national joint protocol on industrial relations.

The national employers should review the Grey Book urgently with the aim of focusing on national pay. Disagreements regarding additional payments, collaborations or implementation of new technologies and working practices should

be resolved locally without resort to the national advisory panels. I do not believe there is any significant incremental cost in reducing the scope of the Grey Book. The Knight review has even highlighted examples of fire and rescue authorities negotiating locally and saving money. Whilst the Grey Book allows for determining new duty systems based on the Integrated Risk Management Plan, its very existence appears to stand in the way (either for cultural or psychological reasons) of that happening.

Section 2.3: Role Maps

The national employers' representatives, the Local Government Association, insist that fire and rescue authorities can use whichever roles they consider necessary. Indeed specific activities within roles will be determined by the authority to meet the local needs of the service based on its Integrated Risk Management Plan.

It is strange therefore that change, as we have heard, according to many fire and rescue services, is frustrated by the national role maps. The suggestion being that the national role maps are not flexible to adapt to changing occupational standards. In effect to introduce a new national occupational standard you have to, in some circumstances, amend the firefighter's terms and conditions.

There is an option to adopt modern day job descriptions that provide an effective but not restrictive appreciation of the role. Essentially they describe, not list, the activities that the job holder is likely to encounter. They provide for variation and flexibility in how activity is undertaken, whilst providing a basis for evaluating the size of any particular role.

Legal challenge to content within a job description is rare and I was surprised to learn of court action¹⁵, brought by the Fire Brigades Union, which appeared to try to prevent fire fighters co-responding in support of the ambulance service. An earlier case (*Bull v Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service*¹⁶) also found that co-responding was not part of the role of a firefighter. The employers accepted the outcome after appeal and decided not to appeal further.

The legal argument took a very narrow focus, looking at whether the written contract specifies that the tasks, described within the role map, are the only ones allowed, or whether additional activities may be taken on as part of the role. The legal examination would not take into account the wider impact of the actual work circumstances (e.g. working in a blue light environment). This case stretched back to

¹⁵ <http://www.lincolnshireecho.co.uk/Legal-action-possible-firefighters-driving/story-21102061-detail/story.html>

¹⁶ 2007 ICR 6131 CA

2007 and within the findings explicit reference was made to fighting fires – it should of course be noted that the role of the firefighter continues to evolve and, at the time of ruling, co-responding or other activities outside the ‘traditional’ job role, such as prevention, were perhaps not as common place. Indeed, it could be argued that applying the specific logic of the Appeal Court back in 2007 could preclude a significant amount of the non-fire work undertaken by firefighters today. I note that the Fire Brigades Union and national employers now have a current National Joint Council work stream¹⁷ to look at the introduction of co-responding.

Clearly, flexibility goes beyond co-responding and there is also a balance between implementing wider skills and activity and the cost of implementing that activity (in terms of cost of training or cost of equipment). However, there was no evidence presented to me during my fieldwork phase that increasing role flexibility would be anything other than cost beneficial.

It is clear that flexibility in role maps is vital to the future operational efficiency of any fire authority. Where informal approaches have worked at a local level this should be held as best practice and where appropriate should be rolled out. However it may be perceived by some that there is a risk in highlighting success. In so far as it draws attention that agreements have been made locally, outside of national arrangements, and this may be one reason why some innovation and change does not makes it across authority boundaries.

In an age of reducing fires and related activity it would protect the level of resilience (number of roles) if the role maps were either widened to include additional tasks or removed from the constraints of forming conditions of service. Increasing capability as a method of maintaining roles/numbers does not seem to feature as a current tactic from the employee representatives. This contradicts somewhat with the approach within private sector organisations whereby demand for training and additional activity is seen as a way of protecting jobs.

It was not possible to identify how every authority deployed staff to support non-firefighting/rescue situations, such as public relations, fire prevention activity, and so on. Whilst it was suggested that some authorities only used uniformed firefighters for such tasks others were willing to use a much wider range of staff. It was also notable that there little evidence of use of unpaid volunteers as firefighters. I am given to understand that there is just one station staffed by volunteers, and that is in Peterborough. This is a clear difference between other emergency services (Police specials, St Johns Ambulance, Royal National Lifeboat Institute).

¹⁷ Item 41 of the Fire Brigades Union Conference 2015 preliminary agenda

Currently role maps have been used to argue that there is a contractual barrier to change. Rather than a useful guide as to the key components of the role of a firefighter they are deployed as a reason not to undertake an activity – “it’s not in the role map so I won’t do it”. This was not the original purpose of creating role maps.

It is argued that the use of the Grey Book together with role maps provides a definitive guide to the role of the firefighter. I am not sure that it does. What is true is that it has become a list of tasks allowed and, by definition, the exclusion of everything else. This makes the use of role maps very limiting as it fails to allow the position holder to fulfil their potential – competence and behaviours are conveniently ignored. Role maps should become job role profiles with skills, values and behaviours driving the primary requirements of the role.

Recommendation: Reference to role maps and National Occupational Standards should be removed from the Grey Book and replaced by a local job description.

Section 2.4: Duty Systems

Five duty systems are listed in the Grey Book:

- Shift duty system – 42 average hours, nights no less than 12 hours, 4 shifts worked in a seven day period.
- Day crewing duty system – 35 hours per week based at a station plus 7 hours on standby at home.
- Day duty system – 42 hours average, with 9 nine days per fortnight worked Monday to Friday.
- Flexible duty system – combined worked and rostered stand-by hours not exceeding 48 in an eight week period. Only for station manager or above. No return to normal hours except by volunteering.
- Retained Duty System – hours by agreement by each authority. Assumed that full cover is 120 hours per week. Pay is restricted to either 10% (for 120 hours) or 7.5% (for any hours below 120) of the annual basic pay.

As stated earlier, significant change in the number of fires and call outs has radically changed the profile of activity of fire and rescue services over the recent years and it also become clear, during the many visits, there is a difference of opinion (arguably ideological) over the role and purpose of the fire and rescue service.

Similarly to the points made about ‘the role of the customer’ some fire and rescue services are taking it upon themselves to adopt activity that positions themselves as an emergency or public protection service with a remit that extends far beyond a 999

response to fire. Other fire and rescue services have a much tighter focus on response and see other activity as something to do when call volumes are low.

These two positions drive quite different employment propositions including the numbers, shift systems and range of duties undertaken. The five duty systems shown above simply do not afford the flexibility to undertake the activity being conducted by fire and rescue services nor allow them to react to efficiency constraints placed upon them.

There has been a rise in variations to duty systems, negotiated locally, which show little resemblance to the nationally agreed position.

Day crew plus combines and extends the principal of time worked and time on standby. Annualised hours provides for 24 hours cover on a self-roster basis with the flexibility for firefighters to change shifts to suit personal circumstances. These duty systems have built in premiums or overtime which offers enhanced pay to firefighters whilst allowing for fewer fire fighters on that duty system. With salary costs accounting for by far the highest proportion of fire authorities' budgets (around 80 per cent), it is unsurprising that there is a desire to align demand and resources available as tightly as possible.

As fire cover requirements differ so much fire authorities are required to operate within their allocated budgets, it is difficult to see the logic in maintaining duty systems in a National Collective Agreement.

As stated above there are multiple examples of duty systems being adopted on a voluntary basis within fire and rescue services – they have all required local negotiation to a greater or lesser extent. Some of these will also have had the advantage of securing whole time roles in areas where reducing activity could threaten the current establishment numbers (for example adopting day crewing plus rather than switching to a retained duty system).

Specifically relating to the flexi duty system for station managers and above – the inability of a fire and rescue service to move a manager from the flexible duty system is wrong. Fire and rescue services, especially as they reduce numbers, must have the flexibility to move managers to appropriate roles and should not be required to wait until an individual voluntarily agrees to relinquish a role.

Whilst I am fully aware that the flexible duty system is linked to pension I do not accept that this is a reason in itself to prevent the fire and rescue service requiring the individual to move roles or duty systems. The ability to compulsorily move an individual from the flexible duty system should be introduced. Alongside this there

should be a period of time whereby the previous benefits are protected (and two years is a typical maximum in other industries).

Duty systems and staffing which align fire fighter availability to the planned work load (e.g. community safety) whilst providing response cover appropriate to the Integrated Risk Management plan should be encouraged. Traditional duty systems (e.g. 2, 2, 4 equal length shift patterns) do not align with the current full range of operational work load and should be challenged. I cannot identify a compelling reason why duty systems should be retained in a national collective agreement when they should align to the Integrated Risk Management Plan applicable in each fire and rescue authority.

Consequently I believe that duty systems should be removed from the Grey Book.

- **Documented conditions of service recommendations**

- I. The fire and rescue services in conjunction with Government should create a national communication programme highlighting the range of activities and skills beyond fighting fires currently undertaken by firefighters. The aim of this would be to raise public awareness that creating a flexible fire and rescue service aligned to prevention is key to increasing safety in the local community.
- II. Slim down and modernise the Grey Book, removing duty systems and reference to role maps and national occupational standards and replace with contracts of employment.
- III. Minimum night time shift hours should be removed from the Grey Book
- IV. Disagreements regarding additional payments, collaborations or implementation of new technologies and working practices should be resolved locally without resort to the national advisory panels
- V. The national employers, government and employee representatives should, in support of establishing a changed culture (as detailed earlier), meet and agree a re-defined national joint protocol on industrial relations.
- VI. The ability to compulsorily move an individual from the flexible duty system should be introduced.

Chapter 3: Industrial Relations

Section 3.1: National Joint Council

The National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (the NJC) is the body responsible for the supervision, from a national point of view, of all questions affecting the conditions of service of employees (other than those in Brigade Management roles) of fire and rescue services established under the Fire Services Acts 1947-59. To this end the NJC's principal role is to reach agreement on a national framework of pay and conditions for local application throughout the fire and rescue service in the United Kingdom.

Evidence submitted to the review from the Local Government Association, the Fire Brigades Union and the independent chair of the NJC, Professor Linda Dickens, championed the record of the NJC in recent years in progressing vital industrial relations matters. It was pointed out that over the last year the NJC had considered issues such as the 2014 pay award process; ongoing work on terms and conditions; a fitness agreement; implementing the part-time workers settlement agreement; amending the Grey Book sections concerned with maternity, childcare and dependency; and the Grey Book sections relevant to health, safety and welfare.

The main argument made by those submissions was that national bargaining provides stability, is cost-effective, strategic and efficient, providing both the necessary competence and capacity that cannot be reproduced locally, particularly with small services.

Taking evidence directly from fire authorities and fire and rescue services painted a slightly different picture.

The majority of fire and rescue services described the NJC as cumbersome, slow, bureaucratic and unrepresentative (and this was the view of some employee representatives as well). I was told of occasions where it was clear that pre-meetings had taken place and decisions made behind closed doors. More than one NJC member told me they were unaware how the NJC operated and just did what the joint secretaries told them.

Some felt the situation recoverable by reform and modernisation (a position that the Local Government Association acknowledged and recognised) whilst others felt that the NJC ought to be more radically reformed and undertake pay negotiations only.

But what is meant by modernisation? It's a term often used without much thought, sometimes to suggest that all current change must be right, or if something hasn't

been changed for a number of years it must be outdated and wrong. So is the NJC outdated and wrong?

When fire and rescue services (and others) informed me during the fieldwork phase that they had frustrations with the NJC I probed further to understand the source of their frustrations.

The role of the NJC is set out as follows: -

The National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (the NJC) is the body responsible for the supervision, from a national point of view, of all questions affecting the conditions of service of employees (other than those in Brigade Management roles) of fire and rescue services established under the Fire Services Acts 1947-59.¹⁸

The NJC delivers that supervision via the following membership structure¹⁹: -

The NJC shall consist of 28 members appointed by the representative bodies set out below:

| | |
|--|----|
| National Organisation of Employers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services | 14 |
| Fire Brigades Union | 14 |

The Middle Managers Negotiating Board shall consist of 28 members appointed by the representative bodies set out below:

| | |
|--|----|
| National Organisation of Employers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services | 14 |
| Fire Brigades Union | 13 |
| Fire Officers Association | 1 |

Each side appoints a chair and all communication is conducted through the chair. This left some employers claiming that they did not have a voice. Employee representative bodies also claimed to me that they did not have a voice, could not raise matters to be discussed and in the case of at least one organisation had essentially led them to decide to disengage.

Given this feedback and the volume of supporting documentation I received from both employers and some employee representatives I come to that same conclusion, that the NJC needs 'modernisation'. The examples presented to me described the negotiating machinery of the NJC as being straight out of 1970s industrial relations –

¹⁸ Scheme of Conditions of Service Sixth Edition 2004 (updated 2009)

¹⁹ Scheme of Conditions of Service Sixth Edition 2004 (updated 2009)

with shuttle diplomacy and a focus on achieving compromise, with the process leading participants to take artificial positions in order for a 'compromise' result to align closer to their desired end point.

It was put to me by the Fire Brigades Union that "Each side of the NJC is entirely free to bring proposals to negotiations". Whilst true, it also demonstrates that industrial relations is seen in a rather simplistic, two dimensional format whereby employer and employee sit across the table and argue their respective positions.

With fire and rescue services suggesting to me that they have very differing requirements (and the same being said by different employee representative groups) the traditional view of industrial relations and dispute resolution maintained by the current members of the NJC needs to change.

The Fire Brigades Union YouGov survey reported that firefighters value the national arrangements for negotiating their pay with five out of six (87%) indicating they were in favour of a national pay structure.

I discovered during my fieldwork that whilst there was a minority of fire and rescue services who suggested that pay and conditions of service should be negotiated locally the overwhelming majority were of the opinion that pay, at least basic pay, should be set on a national basis.

Beyond pay I note that the NJC has (as of March 2015) also been working on five work streams:

- Environmental challenges – flooding, inland water safety, snow, wild fires
- Emergency medical response – co-responding, falls, on-site trauma care, provision of community training
- Multi agency emergency response – MTFA, joint working, any issues falling out of JESIP
- Youth and other social engagement work – arson reduction, working with risk of offending youth groups
- Inspections and enforcement – schools, illegal homes, crown properties, expansion of unregulated business use, related fire safety advice.

However much of this activity is already underway, locally, in one or more fire and rescue authorities. I found the "Confronting the future document"²⁰ from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service an excellent summary of the range of activity local fire and rescue services are pursuing largely independently of the NJC.

²⁰ Confronting the future, Greater Manchester Fire Authority 2014

There is little evidence of the National Joint Council reviewing its own performance. I also received commentary from some fire and rescue services that they felt the employers' representatives were too reactive, waiting for issues or claims rather than proactively supporting the fire and rescue services implement change via the National Joint Council.

The conclusion I was able to reach is that the NJC should be retained for the purposes of national pay bargaining for basic pay whilst reforming itself to represent employers and employees on a more local basis for all other conditions of service including incremental pay for acquiring competences beyond 'safe to ride'.

Should the NJC not reform itself then I should also point out that there is the provision within The Fire Services Act 2004²¹ for the Government, via the Secretary of State, to create negotiating bodies for the fire and rescue service.

Section 3.2: Technical Advisory Panel/Resolution Advisory Panel

It is important to understand the role of the two panels.²² They both cover stage two of the disputes procedure (there being an assumption that there has been a failure to agree at the first stage) contained within the Grey Book. (For clarity, if at stage two agreement is not reached, the next stage is arbitration at ACAS.)

Definition – Resolution Advisory Panel (covers break down in negotiation):

The Panel will be chaired by an Independent Chair (appointed on a three-yearly basis by the NJC) who will be assisted by the Joint Secretaries. In seeking to 'assist the parties further with their negotiations', the Panel will endeavour to facilitate an agreement between the parties, but where that is not possible it will make recommendations

Definition – Technical Advisory Panel (covers duty systems):

Where, following discussion, there is no agreement between the fire and rescue authority and recognised trade union over a proposed duty system (and it does not accord with the principals of any of the existing national duty systems) the difference can be referred by either party to the NJC's Technical Advisory Panel. The Panel will be chaired by an Independent Expert (appointed on a three-yearly basis by the NJC), who will be assisted by the Joint Secretaries.

²¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/section/32>

²² <http://www.fireofficers.org.uk/foa/images/Officials%20Information/TAP%20&%20RAP%20Procedures.pdf>

Over the last year, (as at March 2015), nine fire and rescue services have referred a total of nineteen issues to the Joint Secretariat for formal conciliation, whilst over the last decade, the National Joint Council has met on 28 occasions – approximately three meetings per year. Since it was established in 2008, the Middle Managers Negotiating Board has met (as at March 2015), 19 times. Over that decade around 100 issues have been resolved by the NJC, with six cases sent forward to the Resourcing Advisory Panel and nine cases to the Technical Advisory Panel.

However in the last year, (as at March 2015) neither the Resolution Advisory Panel nor the Technical Advisory Panel have been required to meet.

In the remit of both the Technical and the Resolution Advisory Panel the word 'compromise' does not appear. 'Agreement' and 'recommendation' are the possible outcomes described by the remit issued by the NJC. It is, perhaps, the requirement to broker an outcome that has led to the assumption by many that a referral to one of the panels will inevitably result in a compromise solution.

The Technical and the Resolution Advisory panels may also discourage constructive local negotiation as the employee representatives are aware that if they fail to agree locally and hold a position of no change then they are likely to be offered a compromise, even if the proposed changes by the fire and rescue service fully comply with the terms currently within the Grey Book.

Both the Technical Advisory Panel and the Resolution Advisory Panel should be stood down in favour of a direct to ACAS approach should local negotiations break down.

Section 3.3: Fairness in representation

I unearthed considerable criticism of the mechanisms behind the operations of the NJC and Middle Managers Negotiating Body. There were very mixed views as to how representative the council actually is. The criticism came from both fire and rescue services and some employee representative bodies (although not the Fire Brigades Union, who are very supportive of the NJC). I should point out that the criticism from the employer side was not unanimous and that there was some support for the NJC and in particular recognition that it had a tough role.

Membership of the council is by nomination and individual members of the council are unable to speak during sessions other than through respective chairs.

“Having asked a question during the first Middle Managers Negotiating Body, the Fire Officers Association Chief Executive was told, in no uncertain terms, that only the chair and joint secretaries are allowed to speak and that the Middle Managers Negotiating Body is not a voting area”²³

The result for many fire and rescue services and employee representatives was a feeling of disenfranchisement. The domination of some fire and rescue services on the employer side together with the domination of the Fire Brigades Union on the employee side left many without a voice, without a way of tabling agenda items or of influencing a resulting debate.

The balance of representation within the national bargaining machinery is dominated by the Fire Brigades Union. On a straightforward representative basis (see diagram below) there is underrepresentation from the other employee representative bodies (and particularly the Retained Firefighters Union). This is likely to be exacerbated by any drive to recruit higher numbers of retained personnel and should be addressed now.

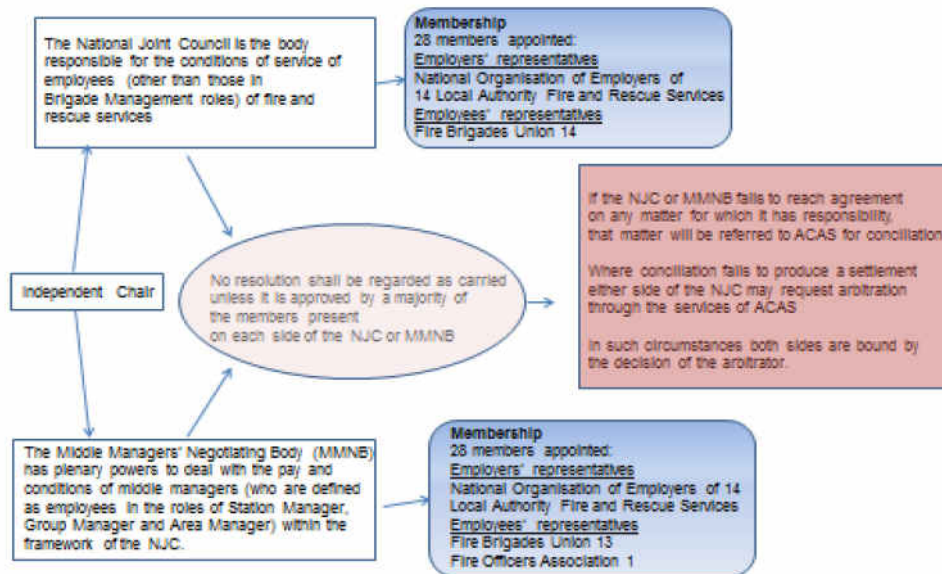
The Fire Officers Association reported to me that they had not been allowed to meet with the Independent Chair of the NJC since her appointment over a year ago, (as at March 2015). Neither had their letter to the chair requesting a meeting been responded to. Whilst I, having met the independent chair, have to believe this is no more than a simple oversight, it does add to the suspicion of exclusion that some (including the Fire Officers Association) have of the operations of the NJC.

The chair of the NJC should instigate an independent review of the structure and representative make-up of the NJC to enable it to perform effectively at both a local and national level – noting that a number of contributors, from both the employers and the representatives, felt that they were excluded from the council.

It is recognised that this review was commissioned to look at the English Fire and Rescue Service and consequently, because the NJC operates United Kingdom wide, before any implementation of the findings of this review take place appropriate consultation should take place with the other governments which may be impacted by a changing remit for the NJC in England.

²³ FRS Review of Pay and Conditions, submission by the Fire Officers Association 2014

Figure: Representation of the National Joint Council



Section 3.4: Right to strike

There were major differences in views on any change impacting the right of firefighters to undertake strike action (withdrawal of labour). Firefighters and their representatives were largely, although not unanimously, of the view that the right to strike was a fundamental right of a worker. However, a right to strike is a misnomer, for there is no right to strike. What the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (the Act) provides for in law is a protection for the union from being sued for inciting breach of contract by calling a strike, including in particular asking members who would not otherwise favour strike action to, nonetheless, strike in solidarity (collective action) with their fellow union members (who are themselves protected from strike action triggering a breach of contract) The legislation also provides some protection to the individual worker. However the words 'right to strike' are used extensively and I have used them in the sense of maintaining or removing the protection offered to trade unions under the Act²⁴.

Some thought that the right to strike should have been negotiated away in favour of increased pay and benefits progression for fire fighters. Whereas at senior manager and authority level, views also differed significantly with support for a change away from the right to strike in many Fire and Rescue Services.

²⁴ Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

I was able to summarise the response from the Fire and Rescue Services as follows:

- Just over 30 per cent in favour of retaining the right to strike
 - 30 per cent not in favour of the right to strike
 - Just under 10 per cent in favour of greater restrictions* in the ability to strike
 - 30 per cent who declined to present a view
- *most commonly this was a greater notice period before strike action commenced.

In some places the view of the chair of the fire authority differed from that of the Chief Fire Officer. Some fire and rescue services found it difficult to take a stance on the question of strike action, whilst others presented two or more views depending on the political make-up of the authority. Those deciding not to express an opinion did so on the basis that taking a stance on this topic would impact their impartiality and is a matter for Government.

The position of firefighters was clear - it is the ultimate protest they can make without leaving the organisation.

The trade union position was also clear as the submission from UNISON sums up:-

The right to withdraw one's labour is a fundamental right, as declared by the International Labour Organisation's convention on the right to organise and bargain collectively, the Council of Europe's social charter and the UN's international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights. DCLG has a duty to respect the United Kingdom's historical position as a supporter of international rights, by upholding workers' rights that have already been ratified by the British Government.

I considered the views expressed to me both written and obtained during the fieldwork phase and these three considerations struck me hardest:

- The expectation from the public that a firefighter will respond to their emergency
- The amount of time a firefighter is engaged on emergency response is very low as a percentage of time at work
- The dedication of the firefighter and the desire to respond to incidents

Blue light response is now only a part of the role of a fire fighter. The majority of the role consists of training and community fire safety - and this is the norm in every fire and rescue service.

Fire and rescue authorities maintain resilience levels during current strike action by relying on non-striking firefighters, managers, auxiliaries and contractors. Most also operate 'return to work' protocols to recall strikers to duty should certain circumstance arise (for example major incidents with people reported trapped by fire or similar emergencies). This arrangement operated best when the watch on duty at a fire station was on picket duty at that station and a return to work simply meant leaving the picket line.

There has been a great deal of effort by some fire and rescue services to reduce the visibility of any strike action by dissuading striking firefighters from performing picket duty. The consequence of this this has been to render any return to work protocol, in such cases, practically useless.

Maintaining resilience cover during industrial action is an obligation for fire and rescue authorities and for some is proving a cost burden that has the potential to impact normal operations.

Whilst the country puts enormous value on the resilience provided by the fire service, and firefighters are held in great esteem by the general public, it does appear somewhat bizarre that emergency response has to be, essentially, negotiated during industrial action.

For this reason Government should consider bringing forward appropriate legislation to remove the protection afforded under the Act to unions when their collective strike action, or action short of strike, impedes the fire service from making an emergency response. There is a precedent for excluding certain workers from the Act and it is noted that specific legislation was enacted in the case of the Police and Prison Officers²⁵.

The vast majority of time a firefighter spends at work is not in an emergency response situation but rather training, maintaining fitness, community safety activity or completing formal paperwork. The right to withdraw labour, under collective action and protected by 'The Act' for these or other non-emergency activities should be retained.

- **Industrial relations recommendations**

- I. The NJC should be retained for the purposes of national pay bargaining for basic pay whilst reforming itself to represent employers and employees on a

²⁵ Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 section 127/Police Act 1996 - although dates back to the creation of the Police Federation under the Police Act 1919

more local basis for all other conditions of service including incremental pay for acquiring competences beyond 'safe to ride'.

- II. The National Joint Council should consider operating regionally to reflect the requirements of the different fire authorities whilst retaining a national umbrella with respect to basic pay
- III. Remove Technical Advisory Panels and Resolution Advisory Panel (ACAS) and replace with a direct to ACAS approach. Fire Authorities are undertaking a significant amount of local negotiation as they agree positions outwith the Grey Book locally and this will not significantly increase workload or cost – in fact the Knight review suggested that local negotiations save money.
- IV. The Government should recognise the increasing view that the current right to withdraw labour (take strike action) is incompatible with the expectations that the public has of an emergency service. As such Government should bring forward appropriate legislation to remove the protection afforded under the Act to unions when their collective strike action, or action short of strike, impedes the fire and rescue service from making an emergency response. The right to strike being retained for non-emergency activities.
- V. If the Government determines not to bring forward legislation to restrict the right to strike then Government should instigate consultation with a view to agreeing with employees impacted a no strike agreement in emergency situations. The right to strike being retained for non-emergency activities.
- VI. The chair of the National Joint Council should instigate an independent review of the structure and representative make-up of the National Joint Council to enable it to perform effectively at both a local and national level – noting that a number of contributors, from both the employers and the representatives, felt that they were excluded from the council.

Chapter 4: Retained Duty System

Section 4.1: Flexible Contracts and legislation

I was presented with very good evidence for both the use and non-use of Retained Duty System personnel. It was a key finding of the Knight review that there was an opportunity to drive up the number of retained firefighters, at the expense of whole time firefighters, and reduce expenditure by up to £123m.

“Increasing the total ‘on-call’ firefighters nationally by just 10 percent (to 40 percent) could provide annual savings of up to £123 million. All fire and rescue authorities must consider whether ‘on-call’ firefighters could meet their risk – it is an invaluable cost-effective service.”²⁶

Figure 15: Potential saving from increasing the proportion of on-call firefighters, by governance type²⁷

| | Authority | Percentage of Retained | Cost | Potential Savings |
|----------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Current model | County | 51% | £212,400,000 | - |
| | Combined | 40% | £578,400,000 | - |
| | Metropolitan | 3% | £576,000,000 | - |
| | England | 30% | £1,366,800,000 | - |
| Possible model | County | 65% | £176,800,000 | £35,600,000 |
| | Combined | 51% | £517,300,000 | £61,100,000 |
| | Metropolitan | 9% | £549,300,000 | £26,700,000 |
| | England | 40% | £1,243,400,000 | £123,400,000 |

However – during my fieldwork phase it was apparent that there was a general lack of support for this finding from fire and rescue services. Some simply pointed out they already had far more retained duty system staff than the average presented in the Knight review. For others, many diverse arguments were put forward to me as to why increasing the numbers on the retained duty system or “on-call” staff was not possible.

In the main it was the perceived difficulty in recruiting and retaining 'On Call' staff that dominated the response. Multiple reasons were presented for this difficulty including:-

- Lack of population at key times

²⁶ Knight review, Facing the future page 7.

²⁷ CIPFA Fire and Rescue Statistics 2011/12 Actuals, reproduced from Knight review page 32.

- High level of time commitment
- Low pay
- Lack of local employer support
- The local demographics have changed over time.

Others suggested that the Knight review was partially right but rather than simply drive up retained the answer lay in the duty systems deployed; a more flexible (banded) approach to paying Retained Duty System firefighters, including moving away from the 100 per cent or 75 per cent restriction on payments (based on different rates of availability); or the introduction of part-time working.

Some fire and rescue services and fire authorities (particularly those heavily reliant on Retained Duty System staff) suggested that whilst recruitment was difficult it was also a mind-set issue. If a Retained Duty System was important to you then the difficulties were more easily surmountable - with more innovation in recruitment and communication and, it was argued that a national recruitment awareness programme for Retained Duty System personnel would enable local recruitment campaigns to have a greater impact.

Individually, fire and rescue authorities suggested they would not be able to deploy enough budget to raise the awareness of the Retained Duty System for recruitment purposes. This could be addressed by combining their resources. Given that the low levels of whole-time firefighter recruitment has resulted in many authorities avoiding external recruitment and adopting a 'retained to wholetime' approach, recruiting a more diverse retained population will inevitably result in the added benefit of that diversity transitioning through to the whole time workforce.

The general use of the requirement for retained firefighters to report to a station within 5 minutes of a call out (which greatly restricts the availability) is increasingly being challenged with some fire and rescue services increasing the tolerance on this. When Retained Duty System personnel are used for relief cover at incidents then this restriction becomes nonsensical.

There is still evidence in some authorities of tension between whole time firefighters and their retained duty system colleagues. This is clearest when fire and rescue services have segregated crewing. Where authorities do not have any retained firefighters I was assured (with the exception of one authority where I was told it was down to the political/ideological stance of the chair of the authority) that they kept the potential use of the Retained Duty System under review.

I find it difficult to accept that an ideological stance should trump the expertise of the fire and rescue service. In the case above, I am concerned to hear of the operational delivery of the service being taken out of the hands of the experts. Fire and rescue

authorities should be required to provide an annual statement on the use of retained firefighters. Any decision not to use or to cease to use retained firefighters should be communicated in this statement and underpinned with operational evidence provided by the fire and rescue service. This could be provided as part of an annual report on the use of retained and part-time staff (see below).

Another key point in the use of Retained Duty System personnel is mixed crewing (either at a station or on a fire appliance). Again evidence was presented to me of resistance to mixed crewing in some fire and rescue services. Mixed crewing conversations mostly occurred up when I was told a station or an individual fire appliance within a station was 'retained'. In many cases I was told one fire engine was crewed by whole time and the other retained – an interesting definition of mixed crewing. The industrial relations environment was the most common response to challenge as to why individual crews, when necessary, were not comprised of both whole time and retained. Most fire and rescue services indicated that they were making good progress in removing any barriers to mixed crewing, however the current national pensions dispute was offering significant challenge as many retained personnel were forming the resilience workforce during strike action.

It is surprising that resistance to co-working between wholetime and retained firefighters has not been completely overcome throughout the service.

This needs to be investigated further with fire and rescue services required to provide an annual review and statement on the use of retained firefighters. Organisational divides based on working hours is an antiquated system.

Co-operation and joint working is clearly going to be more efficient (flexible hours being reported in the private sector as one of the most important features for high employee engagement) and has been recognised as a way of enabling the Military to retain the skills it requires at the level of affordability available.

The survey by the Fire Brigades Union is helpful in understanding the views of retained firefighters. In the recent YouGov survey, retained firefighters made the following valuable points:

- 90 per cent said that if the minimum retainer was reduced, it would have an effect on recruitment
- 85 per cent believe that people don't work in the same communities where they live and so aren't able to commit to the retained as they were in the past
- 78 per cent perceive that their primary employer is reluctant to give release for employees to undertake retained duties
- 72 per cent believe the situation with the primary employers is exacerbated when the scope of work and number of call-outs increases

- 66 per cent said the prospects for self-employment are limited when the scope of firefighting work and number of call-outs is high.

Interestingly, some 42% believe that retained firefighters are treated well by fire and rescue services and so encourage others to apply. Similarly, nearly half (46%) felt that becoming a retained firefighter is not difficult for the self-employed. Whilst these numbers appear to be reassuring it actually says that more than half feel that they are not treated well by fire and rescue services and more than half saying it is difficult for the self-employed to become retained firefighters.

There are significant numbers of personnel undertaking wholtime-retained contracts across the UK, and increasing them further would increase the number of retained firefighters whilst simultaneously reducing equipment and training costs.

It is both surprising and comforting that Retained Duty System personnel are prepared to commit a significant proportion of their time to being available to respond when required; but as the Fire Brigades Union points out there is not a direct relationship between the number of Retained Duty System personnel and the availability of fire engines. It was common for fire and rescue services to have 'retained' fire engines 'off the run', i.e. unavailable to respond to emergency call-outs.

Many people reported concern about the relationship with the primary employer, with the risk of losing primary employment at the forefront of that concern. If fire and rescue services increase the number of firefighters on retained or part-time contracts in the future then this risk also rises significantly.

There is an opportunity to provide Retained Duty System personnel with the same employment protection as Military Reservists or Magistrates (with protected time off for training and deployment).

