

**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  
Tel: 01296 744441



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**Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive**  
Jason Thelwell

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To: Members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

20 April 2023

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS**  
**AND PUBLIC**

Please note the content of  
Page 2 of this Agenda Pack

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at an Extraordinary Meeting of the **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** to be held in Meeting Room 1, Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Stocklake, Aylesbury on **FRIDAY 28 APRIL 2023 at 11.00 AM** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

Graham Britten  
Director of Legal and Governance

**Health and Safety:**

There will be limited facilities for members of the public to observe the meeting in person. A recording of the meeting will be available after the meeting.

Chairman: Councillor Rouse

Councillors: Adoh, Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Christensen, Darlington, Exon, Hall, Hopkins, Hussain, Lambert, Mahendran, McLean, Stuchbury, Waite, Walsh



**MAKING YOU SAFER**



## **To observe the meeting as a member of the Press and Public**

The Authority supports the principles of openness and transparency. To enable members of the press and public to see or hear the meeting this meeting will be recorded. Please visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxl3vIiv7bh1Q>

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 adjourn a Meeting to hear a member 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.

A request to speak on a specified agenda item should be submitted by email to [gbritten@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:gbritten@bucksfire.gov.uk) by 4pm on the Monday prior to the meeting. Please state if you would like the Director of Legal and Governance to read out the statement on your behalf, or if you would like to be sent a 'teams' meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

If the meeting is then adjourned, prior to inviting a member of the public to speak, the Chairman should advise that they:

- (a) speak for no more than four minutes,
- (b) 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.

## **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. Such attendance will be facilitated if requests are made to [enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk) at least two clear working days before the meeting. Statements can be read out on behalf of the Member by the Director of Legal and Governance, or the Member may request a 'team's meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

## **Petitions**

Any Member of the constituent Councils, a District Council, or Parish Council, falling within the Fire Authority area may Petition the Fire Authority.

The substance of a petition presented at a Meeting of the Authority shall be summarised, in not more than four minutes, by the Member of the Council who presents it (as above). If the petition does not refer to a matter before the Authority, it shall be referred without debate to the appropriate 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*, at least two clear working days before the day of the Meeting of the Authority or the Committee.

## COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY - TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To appoint the Authority's Standing Committees and Lead Members.
2. To determine the following issues after considering recommendations from the Executive Committee, or in the case of 2(a) below, only, after considering recommendations from the Overview and Audit Committee:
  - (a) variations to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
  - (b) the medium-term financial plans including:
    - (i) the Revenue Budget;
    - (ii) the Capital Programme;
    - (iii) the level of borrowing under the Local Government Act 2003 in accordance with the Prudential Code produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy; and
  - (c) a Precept and all decisions legally required to set a balanced budget each financial year;
  - (d) the Prudential Indicators in accordance with the Prudential Code;
  - (e) the Treasury Strategy;
  - (f) the Scheme of Members' Allowances;
  - (g) the Integrated Risk Management Plan and Action Plan;
  - (h) the Annual Report.
  - (i) the Capital Strategy
3. To determine the Code of Conduct for Members on recommendation from the Overview and Audit Committee.
4. To determine all other matters reserved by law or otherwise, whether delegated to a committee or not.
5. To determine the terms of appointment or dismissal of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, and deputy to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, or equivalent.
6. To approve the Authority's statutory pay policy statement.

## AGENDA

### Item No:

**1. Apologies**

**2. Minutes**

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 15 February 2023. **(Pages 7 - 22)**

**3. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting**

The Chairman to invite officers to provide verbal updates on any actions noted in the Minutes from the previous meeting.

**4. 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.

**5. Chairman's Announcements**

To receive the Chairman's announcements (if any).

**6. Petitions**

To receive petitions under Standing Order SOA6.

**7. Questions**

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA7.

**8. Values and Culture in fire and rescue services**

To consider Item 8 **(Pages 23 - 34)**

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 14 June (Annual Meeting) 2023 at 11am.

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



## **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY**

### **ROLE DESCRIPTION**

#### **LEAD MEMBERS**

1. To take a lead role in providing support and constructive challenge to senior officers in the development of strategies and plans and contributing towards the strategic direction of the Authority, within the Authority's overall policy objectives.
2. To act as a 'sounding board' for senior officers on issues within the portfolio, and be supportive in dealing with any problems at a strategic level.
3. To review, in conjunction with senior officers, the service within the portfolio.
4. To keep abreast of related developments and policies at national, regional and local level.
5. To take the lead in reporting to the Authority, one of its committees, or panels on issues within the portfolio.
6. To attend the Overview and Audit Committee, at its request, in connection with any issues associated with the portfolio which is the subject of scrutiny.
7. To act as a spokesperson for the Authority on issues within the portfolio.
8. To represent the Authority on bodies, at events and at conferences related to the portfolio, as appointed by the Executive Committee and to feedback to the Authority any issues of relevance / importance.

(Approved 8 June 2007)

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 11 AM.

**Present:** Councillors Adoh (part), Darlington (part), Exon, Hall, Hopkins (Vice Chairman), Lambert (part), Mahendran, McLean, Rouse (Chairman), Stuchbury, Waite and Walsh

**Officers:** J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer), M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), M Hemming (Director of Finance and Assets), A Hussain (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets), A Carter (Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO), P Mould (Area Commander), M Hussey (Principal Accountant), A Collett (Organisational Development Manager), F Mansfield (HR Advisory and Development Manager) C Bell (Head of Protection, Assurance and Development) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

**Apologies:** Councillors Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Christensen and Hussain

The Chairman advised the Authority that the meeting was being recorded and would be uploaded on to the Authority's YouTube channel after the meeting.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vIiv7bh1Q>

## **FA44 NEW MEMBER OF AUTHORITY AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEE**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Shanika Mahendran to the Authority.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Shanika Mahendran be appointed onto the Overview and Audit Committee.

