

**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

Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Jason Thelwell

To: The Members of the Executive Committee

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS
AND PUBLIC**

Please note the content of
Page 2 of this Agenda Pack

3 July 2023

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 12 JULY 2023 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:

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, at the web address provided overleaf.

Councillors: Christensen, Darlington, Hall, Hopkins, Lambert, McLean, Rouse and Walsh



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Recording of the meeting

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/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 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 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 2023/24

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

To appoint a Vice-Chairman for 2023/24

3. Apologies

4. Minutes

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 22 March 2023 (Item 4) **(Pages 7 - 14)**

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Questions

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA7.

8. Budget Monitoring Report April 2022 - March 2023 (Provisional Outturn)

To consider Item 8 **(Pages 15 - 26)**

9. Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme

To consider Item 9 **(Pages 27 - 36)**

10. Environment and Climate Action Plan Update

To consider Item 10 **(Pages 37 - 46)**

11. Financial Strategy Update (No 2)

To consider Item 11 (**Pages 47 - 74**)

12. Updated Fleet and Property Strategies to 2025

To consider Item 12 (**Pages 75 - 134**)

13. Exclusion of Public and Press

To consider excluding the public and press representatives from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contains information relating to any individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report 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.

14. Senior Management Team Succession Plan

To consider Item 14 (**to follow**)

15. Exempt Minutes

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 22 March 2023 (Item 15)

16. Date of next meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Wednesday 13 September 2023 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

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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 on WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH 2023 at 10.00 AM.

Present: Councillors Christensen, Darlington, Hall, Hopkins, McLean, Rouse (Chairman) 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), A Stunell (Head of Human Resources), F Mansfield (HR Advisory and Development Manager), P Mould (Area Commander Industrial Action) C Jordan (Team PA), E Hilling (Communication, Marketing & Engagement Manager), C Newman (Data Intelligence Team Manager)

Remotely: C Bell (Head of Protection, Assurance and Development)

Apologies: Councillor Lambert

The Chairman advised the Committee 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>

EX39 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Wednesday 8 February 2023, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX40 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Chairman advised that there were three matters arising:

EX28 Code of Conduct review will be picked up in Item 6.

EX33 The Director of Finance and Assets confirmed that the Reserves Strategy would be presented to the Executive Committee meeting in July.

EX38 It was confirmed that the Authority's insurance would cover military and other staff that may have provided assistance during any industrial action.

EX41 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

EX42 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

Overview and Audit Committee – 15 March 2023

Updated Code of Conduct (V4.0)

The HR Advisory and Development Manager advised Members that the Code of Conduct has been updated and went through a formal consultation process in September and October 2022. The revised Code of Conduct was presented to the Overview and Audit Committee on 15 March 2023 and was being presented to the Executive Committee to be approved.

Updates made to the Code of Conduct included the NFCC Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services based on the Seven Principles of Public Life in Section 3. Section 8 now included further information regarding smoking in vehicles and Section 9 was updated to include data and information security. Section 15 was updated to include new information regarding dress, the wearing of jewellery and adornments, and advice regarding hair styles to ensure the wearing of PPE was not impeded. The section on tattoos had been reduced, but guidelines were still in place.

Section 22 covered the acceptable use of technology and section 22.4 online and social media platforms had been updated to include the inappropriate use of this technology, and made employees aware that out of hour's activity was included. The section on Cyberbullying had been updated with examples given being more relevant.

Due to the national focus on conduct in the fire and rescue sector, the review of the updated paper also underwent scrutiny from outside organisations and further updates were made following feedback from South East Employers. This included introducing an additional point of contact when reporting breaches of the Code of Conduct, more information regarding fitness assessments and substance misuse. The definition of relationships in section 16 now included 'colleagues dating' to reduce the risk of sexual harassment claims. The implementation of the updated Code of Conduct

formed part of a wider culture review and would be discussed later in the meeting.

RESOLVED –

1. the Code of Conduct, as detailed in Appendix one, was approved for adoption.
2. the consultation feedback, as detailed in Appendix two, be noted.

EX43 GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2022

The HR Advisory and Development Manager advised Members that all data shown in the report was based on data as at 31 March 2022 and explained how the report was compiled. The gender pay gap for 2022 had decreased by 0.4 percentage points to 13.4 per cent, which was below the UK average percentage. However, when comparing the median (mid-point) the gender pay gap had increased from 9.0 per cent in 2011 to 11.7 percent in 2022. This was mainly due to the high number of male employees in senior management roles and this was not expected to change in the short term. The action plan had been put together to highlight areas where work could be done to decrease the pay gap but this would take time to implement gender parity. The organisation would continue to work to achieve this.

The HR Advisory and Development Manager informed Members that the Government had discussed Ethnicity reporting but as yet it had not been made compulsory. Some organisations had started to publish their Ethnicity Pay Gaps and the Authority would look at publishing this next year.

A Member shared their concerns about the length of time it would take female workers to reach parity with their male colleagues and asked if decisions made in the past had effected the current situation.

The HR Advisory and Development Manager advised Members that efforts had been made to reduce the pay gap, but when one female member of staff left a senior role within the organisation it made a huge difference. The action plan had been put in place to try and increase the diversity of female roles and decrease the percentage.

The Chief Fire Officer was glad that overall the pay gap was reducing year on year but acknowledged that more work needed to be done.

A Member asked for reassurance that men and women doing the same role were being paid the same amount.

The HR Advisory and Development Manager reassured Members that the pay structure within the Authority ensured that all staff doing the same role were paid the same and there were no equal pay issues within the organisation.

A Member asked for more information on the Mean Bonus Gap figures as the figures varied for both genders.

The HR Advisory and Development Manager explained that payments made to employees at the Long Service Awards (25 years in service) were included on the report.

Members requested that in future the Gender Pay Gap Action plan takes a more holistic approach to inputs by referencing cross-cutting across other people-centred action plans; that in future the ethnicity pay gap be reported annually; requested that the LGA/NFCC be lobbied with a view to ensure a consistent methodology across the sector for gender pay reporting; and that, once all of the gender pay gap data from fire and rescue authorities for 2022 has been published and captured, a report be brought to a future meeting in 2023 to show where the service sits in comparison to other services. The Chairman suggested that more information could be included in Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to show how decisions could have an impact on the gender pay gap.

RESOLVED –

That the content of the Gender Pay Gap Report 2022 was noted and approved for submission to the Government's website (gov.uk) as per reporting requirements.

EX44 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – Q3 2022/23

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised Members that the Key Performance Measures report gave a rounded and balanced picture on how the Service was performing at a local level up to December 2022.

The Chairman asked if there were up to date figures for wholetime firefighters available.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that at the beginning of March, the figure for wholetime firefighters stood at 289.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that a further intake of transferee firefighters were due to start in June which

Head of
Human
Resources

should bring the workforce up to 300, depending on leavers. Further courses were also planned for September and October.

The Chairman enquired about Fire and Wellness visits and the December figures being well below the 300 target.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager informed Members that figures for January were 295 visits, February 326 visits and March already stood at 269 visits.

The Chairman expressed concern that average attendance times were being shown as red in some months and asked for an overview on the cause.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager explained that the lack of wholetime firefighters meant pump availability was affected, but as discussed earlier, the number of firefighters had now increased. Also, the extra pressure on the Service during the summer months had led to a higher number of calls and some fires were in more rural locations. Response times to major incidents were still good, but calls to minor incidents had suffered due to the above pressures.

A Member raised concern that the 'Great Place to Work' section was showing a large amount of red.

The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO informed Members that a budget had now been approved to carry out more regular culture surveys which would help to give a better understanding of any problem areas.

A Member asked about lesson learned from the summer fires and if any new equipment had being sourced.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Authority had been engaging with other fire and rescue services regarding lessons learned. Firefighters from the Service had attended training courses run by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service on tackling wildfires. Work on improving response to flooding incidents was ongoing.

The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that the property footprint was in a good place, but the Service needed to be aware that in future, it may need to move appliances around depending on the demand and the time of year.

A Member asked when the environment and emissions targets would be populated. The Director of Finance and Assets confirmed that the figures would be updated in 2023/24.

The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO advised Members that the performance figures for 22/23 would be

Director of
Finance &
Assets

Head of

reviewed and going forward, any updates requested by the Committee (whistleblowing events; staff retention/turnover; additional narrative about response times/appliance availability and health & safety e-learning completion) would be considered for inclusion in future reports.

RESOLVED –

That the recommendations below be approved for submission to the Authority:

That the Performance Management – Q3 2022/23 be noted.

EX45 EXPLORING OUR CULTURE

The Head of Human Resources advised Members that this report was put together following the Culture Review at London Fire Brigade in November 2022 and news articles regarding other Services.

The Head of Human Resources highlighted key areas in the People Strategy that supported culture changes and assisted in the delivery of vision and strategic priorities to ensure the behaviours, values and standards were followed.

The current area of focus was to ensure that all staff knew how to raise an issue and were aware of the Whistleblowing process, and that all allegations were dealt with robustly. Officers had engaged with HMICFRS to provide historic grievance/disciplinary information and work carried out on Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) procedures.

The Head of Human Resources informed Members that Appendix 1 linked into the quarterly performance figures, and that the Whistleblowing process had been reviewed internally and externally and a 'Speak-Up' campaign was being put in place for all staff. Consultation with staff was ongoing and the culture programme would be discussed at as many internal meetings as possible.

The Chief Fire Officer emphasised that this Service was the only service carrying out enhanced DBS checks on all staff, and moving forward, hoped that other services would follow.

The Chairman requested the status line in Appendix 1 be changed to blue for complete, green on track, amber if slightly off track and red not progressing.

The Chairman asked if the Code of Conduct and the People Strategy process could be made into an e-learning package.

Technology,
Transformation
and PMO

Head of
Human
Resources

The Head of Human Resources confirmed this was being looked at along with other options.

Head of
Human
Resources

The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO advised that a Whistleblowing communications package was being put together and other programmes would follow.

The Communication, Marketing and Engagement Manager presented the 'Speak Up Campaign' presentation.

A Member felt the presentation was moving in the right direction and would be a useful tool but was concerned about what was done once a complaint had been made and the follow up procedure.

The Chief Fire Officer advised there were issues regarding staff speaking up even through procedures were in place. Many issues only came to light when people were leaving. Managers/colleagues need to encourage staff to come forward when issues occur so that action can be taken immediately.

A Member asked how culture change was going to be measured moving forward and what were the next steps.

The Communication, Marketing and Engagement Manager informed Members that numbers for all e-learning and marketing campaigns could be monitored, and Culture Surveys would be used to measure improvement. Feedback from station visits would also be assessed.

RESOLVED –

That the work carried out to date and the planned work in respect of exploring our Culture be noted.

EX46 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED -

It was moved and resolved that the public and press representatives be removed from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contains information relating to any individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report 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.

(All officers left the meeting with the exception of the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Director of Finance and Assets, Head of Human Resources and minute-taker Team PA).

EX47 'GOLD BOOK' REMUNERATION

The Committee considered the report, details of which were noted in the confidential/exempt minutes.

EX48 EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Exempt Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 8 February 2023, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11:29AM



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 12 July 2023

Report title: Budget Monitoring Report April 2022 - March 2023 (Provisional Outturn)

Lead Member: Councillor Matthew Walsh

Report sponsor: Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets

Author and contact: Asif Hussain, ahussain@bucksfire.gov.uk, 01296 744421

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

1. That the provisional outturn forecast for the Authority as at 31 March 2023 be noted.
2. That the slippage of £1.100m on the capital programme is approved to be carried forward into 2023/24.
3. That the underspend of £0.607m 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.

Executive summary:

The report at Appendix A sets out the Authority's revenue and capital spending position as at 31 March 2023, 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 £0.607m. It is recommended that £0.607m be transferred to the Revenue Contribution to Capital Reserve in line with the approved Medium Term Financial Plan. It must be noted that this underspend includes a yearend technical adjustment and reversal from a provision of £0.524m. This predominantly relates to funds held in provisions relating to holiday pay and potential compensation due to individuals impacted by the 2015

pension remedy which were found to be age discriminatory. Individuals were able to claim compensation for distress, anxiety (“injury to feelings”) which the government legal department have offered to settle and will be fully funded by the government and therefore we no longer need to hold the provision.

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: Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2025/26, Fire Authority Meeting 16 February 2022. <https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/02/fa-item-9b-16022022.pdf/>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
A	Appendix A – Budget Monitoring Report April 2022 – March 2023 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 2022/23 financial year. The budget of £33.480m compared to the forecast outturn of £33.658m gives a forecast yearend overspend of £0.178m. Furthermore, the level of funding is showing a favourable variance of £0.785m which has resulted in an overall net underspend of £0.607m against our expenditure budget.

Table 1

Directorate	Total Budget £	Actual Year to Date £	Provisional Year End Variance £
Corporate Core	1,469,340	1,116,733	-352,607
Finance & Assets	6,410,790	6,653,936	243,146
Human Resources	527,880	536,459	8,579
Delivery, Corp. Dev. Planning	22,899,490	23,455,540	556,050
Statutory Acc. & Contingency	2,172,500	1,895,162	-277,338
Total Expenditure	33,480,000	33,657,830	177,830
Total Funding	-33,480,000	-34,264,533	-784,533
Net Position	0	-606,703	-606,703

Variance by Directorate

Corporate Core £0.353m under– The underspend of £0.067m within Legal & Governance relates to staffing costs being less than budgeted due to a vacant post throughout the year. The residual underspend is due to the finance team achieving higher than budgeted interest returns on treasury management activities. With the Bank of England interest rates raising to 4.25% (as of March 2023), it has resulted in higher investment returns than we had originally projected. The budget was £0.030m at the start of the financial year, however due to rising interest rates, the actual return on investment was £0.328m.

Finance & Assets £0.243m over – This year has been a volatile year in relation to the cost of utilities. Up until September, we were expecting a substantial overspend on utilities until the Government intervened and announced an energy price cap for non-domestic customers. Most of this overspend relates to utilities, even though there was a energy price cap, the cost of utilities was still higher than we have seen in previous years. In March 2023, we have been able to secure a competitive one-year deal on both our gas and electricity and built this cost into our budget for 2023/24.

Delivery, Corporate Development & Planning £0.556m over – Throughout the year we have reported a net underspend when we excluded expenditure relating to the Protection grant. This underspend was primarily due to operational establishment being less than budgeted. This is a direct result of retirements, several transfers of operational staff to neighboring fire services, and the establishment budget being increased by twenty Wholetime posts.

We have had two additional apprentice cohorts join the service in the last 12 months. Cohort 6 included thirteen new recruits into service at the beginning of June. Recruitment for cohort 7 welcomed seventeen new recruits in October. We are currently in the interview process for cohort 8 with the expectation to welcome the new recruits in September. Furthermore, we have also run a transferee recruitment drive which has resulted in nine successful applicants joining the service in September and further six in December. In addition to this, there were several recruitment and engagement initiatives being carried out throughout the year to engage with underrepresented groups to promote the Fire Service. As at the end of March 2023, our operational establishment was at 288 with the expectation that the establishment will surpass 300 by September 2023.

The provisional overspend also includes the additional costs relating the 7% pay award which we had only budgeted 2%. The pay award was backdated to July 2022 and paid to all members of staff in March 2023. Included within these costs is the reversal of the provision relating to holiday pay and "injury to feelings" claim relating to the pensions remedy which has offset some of the additional expenditure incurred in-year relating to the pay awards.

Funding - The level of funding exceeded the budget by £0.785m. This includes funding relating to the Protection Grant of £0.127m that relates to the expenditure incurred in relation to the requirements of the grant. We currently have £0.281m remaining from this ring-fenced grant which will be carried forward into next year. Furthermore, following reconciliations of government business rates grants by central government, we received one-off funding totalling £0.655m. In addition to this, we also received additional one-off grants totalling £0.062m relating to end of year reconciliations carried out by central government and allocation of residual funds. These additional funds were offset by a £0.062m reduction in Firelink funding which is expected to reduce by 20% until the funding stops in 2026/27.

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 31 March 2023:

Subjective	Salary (Including Training costs)	Allowances	NI	Pension	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Wholetime	450,533	-50,239	30,712	-257,627	173,379
On-Call	171,910	-219,100	54,821	-33,871	-26,240
Support	8,741	-1,240	-27,198	-53,175	-72,872
Technicians	-18,024	0	-3,195	-3,337	-24,556
Sessional	16,376	-107	4,147	0	20,416
Agency	72,940	0	0	0	72,940
Bank Cover	428,322	0	159,902	0	588,224
Grand Total	1,130,799	-270,687	219,190	-348,011	731,291

Wholetime – Following the additional precept flexibility awarded to the Fire sector in the lower quartile, the Authority was able to increase their precept by £5 for 2022/23. This resulted in additional funding of £1.1m which resulted in the increase in our operational establishment by 20 to an overall establishment of 300. Due to leavers and retirees, it is expected that we will be working below establishment levels with the workforce reaching full establishment by September 2023 as illustrated in section 4.

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

Support Staff – There were vacant posts throughout the year that the service struggled to recruit too due to the current recruitment market. This position has improved since last year and we have seen several support staff roles recruited too recently.

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

Bank Cover – Operational staff provide additional cover to our wholetime establishment due to vacancies, annual leave and sickness.

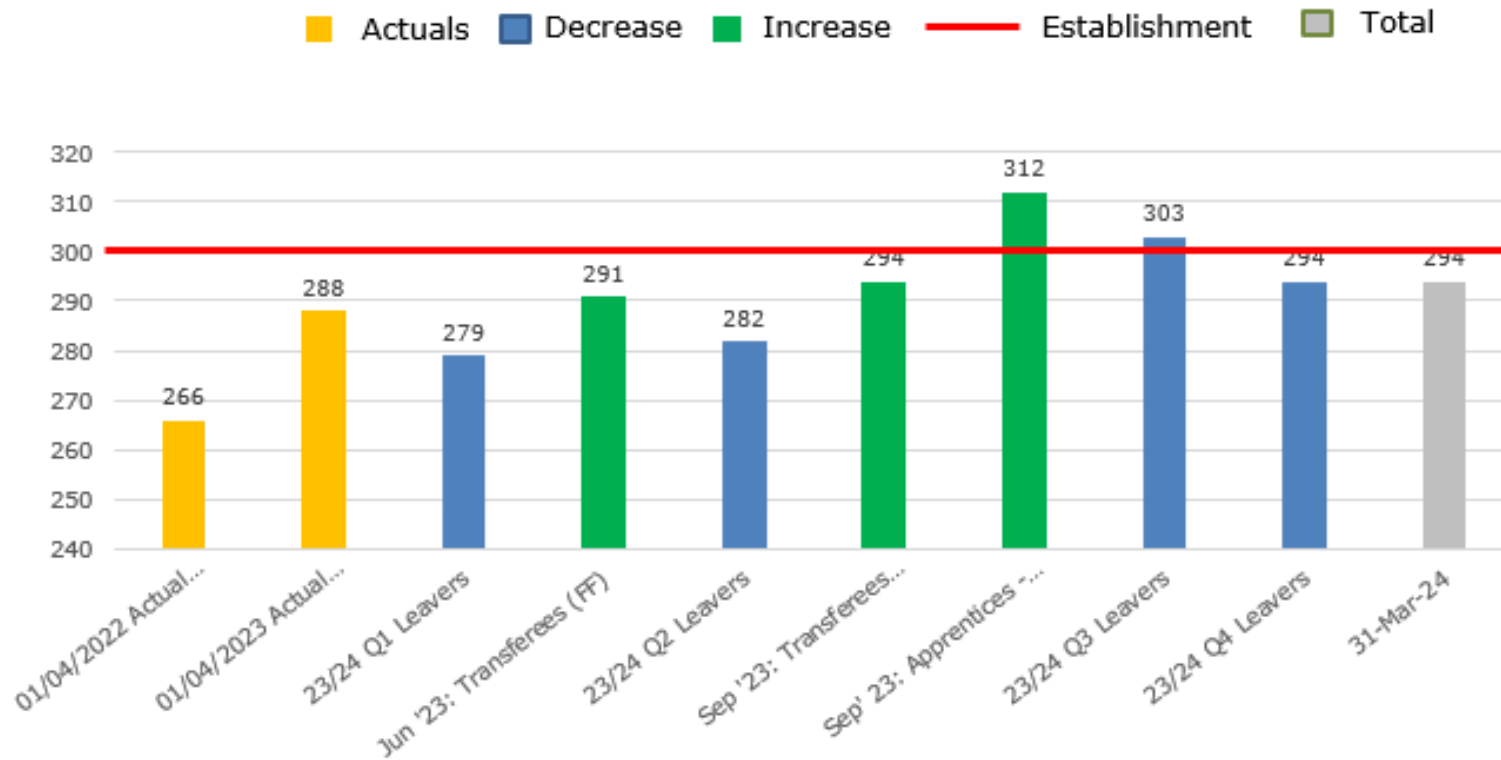
3. Table 3 - In Year Growth Bids

The total bids approved total £0.212m and are for one-off projects only. The roll forward funding relates to fixed term contracts and funds to be utilised in future years as per the bids submitted.

Project	Detail	Budget	Provisional Outturn	Roll Forward	Variance
Premises Risk Management System (PRMS) Hardware update	Replace the tablets used for PRMS.	£8,000	£6,600	£0	-£1,400
Recruitment	Increase Recruitment tools available including stands and marketing material. Modification of confined space training.	£21,000	£11,999	£0	-£9,001
Marketing & Communications equipment and licensing	To increase licensing for digital marketing tools, provide a marketing budget and upgrade hardware.	£55,000	£8,399	£40,000	-£6,601
Digital Marketing Apprentice	Employ Digital Marketing Apprentice - 2 years fixed term.	£61,000	£8,607	£52,393	£0
Improvement of Health and Wellbeing Facilities at Aylesbury Fire Station/ SHQ.	To provide equipment in the refresh of the Aylesbury gym.	£17,000	£16,100	£2,000	£1,100
ICT Apprentice	Employ ICT Apprentice - 2 years fixed term.	£50,000	£2,818	£47,188	£6
Grand Total		£212,000	£54,523	£141,581	-£15,896

4. Wholetime Establishment Roadmap

The following graph illustrates the wholetime operational establishment as at 1 April 2022 through to 31 March 2023 taking into consideration projected retirees, leavers, transfers and recruitment of apprentices.



5. Funding

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

Funding	Total Budget £	Actual Year to Date £	Provisional Year End Variance £
Government Funding	-3,615,800	-3,623,787	-7,987
Specific Grants	-1,465,000	-1,586,907	-121,907
NNDR	-3,574,700	-4,229,866	-655,166
Top-up Grant	-1,843,500	-1,843,520	-20
Precept	-22,981,000	-22,980,453	547
Grand Total	-33,480,000	-34,264,533	-784,533

The funding provisional outturn is £0.785m above the budgeted level; £0.127m relates to expenditure incurred in relation to the Protection grant. The residual Protection grant balance £0.281m will be carried forward into 2023/24 and will be utilised in line with the conditions of the grant.

Furthermore, following reconciliations of government business rates grants by central government, we received one-off funding totalling £0.655m. In addition to this, we also received additional one-off grants totalling £0.062m relating to end of year reconciliations carried out by central government and allocation of residual funds. These additional funds were offset by a £0.062m reduction in Firelink funding which is expected to reduce by 20% per annum until the funding stops in 2026/27.

5. Capital Monitoring

Capital Forecast

The capital programme for 2022/23 is £3.940m, including £1.514m from 2021/22 carry forward capital projects.

Project Name	Original Budget 2022/23 £	Carry Forwards 2021/22 £	Revised Budget 2022/23 £	Provisional Outturn £	Slippage £	Projected Year End Variance £
Property	500,000	150,000	650,000	355,607	249,000	-45,393
Property Review	0	0	0	125,809	0	125,809
Total Property Portfolio	500,000	150,000	650,000	481,416	249,000	80,416
Hydraulic Equipment	65,000	10,000	75,000	56,085	18,915	0
Operational Equipment	90,000	19,000	109,000	117,476	0	8,476
Operational Red Fleet Vehicles	500,000	818,000	1,318,000	757,852	560,148	0
BA and Associated Equipment	950,000	0	950,000	684,541	65,459	-200,000
Fireground Radios	115,000	0	115,000	0	115,000	0
Total Fire Appliances & Equipment	1,720,000	847,000	2,567,000	1,615,954	759,523	-191,524
ICT	206,000	516,500	722,500	676,174	91,656	45,330
Total Support	206,000	516,500	722,500	676,174	91,656	45,330
Grand Total	2,426,000	1,513,500	3,939,500	2,773,543	1,100,179	-65,778

Capital Funding

The capital programme will be funded as follows:

Funding	Balance at 1 April 2022 £000	Estimated Transfers (in) £000	Estimated Transfers Out £000	Estimated Balance at 31 March 2023 £000
Revenue Contribution to Capital	-3,886	-2,223	2,750	-3,359
Other Capital Contributions	0	-24	24	0
Total Capital Funding	-3,886	-2,247	2,774	-3,359

Property Portfolio

Property had a capital budget of £0.650m for 2022/23, which included carry forward budget from 2021/22 of £0.150m. The capital funds were utilised to carry out planned capital projects as agreed at Business Transformation Board (BTB). There have been changes in the property capital plan during 2022-23 with several capital works rearranged between 2022/23 and 2023/24. In addition, there were several unscheduled emergency capital works that needed to be completed during 2022/23.

The total expenditure on property capital works during 2022/23 was £0.355m, with slippage identified of £249k. The capital works completed during 2022/23 included Aylesbury Fire Station (FS) gym improvements, bay lighting upgrade, hot water generator, heating boiler and upgrade to USAR rig follow completion of residual works. Several sites have had various drill tower works carried out at their sites. Additional works included the installation of heating controls panels at our on-call stations. High Wycombe FS had air handling installed in the dorms, drainage works, replacement of hot water generator and redecoration improvements. Additional works have been seen at SHQ with installation of opening windows, electric charging points at Marlow FS, Buckingham FS BA room upgrade and diesel tank infrastructure improvements at Haddenham and Gerrards Cross FS.

The slippage identified of £0.249m relates to drill tower works and upgrades to Broughton, Buckingham, High Wycombe, Gerrards Cross Marlow, Olney and West Ashland FS.

The West Ashland build is now complete, and the final account have been agreed. The capital expenditure seen in 2022/23 of £0.126m relates to the retention fees on the project and includes costs for professional fees. The Authority are in contact with legal representatives to pursue and recover some of the increased costs incurred during the build from the professional design team.

Fire Appliances & Equipment

Fire Appliances & Equipment has a capital budget of £2.567m for 2022/23, which includes carry forward budget from 2021/22 of £0.847m. The capital funds have been utilised to purchase red fleet appliances and to purchase operational equipment for these appliances, in line with the fleet strategy. In addition to this, the funds will be utilised for the replacement of breathing apparatus (BA) and fireground radios. The new BA and fireground radios contracts are due to commence in 2023/24, however the BA equipment was received during 2022/23 ahead of the go-live date and therefore most of the costs have been captured in 2022/23.

The carry forward budget of £0.847m relates to delays in the delivery of the three fire appliances and equipment which were due to be delivered in 2021/22 and were delivered in 2022/23. The 2022/23 actual capital spend relates to the expenditure on the 2021/22 three fire appliances, two hydraulic lifting systems, fire hoses, ladders, light portable pumps, thermal imaging camera and other operational equipment. In addition, expenditure of £0.685m relating to the BA sets and associated equipment.

