

**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: The Members of the Executive Committee

5 July 2021

**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, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, STOCKLAKE, AYLESBURY, BUCKS, HP20 1BD** on **WEDNESDAY 14 JULY 2021 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

**Health and Safety: Covid-19**

There will be limited facilities for members of the public to observe the meeting in person due to Government and Public Health England guidance. A livestream of the meeting will be available online at the web address provided overleaf.

Councillors Christensen, Clarke OBE, Hall, Hopkins, Lambert, Marland, McLean and Walsh



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## **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 livestreamed. Please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vIiv7bh1Q>

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 'teams' meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

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*, 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. Election of Chairman**

To elect a Chairman for 2021/22

**2. Appointment of Vice Chairman**

To appoint a Vice-Chairman for 2021/22

**3. Apologies**

**4. Minutes**

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24 March 2021 (Item 4) **(Pages 7 - 14)**

**5. 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.

**6. 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.

**7. Questions**

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA7.

**8. Budget Monitoring Report April 2020 - March 2021 (Provisional Outturn)**

To consider Item 8 **(Pages 15 - 24)**

**9. Exclusion of Public and Press**

To consider excluding the public and press representatives from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the minutes contain 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:

**10. Exempt Minutes**

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24 March 2021 (Item 10).

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 10 am.

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)

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Minutes of the Meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY held remotely on WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH 2021 at 10.00 AM.

**Present:** Councillors Clarke OBE (Chairman), Hall, Hopkins, Lambert, Marland, McCall, McLean 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) S Gowanlock (Corporate Planning Manager), F Mansfield (HR Advisory and Development Manager) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

**Apologies:** None

Live webcast broadcast:

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

The Director of Legal and Governance confirmed the webcast was live.

The Director of Legal and Governance welcomed Members to the March Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority and confirmed that the meeting was being live streamed on the Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service YouTube channel. Following the meeting, a recording would continue to be available on this channel and it was also being recorded, should there be any technical difficulties.

## **EX43 MINUTES**

The Director of Legal and Governance took Members through the matters arising from the last minutes:

### **EX32 – Christmas Floods – Verbal Update**

Firstly, in respect of the debrief and the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF), the debrief was attended by officers from the Authority, a report was being prepared by the TVLRF and the outcomes would be considered by the Service. Secondly, in connection with the report under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 that was being complied by officers from Milton Keynes Council, officers from the Authority had contacted the Milton Keynes Council Environmental Lead and input had been provided into the report.

### **EX33 – Budget Monitoring Report April – November 2020**

Regarding the Blue light Hub, the Director of Finance and Assets confirmed that potential recovery of costs from the Professional Advisors, in terms of a potential legal claim, were being evaluated. The final account was still being evaluated with the main Contractor of the scheme, the majority of the work packages had been agreed and the final ascertainment was looking to finalise the evaluation of the extension of time requests and that would allow the Director of Finance and Assets to evaluate the value of the legal claim. The final date for the final ascertainment was the end of April 2021. Once this was completed, a potential legal claim would be considered. The Director of Finance and Assets would update Members in due course.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Wednesday 10 February 2021, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**EX44 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

The Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer both declared they were Members of the Firefighters Pension Schemes.

**EX45 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES –**

**OVERVIEW AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 17 MARCH 2021**

**CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Lead Member for Health and Safety and Corporate Risk advised that given the events of the last year, Members would appreciate the importance of maintaining a robust and up-to-date approach to identifying, evaluating, and controlling risks that could potentially compromise the Authority's ability to maintain its services to the public. This update to the Corporate Risk Management Policy and Guidance was therefore timely and welcome. As Lead Member for Health and Safety and Corporate Risk, I have been consulted during its development and support the changes and updates to the preceding policy and guidance that are presented here. The document had also been reviewed by our colleagues on the Overview and Audit Committee and they have recommended it to us for approval today.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised Members that the last update to the Corporate Risk Management Policy was approved by this Committee in March 2015. Although there wasn't anything fundamentally wrong with that policy, it had become overdue for review and therefore undertook to update it before the end of this financial year. Members would see from the cover paper, the opportunity had been taken in this review to look at recent good practice guidance from authoritative sources, in particular, the relevant International Standards Organisation (ISO) Standard, and used this to strengthen and supplement what was contained in the previous policy documentation. It had also been updated to reflect



recent changes to the Service's internal governance arrangements, particularly in relation to improvements to its project control environment. Updates and changes relative to the preceding guidance were shaded grey in the document.