That Councillor Emily Darlington be appointed onto the Executive Committee.

## **FA45 MINUTES**

Councillor McLean to be added to the Minutes as attending the meeting.

RESOLVED –

That with the above amendment, the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 7 December 2022, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **FA46 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The Chairman advised that:

FA33 – High Wycombe Fire Station, the Lead Member for Finance and Assets, Information Security and IT to report back on the improvements to the station: due to be completed by the end of March 2023.

FA 35 - White Ribbon Accreditation process the Chief Fire Officer to ensure it was raised at the next meeting of the Thames Valley Collaboration Steering Group: this had been done at the December meeting.

FA37 – Procurement Strategy 2022-2026 the Procurement Manager to give the Overview and Audit Committee updates on social value progress: this would come to a future meeting of the Committee.

FA40 – (a) The Health and Safety Advisor to run a report on underlying causes and split between actions taken by an individual or anything that the organisation would need to highlight to reduce injuries for future reports and (b) The Chairman requested that future analysis incorporated data on protected characteristics: the Lead Member for Health and Safety and Corporate Risk had been updated on the above and was happy with the actions that had been taken.

FA41 – Building Risk Review and Protection Update, the Chairman requested a briefing for Members on the Building Safety Act (Group Commander Community and Business Policy): the relevant officer has agreed to do this but was unavailable today as a witness in court proceedings.

#### **FA47 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

None.

(Councillor Lambert joined the meeting)

#### **FA48 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman advised Members that with regard to the ongoing pay negotiations, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) had taken a ballot that met the thresholds for potential strike action. There had been a number of discussions in



January leading to a revised National Employers proposal. The Chairman and Chief Fire Officer took part in those discussions and a 7% uplift was made to grey book employees for 2022/23 and a 5% uplift for 2023/24. Since the offer was made, the FBU had confirmed they would undertake a consultative ballot with their members and no strike action would be taken while it was underway. The FBU Executive had indicated that it would be advising its members to accept the settlement and hopefully, industrial action would be avoided. This would allow the Authority to move forward and focus on transformation of the Service.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Fire Officer and Senior Management Team for the huge amount of work that had been undertaken to ensure the Authority and the Service was in a position where it could deal with the challenges of any industrial action should it happen.

Since the last Authority Meeting, the Chairman's activities had included attending the Christmas Carol Service. This was well attended by guests from both the Service and the wider Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes community. Thank you to all those involved in organising such a successful event.

The Chairman joined Rob Butler MP on his visit to the Urban Search and Rescue team at Aylesbury Fire Station, in support of our desire to retain this vital capability.

The Chairman asked if the Chief Fire Officer could ask the respective councils to write reflecting the Authority's views on the impact of losing the fire link grant and USAR funding.

Wholetime Firefighters – The latest cohort (8) for Wholetime Firefighters commenced employment on 3 January 2023 and are currently halfway through their Firefighter Development Programme at the Fire Service College. We have sixteen new and one existing apprentice firefighters commencing on 1 March 2023 and two candidates on hold from this intake for the October 2023 course. Recruitment for the next cohort of apprentice firefighters will commence on 20 February, as we have secured eighteen places at the Fire Service College for October 2023. We are also looking at other opportunities with the Fire Service College and other fire and rescue services that may allow us to add to the above intakes throughout 2023.

Chief Fire  
Officer

Transferee Firefighters – Throughout February/March 2023, we will have the following transferee recruitment campaigns open –

- On Call to Wholetime transferee (internal only)
- On Call & Wholetime Firefighter transferees (internal and external)

Following these, we will look to promote another On Call to Wholetime Crew Commander and Watch Commander transferee intake for internal and external candidates for commencement in September 2023.

(Councillor Adoh joined the meeting)

#### **FA49 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

##### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 8 FEBRUARY 2023**

##### **(B) MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) 2023/24 TO 2027/28**

The Lead Member for Finance and Assets, Information Security and IT introduced the report and informed Members that a lot of work had gone into this budget. It was a budget that set out the Chairman’s strategic vision for transformation of the Service moving forward and safeguarding the plans for 300 wholetime firefighters. The financial position was better than it was, but there was still a huge amount of risk around utilities and pay.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that the revised appendices presented the revenue and capital Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28. It had been a challenging year with inflation reaching double figures and having a significant impact on the expenditure budgets.

There had been a significant change in the Council tax precept flexibility for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). The referendum threshold had increased from 2% to 3% throughout the MTFP. Furthermore, the government proposed additional precept flexibility for FRAs to increase their precept by up to £5 for 2023/24 only, without the need to hold a referendum. This additional flexibility was welcomed and reflected in the MTFP.

The council tax collection fund base had been improving since the start of the pandemic where it had been adversely impacted, and the tax base had reduced. Last year the Authority saw the council tax base increase by

2.19% and there had been another year of continued growth averaging at over 2%.