A slippage of £0.760m on Fire appliances and Equipment has been identified. This relates to the delay in the delivery of the 2022/23 fire appliances, with delivery expected to be 2023/24. In addition, slippage of £0.065m on BA and Associated equipment to purchase additional identified equipment in 2023/24 and a slippage of £0.115m on Fireground Radios, with the project expected to commence in 2023/24.

The £0.200m underspend on BA and Associated Equipment relates to identified savings achieved. The saving was achieved following a collaboration between the three Thames Valley Fire Services which resulted in a competitive procurement process and allowed the three services to align their BA equipment and achieve efficiencies in the capital purchase costs.

The cost of chassis and other appliance parts has increased. This increase impacts the five appliances currently on order (2022/23 x 2 and 2023/24 x 3) and orders beyond 2023/24. With the price increase this will likely result in an overspend being seen in 2023/24 by approx. £0.050m.

Support

ICT has a capital budget of £0.723m for 2022/23, which includes carry forward budget from 2021/22 of £0.517m. This budget was utilised for the purchase of ICT hardware equipment and upgrades to the wide area network / local area network (WAN/LAN) across all Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes estates, as per the ICT replacement strategy. The capital ICT expenditure for 2022/23 totaled £0.676m. Majority of this relates to the WAN/LAN project, along with the purchases of laptops, surface pros, desktop PCs with monitors and delivery of the BHQ servers, which will be installed in April 2023. This has been an overspend on the ICT capital budget of £0.045m, due to the WAN/LAN final costs coming in higher than the approved budget. A slippage of £0.092m has been identified for the replacement of station end servers, On-call MDTs and replacement of station end turnout systems, that will now be completed during 2023/24.

Slippage into 2023/24

The provisional outturn figure is showing a slippage of £1.100m (subject to any late accounting changes) which predominantly relates to the delays in the delivery of red fleet appliances & equipment, along with the property capital works, which will be completed during 2023/24.

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.

Reserves	Balance at 1 April 2022 £000	Projected Movement £000	Estimated Balance at 31 March 2023 £000
General Fund	-1,500	0	-1,500
Earmarked Reserves (Revenue)*	-1,924	-138	-2,062
Earmarked Reserves (Capital)	-3,886	527	-3,359
Total Reserves	-7,310	389	-6,921

* This figure includes £0.617m, which represents this Authority's share of the joint control room renewals fund (which is held by Oxfordshire).

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 12 July 2023

Report title: Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme

Lead Member: Councillor Matthew Walsh

Report sponsor: Anne-Marie Carter, Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO

Author and contact: Marie Crothers - Programme Manager mcrothers@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Noting

Recommendations: That the Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme update be noted

Executive summary:

This paper examines the current Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) position and the expected impact on the South Central (SC) project team, with regard to workloads. It relies on the information provided by the national Programme being open, accurate and provided in a timely manner.

The document outlines the position adopted by the SC region regarding the future engagement with both the Programme and the team managed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

With the current delays within the Programme and bearing in mind that their deployment team have now been stood down whilst the re-procurement of Lot 2 takes place, the SC board had requested a review of how the region look to engage with the Programme over the next couple of years. This was to ensure that the effort put into ESMCP is effective, beneficial, and balanced with other more pressing priorities.

The NFCC and Programme teams have asked each Service to maintain a strategic owner for ESMCP and, in addition, that the ESMCP reference is assigned to a suitable individual who will act as a single point of contact (SPoC).

The Thames Valley region already has an established SRO at strategic level; therefore, this governance can remain unchanged and there will be a single representative for the Thames Valley team at the NFCC ESMCP strategic meetings.

The SPoC position refers to a more tactical level of contact which is currently carried out by four Project Managers across the Thames Valley region. The future engagement will comprise the provision of a single Project Manager to represent all the Thames Valley fire services. The SPoC will cater for the small amount of local engagement from the NFCC/Programme and represent Thames Valley team across all the programme workstreams/meetings as required, and then engaging with their local Service contacts as necessary.

The current Thames Valley Project Manager will adopt this role ensuring that a level of regional contact will be maintained with the Programme and mitigates the risk of losing staff knowledge and experience when scaling back resources.

The Thames Valley Strategic lead and SPoC will ensure relevant communications and developments in ESMCP are managed accordingly, as well as maintaining a significantly reduced level of internal governance. Regular meetings between the project managers will continue, ensuring that information is shared and the SC Programme Board meetings will continue to be held in line with the dates of the Fire Customer Group meetings.

The position adopted from 01 April 2023 will provide assurance that Thames Valley Services remain engaged with the Programme and informed of progress whilst allowing local Services to utilise their resources in a more efficient way.

Financial implications:

The current Local Transition Resource (LTR) funding ceased as of 01 April 2023.

In order to mitigate the impact of this, the TV Project Manager role has been reduced from a four-day week working on South Central Fire ESMCP to one day per week. This is a local flexible agreement which means the time spent on ESMCP will vary but not exceed one day per week over the next twelve months to enable budgets to be made available to support the role.

The TV PM will also be seconded into the Home Office to support Fire Funding Policy with ESMCP for the remaining contracted three days per week. The Home Office will be funding the secondment. The TV PM employment contract will continue to sit with Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service during this period.

Each of the Thames Valley services will contribute an equal amount to the TV PM post for work conducted for Thames Valley on ESMCP.

Risk management:

The South Central Programme team maintains a risk register on behalf of the South Central Programme Board. The Risk Register v27 was reviewed by the three TV FRS project managers in February 2023.

There have been few changes to the current risks due to the limited movement of the Programme. However, there was one closure and one new addition to the register:

ESMCP043 – *Closed* - Funding shortfall in financial year 2022/23 onwards. Closed due to information released regarding the funding position as current financial year about to close

ESMCP045 – *Opened – Green* - Funding shortfall for remainder of delivery of Programme activities - Funding for LTR ceases 31 March 2023. No future model released leading to potential limitations in local resource availability

Legal implications:

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service have already signed up to the principles of the ESN. Officers will continue to monitor the progress of the Programme closely and will provide challenge to the process where it is felt necessary.

Privacy and security implications:

As the Programme remains in the 'Prepare' phase, there have been no privacy issues or security implications identified. This will remain under review, particularly when the Programme stands up again and moves to the 'Mobilisation' phase.

Duty to collaborate:

This Authority remains an active participant of the South Central Transition Delivery arrangements. The governance and delivery models have now been established and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service officers are involved at each level. The principle has been adopted that information is shared across all three South Central services and where appropriate, joint responses to work requests are submitted.

The South Central region is also working with the South East region and Thames Valley Police on activities such as the Coverage and Assurance work in order to achieve a consistent approach and effective use of the limited resources available.

Health and safety implications:

There are no health and safety implications perceived at this time. There is constant review of this and any issues that may arise in the future will be referred.

Environmental implications:

There are no environmental implications perceived at this time. There is constant review of this and any issues that may arise in the future will be referred.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

There have been no equality and diversity implications identified to date. As the programme progresses, further information, and a confirmed plan become available, then an impact assessment will be completed.

Consultation and communication:

The need to communicate and consult with all identified stakeholders is reviewed regularly. Once the Programme has entered its mobilisation and transition phases then regular communications will be established.

Background papers:

[ESMCP Update, Executive Committee 13 November 2021](#)

[ESMCP Update, Executive Committee 13 July 2022](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
A	South Central Region Position Update July 2023	None
B	ESMCP Chronology of events Oct 2022	None

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Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme

South Central Region Position Update July 2023

Background information

The Full Business Case (FBC) for the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) was formally approved by the Government's Major Projects Review Group (MPRG) on Friday 23 July 2021. This was a key milestone and provided the cross-government support to move the programme into the delivery phase, however this is conditional on the programme meeting the challenges of cost, coverage scope and resilience.

The early part of 2021 presented challenges for the Programme, as progress in delivering the technology has been slow. In addition, a concern was raised regarding one of the suppliers' main contractors' ambitions within ESN. This was further compounded, as in mid-2021, a challenge was received by the supplier from the Competition and Markets Authority regarding their association with Airwave and their performance in the delivery of the ESMCP.

The Programme has since announced that they will be moving away from the supplier (Motorola) and are preparing themselves for a re-lotting process which will be a full procurement of Lot 2 – User Services. A short chronology of events leading to this can be found at Appendix A.

The Programme has announced a further expected delay of at least 18 - 24 months due to the re-lotting and re-procurement process which must be followed as a result of Motorola parting company with the Programme. These are further delays to a Programme that was originally planned to be completed in 2019.

The Programme Deployment Team is being stood down and no longer undertaking deployment planning activities with local user organisation teams. It is not believed that these resources will be stood up again until mid-2025. This will allow for the successful bidder for Lot 2 to embed and for planning activities to recommence. The Programme recognises that although there may be a risk in losing momentum, it will be difficult for user organisations to continue to prepare for transition without indicative timelines.

The South Central (SC) ESMCP Programme Board had already requested that the Project Managers in the region start to look at different ways that we, as a region, could continue to engage with the Programme during this time but also ensure an efficient and productive use of Project Manager resources.

The NFCC central ESMCP team have provided an early impact assessment to local teams. Whilst this has sought to categorise the work during these delays, it has not ventured into quantification of the scale of each task or area of work, nor an assessment of the resource required. However, it has been useful to the SC Team in that it has clarified the scale of involvement required at a local level during this interim period.

In early 2021, workloads for the SC region were in line with the Programme Business Case being worked to. This amounted to the Thames Valley Collaboration PM (TVPM) working to the agreed contracted hours and the Service PMs utilising approximately 15% - 20% of their time on ESMCP.

The focus of effort by the SC region has been:

- Re-establishing the Regional Programme Manager role as it had been vacant in the previous year with two of the PMs managing the role,
- Responding to Fire Funding Policy (FFP) requests as part of the Local User Resource (LUR) review,
- Responding to Programme and NFCC requests,
- Coverage assurance work,
- Fully engaging with the Programme workstreams,
- Fully engaging at a strategic level,
- Managing internal governance.

Over the past few months, the workload has diminished as the SC region completed and agreed a business case with the Fire Funding Policy team and the LUR requests have ceased. There has been a reduction in assistance requests from the Programme and the NFCC, as some Programme workstreams are now limited/suspended.

The current Local Transition Resource (LTR) funding ceased as of 01 April 2023. Therefore, for the foreseeable future, there will be no funds available for resources to work on ESMCP activities.

For the interim period, the NFCC central team will be maintaining the Fire Sector engagement with the Programme and provide the assurance that ESN will meet the needs of fire services.

Although most of the work will be managed by the NFCC team, there will be a need to liaise with local Services as and when required.

The NFCC/Programme has asked each Service to maintain a strategic owner for ESMCP and, in addition, that the ESMCP reference is assigned to a suitable individual or single point of contact (SPoC).

Future engagement of the Thames Valley region with ESMCP

In September 2022, when the delays first became apparent, the SC ESMCP board anticipated that resource changes would have to be made and commissioned the Project Managers to review how best to engage with the Programme for the duration of the delays. This was to ensure that any effort put into ESMCP is effective, beneficial, and balanced with other more pressing priorities within Services.

The SC project managers together with the Thames Valley (TV) project manager have been considering a number of options to enable the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for the TV region to make an informed decision on the future engagement with the

Programme over the next 2-3 years. It has been agreed that the region will continue with coverage activities only and will attend Fire Customer Group meetings.

The Thames Valley region already has an established SRO at strategic level; therefore, this governance can remain unchanged and there will be a single representative for the Thames Valley team at the NFCC ESMCP strategic meetings.

The SPoC position refers to a more tactical level of contact which is currently carried out by four Project Managers across the Thames Valley region. The recommendation from the future engagement paper refers to the provision of a single Project Manager to represent all the Thames Valley fire services. The SPoC will cater for the small amount of local engagement from the NFCC/Programme and represent Thames Valley team across all the programme workstreams/meetings as required, and then engaging with their local Service contacts as necessary.

The current Thames Valley Project Manager will adopt this role, freeing up the 3 local Project Managers to focus on other priorities within their Services. Maintaining a SPoC within the Thames Valley will ensure that a level of contact will still be maintained with the Programme and mitigates the risk of losing staff knowledge and experience when scaling back resources.

The Thames Valley Strategic lead and SPoC will ensure relevant communications and developments in ESMCP are managed accordingly, as well as maintaining a significantly reduced level of internal governance. Regular meetings between the PMs will continue to ensure that information is shared and the SC Programme Board meetings will continue to be held in line with the dates of the Fire Customer Group meetings.

The Thames Valley Project team are currently in the process of safely storing all previous work completed on the ESMCP to ensure nothing is lost, so that when the Programme restarts, previous work can be easily accessed and understood.

Programme Restart

The NFCC has confirmed that they will provide Services with 6-12 months notice regarding the point at which resources will be required to step up again, and that this will not be until mid-2025 at the earliest.

The expectation from the Thames Valley team will be, that at the point resources are requested to reconvene, the NFCC/Programme are in a position where they have:

- An approved signed off Full Business Case
- Suppliers they are confident can deliver
- Clear and evidenced timelines with a delivery plan
- A new resource funding model that has been agreed

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Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme

Chronology of events - October 2022

- As a result of the end of contracts for the current Airwave communication system between 2016 - 2020, the Government has been developing an integrated communication system for the three Emergency Services in the United Kingdom. This programme is known as the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) and is Home Office (HO) led. The Fire and Rescue Sector is represented on the Programme through the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).
- The existing radio communications system is known as Airwave and is provided by Motorola. This system was introduced to the Fire sector in 2009 and was due to be replaced in 2019. Whilst the voice provision by this service is excellent, this system is not able to provide broadband data services. It therefore will not be able to support future technology so needs replacing. The Airwave system is also expensive in comparison with other services. EU legislation required a re-competition for the provision of contracts.
- The programme to deliver the new system (known as the Emergency Services Network or ESN) has been established for some years now and is the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme or ESMCP. It will utilise the commercial mobile network operators using 4G LTE for the transmission of voice and data traffic between emergency service resources.
- Contracts awarded by the Programme (held by the Home Office and not individual services) are:
 - Lot 1: *Delivery Partner - Deloitte* to provide project/programme management for the delivery of the new network
 - Lot 2: *User Services – Motorola* to develop and provide the devices to connect to the network
 - Lot 3: *Mobile Services – EE* to build the private ESN mobile network which will sit on top of the EE commercial network. **Note** – Motorola also completed the acquisition of Airwave in 2016.
- Since 2015, the South Central team have been fully engaged with ESMCP, supporting, and providing the Programme with information, opinion, and challenge. The Programme was originally scheduled for completion in 2019 with the proposed ‘big bang’ approach known as ‘Plan A’ and which was supported by a Full Business Case (FBC) at ministerial level.
- In 2017, the Programme realised that the delivery timeline was over ambitious and there had been a significant under estimation of the work and complexities involved to deliver ESN. The Programme went into what was known as a ‘reset’ to re-evaluate the way the Programme was being delivered.
- The Programme estimated that the ‘reset’ would take 3 months. Unfortunately, the Programme did not come out of the ‘reset’ until early 2019 with what was known as ‘Plan B’.
- ‘Plan B’ took a more incremental approach to delivering the technology and provided an estimated timeline for completion by the end of 2022. This was supported by an interim FBC.
- Throughout this period, the South Central team engaged fully with the Programme by responding to any requests for information, engaging with all ESMCP workstreams and maintaining a robust internal governance structure.

- By early 2020, there was a realisation that the 'end of 2022' completion date was unachievable due to several ongoing challenges around the delivery of the Programme. The new Programme Director, John Black, decided to re-baseline the plan to provide user organisations with a more realistic and achievable timeline. A new and revised formal FBC was presented to user organisations during the autumn of 2020 which had two timeline options. The preferred option was to complete the Programme (Airwave switch off) by the end of 2026 with a contingency option which estimated completion by mid-2027. User organisations were asked to endorse the new FBC and to start preparing for delivery. User Organisations (UO) were promised an Integrated Programme Plan (IPP) on the back of the new FBC by mid-2021, which would have provided timelines for the deployment of each UO. This never materialised.
- The early part of 2021 presented more challenges for the Programme, as progress in delivering the technology was slow. This was further compounded, as in mid-2021, a challenge came into the Motorola by the Competitions and Market Authority regarding their association with Airwave and their performance in the delivery of ESMCP. The resultant outcome will not be known until the end of 2022, but the Programme has since announced that they will be moving away from the supplier and are preparing themselves for a re-lotting process which will be a full procurement of Lot 2.
- Currently, the Programme is carrying out an impact assessment of the re-procurement and its knock-on effect. The Programme has confirmed that they are stepping down some teams working on the latter part of the delivery but will maintain the teams required to support the procurement process and maintain other critical parts of the Programme. Further detail on this has yet to be released by the Programme.
- The Programme plans for delivery will be shared in the coming months which will detail the activity that should continue (coverage, device developments etc) as they believe stopping them will only cause further delays. The date from when these plans will be made available has yet to be advised.
- The 'stop start' nature of the Programme has been difficult for the South Central ESMCP team to manage internally. The local Project Managers (PMs) workloads from ESMCP have increased at short notice and de-escalated as quickly, and much work from the Programme has been issued with very short turnaround times. In addition, updates to Service strategic teams tend to continually pass on information about delays and a negative environment has been building around the feel for the Programme for some time.
- The delays within the Programme have meant that more immediate projects within Services have been given priority and the PMs have needed to balance this with their interactions on ESMCP.
- The Fire Sector regions are assessing how to react to the delay, with the strategic short-term focus from the NFCC trying to ensure Services stay engaged with the Programme.

[End]



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 12 July 2023

Report title: Environment and Climate Action Plan Update

Lead Member: Councillor David Hopkins

Report sponsor: Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets

Author and contact: Mark Hemming

Action: Noting

Recommendations: That the Committee note the report.

Executive summary:

The Environment and Climate Action Plan was approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 8 December 2021. The Plan contained several actions designed to improve the Service's response to extreme weather events, as well as taking action to reduce its own carbon emissions.

This paper provides an update on progress against the Plan since it was approved. Some of the key points to note are:

- Following the record high temperatures during the Summer of 2022, a number of improvements have been implemented to assist the response to future extreme weather events.
- The Procurement, Fleet and Property strategies have all been updated to further consider environmental and climate implications.
- Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions from our fleet and property have now been baselined, allowing future improvement to be quantified.
- The Service entered a contract for 100% renewable electricity, sourced solely from solar, wind and hydro power. Based on forecast usage this will reduce the Service's emissions by an estimated 283 tonnes of CO₂ in 2023-24.

Financial implications: There are no direct financial implications associated with the Climate Action Plan, although measures taken to reduce energy consumption will (all other things being equal) also bring a financial benefit to the Authority over the longer-term. Any implications of future actions that have a financial impact will be subject to approval in accordance with Financial Regulations and Instructions.

Risk management: The Authority's 2020-25 Public Safety Plan (PSP) identifies climate change as a risk to the communities it serves. In addition to ensuring that Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) is properly prepared to deal with the effects of climate change on its risk and demand profile, the PSP

also commits to reducing the impact on the environment from BFRS's own operations and infrastructure.

Legal implications: No direct impact.

Privacy and security implications: No direct impact.

Duty to collaborate: No direct impact.

Health and safety implications: No direct impact.

Environmental implications: The Climate Action Plan demonstrates the Authority's commitment to addressing the issue of climate change. Detailed environmental implications are detailed within Appendix 1.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications: No direct impact.

Consultation and communication: No direct impact.

Background papers:

Environment and Climate Action Plan. Fire Authority. 8 December 2021. Available at: <https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/11/fire-authority-agenda-and-reports-8-december-2021.pdf/> (pp. 29-37)

Summer Pressures. Fire Authority. 12 October 2022. Available at: <https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/09/fa-item-10-121022.pdf/>

Summer Pressures Recommendations. Fire Authority. 14 June 2023. Available at: <https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/06/fire-authority-annual-meeting-14-june-2023-item-18.pdf/>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Environment and Climate Action Plan Update	None

Appendix 1 – Environment and Climate Action Plan Update

The Environment and Climate Action Plan (henceforth the Plan) sets out how the Service would respond to climate change through:

- Adaptation – optimising our response to extreme weather events such as flooding and wildfires.
- Mitigation - taking action to reduce our own carbon emissions, while encouraging our staff and communities to do the same.

Mitigation measures were then further subcategorised into Buildings and Energy, Transportation, Waste Reduction and Supply Chain.

Adaptation

The months of July (16 - 19) and August (9 - 15) 2022, brought record high temperatures and dry weather that presented many challenges for Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) and other emergency responders across the country. On the 19 July 2022 the UK recorded its highest ever temperature of 40.3°C (104.5°F).

The Service attended an unprecedented number of calls, including many fires in the open / wildfires and declared a service wide major incident.

The Fire Authority has received two reports analysing the response to those incidents and making recommendations for the future. The latest report focussed on six areas to consider for future improvement:

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

The report concluded that “Summer pressures has the potential to form part of BFRS core business, and due to the nature of these pressures they will provide several challenges moving forward. BFRS staff were able to service the needs of these summer pressure incidents whilst maintaining operational fire cover, and this has been recognised, however there are multiple areas for improvement as can be viewed in the themes.”

Links to the full reports have been provided within the background papers.

Mitigation

The planned actions to reduce our own carbon emissions while encouraging our staff and communities to do the same were set out in the Plan. Updates on each area are summarised in the table below and referenced to more detailed updates for those actions already commenced on subsequent pages.

Year	Action	Objective	Update	RAG
2020-21	Update Procurement Strategy	Address the future aims in the Supply Chain area	Incorporated into new Strategy approved by the Fire Authority in December 2022.	Done
	Update Fleet Strategy	Address the future aims in the Transportation area	An interim update is being presented to the Executive Committee in July 2023. Environmental considerations have been reflected in this.	G
	Investigate the use of renewable energy in our buildings	Reduce CO2 emissions from current levels of energy usage	New electricity contract is zero carbon, 100% renewable electricity.	Done
2022-23	Complete the Carbon Accounting Tool	Baseline current emissions and highlight other areas for further improvement	Completed for Scope 1 and 2 emissions – further work required to complete Scope 3 details	G
	Review engagement and communications plan for climate change issues	Increase public awareness of climate change through existing media channels	Ongoing and specific focus in relation to Summer 2022	G
	Review potential use of sustainable investments	Reduce the environmental impact of our investment portfolio	Sustainable deposits now form part of our Treasury portfolio	Done
2023-24	Update Property Strategy	Review the energy efficiency of our buildings and include actions to improve this, a key element of the Buildings and Energy area	An interim update is being presented to the Executive Committee in July 2023. Environmental considerations have been updated as part of this.	G
	Produce training for staff on climate change and the Environment and Climate Action Plan	Look to establish a group like the Green Action initiative to encourage energy saving among our own staff	Scheduled for 2023-24	G
	Look at ways to further reduce waste	Address the future aims in the Waste Reduction area	Scheduled for 2023-24	G
	Unit 7 Exit – specific part of both updated Property Strategy and Financial Strategy, which has associated environmental benefits	Reduce carbon emissions	In progress. Business case for exiting Unit 7 to be presented to the Executive Committee during Q3 of 2023-24.	A

2024-25	Review of the Prevent, Protect, Respond area in readiness for the Public Safety Plan 2025+	Investigate ways to improve targeting of individuals and business most at risk	Scheduled for 2024-25	G
		Identify potential partners to support our work in relation to climate change	Scheduled for 2024-25	G
	Revised Fleet and Property Strategies	Consider number of vehicles and premises to be held, their purpose, and anticipated level of use	Scheduled for 2024-25 to align with development of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030	G

Update Procurement Strategy

The new Procurement Strategy covering the years 2022-2026 was approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 7 December 2022. The Strategy was developed with reference to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) National Procurement Strategy (which is based on the Local Government National Procurement Strategy) and practices were assessed using the accompanying toolkit to identify strategic targets.

The key area of the Procurement Strategy in relation to this Plan is social value, which is about improving economic, social and environmental wellbeing from public sector contracts over and above the delivery of the services directly required. It was noted that the Service is already including social value requirements in all relevant tenders (despite not being legally required to do so) and this forms 5-10% of the total quality score that is assessed. An improvement that was identified and will be addressed as part of the Procurement Strategy is to improve the monitoring and reporting of social value across all the Service's contracts. Environmental and climate considerations will form a key part of this reporting.

Update Fleet Strategy

The Fleet Strategy will (subject to approval) be extended until 2025 in line with the current Public Safety Plan (PSP) and it has been updated to ensure it remains relevant for the current and subsequent financial year. Following the development of the 2025-2030 Community Risk Management Plan (the timeline for which was approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 7 December 2022) a new Fleet Strategy will be developed to ensure the fleet requirements can be delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible. The update covers several environmental and climate related issues including:

- Electrification of our fleet – the Service continues to monitor the latest developments in electric frontline pumping appliances, including a demonstration of the capabilities of the latest model from Rosenbauer UK, Emergency One and upcoming visit to JCB to view developing hydrogen technology. However, these are currently thought to be impracticable prohibitive given the Service's current requirements and the additional cost, but this position may change in the future. The Service has replaced a number of white fleet diesel vehicles with electric or hybrid equivalents and has installed charging points at West Ashland, Aylesbury and Marlow.

- Vehicle emissions and mileage were analysed and form part of our overall emissions analysis (see pages 5-6)
- The consideration of alternatives to diesel fuels, and why these have currently been discounted but will be kept under review



Investigate the Use of Renewable Energy in our Buildings

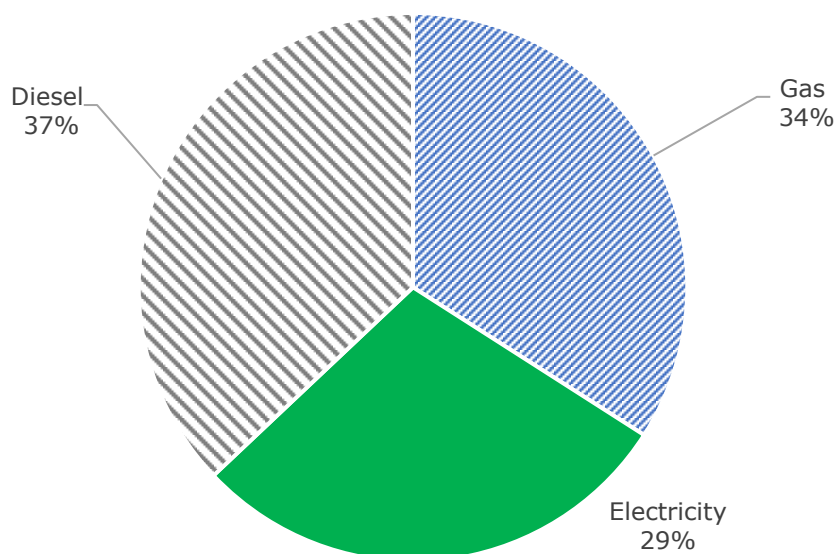
The Service’s previous contracts for electricity and gas expired on 31 March 2022. Due to the significant increases in energy prices at that time, those contracts were extended on a rolling basis until such time that energy prices, and the outlook for prices, started to fall. New 12-month fixed price contracts for both electricity and gas were awarded and started on 1 April 2023.

The contract for electricity was awarded to Bryt energy, who supply British businesses with zero carbon, 100% renewable electricity, sourced solely from solar, wind and hydro power. Based on forecast usage this will reduce the Service’s emissions by an estimated 283 tonnes of CO2 in 2023-24.

