



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 14 June 2023

Report title: Summer Pressures Recommendations

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse

Report sponsor: AC Calum Bell, Head of Protection, Assurance and Development

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Action: Noting

Recommendations: That the content and recommendations detailed within this report are noted.

Executive Summary:

An initial Summer Pressures paper was presented to the Fire Authority on 12 October 2022, which informed on the pressures experienced by BFRS between the months of July (16 - 19) and August (9 - 15) 2022, which brought record high temperatures and dry weather that presented many challenges for Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) and other emergency responders across the country. This included the 19 July 2022 when the UK recorded its highest ever temperature of 40.3°C (104.5°F).

The purpose of this report is to provide a further update on the assurance, debriefing and review activities we have carried out in relation to the Summer Pressures and to highlight areas for consideration which have been derived from a Service wide Extreme / Adverse Weather Survey. It will also serve to inform on the multiple operational reports from the incidents attended by Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) during that period.

Major incidents were declared by fifteen FRSs across the country including neighbouring FRSs in London, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, as a result of the devastating outbreak of fires.

Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) received and BFRS attended an unprecedented number of calls, including many fires in the open / wildfires. Due to the professionalism, aptitude, commitment, skills and hard work of our staff, they were able to service the needs of these incidents whilst maintaining operational fire cover, and this has been recognised.

Following the initial Summer Pressures paper, an action was accepted to produce this additional report, which aims to breakdown the data harvested and develop

areas for consideration (Appendix 1), which will be used, but not limited to informing our next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and Corporate Plan.

Financial Implications:

Once all the recommendations have been considered, there will be some additional financial costs related to improvements, for example - purchasing additional vehicles, equipment, securing enhanced welfare supplies and potential additional resilience costs.

Any additional expenditure of this nature would need to be approved as part of the budget setting process.

Risk management:

Delivery of the recommendations following this report attributed to the summer pressures will contribute towards ensuring the Service's operational and organisational activities are continuously improved and developed, and are efficient, effective, and responsive to significant changes in the external or internal environments.

Failure to deliver these recommendations could expose:

- the Service, its personnel, and the public to operational, health, safety, and welfare risks.
- the Service to reputational and / or financial risks.

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report. Legal assurance will be obtained in advance of, or during, the implementation of any actions arising from this report.

Privacy and security implications:

This summer pressures recommendation report will not raise any privacy or security issues.

Duty to collaborate:

Although the Authority has committed to a default position of collaboration, not just with FRs in the Thames Valley, the reports generated are specific to the Service's operational and organisational activity. However, any opportunity to collaborate will be explored, as will the sharing of any identified operational learning through existing groups, including TVFCS who was also invited to feedback through the Extreme / Adverse Weather Survey.

Health and safety implications:

There are no negative implications on health and safety associated with this report. The recommendations and actions that have been created will continue to promote and enhance the existing health and safety culture within the Service with all associated costs being considered and governed through relevant boards.

Environmental implications:

Delivery of any recommendations or actions from this report will enhance the Service’s ability to identify and manage potential environmental hazards in both the internal and external surroundings.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

There are no negative impacts reference EDI from the publication of this report.

Once areas to consider have been prioritised and action owners assigned, each individual action may require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

Consultation and communication:

Learning from operational activity or recommendations are routinely published and communicated to all staff, utilising either the Intranet, HEAT* or the Operational Assurance newsletter. This approach is intended to ensure there is a clear understanding and appreciation of the collective responsibility toward continuous improvement in respect to operational performance.

From a monitoring and reporting perspective, the Head of Protection, Assurance and Development leads on the improvement plan recommendations and publication of any Learning Review of Command (LRC) report and chair the Operational Assurance Group (OAG).

The Head of Operational Training and Assurance has responsibility for delivering the Operational Assurance Improvement Plan (OAIP) recommendations and production of LRC reports in conjunction with the Operational Assurance Team (OAT).

* HEAT: internal electronic training record management system

Background papers:

Fire Authority, 12 October 2022, Summer Pressures, Item 10

[FA - Summer Pressures - October 2022](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Analytical Data	None

Appendix 1

Analytical Data:

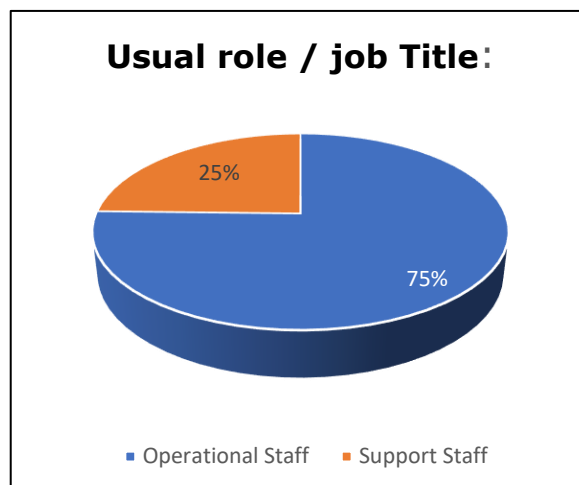
The themes and the areas to consider found within this report are derived from the following data sources:

1 - BFRS Extreme / Adverse Weather Survey Report

This survey was aimed at capturing the views and thoughts of all staff groups that were involved in these periods of extreme weather.