The Revenue Support grant had increased in line with Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Authority had been informed that the Service's grant had reduced from the previous year by circa £150k but the Authority would still receive in the region of £200k.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets informed Members that there had been some negatives. The Firelink grant would reduce by 20% and no more grant would be received from 2024/25 onwards. The Service was verbally notified in January 2023 that the grant funding for the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability hosted at Aylesbury would end on 31 March 2024. This would reduce the amount of fire specific grant funding from 2024/25 onward by a further £817k per annum, meaning the Service would no longer receive any fire specific grant funding from 2026/27 onwards.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that since the report was presented to the Executive Committee on 8 February 2023, there had been two significant events that had required the appendices to be updated further. On 8 February 2023, the National Employers agreed to make a revised pay offer of 7% increase on all basic pay rates and Continual Professional Development payments (with effect from 1 July 2022) and a 5% increase (with effect from 1 July 2023). Although the offer was still subject to agreement, pay inflation assumptions for those two years had been updated to reflect this latest offer. Future year planning assumptions for pay awards have been revised upwards to 4% per year.

The Service had been able to agree and award a 12-month fixed price contract for both gas and electricity, which due to movements in wholesale prices during the period in which the budget has been developed, would cost significantly less than initial projections. Therefore, the utilities budget throughout the MTFP had been reduced by £500k per annum. It should be noted that the overall increase in utilities prices would still cost the Service circa £500k more per year than during 2021-22.

A Member raised a question about the reduction of the Firelink grant and potential loss of USAR, which equated to almost a £1m cut in funding which was a significant amount coming out of the budget. Also, the impact on the Service, especially losing USAR which not only benefited

the residents of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, but also residents across the country. Was the Authority making enough fuss to the government.

The Chairman advised Members that the Authority had not yet received formal notification that the USAR grant was being removed. The Chairman and Chief Fire Officer had been focussed on influencing government. There had been a lot of support from the local MPs. Rob Butler MP had visited USAR and seen the team in operation, as mentioned in the Chairman's Announcements. There had also been correspondence between Rob Butler MP and the Fire Minister, and both the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer had conversations with the Fire Minister and the National Fire Chiefs Council regarding USAR. It was important that this Service retained USAR and this was what was being conveyed to the Home Office.

The Chief Fire Officer gave his thanks to the USAR team who continued to provide a fantastic service with this hanging over them. Every time they were mobilised, locally or nationally, the feedback was excellent.

A Member asked if a risk assessment had been undertaken if the Service was to lose the USAR capability.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that so far, there had been no correspondence from the Home Office to indicate that the Authority would be losing the USAR team, there had only been an informal meeting with the National Fire Chiefs Council who had identified that this Service was one of the teams at risk. The Chief Fire Officer had not yet seen the risk assessment from the Home Office or how the decision was being made, or what was being taken into account. In terms of the risk position, this would need to be encompassed into the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). This Service needed a heavy rescue facility, and other fire and rescue services within the Thames Valley, based their response models on this Service's USAR team being available in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. The next two nearest teams were West Midlands and Essex.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that as the Chief Finance Officer, he was required to report on the assumptions made and the adequacy of financial reserves. His assessment that the reserves were adequate and sustainable was based on Members approving the recommendation to increase the council tax by £5. Should that not be the case, his professional opinion was that the reserves were not sustainable.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report and Statement of the Chief Finance Officer (see section 8 of Annex A) be noted.
2. That a Council Tax precept of £77.16 for a band D equivalent property (equal to an increase of 10p per week) and the revenue budget as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.
3. That the capital programme as set out in Appendix 2 be approved.

Details of the recorded vote for resolutions 1-3 above are set out below:

	For	Against	Abstained
Adoh	✓		
Darlington	✓		
Exon	✓		
Hall	✓		
Hopkins	✓		
Lambert	✓		
Mahendran	✓		
McLean	✓		
Rouse	✓		
Stuchbury	✓		
Waite	✓		
Walsh	✓		

**(A) THE PRUDENTIAL CODE, PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND MINIMUM REVENUE POSITION**

The Principal Accountant advised Members this was a technical paper and was presented annually to the Authority. The Prudential Code was established to ensure the capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with good professional practice.

The Prudential Indicators presented here demonstrate that the current plans for capital investment meet these criteria and present an acceptable level of risk to the Authority. Minimum Revenue Provision was a statutory charge to the General Fund, which ensured the Authority had sufficient cash balances to repay borrowing upon maturity, reducing the refinancing risk. Since 2015/16, there had been sufficient funds set aside to cover the repayment of the long-term borrowing, this could be seen in the background paper.

Historically, early repayment of these loans had not been an option due to the prohibitive penalties on early repayment. However, due to the rise in interest rates since December 2021, it may be more feasible to repay some of the long-term borrowing early. Officers were authorised to make early repayments within the prudential limits where, having consulted with the treasury advisors, there was an opportunity to do this on beneficial terms. Officers would discuss any early repayments with the Lead Member before any final decisions were made. There were currently no plans for additional borrowing according to the MTFP.

The Chairman asked if officers pay off debts early, that it was reported (after the event) at the next Executive Committee meeting.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Prudential Indicators for 2023/24 be approved.
2. That the Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement be approved.

### **(C) MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

The Chairman advised Members that there was a discussion at the Executive Committee last week in relation to this paper and at that time it was against the backdrop of an unresolved pay settlement discussion. The view of the Executive Committee was that it was not appropriate for Members Allowances to be changed while a pay settlement discussion was underway. As a result, the Executive Committee made the following recommendation to the Fire Authority 'That a Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2023/24 be adopted index linked to the 2022/23 'Grey Book' pay award'. For clarity, that would

Director of  
Finance and  
Assets

mean the pay award would need to be fully settled before it was applied, and it would be linked to the grey book.