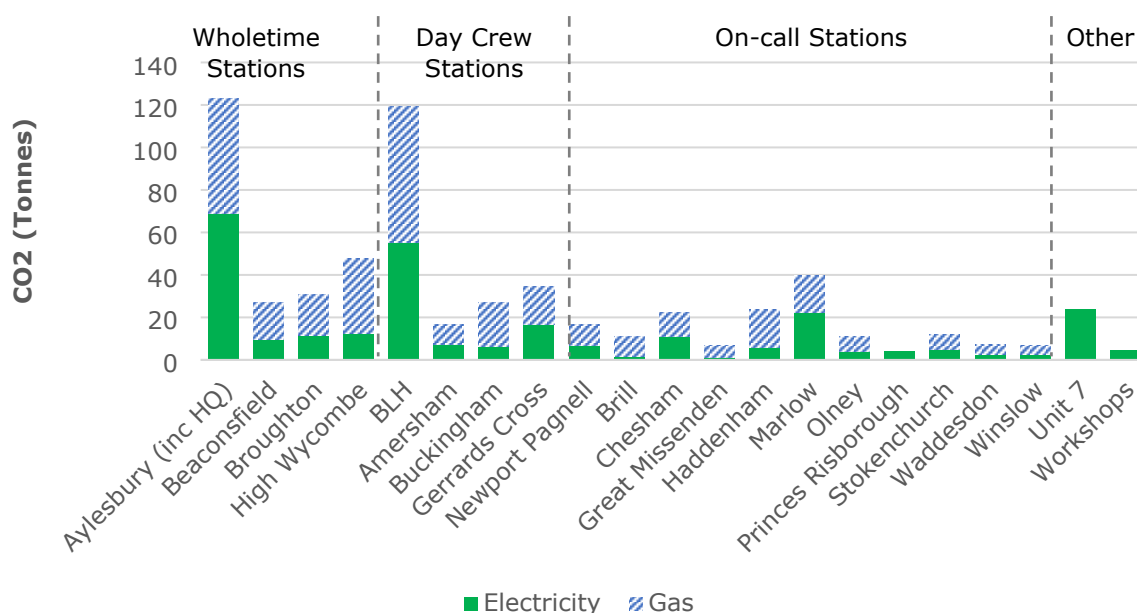


Complete the Carbon Accounting Tool

The tool has now been completed for scope 1 and scope 2 emissions. The total CO2 produced by the Service within these scopes for 2022-23 was 978 tonnes, with the split shown in the chart below:



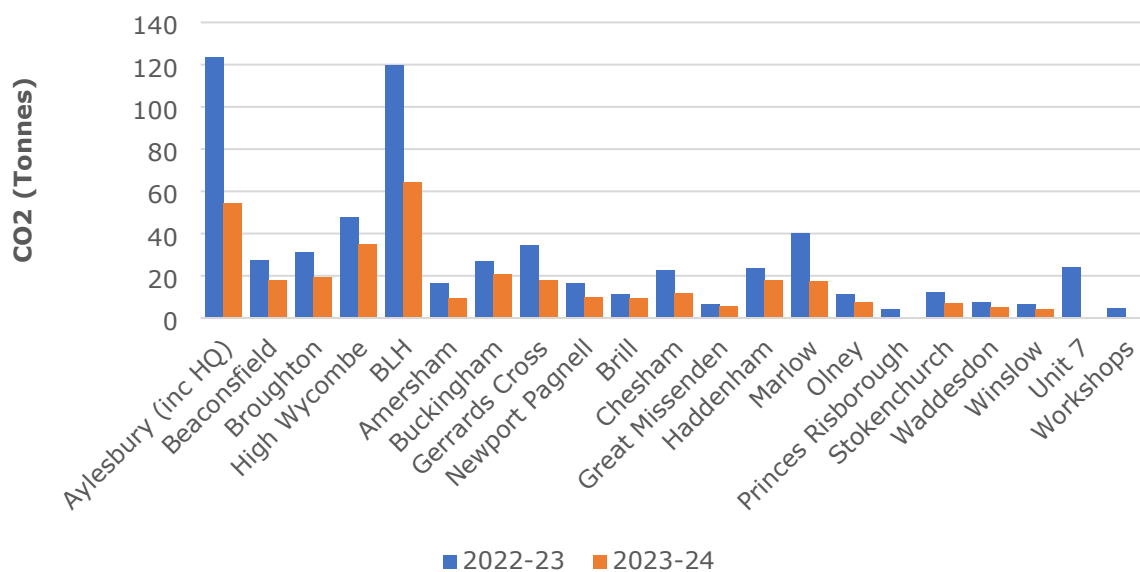
The main driver of diesel usage is responding to incidents, the demand for which is not directly in control of the Service. To reduce diesel usage significantly the Service would need to electrify or move to alternative fuels for its frontline pumping appliances. This is considered in more detail under the Fleet Strategy Update section on page 3. Gas and electricity usage are primarily driven by the usage of the Service’s premises. The chart below shows the CO2 emissions by station, further sub-divided by gas and electricity. Premises have been grouped according to their primary purpose, as one would expect an on-call station that is utilised only when required to consume much less gas and electricity than a wholetime station that is being utilised 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Key points to note from the above chart are:

- Aylesbury Fire Station also includes the Service’s headquarters so will consume more energy than most other wholetime stations.
- The Blue Light Hub (BLH) also contains a significant amount of office accommodation that increases energy consumption.
- Marlow consumes significantly more energy than any other on-call station as it also incorporates a significant amount of office accommodation, and is utilised by multiple partners. Work has been commissioned to revisit the feasibility of solar panel installation at Marlow given the increasing usage of this site in recent years.
- Unit 7 is addressed in the section entitled “Unit 7 Exit” on page 8.

As noted on page 4, the Service entered a contract for zero carbon electricity for 2023-24. The chart below shows the CO2 saving per tonne by premises under this new contract, compared to 2022-23:



While this is a significant saving it should be noted that if a future contract was awarded to a supplier that supplies electricity using a lower percentage of renewable energy supplies, the CO2 emissions would increase towards the 2022-23 levels.

Other measures taken to reduce the energy consumed by our premises are covered in the Update Property Strategy section on page 8. There is still further work required to evaluate other sources of CO2 emissions from the Service’s operations, such as the impact of staff travel and working from home.

Review Engagement and Communications Plan for Climate Change Issues

As noted earlier, the months of July and August 2022, brought record high temperatures and dry weather to the UK. Even before then, the Service was raising the importance of being aware of the weather and promoting fire and water safety, as well as personal wellness. The Service also used its media channels to update the public during major incidents, as well as using the increased interest to promote on-call recruitment.

A selection of environment and climate related tweets from the Service’s account:

Bucks and MK Fire @Bucksfire · Jun 1, 2022
 Stay #WeatherReady this summer by downloading the @metoffice App, where you can access daily weather forecasts plus UV and pollen forecasts, enabling you to stay safe and be prepared for any summer weather ☀️
 More seasonal tips here:
bit.ly/39R6y1F
 #BePrepared #TVLRF



1 2

Bucks and MK Fire @Bucksfire · Jun 15, 2022
 ☀️ If you're going to enjoy the weather with a BBQ check out our advice. 🍷
 📍 bit.ly/3N7H665 Keep #FireSafe. We have attended over 125 BBQ fires in the last 5 years*. Roughly half were in which 2 months?
 Data taken from BFRS incident reporting 2018 - 2022*



2

Bucks and MK Fire @Bucksfire · Jun 20, 2022
 Keeping the kids cool in this heat is a tough one. While it's hot outside the water may not be! Before the kids enjoy the water have the #FloatToLive chat! Remind them to #RespectTheWater. For other top open #watersafety tips bit.ly/3mPakfo



1 1

Bucks and MK Fire Retweeted
Met Office @metoffice · Jul 15, 2022
 🚨🚨🚨 Red Extreme heat warning issued 🚨🚨🚨
 Parts of England on Monday and Tuesday
 Latest info 📍 bit.ly/WxWarning
 Stay #WeatherAware 🚨



736 7,403 5,687

Bucks and MK Fire @Bucksfire · Jul 19, 2022
 We have declared a major incident due to high demand across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. We will not be attending Automatic Fire Alarms. Please only call us if it is an emergency.



1 50 73

Bucks and MK Fire @Bucksfire · Jul 20, 2022
 If the events over the last couple of days have taught us anything it is how much we rely on our emergency services! Now we need you, last few spots left on our On-Call Firefighter awareness evening tomorrow night. Join us bit.ly/3ofTtdDU



3 9 16

Review Potential Use of Sustainable Investments

Sustainable investments now form part of the Service's Treasury Management Strategy. They are classified as deposits that allow customers to have their capital referenced against sustainable assets, whether existing now or in the

future, as verified through the green and sustainable product framework on a net positive basis.

During 2022-23 the Service had £2m invested in a sustainable investment, which is approximately 10% of the investment portfolio.

Update Property Strategy

The Property Strategy will (subject to approval) be extended until 2025 in line with the current Public Safety Plan (PSP) and it has been updated to ensure it remains relevant for the current and subsequent financial year. Following the development of the 2025-2030 Community Risk Management Plan a new Property Strategy will be developed to ensure the requirements of the Service can be delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The update covers environment and climate related issues that have been, and are to be addressed, over the coming years including:

- All on-call stations have had additional heating controls installed to ensure they are not heated unnecessarily when no-one is present in the buildings.
- A number of sites have 1st generation LED lighting, which are being replaced with 6th generation LEDs when they fail, or where it can be done as an invest to save measure. For example, replacing the bay lighting at Aylesbury reduced energy consumption by 30%
- Combined heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) units at HQ have been programmed with a double-shutdown to reduce the amount of energy used during non-core hours.
- Potential exit of Unit 7 (see below)

Unit 7 Exit

The exit of Unit 7 forms part of the current Financial and Property strategies and would also have environmental benefits relevant to this Plan. As noted on page 5, the building emits 24 tonnes of CO2 per year in relation to electricity (although this is reduced to zero on the current contract due to the use of 100% renewable electricity).

To assist with the planning of the exit, the Service recently signed a deed of variation to allow them to terminate the lease by giving nine months' notice at the end of any month (the previous termination clause only allowed this to be exercised at the end of March each year). A business case setting out the options for exiting the building will be presented to the Executive Committee for approval during Q3 of 2023-24.



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 12 July 2023

Report title: Financial Strategy Update (No. 2)

Lead Member: Councillor Matthew Walsh

Report sponsor: Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets

Author and contact: Mark Hemming mhemming@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision

Recommendations: That the Committee:

1. Note the report.
2. Approve the following changes to usable reserves (detailed on pp. 21 to 25 of Appendix 1) to be made retrospectively with effect from 31 March 2023:
 - a. That the Apprentice Reserve be renamed Workforce Planning Reserve
 - b. That the Future Funding Reserve be renamed Transformation Reserve
 - c. That the Continuing Projects Reserve be closed and the balance of £80k transferred to the Transformation Reserve
 - d. That the COVID-19 Reserve be closed and the balance of £594k transferred to the Transformation Reserve

Executive summary:

The Financial Strategy was originally approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2020, and an initial update on the progress of the Strategy was presented to the Fire Authority on 8 December 2021.

This Strategy also contains the Authority's Reserves Strategy, which is a requirement of the National Framework.

Since the last update report was presented, there has been a significant improvement in the financial position and outlook for the Service and progress has been made against a number of the actions within the Strategy. This paper analyses the progress in more detail and provides an updated action plan.

Having reviewed the reserves position, it also presents an updated Reserves Strategy and makes recommendations for reallocating money between reserves and renaming some to more accurately reflect their purpose moving forward.

In line with the commitment made when the Treasury Strategy was approved, this report also highlights the early repayment of £627,000 to the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) in June 2023 , which had an original maturity date of 2053.

Financial implications: As detailed in Appendix 1.

Risk management: Management of our Financial resources is a key risk to the Authority. By projecting forward and monitoring our financial plans, we are in a better position to avoid and mitigate the risk of adverse financial consequences.

Legal implications: The National Framework sets priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England in connection with the discharge of their functions. Fire and rescue authorities have a duty to have regard to the Framework.

Privacy and security implications: No direct impact.

Duty to collaborate: No direct impact.

Health and safety implications: No direct impact.

Environmental implications: No direct impact.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications: No direct impact.

Consultation and communication: No direct impact.

Background papers:

Financial Strategy 2020-21 to 2024-25. Executive Committee. 18 November 2020. Available at: <https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/11/executive-committee-agenda-and-reports-18-november-2020.pdf/> (pp. 49-106)

Financial Strategy 2020-21 to 2024-25 First Annual Update. Fire Authority. 8 December 2021. Available at: <https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/11/fire-authority-agenda-and-reports-8-december-2021.pdf/> (pp. 39-63)

Efficiency and Productivity Plan. Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. March 2023. Available at: bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/efficiency-and-productivity-plan.pdf/

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Financial Strategy Update (No. 2)	None

INTRODUCTION

The Financial Strategy 2020-21 to 2024-25 (approved on 18 November 2020) assessed the Service’s position against four key areas consisting of performance, people, governance, and external factors. It also considered where the Service would like to be, and how it planned to get there. This paper provides an updated assessment against the four key areas and progress made against key measures and actions.

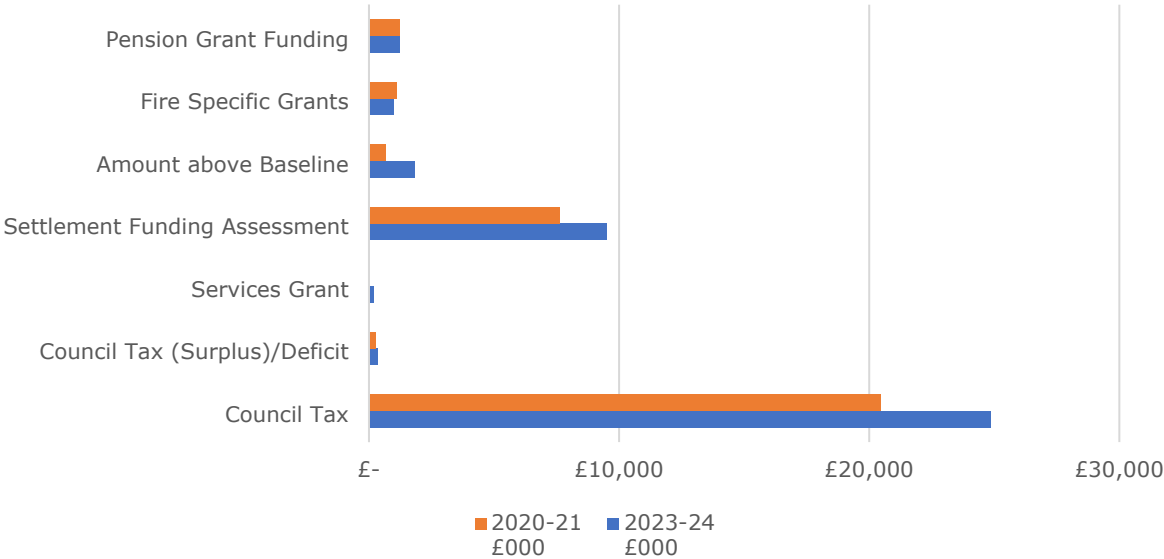
The Financial Strategy incorporated the Reserves Strategy covering the period up to 2024-25. This paper presents an updated Reserves Strategy that reflects the changing financial outlook since the Strategy was first approved.

PERFORMANCE

Nature, level and sources of income and reliance on individual sources of income

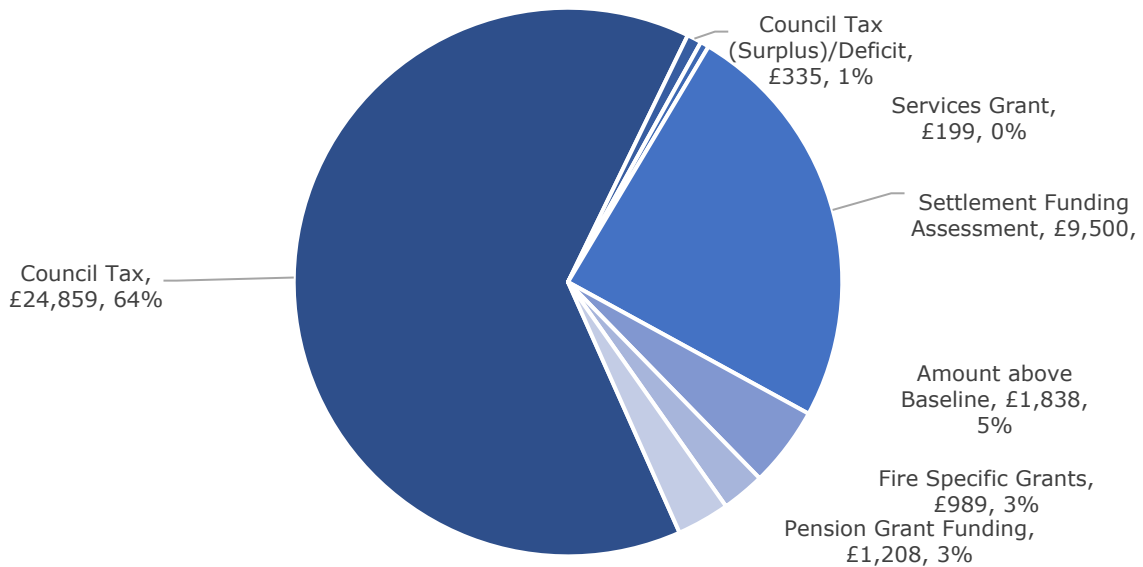
Since 2020-21 there have been significant changes in the level of funding for the Service. The most significant change was the ability to increase the Band D Council Tax precept by up to £5 in 2022-23 and 2023-24 without having to hold a local referendum. The limit in the preceding years had been either a 2% or 3% increase. The chart below shows the significant additional Council Tax revenue this has generated.

Sources of Funding 2023-24(£000):

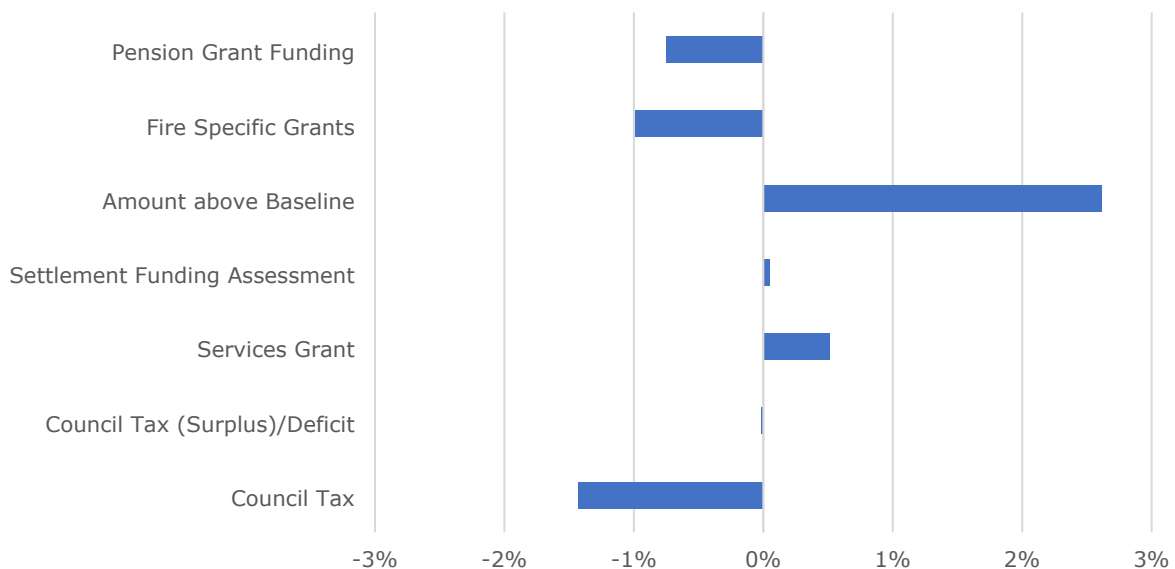


The following two charts show the proportion that each funding stream contributes towards total funding in 2023-24, and the movement in those proportions between 2020-21 and 2023-24.

Sources of Funding 2023-24 (£000) and Relative Percentage Shares:



Sources of Funding 2023-24; Movement in Relative Shares 2021-22 to 2023-24:



Despite the increased Council Tax precept flexibility, the proportion of funding received from Council Tax has decreased slightly since 2020-21. This is mainly due to Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) increasing by at least as much on average (linked to the level of inflation) and the significant increase in the amount of business rates funding received that is above the assessed baseline amount.

The amount above the baseline increased significantly in 2023-24 in large part due to a reassessment of historic appeals and bad-debt provisions by the billing authorities. The proportion of funding this represents is forecast to fall back to around 2-3% in 2024-25. However, there remains a risk that some of this amount could be phased out over the longer-term if the Government chooses to reset the business rates baselines.

Fire specific grants consist of funding for both Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and Firelink. For 2023-24, USAR funding was £817k and Firelink was £172k. It has been confirmed that Firelink funding will be phased out over five years in equal fifths, with the last payment being in 2025-26. When the budget was approved in February, the Service had been informally told that USAR funding would cease on 31 March 2024. Following extensive lobbying, the funding was extended to 31 March 2025 and it is hoped that the Government will be able to fund the capital replacement costs for all USAR teams and that the Service will continue to receive USAR funding for the foreseeable future.

As well as the funding shown above, the Service also generates other income, totalling £1.3m in 2023-24 (£0.6m in 2020-21). Most of the increase is attributable to two factors:

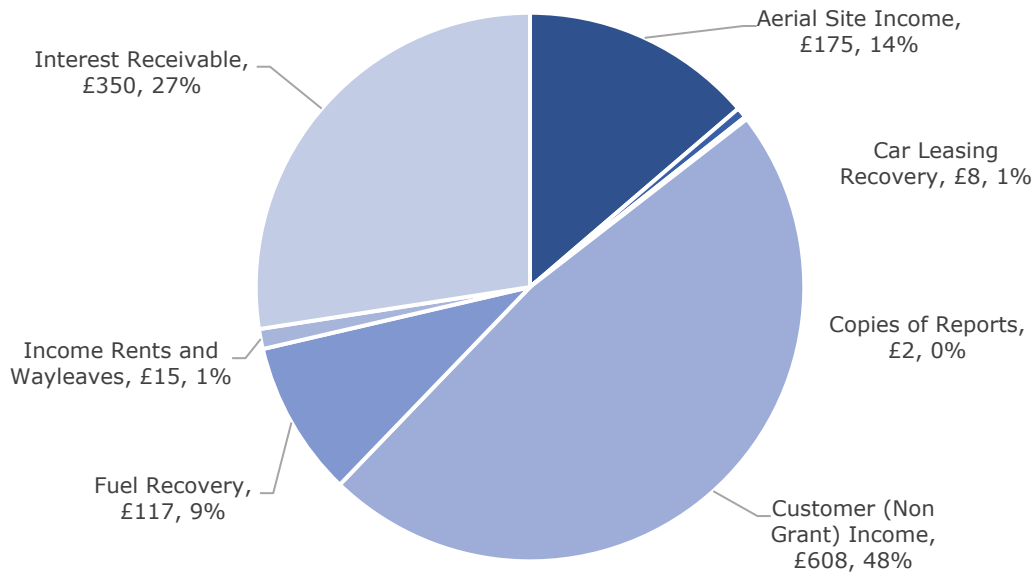
- Customer (Non Grant) Income – most of this increase relates to charges to South Central Ambulance Service and Thames Valley Police under the cost sharing agreement for the Blue Light Hub in Milton Keynes
- Interest Receivable – since the Strategy was first published the Bank of England base rate has increased from 0.10% to 4.50% (as of 15 May 2023). This has significantly increased the returns the Service can achieve from lending cash balances as part of its Treasury Management Strategy.

The relative impact of these changes, and other movements, can be seen in the following charts:

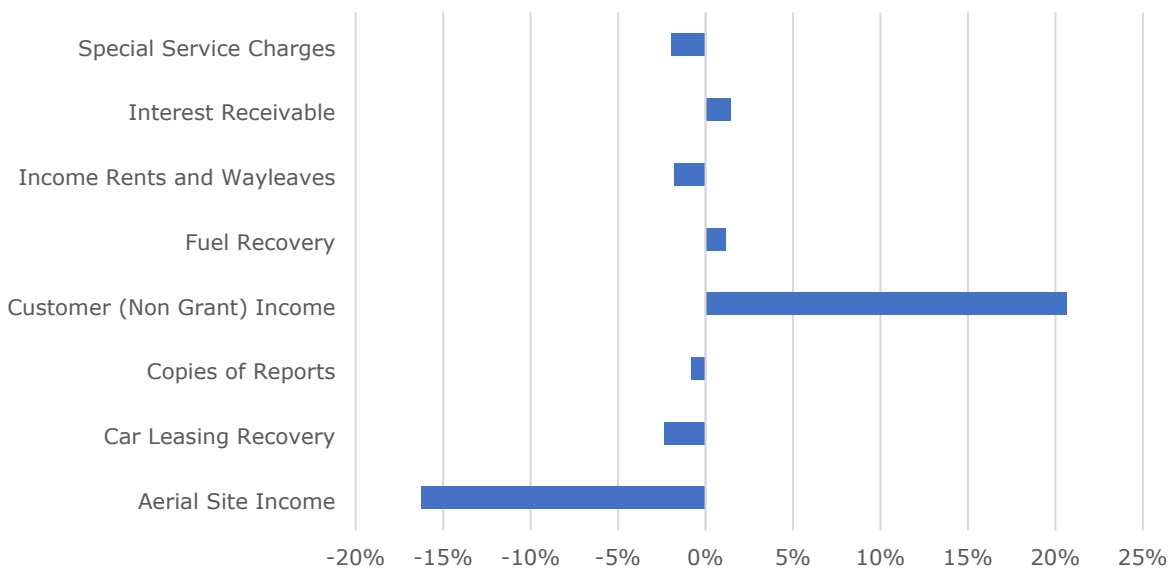
Other Income 2023-24 (£000):



Other Income 2023-24 (£000) and Relative Percentage Shares:



Other Income 2023-24; Movement in Relative Shares 2021-22 to 2023-24:



The chart above shows that the proportion of aerial income has decreased significantly since 2020-21. However, as can be seen in the first chart the absolute amount has stayed constant and the proportion has only fallen due to the significant increases in the level of interest receivable and customer (non grant) income.

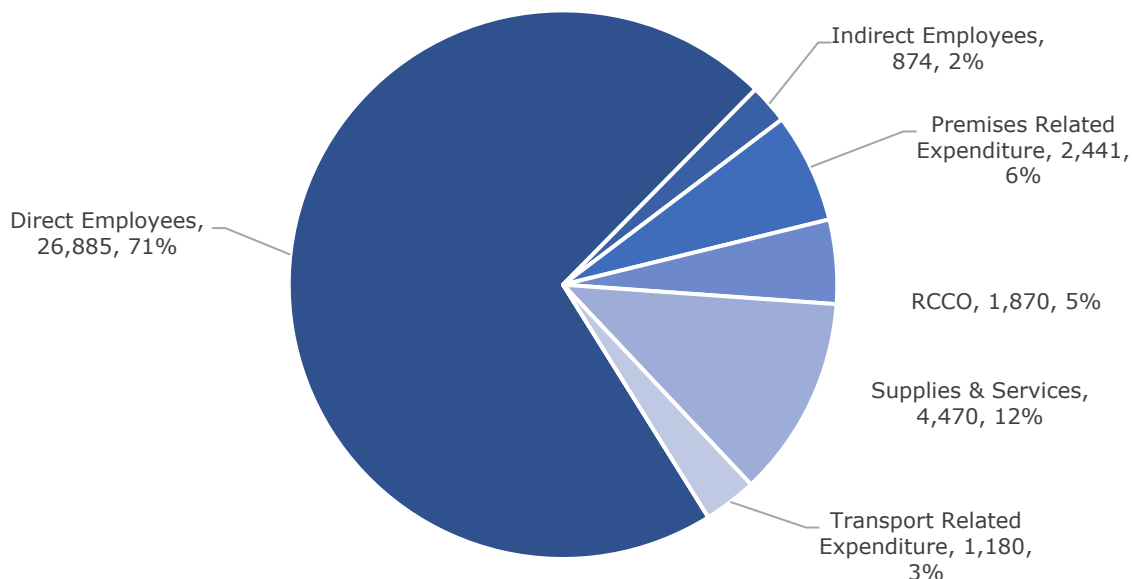
It is positive that there is less reliance on aerial site income, as newer versions of the telecommunications code would make it much harder to maintain business as usual operations if new contracts for aerials were to be agreed. Most of the current contracts have circa fifteen years remaining, but it is unlikely these will be renewed when they expire.