The responses were collated and reviewed by the Operational Assurance Team (OAT) with the aim to understand the challenges and to highlight learnings.

The diagram to the right illustrates from the **65** survey responses, **49** (75%) were from operational staff and **16** (25%) was from support staff.



The following survey headlines were chosen due to their perceived significance of what the Service wanted to establish from the results.

Nine Survey Headlines

- Preparedness
- Response
- Information available and Training provided
- Equipment and Procedures
- Communications (internal / external)
- Health Safety and Welfare
- Significant Challenges
- Support
- Understanding the strains / pressures encountered elsewhere

2 - OAT Incident Reports

- Incident Report Hedgerley Lane + M40 (Wildfire)
- Incident Report Kiddi Caru Nursery (Wildfire)
- Incident Report Wooburn Moor (Wildfire)

The OAT collated information on each of these incidents via incident and monitoring feedback forms through embedded active systems which are available to all BFRS staff following all operational incidents and exercises, during the process of collating information each of these major incidents also received a Learning Review of Command (LRC) with the aim to further establish additional details of the incident.

Invited to each LRC were operational commanders from across BFRS with invites also being sent to cross border services to ensure collaboration with our neighbours. These invites are also extended to partner agencies who were either involved or would have an interest in the learns from each incident.

These reports, along with any recommendations contained within, are presented to the Operational Assurance Group (OAG) for consideration. Recommendations accepted by the OAG are added to the Operational Assurance Improvement Plan (OAIP) which are reported on annually to the Fire Authority (FA).

The resulting actions taken are intended to improve operational effectiveness within BFRS and if appropriate, the lessons learnt are submitted to National Operational Learning (NOL) and / or Joint Organisational Learning (JOL), to ensure learning is shared throughout the UK FRS and with partner agencies.

Each of these Major Incidents occurred during the months that fall within the scope of this report on Summer Pressures that were encountered by BFRS.

Each report contains specific recommendations which have already been assigned action owners. Through the OAG, each owner will provide updates via the OAIP on an 8-weekly basis.

Data Analysis:

Staff engagement throughout BFRS was extensive in both the operational and support departments, the main objective was to gather first-hand information to build on the experiences from individuals who worked during the summer pressures.

The response to the extreme / adverse weather survey report was good and from all areas of the Service across all nine of the survey headlines. It became apparent that each response could be attributed to a specific theme, this helped to shape how the data was to be presented.

All completed areas to consider related to summer pressures will improve how BFRS deals with the risk that may be encountered in the future.

The themes with their areas to consider below do not include the recommendations found within the three incident reports as these have already been assigned and accepted by the individual action owners through the recognised governance

process, however it's important to highlight these reports and their recommendations as most of the areas for consideration below will be mirrored within these reports.

Areas to Consider:

Areas to consider have been created following analysis of the BFRS Extreme / Adverse Weather Survey responses and it focuses on the first six Survey headlines:

- Preparedness
- Response
- Information available and Training provided
- Equipment and Procedures
- Communications (internal / external)
- Health Safety and Welfare

These areas to consider have been categorised into broader themes and reflect all the recommendations from the 65 staff that responded to the BFRS Extreme / Adverse Weather Survey.

Please find below a table containing all the themes complete with examples of the areas to consider, the progress column highlights the ongoing work streams which will ensure the recommendations are delivered.

Theme	Area to Consider	Progress
Welfare	Refreshments / rehydration for people attending incidents. This includes how drinks and food is made available to crews.	Cool boxes have been purchased for every appliance and rehydration tablets are now part of the standard inventory in the welfare boxes. A growth bid for 23/24 has been submitted to Diversify and modernise the Service's Operational Support Units (OSUs), introducing a range of equipment to support incident welfare. Further progress against this action will rely on securing the funding
	Dedicated welfare unit.	A growth bid for 23/24 has been submitted to Diversify and modernise the Service's Operational Support Units (OSUs), introducing a range of equipment to support