RESOLVED -

That a Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2023/24 be adopted index linked to the 2022/23 'Grey Book' pay award.

(Councillor Darlington left the meeting)

#### **FA50 PAY POLICY PRINCIPLES AND STATEMENT 2023/24**

The HR Advisory and Development Manager advised Members that the pay policy was required to be updated each financial year and was presented to the Authority today for approval as the 2023/24 pay policy for the Authority, effective 1 April 2023. This pay policy was based on the current 2022/23 pay policy and had been updated with minor amendments made where appropriate, as detailed with red and unlined or struck through.

Looking at specific sections of the pay policy and the pay multiples and ratio of highest to lowest pay, it continued to fall for the eleventh year, seeing this eleventh year ratio improving by 34% since first reporting in 2012. However, it was important to note this reduction was due to the fact that no pay increase had been put through for the highest salary, however, the lowest had seen an increase.

The cover paper made a note to the government continuing their discussion on exit payments and the consultation undertaken during 2022. This consultation was to seek views on proposed guidance and processes prescribing additional reporting requirements and increased scrutiny and assurance on exit decisions. To reduce the use of large exit payments in the public sector, to improve consistency and accountability in decision making.

It was the Government's intention to ensure that a comprehensive and effective set of controls were in place across the public sector, and it was anticipated an exit payment cap or similar would be reintroduced in some form, and officers await details of any Regulation changes and implementation dates.

The Chairman asked about the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) which was currently showing a neutral impact for that level of assurance. He also welcomed the reducing gap from high to medium salary. On the EIA it referred to the

gender pay gap report and he asked when this report would be coming to the Authority.

The HR Advisory and Development Manager advised Members that the Gender Pay Gap report would be going to the Executive Committee on 22 March 2023. The Gender Pay Gap report would be presented to Members to be approved to be published on the government's website. The EIA showed a neutral impact because there were no specific impacts identified within any of those areas, as it was a more general report, rather than specifically looking at individual areas.

The Chairman asked if the Authority could receive ethnicity pay gap information as well as gender pay gap in future reports.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Pay Policy Principles and Statement as set out in Appendix one, as the statutory Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24, is approved for publication.
2. That the Authority notes the Pay Multiple ratio continues to fall for the eleventh year running, with the eleventh-year period seeing the ratio improved by 34 per cent since 2012.

#### **FA51 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023/24**

The Principal Accountant advised Members that this was the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24, which included statements in relation to the Treasury Management Policy, Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy. There were no significant changes to the strategy and Officers would continue to invest surplus funds in secure short-term deposits, maturing on a frequent basis, whilst ensuring the Authority could maintain adequate liquidity and meet short-term expenditure requirements. The current borrowing position, as of 31 December 2022, included loans of £6.177m, with an average interest rate of 4.64% and interest payable of £283k per annum. In May 2022, the Authority repaid a maturing long-term loan (£620k). The next maturing loan was due March 2024 (£1m). These repayments do not directly impact the revenue budget and funds had been set aside to ensure the Authority could repay the loan when due.

Head of  
Human  
Resources



Historically, early repayment of loans had not been an option due to the prohibitive penalties on early repayment. However, due to the rise in interest rates since December 2021, it may be more feasible to repay some of the long-term borrowing early. Officers were authorised to make early repayments within the prudential limits where, having consulted with the treasury advisors, there was an opportunity to do this on beneficial terms. Officers would discuss any early repayments with the Lead Member before any final decisions were made.

The current investment position as of 31 December 2022, included investments and bank account balances of £17.598m averaging 1.56% interest between April and December 2022. The investment portfolio included £2m investment in sustainable deposits. Officers would continue to explore sustainable investments when these investment deals mature. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee had increased the interest base rate on ten consecutive occasions since December 2021, currently at 4%. This had resulted in an increase in the level of returns from investments for the Authority. Therefore, the investment returns budget for 2023/24 would increase to £350k. This figure had been reflected into the MTFP. The treasury advisors were forecasting for the interest base rate to peak at 4.5%. During 2023/24, Officers would continue to monitor the Treasury Management Performance, and this would be reported to the Overview and Audit Committee.

A Member asked about the number of reds ratings in the UK counterparties and so few for the non UK ones. How do we evidence and track those changes.

The Principal Accountant advised that Officers receive weekly notifications from their treasury advisors of all of the counterparties and any movements that had happened in their ratings. In terms of current investments, the Authority had no investments outside of the UK and there was a threshold of plus six months.

A Member asked that with all the good work being done, were all staff members kept up to date with information.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members, that staff were updated with regular Vlogs, the Authority meetings were recorded and available for all staff to watch on YouTube,

Station visits, leadership group meetings, the Service does try to get all information out to staff.

The Chairman asked about the target benchmark for interest rates of 2%, the previous year hit 2.6%. Given that the benchmark rate looks slightly under ambitious, how do Officers ensure the target was sufficiently ambitious for the Authority.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that as accountants, they would take a slightly prudent approach, and rather under estimate than over estimate. There would also be a slight lag, as the investments were over a range of maturity dates and interest rates were already locked in. This might be a lower rate than the rate of interest increase, especially when the rate of interest was going up so quickly, but likewise, if interest rates start to drop, there would be a positive lag as the rates start dropping as the longer term deals were locked in. Officers work with the treasury advisors to try and get a prudent benchmark for that rate of return, but obviously try and exceed this throughout the year.