The review of services that we charge for planned for 2022-23 will now be undertaken in 2023-24.

Cost base

Since 2020-21 some aspects of the Service’s cost base have also changed. The chart below shows the proportion of costs allocated to each high-level subjective heading.

Expenditure 2023-24 (£000):



Generally, there has been relatively little movement at this level compared to 2020-21. The most significant change is the proportion of the cost base attributable to premises costs, which has increased from 5% to 7%. This is analysed in more detail later in this paper. It is good to note that despite significant inflationary pressures between 2020-21 and 2023-24, the total amount spent on supplies and services has decreased very slightly in cash terms, and significantly in real terms.

One of HMICFRSs key facts that they publish for each service is the firefighter cost per person per year, versus the national average. As can be seen in the screenshot below, this Service compares extremely favourably on this measure:

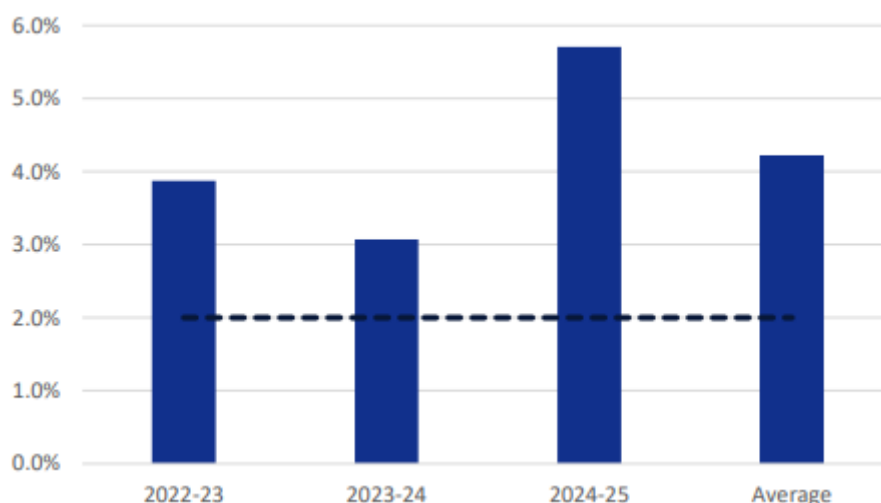
COST	£20.08	£25.22
	firefighter cost per person per year	firefighter cost per person per year (national)

[Source: <https://www.justiceinspectores.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/buckinghamshire/> (Accessed: 15 May 2023)]

The Financial Strategy also set out the aspiration to increase expenditure on front-line staff as a percentage of total expenditure. Between 2020-21 and 2023-24 this figure has increased from 61% to 63%. It should be noted that the definition of frontline staff includes all wholtime and on-call positions, as well as prevention and protection officers.

Planned efficiency improvements

In March 2023, the Service published the most recent version of its Efficiency and Productivity Plan, which amongst other things, summarises the cashable efficiency savings in non-payroll costs the Service has made during 2022-23, and plans to make during 2023-24 and 2024-25. The chart below shows the savings achieved/planned for each year, and on average over the three-year period, against the target of 2% efficiency savings target expressed as a percentage of non-payroll budgets:



As can be seen from the above, the Service exceeded the target for 2022-23 and has firm plans in place to meet the target in the next two years also. The planned efficiencies for 2023-24 and 2024-25 and the latest progress updates are shown in the table below:

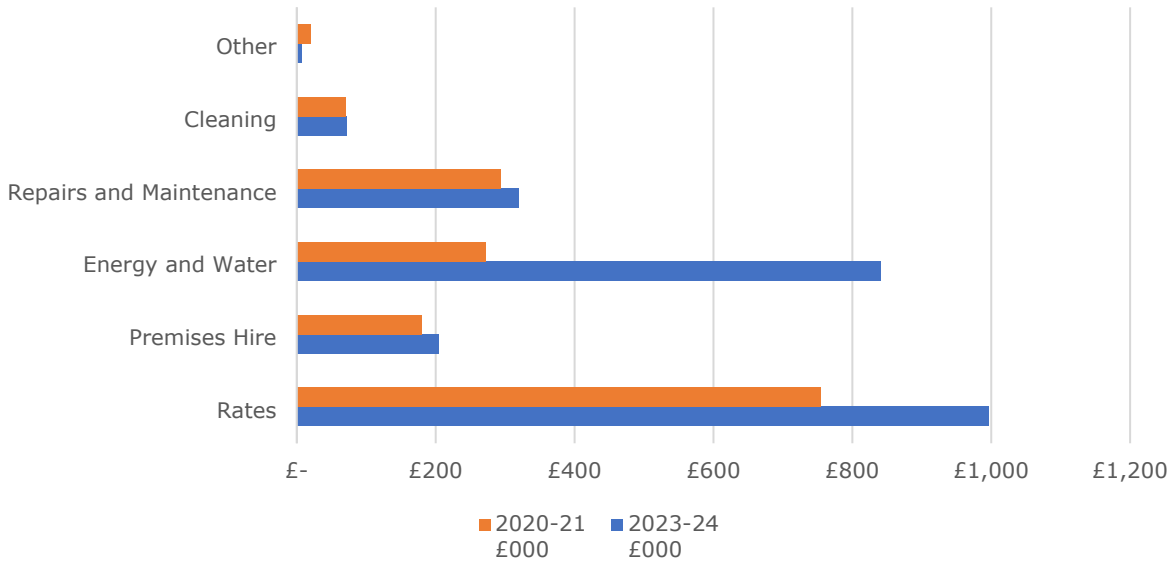
Efficiency Area	2023-24	2024-25	Total	Progress Update
Blue Light Hub*	166	-	166	Complete.
Computer Software	40	-	40	Complete.
Revenue Contribution to Capital	-254	370	116	Transfer of year-end underspend from 2022-23 to the Revenue Contribution to Capital Reserve means there is an upside risk to this savings target.
Net Borrowing Costs	348	45	393	Further increases in interest rates mean there is an upside risk to the income target. Interest savings in 2024-25 will be slightly higher due to early repayment of a loan.
Exit of Unit 7		165	165	Business case to be presented to the Executive Committee during Q3 of 2023-24.
Total	300	580	880	

* Following a full year of occupation of all three services and the final assessment of business rates, this is the net difference between that rates figure and the service charge to the tenants (not the total net saving from moving to the BLH)

Level of overhead costs

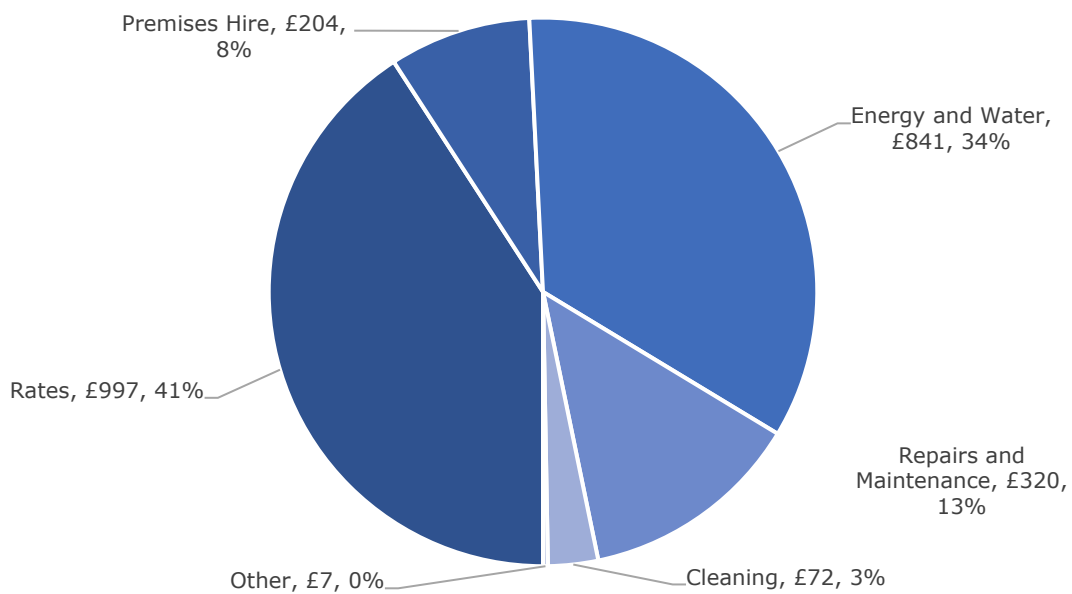
As can be seen from the previous chart, the majority of overheads are categorised within premises related expenditure and supplies and services.

Overhead Costs 2023-24 (£000):

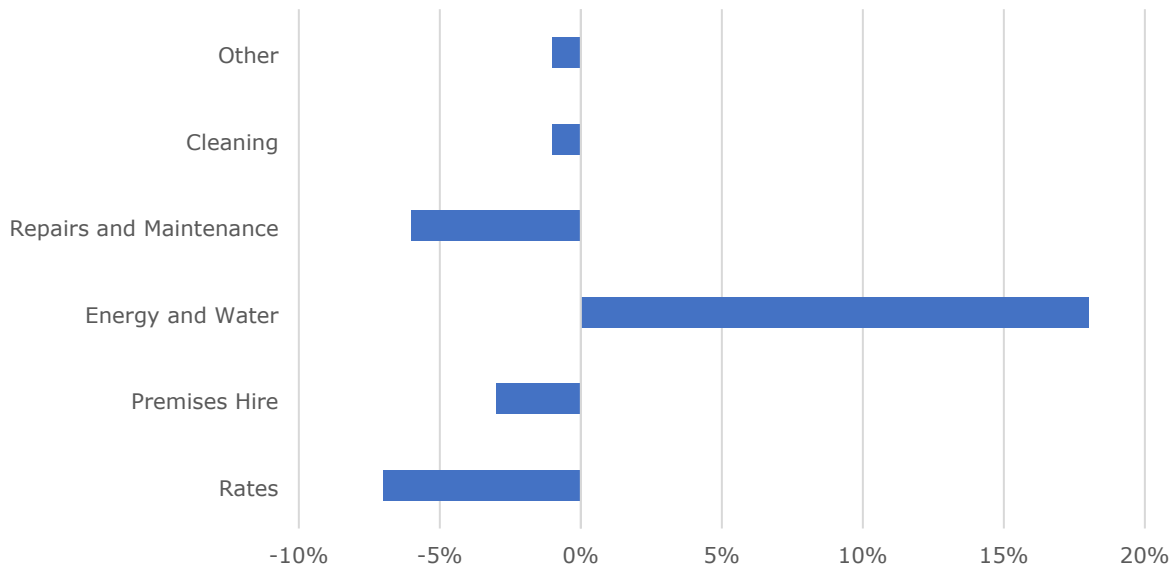


As can be seen in the chart above, there has been an increase in the rates payable and an even larger percentage increase in the energy and water costs (due predominantly to increases in gas and electricity wholesale prices). However, a large proportion of the increase in rates payable is offset by the additional income received from recharging the costs of the Blue Light Hub in proportionate shares to the other two occupying services (see also p.3-4).

Overhead Costs 2023-24 (£000) and Relative Percentage Shares:

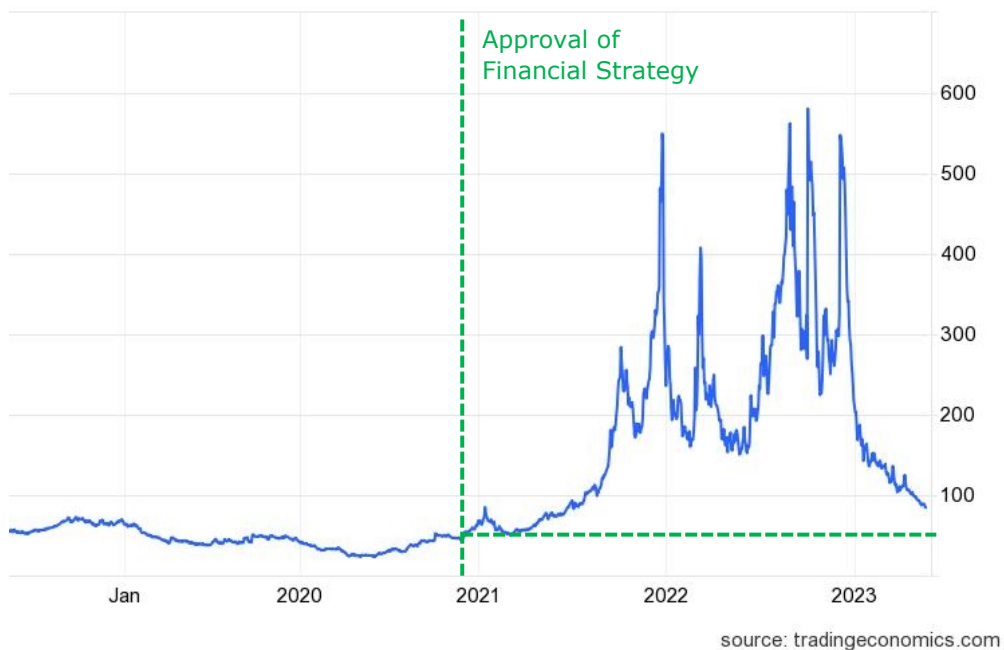


Overhead Costs 2023-24; Movement in Relative Shares 2021-22 to 2023-24:

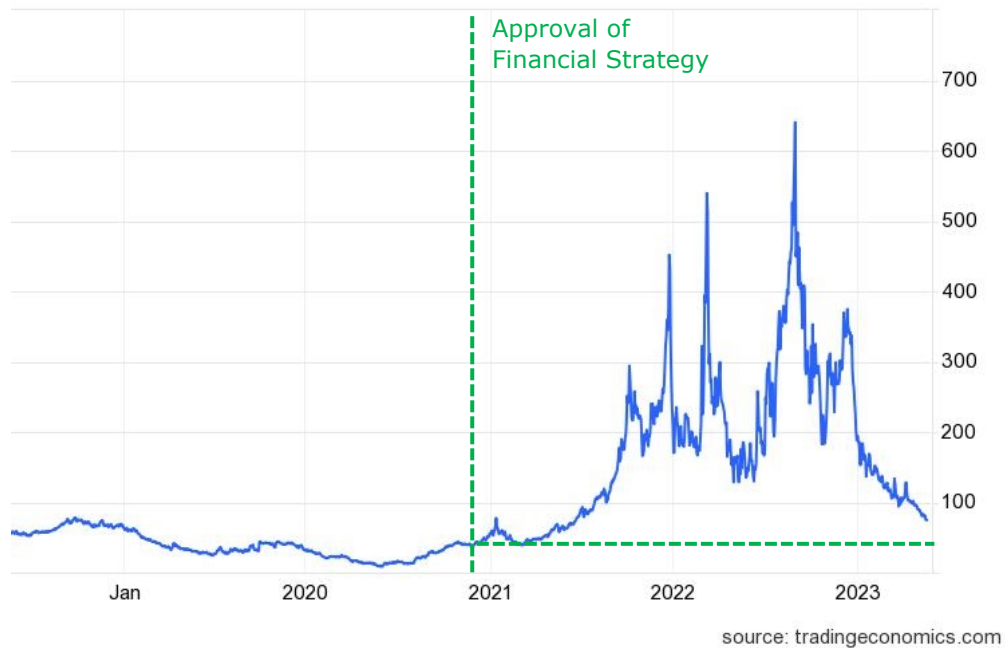


The significant rise in energy costs has meant that energy and water costs now represent over one third of the Service’s premises related expenditure. The rise in energy costs is inextricably linked to wholesale electricity and gas prices.

UK Electricity Spot Prices (£/MWh) as of 16 May 2023:



Natural Gas UK (£p/thm) as of 16 May 2023:



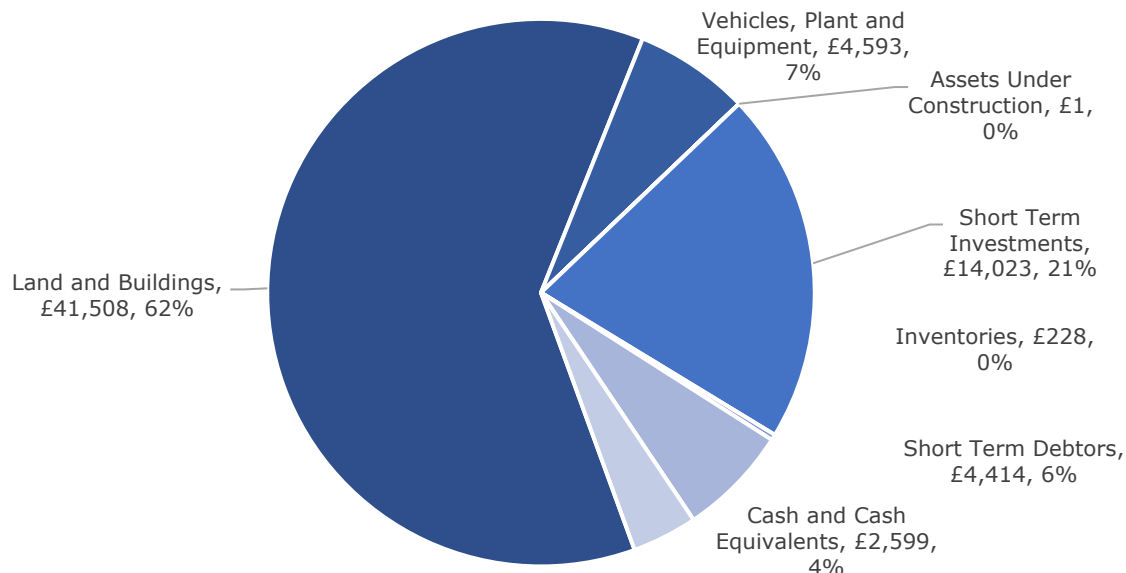
Although prices have come down significantly from the peaks in the Summer and Winter of 2022, prices are still notably higher than when the Strategy was originally approved in November 2020. The Service agreed a new 12 month fixed-price contract for electric and gas from 1 April 2023. The wholesales prices will continue to be monitored throughout the year with a view to awarding further contracts from 1 April 2024 at the most opportune time.

The original Strategy also noted the plan to exit the Unit 7 building in order to reduce the overheads costs, namely rent, rates and utilities. Plans continue to progress, although the ongoing uncertainty about the longer-term future of USAR adds complexity to an already complex project. A further paper will be presented to the Executive Committee in Q3 of 2023-24 that sets out the business case for this discrete project.

Financial assets and liabilities

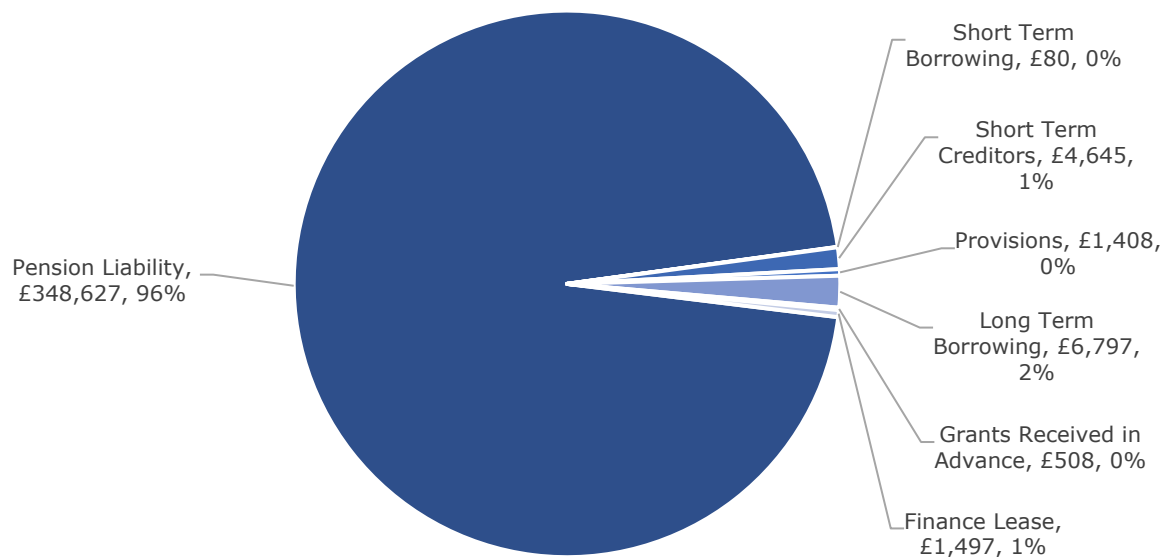
The following charts show the assets and liabilities of the Service as at 31 March 2022.

Assets as at 31 March 2022 (£000):



The only significant changes in the percentage distribution since the last Strategy is Assets Under Construction decreasing from 20% to 0% and Land and Buildings increasing from 47% to 62%. This is predominantly due to the reclassification of the Blue Light Hub between those two categories when the building became operational.

Liabilities as at 31 March 2022 (£000):



Total liabilities continue to far outweigh total assets, although this is due to the significant pension liability shown on our Balance Sheet. Effectively, the Pension

Funds are in deficit by c.£349m compared with what is needed to pay the pensions of current scheme members, and the effect is to reduce the overall net worth of the Authority by that amount. However, statutory arrangements for the funding of the deficit, whereby the deficit will be made good by employer contributions over the remaining working life of employees as assessed by the scheme’s actuaries, mean that the financial position of the Authority remains viable.

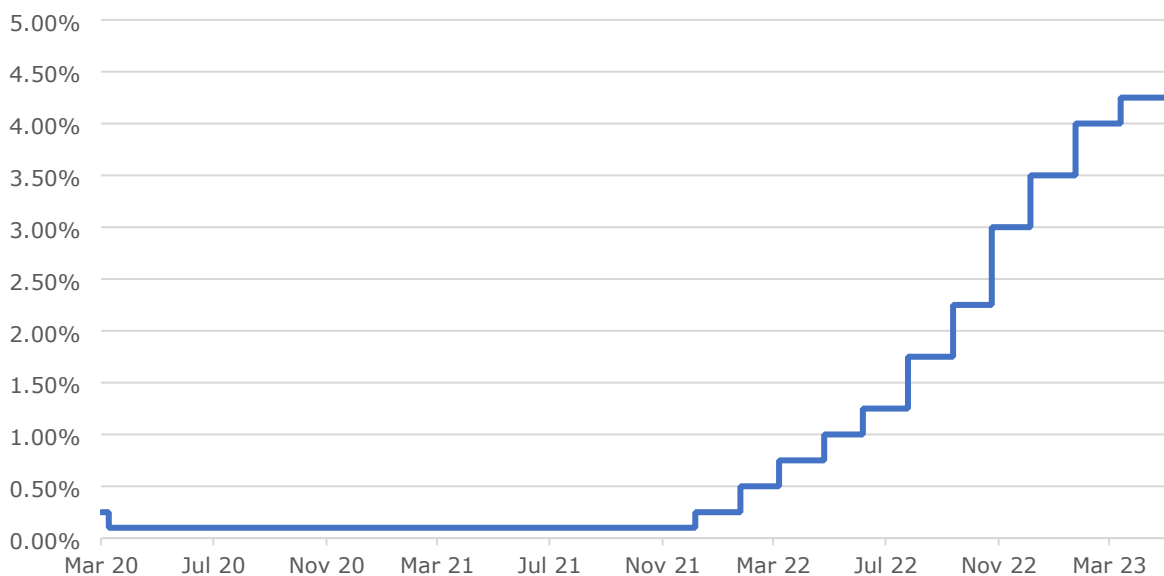
Nature and level of reserves

Details of the reserves are contained within the updated Reserves Strategy on pages 21 to 25.

Ability to service borrowing

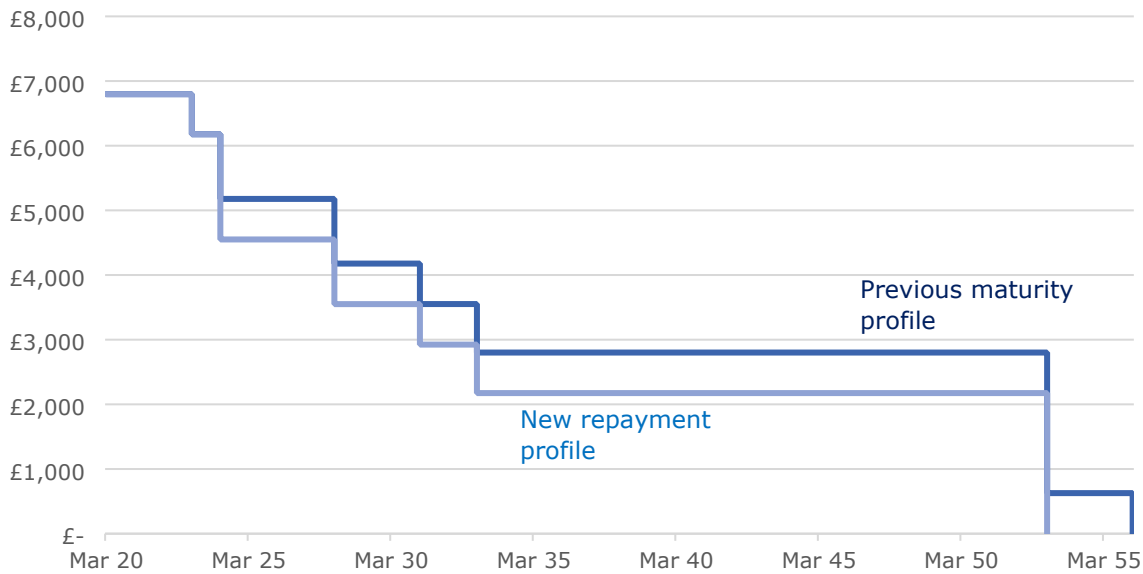
The Financial Strategy had originally noted that early repayment of borrowing was not feasible at the time due to the significant early repayment charges that would be applicable. However, the level of the charge is inversely related to interest rates. The chart below shows the movement in the Bank of England base rate since the Strategy was originally approved.