The Corporate Planning Manger advised Members that before publication, and following feedback from the Chairman, arrows would be added to indicate the upward escalation process through the governance of corporate risks structure (6.1). There were also a couple of small typographical adjustments that would be made to the document before publication.

RESOLVED –

That the Corporate Risk Management Policy set out at Annex A and Guidance at Annex B, be approved.

**EX46**

### **GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2020**

The HR Advisory and Development Manager advised Members that the Authority was advised on 23 February 2021, that due to the continuing impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) announced that employers would have an additional six months after the current reporting deadline to report their gender pay gap information. All employers now have until 5 October 2021 to report their gender pay gap information and no enforcement action would be taken if they report by then.

Notwithstanding the suspension of the compulsory reporting of the gender pay gap for the second year, for openness and transparency the intention was for this data to be published once approved. As an organisation, the Authority had a duty to carry out gender pay gap reporting, and to annually publish six pieces of prescribed data about the pay and bonuses of male and female employees. the snapshot date for public sector employers was 31 March each year, and the data presented within the report was based on data as at 31 March 2020.

The gender pay gap shows the difference between the average earnings of males, compared to females, irrespective of role or seniority. It examined the difference in the average pay gap, expressed as a percentage of male earnings. It was important to note that a gender pay gap was not unlawful and the presence of a gender pay gap did not mean the Authority was discriminating against groups of individuals. A gender pay gap was a reflection of a workforce profile at a specific time, i.e., the snapshot date. This was the fourth year of undertaking gender pay gap reporting, and for 2020 the gender pay gap had increased by 3.7 percentage points to 18.8 per cent. This increase took the Service 3.3 percentage points above the UK average, which

was 15.5 per cent for April 2020. In comparison, for 2019, the Service was 2.3 percentage points below the UK average. For 2020 the Service's median gender pay gap had also increased, by 4.9 percentage points, from 10.4 per cent in 2019 to 15.3 percent in 2020.

The HR Advisory and Development Manager advised Members that the action plan detailed key areas of activity to lower the gender pay gap. Whilst the foundations for improvement had been laid through these initiatives, and progress was being made, it would be several years before there was a significant impact on gender parity within pay. The Authority would continue to strive to increase gender diversity in all areas of the organisation and lowering the gender pay gap.

RESOLVED –

That the content of the Gender Pay Gap Report 2020 be noted and approved for submission to the Government's Website (Gov.UK) as per reporting requirements.

**EX47**

#### **FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME – AGE DISCRIMINATION REMEDY AND EMPLOYMENT APPEAL TRIBUNAL JUDGEMENT**

The Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that the purpose of this report was to present the latest legal advice the Authority had received in relation to the Firefighters Pension Scheme age discrimination remedy, and the recent Employment Appeal Tribunal judgment. The background to this and genesis to all the changes in public sector pensions, was part of the Lord Hutton review which led to the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and regulations made under primary legislation. There were a number of changes and primary legislation required the restriction of existing final salary schemes. However, within this, certain members could be protected and retain the rights to their previous scheme, under what was known as transitional arrangements, which were undertaken in order to protect those closer to retirement.

Within the Firefighters Pension Scheme, there was protection to all members of the scheme who would be 55 by 31 March 2022. It also provided for tapered protection, which meant that members were protected in their original scheme on a tapered basis depending on age until 31 March 2022. Anybody who did not qualify for protection or tapered protection was immediately moved into the 2015 scheme. A legal challenge was bought by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) on behalf of members on whether these protections constituted direct age discrimination, and indirect race and sex discrimination.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that this led to a tribunal and a number of appeals, culminating in the Court of Appeal in