		incident welfare. Further progress against this action will rely on securing the funding
	Toilet facilities and feminine hygiene products to be made available as standard.	A growth bid for 23/24 has been submitted to Diversify and modernise the Service's Operational Support Units (OSUs), introducing a range of equipment to support incident welfare. Further progress against this action will rely on securing the funding
	Designated rest breaks whilst at spate* conditions. *Spate – when receiving large numbers of calls in quick succession i.e. wildfire / flooding	OIN-TV-207 Managing Welfare and Reliefs at Incidents - BFRS Intranet (interactgo.com) will be reviewed and put out for consultation to see if further guidance is required to address the feedback received
Theme	Area to Consider	Progress
Extreme Heat Response	Introduce Wildfire Tactical Advisor in BFRS.	2 Station Commanders identified and initial level training delivered. (Awaiting national course dates)
	Introduce additional Operational Communications Tactical Advisors (currently 1 in BFRS).	Additional Tac Advisors approved by TSG 2023/2024
	Review Incident Command Support – ICU	Following the recruitment of a FF in the Technical Team. The FF and WC technical will look to positively crew the ICU to increase availability and resilience whilst

	availability and resourcing.	delivering the Incident Command Support collaborative review.
Theme	Area to Consider	Progress
Wildfire Equipment, PPE and Vehicles	4 x 4 Vehicles – to include procuring additional specialist appliances, training, and use of and utilisation of an existing appliance.	2 x Outdoor firefighting units are being built by Angloco to enhance the capability of the Nissan Navara 4 x 4 vehicles we have in service. This includes firefighting capability, tyre and suspension upgrades to increase the payload of the vehicle and make it more suitable for driving off road
	Review wildfire equipment availability – this could include seasonal stowage options.	A growth bid for 23/24 has been submitted to Diversify and modernise the Service’s Operational Support Units (OSUs), introducing a range of equipment to support seasonal risk, introducing enhanced wildfire capability. Further progress against this action will rely on securing the funding
	All new appliances to have air conditioning as standard.	This has been actioned through the TV collaborative Appliance contract. 3 vehicles have already been introduced to our fleet with aircon and a further 3 are in production which should begin to be introduced in October 23.
	Review drone capability – thermal image capability.	A drone review is planned for Q3 23/24 which will include a review of BFRS capability and consider the introduction of a more formal collaborative agreement with TVP and voluntary organisations like BSAR
	Uniform Review (PPE) – this is in relation to summer pressures, to include shorts	This recommendation will be factored into the service wide uniform review which will commence in June 23.

	under structural firefighting PPE, collared t-shirts and leggings that seal at the bottom.	
Theme	Area to Consider	Progress
Extreme Heat Training	Review relevant electronic training materials on HEAT.	Station Commander Training Assurance is currently reviewing the Maintenance of Operational Competencies (MOC) to include all wildfire E-learning.
	Review Relevant Maintenance of Operational Competencies (MOC) on HEAT.	Station Commander Training Assurance is currently reviewing the Maintenance of Operational Competencies (MOC) to include all wildfire E-learning.
Theme	Area to Consider	Progress
Operational Assurance	Assurance Exercises – to include tabletops.	Work In Progress to deliver multiple desktop exercises to every operational watch within BFRS.
Theme	Area to Consider	Progress
Wildfire Risk Information	Proactive use of the OSR	This factors into the current OSR review.
Theme	Area to Consider	Progress
Wildfire Strategy	Review how other services assess, review, resource, and their guidance	Info gathered: Berkshire report. Peer review from Surrey.

	regarding summer pressures / wildfires.	2 Station Commanders identified to become BFRS Wildfire Tactical Advisors and initial level training delivered.
	Media / Communications support outside of normal business hours.	This is part of ongoing work to look at the Service's incident comms response. This includes out of hours.

Not every recommendation from staff has formed an action, prioritisation has been afforded to the themes that reoccurred often.

This is not an exhausted list of actions that would potentially improve how BFRS copes with the summer pressures in the future, however each of the themes highlighted should be considered in conjunction with the other competing priorities.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Summer pressures has the potential to form part of BFRS core business, and due to the nature of these pressures they will provide several challenges moving forward.

BFRS staff were able to service the needs of these summer pressure incidents whilst maintaining operational fire cover, and this has been recognised, however there are multiple areas for improvement as can be viewed in the themes.

Some of the areas to consider may be addressed relatively rapidly and simply, however, most themes and areas highlighted will require further work, thought and financial support over a longer period and current capacity of departments must not be overlooked.

All the major incident recommendations have been added to the OAIP and action owners will update through the OAG.

This report documents credible evidence gathered from multiple reliable sources to provide recommendations to the relevant boards, the next steps will be to discuss how, and which recommendations will be accepted, considering risk, financial implications, priorities, and capacity.

Action owners have been assigned to each area at the appropriate level and time scales discussed, resulting in regular updates through one of our recognised governance pathways.