Bank of England Base Rate since March 2020:



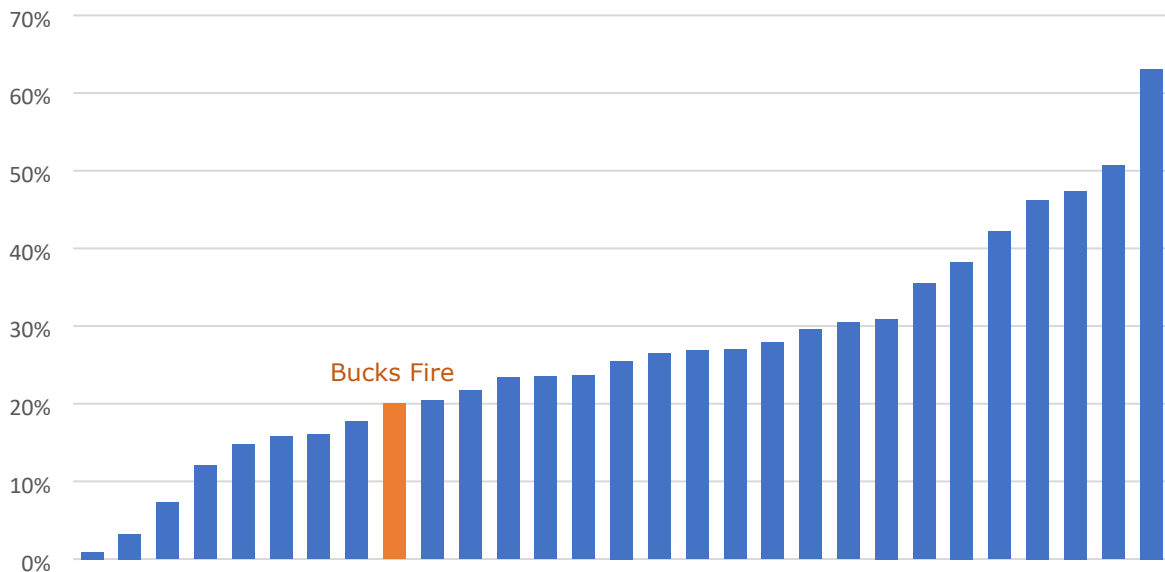
The increases during the last 12-18 months now mean that the Service could repay some of the loans while making a net saving. The chart below shows the maturity profile of the Service’s borrowing and the new profile having repaid £627k that was due to mature in 2053 during June 2023. The loan was repaid at a discount of £46k and the net present value of the saving is forecast to be £166k. Interest rates will be monitored during the course of the current Strategy to determine the possibility of further early repayments. A further loan of £1m due to be repaid when it matures in March 2024.

Long-term Borrowing Maturity Profile (£000):



The chart below shows the level of PWLB debt held by the Service as at March 2023 as a percentage of core spending power, in relation to other services.

PWLB Debt as a Percentage of Core Spending Power as at 31 March 2023; Standalone Fire Services:

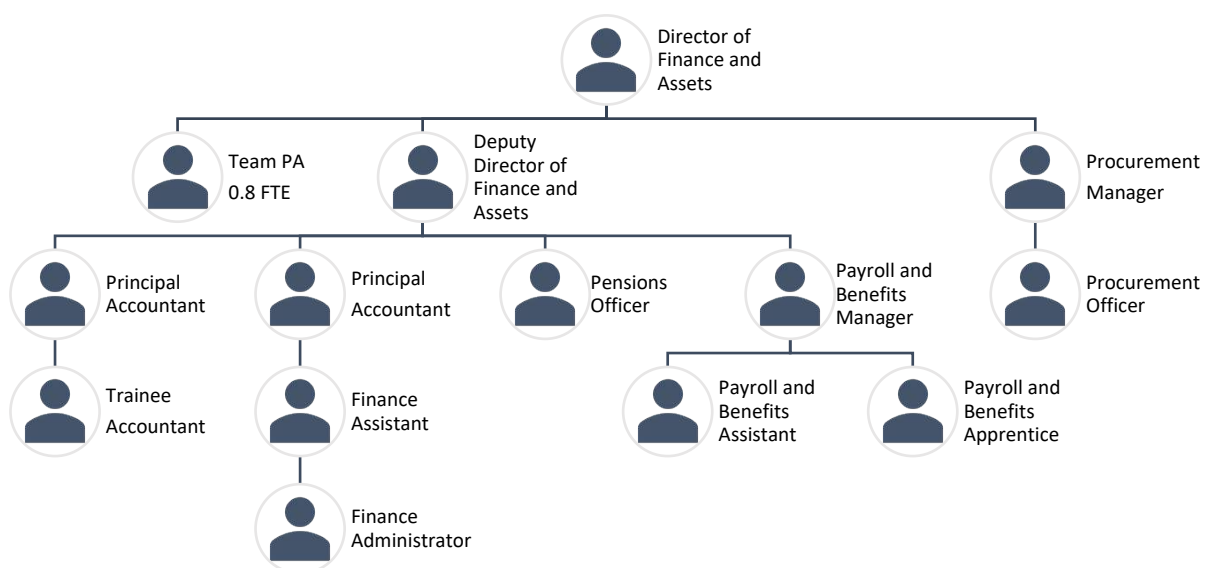


With the early repayment and loan maturing in March 2024, this figure is forecast to fall to 15% by 31 March 2024.

PEOPLE

Structure of the Finance function

The structure of the Finance function remains broadly as set out in the Strategy, with some minor adjustments made to adapt to changing circumstances, which generates a small saving of around £3k per year:



The changes to note are:

- The Procurement Specialist post was replaced with a Pensions Officer post, in line with the action plan set out at the time.
- As a result of the Finance Apprentice completing their apprenticeship, the Finance Officer post is now a Finance Assistant post and the Finance Apprentice post was replaced with the Finance Administrator role
- The Payroll and Benefits Administrator post has been replaced with a Payroll Apprentice post
- The Trainee Accountant post is currently 0.6 FTE and the Payroll Manager post 0.6 FTE following requests from those postholders for flexible working arrangements
- A temporary Accountant post of 0.8 FTE has been introduced to provide resilience across those two areas

Nature and level of staffing, staff skills and expertise

The team is currently fully established. Most staff have, or are working towards, a relevant professional qualification.

Succession arrangements for key staff

Succession plans are presented annually to the Executive Committee. Experience has shown these have worked effectively, as noted in the Strategy. Since then, the arrangements have been further demonstrated as the Payroll and Benefits Assistant has been promoted to the role of Payroll and Benefits Manager and the Finance Apprentice has been promoted to the role of Finance Assistant.

Relationships with elected representatives, the governing body and senior managers and the status of the Chief Financial Officer within the organisation

The Director of Finance and Assets continues to be a key member of the Senior Management Board and works closely with the Lead Member for Finance and Assets, Information Security and IT.

GOVERNANCE

Financial expertise of the governing body

The initial self-assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code indicated the need to review the skillsets of elected members and offer further training if required.

Since then, the Director of Finance and Assets, in their role as lead finance professional for the sector, was asked to lead a series of “masterclasses” on finance for senior leaders and aspiring senior leaders in the sector. These have been recorded, edited and are available as online packages. Rather than assessing the skills of elected members, these videos will be shared with all members.

The Strategy also noted planned improvements to the governance of projects through the implementation of a Programme Management Office. Not only has this enhanced the oversight of projects and other capital works, but has also assisted with the governance of the budget challenge process, including seeking views from a broader section of the organisation as part of this.

Financial and related policies

The approved Financial Regulations are supplemented by Financial Instructions. The latter was reviewed and updated in June 2023. Closely related to these is the Standing Orders Relating to Contracts, which were updated and approved by the Authority in December 2022.

Financial management systems and processes

The Service continues to use Integra for finance and procurement and iTrent for payroll (and HR). Given these are working well for the Service the decision was taken to extend these contracts rather than go to the time and expense of replacing them.

The Core Financial Controls internal audit reviews our systems and processes on an annual basis. The highest assurance level on this audit has now been achieved in each of the last ten years.

Political priorities and commitments

The Financial Strategy must be consistent with the Public Safety Plan. The next update to this Strategy will be following the approval of the new Community Risk Management Plan 2025-2030 to ensure the priorities within that Plan can be funded sufficiently.

EXTERNAL

The organisation's reputation for effective financial management and performance

As noted in the Strategy, the two main organisations that review our financial management and performance are His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and Ernst & Young LLP (EY) as our external audit firm.

In their 2018/19 inspection report HMICFRS raised a cause for concern as to whether the Service had the resources needed to meet the foreseeable risk as a result of the financial position the Service found itself in at the time. However, in their most recent report this cause for concern was removed given the improving financial position. As noted earlier in this report, the position has continued to improve further since then. However, the overall rating for efficiency was still graded as "requires improvement".

The most recent inspection was undertaken during May 2023 and the outcomes from that will be factored into future strategies and plans as required.

Recently, there have been significant delays in receiving the final audit opinion from the external auditor. There are a number of reasons for this, but it doesn't create any significant concerns about the figures in the report, or our financial processes.

Changes to government regulations or guidance

The Strategy noted that the most significant impact would be the Sargeant pensions ruling, and noted this would require a dedicated resource to manage. As noted earlier, that dedicated resource has been integrated into the team with no net increase in cost. The legislation needed to fully enact the changes is expected in the Autumn/Winter of 2023. In the meantime, the Service has adopted the immediate detriment guidance to ensure that all category one cases can received their pension inline with the anticipated rules at the point at which they retire.

Changes in service user demand or profile and other changes in the external environment

COVID-19 impacted the funding receivable in the early part of the Strategy, which will have a knock-on effect in terms of the council tax and business rates receivable into the future. However, these impacts are now know and can be forecast with more certainty that was the case during the pandemic.

In December 2022, the Fire Authority approved the timetable for its new Community Risk Management Plan covering the period 2025-2030. A new Financial Strategy will be developed to ensure the requirements in this plan can be funded as effectively and efficiently as possible.

In July 2022, a review of partnership arrangements that the Service is a part of was presented to the Executive Committee to provide assurance that all arrangements comply with financial and governance best practice.

Summary of Position

Where the organisation was/is

The table below compares the summary assessment of the Service's position when the Strategy was produced against the updated summary assessment considering subsequent changes and events:

Original	Update
Performance	
Council Tax is a significant proportion of funding, however still heavily reliant on non-local sources of funding with low certainty over future levels	Relatively little change in funding proportions with most movements being distorted by the review of historic business rates
Efficient in terms of cost per firefighter and net expenditure per head of population	No change
Excellent budgetary and other internal controls	No change
Over-borrowed but unable to repay loans early. Borrowing costs are not overly burdensome. Capacity to borrow more if required.	Changes in interest rates allowed repayment of £627,000 in June 2023 (original maturity date 2053) at a discount. Further early repayment options to be kept under review.
Sufficient reserves but uncertain future levels due to uncertainty over future funding streams	Improvement in current reserve levels and significant improvement in forecast future levels Still uncertainty about longer-term future of USAR funding
People	
Sufficient number of finance staff	No change
Qualified and experienced Finance team.	No change
Succession planning demonstrated to be working well.	Further demonstrated since initial publication
Dedicated Lead Member provides support and challenge	No change
The Chief Finance Officer is a member of the Senior Management Team.	No change
Governance	
Financial expertise of non-Finance staff and elected Members needs to be formally reviewed	Instead of a formal review NFCC Finance Masterclass presentations will be circulated to all non-Finance staff and elected Members
Up-to-date and proven financial policies	No change
Efficient finance system and processes, although scope to improve the end-to-end process for payments to staff	Improvements to processes are ongoing

MTFP consistent with Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan	No change
External	
Reputation for delivering an efficient service, but concerns about effectiveness due to insufficiency of resources to fully support the activity in the Public Safety Plan	HMICFRS removed their cause for concern in this area but efficiency rating remained as "requires improvement"
Strong representation on stakeholder groups	No change
Unknown impact of key legislation regarding pensions	Impact can be forecast more accurately but still awaiting final legislation (expected Autumn/Winter 2023)
Potential changes in user demand and/or profile as detailed in the Public Safety Plan	Currently no change. A new Strategy will be produced in line with the upcoming Community Risk Management Plan 2025-2030
Further uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic	This is no longer a significant risk to the organisation.

Where the organisation would have liked to have been/would like to be

The table below compares where the organisation would like to be from the Strategy and notes progress against these aims, and work that still needs to be done:

Original	Update	RAG
Performance		
Able to increase Council Tax above the current limit of 2%	Done. Continue to lobby to retain the increased flexibility available for 2022-23 and 2023-24.	G
Other grant funding to be brought within our core Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)	It was originally reported the pension grant would be inside SFA from 2022-23 but this is still yet to happen	A
Increased expenditure on front-line staff as a percentage of total expenditure	Done and continue to do this	G
Further reduced overhead costs by reducing the size of the estate	In progress, but uncertainty regarding longer-term future of USAR is impacting project timelines. Business case to be presented to Executive Committee during Q3 of 2023-24.	A
No additional borrowing and have repaid deals that have matured	Done and continue to do this	G
Reserves maintained at current levels	Done and continue to do this	G
People		
Minor change to staff structure to incorporate dedicated pensions expertise	Completed	Done

No overall increase in the number of Finance, Procurement or Payroll staff	Done and continue to do this	G
Retain existing staff expertise, knowledge and skills as far as possible	Small turnover of staff with succession plans demonstrated to be working well	G
Continue to work closely with Lead Member	Ongoing	G
The Chief Finance Officer remains a member of the Senior Management Team.	Ongoing	G
Governance		
Non-Finance staff and elected Members assessed as having a high level of financial expertise	Assessment to be replaced will rollout of NFCC Finance Masterclasses	G
Policies updated to reflect changes in legislation and best practice	Done and continue to do this	G
Systems and processes further optimised, especially with regards to the end-to-end processes for payments to staff	Ongoing	G
Programme Management Office supports Finance and the wider organisation to deliver transformational change through an efficient internal governance system	Programme Management Office implemented leading to enhanced governance and oversight of financial implications.	Done
External		
HMICFRS note improvements to efficiency in their report. Ratings for efficiency and effectiveness both improved to "good"	Efficiency and effectiveness still rated as "requires improvement" in the most recent report	R
Influence within the NFCC and with Home Office secures a good funding settlement for the Service	Funding settlements for 2022-23 and 2023-24 were good and in-line with inflationary pressures	G
Pensions remedy fully implemented	Work ongoing and will become business as usual once legislation is enacted (expected Autumn/Winter 2023)	G
Finances able to respond to changes in user demand/profile	Ongoing	G
Ensure external partners maintain the same high standards of conduct with regard to financial administration and corporate governance that apply throughout the Authority and that they contribute to the achievement of the Authority's objectives	Review of partnership arrangements presented to the Executive Committee in July 2022	Done

Implementing the Strategy

The following table shows progress against the action plan from the Strategy and any revised target dates, as well as new activities identified as part of this update:

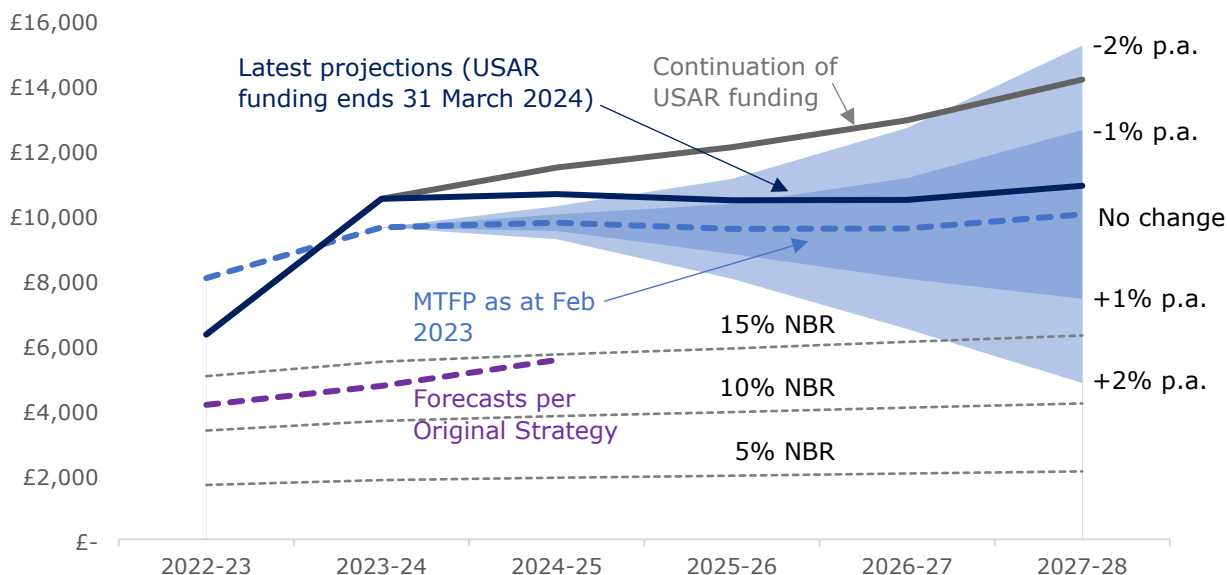
Activity	Target/outcome	Update	RAG
2020-21			
Continue to lobby for an increase in the Council Tax Referendum Limit and for other grants to become part of the Settlement Funding Assessment	Maintain or enhance firefighter numbers and substantiate temporary protection staff	Flexibility to increase Council Tax by up to £5 without a referendum was available for 2022-23 and 2023-24 following extensive lobbying.	Done
Value for Money (VFM) initial review by external provider	Identify areas for improvement in relation to other fire services	Review completed and reported as part of the first update on the Financial Strategy	Done
Review estate footprint	Reduction in overhead costs	In progress. Business case for exiting Unit 7 to be presented to the Executive Committee during Q3 of 2023-24.	A
Review of Partnership arrangements	Ensure partners have high standards and contribute to our objectives	Review reported to the Executive Committee in July 2022.	Done
Establishment of Programme Management Office	Better oversight of key corporate projects to support transformation	Complete	Done
Recruit Pensions Officer	Dedicated expertise to support implementation of legislative changes	Complete – no increase in net cost of team	Done
2021-22			
Review of system requirements and processes and upgrade/replace system	Improved efficiency (also compliance with procurement regulations as current contract ends 31 March 2022)	Current contract extended. Will be required to move to latest version within contract period.	G
Review of budget monitoring and performance reporting arrangements	Improved reporting and compliance with CIPFA FM Code	Complete. Monitoring report now contains detail on workforce planning.	Done
Review skillset of non-Finance staff and elected Members	Improved compliance with CIPFA FM Code	NFCC Finance Masterclasses to be circulated to all staff and Members in lieu of undertaking an assessment	G
2022-23			

Repeat and review VFM exercise	Identify areas for further improvement	To be paused pending review of fire specific benchmarking pilot in 2023-24	A
Review of Charging Policy and support review of unwanted fire signals as per the Corporate Plan	Explore opportunities for further efficiencies	To be completed in 2023-24	A
Review of ethical financial management	Improved compliance with CIPFA FM Code		A
2023-24			
Complete any outstanding items from above	-	See below	N/A
New Action	Reduce energy costs	Monitor energy prices and determine best point and duration to fix prices for (will also aim to reduce usage through actions within the Property Strategy)	G
Updated Action	Identify areas for further improvement	Review the benefits of joining the fire specific benchmarking group being piloted	G
Updated Action	Future investment in the Service	Continue to lobby to retain the £5 Council Tax precept flexibility	G
Action b/fwd	Explore opportunities for further efficiencies	Review of Charging Policy and support review of unwanted (from 2022-23)	G
Action b/fwd	Improved compliance with CIPFA FM Code	Review of ethical financial management	G
2024-25			
Zero-based budget in preparation for Public Safety Plan 2025-30	Reset any budgets that may have 'drifted' over time.	To be carried out during 2024-25 in preparation for 2025-26	G

RESERVES STRATEGY

As noted earlier in this document, there has been a notable improvement in the financial position of the Service, reflected in the reserves position and outlook. The chart below shows the forecast reserves balances at the time the Strategy was approved against the latest forecast balances.

Forecast Usable Reserves Balances; Aggregate (£000):



The dashed-blue line shows the position presented as part of the medium-term financial planning (MTFP) process in February 2023, at which point it was believed USAR funding would cease on 31 March 2024. It also shows a sensitivity analysis and forecast position should pay awards be higher or lower per annum (p.a.) than the core assumption. These forecasts can then be compared to the levels of reserves were they to be maintained at either 5%, 10% or 15% of net budget requirement (NBR). It would be recommended to keep reserves above the 15% line as far as possible.

The dark-blue line shows the most recent position. The start position is lower than forecast in February due to the timing of the receipt from the sale of Great Holm, which is partially offset by a higher than forecast year-end favourable variance and capital slippage. The forecast position by the end of 2023-24 will be slightly higher than forecast in February, as the capital receipt from Great Holm has now been received and it is expected capital slippage from 2022-23 will be spent during 2023-24. The latest forecast then tracks the February forecast throughout, but slightly higher due to the favourable year-end variance in 2022-23.

The dark-grey line shows the alternative position should USAR funding continue for the rest of the MTFP period, which will be dependent on the Government securing enough capital funding to replace the assets of all nineteen USAR teams in England.

For comparison, the purple line shows the forecast reserves position at the time the Strategy was approved in November 2020. This highlights how far the Service's financial position has improved in the interim period.

RISK ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE THE ADEQUACY OF THE GENERAL RESERVE

As part of the MTFP process for 2023-24 a review of the level of the General Reserve was undertaken in February 2023, which can be found here - <https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/02/fire-authority-meeting-15-february-2023-item-9b-medium-term-financial-plan-2023-24-2027-28.pdf/> (pp.15-16). The level of this reserve does therefore not need to be reviewed as part of this update.

REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVES

A review of all earmarked reserves has now been undertaken considering the significantly improved financial position and outlook noted in this report. The table on the following page shows the provisional reserve balances as at 31 March 2023 and recommended reallocations, as well as future forecast balances.

Forecast Usable Reserves Balances; By Reserve (£000):

Reserve	31 March 2023	Year-End Transfers 2022-23	(Use Of) / Transfers In 23-24	31 March 2024	31 March 2025	31 March 2026	31 March 2027	31 March 2028
General Fund	1,500	125	0	1,625	1,625	1,625	1,625	1,625
Workforce Planning Reserve (1)	500	0	0	500	500	500	500	500
Continuing Projects Reserve (2)	80	-80	0	0	0	0	0	0
COVID-19 Reserve (2)	594	-594	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transformation Reserve (3)	271	549	2,478	3,298	2,954	2,737	2,562	2,620
USAR Capability Reserve (New)	0	0	0	0	817	817	0	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital	3,359	0	1,699	5,058	5,547	5,573	5,761	6,137
Total	6,304	0	4,177	10,481	11,443	11,252	10,448	10,882

These balances exclude the Control Room Reserve. The Service's share of that balance is shown within our Statement of Accounts but the total balance is held by Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and is governed by the joint committee.

- (1) Previously known as the Apprentice Reserve
- (2) Reserves to be closed and balance transferred to Transformation Reserve
- (3) Previously known as the Future Funding Reserve

Further detail on the purpose of each reserve is detailed below:

Workforce Planning Reserve

Due to the way in which operational firefighters are trained it is most practical and economical to recruit in relatively large tranches of circa eighteen recruits per cohort. However, as staff may leave the Service at more regular intervals there will be times where the Service will be over or under the budgeted establishment numbers.

Where the Service is over the budgeted establishment the reserve will be used to fund the additional cost. When the Service is below the establishment number the reserve will be topped up. Although the balance will fluctuate it should remain steady over the medium to longer term. It is recommended to rename this reserve from the Apprentice Reserve to reflect its purpose more accurately.

Continuing Projects Reserve

This reserve was originally created to cover the costs of projects that the Service was undertaking, the majority of which related to the Business and Systems Integration (BASI) project. The projects have all now completed and it is recommended that the balance of this reserve is transferred to the Transformation Reserve.

COVID-19 Reserve

This reserve was created to mitigate against negative funding impacts because of the global pandemic. In the event, the significantly improved financial outlook for the Service means this reserve is no longer required for that purpose. It is therefore recommended that the balance of this reserve is transferred to the Transformation Reserve.

Transformation Reserve

This reserve was originally held to meet known funding requirements within the medium-term financial plan and to fund projects from underspends in the previous year. The approved budget for 2023-24 showed a net transfer to reserves of £2.478m, which it is proposed will be transferred into this reserve. Given the improved financial outlook, it is now envisaged that this can be used to fund transformative improvement projects to be identified as part of the upcoming Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030, rather than being used to balance future funding shortfalls (except to smooth out some minor year-on-year variations).

It is recommended to rename this reserve from the Future Funding Reserve to reflect the revised scale of its purpose.

USAR Capability Reserve

When the MTFP was presented in February 2023, the Service had received informal notification that its funding for USAR would cease on 31 March 2024. However, following extensive lobbying the Government has since confirmed that funding will be extended to at least 31 March 2025, with longer-term funding contingent on the affordability of the national asset refresh for all USAR teams.

It is therefore recommended to transfer the £817k USAR funding the Service will receive in 2024-25 that wasn't initially included in the MTFP into a dedicated reserve. Should USAR funding cease after March 2025 the reserve will provide funding to enable the transition away from providing USAR. Should USAR funding be confirmed longer-term, the reserve could be used to invest more significantly in the USAR training facility currently operating on a tenancy at will basis at Westcott and/or other requirements identified within the Community Risk Management Plan 2025-2030.

Revenue Contribution to Capital

This reserve is used to fund the capital programme, which is presented to the Fire Authority annually as part of the MTFP. Maintaining a sufficient balance in this reserve significantly reduces the likelihood that the Service will need to borrow to fund future investment in our estates, fleet, equipment or information technology.

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 12 July 2023

Report title: Updated Fleet and Property Strategies to 2025

Lead Member: Councillor Matthew Walsh

Report sponsor: Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets

Author and contact: Mark Hemming

Action: Decision

Recommendations: That Members approve the updated fleet and property strategies to 2025.

Executive summary:

This paper is being presented to seek approval to extend the current fleet and property strategies until 2025 in line with the current Public Safety Plan (PSP). Both strategies have been updated to ensure they remain relevant for the current and subsequent financial year. Following the development of the 2025-2030 Community Risk Management Plan (the timeline for which was approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 7 December 2022) new coterminous fleet and property strategies will be developed.

The Fleet Strategy 2018-2021 was originally approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 22 November 2017. The substantive updates to the Strategy address the following points:

- Asset disposal process updated to incorporate the donation option approved by the Fire Authority in February 2020
- Updated asset register and replacement programme
- Additional action to pilot the use of small response vehicles to deal with more remote fires in the open
- Updated section on sustainability, including reference to the approved Environment and Climate Action Plan

The Property Strategy 2018-2023 was originally approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 9 May 2018. The substantive updates to the Strategy cover the following key areas:

- Updated throughout to reflect the construction of the Blue Light Hub, capital works undertaken since initial publication and the results of the latest condition surveys

- The section previously entitled “Energy Efficiency” has been expanded to incorporate the approved Environment and Climate Action Plan, including details of actions taken since initial publication of the Property Strategy in 2018.
 - Added details of actions taken to improve the energy resilience of the estate
 - Updated section on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
-

Financial implications: No direct impact as a result of updates to either strategy. The vehicle replacement programme and property capital works required were factored into the medium-term financial plan, which was presented to the Fire Authority on 15 February 2023.

Risk management: No direct impact as a result of updates to either strategy.

Legal implications: No direct impact as a result of updates to either strategy.

Privacy and security implications: No direct impact as a result of updates to either strategy.

Duty to collaborate: No direct impact as a result of updates to either strategy.

Health and safety implications: No direct impact as a result of updates to either strategy.

Environmental implications: The relevant sections of each strategy have been updated to reflect the Environment and Climate Action Plan, which was approved after the initial publication of each strategy.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications: The forecasted expenditure within the Property Strategy now includes £25,000 per annum for specific EDI improvements identified through staff feedback and the EDI Group, which now includes the Property Manager. This is in addition to the consideration of potential improvements to EDI that are considered when any capital works are undertaken throughout the estate.