December 2018. Essentially, this found that the transitional protection element of the 2015 public service pension reforms constituted unlawful age discrimination. It was important to note that only the transitional protection was unlawful, moving all members to the 2015 scheme on 1 April 2022 wasn't discriminatory. In order to remedy age discriminatory treatment across public sector schemes by removing the discriminatory treatment while protecting members who may have been better off in the reformed schemes, the Treasury committed to launching a formal consultation in 2020. The remedy period was defined as between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The remedy only applied to members who were in service on or before 31 March 2012 and on or after 1 April 2015, including those with a qualifying break in service of less than five years.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that in advance of the consultation being issued, there was also something known as immediate detriment guidance from the Home Office. Immediate detriment in this context referred to those who were due to retire in the very near future, and by extension, those who would retire before the necessary changes in legislation to remove the discrimination were made. This guidance should not be applied to scheme members who had already retired and were in receipt of their pension payments. These cases were more complex to address, especially due to complexities in rectifying the member's tax position. It was important to note that all cases processed using this guidance would need to be revisited once the Government's approach to removing the age discrimination had been finalised. This was likely to be after April 2022, possibly as late as October 2023.

The Government consultation proposed two options for removing the discrimination between scheme members, the two options were immediate choice or deferred choice underpin. In October 2020 the response to the consultation was brought to the Authority, setting out the pros and cons of each approach without stating a preference of one over the other. Subsequently, some additional guidance was issued in October 2020, Appendix D in the pack.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that on 12 February 2021, the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) gave judgment which held that fire and rescue authorities should have overruled the Government legislation on discrimination. Before this judgment was given, the Authority had commissioned some legal advice jointly with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority following the Court of Appeal's ruling on the arrangements and were waiting on the outcome of this EAT before that advice could be finalised. The legal advice was that the Authority was now entitled to act on the basis of the judgment. Since this paper was published, the Local Government Association (LGA) had

decided not to appeal the ruling against the judgment. Legislative changes would not be in place until April 2022, but it was imperative that the Authority took action now. To highlight some of the risks, some of the guidance on some technical aspects does not yet exist. In some cases, there may be insufficient information to be able to calculate benefits. If the Authority does nothing, this would risk further challenge by the FBU and/or others.

A Member asked that if members of the scheme sign the document, it wouldn't be detrimental if things changed going forward and was advised that it wouldn't prejudice them at all, the Authority had a duty to make members aware that best endeavours were being used to calculate their pension and try to make it as accurate as possible.

A Member asked if the Authority would be helping members of the pension scheme with pension advice and was advised that to the extent it was able to, but the letter would also recommend that members get their own independent financial advice.

A Member said it was mentioned that there was a number of potential issues involved in processing immediate detriment cases, and that in some cases it may not be possible to calculate benefits due under the old scheme. The Director of Finance and Assets advised that each case would be looked at on a case-by-case basis. For example, a firefighter who has been in the same role for the whole period and has relatively simple personal circumstances would be easier to calculate benefits for (relatively speaking, albeit there would still be uncertainties around interest and tax relief in relation to employee contributions). Someone else for example, who had changed roles a number of times, would be entitled to a split pension and a contribution holiday, had divorce debits and had already breached their annual and lifetime allowances may find that the combination of factors makes it impossible to reliably calculate the benefits as per their old scheme. As well as having asked the QC to draft letters for those individuals where it was possible to calculate benefits, the QC would also draft a letter to those where it had not been possible to provide a reliable calculation, explaining why it had been possible to resolve other cases but not theirs.

A Member stated that the recommendations don't apply to those members that had already retired. The Director of Finance and Assets advised that currently it was not possible to remedy these cases, as the process for adjusting employee and employer contributions and associated tax implications retrospectively was even more complex, and as noted in the Home Office guidance, there were outstanding issues that were still to be resolved. The Authority was keeping a close eye on guidance as and when it was issued. The Authority recognised that many of those currently in receipt of pensions were not receiving

their full entitlement and would look to correct this as soon as possible.

A Member asked if the Authority was expecting to see any increases in the charges from the pensions administrators due to the added complexity they would have to undertake and was advised that there had not been any at present as the Authority was still within the contractual rates. If recalculations need to be made, there may be an additional charge as pensions were becoming more and more complex to administer.

A Member asked how the Authority would ensure that the letters drafted on behalf of the Authority by the QC would be received by the individual pension members and was advised that there were a limited number of cases who fell under the immediate detriment (approximately 15), so the members could be contacted on an individual basis to really emphasise the importance of this and spoken to on an individual basis.

A Member asked if a pensions officer had been employed to help the Authority get through this additional work and was advised that the Authority would shortly be going out to advertisement, collaboratively with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service as the Authority worked closely with them on the legal advice and shared the same pensions administrator.

A Member asked if the Authority knew the number of staff who had already retired and would need to be contacted and was advised that the numbers were not currently to hand.

RESOLVED –

That the Executive Committee, on behalf of the Authority (the Scheme Manager of the Authority's firefighter pension schemes):

- 1) Note the contents of the report;
- 2) Resolve that all firefighters who were members of the FPS 1992 or NFPS 2006 ("their old schemes") who:
  - (a) belonged to those schemes at 1 April 2012; and
  - (b) continues to do so on 31 March/1 April 2015; and
  - (c) who did not qualify for full protection from being transferred into the new 2015 Pension Scheme under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and the transitional regulations made thereunder; and
  - (d) who have been transferred, or are liable to be transferred at the end of their tapered protection, into the new 2015 Scheme;

are now deemed to be members of their old schemes and if still on

tapered protection are no longer liable to be transferred; and

- (3) Resolve, in regard to those who were transferred into the 2015 Scheme and are not still on time limited tapered protection from such a transfer, they are deemed not to have left their old schemes as a result of any compulsory transfer; and
- (4) Resolved those members now deemed to be restored into their old schemes as set out above, or no longer liable to be transferred out of their old schemes as identified above, are to receive pension benefits under, and are to be treated as being subject to, the terms of their old schemes.

Before closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked all Members and officers for their hard work over the year and also thanked Councillor Douglas McCall, who would not be standing for re-election in May this year.

The Group Leaders also gave their thanks to Councillor McCall.

**EX48 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It being moved, it was

RESOLVED –

That the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the minutes contain information relating to any individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 as the minutes contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of a person (including the Authority); and on these grounds it is considered, at this moment in time, that the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Chairman advised viewers of the live webcast that the meeting would now go into private session.

**EX49 EXEMPT MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Wednesday 10 February 2021, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11.10 AM.



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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## Meeting and date:

Executive Committee, 14 July 2021

**Report title:** Budget Monitoring Report April 2020– March 2021 (Provisional Outturn)

**Lead Member:** Councillor David Hopkins

**Report sponsor:** Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets

**Author and contact:** Asif Hussain, [ahussain@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:ahussain@bucksfire.gov.uk), 01296 744421

**Action:** Decision

## Recommendations:

1. That the provisional outturn forecast for the Authority as at 31 March 2021 be noted.
  2. That the slippage of £0.472m on the capital programme is approved to be carried forward into 2021/22.
  3. That the underspend of £0.966m is transferred into Revenue Contribution to Capital Reserve (RCCO).
  4. That delegated authority be given to the Chief Finance Officer to authorise any late changes to the movements in reserves and capital slippage amounts resulting from accounting adjustments needing to be made during the year-end closedown process.
  5. That should any changes to the amounts referred to above be required, then the Chief Finance Officer will report these to Members at the next available meeting.
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## Executive summary:

The report in Appendix A sets out the Authority's revenue and capital spending position as at 31 March 2021, together with the projected outturn position for the financial year.

The report at Appendix A is a provisional position pending final audit recommendations and confirmation of any accounting adjustments to go through before a final position is reached.

The provisional outturn figure for the year is a net underspend of £0.966m. This represents a 3.08% variance against the budget. It is recommended that £0.966m be transferred to the Revenue Contribution to Capital Reserve in line with the approved Medium Term Financial Plan.

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**Financial implications:** As set out in the main body of the report.

**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.

**Legal implications:** None.

**Privacy and security implications:** None.

**Duty to collaborate:** None.

**Health and safety implications:** None.

**Environmental implications:** None.

**Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:** None.

**Consultation and communication:** None.

**Background papers:**

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
Website Link	Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25, Fire Authority Meeting 12 February 2020 (see pages 61-80) <a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/120220_itm7c_medium_term_financial_plan.pdf/">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/120220_itm7c_medium_term_financial_plan.pdf/</a>	None
A	Appendix A – Budget Monitoring Report April – March 2021 Provisional Outturn	None



## 1. Revenue Forecasts by Service Area

Table 1 shows the budget and provisional outturn for each Directorate as at the end of 31 March 2021. The budget of £31.339m compared to the provisional outturn of £31.202m gives a yearend underspend of £0.138m. Furthermore, the level of funding is showing a favourable variance of £0.829m which has resulted in an overall net underspend of £0.966m.