Legislation should be brought forward to provide employment protection to firefighters employed on the Retained Duty System. This legislation is already in place for other groups (military reservists, magistrates and so on) and will provide valuable reassurance to on-call fire fighters who worry that their commitments to their community could be at the expense of their employment. The Government will, of course, need to be satisfied that such legislation could be introduced without the benefits of employment protection being outweighed by any resultant impact on business.

This combined with a national awareness programme for retained duty system personnel will go some way to reducing the employment concerns currently being reported.

Section 4.2: Bounty payments

When a retained firefighter is required for duty there is potential for disruption to either the home life or employer of that individual. Firefighters apply for the retained duty system in the knowledge that they are committing a significant amount of their own time by being 'on-call'. Employers are in a different situation and there is the potential for disruption and financial loss should an retained firefighter employee be called out.

To address this and also to show that employer support for the retained fire and rescue service is important there should be a trial in a limited number of fire and rescue services to evaluate the use of an employer bounty payment. This could be supported by the use of transformational funding.

If successful at increasing the numbers and support for the retained fire and rescue service then it should be rolled out using the principle of spend to save. With the saving generated by the reduction in recruitment costs and an increase in staff retention.

Separate funding to increase the training of fire cadets will further provide a potential supply of Retained Duty System personnel whilst also providing positive engagement for young people and also offers the potential to impact diversity and equality outcomes.

- **Retained Duty systems recommendations**
 - I. Fire and Rescue Authorities should adopt duty systems and staffing which align fire fighter availability to the planned work load (e.g. community safety) whilst providing response cover appropriate to the Integrated Risk Management plan should be encouraged.
 - II. Fire and rescue authorities should be required to provide an annual statement on the use of retained firefighters. Any decision not to use or to cease to use retained firefighters should be communicated in this statement and underpinned with operational evidence provided by the fire and rescue service.
 - III. As part of the annual statement fire and rescue services should be required to provide an annual commentary on the number and use of retained firefighters. And in particular to report on the level of mixed crewing or co-working with wholetime personnel.

- IV. Legislation should be brought forward to provide employment protection to fire fighters employed on the Retained Duty System. This legislation is already in place for other groups (military reservists, magistrates and so on).
- V. A national awareness programme for retained duty system personnel should be produced.
- VI. Trial and evaluate, in a limited number of fire and rescue services, the use of an annual bounty payment for employers of retained firefighters.

Chapter 5: Management of the Fire & Rescue Service

Section 5.1: Fire Authorities

Number of councillors on fire authorities

The Knight review suggests that some barriers to change were anchored in local politics and the public's reluctance to accept change to a service for which, in his words, they have an unconditional attachment for.

Conditions of service are set by the employer. The remit within which the employer operates in the fire and rescue service is defined by the fire authority.

The 46 fire and rescue services (as at March 2015) have approximately 800 elected councillors sitting on fire authorities or associated committees. Many Chief Fire Officers spoke about the burden of managing this weighty political oversight. Although many were also quick to point out that they receive excellent support from the most committed members it was clear that the burden of supporting a fire authority and the various committees that spin off the authority draws much time and energy from the senior management team of the fire and rescue service.

A number of fire and rescue service chairs and Chief Fire Officers suggested that a smaller number of elected members on Fire Authority Boards would be an improvement. Some Chief Fire Officers suggested that reporting into an elected Mayor or similar or a board (like the ambulance service) would enable them to provide a better service. This recognised the belief that some decision making by elected members was on Ideological/political grounds as opposed to addressing the needs of the fire and rescue service.

The question is, is there value added benefit from an average of between 15 and 20 elected councillors in any one fire and rescue service providing political oversight and local accountability or can political decisions and this level of oversight actually work against reform and efficiency?

Number of Fire and Rescue Authorities

The economies of scale driving greater opportunities for operations, communication, and use of resources/staffing together with the elimination of duplication (particularly in the introduction of new technology, equipment or working practice) are all powerful

arguments for reducing the number of authorities. But the greatest opportunity must be in bringing together support functions and decreasing the ratio of managers to staff.

The size of fire authorities together with their sub-committees also generates a formality and inflexibility which when combined with the current national approach to bargaining produces an enormous drag on change. Membership of local authority fire committees also appears to be held in high regard by the elected councillors who sit on them, which could cause further resistance to any future change.

Some (for example Tobias Ellwood MP) have proposed²⁸ more than just the combination of fire authorities but rather a more radical partial or total integration of the fire and rescue service with the ambulance service and the police. I did not identify wide support for this level of integration, although it was clear that there is an increasing amount of activity exploring the potential for collaboration.

Regardless of the size of the authority simplicity of command and clear communication of vision to all personnel is essential. In the private sector it is often termed 'line of sight' or even a 'golden thread' that joins the vision and strategy of the leadership to the operational delivery at the front line.

As covered in the section 4) c. culture and trust I found team working excellently delivered at watch level and even within each management layer, but relationships between layers of management varied significantly. Additionally shrinking fire and rescue services are going to struggle to find the managers and leaders of the future from within their dwindling ranks and given that the overwhelming view I took from the review was that 46 fire authorities mean any change appears to be required to undergo evaluation, be proven and then implemented 46 times.

There is a strong argument for reviewing the number of fire authorities. Mergers could offer the opportunity to create critical mass, not just in operational delivery or delivery of change or new technology, but also in recruitment, succession, training and development.

I found support for a reduction in the number of fire authorities from employers and employee representatives alike.

Larger organisations can be more efficient and provide a better leadership pool (see recruitment below). Fire and rescue services should create critical mass by collaborating in areas such as recruitment, leadership, succession, training and development.

²⁸ Tobias Ellwood, Improving Efficiency, Interoperability and Resilience of our Blue Light Services, 25 June 2013

Section 5.2: Recruitment

The focus on efficiencies in recent years is probably most visible by the lack of recruitment in most fire and rescue services over the past seven or eight years. This coupled with very little forecast recruitment (again in most authorities) for the foreseeable future will result in a management 'gap' of possibly a generation (15 – 20 years).

This reduction in the numbers of firefighters recruited, coupled with low academic entry requirements (either no academic qualifications or up to two GCSE's)²⁹ potentially pose serious challenges to the identification and training of future middle and senior managers of the fire and rescue service.

Changes in (or the introduction of new) technologies, working practice and even crewing levels may also call for future entrants to have different skills and behaviours (and career potential) than recruits from previous or current recruitment campaigns.

The senior management of the service is currently mostly drawn from a very small talent pool of long serving, technically skilled officers. This pool is reducing and as the number of firefighters reduces, the pool will reduce further. There is also a disconnection between the competencies used to recruit and those required to aspire to management levels.

Understanding where the future leaders of the industry will be drawn from, given this gap, is a concern. The fire and rescue service is an industry where the vast majority of management are recruited into entry level roles. Those with the skills, behaviours and competencies to progress into managerial roles do so via promotion either within their own fire and rescue service or, (usually only for more senior appointments), by transferring into another.

Appointment into managerial roles is competitive and despite very low academic entry qualifications, to date, there have been enough candidates to generate good talent pools to feed the recruitment process. There is no evidence that, currently, fire and rescue services are struggling to appoint appropriately qualified senior management, even those fire authorities who have allowed their Chief Fire Officer to retire and be re-appointed have satisfied me that the reason behind re-engagement was not related to lack of talent.

²⁹ An assumption that stating minimum qualification requirements is discriminatory is apparently accepted throughout the service and yet this is not something that is generally accepted in the recruitment industry.

When recruitment activity is healthy and reasonable numbers of new recruits are joining, it is reasonable to assume that the talent pools, despite those low academic entry requirements, will contain suitable candidates to meet future senior managerial needs. However, should the numbers entering into that talent pool reduce or dry up, for example by low levels of recruitment over a number of years, then there is a risk that finding suitable senior managers is essentially being left to chance.

I did not see any authorities changing their recruitment requirements to counter this potential risk. Either they are blind to it (effectively leaving future management appointments to chance that sufficient talent will emerge) or they expect to address the issue in a different way, possibly by the introduction of lateral recruitment or fast track management schemes. Certainly very few fire and rescue services were able to supply a strategic workforce plan, as requested, during the information gathering phase.

It is also clear that widening this talent pool could introduce senior managerial competencies at the level required to drive change, deliver innovation or remove barriers by approaching activity without preconceived ideas or ways of working.

Direct entry above the rank of firefighter already occurs. As at March 2015, two fire and rescue services had appointed their current Chief Fire Officer (or rather Chief Executive Officer) via this route. London also has a graduate entry cadre. I found little appetite (mostly because they could not justify the cost given the size of the fire and rescue service nor did they have roles available) for formal graduate recruitment schemes - although every authority I spoke to recognised that the low levels of recruitment over 10, 15 or even potentially 20 years is storing up a major risk for them.

Whilst mergers of fire authorities may provide a solution in the longer term I recommend that an industry wide lateral recruitment scheme should be launched. A good model is the Track and Train programme³⁰ covering the rail industry. Whilst Track and Train is focused on graduates it doesn't necessarily follow that a scheme covering the fire and rescue industry has to be restricted to graduates. The aim of creating lateral entry points, whilst allowing for full training, will mitigate against the management chasm that is an impending risk in the future.

Additionally lateral recruitment is also a way to achieve increased diversity and equality within more senior management layers that would otherwise take an individual many years to achieve. Fire and rescue services should explore a collaborative approach to the creation of succession plans and senior leader

³⁰ <http://www.trackandtrain.org.uk/>

programmes with more cross authority developmental moves. A reduction in the number of fire and rescue authorities would greatly assist this – see above.

It is noted that the Police have recently introduced direct entry at Superintendent level³¹.

Widening the attractiveness of a 'professional' career in Fire and Rescue is also difficult 1) because turnover is low and 2) the increase over the last 20 years of those achieving graduate level qualifications may have had the unintended consequence of dissuading them from applying as they seek 'graduate' careers and companies that target graduates for entry level roles. Many potential candidates with degree level qualifications, seeking professional careers, may not apply for roles with no or low academic entry requirements. In reality the low levels of recruitment coupled with high volumes of applicants have masked this issue.

Making recruitment processes harder will mean less people passing through the rigorous sift and selection processes and whilst this means more candidates will need to be put into the system, this can be easily managed (at virtually no cost) by any modern applicant tracking system. The larger number of candidates reached by the campaign allows for more activity to attract diverse and under-represented groups, particularly those with the skill sets to grow into future managers. This is directed at the wholetime service, where the candidate, should one would hope, be demonstrating ambition to rise further in the organisation. The situation is different for the retained, where this is not their primary occupation, and unlike the wholetime, there are recruitment issues. For them a lower academic entry point is entirely appropriate.

So in addition to the introduction of a lateral recruitment programme across the fire and rescue industry I suggest raising academic standards within the recruitment process standards. This will provide for a higher educational standard of recruits and provide seed corn for future development into senior managers. A consequence may be higher levels of turnover. However, importantly, increased turnover may allow a greater focus on equality and diversity enabling the service to change quicker to represent the community it serves.

Recruitment and selection standards should be immediately raised. Currently, where recruitment is taking place (and there is an academic standard) two GCSEs or equivalent is all that is typically required. Low levels of recruitment over many years require fire authorities to consider the risk of a gap in future management

³¹ <http://www.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2014/03/31/police-recruitment-shake-up-will-see-external-leaders-join-top-ranks.aspx>

competence. High application volumes means candidates are plentiful and the risk of failing to hire is almost negligible.

Finally I found it surprising that so few fire and rescue services were able to show me a strategic workforce plan.

A strategic workforce plan combines workplace change, technology, demographics and turnover to produce a staffing strategy which forms a major part of any strategic decision making. Without a workforce strategy/plan, decision making can become short term and opportunities for wider impact can be missed. For example failure to link leavers (either natural or via redundancy) to recruitment will leave gaps, or the introduction of new technology is slow because the people element is not considered early enough.

Components of a strategic workforce plan for a fire and rescue service may include collaboration with other authorities, crewing and staffing arrangements, location of stations and other property/facilities, redundancy, training programmes and introduction of different ways of working. The early involvement of the trade unions is an essential component of the plan.

Finally, all fire and rescue services should maintain an up-to-date strategic workforce plan.

There is a disconnection between the competencies used to recruit and those required to aspire to management levels. Consequently the entry level roles are lacking in future potential. This is further exacerbated by a lack of lateral entry points to boost management and leadership competence at any given level. It could be argued that the overall attraction and selection process, whilst robust in selecting from any given talent pool, is ultimately flawed in that it is focused on identifying entry level talent.

To summarise, the quality of recruitment seems to vary between fire and rescue authorities.

Section 5.3: Training and development of workforce

I. Base level training

It was explained to me that currently a firefighter is a firefighter: in other words, all fire-fighters are required to achieve the competencies that define the role of fully

trained fire fighter. These competencies are set at a level which allows for complete interoperability between firefighters. There is an assumption that firefighters on all duty systems, including the Retained Duty System, have and are required to have, the same skills.

From the discussions I had and the evidence submitted the reality seems to be somewhat different. Firefighters take roles, some are at different levels of training, and there are specialist roles outside of the Grey Book. Additionally, at the moment losing competencies risks job loss.

Now is the time to consider moving from 'a fire fighter is a fire fighter' to a base level of training for all, rather than everyone attaining all competencies. This would include a basic 'safe to ride' status providing a level field between the currently differing conditions of service and opens the way for more flexible ways of working that are underpinned by the introduction of job descriptions and enhanced competencies as required by the local integrated risk management plan.

There is of course sensitivity in suggesting that in the future firefighters may not have all the current competencies. It may suggest that they would not necessarily be fully skilled and therefore present a risk. Feedback to me suggests otherwise.

Training is currently delivered on the basis that all firefighters require the same skills with fire and rescue arguing that this increases flexibility. I am not so sure.

Replacing the current training programme which assumes all firefighters must be equally skilled with a base level of training to be 'safe to ride', complemented with additional competencies, will allow fire and rescue services to more closely align training and technical competence with the Integrated Risk Management Plan. This will also drive better management and planning allowing progression and the attainment of additional competencies in line with that plan.

Fire fighters will be able to achieve more competencies (and pay) aligned with the local requirements. Additionally firefighters who (for whatever reason) lose competencies can retain a firefighter role – aligning fitness with the roles firefighters are best able to perform. Benefits could include – enabling firefighters to serve longer, continue working whilst rehabilitating from illness or injury, continue working at lower fitness levels, acquire specialist skills quicker and integrate better with retained firefighters.

The result is:

The right number of firefighters, with the right skills and fitness levels to support the fire authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan.

Evidence of promotion outside of 'home' station or movement cross authority is limited. Usually the movement is at senior officer level. Collaboration between authorities should be encouraged in this respect, including the movement of resources at all levels of management (but particularly at first level management). This is in contrast to the current situation whereby typically only senior officers move between fire authorities. Indeed, I was given anecdotal advice that movement at lower levels was actively discouraged.

Most promotion takes place directly from the ranks with the newly promoted officer managing teams or working in close proximity to teams they were previously part of. Moving from team member to team leader is a crucial first step in a managerial career. It is only natural and right to feel an affinity with colleagues with whom an individual has learnt their trade.

However, the responsibilities of leadership and management require a line of sight that reaches beyond the immediate team and can cause conflict within that team. For example, taking responsibility for absence management can put a new manager into conflict with a former colleague who is being subject to a performance management process. Whilst this is almost a self-evident statement it should not be underestimated how difficult it can be to undertake such action.

If fire and rescue services cannot offer promotional opportunities away from the original place of work/watch then preparatory management training should be available as part of a strategic workforce development plan. Management training needs to precede appointment as a manager.

Resistance to change is often a result of satisfaction with current performance and a lack of desire to continually push the boundaries. Exposing people to more change, different practice and ways of working, together with working in management teams with different expectations and standards will encourage more stretch in personal delivery and performance, including the transferability of those experiences from one authority to another.

As communicated to me by the Fire Brigades Union, firefighters are also rightly concerned about the quality of training they receive to do the job safely. However, opinion was evenly divided about recent training, with 36% believing the quality of training had worsened, 31% saying it had improved and the remaining third suggesting it was about the same.

Training is vital to undertake any role safely and effectively. Training has to be of the highest standard, but it also has to be relevant to the role that is being undertaken. Automatically training an individual in all competencies will not make

them safer and more effective unless they actually use those competencies. Aligning training with the role undertaken is key and Role based training should be available equally to operational (Grey Book) and support (Green Book) personnel.

II. Leadership and management training

All firefighters undertake common skills based training on joining and that training continues throughout their careers. There is also a comprehensive leadership training programme for those moving from firefighter into officer ranks.

Earlier, in section 4) The Working Environment, I discussed change management, in particular focusing on why positive change didn't seem to flow across the fire and rescue service and implementations seemed to be undertaken multiple times. One variable is, of course, the ability of the manager to make change happen.

One submission to the review made the following observation: -

“My take on the fire and rescue service nationally is that it appears to be “over managed and under led” at times. Perhaps my weak management infrastructure comment should extend to weak leadership. There appear to be significant barriers and/or resistance to progress or acceptance of any transformational change and the bureaucracy of the national negotiating structure would appear to provide the mechanism for this to flourish.”³²

The suggestion is clearly that the fire and rescue service does not have the leadership quality needed to challenge the barriers to change and to drive through solutions in the face of resistance (wherever that resistance is coming from)

It is useful to understand the difference between managing change and leading change. John Kotter, emeritus professor of change at Harvard University describes it as follows: -

I am often asked about the difference between “change management” and “change leadership,” and whether it's just a matter of semantics. These terms are not interchangeable. The distinction between the two is actually quite significant. Change management, which is the term most everyone uses, refers to a set of basic tools or structures intended to keep any change effort under control. The goal is often to minimize the distractions and impacts of the

³² Confidential submission from a serving individual

change. Change leadership, on the other hand, concerns the driving forces, visions and processes that fuel large-scale transformation.³³

Creating change leaders for the fire and rescue service will be key to the future success of the industry. The challenge to deliver ever more efficiently and effectively in changing political and economic environments will require investment in producing the very best leaders.

I note that the Chief Fire Officers Association, in partnership with Warwick University Business School, have been instrumental in delivering the Executive Leadership Programme (ELP) designed to develop leadership capabilities in the fire and rescue service. Unfortunately the programme is not mandatory, nor is it being used by all fire and rescue services. Whilst a good number of fire and rescue services do support the programme with student nominations of Group Managers and upwards, some do not. I am aware that some fire and rescue services opt for alternative executive development programmes as is the case with one authority who utilise faculty from Harvard University, USA.

Recognising that the Warwick leadership programme is the most widely utilised across the fire and rescue service, I am unconvinced that multiple leadership programmes is the appropriate way forward. The Warwick programme is delivered by a world class university that delivers similar programmes to a wide range of UK industries. Additionally a key issue here is that fire and rescue services look to invest in high quality, value for money leadership development programmes which could be scoped within their annual assurance statements.

Fire and rescue services not using the ELP should reconsider doing so.

Section 5.4: Gold Book/Principal Officers/Brigade Managers

I. Gold Book

Quite simply there was very limited evidence of any fire and rescue authority actually using or valuing the Gold Book. I asked, on many occasions, principal officers within the fire and rescue service and also fire authority chairs and elected members if they could remember the last time they had used or referred to the gold book. At no point in the field work phase was anyone able to reach for a copy. Some even admitted to never having read any part of it.

³³ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkotter/2011/07/12/change-management-vs-change-leadership-whats-the-difference/>

With many authorities moving their principal officers pay away from the Gold Book I looked to see if the policies and procedures within it continue to have relevance. Whilst some authorities are still using the Gold Book as a conditions of service manual, many had moved away from this and had replaced it with contracts of employment. This was particularly the case with many county authorities.

So with the very general lack of support, with many authorities paying outside of the Gold Book terms and issuing completely separate contracts of employment I was unable to unearth any meaningful reasons to maintain it (other than to maintain the status quo). It would be fair to note that a minority of authorities did indicate that they would keep the Gold Book however no authorities were able to describe a practical benefit in retaining the Gold Book.

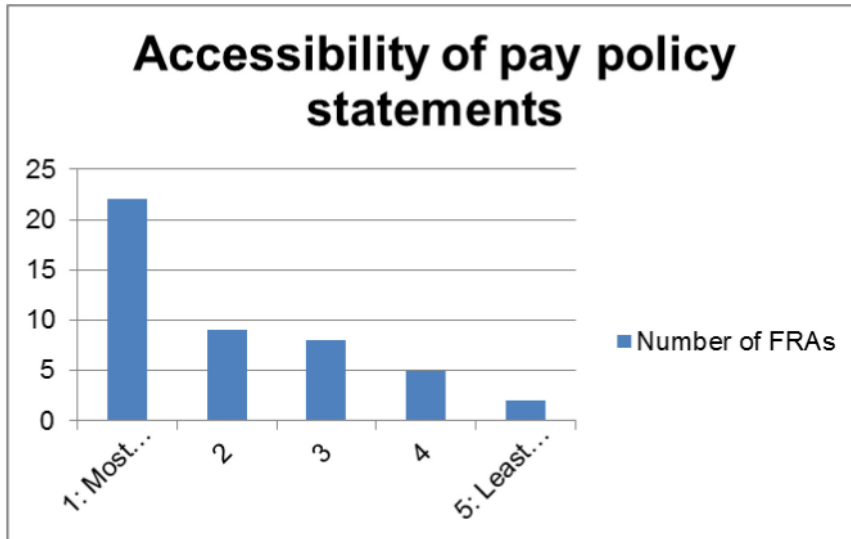
It is my view that the Gold Book conditions of service (for Principal Officers and Brigade Managers) should be discontinued. Given that local arrangements have effectively already superseded the Gold Book there should be nil or negligible transitional cost.

II. Accessibility of pay statements

Sections 38 to 43 of the Localism Act 2011 require councils and fire and rescue authorities in England and Wales to prepare and approve a statement setting out their policies in relation to a range of matters on the pay and reward of their staff, particularly senior staff.

The ease of access (transparency) of these policies varies considerably between authorities and it is difficult to ascertain if 1) the policy and 2) the consequential pay decisions meet the legal requirements placed on the authority, an example being the stance taken by Cambridgeshire on the retirement and re-employment of staff which triggered an exchange of letters with the Fire Minister at the time. However it would be unfair to simply single Cambridgeshire out. There are a number of authorities who, in my view, could do more to improve transparency and their scrutiny committees should review the spirit of their compliance with the Localism Act.

Certainly in some instances policies (whilst technically published) are almost buried in papers prepared for meetings. To illustrate this point, I arranged for a search of authority websites to locate the pay policy statements and assess how easy they were to find – see diagram below.

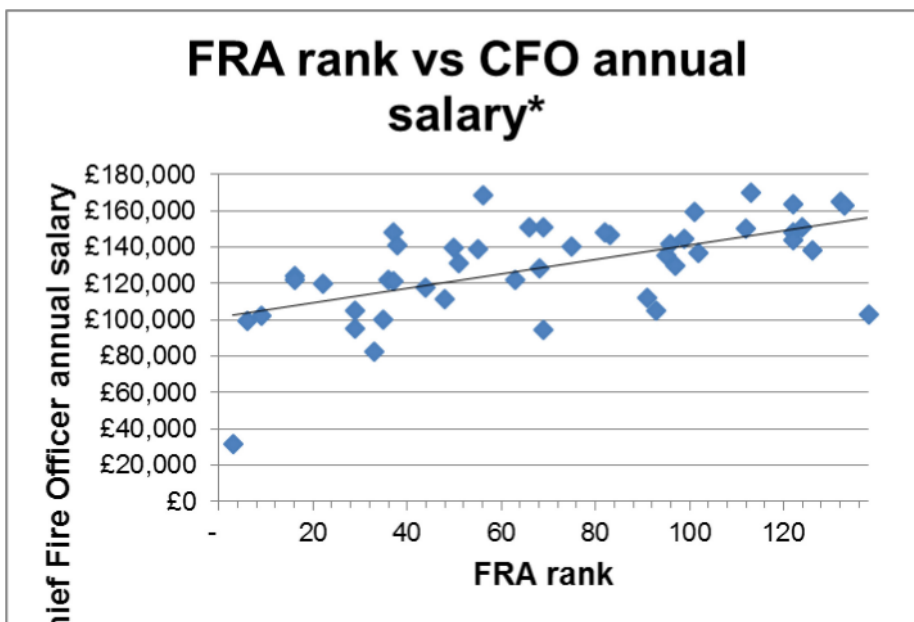


All fire and rescue services and fire authorities should review the accessibility of their pay policy statements.

III. Job Evaluation

The terms of reference asked me to consider the arrangements for agreeing remuneration of senior officers in fire and rescue authorities.

A review of the current (March 2015) remuneration (salary) against a simple algorithm representing complexity of role gave limited correlation of salary versus size of the role.



*The low data point at £31,700 is the part time salary of the chief fire officer of the Isles of Scilly.

The size and complexity of the role is represented by the scale FRA rank. Each fire and rescue service was assigned a FRA rank score by ranking three variables independently and then combining and summing the ranked scores.

The three variables used were: -

1. The population of each Fire and Rescue Service
2. The gross expenditure of each Fire and Rescue Service
3. The total firefighter headcount (whole time and retained) of each Fire and Rescue Service

This method gives a final 'Fire and Rescue Service size' table, which can then be compared against the Chief Fire Officer salaries. The salaries used are shown in appendix 4.

Using the above approach there a correlation of 0.588 between salary and the size/complexity of the fire and rescue service. However it is not the actual correlation that is the issue. The number of outlying points is significant and those above the correlation are particularly relevant as these show which roles have a level of remuneration which may appear generous given the level of complexity of the fire and rescue service.

For the purposes of establishing if there is a concern (to answer the question posed by the terms of reference) I used a simple three point factor approach to complexity with an assumption that variables such as population covered, spend, and number of employees directly relate to the size of the role undertaken.

From my field work it was apparent that a three point factor approach may be too simplistic. Principal Officers, in many instances, have responsibilities that range far beyond that of managing a fire and rescue service. In county fire authorities it was common to find roles such as Head of Highways, Children's Services or Coroner's Office (amongst others) to be part of the job description of a Principal Officer. I also recognised the very different challenges of running a metropolitan or a rural service, the very different relationships between the Chief Fire Officer and the Chair/members of the Fire Authority and also the industrial relations environment.

In terms of pay, principal officers are either paid under the Gold Book terms (see above) which allow for a twin track approach of core basic salary, topped up with a local variable amount set locally or are taken out of the gold book terms and paid on a local authority scale. Different job evaluation approaches are taken to align roles at the appropriate point on these scales.

The Gold Book sets minimum not maximum pay levels – which itself is a little surprising. It is more customary to find maximum salary levels, or at least pay bands with a minimum and maximum. Currently by virtue of the twin track approach

combined with local authority alternative scales it is difficult and probably impossible to compare principal officers' pay across the industry.

In order to offer comparison across the all authorities a common methodology is required. I noted that various job evaluation schemes have been deployed by a number of fire authorities but these have been focused on alignment to grades rather than cross industry salary benchmarking.

I asked PwC to consider the above points and the terms of reference of this review to suggest a route forward to provide, based on all job factors, a methodology which would allow genuine comparison across all principal officer roles, regardless of authority, or if the individual was within or outside the Gold Book terms.

PwC have provided that methodology (see appendix 7 for the full report).

Until there is a comparative way to look at principal officers' roles across authority boundaries in a fair and transparent manner it is not possible to assert if the current structure governing the pay of the principal officers of the fire and rescue service is delivering appropriate value for money with respect to other fire authorities.

A comprehensive job evaluation analysis of all the principal officer roles across the fire and rescue service would need to be completed to allow for that comparison to be made. Should such an exercise be completed it would provide an objective justification for setting pay, allow for external comparison, transparency and additionally some element of market-based pay to be introduced. An expected added benefit would be the ability to compare roles externally, therefore increasing the potential talent pool for future appointments and succession planning.

IV. Chief Fire Officers Association

During the field work phase of my research I was taken by the number of people who pointed out the stability of tenure of the Local Government Association, the key players from the various Trades Unions, the National Fire Policy team and many others and contrasted it with the rotating presidency of the Chief Fire Officers Association whereby a president serves just one year in office.

I note the many initiatives being led or supported by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and the role they take in leading and influencing the fire and rescue service.

In their own words³⁴: -

³⁴ Chief Fire Officers Association website, www.cfoa.org.uk/about, 2015

“CFOA is the professional voice of the UK fire and rescue service, supporting members to fulfil their leadership role in protecting local communities and making life safer through improved service delivery”

“Providing professional advice to inform government policy, CFOA is committed to developing both strategic and technical guidance and sharing notable practice within the wider FRS”

“CFOA is the driving force in managing change and implementing reforms in the service”

I also note that the route to the presidency is via a two year introduction as vice president elect, vice president and then in the third year president.

In the absence of a single national fire service or fire inspectorate, the role undertaken by CFOA, is key in providing consistency across the industry, cross authority leadership in fire and rescue matters, and independence from any one authority or Government.

To align better with those that CFOA interact with and influence, I recommend that the board of directors and wider membership of CFOA consider whether it would be advantageous to appoint a president for a period longer than one year.

- **Management of the Fire and Rescue Service recommendations**

1. Fire authorities should keep the number and level of commitment of fire authority elected members under review. The right number may differ by authority but should be large enough to allow scrutiny without becoming burdensome on operational delivery.
2. Recruitment and selection academic standards should be immediately raised.
3. Fire and rescue services should create critical mass by collaborating in recruitment including lateral recruitment into ‘fast track’ management programmes.
4. Fire and rescue services should explore a collaborative approach to the creation of succession plans and senior leader programmes with more cross authority developmental moves
5. Where collaboration could lead to more formal mergers, Government should find transformational funding to support the creation of larger fire and rescue services that offer critical mass in areas of technology introduction, recruitment, succession and development.

6. Fire and rescue services should maintain an up-to-date strategic workforce plan.
7. Fire and rescue services that cannot offer promotional opportunities away from the original place of work/watch then preparatory management training should be available as part of a strategic workforce development plan.
8. The expectation that all fire fighters attain the same, maximum, level of competency should be removed. The wide and increasing range of roles and activities undertaken by fire fighters calls for a more sophisticated alignment of capability with the activity required in support of the local Integrated Risk Management Plan than can be provided by the view that 'a fire fighter is a fire fighter'.
9. Training and pay should reflect a 'safe to ride' measure – basic core skills and core pay followed by competency based increments as required (which in the event of losing that competency means that the fire fighter retains their job albeit without that competency).
10. To create and maintain (in the face of decreasing numbers) a cadre of managers capable of becoming future fire and rescue service leaders, a standardised industry wide approach to leadership development should be adopted.
11. Fire and rescue services not using the Executive Leadership Programme should reconsider doing so.
12. A lateral, industry wide, recruitment scheme should be created. This will fast track managers through the experiential requirements and into senior roles.
13. The Gold Book (conditions of service for principal officers) should be removed along with that for Brigade Managers. With pay and conditions of service agreed locally subject to the introduction of a more sophisticated job evaluation programme that better reflects job size, role complexity and other duties in a way which allows inter authority comparison.
14. All fire and rescue services and fire authorities should review the accessibility of their pay policy statements.
15. The Chief Fire Officers Association should consider increasing the term of office for the role of president from 1 year to 2 or 3 years – to provide increased stability of leadership.

Appendix 1

Terms of reference

To review the conditions of the service of chief fire officers and firefighters, and the processes by which they are determined to consider whether they present barriers to the reform, improvement and efficiency of fire and rescue services.

In particular, the review should consider barriers to:

- the flexibility and responsiveness of staffing and crewing arrangements.
- collaboration and integration with other emergency services.
- the increased use of on call firefighters.
- clarity of process in the fair recruitment and remuneration of senior fire officers and fire officers

The review should also consider the national arrangements for agreeing conditions of service, in particular:

- whether a UK-wide process remains appropriate;
- whether there is sufficient independent advice and expertise in the process;
- whether there are sufficient mechanisms to ensure that conditions of service keep pace with the rest of the public sector;
- consider the current usefulness of the Grey and Gold Books, and the present arrangements for dispute resolution within the Grey Book;
- consider the arrangements for agreeing remuneration of senior officers in fire and rescue authorities;
- identify any barriers in moving between the Grey and Green Books;
- the impact on services by the undertaking of activity, by firefighters, outside of normal working hours/shift systems.

In conducting this review, the review team should consult with fire and rescue authorities, firefighters, representative bodies, and others they deem relevant. It will report to government, but should make recommendations to others, including fire and rescue authorities and representative bodies. The cost of any recommendations should be calculated and in sufficient detail to enable effective implementation.