Consultation and communication: No direct impact as a result of updates to either strategy.

Background papers:

Fleet Strategy 2018/19-2021/22. Executive Committee. 22 November 2017.

Available at:

https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/221117_exec_committee_agenda.pdf
(pp. 11-43)

Property Strategy 2018-2023. Executive Committee. 9 May 2018. Available at:

https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/090518_exec_committee_agenda.pdf
(pp. 9-35)

2025 – 2030 Service Planning. Fire Authority. 7 December 2022. Available at:

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/11/item-10-fire-authority-meeting-7-december-2022-2025-2030-service-planning.pdf/>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Fleet Strategy 2018/19 to 2024/25	None
2	Property Strategy 2018 - 2025	None

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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE & MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

FLEET STRATEGY

2018/19 to 2024/25

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1. THE NEED FOR A FLEET STRATEGY

A Fleet Strategy is necessary to ensure:

- a) Constantly improving customer and stakeholder satisfaction
- b) Improving use of natural resources
- c) The effective and efficient use of capital funds
- d) Compliance with statutory regulations
- e) Effective Corporate Management

This helps to:

- f) Deliver efficiency savings
- g) Continuously improve service delivery
- h) Implement new ways of working
- i) Maximise the safety of our communities by reviewing operational resources to meet identified risks in the Public Safety Plan

2. HOW THE FLEET STRATEGY INTERLINKS WITHIN THE CORPORATE STRUCTURE AND OTHER STRATEGIES

The Fleet Strategy provides a comprehensive and integrated approach to the management of the Authority's vehicular and associated operational assets. The plan is a 'live' document, which will evolve through time and reflect changes based on current and predicted working practices, legislation, environmental developments and availability of capital.

The Fleet Strategy will link with, and inform, other strategic decisions and plans for the effective management of Bucks Fire and Rescue Service. Table 1 sets out the relationship between the Fleet Strategy and other corporate plans:

The Public Safety Plan (PSP) is the most influential of the Authority's documents for the provision of fleet services. The Authority has an established PSP for 2020 to 2025 that outlines what it aims to achieve and how it will achieve it over this period and this is supported by a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). In particular the PSP sets out the current resourcing to enable delivery of the service and it is vital to maintain and invest in the identified fleet to meet the risk assessed need identified.

At its meeting on 7 December 2022, the Authority resolved that the successor plan to the current PSP, be known as the '2025 – 2030 Community Risk Management Plan'; and that the Authority planned to approve this at its meeting in September 2024. This Fleet Strategy is therefore being extended to better align to that planning timeline, and a new Fleet Strategy will be implemented from 2025/26.

The MTFP sets out the Revenue and Capital strategies for delivering the PSP.

Relationship of Fleet Strategy with other Corporate Plans and Strategies

Plan	Input From Fleet Strategy
Public Safety Plan	The PSP sets out the Authority's assessment of local risk to life and, in line with this assessment, how resources will be deployed to address these risks. The PSP will be supplemented by annual objectives and associated programmes and projects that deliver the required improvements. The Fleet Strategy aims to ensure that vehicular resources are in place to meet PSP objectives.
Corporate Plan	The Authority sets out an annual Corporate Plan which shows how it will deliver the annual priorities and targets that deliver the requirements of the PSP. The fleet service team objectives will reflect the Corporate Plan as well as the more detailed Fleet Strategy.
Financial Strategy	The Financial Strategy is the link between the Authority's long-term service objectives and its financial capacity. It also helps the Authority to consider the feasibility of different options in terms of affordability and financial sustainability.
Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), including Revenue and Capital Budgets	The MTFP sets out the Authority's financial position over the medium-term and ensures resources are managed effectively and budgets are aligned with corporate objectives.
Capital Strategy	The Capital Strategy provides a framework that transparently demonstrates how the investment of capital resources contributes to the achievement of the vision and key priorities set out in the Strategic Asset Management Plan and PSP. The existing approved capital programme includes ongoing investment in the Red Fleet.
Functional, Area and Station Plans	Each function, command area and station will develop annual plans to document key 'in-year' work activities that contribute to the realisation of the PSP. The Finance & Asset Directorate plan includes the detailed Fleet Service activity that feeds through to meet PSP objectives.

Table 1

3. PURPOSE AND ROLE OF THE FLEET SERVICE WITHIN BFRS

The prime purpose of the Fleet Service within Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) is the supply and maintenance of vehicles and associated major operational equipment which meet:

- a) User and stakeholder needs;
- b) Fire and Rescue Service strategies
- c) Legislative requirements

and which facilitate and promote environmental sustainability as well as meeting the established principles of best value.

The services provided by the Fleet Service cover three main functions:

- d) Fleet Supply
- e) Fleet Management
- f) Fleet Maintenance

The Fleet Service is the main support provider for all fleet or fleet related services, and additionally provides support for the maintenance and management of many major operational assets, such as:

- g) Rescue Boats
- h) Various trailers
- i) Positive Pressure Ventilation Fans
- j) Portable Pumps
- k) Hydraulic Rescue Equipment (power packs, cutters, spreaders, rams, pedal cutters)
- l) Ladders (13.5m, 10.5m, 9m, roof, short extension)
- m) Portable generators
- n) Fire Fighting branches (nozzles)
- o) Vehicle stabilisation equipment

4. FUNCTIONS PERFORMED

Fleet Supply	The research, specification, costing, tendering, acquisition, and disposal of all BFRS vehicles and associated operational equipment and vehicle mounted firefighting equipment.
Fleet Management	<p>The management of the fleet -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leasing contracts and management of leasing costs 2. Vehicle Excise Duty 3. Registration and Licensing 4. Type Approval Testing (VCA testing) 5. Fuel Management 6. Monitoring availability of vehicles and associated operational equipment 7. Licensing and other documentation checks
Fleet Maintenance	The repair and maintenance of vehicles and vehicle mounted operational equipment, and much of the major operational equipment. The Fleet Workshop undertake most of the tasks involved. Specialist external contractors are engaged for the repair and maintenance of equipment outside of the expertise or facilities available within the workshop team / premises, which includes aspects such as major body work repairs, paint spraying and some larger items that require fabrication.

Table 2

5. LEGISLATIVE / BEST PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS

The operation of any fleet of vehicles is a heavily regulated area and is affected by the following legislation or best practice guidance:

- a) The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986
- b) The Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 (as amended by the Deregulation Action 2015)
- c) The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999 (as amended by The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licenses) (Amendment) Regulations 2022)
- d) The Road Traffic Act 1991
- e) The Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations 2002
- f) The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- g) Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- h) The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- i) The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001
- j) British and European Technical Standards
- k) The Management of Occupational Road Risk
- l) National Fire Chiefs Council – Fleet Management Best Practice Manual
- m) Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998
- n) Data Protection Act 2018

The list of Acts / guidance is not exhaustive, and by the very nature of the fleet environment, various legislative requirements cut across other services of the Authority. To adhere to vehicle operating legislation the Fleet Service utilises a variety of procedures to ensure that the vehicle fleet complies with the relevant regulation(s). The following are some of the current procedures adopted to satisfy the legal requirements and also provide reassurance of the adoption of best practice methodology:

1. Safety Inspection programme
2. Defect Reporting System
3. Preventative Maintenance Schedule

6. FLEET ASSETS – LOCATION, COST

BFRS has a variety of fleet assets located at 21 locations including Unit 7 and the workshop itself with the majority of vehicular assets being located at the service's 19 fire stations. The current fleet operated by BFRS consists of 49 'red fleet' vehicles and 75 'white fleet' vehicles. The net book value (NBV) of Vehicles as at 31 March 2022 is £3.726m and for associated Plant & Equipment is £0.850m.

Total NBV for Vehicles, Plant and Equipment = **£4.576m**

Appendix 1 identifies each vehicle by registration number, make, type, and location as applicable.

7. FLEET ASSET INVESTMENT

'Need' and Funding

The vehicular assets of BFRS are determined by the needs of the community, as identified in the PSP – this, in turn, is interpreted by the service to ensure the identified and predicted risks can be met with the correct equipment. Whilst public perception of Fire Service vehicles is the traditional 'Red Fire Engine', there are numerous supporting vehicles that are required to fulfil a variety of roles.

The need for a vehicle or asset may come as the result of a newly identified risk, or a changed risk, or the replacement of an 'end of life' vehicle or asset, or to support a new task or strategy.

When any replacement vehicles are required, the needs of the service are reviewed and evaluated with the requirement being scrutinised to determine if the need remains the same. With this information a vehicle specification can then be determined.

This specification must have some reflection of what is available in the open market and consider any new technology that could improve performance.

Working in conjunction with Research and Development (R&D), the Business Transformation Board (BTB) will be the initial forum to:

1. Consider the provision or replacement of major vehicle and associated equipment assets;
2. Provide recommendations to Strategic Management Board (SMB) and Members on the provision or replacement of major service delivery assets;
3. Allocate / Ensure staff resource is available to major provision or replacement projects; and
4. Monitor the utilisation of vehicular assets and make recommendations to SMB/Members to achieve best value.

Where a new or changed risk is identified and additional financing is required to purchase a suitable vehicle/equipment, then recommendations will be made through SMB with a view to seeking approval for such funding. Depending on the amount involved, this may also require Authority approval. Such requests should normally be forward planned and included as part of the annual budget setting process and subject to rigorous Officer and Member challenge; however, the SMB will consider any cases of unexpected urgency and advise accordingly, including the method of financing (Revenue or Capital).

Utilisation

To obtain best value from vehicular and other major operational assets, BFRS monitors their utilisation. This is accomplished by evaluating data from fuel returns, vehicle mileage sheets and actual use.

The Fleet Service actively monitors the use of vehicles and major operational assets and reviews their disposition in order to maximise their service life. In addition, the vehicle replacement programme is currently monitored and reviewed by SMB, which considers any appropriate vehicle investment or condition reports and recommendations made by the Fleet Manager or through R&D. This results in direction being provided to the Fleet Manager or R&D about purchasing vehicles or leasing them, extending the service life of vehicles and the disposal of obsolete or no- longer required assets. If appropriate, any recommendations are then put to the Executive Committee for consideration.

Emergency Vehicle Requirements

The size of the fleet of fire appliances needs to be given due consideration, as by its very nature it is difficult to manage the demand of an emergency vehicle fleet. Statistical evidence is collected and maintained, which provides the best possible indication of the high and low demands on the fleet and is subsequently used to determine vehicle standby levels and numbers required, in order to best maintain full operational readiness.

The placement of the emergency vehicles is also important. Recent practice has been for all new emergency vehicles to be allocated to the busiest stations. The rationale being that this provides the opportunity for maximum operational use, to identify any vehicle issues relating to vehicle warranty, and to get these defects rectified by the manufacturers. This means that new appliances are subject to maximum operational wear and tear in their early years in service, later in their life these older but still operationally sound appliances are then allocated to stations where there is less operational use for the middle to end of service life.

8. VEHICLE LIFE CYCLE

Vehicles and equipment have a predetermined life cycle. This life cycle follows a course that is set by a variety of factors:

- a) Legislation
- b) Total Life Cycle Costing
- c) Procurement practices
- d) Disposal methods
- e) Best Practice methodology
- f) Maintenance and upkeep requirements and costs
- g) Requirements of end-user departments
- h) Cost and depreciation
- i) Level of specification
- j) Availability and use

- k) Dependability
- l) Flexibility
- m) Service life
- n) Environmental considerations

The Service's current vehicle replacement policy is:

Rescue Pumps	- circa 15 years
Special Appliances	- circa 20 years
Utility Vans	- 7 to 10 years
Pool Cars	- 3 to 5 years

This replacement policy allows for prudent financial capital planning, but it only provides an indicative cost and time of replacement, the actual period of replacement is determined by the utilisation and need and may be monitored by BTB. The costs are dependent on the final user and technical specifications and the effect of any exchange rate or manufacturers' cost increases. Lead times between order and delivery will also be a critical factor.

The BTB is probably best placed to monitor and review the provision and replacement of vehicular assets to achieve best value and derive the maximum benefit from operational vehicles. It will, where necessary and appropriate, make recommendations to the Authority / SMB to extend the life of vehicles beyond the above guidelines where this can be achieved without affecting operational capability. This often involves the purchasing of vehicles from lease and extending their life. This does, however, have some implications:-

- a) A number of vehicles have in the past been obtained through leasing arrangements. This was determined to be the best use of financial resources at the time when the cost of capital borrowing was high and it was more prudent to invest capital and utilise revenue to fund appliances and equipment.
- b) More recently it has become more efficient and effective to capital purchase a number of appliances and equipment. However, in practice the best funding method to acquire any vehicle is evaluated on a case by case basis, meaning that vehicle assets may now either be leased or capital purchased dependent upon the best overall financial deal for the Authority.
- c) Previously, the fleet acquired through leasing was extensive and as leasing periods come to an end an inspection of the condition of the vehicles and equipment was made to determine suitability for capital purchase from lease. This extends the service life and reduces costs through the reduction in revenue leasing expenditure over the increased service life, together with residual value ownership by the Service. Any potential costs to return the vehicle to the leasing company are also reduced. The condition of some vehicles would require the Service to carry out expensive repairs to be able to return the vehicles to the

leasing company in a condition that would not incur significant penalties – the Service can purchase the vehicles for a considerable discount, extend the service life and then not need to carry out the repairs, and still have a saleable asset for less than the cost of either continuing / extending the lease or returning the vehicle / asset to the leasing company.

- d) In any event, as any vehicle comes toward the end of its life, there is a need for timely advice to Finance to ensure best lease rates can be made available via the Authority's advisors.

9. PROCUREMENT

A procurement process is undertaken to acquire any vehicle or supporting equipment at the best possible price for the specification required. This may follow several different paths; all comply with current Standing Orders and Legislative / Financial requirements.

The majority of vehicles and major operational equipment are procured through framework agreements where possible. These frameworks have been established to save on administration and advertising costs and meeting the requirement to open up to competition from Europe through the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). Where the framework does not exist for a particular vehicle or asset the OJEU process is followed where required according to the threshold value and a tendering process is completed. The legal competitive process will, of course, be amended when UK specific legislation is passed following its exit from the European Union.

In any event, the final choice of supplier is determined by a tendering exercise based on quotations provided by approved suppliers on the relevant framework agreement.

Where possible, the procurement of all vehicles and their associated equipment will be carried out in collaboration with other fire services and/or Thames Valley Police. The intention is to build upon the recent very successful collaborative procurement of Type B fire appliances, working with both Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire Services.

10. OPERATIONAL LEASES

This method of funding vehicle acquisition means that the vehicle is not owned by the Service. Instead, it is deemed to be the registered keeper of the vehicle, or asset. During the predetermined lease period, the Service is required to make a number of annual leasing payments to the lessor. Such operational lease arrangement may or may not include any maintenance responsibilities, but where they do, these are financed and undertaken by the Fleet Department.

When the end of each lease period is reached the vehicle is inspected by the lessor to ensure that the vehicle complies with the return conditions and

collection is arranged.

Before coming to a view as to the use of operational leases, a financial option appraisal should be undertaken to identify the most cost-effective funding method for vehicle acquisitions.

11. MAINTENANCE

All vehicular assets are purchased with a minimum of 12 months warranty from the vehicle manufacturer; the majority of light vehicles have a whole vehicle warranty of 36 months duration. In respect of vehicles above 3500kg gross vehicle weight, the body is generally not produced by the chassis manufacturer and is built and warranted by a specialist bodybuilder.

The Fleet Service provides the operational support to the vehicle fleet. This may be for unplanned repairs or scheduled preventative maintenance. The Fleet Service has the responsibility to ensure that all vehicles stay within legislative and predetermined safety requirements.

The Transport Officers Group (TOG) of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) provide best practice guidance for the servicing intervals and schedules for emergency fire appliances, which are stricter than those of the vehicle manufacturer.

The Fleet Department provides support which includes a reporting mechanism to respond to day-to-day unplanned repairs, and a planned preventative maintenance and inspection schedule to reduce the number and severity of unplanned repairs required. All repairs are documented to ensure that works to fleet vehicle assets are recorded to enable effective asset management. Throughout the vehicles life they are maintained in a safe, legal and roadworthy condition.

12. DISPOSAL

Once a vehicle (or major piece of equipment) has reached the end of its service life it will be disposed of in compliance with Contract Standing Orders. In the past this has been by either selling it at auction, through a sealed bid process, or via Essex Fire Authority (EFA) Trading to a reputable purchaser.

The Authority uses the following options for disposal of assets:

Option 1

Dispose by direct auction.

This has historically been the preferred disposal method since it provides at least some capital receipt toward any new purchase. A variation of that arrangement, however, is:

Option 2

Disposal via third-party auctioneers which, due to the disposal routes available to them both in the UK and Europe, aims to offer the best possible financial return for the Authority as well as ensuring the vehicles are sold to reputable organisations that have provided evidence of future use of the vehicle. This has recently proved successful and is currently the preferred option for disposal.

Option 3

More recently the market for second-hand fire appliances appears to be becoming increasingly limited, and appliances are taking longer to sell and generating lower capital receipts. In February 2020, the Fire Authority supported the objectives of FIRE AID; and amended its Contract Standing Orders to enable the Authority to provide donations of end-of-life appliances and equipment with a net book value of £10k or less to FIRE AID to help with the furtherance of their charitable objectives.

13. FUTURE FLEET AND WORKSHOP PROVISION

Fleet procurement and maintenance is currently undertaken in-house. The service will always look to collaborative working where there is benefit in doing so with particular emphasis on the following criteria:

- a) A desire to explore the opportunity of new fleet service delivery models to deliver better value for money and to improve efficiency.
- b) Seeking ways to ensure that capital investment in the fleet is secured.
- c) Wishing to work in partnership with other regional Fire and Rescue Services to secure benefits from collaboration and standardisation.
- d) Any desire to address possibilities in relation to shared workshop facilities.

A number of issues relating to the Fleet Strategy which are of more detailed technical interest including some numeric information for fuel and servicing etc. is set out in **Appendix 3**.

14. VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS 2018/19 to 2024/25

Pumping Appliances

At the commencement of this Strategy, the Service had 16 Scania Rescue Pumps providing a front line service. These were based at all whole-time and day-crewed fire stations as well as 2 standalone retained stations.

The latest vehicle of this type to enter the service was in November 2011, with the oldest at the time coming into service in January 2006. Currently there are only 11 Scania appliances remaining within the fleet.

The historic use of this type of appliance is now widely accepted as a success. The dual role of fire appliance and rescue appliance has negated the need for the Authority to purchase separate 'Rescue Tenders', therefore offering good value for money. Staff feedback has always been very positive as to performance, which is also reflected in anticipated whole life costs in regard to repairs and maintenance.

The Authority had already committed to a programme of replacement of these vehicles, working in collaboration with both Royal Berkshire FRS and Oxfordshire FRS. This has seen the delivery of 19 new Rescue Pumps in the period between 2016/17 up to the end of 2022/23, with funds committed for a further eight purchases during the life of the current contract. No purchases are planned for 2024/25 to allow time for the implications of the CRMP 2025-2030 to be considered, and also any implications this may have for the next contract to purchase frontline appliances.

The ongoing need or otherwise for rescue platforms was considered during the initial life of this strategy. These are currently available on a number of existing pumps and whilst their use is sporadic, they are nevertheless essential for the occasions required. The decision was made to carry rescue platforms on a small number of appliances strategically located across the areas we serve.

No further action is required for the period of this strategy other than to ensure vehicles are strategically positioned to provide an attendance anywhere in our local area within 15- 20 minutes as determined by the PSP.

A detailed replacement programme is set out in **Appendix 2**.

4 x 4 Pumping Appliances

The Authority has previously given approval for the replacement of these vehicles and delivery has now taken place of 3 x 12 tonne vehicles as well as one 7 tonne vehicle.

The disposal of the 3 legacy 'Unimog' vehicles has been completed.

Bulk Water/Foam Carriers

The Service currently has two 'Water Carriers' within the fleet, based at Aylesbury and Gerrards Cross. These appliances utilise ex-National Resilience prime movers fitted with a demountable 10,000 litre tanker pod. As the prime movers have a life expectancy of 20 years, they will be due for replacement from 2024.

This Service has a limited risk requirement for bulk foam and this facility is provided by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of the Thames Valley.

White Fleet Replacements

Replacements for existing leased white fleet are generally considered on a case by case basis and opportunity will be taken either to not replace a vehicle or to replace with a more efficient vehicle at lower cost where possible.

15. ACTION PLAN

Table 3 below sets out the strategic action plan that summarises the 'actions required' set out in the body of this strategy.

Table 3

Action Point	Title	Description	Owner	Target Date for Completion	Notes
A	Financial Planning	The vehicle replacement Capital Programme should continue to be developed to project the replacement, frequency and potential costs for capital planning purposes, this program can be monitored through the BTB. The annual revenue impacts that may arise as a result of potential replacements should also be included. The existing Capital Programme already allows for £500k each year for vehicle replacements, however, any possible changes to this should be quantified and included as part of the budget planning process from 2018/19 onwards.	Fleet Manager	31 Dec 2017 (Completed)	Annual Review
B	Allocation of new appliances to maximise life span	The Authority should assess the impact of allocating new appliances to its smaller and less operational active stations, or frequent moving of appliances to different stations of varying operational activity in order to ascertain if vehicle life can be extended, by evening out the wear and tear throughout the vehicles service life.	GC Response Policy	Ongoing	

Action Point	Title	Description	Owner	Target Date for Completion	Notes
C	Collaborative Procurement	The Authority will continue to work with other blue light services to explore any opportunities to work together to make more cost efficient purchases of vehicles and associated equipment.	Procurement Manager	Ongoing	
D	Rescue Platforms	The deployment of rescue platforms will be reviewed with particular emphasis toward future collaborative requirements with neighbouring service.	GC Policy and Resilience	June 2018 (Completed)	
E	BASI Review	As part of the next phase of the Business and Systems Integration project (BASI), a review will be undertaken to determine if and whether a replacement or major update of TRANMAN should be initiated	Fleet Manager	March 2019 (Completed)	

F	Future Fleet Requirements	Following the risks identified during the Summer pressures of 2022, pilot and review the use of smaller response vehicles that provide further capabilities to deal with more remote fires in the open.	Fleet Manager	March 2024	
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APPENDIX 1

Red Fleet Vehicles

REG.NUMBER	MAKE	STATION/LOCATION	VEHICLE TYPE
KN72NBG	VOLVO	Amersham	RP
KP67HYK	VOLVO	Amersham	RP
KM70ZBL	VOLVO	Aylesbury	RP
KL19TSY	VOLVO	Aylesbury	RP
OU66LWZ	MAN	Aylesbury	4x4 RP
WR65NYA	IVECO	Aylesbury	EPU
BD15GWE	MERCEDES	Aylesbury	ICU
WX54VRG	MAN	Aylesbury	P/Mover + W/Tanker
WX54VRJ	MAN	USAR - Aylesbury	Prime Mover
WX54VSM	MAN	USAR - Aylesbury	Prime Mover
WX54VVZ	MAN	USAR - Aylesbury	Prime Mover
KX17MXB	VOLVO	BHQ	RP
KX17MXC	VOLVO	BHQ	RP
KX11OHR	SCANIA	BHQ	RP
KO68FUB	VOLVO	Beaconsfield	RP
KX59JHK	SCANIA	Beaconsfield	RP
OU10FLP	MERCEDES	Beaconsfield	Water Rescue
KX57TWJ	SCANIA	Brill	RP
KN72NBF	VOLVO	Broughton	RP
KP67HYM	VOLVO	Broughton	RP
OU10EDR	MERCEDES	Broughton	OSU
KP67HYN	VOLVO	Buckingham	RP
KX57TWL	SCANIA	Buckingham	RP
KX57TWK	SCANIA	Chesham	RP
KN71RXB	VOLVO	Gerrards Cross	RP
WX54VUL	MAN	Gerrards Cross	P/Mover + W/Tanker
SF66LYU	IVECO	Great Missenden	Light 4x4 WT
KX59JHJ	SCANIA	Haddenham	RP
KM70ZBN	VOLVO	High Wycombe	RP
KL19TSX	VOLVO	High Wycombe	RP
OU66LWY	MAN	High Wycombe	4x4 RP
KX11BCZ	SCANIA	High Wycombe	TL
KX59JHH	SCANIA	Marlow	RP
OU10EDP	MERCEDES	Marlow	OSU
KO68FUE	VOLVO	Newport Pagnell	RP
OU10FLR	MERCEDES	Newport Pagnell	Water Rescue
KX56CVW	SCANIA	Olney	RP
KX11OHP	SCANIA	Princes Risborough	RP
KX58MXA	SCANIA	Stokenchurch	RP
KX17MXE	VOLVO	Waddesdon	RP
KN72NBE	VOLVO	West Ashland	RP
KN71RXC	VOLVO	West Ashland	RP
KP67HYL	VOLVO	West Ashland	RP
OU66LXA	MAN	West Ashland	4x4 RP
KX64CDE	SCANIA	West Ashland	TL
KX58MXB	SCANIA	Winslow	RP
KX17MXF	VOLVO	Haddenham	RP

KX67EGF	SCANIA	Driver Training	CS
KX67EGJ	SCANIA	Driver Training	CS

OU10EDP	MERCEDES	Marlow	OSU
KX57TWJ	SCANIA	Newport Pagnell	RP
OU10FLR	MERCEDES	Newport Pagnell	Water Rescue
SF66LYU	IVECO	Olney	4x4 Light WT
OV51FCP	ERF	Princes Risborough	RP
X138OFC	VOLVO	Princes Risborough	Foam Tanker
OU10AEP	MITSUBISHI L200 4x4	Stokenchurch	Small Fires Unit
Y76MWL	VOLVO	Waddesdon	WT
KX55PMO	SCANIA	Winslow	RP
OV51FCU	ERF	T/SCHOOL-HADDENHAM	RP
OE03WXN	VOLVO	T/SCHOOL-DRIVER TRAINING	WT
OE03WXP	VOLVO	T/SCHOOL-DRIVER TRAINING	WT

White Fleet Vehicles

Make/Model	Use	Year
VAUXHALL ASTRAVAN	Support Services	2010
VAUXHALL VIVARO	Support Services	2010
AUDI A6 AVANT 2.0TDI	Fleet Car	2016
AUDI Q5 2.0TDI	Officer Car	2017
VAUXHALL COMBO VAN	Hydrant Maintenance	2015
VAUXHALL COMBO VAN	Hydrant Maintenance	2015
VAUXHALL MOVANO	Support Services	2015
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2018
KIA RIO 1 1.4CRDi	Station Car	2017
KIA RIO 1 1.4CRDi	Station Car	2017
KIA RIO 1 1.4CRDi	Station Car	2017
AUDI Q5 2.0TDI	Officer Car	2019
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2018
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2018
KIA RIO 1 1.4CRDi	Support Services	2018
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Driver Training	2019
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2019
PEUGEOT 3008 1.5HDI	Officer Car	2018
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2019
FORD FIESTA 1.5TDCi	Operational Assurance	2019
MAZDA 6	Officer Car	2018
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Pool Car	2018
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2018
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2018
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Pool Car	2018
NISSAN X-TRAIL 1.7d	Officer Car	2019
L/ROVER DISCOVERY SP	Officer Car	2019
NISSAN NAVARA 2.3dCi	Station Car	2019