RESOLVED –

That the Authority approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2023/24.

**FA52 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE  
AUTHORITY APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Organisational Development Manager advised that this report presented an update to Members on the Authority's apprenticeship programme, its current funding arrangements, and future opportunities. This update provides an overview of the apprenticeship journey, the range of apprenticeship subject areas, and also brought up to date current numbers enrolled on programmes and future plans.

The report showed details of the levy payments and spending, and highlights that because the Authority had been so effective in fully utilising its levy, it had now entered into co-funding arrangements with the department of education, where they fund 95% of the apprenticeship cost and the Authority funds the other 5%.

The Organisational Development department were currently exploring other potential funding options. It was possible for levy paying employers to transfer a percentage of their unused levy funds to other employers. The team had reached out to local colleges within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, who the Authority deliver its apprenticeship programmes through, as well as other fire and rescue services, to determine if this would be a viable option for the Authority. The enrolment numbers showed the Authority had consistently exceeded the public sector target of 2.3% of its workforce in new starts each year.

The Organisational Development Manager advised Members that last week was National Apprenticeship Week, and the Communications Team had run case studies on all social media platforms of current apprentices in various roles across the organisation, and the positive experiences they were having. The Service also attended the NFCC National Apprenticeship Conference, and spoke to other services on how they recruit, train and deliver their apprenticeships.

The Organisational Development Manager advised Members that this update showcased the success of the Authority's apprenticeship programme, the level of investment in new and existing staff across the Service and how it could enable succession planning, resilience, and future proofing by recruiting and training apprentices into a number of roles across the organisation. The energy, enthusiasm, and diversity that apprentices bring to the roles benefits the organisation, whilst enabling the Authority to show them what it can offer as an employer and a career within the fire and rescue service.

The Chairman stated that the performance of the Service with new starters against the government target was the best he had seen, and the Service should be incredibly proud, not only the number of apprenticeships, but the mix of apprenticeships that were being delivered.

The Chairman congratulated the way in which the Service conducted itself through National Apprenticeship Week, the social media was superb, with some excellent case studies showing both diversity in terms of gender and an excellent neurodiversity case study as well.

The Chairman felt apprenticeships were a really great way of driving diversity in the workplace, both in terms of age,

and other characteristics and it would be helpful if in future reports, some of these statistics could be included.

The Chairman was also supportive of a concerted effort from the Authority in approaching large national employers, particularly those based in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, to ask for support with levy transfer, because there was a significant underspend with some of those larger employers.

RESOLVED –

That the information contained within this update is noted.

**FA53 THE CHARTER FOR FAMILIES BEREAVED THROUGH PUBLIC TRAGEDY**

The Director of Legal and Governance advised Members that it was with great pleasure that he presented this report to the Authority, recommending that it sign up to the Charter for Families Bereaved Through Public Tragedy. The proposals for adoption, which had been planned to take to the Authority in 2020 before the disruption of the Covid pandemic and changes of membership on the Authority, were reinvigorated by the attendance of the Right Reverend James Jones at a conference of the National Fire Chiefs Council at the end of November in 2022. Coincidentally, after this item had been added to today's agenda, the National Police Chiefs Council announced on 31 January its formal response to the Right Reverend James Jones report which was published in 2017 and was referenced in the executive summary. This also led to the matter of bringing into legal effect some aspects of the Right Reverend James Jones's report being raised again in Parliament with cross-party back bench support. The impact on the Authority would be minimal and would be underpinned in the employee's Code of Conduct and the Complaints procedure. For Members information, the local FBU representative had seen a copy of the draft report, and fully endorsed its proposals, and would be happy for a joint statement to be issued via the Authority's website.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that it was with mixed emotions that this report was brought here today, as from a personal perspective, a member of his family was killed at Hillsborough and his whole family went through the issues of Hillsborough and the trauma of that over decades.

Organisational  
Development  
Manager

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that when they went through the hearings and the final court hearings and found out how his family member had died. It was not until 30 years later that the family, for the first time, realised that there was actually somebody with him when he died. A police officer who tried his best to save his life. The family never got a chance to thank that police officer for his actions and that police officer never knew the person he tried to help.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that this paper encouraged authorities, to be open, honest, and transparent and think about the families of those who were bereaved in tragedies that effect the public. From a personal perspective he hoped the Authority accept and endorse this approach moving forward.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Fire Officer for sharing this, as he knew it would not have been easy for him, but he appreciated him doing so.

The Chairman also asked that the Authority not just signed the Charter, but Officers made sure it was embedded in the way the Authority operated and how it thought about things.

The Chairman would also like it to be sufficiently reflected, where needed, through the Authority's policies and procedures, and also to remind everyone about the expectations that signing the Charter placed upon the Authority, so it does not get signed and forgotten.

RESOLVED –

That 'The Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy' be adopted and be attested by the signatures of the Chairman and the Chief Fire Officer.

#### **FA54 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be the Annual Meeting, and will be held on Wednesday 14 June 2023 at 11am, at The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 12.27 PM.