Appendix 2

Governance structure for fire and rescue and geographical location (as at March 2015)

| | Local Authority | Membership | Funding Route |
|--|---|--|--|
| County (11) | Fire and rescue services are part of the County Council. | One of the County Council members is portfolio holder for fire and rescue. | Funding to the county but not clearly identified and not ring-fenced, council sets the budget of the fire and rescue service. No separate fire precept. |
| Unitary (4) | Fire and rescue services are part of the Unitary authority | Various, set out in legislation. | |
| Combined (24) | A stand-alone authority covering pre-1992 county council areas, including a combination of residual county councils, district councils and unitary authorities. | Maximum 25 elected members nominated from constituent authorities. | Funding direct from central government, plus precept across constituent authorities. |
| Metropolitan (6) | A stand-alone authority covering the area a number of Unitary Authorities within the Metropolitan Counties set out in 1974. | Membership is set out in Local Government Act 1985, which specifies numbers from each constituent council. | |
| London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (1) | A stand-alone authority including emergency planning, covering 31 London Boroughs plus City Corporation. | 17 elected representatives plus 2 Mayoral appointees. | Separately identified, but funding to the Greater London Assembly is non-ring fenced. The GLA then set the budget requirement for LFEPA. No separate fire precept. |

Appendix 3

Fire & Rescue Authority Governance and Location (March 2015)



Appendix 4

Chief Fire Officer annual salaries and complexity rank

Data for Chief Fire Officers' salaries has been obtained from each fire and rescue service website. Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to include the salaries of senior officers in their annual Statement of Accounts.³⁵

| Number | Authority | CFO Total reward ³⁶ | FRA Rank ³⁷ | Visited during review |
|--------|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Merseyside | £170,000 | 113 | ✓ |
| 2 | Cambridgeshire | £168,302 | 56 | ✓ |
| 3 | Greater Manchester | £165,000 | 132 | ✓ |
| 4 | Kent | £163,600 | 122 | ✓ |
| 5 | West Midlands | £162,903 | 133 | ✓ |
| 6 | South Yorkshire | £159,701 | 101 | |
| 7 | West Yorkshire | £151,172 | 124 | |
| 8 | East Sussex | £151,123 | 69 | |
| 9 | North Yorkshire | £150,661 | 66 | ✓ |
| 10 | Lancashire | £150,000 | 112 | ✓ |
| 11 | Cleveland | £148,422 | 37 | ✓ |
| 12 | Essex | £148,266 | 122 | ✓ |
| 13 | Leicestershire | £148,220 | 82 | ✓ |
| 14 | Cheshire | £146,972 | 83 | |
| 15 | Staffordshire | £144,873 | 99 | ✓ |
| 16 | Hampshire | £143,823 | 122 | |
| 17 | Nottinghamshire | £141,592 | 96 | |
| 18 | Durham | £141,400 | 38 | ✓ |
| 19 | Derbyshire | £140,536 | 75 | |
| 20 | Buckinghamshire | £140,000 | 50 | ✓ |
| 21 | Berkshire | £138,857 | 55 | |

³⁵ Data was taken from accounts published September 2013.

³⁶ Amounts quoted do not include pensions

³⁷ See page 69 for the definition of 'FRA rank'

| | | | | |
|----|----------------------|----------|-----|---|
| 22 | Devon and Somerset | £137,954 | 126 | |
| 23 | Tyne and Wear | £136,611 | 102 | ✓ |
| 24 | Humberside | £135,779 | 95 | ✓ |
| 25 | Dorset | £131,301 | 51 | ✓ |
| 26 | Avon | £130,080 | 97 | |
| 27 | Norfolk | £128,100 | 68 | |
| 28 | Shropshire | £124,008 | 16 | |
| 29 | Warwickshire | £122,254 | 16 | |
| 30 | Hereford & Worcester | £122,027 | 63 | ✓ |
| 31 | Northamptonshire | £122,000 | 36 | ✓ |
| 32 | Oxfordshire | £121,176 | 37 | |
| 33 | Gloucestershire | £120,146 | 22 | ✓ |
| 34 | Suffolk | £117,465 | 44 | |
| 35 | Surrey | £111,838 | 91 | |
| 36 | Lincolnshire | £111,223 | 48 | |
| 37 | Hertfordshire | £105,330 | 63 | |
| 38 | Cumbria | £105,000 | 29 | |
| 39 | London F&EPA | £102,626 | 138 | ✓ |
| 40 | Northumberland | £102,000 | 9 | ✓ |
| 41 | Wiltshire | £100,151 | 35 | |
| 42 | Isle of Wight | £99,721 | 6 | |
| 43 | Bedfordshire | £95,085 | 29 | |
| 44 | Isles of Scilly* | £94,699 | 3 | |
| 45 | West Sussex | £94,260 | 69 | |
| 46 | Cornwall | £82,500 | 33 | |

*The CFO for the Isles of Scilly works 7.4 hours per week as Chief Fire Officer. The annualised salary is £94,699

Appendix 5

COBRA – Cold Cut Systems

I have included a more detailed reference to COBRA as it was utilised as a question during the field work phase (late 2014) of the review. Fire and Rescue Services were asked why they were or were not implementing COBRA as an example of trying to understand why change is happening in some fire and rescue services and not in others.

There is no endorsement of the technology nor any suggestion that this is a product or process that should be rolled out across the fire and rescue service.

Cobra is a firefighting system developed by Cold Cut Systems of Sweden. COBRA utilises high pressure water (300 bar) and can be used in conjunction with an abrasive compound to cut through materials releasing high pressure water droplets to a fire compartment. These water droplets are proven to absorb heat in the compartment and very quickly, using minimal water. I.E. temperature levels that are near flashover levels +600°C are reduced to below 100°C in under a minute, using only 1 litre of water thus reducing water damage and more importantly allows firefighting operations to be carried out externally in a safer area (traditional methods crews are deployed into fire compartment) also improving conditions for casualties.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is a proactive user of this technology and gradually installing the equipment to standard and specialist fire appliances. The Cobra concept forms part of a new firefighting approach, using innovative technology to extinguish structural fires, combined with thermal image cameras and Positive Pressure Ventilation, a more effective firefighting technique can be applied.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service have trialled and introduced Rapid Intervention Vehicles and or COBRA Intervention Vehicles (CIV) which are smaller vehicles than traditional fire appliances (van) that utilise COBRA technology to back up the traditional response with fire appliances, or to supplement fire cover where this is reduced due to staffing issues I.E. Retained Duty System areas where crew levels can be unpredictable due to crews primary working commitments or other operational activity.

The RIV, CIV provides a capability to intervene in **some** fires with potentially reduced crewing levels whilst waiting for additional/ traditional resources to intervene offensively.

Appendix 6

Percentage of fatalities thought to be already dead when firefighters arrived

| | |
|--|------------|
| 2013/14 | |
| Thought to be already dead when Firefighter arrived | 131 |
| Grand Total | 131 |
| 2013/14 | |
| Alive on leaving scene, but died later | 74 |
| Not known | 9 |
| Thought to be already dead when Firefighter arrived | 131 |
| Unable to resuscitate at scene, confirmed dead at hospital | 19 |
| Unable to resuscitate, confirmed dead at scene | 40 |
| Grand Total | 273 |
| | 48% |

Appendix 7

Full PwC report on Job Evaluation for Principal Officers

Purpose

- 1.1 PwC was asked by independent reviewer of the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) terms of service, Adrian Thomas, to provide observations and comments related to an approach on how a review of Senior Fire Officers pay could be undertaken.
- 1.2 As per an email from Adrian Thomas on 1 February 2015, PwC was asked to provide commentary on the following:
 - 1.2.1 A method of evaluating the size of Senior Officers' roles across England taking into account the different types of authorities and the different regions of England. PwC was asked to consider what might be a preferred approach and the reasons why;
 - 1.2.2 The disparity of Principal Officer pay across the different Fire and Rescue Authorities;
 - 1.2.3 The impact of any changes to role size under job evaluation should there be a reduction in the number of authorities;
 - 1.2.4 The legality of "retirement and rehire", ensuring the difference between rehire into the same or different role is communicated transparently and approved by the fire authority.
 - 1.2.5 The financial implications on the public purse from allowing firefighters to retire and by re-hired with a pension abatement? It is recognised that recruitment costs are avoided, employer/employee pension and/or NI contributions may be avoided, lump sums taken from pension schemes will reduce the size of the pensions reserves and may impact valuation, etc. and;
 - 1.2.6 Consideration of any change of the potential impact on the available talent pipeline (internally or externally).
- 1.3 The purpose of this paper is to provide views on one possible approach on how Senior Officers' remuneration packages could be reviewed. PwC recognises there are other valid approaches.

Scope

- 1.4 PwC understands as part of the review of Senior Fire Officers' terms of service, the process behind the establishment of Senior Officer Pay in the Fire and Rescue Service is being considered. Part of this assessment is to assess whether national arrangements for remuneration remain competitive and consistent within senior roles.

Rationale for the Review

Disparity across the country

- 2.1 Reviewing pay across the different Fire and Rescue Authorities, there is evidence which points to a discrepancy between salary level and the size of the role (considering the number of employees within a service). Furthermore, after a high level review of job descriptions of Senior Fire Officers it appears some roles include certain responsibilities which are disproportionate to their remit. This creates complexities when comparing roles, as further analysis will be required to objectively compare roles.
- 2.2 Currently, PwC understands that the pay of a Senior Officer is decided by two factors: 1). a National Pay Scale as detailed in the Gold Book plus 2). a locally decided element (which can be as large or larger than the national award). In some cases the Senior Officers are on a local council salary scheme and are outside the Gold Book entirely. In these cases pay is 100% locally driven. It appears around 300 Officers are in roles which are covered by the Gold Book.

PwC's understanding of why is it a challenge?

2.3 *Impact on the Talent Pool*

PwC understands that generally, due to few academic qualifications and an increase in in-house training available, there is a view shared by some Fire Officers that working up the ranks will lead to senior roles. However, there is an opposing view that Senior Officers are operational leaders and/or managers, so do not require in-depth knowledge of the Fire & Rescue Service's processes and procedures. These contrasting views lead to an interesting debate about the future of the Service.

PwC understands that recruitment is generally reassigned to those already in the role. This could lead to talent pools stagnating or even shrinking, putting the future of effective service delivery at risk. PwC understands that it has

been agreed that external recruitment is needed to bolster the skills and fill in a potential talent gap.

2.4 *Retire and Rehire Dynamic*

PwC understands there may be some disillusionment by the public regarding the ability of individuals within the public sector to retire and be re-hired into the same role. PwC understands that the Fire and Rescue Service allows this practice, and it is thought the last two Government Senior Fire Advisors also followed this practice. It is understood that in most (possibly all) of the Fire and Rescue Service the same practice applies throughout the ranks – although below Principal Officers those rehired tend to go into non-operational roles (e.g. community fire safety personnel).

2.5 *Paying for the role, not necessarily for the person*

Given the current challenges of budgetary cuts and pressure to reduce headcount within the public sector, there is a great need for committed leadership and not just managers within the Fire and Rescue Service.

With this in mind, a systematic process of determining the relative ranking of senior roles within the Fire and Rescue Service is required. A framework can be established to define roles and hierarchy and reflect the complexity of different roles, providing a foundation for reward and talent management decisions.

1 *PwC observation: create a fair, objective baseline using the principals of job evaluation*

Why Job Evaluation

- 1.1 PwC believes the starting point of any review should be to create an objective basis which will allow for accurate measurement and comparison of roles across the FRS. Additionally, PwC would suggest that with an agreed baseline of the roles, there can be some steps toward external parity. This is in line with the Hutton Review on pay where the “weight of each role” is considered. One approach which may be adopted to achieve this baseline for accurate comparison is via a *job evaluation* methodology.
- 1.2 One of the principals which underpins job evaluation is that job complexity increases with seniority, therefore requiring greater levels of knowledge, skills, communication ability and lateral thinking. Accessing key criteria will allow for objective comparison as the principals for assessment are equal.

Furthermore, job evaluation assesses the competencies required for a role – it is not driven by the individual.

- 1.3 The measurement for job complexity may differ by the job evaluation system and what an organisation has determined is strategically important. For example, one organisation may put significant weight on budgetary control while another may believe reputational impact is critical. As a general rule, there are four to eight key areas which are measured with several sub-categories which will underpin the headline areas.
- 1.4 An example of the key categories (“factors”) is shown in Section 4.
- 1.5 PwC does recognise that some of the senior roles within the FRS may have been evaluated in the past. However, it is our understanding that not all roles across all services have been evaluated so no relative comparison exists.
- 1.6 If the intention of the job evaluation process is not to use it for internal grading purposes, the methodology should be kept relatively simple. The objective of achieving accurate job matching may be better served by using a straightforward scheme which focuses on a fairly small number of key job characteristics.
- 1.7 PwC would suggest reviewing a portion of the c.300 officers, looking for: diversity of role, various employing service, a spread of headcounts and complexities of the organisational structure. As similarities will be identified between services, we do not believe you need to review all of them. Our experience would suggest a sample of 10% to 20% may be required. It may be also appropriate to evaluate Deputy Chief Fire Officers to understand the relativities.
- 1.8 In reviewing the roles, a method would be developed for measuring the comparable “size of the job” across the Fire and Rescue Service. This may be considered a type of job levelling. This would also allow for an external job matching process by establishing a profile for each Senior Fire Officer job in terms of the characteristics which are required to perform the job. Secondly, it would help determine a relative job “weight”. That is, an objective measure size which will allow for comparison between roles within the FRS, across services and throughout general industry.
- 1.9 By creating a methodology, any changes to, and evolution of, the FRS are catered for, as the methodology will not be dependent on size, structure or service variations. The methodology will allow for change to the number of services or changes to the role of Senior Officers.

Potential Project Approach

- 1.10 Previously, when PwC has run similar projects, including the review of senior police roles across the country, a first stage was to determine whether there

was a reasonably good match between jobs in terms of the tasks and responsibilities performed by the jobholders.

- 1.11 As a second part of the initial stage, an assessment of the job profiles of the Senior Officer roles would be required. A match to an existing role would be sought (i.e. a match to a role in the PwC database) to look for a comparative role in either the public or private sector, depending on the information gathered. A “ranking” or level would be given to the role.
- 1.12 The next step would be to undergo selected stakeholder interviews to gather further information related to the role and job undertaken.
- 1.13 Analysis would then follow to score the job in order to determine a rank for the in-scope Fire and Rescue Service roles. After sizing all the roles in scope, a review of the evaluations would be undertaken to identify any apparent anomalies and resolve any instances of identified inconsistency.
- 1.14 The final step in this process would be to consider the impact of other influences on pay levels. These influences would include any recruitment and retention difficulties for particular ranks, competencies or additional skills required of particular posts (for example the more demanding posts). This analysis could have an impact on the “weight” assigned to the role. This stage would end with pay benchmarking analysis – both internal comparisons (across the Fire and Rescue Service) and external ones (for other roles of similar size/ level).

Job Evaluation Outcomes

- 1.15 Lastly, an analysis of all the roles across the Fire and Rescue Service, including pay, would be completed to allow for changes and adjustments as required. It would provide an objective justification for setting pay, allow for external comparison and some element of market-based pay to be introduced. An expected additional benefit would be the ability to compare roles externally, therefore increasing the potential talent pool for future appointments and succession planning.

2 PwC’s Job Evaluation System

As an example of one job evaluation process, the PwC Six Factor methodology could be used to evaluate and weigh roles. For illustrative purposes, we have provided sample questions which could be used to help develop an understanding of the role, analysing the work through a lens related to the six factors. The answers would be assessed against a master scoring matrix to size the job.

| Category/ Factor | Description of Factor | Guiding Questions & Observation Cues |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Knowledge | Knowledge is essentially a database of information that is held and used by the jobholder in carrying out his/her work and refers to the breadth of knowledge required to do the job. It can be acquired through experience as well as education and training. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What areas of knowledge are required to undertake your job? • What is the difference between a new job holders as compared to an experienced job holder? • What is the change in requirements to move to a more senior job? |
| Specialist Skills | Specialist skills are acquired through natural ability, training, experience or practice. Specialist skills are different from knowledge, although they involve the use of knowledge to produce outcomes. For example, the jobs of a general manager may require broad knowledge but few specialist skills. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the requirements to undertake the job at a fully competent level? • What makes the job different to other jobs in your team? • What new skills do you require to progress in the organisation? |
| People Skills | People skills are required for getting things done with and through people. These skills are used when working within organisations, for example, in line management, team working and communicating with colleagues or in working with suppliers, customers and the general public. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the regular points of contact in the course of your job? • How much freedom is there to change contact points? • Are there limits on what can or cannot be communicated? |
| External Impact | External impact looks at the extent to which the jobholder has an impact on the services provided to customers outside the organisation, distinguishing between jobholders who have a direct and an indirect impact on client service. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much contact do you have with the public? • What is the scope of that contact and what boundaries do you need to operate within? • Who else would you deal with and what is the nature of that contact? |
| Decision Making | Decision making looks at the complexity of factors to be considered and the extent to which information for consideration is likely to be ambiguous or conflicting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of decisions do you have to make in the course of your work? • How much freedom do you have to make your own decisions? • What would happen in a situation where your manager is not available? |
| Strategy | Strategy refers to the requirement of a job holder to think ahead or 'outside of the box' as well as develop and implement new ideas. This factor measures the extent to which the jobholder is required to be creative, rather than making choices within existing rules and procedures. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much of your job is set-down within rules and procedures? • What happens if the situation is not covered by the rules and procedures? • What is the process for making changes to operating procedures? |

The questions above are a sample and would need to be customised for any review of the Fire & Rescue Service.

There are many other job evaluation systems available in the market which could be leveraged to produce comparative results.

3 Total Employee Value Proposition

- 3.1 Following a job evaluation exercise, the roles across the Fire and Rescue Service can be compared and the pay and benefits of each considered. The purpose would not be to increase or decrease remuneration but rather to provide each relevant authority an evidence-based structure to consider the appropriate level of remuneration for the Senior Officers.
- 3.2 PwC would expect the output of any job evaluation and subsequent comparison to be one component of the decision on what is the appropriate level of remuneration for a role. Other considerations could include: the talent pool (i.e. the need to attract and retain a job holder), external talent forces (i.e. what is happening in the broader pay market), internal relativity (i.e. what other senior posts within the relative Authority earn) and the overall employment offering (i.e. holiday offering, pension, benefits, work-life policy, etc.).
- 3.3 It is recognised some senior role holders within the Fire and Rescue Service are individuals who have completed 30 years of service, retired and then been rehired as contractors in the exact same position on same/ similar compensation but who also draw a pension which has been rightfully accrued. The fairness of this perceived “double dipping” has been questioned by some.
- 3.4 PwC does recognise this practice happens in other parts of Government. However, some departments use abatement - a process commonly used in public sector pensions whereby there is a reduction or suspension of pension income when a pensioner is re-employed in a similar role.
- 3.5 In the case of the Fire and Rescue Service, the principal of abatement would be that Officers would not receive more than total remuneration during post retirement reemployment than the rate of salary on the last day of earlier service.
- 3.6 If the Government were to consider changing the relevant legislation or pension scheme rules, one consideration should be the definition of “contractor” as it can be a matter of judgment.
- 3.7 In reviewing the Employee Value Proposition and how Senior Officers are paid, the manner and approach for how they are measured should also be considered. Performance Management should be reviewed to ensure it is robust and accurately reflects an objective and fair process for identifying success and supporting development for Senior Officers.
- 3.8 The Hutton Review comments on “due dessert”. It was highlighted that “reward should be proportional to the weight of each role and each individual’s

performance”. Setting pay and comparing roles can only be achieved if the role holder is regularly and fairly assessed.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 PwC does recognise the challenges currently faced by the Fire and Rescue Services in terms of objective comparison of senior roles across the Service. Given the different sizes of Authorities, remit of the in-scope roles and local talent challenges; comparison may be a challenge.
- 4.2 Job Evaluation is one methodology which could be employed to create a justifiable comparison. Once a job evaluation process has been completed, pay and other benefits can be analysed and necessary changes could be made.
- 4.3 One additional benefit would be accurate comparison with the external talent market, potentially increasing the talent pool available for senior roles.
- 4.4 Following the creation of a baseline for role comparison, the broader questions of Total Reward and the Employee Value Proposition can be looked at for fairness, equity and creation of a reward philosophy which can be used across all Authorities.

Appendix 8

Material reviewed

Summary of material reviewed - previous reviews, national & local bodies/structures...

1. Facing The Future - Findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in fire and rescue authorities in England - Sir Ken Knight May 2013
2. National Agreement on Pay & Conditions of Service - National Joint Council for Local Government Services - First Edition 1997 (updated 2005)
3. The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives - Professor Sir George Bain 2002
4. Our Fire and Rescue Service - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister June 2003
5. Fire and rescue national framework for England - Department for Communities and Local Government July 2012
6. Accounting Officer Accountability System Statements for Local Government and for Fire and Rescue Authorities - Department for Communities and Local Government September 2013
7. National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services. Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service Fifth Edition 2006 (The Gold Book)
8. National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services. Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service Six Edition 2004 (Updated 2009) (The Grey Book).
9. Openness and accountability in local pay: Guidance under section 40 of the Localism Act - Department for Communities and Local Government February 2012
10. Openness and accountability in local pay: Guidance under section 40 of the Localism Act 2011 Supplementary Guidance - Department for Communities and Local Government February 2013
11. High Potential Leadership programme - Department for Communities and Local Government 2011
12. Leadership & Development in the Fire and Rescue Service, Consultation Paper, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister December 2005
13. Operational Statistics Bulletin for England 2012-13, Department for Communities and Local Government November 2013
14. Fire and Rescue Services: Going the extra mile - Dr Dave Baigent/Sarah O'Conner, Local Government Group, March 2011
15. Submission from Fire Officers Association parts 1 and 2 2014
16. Submission from the Fire Brigades Union and YouGov survey 2015

17. Submission from the Retained Fire Officers Union 2014
18. Submission from Women in Service (Fire Officers Association) 2014
19. Submission from Local Government Association 2014
20. Submission from Chief Fire Officers Association 2014
21. Submission from Association of Principal Fire Officers 2014
22. Confronting the Future, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service August 2014
23. Submission from the Asian Fire Services Association
24. Submission from Professor Kim Mather, Industrial Relations in Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service 2014
25. Submission by Professor Linda Dickens, Independent Chair, National Joint Council 2014
26. Response to Facing the Future review by County Durham and Darlington Fire Authority 2013
27. Accounting Officer Accountability System Statements for Local Government and for Fire and Rescue Authorities, September 2013
28. Submission from the Fire and Rescue College, Morton in the Marsh, 2014
29. High potential leadership programme part 1, Skills for Justice
30. Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge Toolkit, 2014
31. Response to Dorset Fire Authority consultation "Strengthening our Fire and Rescue Service", Dorset Fire Brigades Union, 2014
32. Community Protection Plan, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, 2014
33. Survey of Retained Duty System Managers, Michael Thewlis, Employment Research and Consulting, February 2011
34. Questionnaire responses received from 46 Fire and Rescue Authorities 2014/2015
35. Questionnaire responses received from 3,000 individual fire fighters
36. Face to face and group meetings with over 200 individuals (from Fire Authority Chairs, Senior Managers, Managers and Fire Fighters) from 21 Fire & Rescue Authorities 2014/2015.

ISBN: 978-1-78655-270-9

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