The provisional outturn includes a transfer of £0.500m to revenue contributions to capital and £0.230m to a COVID reserve, which were approved by the Executive Committee in September 2020.

An additional £0.829m of funding has been allocated to the Authority during the year, which predominantly relates to COVID-19 funding. A detailed breakdown is provided in section 4.

**Table 1**

Directorate	Total Budget £	Actual Year to Date £	Provisional Year End Variance £	Percentage Year End Variance £
Corporate Core	1,513,830	1,444,195	-69,635	-4.60%
Finance & Assets	6,283,192	6,276,749	-6,443	-0.10%
Human Resources	542,610	446,012	-96,598	-17.80%
Delivery, Corp. Dev. Planning	21,407,930	20,947,783	-460,147	-2.15%
Statutory Acc. & Contingency	1,591,850	2,086,903	495,053	31.10%
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>31,339,412</b>	<b>31,201,643</b>	<b>-137,769</b>	<b>-0.44%</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>-31,339,412</b>	<b>-32,168,053</b>	<b>-828,641</b>	<b>-2.64%</b>
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-966,411</b>	<b>-966,411</b>	<b>-3.08%</b>

## Variance by Directorate

**Corporate Core £0.070m under** - The underspend of £0.065m within Legal & Governance predominantly relates to projected underspend in legal costs and consultation with public (in relation to public safety plan). Furthermore, there were underspends of £0.005m within Corporate Management courses and conference fees which have been postponed due to Covid19 Pandemic.

**Finance & Assets £0.006m under** - Most of the underspend is attributable to employee costs as a result of vacant positions throughout the directorate, which have either since been filled or where recruitment has been delayed due to Covid-19 Pandemic. In addition to this, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, our fuel supplier has provided free fuel for emergency vehicles which has resulted in additional underspend in fuel costs. This is partially offset by overspend seen within West Ashland revenue costs which has been accrued for and will be recovered via services charges to other organisation's sharing the facilities.

**Human Resources £0.096m under** - The underspend is due to an employee being on maternity leave and the duties of the role being shared within the existing team. Additionally, not all employees are taking part in the LGPS pension scheme and there was a two-month vacancy within one of the posts which contributes towards the underspend. Furthermore, employee relations costs were below the budgeted levels which is also contributed towards the underspend.

**Delivery, Corporate Development & Planning £0.386m under** - All costs relating to the Covid-19 response are included within this directorate which totaled £0.886m (which includes a transfer of 0.230m into a Covid-19 reserve as approved by the Executive Committee in September 2020) for the financial year. In addition to this, due to Covid impact, costs were lower than expected in operational training and cross border charges.

As a result of new recruits joining the organisation, a number of Wholetime posts are not at the top of the pay scale and these recruits have joined the 2015 pension scheme which has lower employer contributions than the 1992 pension scheme. This has also contributed in an underspend within the pension budgets.

**Statutory Accounting and Contingency £0.496m over** - this variance is due to an additional revenue contribution to capital of £0.500m, which was approved by the Executive Committee in September 2020.

## 2. Direct Employee Variances

**Table 2** shows the breakdown of all the favourable (-) and adverse (+) variances for each sub-heading within the direct employees subjective as at the March 2021.

<b>Subjective</b>	<b>Salary (Including Training costs) £</b>	<b>Allowances £</b>	<b>NI £</b>	<b>Pension £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
Wholetime	197,727	-36,103	109,989	-290,055	-18,442
On-Call	-13,427	-214,620	26,734	-48,044	-249,357
Support	-367,956	0	-42,113	-104,683	-514,752
Technicians	-26,588	0	-6,908	-4,896	-38,392
Sessional	-15,150	4,844	216	0	-10,090
Agency	93,379	0	0	0	93,379
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>-132,015</b>	<b>-245,879</b>	<b>87,918</b>	<b>-447,678</b>	<b>-737,654</b>

**Wholetime** – The underspend of £0.018m predominantly within pensions, which relates to new recruits joining the 2015 scheme and replacing existing post holders who may have been on a 1992 scheme which have higher employer contributions. With the Sargeant remedy still to be finalised, there is uncertainty on the impact that this will have on employer pension contributions and therefore the current budget reflects a mix of establishment posts on the 1992 and 2015 pension schemes.