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Extraordinary Fire Authority, 28 April 2023

**Report title:** Values and Culture in fire and rescue services

**Lead Member:** Councillor Simon Rouse

**Report sponsor:** Jason Thelwell, Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

**Author and contact:** Anne-Marie Carter, Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO, [acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk)

**Action:** Decision

**Recommendations:**

- 1) That the Fire Authority should accept the recommendations allocated to the Chief Fire Officer in full
  - 2) That the Service will fully engage and support the delivery of the remaining recommendations
  - 3) That the Fire Authority support a risk being escalated to the Corporate risk register – Poor Culture
- 

**Executive summary:**

On Thursday 30 March 2023 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published 'Values and culture in fire and rescue services'. The report has 9 themes supported by 35 recommendations and all Fire and Rescue Services alongside, the government and national fire bodies are urged to implement them as a matter of urgency.

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) and Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) welcome the report and the recommendations within it.

BFRS has always taken the culture of our service extremely seriously. Our Values have been in place since 2011 and we want to make sure all our staff and the public we serve are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Of the 35 recommendations, 19 are owned the Chief Fire Officer. Work has already started on a number of these recommendations and progress can be found in Appendix 1. Following the feedback regarding the various streams of work and plans, including the previously presented Exploring our Culture paper, these recommendations will now feed into a larger people plan driven by the BFRS people strategy.

**Financial implications:** Any costs associated with this will come from established budgets, or where this is not possible growth bids will be submitted for work that is not covered. Any training required will be taken through the Training Strategy Group who review any training needs identified and prioritise these within the allocated budget.

**Risk management:** The risk of not accepting these recommendations and the actions associated with this has been added to the Human Resources Risk Register and, subject to recommendation 3, this this will be escalated to the Corporate Risk Register.

If the Service does not review the measures in place, employee wellbeing is impacted affecting recruitment, employee morale, retention, and future improvements to working practices.

**Legal implications:** Legal inputs are sought and provided as and when required in respect of all the strands within the recommendations.

**Privacy and security implications:** Previous employee relation cases have been reviewed, the details of these are limited to the Hearing Manager, investigator and the Employee Relations team. Any future cases will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially. Any learning from investigations, informal and formal management interventions and case hearings will be fed into procedures and guidance notes and communicated to all employees; Neither individual cases or employees will be identified.

Freedom of Information requests are processed adhering to confidentiality and data protection guidelines.

**Duty to collaborate:** South East Employers and the Addressing Inequalities Group made up of five Fire and Rescue Services were sent the Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Procedures for feedback. Feedback was incorporated into the final documents. Each service's approach to the Culture actions undertaken are discussed at the six-weekly meetings, so that learning is shared.

Two members of the Service attended the National Fire Chiefs Council Culture event on 27 and 28 March, learns from the event have been brought back to the service and will be incorporated into our processes.

**Health and safety implications:** Employee Health and Wellbeing is a key area of the People Strategy. The Human Resources Team support managers and employees across the service – for example Employee Assistance Procedure, Welfare Officer, Occupational Health, Mental Wellbeing Support Officers, a range of procedures on absence management, code of conduct, whistleblowing, grievances, conduct and capability.

**Environmental implications:** There are no Environmental impacts.



**Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:** The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group meet every month, they discuss issues of concern with stakeholders from across the service. BFRS Culture is a standing agenda item.

The EDI group continue to work on the EDI objectives, the progress on these can be found in the People strategy – year 2 update.

Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for each recommendation as appropriate.

**Consultation and communication:** There will be continued engagement with staff and the public regarding the Culture they experience whilst working for or engaging with BFRS. The People strategy will continue to be reviewed annually with the output shared with members.

**Background papers:**

HMICFRS Values and Culture in fire and rescue services Report

[Values and culture in fire and rescue services - HMICFRS – Home \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

HMICFRS Values and Culture report terms of reference:

[Terms of reference: Spotlight report on values and culture in fire and rescue services](#)

22 March November 2023 - Overview and Audit Committee: Exploring our Culture

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/03/executive-committee-22-march-2023-item-9-exploring-our-culture-report.pdf/>

Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade:

[Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade \(london-fire.gov.uk\)](https://london-fire.gov.uk)

FRS Culture News Articles:

[South Wales Fire Service faces independent review into abusive behaviour by firefighters | ITV News](#)

[Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service has 'taken steps to improve culture' - BBC News](#)

BFRS People Strategy 2020-2025 – Year 2 update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/09/fa-item-14-121022.pdf/>

His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report 2020/21

[Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2021/22 – BFRS - HMICFRS](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
Appendix 1	Values and Culture in the fire and rescue services recommendations and update	

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## HMIFRS Values and Culture Recommendation Dashboard

Total Number of Recommendations	<b>35</b>
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### Owner Breakdown

BFRS	19
Fire Standards Board	3
Government	2
Home Office	7
National Employers, LGA, NFCC	1
NFCC	2
Police	1

### BFRS Progress

Complete	2	11%
In Progress - On track	13	68%
Off Track	0	0%
Escalate	0	0%
Not started	4	21%