NISSAN NAVARA 2.3dCi	Station Car	2019
NISSAN NAVARA 2.3dCi	Station Car	2019
CITROEN DISPATCH	Station Car	2019
CITROEN DISPATCH	Station Car	2019
L/ROVER DISCOVERY SP	Officer Car	2019
KIA PROCEED 1.6CRDi	Officer Car	2020
JAGUAR F-PACE 3.0D	Officer Car	2021
AUDI Q5 2.0TDI	Officer Car	2021
CITROEN DISPATCH	USAR	2019
FORD FOCUS 2.0 EST.	Officer Car	2019
VOLVO XC60	Officer Car	2020
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2020
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2020
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2020
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2020
K9 - VW TRANSPORTER	USAR	2018
VW E-UP	Protection	2021
VW E-UP	Protection	2021
VW E-UP	Protection	2021
VW E-UP	Protection	2021
FORD FOCUS 1.5 ECO	Officer Car	2022
FIAT FIORINO CARGO	Prevention	2021
FIAT FIORINO CARGO	Prevention	2021
FIAT FIORINO CARGO	Prevention	2021
FIAT FIORINO CARGO	Prevention	2021
FIAT FIORINO CARGO	Prevention	2021
FIAT FIORINO CARGO	Support Services	2021
CITROEN DISPATCH	Support Services	2021
CITROEN DISPATCH	Support Services	2021
CITROEN BERLINGO	Support Services	2021
CITROEN RELAY 2.2HDI	Support Services	2021
FIAT FIORINO CARGO	Support Services	2021
AUDI Q5 2.0TDI	Officer Car	2022
FORD FOCUS 1.5 ECO	Officer Car	2021
CITROEN BERLINGO	Training School	2022
CITROEN DISPATCH	Training School	2022
FORD FIESTA 1.0 MHEV	Protection	2022
CITROEN RELAY 2.2HDI	Training School	2022
KIA SPORTAGE 1.6CRDI	Officer Car	2022
KIA SPORTAGE 1.6CRDI	Officer Car	2022
FORD FIESTA 1.0 MHEV	Protection	2023
FORD FIESTA 1.0 MHEV	Protection	2023
FORD FIESTA 1.0 MHEV	Protection	2023
KIA SPORTAGE 1.6CRDI	Officer Car	2023
KIA SPORTAGE 1.6CRDI	Officer Car	2023
KIA SPORTAGE 1.6CRDI	Officer Car	2023
CITROEN E-BERLINGO	Prevention	2023

FORD MONDEO 2.0 TDCi	Officer Car	2014
VAUXHALL CORSAVAN	Support Services	2014
MERCEDES C220	Fleet Car	2014
HONDA CIVIC 1.6iDTEC	Fleet Car	2013

HONDA CIVIC 1.6iDTEC	Fleet Car	2013
HONDA CRV 2.2i-DTEC	Officer Car	2013
HONDA CRV 2.2i-DTEC	Officer Car	2013
KIA CEED 1.6Crdi	Officer Car	2014
HONDA CRV 1.6i-DTEC	Officer Car	2013
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.6D	Officer Car	2015
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.6D	Officer Car	2014
SKODA SUPERB ESTATE	Officer Car	2014
SKODA OCTAVIA I.6TDI	Officer Car	2015
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2016
NISSAN QASHQAI 1.5D	Officer Car	2016
HONDA CIVIC 1.6iDTEC	Officer Car	2013
VW GOLF 2.0 TDI	Officer Car	2014
AUDI A4 AVANT 2.0TDI	Officer Car	2015
HONDA CRV 1.6i-DTEC	Officer Car	2016
BMW X3 2.0d	Officer Car	2015
HONDA CIVIC 1.6iDTEC	Driver Training	2015
HONDA CRV 1.6i-DTEC	Officer Car	2015
AUDI A6 AVANT 2.0TDI	Fleet Car	2016
AUDI SQ5 3.0 TDI	Officer Car	2016
FORD TRANSIT CUSTOM	Pool Vehicle	2015
FIAT 500 0.9 TWINAIR	Fleet car	2015
FORD FIESTA 1.5TDCi	Protection	2015
FORD FIESTA 1.5TDCi	Protection	2015
FORD FIESTA 1.5TDCi	Protection	2015
FORD FIESTA 1.5TDCi	Protection	2015
FORD FIESTA 1.5TDCi	Protection	2015
FORD FIESTA 1.5TDCi	Protection	2015
AUDI Q7 3.0TDI	Officer Car	2017
VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6	Support Services	2015
VAUXHALL COMBO VAN	Hydrant Maintenance	2015
VAUXHALL COMBO VAN	Hydrant Maintenance	2015
VAUXHALL MOVANO	Support Services	2015
VW PASSAT 2.0 TDI	Officer Car	2015
CITROEN NEMO 1.3HDI	Prevention	2015
CITROEN NEMO 1.3HDI	Prevention	2015
CITROEN NEMO 1.3HDI	Support Services	2015
CITROEN NEMO 1.3HDI	Support Services	2015
CITROEN NEMO 1.3HDI	Protection	2016
PEUGEOT EXPERT VAN	Support Services	2016
SEAT ITECA 2.0TDI	Officer Car	2017
VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6TD	Officer Car	2017
FORD TRANSIT CUSTOM	Pool Car	2017

FORD TRANSIT CUSTOM	Pool Car	2017
KIA RIO 1 1.4CRDi	Pool Car	2017
KIA RIO 1 1.4CRDi	Pool Car	2017
BMW 320d Xdrive tour	Officer Car	2017
SKODA SUPERB ESTATE	Officer Car	2017
PEUGEOT BOXER LWB	Support Services	2007

Red Fleet Vehicles – replacements and suggested vehicle movements

2016/17 - 2019/20

Thames Valley Pumping Appliance Contract 2

Year 1 F/Y 2021-22 (Estimated delivery - September '22)

- **Volvo 17** > AME P1 (Volvo KP67HYK) > AME P2 (Scania KX58MXA) STO 1
(Scania KX06MUC) > Disposal
- **Volvo 18** > WAS P1 (Volvo KN71RXC) > WAS P2 (Volvo KP67HYL) > WAS P3
(Scania KX11OHP) > MAR P1 (Scania KX55PMV) > Disposal
- **Volvo 19** > BRO P1 (Volvo KP67HYM) > BRO P2 (KX59JHH) > PRI P1
(Scania KX06MUB) > Disposal

Year 2 F/Y 2022-23 (Estimated delivery – September '23)

- **Volvo 20** > BUC P1 (Volvo KP67HYN) > ? ? > OLN P1 (Scania KX56CVW) >
Disposal
- **Volvo 21** > BEA P1 (Volvo KO68FUB) > BEA P2 (Scania KX59JHK) > BRI P1
(Scania KX57TWJ) > Disposal

Year 3 F/Y 2023-24 (Estimated delivery – March '24)

- **Volvo 22** > NPA P1 (Volvo KO68FUE) > ? ? > CHE P1 (Scania KX57TWK) >
Disposal
- **Volvo 23** > AYL P1 (Volvo KM70ZBL) > AYL P2 (Volvo KL19TSY) > Reserve
(Volvo KX17MXB) >
BUC P2 (Scania KX57TWL) > Disposal
- **Volvo 24** > HWY P1 (Volvo KM70ZBN) > HWY P2 (Volvo KL19TSX) >
Reserve (Volvo KX17MXC) >
AME P2 (Scania KX58MXA) > Disposal

Year 4 F/Y 2024-25 (Estimated delivery - TBA)

- **Volvo 25** > AYL P1 (Volvo 23) > AYL P2 (Volvo KM70ZBL) > ?? > WIN P1
(Scania KX58MXB) > Disposal
 - **Volvo 26** > HWY P1 (Volvo 24) > HWY P2 (Volvo KM70ZBN) > ?? > (Scania
KX59JHH/J/K) > Disposal
 - **Volvo 27** > WAS P1 (Volvo 18) > WAS P2 (KN71RXC) > ?? > (Scania
KX59JHH/J/K) > Disposal
- OR** GEX P1 (KN71RXB) > ?? > (Scania KX59JHH/J/K) > Disposal

1. AGE PROFILE OF FLEET

The current vehicle fleet has evolved over the years to include vehicles ranging from recent acquisitions to circa 20 years old.

The average age of the operational (Red) fleet is 9 years. Whilst it is generally accepted that the specialised, high value vehicles have a longer life and will therefore remain in the fleet for a longer period, the older the fleet, the more likely it will become redundant in terms of modern working practices and technology. The risk of obsolescence is a consideration in determining vehicle life extension and refurbishment programmes.

The decision of when to replace vehicles is determined by several factors. Due to the high cost of the more specialised vehicles it becomes beneficial to spread the initial cost over a longer period in accordance with predicted useful life. The major drawback of this is that as technology moves on, there is a danger that the vehicle will become outdated in respect of technological developments. The vehicles effectiveness to the operational function becomes the 'obsolescence gauge' and must be balanced with financial considerations in deciding on vehicle life.

In respect of the 'non-specialised' fleet, the factors guiding obsolescence and subsequent replacement are not subject to the same drivers. Non-specialised vehicles tend not to be as expensive, and a higher residual value is anticipated, whilst the capability of the vehicle is not as restrictive for its intended use.

The decision of when to replace these types of vehicles is more financially based than operationally based, and is achieved by evaluating the condition and reliability history of the vehicle and the remaining useable life together with the residual value and replacement cost.

These factors are critical for the work of the Research & Development team in their considerations for replacement vehicles.

2. FLEET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The current Fleet Management System (FMS) used by the Fleet Service is Tranman. The system is used to record, monitor and manage the details of the fleet, information on servicing and maintenance (including operational equipment), accident records, and costs and also has a direct link to the vehicle defecting web portal.

The system is continually improved and updates/new releases applied where appropriate. Information is provided through regular email bulletins and an annual user group meeting. Support is also provided via email and telephone depending on the urgency of response required.

The system meets the requirements of the Authority but is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains fit for purpose. It is also interesting to note that it is used by a growing number of other Fire & Rescue Services which should aid sharing of information and benchmarking.

As part of the Business and Systems Integration project (BASI), a review was undertaken to determine if and whether a replacement or major update of Tranman should be initiated and this was included in the proposed action plan set out in the main body of the strategy. The upgrade to the latest version of Tranman was completed in 2022. As part of the upgrade the system is now cloud hosted in line with the current ICT strategy. This latest version utilises ruggedised handheld devices to improve efficiency and reduce paper usage.

3. FLEET SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 Environmental Considerations

The adoption of sustainable fleet by the public sector arises from the need to address climate change and global warming in response to a suite of international, European and national legislation action plans and targets, as well as the Service's own Environment and Climate Action Plan.

All vehicle fleet owners are expected to adopt a sustainable fleet and BFRS is committed to addressing some of the key challenges by researching and implementing solutions that ensure its fleet balances the need for operational effectiveness and fleet sustainability. The Service will also use its influence with other stakeholders to improve environmental performance across a wide range of fire and rescue vehicles and equipment. In particular, the following areas are kept under constant review:

- a) The fuel management system.
- b) Revised vehicle specification to take into account any new emission regulations.
- c) Investigate alternative fuels feasibility, including electric vehicles.
- d) Manufacturers' environmental policies.
- e) The use of sustainable / renewable materials in the production of vehicles
- f) The use of lighter weight materials to reduce overall vehicle weights and therefore increase fuel efficiency
- g) The use of plastic bodies to improve service life and offer the potential for re-using bodies on new chassis.

3.2 Current Measures

The Fleet Service will always look for practical solutions to improve the carbon footprint of the Service. Several environmental initiatives are currently in place

within the Fleet Service.

- a) Emissions testing as part of routine servicing.
- b) Re-grooving, re-moulding and recycling of tyres.
- c) Recycling of lead acid and other batteries.
- d) Environmentally safe disposal of waste engine oil and other engine and vehicle fluids.
- e) Recycling of scrap metals including aluminium ladders.
- f) Extending oil drain intervals.

The Service has already invested in several electric vehicles within its white fleet and has installed vehicle charging points at Aylesbury, Marlow and West Ashland. The Service continues to monitor the development of electric pumping appliances, although given the current costs of these it is not proposed to proceed with investment in these during the lifetime of this Fleet Strategy.

3.3 Vehicle Emissions

The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has identified the following as potentially harmful gases:

- a) Carbon Monoxide
- b) Methane
- c) Nitrous Oxide
- d) Hydro Fluorocarbons
- e) Sulphur Hexafluoride

However, by far the largest global emissions by volume are of carbon dioxide which originates from the burning of fossil fuels including the combustion process that occurs in compression ignition or spark ignition motor vehicle engines. Continual monitoring, testing and the purchase of more fuel efficient vehicles with lower emissions are the most practical way in which the service can minimise emissions.

3.4 Diesel Replacement Fuels

There are a number of diesel replacement fuels on the market; Bio diesel has been around for some time and is a mixture of mineral diesel fuel and vegetable derived fuel - 'standard' diesel fuel is a 7% blend; GTL (gas to liquid) is a synthetic diesel alternative made from natural gas and HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) is a fossil-free paraffinic diesel made from certified waste materials. The service's fuel provider does not currently supply any of these diesel replacement fuels and whilst the service intends to investigate the use of them, there are specific concerns with regard to their use which will require addressing or mitigation by BFRS. They are:

- a) Bio diesel has a reduced calorific value when compared to mineral diesel. This means that the power produced is slightly less than mineral diesel. This is obviously a concern to emergency fleets and their ability

to respond quickly.

- b) some do not have the same lubricant properties as mineral diesel and may necessitate more frequent and regular engine oil changes.
- c) The use of these alternatives is not widely supported by vehicle manufacturers and therefore its use could invalidate warranties and increase the risk of major repair costs to engines and fuel systems. When use is approved, there is usually a need for a more frequent service regime.
- d) Until the use of diesel replacement fuels is approved by the majority of vehicle manufacturers across their range of vehicles, it will prevent BFRS from adopting its use due to having bunkered fuel stocks.
- e) There is an increase in cost for all of the alternative diesel fuels.

Nationally, a number of issues surrounding the use of bio diesel have been identified including viscosity at sub-zero temperatures and filter blockages. Bio diesel is more prone to microbial growth (especially when it is stored for long periods) which causes sludge to accumulate in fuel tanks which then cause blockages in the fuel system. Due to these findings, the service has decided against using bio diesel at this time due to the potential implications for interruptions to operational service delivery and associated safety implications. This position will remain under review for future developments.

3.5 Carbon Footprint

The amount of carbon dioxide produced is directly related to the amount of fuel burnt and can be calculated using a simple equation. This calculation assumes that fuel burns completely whilst in reality motor vehicle engines are not 100% efficient and will produce bi-products of the combustion process. The following formula represents a theoretical approach to quantifying the carbon dioxide emissions of a compression ignition engine:

Burning one litre of diesel produces 2.68kg of carbon dioxide (CO₂). Burning one litre of petrol produces 2.31kg of CO₂.

By studying the fuel used by the fleet it is possible to calculate the fleet's carbon footprint. As new technology is introduced into the fleet, it is plausible that the current fuel usage of the BFRS fleet will reduce and subsequently the size of the carbon footprint.

The calculated 2022/23 CO2 emissions from the Service's Red Fleet vehicles was 384 tonnes.

Emissions of Carbon dioxide over the last three years:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Carbon Dioxide Emitted in Tonnes	319	564	386

Table 5

4. Fleet Monitoring

In 2022/23 the Red Fleet covered 223,933 miles and consumed 144,206 litres of fuel at a cost of £192,183.

TOTAL MILEAGE FOR VEHICLES: 2020/21– 2022/23

Vehicle	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Pumps (37)	114,904	122,829	166,984
Specials & Ancillary Vehicles (17)	15,794	60,102	56,949
TOTAL	130,699	182,931	223,897
Average Miles per Vehicle	Pumps 3106 Specials 929	Pumps 3320 Specials 3535	Pumps 4512 Specials 3347

Table 6

DIESEL PURCHASED AND PRICE PER LITRE: 2020/21– 2022/23

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
TOTAL VOLUME (Litres)	119038	210,658	144,206
Average Price pence per litre	91.58	109.33	133.27

Table 7

There is a substantial amount of maintenance required as the nature of the service dictates that vehicles will operate on short unplanned journeys. The majority of miles covered are undertaken before the power unit reaches normal operating temperature. There are also a number of legal, safety and environmental issues that need to be constantly addressed.

5. CHANGES IN THE USER'S OPERATION

The Fleet Service's operational strategy needs to be flexible to adjust to the requirements of the users. During recent years the Service has increased resources to prevention and protection activity leading to a reduction in fires. This trend will no doubt continue and whilst this change of focus will not necessarily reduce the establishment costs of having an emergency fleet on standby, it may reduce some of the operational running costs and create more of a demand for mobile advice centres, mobile fire stations and similar types of support vehicles.

If targeting of the prevention of fires continues to be successful this should produce a change in user needs and ought to reduce the number of, or influence the design of, the emergency vehicles required.

6. FINANCIAL PLANNING

6.1 Capital

Capital expenditure is the term used to describe the acquisition of assets that have a long- term value to BFRS. The Fleet Service capital expenditure will form part of the Authority's capital strategy and will be drawn from the replacement cycle of vehicles and equipment. There are some complexities around capital purchase and activity in this area should be co-ordinated with Finance so the Authority can negotiate the best options for all capital and revenue towards the end of the lifecycle for vehicle replacement. Ideally this should be well in advance, say 18 months.

6.2 Revenue Budgets

The Fleet Service revenue budget will be heavily influenced by the Vehicle Replacement Programme. It is unlikely that year-on-year capital spending will remain constant and there will be fluctuations in the costs incurred in the revenue budget. To even-out revenue expenditure it would be necessary to concentrate on the level scheduling of vehicle purchases over an anticipated lifespan, or to accept that fluctuations will occur between different years. In any event this should all be considered at time of MTFP budget build. Growth and savings bids should be raised for this and included with revenue consequences from capital purchases.

The contingency to counter this would be to make predictions and consequently financial provision for them in the years that they are likely to

occur. A similar concept applies to vehicle maintenance expenditure - as vehicles age, more costs will be incurred. Unless the same numbers of vehicles of the same type are purchased each year there will be fluctuations in vehicle maintenance expenditure. Improving strategies can ease the fluctuations to enable more even and accurate budget forecasting.

There are no specific actions required for financial planning as the Authority has already approved the red fleet replacement capital programme.



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

PROPERTY STRATEGY

2018 - 2025

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Fire Authority has made significant investment in the property portfolio over the past five years with major refurbishment, alterations, improvements, planned maintenance and reactive repairs being carried out across the board to the 20 fire stations (19 since the merger of Bletchley and Great Holm) and Brigade HQ.
- 1.2 The continued and increasing financial pressures being faced by all public bodies mean that it is more important than ever to ensure that investment in property and facilities is targeted and coherently planned to provide the right property, in the right place and at the right time. There are several sites where we have co-location initiatives taking place and we will continue to work with other partner organisations to explore co-location initiatives and continue to utilise our property assets to achieve optimum effectiveness and efficiency.
- 1.3 This updated property strategy builds upon the existing foundation for the effective and efficient use of all property related assets and provides a platform for structured and rigorous forward thinking and decision making about property management within the Authority. It will also aid the process of responding to property needs from the Public Safety Plan and as a consequence, operational response, as well as meeting the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 1.4 This Strategy was originally written to cover the period 2018 – 2023. It is now being extended to 2025 in order to align it with the next iteration of the public safety plan, which will be referred to as the Community Risk Management Plan and cover the period 2025-2030.

2 Background

- 2.1 In March 2015 the Executive Committee agreed a ten-year high level strategic asset management strategy that set out a number of key parameters for all asset management, including property.
- 2.2 At the same time the Executive Committee confirmed the Strategic Business Requirements (SBR's) that set out the required objectives of the property function, (see Section 3). This updated strategy further embeds those core principles for the next two years and will provide a solid foundation in supporting all business requirements.
- 2.3 Other major factors to be taken into account in setting out this strategy include the continued impact of operational decisions as to crewing and response models, as well as the full condition surveys, which were carried out during the autumn of 2017 and 2022, and which provides clear evidence of where the Authority should prioritise its future investment to the existing

property portfolio.

- 2.4 The Fire Authority owns land and buildings with a book value of £40.004m as at March 2022. Though this is broadly classified as land/buildings, it is important to recognise that the majority of the buildings have no great commercial value other than as Fire Stations.

3 Strategic Business Requirements (SBR's)

- 3.1 A fundamental aim of this strategy is to continue to embed and deliver the agreed SBR's as set out below:

Strategy

1. There is a clear direction for Property, based on clear policy from the Strategic Management Board (SMB) and the Fire Authority and an up-to-date, comprehensive, coherent Property Strategy for the organisation;
2. The Property Service and Portfolio has clear senior sponsorship and ownership at SMB and Fire Authority level;
3. The Property Service is the centre of excellence that translates the strategy and policy into an action plan and helps to deliver it;
4. The business needs of the organisation are supported in a strategic, proactive and positive manner, by taking the Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan and interpreting what they mean for the Property Service;
5. A Property Strategy is developed and maintained, covering which properties are required, their locations and respective purposes, including service delivery and community use;
6. Property portfolio management is done in a way that recognises the strategic business need, local property pricing, and available leasing/financing solutions, to ensure the optimum portfolio for the best combination of cost and risk;
7. The Property Service is provided through the most economic, efficient and effective sourcing routes, with a clear position on in-sourcing and outsourcing;
8. The Service seeks to use renewable energy and lower its carbon footprint wherever possible and is cost-effective.

Customers

1. The property services provided to customers are assessed, agreed and published, ensuring that they deliver best value for money;
2. A service-wide property standard is in use and maintained, including expected facilities, operational principles, space usage, security, and sustainability factors (e.g. carbon footprint, energy usage and efficiency, water usage, recycling, sustainable procurement and sustainable construction);
3. Responsibilities and authorities with regard to the planning,

procurement, delivery and budgetary management of Property Services are clear;

4. Performance and financial reporting are clearly defined, in use, managed and monitored;
5. Facilities management and maintenance are done to the right quality, timeliness and cost;
6. The Property Service works with local property stakeholders and organisations to understand and proactively manage changes and developments related to property.

People

1. The Property Service operates professionally and proactively, and is credible in the eyes of its customers;
2. An effective organisational structure, with clear roles and appropriately skilled and experienced managers and staff is in place to deliver the strategy;
3. The Property Service is robustly supported by senior management;
4. The Property Service team are professionally qualified and have the skills and capabilities necessary to deliver a professional property service;
5. The Property Service is appropriately resourced, professional in its experience, and with the capacity to provide all necessary support and development;
6. The Property Service is customer-centric, supportive, approachable, engaging, enabling, and "can do";
7. The Property Service takes responsibility for the organisation being able to do its work, and provides solutions;
8. The Property Service is routinely up-skilled as requirements change;
9. The Property Service challenges and scrutinises any proposed property solutions to ensure fit with the Property Strategy;
10. The Property Service challenges and offers potential solutions where it believes that the organisation is not maximising its potential.

Processes

1. All processes and responsibilities within the acquisition, maintenance and disposal aspects of the Property Service are clear and deliver agreed outcomes;
2. An effective property governance framework is used for the development and maintenance of the property strategy and for the authorisation of property portfolio management, maintenance and performance;
3. There are clear processes and principles for procuring external support for property maintenance;
4. Property data is defined, collected and managed, to ensure an up-to-

date and secure property portfolio;

5. Contracts are proactively managed, to ensure the delivery of what is agreed.

Technology

1. A fit-for-purpose, flexible and integrated property infrastructure is in place to support the full property life cycle, covering acquisition, maintenance and disposal;
2. Timely and accurate property status, performance and cost data are defined and maintained with appropriate and easy access for managers;
3. New technologies (e.g. solar technology, heat-source pumps) and their cost/benefit to the service are proactively identified and evaluated, with proactive recommendations to the service where there is potential to improve.

4. Resources

- 4.1 During 2023/24 total budgeted spend for Property Services is expected to be:

Gross Revenue Spend: £2.16m

Capital Programme: £1.4m

Income Generation: £213k

The gross revenue budget broadly consists of the following:

Staff Costs: £272k

Reactive Maintenance: £159k

Planned Maintenance: £129k

Utilities: £682k

Rents / Hire £85k

Contract cleaning

and supplies: £64k

Consultancy/Licen

ces/Professional

Fees £50k

Rates: £708k

The staff costs include facilities management services, i.e. cleaning, reception and directorate administration team etc.

5. Influences for change

- 5.1 The influences for change are significant. Changing patterns of operational risk as well as new responsibilities and operational requirements will need to be understood and assessed for their effect upon the property requirement so that it can be aligned to need.
- 5.2 Environmental responsibilities are a key influence in our investment into property. Our buildings need to be energy efficient and used in an environmentally responsible manner. Much has been done in recent years, but there will always be a strong focus on energy efficiency and the impact of investment into energy efficient solutions for our buildings will be a key influence upon our investment decisions. (See also Section 11)
- 5.3 Diversity and welfare are also important change factors as we continue to respond to our increasingly diverse community and workforce. This will link directly to our response on community engagement and workforce issues such as increasing numbers of female operational staff and the apprentice intake. Equality and diversity is a continuously developing area that will require regular review of our facilities to meet the needs of our workforce..
- 5.4 The Covid 19 pandemic has demonstrated the benefits of a hybrid working arrangement, and many members of staff are no longer required to be seated at fixed location every day. This has presented opportunities to review the size of our estate footprint with a view to potential rationalisation of the office accommodation we use.
- 5.5 Security is another influence for change. As a key emergency service provider there is a need to ensure that our buildings, which contain expensive appliances and vehicles, as well as information and ICT systems, are well protected. Indeed there are legal responsibilities we must honour and physical security is one of them.
- 5.6 The continuing pressure on public service expenditure remains unparalleled and continues to have a significant impact. This will mean that the policy and practices associated with maintaining, developing and using our property portfolio will need to be kept under constant review as well as contribute with efficiency savings to meet the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 5.7 Given all the above, the following represents specific issues for the Authority with some commentary on how each should be dealt with, which will culminate in an outline plan of action.

6. Condition Surveys

- 6.1 Full independent surveys of the property portfolio were undertaken and completed in November 2017 and Autumn 2022. These show the improving position compared to the full survey in 2013, which has continued between 2017 and 2022. Although not included as part of this document, the 2022 survey is available upon request, however the following summarises the survey outcome.
- 6.2 The entirety of the Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service estate was surveyed in 2013 and reported that an investment of £4.4m over a five year period would be required to both maintain and bring the stations to good order.
- 6.3 The sites were subsequently resurveyed in autumn 2017 with a revised five-year plan showing required investment of £2.4m. The most recent full survey in 2022 shows a required investment of £1.6m over the next five years (net of contingencies and professional fees). This like for like reduction in investment required, shows the positive impact of the increased investment by the Authority against a continually ageing estate.
- 6.4 It is clear that significant improvements in the condition and quality of stations have resulted from investment made between 2017 to 2022. Of the eighteen sites surveyed, twelve have seen a reduction in required expenditure, and only six have seen an increase.
- 6.5 These improvements include the replacement of the air handling plant at Aylesbury HQ, refurbishment of BA servicing rooms, lockers rooms and kit rooms at various sites and reconfiguration of toilet, shower and changing facilities on multiple stations to improve equality of access for our staff.
- 6.6 The single largest increase in backlog however (£458k) relates to High Wycombe. Due to historic discussions with Wycombe District Council (now part of Buckinghamshire Council) about the potential relocation of the site, investment in the site has been restricted to health, safety and welfare issues and essential maintenance only. Significant investment in the site is now well overdue.
- 6.7 The history of the High Wycombe site and future considerations are detailed in sections 21 and 22 of this Strategy.
- 6.8 Elsewhere across the estate the investment required remains static with investment made to improve sanitary accommodation and ablutions offset by ageing fixtures, finishes and plant and equipment and goes to highlight the need for constant investment in an estate of the size and complexity of Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- 6.9 Arising from the first condition survey in 2013, a 'Property Standard' will be continue to be maintained setting out the minimum acceptable criteria for all Authority buildings.

6.10 Appendix 1 – shows the summary table arising from the condition survey 2022.

6.11 During 2021, a separate survey of the condition of all drill towers was undertaken. This highlighted the need to invest in towers to bring them up to the required standard. A summary of this condition survey can be seen in Appendix 2.

7. Use of outside consultants

7.1 The Authority does not carry all the requisite skills in-house that are necessary to manage its property portfolio. Due to its size, the Authority has to rely on commissioning professional services such as Architects, Structural Engineers and Quantity Surveyors etc., as required. These have been procured in the past via a formal tender exercise and those arrangements have been in place for several years.

8 Future use of Properties

- 8.1 It is clear from the recently completed condition surveys that the primary challenges for the Authority arise in two key areas:
- High Wycombe
 - Drill towers across all the estate
- 8.2 In addition, the Authority must retain its commitment to exit Unit 7 as soon as it is practicable to do so.

9 Domestic Dwellings

- 9.1 The Authority no longer owns any domestic dwellings with the last two having been sold off as part of the previous strategy. It does however retain nomination rights through London & Quadrant (L&Q) Housing Trust for housing in close proximity to Gerrards Cross Fire Station. Also, the Authority has nominations rights in a separate agreement over any of L&Q's housing stock within the area of Buckinghamshire bounded by the M4 and M40 for up to six, 2 or 3 bedroom, dwellings (until 8 February 2054). There is no operational proximity requirement, merely that the prospective tenant is employed by the Authority.
- 9.2 The Service has recently reviewed and increased the day-crewing allowances paid to staff on that duty system, with a view to making day-crewing a more attractive proposition to staff. Consideration will be given supporting the model further by purchasing properties near day-crewed stations that can be used to house staff working out of those stations.

10 Day to day activity

- 10.1 There are four main areas of what is recognised as 'day to day' activity in the management of property:
- Planned Maintenance
 - Responsive Repairs and Maintenance (R&M)
 - Major refurbishments
 - Facilities Management (Hard and Soft Services)
- 10.2 By and large the above activities are carried out using risk assessed criteria that comprises of (in no particular order) health and safety, weather-proofing and security. Historically it is those factors that determine the priorities for action and in times of financial restraint including limited capital funds availability, there is little room for other factors to influence priorities.
- 10.3 That position will be continually reviewed over the life of this strategy to ensure it remains valid and to determine whether other factors should be added to, or replace the current criteria.
- 10.4 In respect of the day-to-day activities, there is an on-going commitment to

continual improvement funded through the capital programme. The independent condition survey has determined with greater certainty where the authority needs to commit its resources over the next two years.

- 10.5 The current strategy in respect of planned maintenance is to ensure that as much as is affordable is covered by a planned maintenance programme and this naturally reduces the risk of any responsive repair and maintenance having to be carried out. This strategy has evolved as a good practice rather than being specifically set out as a strategic goal but should remain in place. All the major refurbishment investment into heating and mechanical systems in recent years have been followed up with a planned maintenance programme to protect that investment and this should continue.
- 10.6 In setting the budgets for each financial year an exercise will be carried out to analyse and subsequently allocate the correct funding required for each location for planned maintenance. During the period of the 2018 Strategy, all planned maintenance budgets have been centralised and are now managed by the Property Manager.
- 10.7 A continual 're-balancing' of available responsive and planned maintenance budgets is required to ensure that as better planning creates more planned maintenance contracts, responsive repair budgets are subsequently reduced. This also allows the budgets to, by and large, cope with the inevitable unexpected issues that arise. This continual refinement of budgets has proved successful in recent years so though there is now less scope for movement during the life of this strategy, nevertheless a review will always be undertaken each year.
- 10.8 The Capital programme requirements, informed by the condition survey and recent works, will be considered during budget setting each year along with all other potential bids. This does not preclude other capital investment being considered during the course of the year, especially where priorities may change due to unforeseen issues arising. Due to the nature of these issues, it is generally not practicable for these to follow the standard approval process for projects as the required works are often highly time critical. The Property Manager, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Assets, can re-prioritise and reallocate funding within the approved Property capital programme as necessary. Any changes to the programme should be reported at the next available Business Transformation Board meeting. If the amounts involved are greater than the virement limits set out in Financial Instructions, further reporting to the Strategic Management Board and the Executive Committee may be required.
- 10.9 In terms of procuring best value for money for all types of work, it is proposed to continue separating out both 'soft' services (cleaning, reception etc.) and 'hard' services (mechanical, electrical, etc.) into bundles of work that better serve the needs of the Authority, as well as appealing to a wide range of potential contractors that should lead to more competitive pricing.

11 Environment and Climate Change

- 11.1 The Authority still has several properties, within the present portfolio, where because of age and condition the most energy efficient methods of construction, heating and boiler services plus other mechanical and lighting services are not up to modern standards and expectations.
- 11.2 However, good practice has evolved over recent years that has seen this position fully rectified at every available opportunity and has seen, for example, the introduction of solar panelling at Brigade HQ, Workshops, Broughton and Winslow.
- 11.3 Analysis of Kw/H usage during the first two full years was included in the previous property strategy and showed an expected payback of 5.7 years. However, it also indicated that small scale installation such as that at Winslow, is only marginally beneficial and is something to be borne in mind for future applications. Whilst the 'payback' period per site will always be one key factor, other environmental factors remain significant.
- 11.4 Given the increase in the utilisation of Marlow Fire Station in recent years, an analysis of the potential benefits of installing solar panels at this site has been commissioned. At present there are no plans to roll this out to further sites, primarily because utilisation rates, roof sizes or positions don't lend themselves to justifying the capital investment, but the opportunities will always be kept under review, particularly as new technologies emerge.
- 11.5 With respect to energy supplies, the Authority currently utilises the services of an independent company, specialising in utility management, including securing the best utility market rates available. This service will be retained for the foreseeable future to negotiate on the Authority's behalf on a suitable procurement cycle.
- 11.6 Wherever and whenever works allow for more energy efficient installations, such opportunities will continue to be taken.
- 11.7 In December 2021, the Authority approved the Environment and Climate Action Plan, which sets out (amongst other things) how the Service will take action to reduce its own carbon emissions, while encouraging its staff and communities to do the same.
- 11.8 As noted in para 11.6, the Service will continually look for opportunities to improve energy efficiency when works are undertaken but will also proactively seek ways to reduce energy usage. Some of the key improvement actions taken during 2022 include:
- All on-call stations have had additional heating controls installed to ensure

- they are not heated unnecessarily when no-one is present in the buildings.
- A number of sites have 1st generation LED lighting, which are being replaced with 6th generation LEDs when they fail, or where it can be done as an invest to save measure. For example, replacing the bay lighting at Aylesbury reduced energy consumption by 30%
 - Combined heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) units at HQ have been programmed with a double-shutdown to reduce the amount of energy used during non-core hours.

12 Asbestos & Legionella

- 12.1 Asbestos – the Authority fulfils the requirements of The Control of Asbestos Regulations (2012) and associated Approved Codes of Practice to ensure that asbestos is correctly managed on all Authority premises so that no person is exposed to asbestos material in a form that can cause harm.
- 12.2 A program of removal has been undertaken in recent years either as part of refurbishment projects or where a specific need has arisen, thus reducing the number of properties with asbestos. These sites are then covered and managed under the Authority’s procedure statement ‘The Management of Asbestos in Authority Premises’.
- 12.3 Legionella – The Authority provides safe and clean water for all purposes of use by staff or visitors at all premises and also works to the ‘Approved Codes of Practice’ in the control of legionella bacteria in premises water systems.
- 12.4 A program of renewal/removal has been undertaken in recent years either as part of refurbishment projects, or where a specific need has arisen, thus reducing the number of properties with the need of treatment programmes. The premises that then remain with a risk are then covered and managed under the Authorities procedure statement ‘Premises Water Hygiene’.
- 12.5 As part of the continuing drive to minimise risk as much as is practically reasonable, it is proposed to continue with a suitable programme of works.

13 Aerial Sites

- 13.1 When this Strategy was first approved it was noted that the extremely uncertain position with regard to maintaining income from mobile mast licences that was set out in the previous strategy had very largely been mitigated due to some protracted and tough negotiation with the operators. A gross income stream of some £185k p.a. had been secured for the next 20 years and includes recharge arrangements and fees for site call outs.
- 13.2 More recently, the income has decreased slightly to £175k p.a. following the merger of Bletchley and Great Holm. Recent legislation has also tipped the

balance of power towards the telecommunications providers in many instances, potentially creating issues that could impact on the Services ability to fully utilise its sites in the manner intended. It is unlikely new contracts will be entered into when the current ones expire.

14 Accessibility to Fire Stations and Other Premises

14.1 The Authority takes its obligations to provide accessibility to all members of the community very seriously and will continue to do so. Wherever and whenever undertaking major refurbishments or new build, or where identified by the EDI working group, works relating to accessibility will be carried out, where it is cost effective to do so, within an operational or office environment.

15 Leased/Rented Buildings

15.1 The Authority presently leases just one building as part of its overall property portfolio, this being Unit 7, Garside Way, Aylesbury – Office accommodation, Stores, USAR.

15.2 In March 2017, this lease was re-negotiated to provide the Fire Authority with more flexible exit options following the opening of the blue light hub. For a relatively small increase in the annual rent, the Authority was able to agree new break clauses at the end of December 2019, 2020 and 2021. The original lease break clause at the end of 2022 also remains, with the full-term expiring 24 December 2027. Further flexibility was negotiated during March 2023 so that the break clause can be exercised by giving at least nine months' notice at the end of any month, not just in March each year.

15.3 Whilst there are no specific plans to lease or rent other property during the course of this strategy, an open mind will be kept in relation to any possibilities that may present themselves and which make economic sense.

16 Buckinghamshire Council and Milton Keynes City Council Plans

16.1 Buckinghamshire Council and Milton Keynes City Council all have plans in place that look to re- develop, improve or refurbish town centres and other locations around the county.

16.2 The Authority is aware that some of these plans contain specific proposals that impact upon the current locations of some fire stations, notably in High Wycombe and Princes Risborough.

16.3 Officers will continue to work with Members, colleagues and the relevant councils to ensure the interests of the Fire Authority are protected at all times and that any subsequent outcomes that involve any re-locations are thus planned for accordingly.

16.4 Part of the work with the councils, particularly in the south of the county, will be to make representations with regard to key worker housing.

17 Risk Management

17.1 For all actions arising from this strategy the appropriate risk assessment(s) will be undertaken. The strategy itself will mitigate against the risk of uncoordinated property management activities being undertaken and not meeting priorities. In addition, following the recent condition survey, the outcomes will continue to be RAG assessed as they are now in line with existing or amended risk criteria that may be determined. Nevertheless staff and public safety will remain at the forefront of any risk assessment.

17.2 In terms of operational risk, the Property Service will work closely with operational response colleagues to ensure that any proposed location changes that may arise for any reason in the future are fully informed by advice from operational response colleagues as to risk.

17.3 During 2022, the risk of disruption to energy supplies, while remaining unlikely, appeared to increase due to the threat of reduced supplies as an indirect result of the war in Ukraine. The Service has worked with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to review the potential impacts to our estate should managed rota disconnections every need to be implemented. The Service already had electricity generators at Aylesbury, Broughton, Marlow, Princes Risborough and West Ashland, and following the work with BEIS, has now also purchased, and installed generators at Buckingham, Gerrards Cross and High Wycombe. To mitigate the risk of disruption to gas supplies, the Service has purchased a backup supply of electric radiators and installed hot water immersion heaters at several sites.

18 Community use of Fire Stations and other premises

18.1 At present there is limited community use of the Authority's premises. Some research was carried out as part of the 2012 strategy to determine whether there was any demand for meeting rooms, but the market appeared to be saturated at that time often with better facilities than this Authority could offer.

18.2 Since 2012 there has been an increase in the use of premises by other organisations where there is a mutual benefit for the fire and rescue service. Rooms have been used, at no cost, by groups associated with the Safeguarding Boards in both Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes for multi-agency meetings and training purposes. This Service has also supported the NHS Falls Prevention team by providing rooms for stability classes as well as blood donor sessions. This aligns with the organisational approach to fire safety as those who are vulnerable to falling are at far greater risk from fires in their homes.

- 18.3 During the period of this strategy we will seek to facilitate other community groups that express an interest as part of a policy to work with the wider community. Whilst each case will be judged on its merits there is no plan to raise income from this objective and all cases will be subject to security and safety concerns being properly met and balanced with overall corporate objectives and wider collaborative working.

19 Collaborative Opportunities

- 19.1 In line with the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for estates, the Authority has for many years had a healthy dialogue with Thames Valley Police (TVP) colleagues on the possibilities of co-location or sharing of existing facilities. A lease agreement for the use of the 'Annex' at Broughton by TVP has been in place for some years and of course the proposals at the blue light hub have taken such arrangements to new heights with both TVP and South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS).
- 19.2 Co-location opportunities have progressed further with TVP with sites now also being shared at Princess Risborough and Newport Pagnell.
- 19.3
- 19.4 The Authority will always actively pursue estate related collaborative opportunities where it is feasible to do so.

20 Blue Light Hub – West Ashland, Milton Keynes

- 20.1 Since the last Property Strategy the arrangements for the Blue Light Hub project have been completed and the site became operational in June 2020.

21 High Wycombe, Beaconsfield and Stokenchurch Fire Stations – Recent History

- 21.1 The Fire Authority has for many years faced challenges in respect of both the location and condition of the above stations. If all the right conditions could be met, then ideally the Authority would probably replace all three of these stations and provide alternative sites to the east and west of High Wycombe. However, this possibility now appears increasingly unlikely.
- 21.2 Wycombe District Council (now Buckinghamshire Council) had made it clear in their site allocation plans over the years that they have a wish to see the fire station in High Wycombe relocated elsewhere, to enable their vision of a much clearer line of sight and much more aesthetically pleasing view towards and around the Wycombe Swan Theatre. However, it appears that position has now changed and recent discussions have focused on making best use of the existing site.
- 21.3 Both High Wycombe and Stokenchurch Fire Stations require major

investment. Beaconsfield has had recent investment, however, its challenge is around site movement as it sits on what was once a landfill site. Although movement has been slight in recent years, it does nevertheless present a long term challenge and the dilemma is always how much more to invest in a site that is susceptible to land movement.

- 21.4 The condition of the fire station at High Wycombe has now reached a 'tipping point'. After many years of informal discussion with Wycombe Council (now Buckinghamshire Council) and to a lesser extent with the other blue light services there is now a need for some decisive action so that the Authority can present a building that is fit for purpose and secure the most effective response for the foreseeable future.
- 21.5 The 'make do and mend' approach is no longer sustainable.
- 21.6 Stokenchurch is a very challenging site. The Authority has kept the building in a serviceable condition over the years to enable operations to continue, but it is a very old building and if operations are to continue there in the long term, then almost certainly it would be more cost effective to demolish the existing building and build a new station on the plot. The plot itself has some issues being long and narrow thus making it difficult to make effective use of the site.
- 21.7 In addition, Stokenchurch has become a very difficult station to respond from as it has become harder to attract retained firefighters able to meet the response requirements for the location with available firefighters generally being used to provide second or third line response to High Wycombe or Marlow stations.
- 21.8 For the Authority the ideal situation would be to provide two new stations and to make the whole exercise cost neutral by utilising funds from the sale of the three existing sites to enable two new stations to be built.
- 21.9 However, this scenario has for many years been an unlikely one. Firstly, there have never been any sites identified either to the east or west of High Wycombe that could successfully house a new fire station. The previous district council have made informal suggestions over the years on possible sites to move High Wycombe Station, however, all have proved problematical for one reason or another and have never been seriously pursued.
- 21.10 The question of land values is also problematical, i.e. given the wish of the Council to move High Wycombe Fire Station and to have that retained in their Delivery and Site Allocations Plan 2013, does raise a question at the very least as to how that affects the land value because that will impact upon the ability on any prospective purchaser to develop the site.

- 21.11 Given that in over a decade of informal discussions the Council have never stated any intent to buy the site and have not been able to identify a suitable site to relocate to, there seems no reasonable prospect of the Fire Authority being able to relocate and gain the full value of the existing site.
- 21.12 Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, whilst there is some appetite amongst a number of stakeholders for a blue light hub in the south of the county, there is actually no pressing requirement for either Police or Fire to relocate both having perfectly adequate town centre locations, notwithstanding the fire station condition issue. A 2017 bid to win One Public Estate funding to commission a feasibility study for a blue light hub failed primarily because of a lack of commitment by all three blue light services and no obvious lead authority.
- 21.13 A short and long term strategy for all three sites is therefore required to enable the most effective service to be provided to residents in the south of the county.

22 Proposed strategy for High Wycombe, Beaconsfield and Stokenchurch Fire Stations

- 22.2 The way ahead must focus on the needs of the growing community and the role of this strategy, particularly in the next year or so, must be to look at the possible options but to perhaps focus on the existing High Wycombe Station location as the key to the way ahead.
- 22.3 It is not the role of this strategy to prejudge any outcomes, merely to set out an intention that during 2023/24 work will commence with a view to presenting back to Members a range of costed options for Wycombe Fire Station by the financial year end.
- 22.4 There will be funding challenges so affordability of any given option will be a key part of any recommended way forward.

23 Buckingham Fire Station

- 23.1 The Authority has for some time been exploring options for either re-locating or making better use of the land at Buckingham Fire Station. This has not progressed in any formal way primarily because of the resource allocation towards the completion of the blue light hub project.
- 23.2 Some indicative plans had been commissioned that showed it may have been feasible to split the site approximately 50/50 allowing one half to be disposed of, with the resulting capital receipt funding a new station. However, there were other obstacles that meant the proposed site split was

not practical in the original format envisaged.

23.3 There is a tentative indication that Thames Valley Police would be interested in some form of co-location in Buckingham and any proposals for the future will include that.

23.4 Any significant work at Buckingham Fire Station is not a priority at present and will be for consideration in future Property Strategies, but not this iteration.

24 Links to other Plans and Strategies

24.1 It is fully intended to ensure that any actions arising from this strategy are cognisant of other plans and strategies that the Authority has in place, specifically:

- Corporate Plan
 - The Property Service is a strategic enabler that seeks to ensure *we provide high quality, cost effective assets and equipment with sufficient flexibility to adapt to changing requirements*. 'Assets' in this context includes property.

- Public Safety Plan
 - Most aspects of the PSP require proper, fit for purpose, safe buildings and facilities and forms an integral part of the property service provision.

- Procurement Strategy
 - All procurement related to property services will be in line with the Procurement Strategy.

- Medium Term Financial Plan
 - The service understands it is operating in a challenging financial environment and will seek to provide service within budget and will remain vigilant to opportunities to provide better value for money at all times.
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy
 - Our premises must provide a safe and accessible working environment that values and respects the identity and culture of each person.

25 Equality and Diversity

25.1 The previous Property Strategy was formulated in consultation with the Equality and Diversity Manager and a People Impact Assessment (PIA) was completed, where it was determined that for the nine protected characteristics

the impact of the strategy was neutral. An equality impact assessment (EIA) was completed to consider the impact of extending the Strategy to 2025. It is expected that impacts will be positive and there is nothing to indicate any negative impacts.

25.2 However, where specific actions or projects are undertaken in the future as a result of this refreshed strategy, it is expected that a specific EIA will be completed as appropriate.

25.3 Property related EDI issues are considered as part of the EDI working group, which will make recommendations for changes that will have a positive impact on EDI across our estate. When planned property work is undertaken the opportunities will be taken to improve the usability of premises for all staff. Within the strategy and capital programme, an amount of £25,000 per year has been included for additional works that specifically improve the EDI of our premises in high priority areas.

26 Property Portfolio Records & Performance Indicators

26.1 **Premises Data Record** - The Property Service has a complete set of Premises Data Records for each property that sets out key information for each building including - current condition, projected remedial works, budget base and energy consumption and will significantly inform the evaluation of any proposed schemes within the property portfolio.

26.2 In addition, the Property team will continue to maintain a web portal for storage of this data and all other legislative documents relating to the Authorities estate, such as - Asbestos Registers, Land Registry, Site Plans, Building layout plans, Building Contracts, Tenants contracts/Licences etc. This was introduced with a 'one stop shop' and business continuity planning approach in mind.

27 Action Plan

Ref	Recommended Actions	Date	Status
1	Continue to prioritise all actions relating to the construction and occupation of the new Blue Light Hub facility in Milton Keynes	April 2018- Dec 2019	Complete
2	Review use of external professional services to assess whether value for money is being achieved	2018/19	Complete
3	Review and cost possible options covering location and response in the south of the County with a view to presenting such options back to Members by the end of the financial year 2018/19	March 2019	Review of High Wycombe only during 2023-24
4	Review requirement to remain in Unit 7 following occupation of Blue Light Hub	Post December 2019	Exit plan to be formulate during 2023-24
5	Facilitate continued community use of fire stations and develop new opportunities as they arise as part of the policy to work with the wider community	Ongoing	Ongoing
6	Complete collaborative work with Thames Valley Police to co-locate at Princes Risborough	March 2019	Complete
7	Complete collaborative work with Thames Valley Police to co-locate at Newport Pagnell	March 2019	Complete
8	Continue to seek out and develop collaborative estates opportunities where it is feasible to do so	Ongoing	Ongoing
9	Present detailed and costed options for the future of the Buckingham Fire Station site	March 2019	Remove from plan
10	Identify feasible overnight accommodations in Mid/North of County for duty officer including potential works.	July 2018	Complete
11	Carry out an interim review and refresh of the Property Strategy 2018-2023	By July 2021	Due to complete 2023
12	Commission next full condition survey	2022/23	Complete

N.B. The Action Plan does not seek to include normal 'day to day' repair and maintenance projects that form part of normal revenue or capital programme activity.

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY DASHBOARD



Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service	Gross Floor Area (m ²)	56,761	
	Net Usable Area (m ²)	45,409	
	Cost per m ²	£29	
	Building Year	1930 - 2010	
	Total Backlog	£1,320,600	
	Total Budget	£292,100	
Survey Date	February - March 2022	Combined Costs	£1,612,700



Site Location & Description

Oakleaf Surveying Ltd surveyed 18 fire stations across Buckinghamshire. The stations were all purpose built and varied in size, age, and construction, from the brick built 1930s stations like Brill to the concrete framed 1960s stations like Olney and then through to the steel /concrete framed stations of the 1980s/90s like Broughton. There are also several bespoke contemporary stations such as Marlow with its block walls and large sections of curtain glazing.

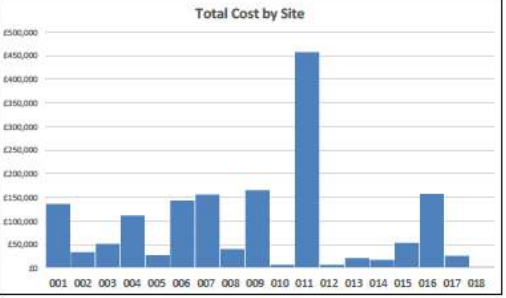
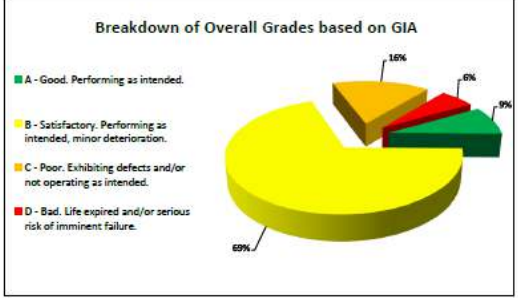
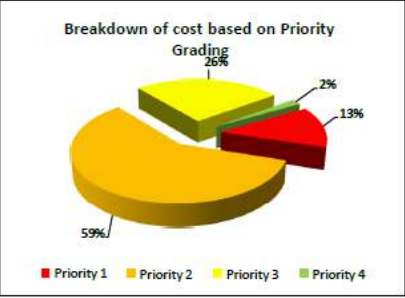
Condition Backlog Maintenance Works	
Building	£1,219,900
M&E	£100,700
Backlog Total Cost	£1,320,600
Cost per m ²	23.26

Condition Future Planned Costs for Future Maintenance Works (5 years)	
Building	£275,900
M&E	£16,200
Future Planned Total Cost	£292,100
Cost per m ²	£5

Combined Total Costs	£1,612,700
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Breakdown of Priority Grading		
Priority 1 - Urgent Work	£214,250.00	13%
Priority 2 - Essential Work	£956,250.00	59%
Priority 3 - Desirable Work	£417,700.00	26%
Priority 4 - Long Term Aspirational Work	£29,700.00	2%

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue projected capital outlay per capital financial year													
Site Code	Site / Block Name	GIA	Total Cost	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Condition Grade	M&E Grade	Site Grade	Overall Grade
001	Amersham Fire Station	1,470	£135,550			£68,050			£67,500	C	C	B	C
002	Aylesbury Fire Station	15,571	£33,850		£33,850					C	B	B	B
003	Beaconsfield Fire Station	3,067	£51,200		£51,200					B	A	C	B
004	Brill Fire Station	1,065	£110,750			£110,750				C	B	C	C
005	Broughton Fire Station	6,131	£27,200	£27,200						B	B	C	B
006	Buckingham Fire Station	4,252	£142,950		£142,950					B	C	C	C
007	Chesham Fire Station	1,294	£156,200			£156,200				C	B	C	C
008	Gerrards Cross Fire Station	3,801	£40,050		£40,050					B	B	B	B
009	Great Missenden Fire Station	1,181	£165,350					£165,350		B	A	C	B
010	Haddenham Fire Station	3,147	£7,100	£7,100						B	B	B	B
011	High Wycombe Fire Station	3,315	£457,650			£457,650				C	D	C	D
012	Marlow Fire Station	3,054	£6,950	£6,950						B	A	A	A
013	Newport Pagnell Fire Station	2,798	£20,800		£20,800					B	B	C	B
014	Olney Fire Station	1,746	£17,700		£17,700					C	B	B	B
015	Princes Risborough Fire Station	1,882	£53,450						£53,450	B	B	B	B
016	Stokenchurch Fire Station	1,182	£157,450					£157,450		C	A	C	C
017	Waddesdon Fire Station	814	£25,800						£25,800	B	A	A	A
018	Winslow Fire Station	991	£2,700	£2,700						B	A	A	A
TOTAL		56,761	£1,612,700	£43,950	£306,350	£792,650	£0	£322,800	£146,750				-



Appendix 2

Drill tower survey – summary of assessment of work required:

Station	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Total
Amersham	17,500	8,500	6,200	32,200
Beaconsfield	3,600	4,200	2,100	9,900
Brill	23,900	10,800	3,100	37,800
Broughton	4,800	4,800	2,500	12,100
Buckingham	5,600	3,800	1,050	10,450
Chesham	1,500	4,800	0	6,300
Gerrards Cross	2,400	9,400	1,350	13,150
Great Missenden	19,000	14,700	9,100	42,800
Haddenham	2,400	10,400	4,700	17,500
High Wycombe	16,000	500	7,800	24,300
Newport Pagnell	0	1,100	700	1,800
Olney	18,500	11,300	4,900	34,700
Princess				
Risborough	16,700	9,200	3,500	29,400
Stokenchurch	3,200	8,300	0	11,500
Winslow	14,800	9,200	4,750	28,750
Totals	149,900	111,000	51,750	312,650