**On Call** – Underspends predominantly seen within allowances which is based on activity/training in year.

**Support Staff** – There is a net underspend on support staff budgets across the directorates due to a delay in recruitment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Agency Staff** – Agency staff have been used to partly cover interim vacancies within support staff roles and this offsets the underspend on support staff.

### 3. COVID-19 Spend Analysis

**Table 3**

<b>Subjective</b>	<b>Actuals £</b>
Staffing Costs*	471,615
Protective Equipment	115,277
Other Costs	71,467
Loss of Income	7,265
<b>Total</b>	<b>665,624</b>

\* This figure includes £3k in actual costs which were incurred in March 2020 and therefore the total figure includes all COVID-19 related costs since the start of the Pandemic.

**Funding** - Central Government have allocated additional funding of £0.800m of which £0.090m was received in March 2020. This also includes a successful bid (of £0.034m) by the Authority in relation to a bid submitted in round two of the Covid-19 contingency fund.

**Staffing Costs** – All additional employee costs (operational and support staff) incurred as a result of the Pandemic. An example of this has been the use of bank staff to provide the operational resilience when members of staff have had to isolate.

**Protective Equipment** – All costs in relation to the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure the safety of all employees and providing employees with the appropriate PPE in order to carry out their roles safely. This also includes cleaning materials to be used for all brigade sites by employees/visitors for sanitising and disinfecting areas before and after they are used.

**Other Costs** – Predominantly costs relating to IT upgrades to allow meetings to take place online and costs relating to signage put up on all sites in relation to COVID-19.

**Loss of Income** – Income we were unable to generate due to cancellation or restriction of certain activities due to COVID-19.

## 4. Funding

**Table 4** details the budget and forecast outturn for each category of funding.

<b>Funding</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>Actual Year to Date</b>	<b>Provisional Year End Variance</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Government Funding	-3,531,360	-3,539,296	-7,936
Specific Grants	-1,106,440	-1,920,933	-814,493
NNDR / Precepts	-24,857,612	-24,864,144	-6,532
Top-up / Pooling Receipts	-1,844,000	-1,843,680	320
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>-31,339,412</b>	<b>-32,168,053</b>	<b>-828,641</b>

The level of funding has exceeded the original budget by £0.829m. The majority of the additional funding (£0.710m) is due to the Treasury making additional funds available to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic and £0.011m additional funding in relation to Airwave. In addition to this, the Authority received £0.007m in relation to Transparency grant and £0.032m one-off grant in relation to the administrative costs associated with the Sergeant remedy.

Furthermore, following the Grenfell enquiry, Central Government have allocated funds specifically for the Fire Sector Protection teams to carry out a review of all high-rise buildings and support initial improvements in local protection capability. This has resulted in additional in-year funding of £0.246m, of which £0.061m has been spent and reflected in the actuals in the table above with the residual funding transferred to grants received in advance. Due to the nature of the funding being ring-fenced, we can only utilise the funding when certain conditions of the grant are met. The requirement of the grant is for all funding to be spent or committed by March 2022. The remaining (£0.008m) relates to increases in specific grants (from prior years) which the Authority were not aware of when the budget was set.

We did not anticipate COVID-19 impacting the Precept/NNDR funding for 2020/21 and have received the full budget for 2020/21. However, as collection deficits are identified in the following financial year, the impact will be seen in a reduction in funding from 2021/22 due to the financial impact COVID-19 has had on businesses and council taxpayers. As part of our budget setting process, we have taken a prudent approach in what we believe these deficits will look like and reflected this in our MTFP 2021/22 which was approved by the Fire Authority in February 2021.

## 5. Capital Monitoring

### Capital Forecast

The capital programme for 2020/21 £3.025m, including £1.809m worth of carry forward capital projects from 2019/20.

Project Name	Original Budget 2020/21 £	Carry Forwards 2019/20 £	Revised Budget 2020/21 £	Provisional Outturn £	Slippage £	Projected Year End Variance £
Property	500,000	217,698	717,698	295,283	121,000	-301,415
Property Review*	0	919,515	919,515	3,064,883	0	2,145,368
<b>Total Property Portfolio</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>1,137,213</b>	<b>1,637,213</b>	<b>3,360,166</b>	<b>121,000</b>	<b>1,843,953</b>
Hydraulic Equipment	51,000	11,635	62,635	52,272	10,000	-363
Operational Equipment	90,000	35,000	125,000	0	25,000	-100,000
Operational Red Fleet Vehicles	500,000	610,200	1,110,200	709,529	310,500	-90,172
Operational White Fleet Vehicles	0	14,801	14,801	14,801	0	0
<b>Total Fire Appliances &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>641,000</b>	<b>671,636</b>	<b>1,312,636</b>	<b>776,602</b>	<b>345,500</b>	<b>-190,535</b>
ICT	75,000	0	75,000	69,347	5,000	-653
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>69,347</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>-653</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,216,000</b>	<b>1,808,849</b>	<b>3,024,849</b>	<b>4,206,115</b>	<b>471,500</b>	<b>1,652,766</b>

\* The forecast year-end variance for Property Review (£2.145m) is expected to be offset by additional capital receipts and contributions which will result in a net variance of circa £1m against the forecast expenditure and risks previously reported to Committee

## Capital Funding

The capital programme will be funded as follows:

<b>Funding</b>	<b>Balance at 1 April 2020 £000</b>	<b>Estimated Transfers (in) £000</b>	<b>Estimates Transfers Out £000</b>	<b>Estimate Balance at 31 March 2021 £000</b>
Revenue Contribution to Capital	-1,442	-2,781	1,612	-2,611
Other Capital Contributions	0	-2,594	2,594	0
<b>Total Capital Funding</b>	<b>-1,442</b>	<b>-5,375</b>	<b>4,206</b>	<b>-2,611</b>

## Property Portfolio

Property Portfolio has a capital budget of £1.637m for 2020/21, which includes carry-forward slippage from 2019/20 of £1.137m. The capital funds were utilised to carry out planned capital investments and completion of West Ashland. A number of planned capital investments are delayed due to COVID-19 and will now be deferred until 2021/22. This results in forecast slippage of £0.121m, along with identified property capital saving of £0.301m.

The variance seen on West Ashland will be offset by additional anticipated capital receipts and contributions. The final account for West Ashland is currently in the process of being agreed. Due to the further delays, some of which are attributable to COVID-19, costs have increased further. The Authority is in discussion with the relevant parties to recover some of the increased costs from the professional design team.

## Fire Appliances & Equipment

Fire Appliances & Equipment has a capital budget of £1.313m for 2020/21, which includes carry forward slippage from 2019/20 of £0.672m. The majority of the capital funds were utilised to purchase red fleet appliances and to purchase operational equipment for these appliances in line with the fleet strategy.

Due to COVID-19, there was a delay in the delivery of four appliances relating to 2019/20 (which were delivered in January 2021) and 2020/21 (two appliances to be delivered at the earliest May 2021), therefore a slippage of £0.311m has been forecast for the

final appliance payments in 2021/22. Red fleet appliances budget provisional underspend of £0.090m is due to the collaboration and joint tendering with the neighboring Fire Authorities resulted in the costs of the appliances being lower than budgeted.

### Support

ICT has a capital budget of £0.075m for 2020/21, which was predominantly utilised to purchase hardware, as per the ICT replacement strategy.

### Slippage into 2021/22

The provisional outturn figure is showing a slippage of £0.472m (subject to any late accounting changes) which predominantly relates to the delays in the purchase of a further two red fleet appliances. Members are requested to approve the slippage of this budget into 2021/22.

### 6. Reserves

The table below shows the provisional movement in reserves during the year and will be finalised once our Statement of Accounts have been audited.

<b>Reserves</b>	<b>Balance at Start of year £000</b>	<b>Projected Movement £000</b>	<b>Balance at End of Year £000</b>
General Fund	-1,500	0	-1,500
Earmarked Reserves (Revenue)	-2,197	-225	-2,422
Earmarked Reserves (Capital)	-1,442	-1,169	-2,611
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>-5,139</b>	<b>-1,394</b>	<b>-6,533</b>

\* This figure includes £0.586m, which represents this Authority's share of the joint control room renewals fund (which is held by Oxfordshire)