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## HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '23 Update
<b>Raising concerns</b>					
1	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes.	BFRS	01-Oct-23	In Progress - On track	We have had a Whistleblowing line in place for a number of years, which is run by an external organisation. However, we recognise we need to do more to give staff the confidence to speak up. We are now working with several service providers to introduce a dedicated confidential reporting line. This will be supported by a strong marketing 'Speak up' campaign to highlight this to BFRS staff.
2	By 1 October 2023, National Employers, the Local Government Association and the National Fire Chiefs Council should review any current independent arrangements whereby staff can raise concerns outside their FRS. They should then ensure that all FRS staff have access to an independent reporting line that can be used as a confidential way to raise concerns outside their own FRS.	National Employers, LGA, NFCC	01-Oct-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
3	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review the support available for those who have raised concerns and take any action needed to make sure these provisions are suitable.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	In Progress - On track	We have a range of support in place for those that raise concerns inc - Welfare Officer - Occupational Health - Allocating a point of contact that's not part of the investigation But we will continue to review what our staff have available to them and if it works for them and ensure our processes document the support available.
4	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should assure themselves that updates on how concerns are being handled are shared with those who have raised them. The updates should be given in an accessible way that encourages trust and confidence in the service response. Consideration should be given to creating a professional standards function to handle conduct concerns in service (or from an external service) to have oversight of cases, to make sure they are conducted in a fair and transparent way and to act as a point of contact for all staff involved.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Not started	
5	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure they provide accessible information for all staff and members of the public on how they can raise concerns and access confidential support (including through external agencies). Chief fire officers should also make sure accessible information is provided on how concerns and allegations will be investigated in a way that ensures confidentiality and is independent of the alleged perpetrator.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	In Progress - On track	We have a whistleblowing procedure in place and are working on a campaign to encourage staff to speak up. We will review our procedure to ensure they are written in an accessible way, easy for staff and public to understand. The public can raise concerns via a number of channels all documented on our website. We have a complaints procedure in place. Both compliments and complaints are part of our performance measures that are reported on quarterly. These actions will support recommendation 31

## HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '23 Update
<b>Background checks</b>					
6	By 1 January 2024, the Home Office, working with the Ministry of Justice, should make sure that the Government incorporates fire and rescue authority employees within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 so that they are eligible for the appropriate DBS checks.	Home Office	01-Jan-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
7	By 1 May 2024, the Home Office, working with the fire and rescue sector, should make sure that the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002, or a similar appropriate legislatively enabled solution, makes detailed provisions for fire and rescue services.	Home Office	01-May-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
8	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and underpinning guidance. It should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clearly state the requirements for background checks undertaken by services;</li> <li>• clarify the minimum requirements (including levels of DBS checks) for all roles, particularly roles where staff have access to vulnerable members of the public;</li> <li>• define the standards required to embed a culture across fire and rescue services that empowers all members of staff and local communities to report concerns; and</li> <li>• be subject to review following any legislative change</li> </ul>	Fire Standards Board	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
9	By 1 January 2024, chief fire officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• immediately review their current background checks arrangements, and make sure that suitable and sufficient background checks are in place to safeguard their staff and communities they serve; and</li> <li>• make sure that appropriate DBS check requests have been submitted for all existing, new staff, and volunteers, according to their roles as identified by the Fire Standards Board.</li> </ul>	BFRS	01-Jan-24	In Progress - On track	Since 2016 we have completed DBS checks on all relevant staff including all frontline staff. In 2019 we increased our vetting and moved to the annual 'Enhanced with barred list' DBS. We believe this is leading practice in the way Fire & Rescue Services should vet their staff, and have lobbied the Home Office to make it mandatory for Fire and Rescue services. We welcome the focus on this from HMICFRS. We also carry out other background and vetting checks including a. Right to work in the UK b. References Some roles require external agencies to carry out further security clearance checks. For example, NILO, Prevent panel, CTLP Liaison, National Security Vetting
10	By 1 September 2023, chief constables should make sure they are appropriately using their Common Law Police Disclosure powers in circumstances involving employees of fire and rescue services.	Police	01-Sep-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

## HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '23 Update
<b>Misconduct handling</b>					
11	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle staff disclosures, complaints and grievances	Fire Standards Board	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
12	By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling.	BFRS	01-Mar-24	Not started	
13	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle misconduct and safeguarding-related allegations and outcomes. These should include requirements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conduct and complete investigations, whether or not the staff member under investigation leaves;</li> <li>• consider whether the incident requires immediate dismissal;</li> <li>• provide training for staff who are carrying out investigations; and</li> <li>• ensure the diversity/neutrality of the investigation panel/person.</li> </ul>	Fire Standards Board	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
14	By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on misconduct allegations and outcomes handling.	BFRS	01-Mar-24	In Progress - On track	Awaiting standard to be released, but continue to provide investigation training to staff and have invested in Case management refresher training for 23/24
15	By 1 October 2023, the Home Office should work with the National Fire Chiefs Council and fire and rescue service employers to make sure there is a process to handle misconduct allegations against chief fire officers. The Home Office should immediately notify HMICFRS of any allegations and outcomes that it is aware of	Home Office	01-Oct-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
16	By 1 October 2023, the National Fire Chiefs Council should develop and manage a national barred list that holds details of staff who have been dismissed for gross misconduct (including staff who have already left services). It should ensure that this list is referred to in all appointment processes to prevent those who are barred from rejoining another service. After the College of Fire and Rescue has been established (see recommendation 25), it should take responsibility for managing the list.	NFCC	01-Oct-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
17	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• involve allegations of a criminal nature that have the potential to affect public confidence in FRSS;</li> <li>• are of a serious nature; or</li> <li>• relate to assistant chief fire officers or those at equivalent or higher grades.</li> </ul>	BFRS	Immediate	In Progress - On track	We will comply with this requirement with immediate effect in providing disclosures in line with the non-identifiable case histories provided previously to HMICFRS. We are seeking clarification from HMICFRS on any more detailed reporting it requires, to enable us to ensure that we are also compliant with our GDPR obligations
18	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that all parties are supported in relation to ongoing investigations.	BFRS	01-Aug-23	In Progress - On track	We have a range of support in place for those that raise concerns inc <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Welfare Officer</li> <li>- Occupational Health</li> <li>- Allocating a point of contact that's not part of the investigation</li> </ul> But we will continue to review what our staff have available to them and if it works for them and ensure our processes document the support available. Our processes will be shared with HMICFRS in our round 3 inspection

## HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '23 Update
19	By 1 July 2023, the Home Office should examine whether any appeal processes for fire and rescue misconduct cases are appropriate.	Home Office	01-Jul-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
<b>Leadership</b>					
20	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should have plans in place to ensure they meet the Fire Standards Board's leading the service standard and its leading and developing people standard.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	In Progress - On track	Gap analysis underway. We have utilised the standards to feed into our BFRS staff development pathway project
21	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all senior leaders and managers (assistant chief fire officer equivalent and above) in service.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Not started	
22	By 1 September 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in service. The process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports	BFRS	01-Sep-23	Not started	
23	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should seek regular feedback from staff about values, culture, fairness and diversity, with due regard to the leading and developing people standard. They should show how they act on this feedback.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	In Progress - On track	We have completed Bi-Annual staff surveys since 2017 with response rates of over 65% allowing staff to raise their feedback on a broad range of topics anonymously. BMKFA provided funding for this survey to move to annually from 2023/24
24	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should put plans in place to monitor, including through the gathering and analysis of staff feedback, watch and team cultures and provide prompt remedial action for any issues they identify.	BFRS	01-Oct-23	In Progress - On track	This is linked to recommendation 23. Alongside moving to annual staff survey, the following measures form part of our Quarterly Performance reports presented to members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- % Staff turnover</li> <li>- % Absence</li> <li>- Welfare and Support</li> <li>- Employee engagement</li> <li>- Grievance and disciplines processed</li> <li>- Employee Assistance Programme contact</li> <li>- Appraisal completion</li> </ul>



## HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '23 Update
<b>Management and leadership training and development</b>					
25	By 1 January 2025, the Government should establish a College of Fire and Rescue, as proposed by the White Paper Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service. There should be no further delay to its implementation.	Government	01-Jan-25	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
26	By 1 October 2023, as a precursor to the development of the College of Fire and Rescue, chief fire officers and the National Fire Chiefs Council should work with the Home Office to consider how they can improve the training and support they offer to staff in management and leadership development. This should include authority members in respect of their assurance leadership roles and should ensure that opportunities are offered fairly across all staff groups.	NFCC	01-Oct-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
27	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their equality impact assessments are fit for purpose and, as a minimum, meet the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality impact assessment toolkit.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	A thorough review of the existing Equality Impact Assessments took place in 2022 which led to the update of the template and supporting guidance. A e-learning package was created and face to face support available across the service. This remains a key focus when items are presented at our governance meetings.
28	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review how they gather and use equality and diversity data to improve their understanding of their staff demographics, including applying and meeting the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality, diversity and inclusion data toolkit.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	In Progress - On track	While we've always been able to capture equality and diversity data in our systems, we acknowledged that the level of data in our HR system was low. We are in the middle of a campaign to increase awareness of the importance of completing the information and encouraging our staff to update their protected characteristics. We report on our Workforce EDI data annually to the FA. This work will support recommendation 29
29	By 1 December 2023, the Home Office should publish greater detail on the protected characteristic data it collects about FRS staff, including joiners and leavers, by rank and role.	Home Office	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
30	By 30 December 2024, the Home Office should align the data it collects on protected characteristics with the Office for National Statistics harmonised standard and publish this data.	Home Office	30-Dec-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
31	By 1 December 2024, the Home Office should collect and publish experimental statistics on public complaints and conduct matters in relation to FRS staff, similar to that which it currently publishes on police forces in England and Wales.	Home Office	01-Dec-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

## HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '23 Update
<b>Improving diversity</b>					
32	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should, as a priority, specify in succession plans how they intend to improve diversity across all levels of the service. This should include offering increased direct-entry opportunities.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	In Progress - On track	At an SMT level, a succession plan option's paper is being produced for review and approval at the September 2023 Executive. The next level succession plan will also be presented at this Executive.
33	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should develop plans to promote progression paths for existing staff in non-operational roles and put plans in place to reduce any inequalities of opportunity	BFRS	01-Aug-23	In Progress - On track	We have developed a Leadership and Management development programme, based on the NFCC leadership framework, that has been delivered via face-to-face training to all managers across the service, Supervisory or above. The next phase of this is the BFRS Staff development pathway project that will cover all staff. In 20/21 we restructured SMT to meet the needs of the service and broaden the views at the table. The NFCC Executive Leadership Programme is open to all Senior managers, two SMT members have recently completed the programme and one has just started.
<b>The Core Code of Ethics</b>					
34	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should review their implementation of the Core Code of Ethics and make sure it is being applied across their services.	BFRS	Immediate	Complete	Our Values have been in place since 2011 and are embedded in our Service. The NFCC Core Code of Ethics was released in 2021 The final document complements and supports our own vision and values, which forms part of everything we do. In March 2023, we reviewed our Code of conduct and chose to add in the Code of Ethics alongside our values.
<b>The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England</b>					
35	By the end of this Parliament, the Government should consider the findings and recommendations in this report when refreshing the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England	Government	End of this parliament	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation