

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: Members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

2 October 2023

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS
AND PUBLIC

Please note the content of
Page 2 of this Agenda Pack

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at a Meeting of the **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** to be held at **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, THE OCULUS, THE GATEWAY OFFICES, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY, BUCKS, HP19 8FF** on **WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2023 at 11.00 AM** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

Graham Britten
Director of Legal and Governance

Health and Safety:

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

Chairman: Councillor Rouse

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



MAKING YOU SAFER



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

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

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxl3vliv7bh1Q>

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 'team's meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

Petitions

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

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

Questions

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

COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY - TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

AGENDA

Item No:

1. Apologies

2. New Member of Authority

To welcome the new Member from Milton Keynes City Council.

3. Minutes

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Fire Authority held on 14 June 2023. **(Pages 11 - 26)**

4. 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.

5. Disclosure of Interests

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

6. Chairman's Announcements

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

7. Petitions

To receive petitions under Standing Order SOA6.

8. Questions

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA.

9. Membership of the Authority

To note that Milton Keynes City Council appointed on 19 July 2023 the following Members to serve on the Authority:

Milton Keynes City Council (5)

From: Councillors Darlington, Exon, Fuller, Hopkins and McLean

To: Councillors Darlington, Exon, Fuller, Khan and McLean

10. Committee Matters

- (a) Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

The Authority is required by the above Regulations to review the basis of allocation of seats amongst the Political Groups either at its Annual Meeting, or as soon as practicable thereafter, or following a change in its Membership. In making its review, the Authority is required, so far as reasonably practicable, to comply with the following principles:

- (i) The majority of seats is to be allocated to a particular Group if the number of persons belonging to that Group is a majority on the Authority.
- (ii) Subject to the above paragraphs, the number of seats on the Committees allocated to each Group should bear the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the Committees as that borne by the number of Members of that Group to the Membership of the Authority.
- (iii) Subject to paragraphs (i) to (iii) above, that the number of the seats on the body which are allocated to different political groups bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.

Subject to formal notification of the Membership of each Political Group, the allocation of seats on the Authority is as follows:

Conservative Group:	10 seats	(58.82%)
Labour Group:	4 seats	(23.53%)
Liberal Democrat Group:	3 seats	(17.65%)

The above Regulations, with the Authority's Scheme of Delegation, require a notice in writing to be delivered to the Authority's Monitoring Officer signed by two or more Members of the Authority to establish a Political Group.

The Authority is asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Katie Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) – 01296 744633

Background papers: None.

(b) Committee Appointments

To consider making appointments to the Authority's committees. The membership of the Executive and the Overview and Audit committees is required to be mutually exclusive.

Executive Committee

The Authority is asked to make appointments to the Executive Committee in accordance with the wishes of the respective Political Groups (8 Members).

It is recommended that the seats should be allocated as follows:

Conservative – 5

Labour - 2

Liberal Democrat – 1

Overview and Audit Committee

The Authority is asked to make appointments to the Overview and Audit Committee in accordance with the wishes of the respective Political Groups (9 Members).

It is recommended that the seats should be allocated as follows:

Conservative – 5

Labour – 2

Liberal Democrat – 2

Contact Officer: Katie Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) – 01296 744633

Background papers: None.

11. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

To consider appointing a Vice-Chairman for the remainder of 2023/24.

The Vice Chairman's responsibilities include supporting the Chairman of the Authority in the discharge of their responsibilities; to deputise for the Chairman of the Authority where necessary, including leading on the Authority's response to any Government proposals relevant to the responsibilities of the Authority, and any transitions or changes arising from such proposals; to lead on Climate Change and to lead on the Authority's response to any matters relating to HMICFRS.

12. Lead Member Responsibilities

To consider appointing Members to the following Lead Member roles:

People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance
To ensure that the right staffing solutions are in place to provide the best possible service to our communities; and to ensure that our operations are

fully assured and we continue to improve the quality of our service to our communities and the safety of our staff.

Health and Safety and Corporate Risk

To ensure that measures and policies are in place to mitigate risks to the organisation and our staff.

It is recommended that:

1. Appointments to each of the Lead Member roles be made.

13. Recommendations from Committees

(a) Overview and Audit Committee - 19 July 2023

Protocol on Member and Officer Relations

“It is recommended that the Protocol on Member and Officer Relations be approved and be recommended to the Authority for adoption.”

The report considered by the Overview and Audit Committee is attached at item 13(a) **(Pages 27 - 44)**

(b) Executive Committee - 13 September 2023

2025-30 CRMP Listening and Engagement Consultation Outcomes

“That the report be submitted to 11 October 2023 Fire Authority meeting for information and noting”.

The report considered by the Executive Committee is attached at item 13(b). **(Pages 45 - 74)**

(c) Performance Management - Q1 2023/24

“That the report and recommendation below be approved for submission to the Authority:

1. It is recommended that the Performance Management – Q1 2023/24 be noted.”

The report considered by the Executive Committee is attached at item 13(c). **(Pages 75 - 126)**

14. People Strategy 2020-2025 - Year three update

To consider item 14. **(Pages 127 - 166)**

15. Extend the time period of the BFRS Response Strategy

To consider item 15. **(Pages 167 - 190)**

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

17. Succession Planning

To consider item 17.

18. Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 6 December 2023 at 11am.

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



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

ROLE DESCRIPTION

LEAD MEMBERS

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

(Approved 8 June 2007)

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2023 AT 11 AM.

Present: Councillors Adoh, Bagge, Carroll, Darlington (part), Exon, Fuller, Hopkins, Hussain, McLean, Rouse, Stuchbury, Waite and Walsh

Officers: J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer), M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), M Hemming (Director of Finance and Assets), A Hussain (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets), A Carter (Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO), C Bell (Head of Protection, Assurance and Development), A Stunell (Head of Human Resources), S Tuffley (Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience), Group Commander B Ackerlay (Head of Operational Training and Assurance) Group Commander Steve Hawkins (Community and Business Safety Policy), S Gowanlock (Corporate Planning Manager), C Newman (Data Intelligence Team Manager), and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Chapple OBE Christensen, Hall and Lambert

Councillor Hopkins opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the Annual Meeting of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.

Councillor Hopkins advised that although members of the public were able to attend and observe in person, following the meeting, a video recording would be uploaded to the Authority's YouTube Channel.

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

FA01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

(Councillor Hopkins in the Chair)

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Rouse be elected Chairman of the Fire Authority for 2023/24.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Rouse be elected Chairman of the Authority for 2023/24.

(Councillor Rouse in the Chair)

FA02 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Hopkins be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for 2023/24.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Hopkins be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Authority for 2023/24.

FA03 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Fire Authority held on 28 April 2023, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

FA04 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Chairman advised that there were the following matters arising from the previous minutes:

FA59 – Values and Culture in fire and rescue services - the Head of Human Resources had met with Councillor Waite and they had discussed various options of raising Whistleblowing concerns, such as texting and apps. The HR Advisory and Development Manager would also consult with the Occupational Health Committee regarding this.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chairman to write to HMICFRS giving feedback on what had been discussed and the action plan – this had been included in the Strategic Brief and also in discussions with the Inspectorate, it was also part of the evidence pack provided to HMICFRS.

The Chief Fire Officer to consider with the Chairman how to keep the MPs and local Members up to date - the Chairman advised that following this meeting, a further update would be provided to local members and MP's.

Chief Fire Officer

FA05 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

None.

FA06 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that:

In May, the sale of Great Holm Fire Station was completed, and the site was no longer the Authority's responsibility.

Officers were currently working on the Wholetime (Cohort 10) campaign, currently at interview stage. There had been 167 applications received, 105 applications had been shortlisted and 82 had been invited to the bleep and behaviour workshop, 51 had been invited for role related

tests, and 42 had been invited for interview/presentation. 18 candidates would be offered employment and commence on 27 September 2023. The Service would be able to create a pool of candidates should any of the 18 leave the course unexpectedly. 9 firefighter transferees had commenced on 5 June and would attend a three-week conversion course with Training School. All these recruitment activities were continuing to show the increase in numbers on establishment. The Workforce Planning Group were meeting monthly to ensure the global target of 300 was met (currently 293 and expected to be 312 in September).

Congratulations to Councillor Hussain on achieving 20 years' service as a Justice of the Peace. The Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Director of Finance and Assets and he had attended an event which celebrated this fantastic achievement.

The Authority had received an urgent request from the Home Office to supply critical water safety equipment to Ukraine to support the rescue efforts following on from the Kakhovka Dam incident. The Chairman was proud to report that the Authority supplied a wide range of equipment.

It is with the deep regret and personal sadness that the Chairman shared the news of the tragic and sudden death of our friend and colleague, Dave Evans.

Dave was a popular and valued employee, dedicated to serving the community with Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. He started his fire service career in 2010 as an On-Call firefighter based at Aylesbury, where he spent five years as an operational crew commander before more recently becoming one of the Service's blue light driving instructors.

Dave will be missed by everyone who knew him, and our heartfelt sympathy is with his family, friends and colleagues who need time to grieve at this difficult time.

(A minute's silence was observed in honour of Dave Evans)

FA07 MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY

The Authority noted that the following Members had been appointed by the Constituent Authorities to serve on the Fire Authority for 2023/24:

Buckinghamshire Council (12)

Councillors Adoh, Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Christensen, Hall, Hussain, Lambert, Rouse, Stuchbury, Waite and Walsh

Milton Keynes Council (5)

Councillors Darlington, Exon, Fuller, Hopkins and McLean

FA08 COMMITTEE MATTERS

- (a) Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990

The Authority noted that the allocation of seats on the Authority was:

(i) Conservative Group:	11 seats	(64.70%)
(ii) Liberal Democrat Group:	3 seats	(17.65%)
(iii) Labour Group:	3 seats	(17.65%)

- (b) Committee Matters – Committee Appointments

RESOLVED –

That the following Committees be appointed, and seats be allocated, as follows:

Executive Committee (8 Members):

- (i) Conservative – 5 seats
- (ii) Liberal Democrats – 2 seats
- (iii) Labour – 1 seat

Overview and Audit Committee (9 Members):

- (i) Conservative – 6 seats
- (ii) Liberal Democrats – 1 seat
- (iii) Labour – 2 seats

RESOLVED –

1. That the following Members be appointed to the Executive Committee:

Councillors Christensen, Darlington, Hall, Hopkins, Lambert, McLean, Rouse and Walsh in accordance with the Group Leaders' wishes.

2. That the following Members be appointed to the Overview and Audit Committee:

Councillors Adoh, Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Exon, Fuller, Hussain, Stuchbury and Waite in accordance with the Group Leaders' wishes.

FA09 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Authority considered proposed dates for its meetings and meetings of its committees during 2023/24.

RESOLVED –

1. That meetings of the Authority be held on Wednesday 11 October 2023, Wednesday 6 December 2023, Wednesday 14 February 2024 and Wednesday 12 June 2024, all at 11 am.
2. That meetings of the Executive Committee be held on Wednesday 12 July 2023, Wednesday 13 September 2023, Wednesday 15 November 2023, Wednesday 7 February 2024 and Wednesday 20 March 2024, all at 10 am.
3. That meetings of the Overview and Audit Committee be held on Wednesday 19 July 2023, Wednesday 8 November 2023 and Wednesday 13 March 2024, all at 10am.

FA10 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Authority considered the appointment of representatives to outside bodies having received nominations which were seconded:

RESOLVED –

1. That Councillors Hopkins and Walsh be appointed to attend the Local Government Association Annual Conference.
2. That Councillor Rouse be appointed as the Authority's representative (and Councillor Hopkins as the Standing Deputy) to the Local Government Association Fire Commission.
3. That Councillors Rouse and Hopkins be appointed as the Authority's representatives to the Local Government Association Annual Fire Conference.
4. That Councillors Rouse and Walsh be appointed as the Authority's representatives on the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee.
5. That Councillors Hall and McLean be nominated as substitute members of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee.

FA11 LEAD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Each having been nominated and seconded it was:

RESOLVED -

That Members be appointed as Lead Members for 2023/24 as follows:

Responsibility	Lead Member
Service Delivery, Protection and Collaboration	Councillor Rouse
People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance	Councillor Hall
Finance and Assets, Information Security and IT	Councillor Walsh
Health and Safety and Corporate Risk	Councillor McLean

(Cllr Darlington Joined the meeting)

FA12 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN: YEAR 3 PROGRESS REVIEW AND YEAR 4 UPDATE

The Chairman advised Members that this report sets out the progress being made with the Corporate Plan and steps for the year ahead.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised Members that this was a review of progress made over the third year of the five-year Corporate Plan that the Authority approved at its Annual Meeting in June 2020. It also set out the programme for the remaining two years of the plan through to the end of March 2025. Progress made during the second year and a year three refresh were approved by the Authority in June and October of last year respectively. In light of progress made, the Authority had taken the opportunity to refresh the programme of activities that would be undertaken over the remaining two years of the plan in pursuit of the Strategic Objectives.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised that since Members last saw it, the plan had been updated to align with the Medium Term Financial Plan; include two new workstreams relating to readiness to deal with legislative and regulatory change and develop the Service's culture, the latter of which was linked to the HMICFRS' Values and Culture report which was considered at the Authority's Extraordinary meeting at the end of April. A summary of projects by status from which Members would see that three items had been completed and/or streamed into business as usual activity. Specifically, SO1.2 relating to the Safety Centre; SO1.3 dealing with collaboration with partners in relation to risk information and

SO3.9 the mid-term review of the current 2020-25 Public Safety Plan.

There were no items at red RAG status, the majority (19) were green which meant they were on track with only five at amber which meant they were a little off track but recoverable.

A Member asked about SE2.8 'Review / enhance overall Service resilience / business continuity management structures and processes' and asked for an update on the business continuity plans and ICT disaster recovery.

The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO advised that during Covid, the Service held off completing any business continuity testing but were able to put the business continuity plans into practice. The Service does complete penetration testing in line with the ICT strategy and ensured systems remained secure and more recently completed an external server health check, which was positive. Now that the wider area and local area networks had been migrated, officers would work with Buckinghamshire Council and the Business Continuity Officer, to build an action and testing plan including ICT and broader elements.

The Chairman asked what was driving the amber rag status on the culture and values work, and what assurance could be given that it would be tracking to green and not to red.

The Head of Human Resources advised that when she presents the report further down on the agenda, Members would be able to see the progress that was being made. There was still work to be done, but it was moving forward. The date had been reviewed and although it was amber at present, it was expected to move to green.

The Chairman asked about progress with the improvements to records management, and what was the plan to get this on track to green.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that the Service had engaged with an external provider, Buckinghamshire Council, and there had been dialogue with its Data Protection Officer, and members of its Information Security Team were currently engaged in scoping out a training package which once approved by the Training Strategy Group, would be delivered to nominated staff.

RESOLVED –

That the 2020-25 Corporate Plan Progress Review and Update be noted by the Authority.

FA13 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OBJECTIVES 2020-2025 YEAR THREE UPDATE

The Chairman advised that this report set out the progress on the equality, diversity and inclusion objectives and also included some updates to those objectives and looked at the year ahead.

The Head of Human Resources advised Members that this report was to update on progress made on equality, diversity and inclusion and the equality, diversity and inclusion objectives. The themes for 2023 were set against agreed objectives and had been amended to ensure the refreshed Corporate Plan priorities and the HMICFRS report recommendations and learnings, were aligned with it. Recommendations from both the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade and more recently the HMICFRS values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services had been cross referenced. Separate reports had been presented to the Executive Committee and Fire Authority.

Appendix 1 introduced the statutory duties outlined by the prevailing legislation, and the overarching objectives. Appendix 2 showed a summary of the equality, diversity and inclusion headlines and what had been achieved in 2022/2023. Appendix 3 illustrated equality, diversity and inclusion workforce data in the form of charts in comparison to the latest census data (2021) for the population of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. The service had reviewed the way it collected and presented data; this had been refreshed and was captured in the latest data report. Appendix 4 showed the refreshed objectives, noting the themes for 2023/2024 - Leadership, Community Engagement, Neurodiversity, Recruitment, and Facilities and Welfare Provision. They were set out against themes, activities, and the overarching objective so they could be effectively measured and reported on in future.

A Member asked about facilities and welfare provision, there was no timeline to show when the work identified would be completed.

The Head of Human Resources advised that work had already started, the plan was to look across all of the estate to see what was needed throughout and to be consistent. There was

an equality, diversity and inclusion budget of £25k per annum.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised that he was working with the Property Manager, to understand what a standard fire station should look like, and what needed to be undertaken at each fire station. The Property Manager had been invited to attend the equality, diversity and inclusion group meeting to update on what was being done.

Members would like to see a list of identified works needed to upgrade premises in line with EDI objectives.

A Member asked about the gender pay gap and would the Authority hit the target.

The Head of Human Resources advised that the Authority reported on gender pay annually, and there was an action plan in place. In terms of equality on equal pay, an audit was carried out in 2020 that showed the Authority was doing everything it should and there was not any equal pay issues. As well as gender pay, the Authority would be looking at reporting on ethnicity pay moving forward.

A Member asked about the equality, diversity and inclusion recommendations that came out of the Grenfell report.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that once all the Grenfell recommendations had been received, they would be worked on and included in the Authority's policies and procedures. Regular updates were brought to Members, and the next report would highlight the equality, diversity and inclusion recommendations. The Operational Assurance Improvement Plan which included recommendations from Grenfell and Manchester Arena would be presented at the next Authority meeting in October.

The Chairman advised there was good progress in ethnic diversity in wholetime recruitment, but there had been a drop in gender diversity and asked what was being done to mitigate this.

The Head of Human Resources advised that in terms of gender challenges, in the last cohort of apprentices, of the 18 that had been selected, there were four females. Each recruitment the Service was looking at being as reflective of its communities as possible. Officers would run various reports at different stages of the application process, to see who applied, different dropout rates and was there anything

Director of Finance
and Assets

Head of Protection,
Assurance and
Development

that could be done in terms of the selection procedures and role related testing.

RESOLVED –

1. That the contents of the report, Introduction; Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) 2020 – 2025 Appendix 1 the BMKFA Headlines in Appendix 2 and EDI workforce data in Appendix 3 be noted.
2. That the revised EDI objectives in Appendix 4 be approved.

FA14 EXPLORING OUR CULTURE

The Head of Human Resources advised Members that a report was presented to the Executive Committee in March which showed the work to date and the planned work, and this report was an update on the work to date. In March 2023 HMICFRS published the 'Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services' report. An Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting was held on 28 April 2023 where the HMICFRS recommendations were approved. The plan was to combine the action plans from the two reports and base them on the draft National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Culture Action Plan. Updates on progress would be presented in due course. Appendix 1 showed an updated version of work to date and planned work. Appendix 2 showed the DBS letter sent to HMICFRS in March. Appendix 3 showed the Equality Impact Assessment and Appendix 4 showed the updated HMICFRS values and culture in fire and rescue services recommendations and update.

A Members asked why action 16 – 'Review of Vision and Values to include Code of Ethics' was in red.

The Head of Human Resources advised that it was in red as it had not yet been started and was due to commence in quarters 2 and 3.

The Chairman asked about the HMICFRS action plan and why concern 4 was marked as off track and had a moved due date of 1 January 2024. The due date was 1 June 2023 for Chief Fire Officers to assure themselves on how concerns were being raised. The Chairman asked the Chief Fire Officer if he had assured himself against the 1 June target and was the off track date because of the work being undertaken with the professional standards.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that he was assured he was aware of everything going on within the organisation,

he was assured that people coming forward were dealt with, and that they were dealt with in the appropriate way, and this was followed up.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that in terms of the professional standards function, there were ongoing discussions looking at collaboration in the Thames Valley, and with other fire and rescue services.

The Chairman suggested that the action was split into two. That phase one of the action had been completed on time, the next phase was in progress, rather than off track, and a target of 1 January 2024 had been set. This was also the case with items 20 and 21.

The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO advised Members that the reason it was showing as off track was that the date had been revised, and in the next report it would not be showing as off track.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that in terms of evidencing this, confidentiality was key in encouraging people to come forward, so it was difficult to provide evidence more broadly to HMICFRS. Anything that was of concern had been notified to HMICFRS, but the detail was not shared.

RESOLVED –

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

FA15 SUMMER PRESSURES RECOMMENDATIONS

The Group Commander Head of Operational Training advised Members that an initial Summer Pressures report was presented to Members on 12 October 2022, which informed on the pressures experienced by the Service between the months of July and August 2022, which brought record high temperatures and dry weather and presented many challenges for fire and rescue services and other emergency responders across the country. The purpose of this report was to provide a further update on the assurance, debriefing and review of activities carried out in relation to summer pressures and to highlight areas for consideration which had been derived from a Service wide Extreme/Adverse Weather Survey. This survey was aimed at capturing the views and thoughts of all staff groups that were involved during those periods of extreme weather under nine specifically chosen headlines. 65 staff responded to the survey. The table containing the themes was complete with examples of areas

Chief Fire Officer /
Head of
Technology,
Transformation
and PMO

to consider. The progress column highlighted the ongoing work streams which would ensure the recommendations were delivered.

In conclusion, staff were able to service the needs of the summer pressure incidents whilst maintaining operational fire cover. Some of the areas to consider could be addressed relatively rapidly and simply, however, most themes and areas highlighted would require further work, thought and financial support over a longer period. Action owners had been assigned to each area at the appropriate level and time scales discussed, resulting in regular updates through the Operational Assurance Group (OAG). Updates would be captured through the Operational Assurance Improvement Plan (OAIP).

A Member had attended one of the incidents in Milton Keynes and asked if the local authority worked well together with the fire service.

The Group Commander Head of Operational Training advised Members that one of the recommendations within the report was how communication both internal and external was brought back into the Service and through the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF). The Service now had a representative that sat on the group.

A Members asked if officers had knowledge of where water courses were in rural areas and also if the Service had the right equipment to deal with wildfires in rural areas.

The Group Commander Head of Operational Training advised Members that staff were trained to go out and site specific risk assess areas regarding access of water courses as it could be difficult in a real situation to find water. Through work being undertaken in the Thames Valley, the Wildfire Tactical Advisor, had been given the task of highlighting where the risks were for wildfires. Staff were very highly trained with the equipment that was on the appliances to deal with any situation. New 4x4 equipment had been purchased to repurpose two 4x4 vehicles to get water and staff to areas where water may be a problem.

A Member asked if there was a mapping system of where water was.

The Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience advised that the data terminals had hydrant mapping on them, although it does become challenging in some areas, but the

mapping would also show access to open water supplies. When at incidents, crews do rely on some local knowledge. The site specific risk information had been developed over recent years to include wildland areas as a risk.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that the Service had also engaged with the National Farmers Union and from feedback had now included adapters that allowed crews to access water supplies that were currently on farms and had also engaged on a prevention basis with farmers to limit and reduce the spread of wildfires.

The Chairman advised that following the summer incidents last year, Members were really clear they wanted the Service to ensure it was equipped and able to cope with any future events. Looking at this report, there were a number of actions outstanding where officers were going through growth bid submission, or it was part of a broader review. Could officers give Members assurance that processes would not hold up firefighters being equipped to cope with summer incidents this year. How well equipped and how ready was the Service to deal with a repeat of events or indeed worse events than happened last year.

The Group Commander Head of Operational Training advised Members that since the inception of this table, things had moved on. The growth bid process came to a conclusion two weeks again a lot of work had been in progress since then.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that work had been ongoing and was progressing well. Also, the Service was employing more staff, going from 268 to nearly 300 operational staff would make a difference this year. The Service coped last year and was now in a better position than it was last year.

RESOLVED –

That the content and recommendations detailed within this report were noted.

FA16 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – Q4 2022/23

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised this was the fourth time sharing with Members the key performance measures report for 2022/2023. The commentary within the report had been completed slightly differently to reflect both the performance in quarter four and the performance over the year. As in previous quarters, officers had highlighted and provided commentary on measures to enable a better

understanding of captured outcomes, whilst also reflecting on previous reports. While many improvements to the report were made during the year, there were several suggestions that had been held until 2023-2024, these would be implemented for the next Authority meeting.

A Member asked around GP1.10 – grievances and disciplines processed, given that the Service was trying to encourage more people to speak out, was this the right way to reflect this.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager agreed there were a couple of measures where it was difficult and one of the recommendations from the previous report was to include a better narrative of each of the measures.

The Chairman suggested that the Data Intelligence Team Manager go through all the measures with the Lead Members to see if they were the correct measures and to refresh if necessary, as these had now been in place for a year.

A Member asked about non-domestic and domestic fires.

The Data Intelligence Team Leader advised that this was a good example of how this report worked well, for non-domestic properties, when officers looked at this more in depth, it showed that most of the non-domestic fires were prison related. The Service was now working with prisons to understand how this could be reduced.

The Chairman thanked officers for the report and felt it had improved over the year and was an important part of Members scrutiny. It was also important to note the improvement with fire and wellness visits. The challenges for the year ahead were to improve the ‘great place to work’ performance. It showed that fewer appraisals were completed this year, and a slight improvement in mandatory elearning but still some way to go. The Chairman asked if these could be elevated up as the focus. Also, it was very important to get some climate change metrics in place.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that a report would be going to the Executive Committee meeting in July, and the carbon emissions base line had been set which would give a baseline to measure improvements against.

RESOLVED –

That the Performance Management – Q4 2022/23 be noted.

Head of
Technology,
Transformation and
PMO / Director of
Finance and Assets

FA17 RECENT CHANGES TO FIRE SAFETY / BUILDING SAFETY LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

Group Commander Community and Business Safety Policy gave Members a presentation on the recent changes to fire safety / building safety legislation and regulations.

A Member asked if this covered commercial properties or just residential properties.

Group Commander Community and Business Safety Policy advised Members that all the legislation was around buildings that had at least two minimum residential properties within the building.

A Member asked about the planning implications, as there was a move towards many more high rise residential developments in Milton Keynes, and also did the Service have the equipment moving forward for fire in a high rise building, for example on the 27th floor.

The Group Commander Community and Business Safety Policy advised Members that the Service did get involved with the planners and approval inspectors and all that work was going ahead as normal. There were a number of level 5 Fire Engineers, someone taking a degree in level 6, and there were three level 7s at regional level. With regard to having the necessary equipment, if everyone followed the legislation, there would not be a need for specialist equipment.

A Member asked who was responsible for enforcement.

The Group Commander Community and Business Safety Policy advised that the Authority was responsible locally.

A Member asked about houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs).

The Group Commander Community and Business Safety Policy advised that HMOs were regulated by the local authority, and they have authority over them.

A Member asked about 'responsible persons'.

The Group Commander Community and Business Safety Policy advised that the responsible person for the building from a legal perspective was responsible.

A Member asked if there should be a media promotion for local residents.

The Group Commander Community and business Safety Policy, said that this was something that would be looked at, the National Fire Chiefs Council would be looking to do something nationally.

The Chairman advised Members that there would be a training workshop put in place on this subject for Members.

Group Commander
Community and
Business Safety Policy

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 1.10 PM.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 12.15 PM.



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Overview and Audit Committee, 19 July 2023

Report title: Protocol on Member and Officer Relations

Lead Member: Chairman of the Authority

Report sponsor: Graham Britten, Director of Legal and Governance

Author and contact: Katie Nellist, Democratic Service Officer

knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Protocol on Member and Officer Relations be approved and be recommended to the Authority for adoption.

Executive summary:

The purpose of this report is for Members to review and approve the draft Protocol on Member and Officer Relations (Appendix 1) for adoption by the Authority.

The Protocol requires that it be reviewed on a four-yearly cycle. The substantive amendments are shown underlined in the Appendix and reflect the incorporation of the five ethical principles from the [Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services – England](#).

Financial implications: There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Risk management: Failure to have an established protocol that clarifies member and officer roles could place members and officers at risk of compromising their respective positions.

Legal implications: The recommendation that local authorities have in place a protocol on member and officer relations derives from the Third Report of the Committee on Standards of Conduct in Public Life: *“Standards of Conduct in Local Government in England, Scotland and Wales”* 1997.

Common law has established that if the actions of an individual member adversely affect the ability of an officer to execute his or her contract of employment, it can undermine the implied contractual obligation of trust and confidence for which the Authority may be vicariously liable (for which compensation might be payable). The

promulgation of a protocol on member and officer relations is a practical measure to mitigate the Authority from vicarious liability.

Privacy and security implications: There are no privacy and security implications.

Duty to collaborate: There are no identified collaboration opportunities with the ambulance or police services due to their different governance models.

Health and safety implications: There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.

Environmental implications: There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications: An equality impact assessment was completed in advance of the internal staff Joint Consultation Forum 1 March 2023 [and is appended for the purposes of PMB and SMB as appendix 2]

Consultation and communication:

The Protocol was reviewed by employee representatives via the Joint Consultation Forum at its meeting on 1 March 2023 who were in agreement that the Protocol should include reference to the five ethical principles from the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services – England, which were also subsequently incorporated into the [updated employee Code of Conduct 2023](#) when approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 22 March 2023.

Background papers:

[THE THIRD REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE \(Chairman Lord Nolan\) July 1997 Recommendation 20](#)

[Report to the Annual Meeting of the Authority 10 June 2015 - Item 14a](#)

[Report to the Meeting of the Authority 18 September 2019 - Item 7](#)

[Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services – England](#)

[Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee 22 March 2023](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Draft Protocol on Member and Officer Relations	



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Protocol on Member and Officer Relations

Policy Statement

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is committed to ensuring there is a strong, constructive and trusting relationship between Members and officers. This policy aims to provide a formal protocol for the working relationship between Members and officers to ensure that current good practice continues.

The protocol provides guidance on the behaviour, roles and responsibilities of both Members and officers, and puts in place a mechanism should any issues arise surrounding this subject.

Document history

Version 1.0 Issued March 2011 following adoption by Standards Committee

Version 1.2 Issued September 2014 following change of information asset owner from Deputy Chief Fire Officer Adrian Crook to Director of Legal and Governance Graham Britten.

Version 2.0 NOTE: By resolution of the Authority at its meeting on 13 June 2012, responsibilities of its Standards Committee were transferred to its Overview and Audit Committee. References to the Standards Committee should be construed accordingly.

Version 3.0 Issued June 2015 following adoption by the Fire Authority.

Version 4.0 Issued July 2019 following adoption by the Overview and Audit Committee at its meeting on 17 July 2019. [Correction: version 4.0 was adopted by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 18 September 2019 after recommendation from the Overview and Audit Committee at its meeting on 17 July 2019]

Draft Version 5.0



Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

Provide a formal protocol which covers the relationship between elected Members and officers.

Provide a mechanism to deal with any issues that may arise which affect the relationship between elected Members and officers.

Support the Authority's commitment to upholding standards of conduct in public life.

Organisation

Throughout the policy document details have been included for people and organisations that have roles and responsibilities in this policy.

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive is responsible for monitoring this policy and any feedback from Members and officers to ensure that it is working effectively.

Planning & Implementation

Members will be made aware of this policy via the Committee structure and presentation to the meeting of the full Fire Authority. It will be included in any induction pack to new Members following the annual meeting in June.

The policy will be made available via the intranet and managers will be urged to ensure that all staff are familiar with the policy.

Measuring, Audit & Review

The policy performance will be monitored as described at 'organisation' above. Unless a change is required sooner, the policy will be reviewed by the Overview and Audit Committee every four years after approval.



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Protocol on Member and Officer Relations

"Every Local Authority should have its own written statement or protocol governing relations between Members and Officers." (**Third report of the committee on standards in public life, the Nolan Committee**).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The relationship between elected Members of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority (the Authority) and officers has always been and continues to be one of the main organisational strengths. However, the Authority accepts it is required to have a formal protocol which covers the relationship between elected Members and officers. This protocol is prepared to meet those requirements but against a background of a good working partnership which is well-established, widely accepted and benefits everyone who serves or is employed in the Authority. It will provide a safe guide to help ensure that current good practice continues.
- 1.2 The Authority recognises that a strong, constructive and trusting relationship between Members and officers is essential to the effective and efficient working of the organisation. Members and officers should work in partnership in developing the policies of the Authority and in ensuring the delivery of services to the people of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.
- 1.3 This protocol takes into account the respective and different roles of Members and officers and does not seek to change or influence these roles. It is accepted that from time to time issues may arise which need to be addressed. This protocol provides a mechanism by which to address any such matters.
- 1.4 It is recognised that the Authority is a corporate entity but that in terms of its political structure there is an Administration and Opposition and this dimension involves both Members and officers operating in a political sensitive climate. Officers have an overriding obligation to serve the Authority as a corporate body but must be aware of the political dimension.
- 1.5 This protocol forms a key part of the Authority's approach to corporate governance and its commitment to uphold standards of conduct in public life. The Authority supports the wider aims of protecting and enhancing the integrity and reputation of public services and high standards of personal conduct.

2. Operation of this protocol

- 2.1 This protocol will be applied having regard to the requirements of the Members' Code of conduct and the Officers' Code of Conduct, as set



out in the Authority's Constitution, and relevant Authority policies, procedures and processes. Members and officers must at all times observe this protocol; where there is a conflict or discrepancy between this protocol and those codes and policies referred to above, then those codes and policies shall have precedence. Account will also be taken of any conventions in the case of conflict or discrepancy.

- 2.2 This protocol does not affect or interfere with any rights of or protection which a person may have in law.

3. Responsibility for the protocol

- 3.1 The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive is responsible for the operation of this protocol and will ensure that it is reviewed on a four yearly cycle. However, the Overview and Audit Committee may request a review at any time.
- 3.2 He or she will rule on the interpretation and/or the application of the protocol in matters of dispute and such rulings will be final. Where such a matter is relevant to or involves the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive then the Monitoring Officer shall be the appropriate officer under this paragraph.
- 3.3 Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is responsible for approving any amendments or additions to the protocol following consultation with Member and officer representatives and the Overview and Audit Committee where appropriate.

4. Members' access to information

- 4.1 Members have a statutory right under the Local Government Act 1972 to inspect any document which contains material relating to any business which is to be transacted at an Authority meeting. This extends to background papers. If there are any concerns about the rights of members to inspect documents, those involved should consult with the Monitoring Officer.
- 4.2 Members are free to approach the service to provide them with such information, explanation and advice as they may reasonably need to assist them in discharging their role as Members of the Authority. Such approaches should normally be directed to the appropriate senior officer or, in cases of doubt, to the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive. Members should not put undue pressure on officers to release information and documents to which they are not entitled to have access.
- 4.3 An exception to the above will be information or reports that contain confidential personal information about employees or other persons. (examples would be a report containing personal medical information



or annual appraisal details of an individual). If the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive wishes to withhold a confidential report then he will consult with the Chairman and the Monitoring Officer and, where a report is to be withheld, reasons will be given to the member concerned.

5. Member and Officer Roles

- 5.1 This protocol recognises that Members are elected and officers are appointed to serve the people of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and that their roles are distinct.
- 5.2 The Members are accountable to the electorate who determine the people they wish to represent them on the local authorities. The local authorities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes then nominate elected Members to sit on Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority.
- 5.3 Officers are accountable to the people of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes through this Authority.
- 5.4 Members are primarily responsible for:
 - 5.4.1 Political direction and leadership of the Authority. The determination of policies, plans and strategies and deciding matters to give effect to or implement those policies, plans and strategies, particularly in service delivery terms.
 - 5.4.2 Performing the Authority's regulatory functions.
 - 5.4.3 Monitoring and reviewing, primarily through the Executive Committee and the Overview and Audit Committee functions, the Authority's performance in implementing its plans and strategies and in delivering its services.
 - 5.4.4 Participation in partnership working.
 - 5.4.5 Representing the Authority on national, regional and local bodies and organisations.
 - 5.4.6 Representing the views of their communities and individual constituents in respect of the work of the Authority.
- 5.5 Members should not involve themselves in the day to day management of the Authority's services as the responsibility rests with the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and senior managers and there are clearly defined lines of accountability to Members. However, applying this part of the protocol, it has to be recognised that Members do have specific responsibilities under the Authority's Executive Committee and the Overview and Audit Committee as set out in part nine of this document.



- 5.6 Under the Authority's Constitution some Members have additional responsibility at Member level, for example being Chairman of a committee or panel or as lead or champion Member for a specific area of the service. The holding of these offices will involve a different relationship with certain officers in areas where the Member has a particular role and responsibility. Also, the relationships will be more complex and expectations will be different from other Members.
- 5.7 It is important that Members of the Authority:
- 5.7.1 Respect the impartiality of officers and not undermine their role in carrying out their duties.
 - 5.7.2 Do not ask officers to undertake work or to act in a way which seeks to support or benefit a particular political party or gives rise to the officer being criticised for operating in a party political manner.
 - 5.7.3 Do not ask officers to exceed their authority where that authority is given to them in law, by the Authority or by their managers.
- 5.8 This protocol recognises the role of opposition groups in the Authority, acting individually or jointly, and that relationships will be different and complex. Members in opposition have the same rights and obligations in their relationships with officers and should be treated equally. Where opposition groups, individually or collectively, appoint their Members to perform shadow or spokesperson roles, then the requirement of 5.6 above will apply.
- 5.9 It is however envisaged that all Members will work co-operatively to ensure that the Authority meets its statutory obligations and provides an effective and efficient fire and rescue service to the people of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.
- 5.10 The primary role of officers is to advise, inform and support all Members and to implement the lawfully agreed policies of the Fire Authority.
- 5.11 In performing this role, officers will act professionally, impartially and with political neutrality. Whilst officers will report a Member's view on an issue, the officer should not be influenced or pressured to make comments or recommendations which are contrary to his or her professional judgement or views.
- 5.12 The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer have specific responsibilities placed on them by law. These responsibilities go beyond their obligations as employees of the Authority. Where an officer is discharging his or her



responsibilities under any statutory office, a Member or Members shall not:-

5.12.1 Interfere with or obstruct the officer in exercising those responsibilities.

5.12.2 Victimise any officer who is discharging or has discharged his or her responsibilities of the statutory office.

5.13 Both Members and officers will, regardless of their role always act in accordance with the Core Values of the Authority and the five ethical principles of the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services – England (Appendix 1).

6. Member/officer obligations and expectations

6.1 Members will require and expect officers:-

6.1.1 To be committed to the Authority as a whole and not to any political group or individual.

6.1.2 To work in partnership with Members in an impartial and professional manner.

6.1.3 To understand and support the roles of Members and the associated workloads and pressures.

6.1.4 To implement decisions of the Authority and its subordinate committees which:

- are lawful
- have been properly approved in accordance with the law and the Authority's constitution and;
- formally recorded.

6.1.5 To respond to enquiries and complaints in accordance with the Authority's standards.

6.1.6 To provide professional advice, which is not influenced by political views or preferences, and which does not compromise the political neutrality of officers.

6.1.7 To provide information to Members on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant taking into account the Members' individual responsibilities and position and the Members' rights to access documents and information, subject to specific exclusions, eg personal interests and confidentiality.

6.1.8 To be aware of, and sensitive to, the internal and external political environment.

6.1.9 To act with honesty, respect, dignity and courtesy at all times.



6.1.10 To provide support and learning and development opportunities for Members to help them in performing their various roles in respect of their Authority Membership.

6.1.11 To act with integrity and appropriate confidentiality.

6.1.12 Not to raise issues of a personal nature outside agreed procedures.

6.1.13 Not to use their relationship with Members to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly.

6.1.14 To comply at all times with the officer Code of Conduct and such other policies or procedures approved by the Authority to support the role of Members with any policy or procedure agreed by the Authority.

6.1.15 Not to support Members in any role other than that of Authority Members and not to undertake any actions which are not compatible with this protocol.

6.2 Officers can expect Members: -

6.2.1 To act within the policies, practices, processes and conventions established by the Authority.

6.2.2 To work constructively with officers, acknowledging their separate and distinct roles and responsibilities.

6.2.3 To understand and support the respective roles and responsibilities of officers and their associated workloads, pressures and reporting lines.

6.2.4 To give political leadership and direction and to seek to further their agreed policies and objectives with the understanding that Members have the right to take the final decision and issues based on advice and within the competence of the Authority.

6.2.5 To treat them fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy.

6.2.6 To act with integrity, to give support and to recognise appropriate confidentiality.

6.2.7 To recognise that officers work to the instructions of their senior officers and not to individual Members.

6.2.8 Not to subject them to intimidation, harassment or put them under pressure. Members will have regard to the seniority of officers in determining what reasonable requests are, having regard to the relationship between Member and officer and the potential vulnerability of officers, particularly at junior levels.



6.2.9 Not to request them to exercise discretion which involves acting outside the Authority's competence, policies and procedures.

6.2.10 Not to authorise, initiate or certify any financial transactions or enter into any contract, agreement or undertaking on behalf of the Authority, or in their role as Member of the Authority without proper and lawful authority.

6.2.11 Not to use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interest or those of others, or to influence decisions improperly.

6.2.12 To comply at all times with the Members' Code of Conduct, the law, the constitution and such other policies, procedures, protocols and conventions agreed by the Authority.

7. Behaviour limitations

7.1 The different roles of Members and officers require particular limitations upon behaviour. Both Members and officers need to ensure that their working relationship is appropriate to their respective role and that they do not act in any way which would lead to their behaviour being questioned. It is not possible to provide a list of circumstances where behavioural issues might be of concern. The main examples below help to illustrate the point.

7.1.1 A close personal relationship between a Member and an officer can confuse their separate roles and influence the proper discharge of the Authority's functions, not least in creating a perception that a Member or officer may be securing advantageous treatment.

7.1.2 The need to maintain the separation of roles means that there are limits to those matters on which a Member may seek the advice of an officer, both in relation to personal matters and party political issues.

7.1.3 Relationships with a particular individual or party group should not be such as to create public suspicion that an employee favours one Member or group above the others.

8. Political groups

8.1 It is in the interests of the Authority to support, to some degree, the effective operation of all its political groups and not one particular group. The operation of political groups may, however, pose particular issues for officers in terms of their impartiality.



- 8.2 A political group may request the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive or member of the Senior Management Team to prepare a written report on a matter or matters relating to the Authority for consideration by the group.
- 8.3 An officer report to a political group will be restricted to a statement of material facts and identification of options and the merits or otherwise of such options for the Authority. Such reports will not cover any political implications on the matter or any option. Such reports will not include any recommendations.
- 8.4 The release of such reports to other political groups shall be dealt with in accordance with any conventions in existence at the time.
- 8.5 A political group may request the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive or a member of the Senior Management Team to attend a meeting of the group to advise on particular matter relating to the Authority. The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive or member of the Senior Management Team may arrange for the attendance of a representative on his or her behalf, or may decline to attend or send a representative where he or she is of the opinion that the particular issue is of such a political nature that it would be inappropriate to attend.
- 8.6 Officer advice at a meeting of a political group will be restricted to a statement of material facts and identification of options and the merits or otherwise of such options for the Authority. The advice will not cover any political implications of any matter or any option.
- 8.7 All officers will respect the confidentiality of any matter which they hear in the course of attending any political group meeting or in respect of any requests for advice and the giving of that advice.

9. Attendance of officers at Executive Committee and Overview and Audit Committee

- 9.1 It is accepted that in carrying out its role, the Executive Committee and Overview and Audit Committee may require an officer to attend to answer questions or to discuss issues. In requiring an officer to attend, a Committee will consider the seniority of the officer it would be appropriate to invite. There is a presumption against inviting officers outside the senior officers' range to attend in this capacity. Requests for officer attendance shall also have regard to workloads of officers.
- 9.2 Where an officer attends such a meeting his or her contributions should be confined to matters of fact and explanation. However, an officer may be asked to explain and justify advice which he or she has given prior to a decision having been made, including decisions taken by him or her and delegated powers.



- 9.3 Officers should not be drawn into discussions of a political nature which would be inconsistent with the political neutrality requirement, nor should any questioning of an officer be reasonably interpreted as constituting harassment.
- 9.4 In Executive or Overview and Audit proceedings the capability or competence of officers must not be questioned. The distinction needs to be drawn between reviewing the policies, performance and decisions of the Authority and its services and the appraisal of staffs' individual performance. The latter is not a function of the Executive Committee or the Overview and Audit Committee.
- 9.5 The approach here is consistent with the committee terms of reference as set out in the Authority's standing orders.
- 9.6 In applying this part of the protocol, account will be taken of any guidance agreed by Executive Committee and/or the Overview and Audit Committee provided that guidance is consistent with the principles of this protocol.

10. Breaches of the protocol

- 10.1 Where a Member is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of an officer, the matter should, in the first instance, be raised with the officer concerned. Where any matter remains unresolved or is of significant concern it should be raised with the appropriate senior manager. Where the officer concerned is a senior manager, the matter should be made with the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive. Where the employee concerned is the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, the matter should be raised with the Monitoring Officer.
- 10.2 Where the relationship between Members and officers or other Members breaks down or becomes strained, every effort will be made to resolve matters informally. This can be achieved through conciliation by an appropriate senior manager, group leader and if necessary the Chairman. Officers will also have recourse to the Grievance Procedure or to the Authority's Monitoring Officer as appropriate.
- 10.3 In the event of a grievance or complaint being upheld, the matter will be referred to the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive. The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, having advised the Chairman of the Authority and the other appropriate party spokespersons, will decide on the course of action to be taken. Consultation with the Overview and Audit Committee should be considered if appropriate.
- 10.4 Breaches of protocol by a Member may result in a complaint to the Overview and Audit Committee and, in the case of officers, may lead to disciplinary action. In all cases, a resolution should be timely and ideally concluded within 28 days.



10.5 Any issues arising from or in relation to this protocol will be reported to the next appropriate Overview and Audit Committee meeting.



Appendix 1

Core Values of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Service to the Community

We value service to the community by:

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Striving for excellence in all we do
- Being answerable to those we serve

People

We value people by everyone practising and promoting:

- Fairness and respect
- Recognising commitment and the achievement of excellent service
- Honesty and trust
- Opportunities to develop and learn
- Co-operation and inclusive working

Diversity

We value diversity in the Service and the community by:

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination
- Creating opportunities to meet the different needs of people in our communities
- Promoting equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, promotion and retention

Improvement

We value improvement at all levels of the Service by:

- Accepting responsibility for our performance and actions
- Being open-minded and receptive to alternative approaches
- Learning from our experience
- Supporting others to enable them to achieve their goals
- Encourage innovation and creativity



Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services: five ethical Principles

1. Putting our communities first
- we put the interest of the public, the community and service users first
2. Integrity
- we act with integrity being open, honest and consistent in everything we do
3. Dignity and respect
- we treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias
4. Leadership
- we are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership.
We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards
5. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
- we continually recognise and promote the value of EDI, both within the Fire Service and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality foster good relations and celebrate difference

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 13 September 2023

Report title: 2025-30 CRMP Listening and Engagement Consultation Outcomes

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse: Service Delivery, Protection and Collaboration

Report sponsor: Mick Osborne, Chief Operating Officer / Deputy Chief Fire Officer

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Action: Decision

Recommendations: That the report be submitted to 11 October 2023 Fire Authority meeting for information and noting.

Executive summary:

At the Fire Authority meeting on 7 December 2022, Members approved the outline process and timetable for production of the successor plan to the 2020 – 2025 Public Safety Plan, to be known as the ‘2025 – 2030 Community Risk Management Plan’ (CRMP).

As part of the development process for the new CRMP, officers commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS), an independent social research practice, to carry out an initial consultation with a broadly representative / diverse sample of the public domiciled within the areas served by the Authority.

This early consultation work was designed to help inform the development of the 2025 – 30 CRMP by exploring the participants’:

- general awareness of / perceptions of risk and understanding of the Fire and Rescue Service and the issues facing it (without being given any significant background information);
- views and expectations after being more acquainted with the issues and challenges facing the Authority / Service and some potential ways that it could respond to these.

In total, 40 people participated across five focus groups (three of which were held virtually and two at physical locations in Aylesbury and Milton Keynes). ORS used a deliberative approach that enabled participants to reflect in depth about the issues facing the Authority / Service. Also, participants were able to do this without the constraint of worrying about any imminent changes to local Fire and Rescue service provision.

The outcomes of the consultation are contained in the appended ORS report. Because recruitment to the focus groups was inclusive and the participants diverse, ORS advise that the outcomes of the consultation are broadly indicative of how informed public opinion as a whole would incline in similar discussions.

Next Steps

Preparation of the 2025 – 30 CRMP is currently underway with a view to officers presenting a draft for Members to approve for a formal 12 week public consultation at the 14 February 2024 Fire Authority meeting. Further stakeholder consultations are planned throughout the CRMP development process in line with National Framework, [CRMP Fire Standard](#) and [Communication and Engagement Fire Standard](#) requirements.

Also, it should be possible to re-convene the five focus groups reported on in the attached report, once Members have approved the draft 2025-30 CRMP for consultation, which means that it will receive scrutiny from a more informed perspective than would be possible with fresh groups of people drawn from the wider public. This will help the Authority to demonstrate that it has met the requirements of: the National Framework; CRMP and Communication and Engagement Fire Standards; and, the underlying [Gunning Principles](#) for active and informed participation in consultations.

Financial implications: The costs associated with this, and any further consultations associated with the preparation of the 2025 – 30 CRMP, will be met from within existing Service Budget provisions.

Risk management: A detailed risk assessment was carried out with ORS at the project planning stage with a risk log established within the Project Initiation Document (PID) & appropriate measures identified to control the identified risks. The key corporate risks arising out of the research process include:

- That the range of views expressed are not typical of the public as a whole;
- That the research is poorly executed and fails to meet the specified requirements.

Both of these risks could impair the decision making process in relation to the development of the CRMP were they to crystallise.

As a university spin out company, ORS seeks to guarantee academic standards for all applied social research. ORS is a Market Research Society Company Partner and are fully compliant with the MRS Code of Conduct. All of ORS' research activities and systems are fully certified to ISO 27001:2013, ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 20252:2019.

The scope of the ISO certification covers the entirety of their research business from client management and identification of client needs through to frontline data collection, analysis and report writing.

ORS fieldwork procedures are fully IQCS certified, and all field and telephone interviewers are fully trained to IQCS standards.

Legal implications: The approach complies with National Framework requirements by ensuring that consultation is undertaken at appropriate points in the CRMP development process. The outcomes of the consultation are not binding on the Authority. However, it is required to have regard to them in reaching decisions associated with the community risk management planning process.

Privacy and security implications:

ORS' Information Security Policy requires that personal data is only sent from ORS using secure media. Checks are made to ensure that identifying information is removed prior to dispatch of data to clients.

Duty to collaborate:

The National Framework requires every fire and rescue authority to produce its own CRMP. However, officers share thinking on approaches to CRMP development and consultation practices with other fire and rescue services, in particular our Thames Valley partners.

Health and safety implications:

No direct implications arising from this initial consultation work.

Environmental implications:

No direct implications arising from this initial consultation work.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

The participant selection process was designed to ensure that a broadly representative / diverse sample of the public was consulted. Details of the participants' demographic profile are set out at paragraph 2.9 on page 11 of the appended report.

Consultation and communication:

The consultation themes were approved by the Senior Management Team on 2 May 2023 and also shared with the Lead Member for Service Delivery, Protection and Collaboration.

The Consultation findings will be shared with Service staff as well as Authority Members.

Background papers:

<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	Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030: Public Engagement Report of findings	None

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Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030: Public Engagement

Report of findings

July 2023



Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025 – 2030: Public Engagement

Opinion Research Services

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As with all our studies, findings from this report are subject to Opinion Research Services' Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract.

Any press release or publication of the findings of this report requires the advance approval of ORS. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation

This version of the report will be deemed to have been accepted by the client if ORS has not been informed of any amendments within a reasonable period of time (1 month)

This study was conducted in accordance with ISO 20252:2012 and ISO 9001:2008.

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Acknowledgements

Opinion Research Services (ORS) is pleased to have worked with Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) on the five engagement focus groups reported here. The diverse participants engaged with the issues and discussed their ideas readily, so we trust that this report of findings will help to inform service planning.

We thank BFRS for commissioning the project as part of its on-going regular programme of public engagement and consultation about its risk management planning. We particularly thank the senior officers and staff who attended the sessions to listen to the public's views and answer questions. Such meetings benefit considerably from the readiness to answer participants' questions fully and frankly, as in this case.

At all stages of the project, ORS' status as an independent organisation engaging with the public as objectively as possible was recognised and respected. We are grateful for the trust, and we hope this report will contribute usefully to thinking about BFRS's future service planning.

1. Key Findings

Key engagement findings

Overview of the engagement

- 1.1 Below are the key findings from a series of five focus groups (convened and facilitated by Opinion Research Services) with 40 members of the public from across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. The focus groups were designed to help Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) develop its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2025 – 2030. BFRS's key priority was that this would be a 'listening and engagement' process at a very early stage in the organisation's thinking – to understand public opinions and to 'test' some very general ideas and principles.

Awareness and perceptions

Perception of risk

- 1.2 Participants were initially asked for their thoughts on the biggest issues and risks facing them and their communities. The key concerns raised across the groups were the cost-of-living crisis and a lack of affordable housing; climate change; crime and anti-social behaviour; access to public services like healthcare; and the potential consequences of national and global political uncertainty and division.
- 1.3 Few people spontaneously raised fire risk as a concern, though it was widely discussed in the context of increasing wildfires and the risks posed by 'cheap imports'. In relation to the latter, when informed about the increasing prevalence of e-bike and e-scooter fires and asked to consider other emerging risks facing fire and rescue services, it was agreed that anything containing a lithium-ion battery could pose a risk, though vapes and electric cars were most mentioned. It was widely recognised, however, that it is not necessarily the batteries that are the issue, but the preponderance of devices using counterfeit or cheap imports that have not undergone the relevant safety checks.

Infrastructure changes

- 1.4 There was generally good awareness of major infrastructure developments such as HS2, which is clearly still contentious in some areas of Buckinghamshire. Residents remain concerned about the disruption and a loss of countryside and wildlife habitat for what they see as little benefit, and about the impact of such large-scale construction on Buckinghamshire's roads.
- 1.5 Participants in all groups commented on 'excessive' housing development across the county currently, as well as the apparent lack of corresponding infrastructure development in the form of roads and transport, schools, healthcare etc. In the context of BFRS, a particular issue raised was that of inconsiderate parking on new developments, and the impact of this on emergency service access and response times.

Awareness of BFRS

- 1.6 Participants were asked how much they knew about BFRS and what it does. Knowledge was mixed, but people were typically aware that the Service attends a range of incidents in addition to fires - as well as undertaking preventative and educational outreach work, inspecting and advising commercial premises, fire investigation, offering national resilience for civil emergencies, and assisting other emergency services.

- 1.7 When asked whether they knew where their nearest fire station is and how it is crewed, most participants were aware of the former, but not of the latter.
- 1.8 There was very little awareness of BFRS's response times. In terms of expectation, most of those living in urban areas said they would expect a response in under ten minutes, whereas those in more rural areas were aware that they would likely wait longer. Indeed, there was general recognition that response times would be influenced by several factors like location and time of day.
- 1.9 It should be noted that people's general unawareness of crewing systems can lead to unrealistic expectations of response times. For example, some of those living close to an on-call station assumed that they would receive a response in around five minutes, not knowing that on-call firefighters are not on station and must travel there before attending an incident. Moreover, in most groups there was a perception that incidents are triaged or 'graded' by fire control according to severity.
- 1.10 When asked if they knew how BFRS is funded and how much they pay towards it, most participants were aware that the two main sources of income are council tax and central Government funding. However, few knew how much the Service costs to run, or how much they pay for it via council tax. When informed that the 2023/24 Band D charge is £77.16, this was universally considered to be value for money.

Perceptions of BFRS

- 1.11 When asked for their general impressions of BFRS and the fire and rescue service nationally, participants were typically positive, though few had specific experience of the Service to influence this view. In the absence of direct contact, people were asked why they felt so well-disposed toward BFRS. The comments made suggest a positive view of those who work in the emergency services more generally, though the 'danger' aspect of firefighting was thought to command particular respect.
- 1.12 Following the general conversation around perceptions, participants were asked about their awareness of recent negative media coverage of bullying, harassment, and discrimination (including racism and misogyny) within fire and rescue services. None were aware of the reports and articles shown, which many attributed to them being overshadowed by constant articles about police misconduct.
- 1.13 When asked whether these stories might influence their perceptions of the fire and rescue service, opinions were mixed. Some felt that they are clearly damaging to the service's reputation, and that more needs to be done to address the underlying reasons for unacceptable behaviour. For example, a few female participants felt that a degree of misogyny is bound to arise within male-dominated professions like fire and rescue, and within the 'groups' that tend to form in large, homogeneous organisations.
- 1.14 Others, however, seemed to misunderstand the 'institutional' aspect of some of the reviews and allegations mentioned, describing those being complained against as a few "*bad apples*". One possible explanation for this is the perception that is instilled in people from a very early age of firefighters as 'heroes.' It was said to be much more difficult to accept poor behaviour among those we have put on a pedestal, meaning negative reports of fire and rescue service cultures can be more readily dismissed.
- 1.15 In terms of what might be done to address issues of concern, some participants suggested more thorough recruitment processes using psychometric testing and examinations of social media to determine a person's values for example. And despite some participants' dismissal of such behaviour as 'banter', many others recognised the need to take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of discrimination (either in person or within WhatsApp groups).

Current and future challenges

Workforce diversity

- 1.16 Participants were informed that BFRS was inspected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in 2021, who identified that it, *'Hasn't made enough progress since the last inspection to improve equality, diversity and inclusion'*. When asked whether this is important, opinion was mixed.
- 1.17 Several participants made comments like, 'What does skin colour or gender matter for putting out a fire?', highlighting that operational response continues to dominate people's thought processes when considering the role of the fire and rescue service. This suggests that better explanations are needed as to why diversifying the workforce is important, not least in improving the effectiveness of prevention and education work within certain communities.
- 1.18 It was recognised that several factors may have influenced the lack of diversity within BFRS, not least the long-term recruitment freeze, and the fact that many staff are 'long-termers'. Taken together, these two issues were thought to contribute to BFRS's workforce not keeping pace with societal changes.
- 1.19 In terms of what more BFRS could do to encourage a more representative workforce, visits to schools, colleges and local cultural events were suggested, to explain that fire and rescue services can offer a variety of different roles, not just firefighting. Indeed, it was suggested that the Service follow the Army's lead in developing a campaign that highlights the various careers it can offer.
- 1.20 This is especially important considering the issues raised by a couple of participants in Milton Keynes, who said that they and others from Black and Asian backgrounds would typically not consider operational firefighting for cultural reasons. They were of the view that while attracting Black and Asian recruits will continue to be challenging, highlighting the non-operational roles available would help.
- 1.21 On a related note, it was said that the fire and rescue service is simply not seen as a desirable career option within some cultures, nor is it yet considered a viable one by many females. Regarding the gender issue, one female participant working in the technology industry said she was recruited into tech via a targeted campaign and suggested that BFRS look at what is being done elsewhere to recruit women into traditionally male-dominated industries.
- 1.22 Finally, and crucially, addressing any issues with racism and misogyny was considered essential if fire and rescue services are to stand any chance of diversifying their workforces. However, there is something of a 'catch-22' situation in that there is a reluctance among minority ethnic groups to join the Service for fear of experiencing racism within a largely White workforce; but only by diversifying that workforce will it be viewed as a more inclusive environment that can nurture and develop role models for future recruits.

The future of the on-call service

- 1.23 Participants were informed that the traditional on-call model used in rural areas is increasingly difficult to maintain due to a decline in occupations from which on-call staff were traditionally recruited; fewer working age people being available during the day in villages and small towns; and changing lifestyles. To address this, BFRS has developed a series of four options, with participants asked for their views on whether the Service should consider their inclusion in its forthcoming CRMP.
- 1.24 The first two options are 1) instead of on-call staff being attached to a specific local fire engine, consolidate them into a larger pool to improve the overall number of engines available for 'resilience' and/or provide relief crews for extended or multiple incidents; and 2) replace 'difficult to crew' on-call fire engines in

more remote rural locations with smaller four-wheel drive vehicles for first response to, for example, outdoor fires. These options were most favoured.

- 1.25 There was less but still some support for Option 3 (re-locate ‘difficult to crew’ on-call appliances to urban areas where they would be held in reserve for ‘resilience’), and mixed views on Option 4 (rebalance resources in favour of more wholetime and/or day crew provision). Some felt the latter should be considered even if it would mean a smaller fleet overall, whereas others rejected it due to cost.

Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)

- 1.26 HMICFRS has suggested (in its 2021 inspection of BFRS), that the Service should review its response to AFAs, which it currently responds to as an emergency ‘on blue lights’. In light of this, the Service has developed a series of five options, which participants were asked to comment on.
- 1.27 Participants were divided on whether BFRS should consider making changes to its AFA procedures. Those who felt it should continue to respond to all AFAs as an emergency (Option 5) considered it too risky to do otherwise, both operationally and reputationally.
- 1.28 If the Service does wish to make changes, although there was some support for Option 1 (only attend an AFA if an actual fire is reported or the owner/occupiers of the building cannot be contacted), Option 2 (attend all AFAs in high-risk premises and AFAs in lower-risk premises when an actual fire is reported, or the owner/occupier of the building cannot be contacted) was most favoured. Options 3 (attend all AFAs in high-risk premises and AFAs in lower-risk premises when an actual fire is reported) and 4 (respond to AFAs at normal road speed [i.e., on ‘non-blue lights’]) received least support.

BFRS’s Vision

- 1.29 BFRS’ Vision is ‘To make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel’. The vast majority of participants agreed that it is still appropriate.

A name change?

- 1.30 As Milton Keynes has achieved city status, participants were asked whether Buckinghamshire FRS should change its name to, say, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes FRS. While some agreed that doing so would demonstrate inclusivity, more were opposed to a name change on the grounds of cost.

Information provision

- 1.31 Finally, participants were asked what information about or from BFRS would most interest them. The most common preferences were for live incident updates, safety advice, job opportunities, and performance statistics.

2. The Engagement Process

Overview of the engagement

Background to the engagement

- 2.1 'Community Risk Management Planning' is the development of a balanced approach by Fire and Rescue Services to reducing risk within the community. This is achieved by combining Prevention, Protection and Emergency Response, on a risk-assessed basis, in order to improve community safety and create a safer working environment for firefighters.
- 2.2 Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) is beginning to develop its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2025 – 2030 and is seeking input from a range of stakeholders, including members of the public, on how it might provide fire and rescue services during this period. The purpose of the focus groups reported here was to allow BFRS to engage with, and listen to, members of the public about some important issues - so that participants would become more informed about the Service and its current and future challenges; but also so that discussions around people's perceptions of risk and ideas about their fire and rescue service could inform its planning for the future.
- 2.3 BFRS's key priority was that this would be a 'listening and engagement' process at a very early stage in the organisation's thinking – to understand public opinions and to 'test' some very general ideas and principles. This very early-stage consultation programme conforms to the Gunning Principles, which require, above all, that engagement and consultation should be at a 'formative stage', before authorities make decisions.

The commission

- 2.4 Opinion Research Services (ORS) - a spin-out company from Swansea University with a UK-wide reputation for social research - was appointed to convene, facilitate and report five focus groups with members of the public: two face-to-face (in Aylesbury and Milton Keynes); and three online (covering the North, East/West and South of the county). Pre-consultation listening and engagement and formal consultation meetings have been undertaken with residents across Buckinghamshire on a regular cycle; and in this context ORS has facilitated similar focus groups for the Service for many years.

Deliberative engagement

Focus groups

- 2.5 The focus group meetings reported here used a 'deliberative' approach that encouraged members of the public to reflect in depth about the discussion issues while both receiving and questioning extensive background information. The fact that the groups were part of an 'early stage engagement' rather than 'formal consultation' process was stressed: participants were told they would be discussing some generic issues and 'testing' BFRS's ideas for how it might provide services over the lifetime of its next CRMP, rather than discussing any firm proposals.

- 2.6 The meetings lasted for around two hours and in total there were 40 diverse participants. The dates of the meetings and attendance levels by members of the public at each focus group are as shown in the table below.

FOCUS GROUP	DATE	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
Buckinghamshire South (online)	12th June 2023	8
Milton Keynes (face-to-face)	13th June 2023	10
Buckinghamshire Central (face-to-face)	14th June 2023	7
Buckinghamshire North (online)	21st June 2023	8
Buckinghamshire East/West (online)	21st June 2023	7

- 2.7 The attendance target for each of the focus groups was 8 people – so the total of 40 participants was on-target.
- 2.8 Participants were recruited by Acumen Field, a specialist recruitment agency, who initially sent out a screening questionnaire as an online survey to a database of contacts and, more widely, on social media platforms. They then collated the responses to establish a pool of potential recruits, which was ‘sifted’ to establish a contact list. People were then contacted by telephone, asked to complete a more detailed screening questionnaire and either recruited or not to match the required quotas. Those recruited were sent all the necessary details in a confirmation email and telephoned a day or two before the events to confirm their attendance.
- 2.9 In recruitment, care was taken to ensure that no potential participants were disqualified or disadvantaged by disabilities or any other factors. The recruitment process was monitored to ensure social diversity in terms of a wide range of criteria including, for example: gender; age; working status; and disability/limiting long-term illness (LLTI). Overall, as demonstrated in the table below, participants represented a broad cross-section of residents – and as standard good practice, people were recompensed for their time and efforts in and taking part.

GENDER	AGE	LIMITING ILLNESS OR DISABILITY	ETHNIC GROUP
Male: 18 Female: 22	16 - 24: 4 25 - 39: 14 40 – 54: 12 55+: 10	8	White British: 27 Asian/Asian British: 6 Black/Black British: 3 White Irish: 2 White European: 2

- 2.10 Although, like all other forms of qualitative engagement, deliberative focus groups cannot be certified as statistically representative samples of public opinion, the meetings reported here gave diverse members of the public the opportunity to participate actively. Because the meetings were inclusive, the outcomes are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline on the basis of similar discussions.

The agenda

- 2.11 ORS worked in collaboration with BFRS to agree a suitable agenda and informative stimulus material for the meeting, which covered all of the following topics:

Sources of worry and concern;

People’s perceptions of risk and how they manage it;

Fire and other risks in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes;

BFRS’ new and emerging risks;

People’s awareness and perceptions of BFRS and the fire and rescue service nationally;

BFRS’ staffing and resources, activity, response times, and funding – and whether the Service represents value for money; and

The issues and challenges facing BFRS and possible strategies to meet them.

- 2.12 Participants were encouraged to ask questions throughout, and the meetings were thorough and truly deliberative in listening to and responding openly to a wide range of evidence and issues.

The report

- 2.13 This report reviews the sentiments and judgements of respondents and participants on how BFRS might deliver its services in future. Verbatim quotations are used, in indented italics, not because we agree or disagree with them - but for their vividness in capturing recurrent points of view. ORS does not endorse any opinions but seeks only to portray them accurately and clearly. The report is an interpretative summary of the issues raised by participants.

3. Focus Group Findings

Detailed engagement findings

Introduction

- 3.1 This chapter reports the views from five deliberative focus groups with members of the public across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, which were independently facilitated by ORS. The meeting format followed a pre-determined topic guide which allowed space for a general discussion of the key questions under consideration. A series of information slides were shared at set points during the sessions, which ensured that participants had sufficient background information to actively deliberate on the issues.
- 3.2 This is not a verbatim transcript of the five sessions, but an interpretative summary of the issues raised by participants in free-ranging discussions - and as the focus groups did not differ materially in their views, this report combines the findings from all the meetings in a single account.
- 3.3 The report of findings is in two main sections – the first deals with people’s perceptions of risk as well as their general awareness and understanding of the FRS (without being given any significant background information), while the second deals with their judgements and expectations after being more informed and asked some challenging questions about policy. Both parts of the report are, of course, relevant to a fuller understanding of public views. It should also be borne in mind that these participants’ views were not influenced by any imminent local decisions: they had the luxury of thinking about important public policy issues without the constraint of worrying about changes in their immediate local services.

Main findings

Awareness and perceptions

Perception of risk

- 3.4 As an introductory exercise, participants were asked for their thoughts on the biggest issues and risks facing them and their communities; whether they worry about these issues and risks; and if they do, what (if anything) they do to mitigate against them.
- 3.5 The key concerns raised across the groups related to financial uncertainty, with people mainly worrying about the cost-of-living crisis and a lack of affordable housing, especially for young people.

“The cost-of-living crisis ... People having to prioritise food over heating or vice versa. There are a lot of old people in my area, and I worry about their health especially” (Buckinghamshire South)

“Cost-of-living but more about house prices. They are increasing so much. If I want to move out, I would have to start saving now” (Aylesbury)
- 3.6 The other main concern highlighted in all groups was climate change and, in the context of the discussion, the implications of this for the fire and rescue service in the form of more frequent and severe wildfires. Worry about the environment was particularly acute among parents, who said that they often worry about the world in which their children and grandchildren will be living in. Some of the many typical comments can be seen overleaf.

“The environment, the planet, and fires ... it’s a big concern for me that humankind is not taking it seriously enough. We need to start dealing with it” (Aylesbury)

“Climate change is a concern for me. I think we’ve all seen more extreme weather. Yesterday we had blazing sun then five minutes later we had the most amazing storm with hailstones ... That obviously impacts the fire and rescue services. Last year we saw the wildfires where houses were burning down, for the first time in the UK I can remember. That seems to be an increasing threat to our society and a risk” (Buckinghamshire South)

“I think the biggest risk is climate change, particularly if you’re thinking of 2025-30 ... Last year we already saw temperatures of over 40 degrees and spontaneous fires breaking out ... In terms of flooding, we’ve had thunderstorms over the last week. I have a sewage tank and that was the first time the tank was full ... in more than 20 years” (Buckinghamshire East/West)

- 3.7 It should be noted, though, that concern about environmental issues is not a day-to-day concern for most. That is, rather than actively worrying about it, participants described more of an awareness of it as a significant global issue that must be tackled. In fact, only one person said they were taking steps above and beyond the day-to-day (i.e., recycling) to try and mitigate against the risks.

“We’re taking active steps to rewild the garden, installing a heat pump, solar panels, looking into installing batteries and making changes to the way we spend money on goods and services, trying to make sure we’re not contributing to the problem” (Buckinghamshire East/West)

- 3.8 The impact of crime and antisocial behaviour was raised in each group: participants highlighted incidents like drug dealing, theft and burglary, and arson in their local areas. Many felt that such activity is on the rise, heightening their worry about it; worry that was again particularly acute for those with children (teenagers wanting more independence especially).

“... You’re seeing safe areas starting to change. I’ve got a young son ... It’s on top of me as he starts to get older and wants more independence” (Buckinghamshire East/West)

“The thing I think about the most is crime and safety in the area we live in. It’s a nice area but it’s changed over the years. I worry about my two teenagers and their safety. You hear a lot of things going on ... Things have changed recently” (Buckinghamshire South)

- 3.9 Coupled with this was an alleged drop in levels of respect for the authorities (and indeed fellow citizens) over recent years. It was said that this *“brings standards down, and when standards start to drop, it’s very hard to pick them up again. It’s a slippery slope.”* (Buckinghamshire South)

- 3.10 The potential consequences of current political uncertainty and division (nationally and globally) was a concern for some, as was the impact of public spending reductions on access to public services like healthcare.

“I do worry about the uncertainty and instability in the political landscape ... and what that could lead to. There’s so much division; where does it end? In civil unrest?” (Milton Keynes)

“I worry about it the government’s reluctance to invest in our services across all public sectors. That’s what worries me most. We’re slowly privatising services” (Buckinghamshire East/West)

- 3.11 Of particular worry was the lack of support for mental health and wellbeing issues, which were thought to have been exacerbated among adults and especially children by the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns.

- 3.12 Few participants spontaneously raised fire risk as a concern, though one Milton Keynes participant is a fire warden at work and so has a heightened sense of awareness of the need to take precautions in the form of smoke alarms and escape routes; another felt that having small children is another reason why a fear of fire may be more acute; and another couple said it is something people only really think about as a result of personal experience.

“... I have put a washing basket with clothes in it on a hot electric hob and just left it and then the whole house was in smoke ... Once you make a mistake you are thinking about it but prior to it you are not aware of the situation ...” (Milton Keynes)

“I’ve never actually personally been affected and needed ... the fire service. Until it happens to me, I don’t think I’ll be scared because I feel like I’m in good hands...” (Buckinghamshire South)

- 3.13 Fire risk was, however, widely discussed within the context of the focus group - with participants raising issues around wildfires; the dangers of ‘cheap imports’ (reported in more detail below); and intensified feelings of risk following high-profile tragedies like Grenfell. Similarly, terror attacks are typically a significant worry in the immediate aftermath of an incident, as underlined by the fact that the Aylesbury and Milton Keynes focus groups happened at the time of the attacks in Nottingham City, meaning these were raised at both sessions.

“You look at the news and you just don’t know who you might come across ... It frightens the life out of me” (Aylesbury)

- 3.14 This highlights that what a person worries about is ultimately influenced not only by their personal circumstances, but also what happens to be in the public eye (and thus consciousness) at any given time.

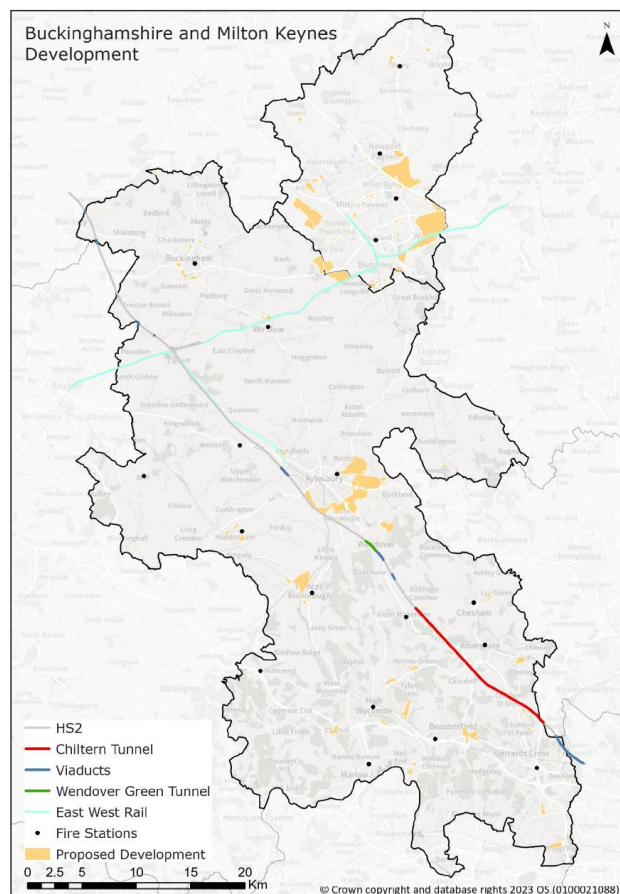
Infrastructure changes

- 3.15 There was generally good awareness of major infrastructure developments such as HS2, which is clearly still contentious in some areas of Buckinghamshire. Residents remain concerned about the disruption and a loss of countryside and wildlife habitat for what they see as little benefit.

“... It’s just not fair that it’s tearing up all of our countryside and it’s not even stopping here; it’s not going to benefit us in any way, and we’ve got to go through all these problems” (Buckinghamshire North)

- 3.16 Moreover, a few participants complained about the impact of developments like HS2 on Buckinghamshire’s roads, which were considered worse than those in many other parts of the country as a result.

“Two of the biggest infrastructure projects in the country are just down the road and the state of the roads is horrendous ... I drive 50 to 60,000 miles a year ... and the roads locally are significantly worse than roads around other parts of the country ...” (Buckinghamshire North)



- 3.17 Participants in all groups commented on what they saw as the excessive amount of housing development across the county currently. Indeed, while there were concerns about affordable housing shortages (as reported above), the impact of addressing these via significant housing growth was a worry - particularly in relation to an apparent lack of corresponding infrastructure development in the form of roads and transport, schools, healthcare etc.

“There is lots of building work ... It has many areas of impact with traffic infrastructure, places at schools and a whole manner of different things” (Aylesbury)

“There’s so much development and no infrastructure alongside it, like doctors, schools, hospitals, dentists” (Buckinghamshire North)

- 3.18 It should be noted, though, that a few people said they would feel more well-disposed toward new developments if they were to offer affordable options, allowing local people (young people especially) the opportunity to start laying down their roots in Buckinghamshire.

“... If the developments were affordable housing, particularly for professionals like me, I’d be easy about it. It frustrated me when [they] were proposed; there doesn’t seem to be any affordable housing. It makes me feel transient in terms of my relationship with Buckinghamshire. I can’t afford to buy a house here so I’m not investing in the whole county” (Buckinghamshire East/West)

- 3.19 In the context of BFRS, a particular issue raised was that of inconsiderate parking within new developments, and the impact of this on emergency service access and response times.

“Parking is an issue. You cannot get emergency vehicles down the road where I am because on a daily basis, people park on both sides of the road ... When there was a garage fire it was a nightmare because you were knocking on every door trying to move people’s cars and there was no hope whatsoever” (Milton Keynes)

Emerging risks

- 3.20 Participants were informed about the increasing prevalence of e-bike and e-scooter fires in the UK as a result of overheating lithium-ion batteries. They were then asked to discuss any other emerging risks facing fire and rescue services.



- 3.21 It was agreed that anything containing a lithium-ion battery could pose a risk, though vapes and electric cars were most commonly raised by participants. It was widely recognised, however, that it is not necessarily the batteries that are the issue, but the preponderance of devices using cheap and/or counterfeit parts that have not undergone the relevant safety checks.

“...I would say any product like chargers, that you can access quick and easy from online websites that cost £5 rather than £20 that people go for. That’s a big risk, when you leave things plugged in and go out” (Buckinghamshire East/West)

“The amount of counterfeit parts you get coming from China on Amazon and eBay and they are not vetted. They are not compliant or tested and approved parts under regulations ...” (Milton Keynes)

- 3.22 Another specified risk was socket overload given the number of electronic devices the typical person now owns. In particular, it was said that many young people do not recognise the dangers of this, or the risks of leaving devices on charge for very long periods.

“I have older kids and ... you see their plugs and you think, ‘For God’s sake, these could heat up’ and they are not aware of the risk ... Kids now have no clue. They plug as many gadgets as possible into one single plug ... The amount of times I have to say to my daughter about her mobile, ‘Stop leaving it on your bed ...’” (Milton Keynes)

- 3.23 One Milton Keynes participant discussed the ongoing cladding risks on some high-rise buildings at this point. They were very concerned that this has not yet been properly addressed.

“Why and how is that allowed? I know it’s more in big cities, but it shocked me that lessons have been acknowledged and ignored” (Milton Keynes)

Awareness of BFRS

General awareness

- 3.24 Following the discussions about risk, participants were asked how much they knew about BFRS and what it does. Knowledge was mixed, but people were typically aware that the Service now attends a range of incidents in addition to fires (though it should be noted that the ‘rescues cats from trees’ perception is still prevalent) - as well undertaking preventative and educational outreach work, inspecting and advising commercial premises, fire investigation, offering national resilience for civil emergencies, and assisting other emergency services.

“I think they do more than on the face of it. Most people would say they put out fires, but they do a lot more ... there’s been flooding, there’s car accidents, there’s cats up trees, there’s safety checks in people’s houses and smoke alarms and that sort of thing...” (Buckinghamshire North)

Awareness of fire station locations and crewing

- 3.25 When asked whether they knew where their nearest station is and how it is crewed, most participants were aware of the former, but not of the latter. Many said they had never really thought about it, and that they, *“Take it on trust that there’s enough people available to deal with an emergency within a reasonable time if and when one happens” (Buckinghamshire South).*

- 3.26 There were certainly some misconceptions though, such as that there are always firefighters present at all fire stations, and that on-call fire stations are crewed by volunteers.

“I just assume there is always a crew there. A band of people always there in the gym. I perceive your life to be how it was on London’s Burning!” (Milton Keynes)

... There is a permanent and a lot of voluntary crew ... I think there are more volunteers than fulltime crew” (Milton Keynes)

- 3.27 It should also be noted that there was some concern at the Buckinghamshire North group about on-call firefighters having other employment, potentially affecting response times. This is, of course, the nature of the on-call service, but this misconception has the potential to affect perception.

"I live very close to a fireman ... He spends most of his week [running] his own builder contractor's company. I think he gets paid for both jobs, but he spends most of his time on the other one whilst simultaneously on-call ... It just seems strange to me because there aren't many jobs in the world where you can get paid for two things by doing both at the same time..." (North Buckinghamshire)

Awareness of response times

- 3.28 There was very little awareness of BFRS's response times. In terms of expectation, most said they would expect a quicker response than from the police and ambulance services, given the operational pressure those two services are currently under.

"... I think you have an impression of the fire service being a quick response time compared to the ambulance service which is constantly in the news having long delays. Also, the police service because you'd imagine that they're constantly being called out" (Buckinghamshire East/West)

- 3.29 Most of those living in urban areas said they would expect a response in under ten minutes, whereas those in more rural areas were aware they would likely wait longer than this. Indeed, there was general recognition that response times would be influenced by several factors like location and time of day.
- 3.30 It should be noted, though, that people's general unawareness of crewing systems can lead to unrealistic expectations of response times. For example, some of those living close to an on-call station assumed that they would receive a response in around five minutes, not knowing that on-call firefighters are not on station and must travel there before attending an incident.

"I've got this perception that it's like a two-minute drive to the fire station from where I live, but that's me thinking they are sat there waiting for me to call. I'm not sure they're there or not, so it's giving me maybe a false sense of security" (Buckinghamshire North)

- 3.31 Moreover, in most groups there was a perception that incidents are triaged or 'graded' by fire control according to severity, and that a house fire would be prioritised over a lock-in for example.

"I think there are tiers depending on how the emergency is ... You have to assess which is the priority. The police [and ambulance] as well; everything is graded" (Milton Keynes)

- 3.32 When shown the average response time figures, all participants were impressed.

"... When you showed the statistics of how well they're doing trying to get to emergencies within 10 minutes, it's really good. Police take a long time to get anywhere to be fair. Ambulances can take a while too depending on how busy it is..." (Buckinghamshire South)

Awareness of funding and costs

- 3.33 When asked if they knew how BFRS is funded and how much they pay towards it, most participants across all groups knew that the two main sources of income are council tax and central Government. However, few knew how much the Service costs to run, or how much they pay for it via council tax.

- 3.34 The Band D charge of £77.16 a year was universally considered to be value for money, though there was considerable surprise and no little consternation around the reductions in government funding that have necessitated council tax increases. In this context, one participant (who lives in a thatched property and is thus particularly aware of fire risk) was especially concerned about the impact of funding reductions on BFRS's resources, though they did also note the corresponding reduction in incidents as a result of lifestyle changes, safety improvements and education.

“... It seems to me that there are many fewer house fires than there have been in the past, and I guess that must reflect in the way that the fire services are funded. But what concerns me a little bit is that it will restrict the amount of resources they have to deal with fires when they happen, and at what point do we realise that they’ve gone too far and the resources aren’t enough ...”
(Buckinghamshire North)

Perceptions of BFRS

- 3.35 When asked for their general impressions of BFRS, participants were typically positive, with one particularly praising the professionalism and usefulness of a Home Fire Safety Check they had received.

“... When we moved into our thatched property, we ... contacted the Fire Service to ask them to come and look at our property, appraise it and give us advice ... Amazing. They gave us good advice, pointed out one or two points in the house that would benefit from an additional smoke detector ... They also had a look at some of the existing safety bits and bobs in our chimneys and so on. They were very preventative. We were very grateful” (Buckinghamshire North)

- 3.36 Some said they were ‘neither positive or negative’ having had no contact with the Service in the past or, in one participants’ case, having a poor experience of waiting a significant time for an operational response.

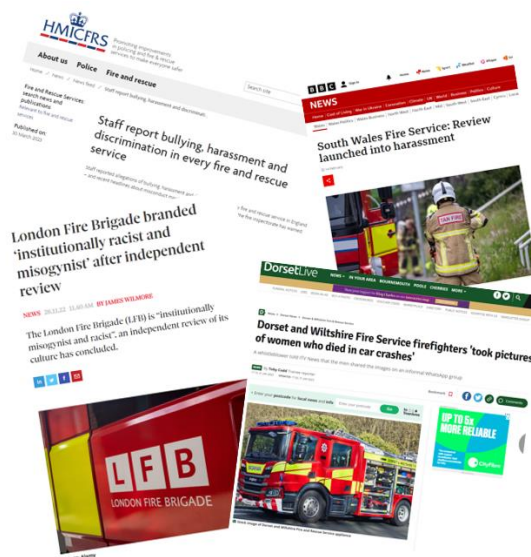
- 3.37 In the absence of direct contact, people were asked why they felt so well-disposed toward BFRS and the fire and rescue service nationally. The comments made suggest a positive view of those who work in the emergency services more generally, though the ‘danger’ aspect of firefighting was thought to command particular respect.

“... Like the rest of the emergency services, it’s a very professional service under very taxing circumstances ... You can only have the utmost respect for that” (Aylesbury)

“... I work right next to Grenfell, so I was aware of all that when it was going on. For me, it’s the absolute sheer bravery ... The danger they face, and they put all of our lives first; that’s incredible” (Buckinghamshire East/West)

- 3.38 Following the general conversation around perceptions, participants were asked about their awareness of recent media coverage of issues in fire and rescue services such as the report of His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) alleging ‘bullying, harassment, and discrimination in every fire and rescue service’; the independent review of London Fire Brigade that branded it ‘institutionally racist and misogynist’; and allegations of misconduct in South Wales and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services.

- 3.39 Very few participants across all five groups were aware of these news stories. Indeed, participants in all groups spontaneously made comments along these lines prior to be shown the articles on the right.



“I think they’re amazing ... There’s all these horror stories at the moment about the police service and what they do to the victims, you never hear anything bad about a firefighter. I think they’re there to protect us, they care, they put their life at risk...” (Buckinghamshire North)

3.40 Many attributed their lack of knowledge to these stories being overshadowed and somewhat ‘drowned out’ by constant articles about police misconduct. Indeed, there was some sense that, *“The media like to go, ‘Who does the public like to villainise’ and that’s not the fire service. ‘What is going to cause outrage and panic?’”* (Milton Keynes)

3.41 When asked whether these stories might influence their perceptions of the fire and rescue service, opinions were mixed. Some felt that they are clearly damaging to the Service’s reputation, and that more needs to be done to address the underlying reasons for unacceptable behaviour. For example, a few female participants felt that a degree of misogyny is bound to arise within male-dominated professions like fire and rescue, and within the ‘groups’ that tend to form in large, homogeneous organisations.

“... Each individual may not be like that, but there is something about groups ... You obviously have more men in the fire service than women, so what is it that makes it a safe space for them? I don’t know the answer but ... it does say ‘institutionally’ and groups with few women can be misogynistic ...” (Aylesbury)

3.42 Moreover, it was highlighted that fire and rescue service culture may still be being influenced (even if subconsciously) by the traditional language used to describe operational staff.

“The institutionally misogynistic part especially, growing up it was always about ‘firemen’ ... I know they have changed the language now, but that is something inbuilt into so many different careers. It will take a long time for that to change ...” (Milton Keynes)

3.43 Others, however, seemed to misunderstand the ‘institutional’ aspect of some of the reviews and allegations mentioned, describing those being complained against as a few *“bad apples”*, similar to those you would find in most professions.

“... It should bother me, but for some reason it doesn’t. I just think it’s only a couple of cases. Every company or workplace is going to have one issue or another” (Buckinghamshire North)

“... I know the one example was the Service as whole, but the others are anecdotal examples. Instead of branding the whole Service as this, they should focus more on who is doing these atrocities and make it about them as opposed to the job they do ... That sounds like it’s a couple of individuals rather than the Service as a whole” (Buckinghamshire East/West)

3.44 One possible explanation for this is the perception that is instilled in people from a very early age of firefighters as lifesaving ‘heroes’, particularly in contrast to police officers, whose role is often to enforce. It was said to be much more difficult to accept poor behaviour among those we have put on a pedestal, meaning negative reports of fire and rescue service cultures are more readily dismissed as ‘just a bit of banter’ or to have been wholly perpetrated by the aforementioned bad apples.

“The fire service is always under a positive light from being a child with Fireman Sam ... and wanting to be a fireman when you were younger ... There has never been a reason to see them in a negative way” (Milton Keynes)

“A lot of people still think of the fire service as heroes, and they are labelled like that ... And these sorts of things may get brushed under the carpet because the fire service are seen as heroes. They put out fires and risk their lives to save yours, and all the police do is give you a fine or arrest your kid for whatever he has been doing. People are looking at the police as bullies, and they have this stigma attached to police, whereas firefighters are the heroes” (Aylesbury)

3.45 This is perhaps reflected in some of the comments made at the sessions, such as:

“I’m surprised to see those headlines. I’m upset to see the institutionally racist and misogynist ones and I’m not sure I quite buy it ...” (Buckinghamshire East/West)

“It’s very much a man’s world there ... They do silly, boyish, men things; they have a bit of fun. In this world, men act like that when they’re in a group with other men ... I don’t think misogyny is that massive. There’s not that many women in the fire service anyway. I don’t think it’s that much of a problem ... I just think they’re amazing” (Buckinghamshire North)

3.46 In terms of what might be done to address issues of concern such as those highlighted above, some participants suggested more thorough recruitment processes using psychometric testing and examinations of social media to determine a person’s values for example. And despite some participants’ dismissal of such behaviour as ‘banter’, many others recognised the need to take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of discrimination (either in person or within WhatsApp groups).

“... It’s important to look at the culture ... within the organisation ... Where colleagues are having group chats with misogynistic or racist conversations, I think more needs to be done to stamp those attitudes out before they lead onto more serious behaviours” (Buckinghamshire East/West)

Current and future challenges

Workforce diversity

3.47 Participants were informed that BFRS was inspected by HMICFRS in 2021, who identified that, ‘*The Service hasn’t made enough progress since the last inspection to improve equality, diversity and inclusion*’. They were shown data to highlight that the Service’s current workforce is not fully representative of the working population, especially in terms of ethnicity and gender. When asked whether this is important, opinion was mixed.

3.48 Several participants made comments like, ‘What does skin colour or gender matter for putting out a fire?’, highlighting that operational response continues to dominate people’s thought processes when considering the role of the fire and rescue service. This suggests that better explanations are needed as to why diversifying the workforce is important, not least in improving the effectiveness of prevention and education work within certain communities. As one participant said:

“Whether or not it matters is a split question. Does it matter who turns up to put the fire out? No ... Does it matter that the Service is representative of the population as a whole? Yeah, of course it does. They don’t have as much engagement with the general public as the police or ambulance staff, but they do still need to be trusted by all of the population” (Buckinghamshire North)

3.49 It was recognised that several factors may have influenced the lack of diversity within the Service, not least the long-term recruitment freeze, and the fact that many staff are ‘long-termers’. Taken together, these two issues were thought to contribute to BFRS’s workforce not keeping pace with societal changes.

“... There will be a lot of people in the service that joined 20-25 years ago. The ethnic diversity mix of the area was probably very different then ... Looking at the workforce as a whole is distorted by the long servers. It will take a long while to change that ...” (Buckinghamshire South)

- 3.50 In terms of what more BFRS could do to encourage a more representative workforce, visits to schools, colleges and local cultural events were suggested, particularly to explain that fire and rescue services can offer a variety of different roles, not just firefighting.

“It would be good to get more into schools because you have the diversity ... and explain exactly what you do in the fire service, because you think ‘firefighter’ and that’s all they do ...”
(Aylesbury)

- 3.51 Indeed, it was suggested that the fire and rescue service should follow the Army’s lead in developing a campaign that highlights the various careers it can offer.

“...They have their own campaign which says, ‘The Army is not just about shooting but you can do this, and there is this possibility’ ... Something similar to that” (Milton Keynes)

- 3.52 This is especially important in light of the issues raised by a couple of participants in Milton Keynes, who said that they and others from Black and Asian backgrounds would typically not consider operational firefighting for cultural reasons. They were of the view that while attracting Black and Asian recruits will continue to be a challenge, highlighting the non-operational roles available would help.

“Talking from a cultural view ... Black and Asian people don’t go into fires or water ... There are certain things Black people won’t do, certain jobs we won’t accept, and fire is one of them ... It’s a culture thing. It will be a long process to get Blacks and Asians to join the fire service. When I was a kid, I used to look at the fire service and police and it was never in my plans to say, ‘I want to be a fireman’. It is going to be a hard task” (Milton Keynes)

“... I didn’t even know there were other opportunities for minorities ... You have to make people aware of this and that it is open to all, but it will take a lot to convince us. It’s not a job that appeals; we think, ‘Fire is death’ and nothing else” (Milton Keynes)

- 3.53 On a related note, it was said that the fire and rescue service is simply not seen as a desirable career option within some cultures, nor is it yet considered a viable one by many females – again in part due the gender-based attitudes instilled in people from a young age.

“Equality and reflecting the population is really important, but if you speak to families from these backgrounds, they don’t want their sons and daughters to join the fire service” (Buckinghamshire East/West)

“... Even now with all the progress that has been made, girls go to parties dressed as princesses and boys go as firemen and police. It is still very much ingrained, but changing” (Milton Keynes)

- 3.54 The second quotation above acknowledges that attitudes around ‘gender roles’ are changing, but some comments made in one of the online groups suggests that there is still work to be done in relation to changing perceptions of females as operational firefighters. One participant felt that they would be more reassured if a “fire engine of men” were to turn up to an incident from a strength point of view, and another said that:

“It’s a man’s job. I know that’s sexist, but it is. If a fire crew turned up for a fire and they were all women, I’d be concerned. I’d want it to be all men. They’re stronger, they’re not going to panic as much. You feel like you can trust men in that kind of situation. I wouldn’t mind if there was a couple of them, but if it was all women, I’d be like, ‘Are they going to lift things, are they going to cope?’” (Buckinghamshire North)

3.55 In relation to the gender issue, one female participant noted that they now work in the technology industry, despite never considering it as a career when growing up as it was never “*promoted or pushed*” as something for women. She was recruited via a targeted campaign and suggested that BFRS look at what is being done elsewhere to recruit women into traditionally male-dominated industries.

3.56 Finally, and crucially, addressing any issues with racism and misogyny was considered essential if fire and rescue services are to stand any chance of diversifying their workforces.

“... If the headlines say the Service is institutionally racist, you won’t get many applicants from ethnic communities ... It’s very concerning in that way ... Ethnic minorities [are] obviously noticing those headlines and thinking that’s not a job for them ...” (Buckinghamshire North)

“... I don’t think the older generation from black minority groups trust sending kids to the fire service because they have experienced racism, and their kids have experienced racism, and sending someone to a workforce which is mainly White males ...” (Aylesbury)

3.57 Furthermore, the final quote above suggests something of a ‘Catch-22’ situation in that there is a reluctance among minority ethnic groups to join the fire and rescue service for fear of experiencing racism within a largely White workforce; but only by diversifying that workforce will the Service be viewed as a more inclusive environment that can nurture and develop role models for future recruits.

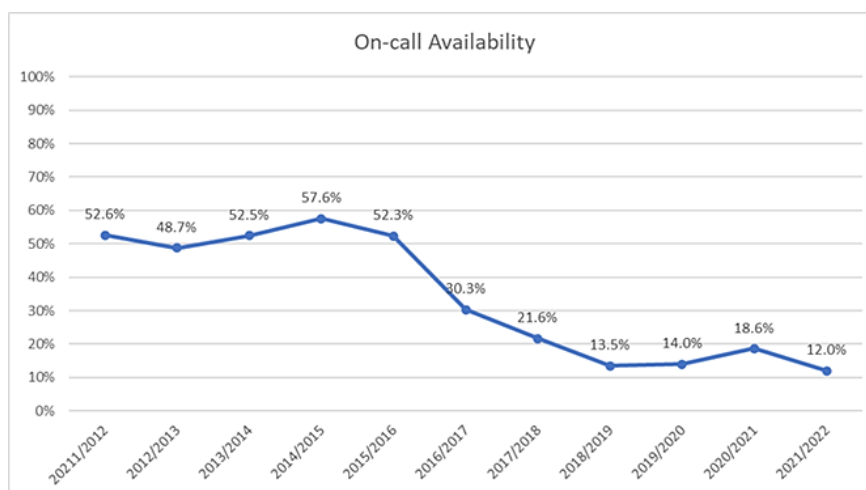
“If you are going to make a difference, you need to see people of different skin colours in those positions so that when younger kids see that, they would be a lot more comfortable to join that workforce ...” (Aylesbury)

“... If a young Asian person doesn’t see an Asian fireman, where is the role model? They need to be seeing themselves in the people who are doing the job in order to be engaged in it ...” (Buckinghamshire North)

The future of the on-call service

3.58 Another issue raised by HMICFRS in 2021 was that ‘*The Service continues to see a reduction in its on-call staff and has no plans to address this trend*’ and that ‘*The service should ... make sure that all of its fire engines can be sufficiently resourced, if required*’.

3.59 Participants were informed that the traditional on-call model used in rural areas is increasingly difficult to maintain locally and nationally due to a decline in occupations from which on-call staff were traditionally recruited; fewer working age people being available during the day in villages and small towns; and changing lifestyles. This has resulted in a fall in on-call appliance availability as follows.



3.60 To address this, BFRS has developed the following series of options, with participants asked for their views on whether it should consider their inclusion in its forthcoming CRMP.

Option 1: instead of on-call staff being attached to a specific local fire engine, consolidate them into a larger pool to improve the overall number of engines available for ‘resilience’ and/or provide relief crews for extended or multiple incidents;

Option 2: replace ‘difficult to crew’ on-call fire engines in more remote rural locations with smaller four-wheel drive vehicles for first response to, for example, outdoor fires;

Option 3: re-locate ‘difficult to crew’ on-call appliances to urban areas where they would be held in reserve for ‘resilience’, and where it is easier to raise on-call crews from larger day-time populations; and

Option 4: rebalance resources in favour of more wholetime and/or day crew provision.

3.61 Options 1 and 2 were most preferred of the four. The first (consolidating on-call staff into a larger pool for resilience or relief) was described as sensible and suitably strategic, and less restrictive for firefighters themselves, which could aid recruitment and retention.

“I like the first option ... having some in the restricted area so they could be your first responders as you go out and then six or seven in a wider area or radius who can get there as time goes on. It makes a lot of sense not to be, ‘Right, this is our fire station, and we do this fire area’ but for the whole of Bucks to work together. And you would potentially get more people involved as well, especially knowing that they don’t have to stick to such a small area” (Aylesbury)

“The first would be most appealing for staff on call, so they can go and do things with their family and not so limited” (Buckinghamshire North)

3.62 Option 2 (replace ‘difficult to crew’ on-call fire engines in more remote rural locations with smaller four-wheel drive vehicles) was viewed positively on the grounds of efficiency, cost, accessibility, and reassurance.

“I like the idea of the four-wheel drive vehicles. They could attend those incidents in rural areas more quickly and assess the situation and call back to base for more fire engines. There would be less wasted time at false alarms as well as you wouldn’t need to send as many people out at once; they could just check it out and see how it is” (Buckinghamshire South)

“I like the first response That great big truck that they’ve got to get through the streets, that’s always going to take time. At least there’s the reassurance that this person’s going to help you a little bit before the big boys come” (Buckinghamshire North)

3.63 There were some questions about the capacity of a smaller vehicle, however, and what incidents it could realistically deal with.

3.64 There was less but still some support for Option 3 (re-locate ‘difficult to crew’ on-call appliances to urban areas where they would be held in reserve for ‘resilience’), and mixed views on Option 4 (rebalance resources in favour of more wholetime and/or day crew provision). Some felt the latter should be considered even if it would likely result in a smaller fleet overall, whereas others rejected it on the grounds of cost.

3.65 There was also recognition that, *“They are not exclusive options so you can combine more than one, two or possibly three of them...”* (Aylesbury)

- 3.66 Overall, participants trusted senior officers to make sensible decisions in relation to fire cover, though it was said that changing or removing resource provision can be an emotive issue that would need to be properly explained.

Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)

- 3.67 The final recommendation from HMICFRS was that *‘The Service should review its response to false alarms ... to ensure operational resources are used effectively’*. BFRS’s current policy is to attend all AFAs as emergencies (i.e., on ‘blue lights’), and while less than 1% turn out to be a real incident, 40% of AFAs attended in 2022/2023 were to high-risk properties, enabling opportunity for engagement with building owners to provide advice and update building risk information.

- 3.68 Nonetheless, in light of HMICFRS’s recommendation, the Service has developed the following options.

Option 1: only attend an AFA if an actual fire is reported or the owner/occupiers of the building cannot be contacted;

Option 2: attend all AFAs in high-risk premises and AFAs in lower-risk premises when an actual fire is reported or the owner/occupier of the building cannot be contacted;

Option 3: Attend all AFAs in high-risk premises and AFAs in lower-risk premises when an actual fire is reported;

Option 4: Respond to AFAs at normal road speed (i.e., on ‘non-blue lights’); and

Option 5: continue to respond to all AFAs as an emergency.

- 3.69 Participants were divided on whether BFRS should consider making changes to its AFA procedures. Those who felt it should continue to respond to all AFAs as an emergency considered it to risky to do otherwise, both operationally and reputationally.

“If you were to adopt something else and something went wrong and resulted in something unfortunate then it could damage your representation and perception with the public”
(Aylesbury)

- 3.70 Furthermore, it was said that *“If attending those false alarms isn’t adding cost to the service, why not keep doing it, because these 1% that they are attending are really important.”* (Buckinghamshire North)

- 3.71 If the Service does want or need to make changes, though there was some support for Option 1 (only attend an AFA if an actual fire is reported or the owner/occupiers of the building cannot be contacted), Option 2 (attend all AFAs in high-risk premises and AFAs in lower-risk premises when an actual fire is reported, or the owner/occupier of the building cannot be contacted) was most favoured as an acceptable compromise.

“I would say two, because if it’s a high risk, definitely. Are we talking if someone sets their fire alarm off then they call and say it was an accident, then they wouldn’t need to come out? That would be more favourable for me ... because that’s not wasting anyone’s time. When they’re going at a high speed to an emergency that there is no emergency, everyone’s life is at risk”
(Buckinghamshire East/West)

“For me it’s number 2 as you just can’t take the risk with the high-risk premises ... There are so many false alarms, that I would want a bit more certainty. So, contact with someone there to say, ‘Look, the alarm has gone off, are you concerned that there is a genuine risk’. And if you

can't get hold of anyone at somewhere like a chemical warehouse or somewhere, you'd have to go to that as it's such a high risk" (Buckinghamshire South)

- 3.72 A few participants felt they could not make a judgement without more detail. One specifically said they would like more information on the number of incidents caused at high speed, as well as how often appliances are unavailable for 'proper incidents' through being at a false alarm prior to determining the appropriateness of making changes to AFA policies.

BFRSs Vision

- 3.73 BFRS' Vision is 'To make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel'. An overwhelming majority of participants agreed that it is still appropriate.

A name change?

- 3.74 In light of the fact that Milton Keynes has achieved city status, participants were asked whether Buckinghamshire FRS should change its name to, say, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes FRS. While some agreed that doing so would demonstrate inclusivity, more were opposed to a name change on the grounds of cost.

"What's the point in changing it? [Milton Keynes] is still in Bucks and it would cost a lot of money to rebrand it" (Aylesbury)

"I think it is a waste. You see this in the NHS all the time where they have to work out how far down this blue line has to be ... Why? Stop being a wally! New uniform and you have to get it embroidered ... no!" (Milton Keynes)

Information provision

- 3.75 Finally, participants were asked what information about or from BFRS would most interest them. The most common preferences were for live incident updates, safety advice, job opportunities, and performance statistics.



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 13 September 23

Report title: Performance Management – Q1 2023/24

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse

Report sponsor: Mick Osborne, Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Chief Operating Officer

Author and contact: Craig Newman, Data Intelligence Team Manager,
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Action: Noting

Recommendation: That the report and recommendation below be approved for submission to the Authority:

1. It is recommended that the Performance Management – Q1 2023/24 be noted

Executive summary:

This report details the suite of 69 performance measures split across 4 quadrants:

- 1) Public Impact
- 2) Response
- 3) Great Place to Work
- 4) Public Value

The report has been updated for 2023/24 with the following changes:

- Improved layout allowing more detailed measure descriptions and increased commentary.
- new measures: PI.2.09 Prison Fires, PV.1.01 Forecast – Outturn, Website engagements, Carbon Emissions. and Printing.

This report comprises of the Service performance against these measures for Q1 2023/24, see Appendix 1, containing the following:

- 1) Performance Measures Overview – each quadrant on one page
- 2) Performance Measures Details – shows actual performance alongside relevant trend information and where needed commentary.

At the end of Q1, 55 measures reported with a Blue, Green, Amber or Red status, ten are for information, two are awaiting information and two are for data capture.

BRAG	Number		Total	%
	Target	Monitor		
B	8	1	9	14
G	23	3	26	40
A	14	4	18	28
R	10	2	12	18

Financial implications: A detailed understanding of the Service’s performance allows informed decision making in relation to future resource allocation. The balance of measures also allows an understanding of the Service’s financial performance and enables a view to be formed of its overall value for money compared with others.

Risk management: Performance and risk information is designed and presented to assist the Authority in the strategic decision-making through understanding the communities we serve and associated risk profiles. Performance management information is a major contributor to service improvement and to the effective prioritisation of resources.

Legal implications: There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Privacy and security implications: There are no Privacy and Security implications arising from this paper.

Duty to collaborate: There are no opportunities to collaborate directly from this report.

Health and safety implications: There are no specific Health, Safety and Wellbeing implications arising from this paper. Performance reports on Health, Safety and Wellbeing is subject to separate scrutiny and performance reporting.

Environmental implications: There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report. Performance measures will be developed during the year to provide reassurance that the Service is making progress against its recently approved Environment and Climate action plan.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications: There are no specific Equality, diversity and inclusion implications arising from this paper. Performance reports on Equality, diversity and inclusion are subject to separate performance reporting.

Consultation and communication: We aim to provide performance information incorporating stakeholder contributions. The report will be circulated throughout the

organisation for information and awareness.

Board	Date	Outcome
Performance Monitoring Board - subgroup	28 July 2023	Approved to go to SMB
Strategic Management Board	22 August 2023	Approved to go to Executive Committee

Next steps -

- The performance measures will be reported quarterly
- Indicators and targets will be reviewed annually

Background papers:

Fire Authority, 14 June 2023: Performance Management – Q4 2022/23

bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/06/fire-authority-annual-meeting-14-june-2023-item-19-performance-management-q4-2022-23.pdf/

Executive Committee, 22 March 2023: Performance Management – Q3 2022/23

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/03/executive-committee-22-march-2023-item-8-performance-management-q3-2022-23.pdf/>

Fire Authority, 7 December 2022: Performance Management – Q2 2022/23

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/11/item-14-fire-authority-meeting-7-december-2022-performance-management-q2-2022-23.pdf/>

Special Meeting of the Executive Committee, 7 October 2022: Performance Management – Q1 2022/23

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for BMKFA Executive Committee, 14/09/2022 10:00 \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/10/oa-item-14-17-10-21.pdf/)

Overview and Audit Committee, 10 November 2021: 2020-21 Annual Performance Monitoring2020/2021 Performance Report

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/10/oa-item-14-17-10-21.pdf/>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	BFRS Key Performance Measures - Q1 – 23-24	N/A

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KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES - 2023-2024

QUARTER 1 (APR - JUN)

Introduction

This Key Performance Measures report has been designed as a rounded and balanced picture of how the Service is performing at a local level.

Due to the regular frequency of this report being produced, most indicators used within each measures represent change within the Service and does not always represent good or bad performance. For example, Accidental Dwelling Fires could increase, yet still have the fewest number within the country (relative). This level of detail will be covered in annual reports and ad-hoc reports when requested, as most national data is published annually.

It's worth noting, the report contains many types of targets and methods of comparison. Some targets are aspirational, some are there to ensure minimum standards are met and others are there to identify exceptions within trends, allowing us to identify possible needs for change/reaction.

	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)
Better than expected	B	B
As expected (within trend/target)	G	G
Worse than expected	A	A
Considerably worse than expected	R	R

For monitoring purposes	B
For monitoring purposes	G
For monitoring purposes	A
For monitoring purposes	R
No reporting for this pattern	-
Information not received	?

PUBLIC IMPACT

IN THE HOME

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
PI.1.01	Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)	G	G	7
PI.1.02	Number of serious ADFs	B	G	7
PI.1.03	ADFs - Fire related fatalities	G	G	8
PI.1.04	ADFs—Fire related serious injuries	G	G	8
PI.1.05	Dwelling fires - Cause not known	B	G	9
PI.1.06	Dwelling fires - Deliberate	A	A	9
PI.1.07	False Alarms in the home	R	A	10
PI.1.08	Home Fire Safety Visits	B	G	10
PI.1.09	Home Fire Safety Visits - Vulnerable	B	B	11

IN THE WORKPLACE

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
PI.2.01	Non-domestic property fires - Accidental	B	B	12
PI.2.02	Non-domestic property fires - Deliberate	G	G	12
PI.2.03	Non-domestic property fires - Not Known	A	G	13
PI.2.04	Non-domestic property fires - Serious	R	B	13
PI.2.05	Non-domestic property fires - Fire related fatalities	G	G	14
PI.2.06	Non-domestic property fires - Fire related injuries - Serious	G	G	14
PI.2.07	Non-domestic property fires - False Alarms	G	G	15
PI.2.08	Fire Safety Audits	G	G	15
PI.2.09	Prison Fires	R	R	16

TRAVEL

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
PI.3.01	Road Traffic collisions (RTCs) - Attended	A	A	17
PI.3.02	RTC Fatalities	G	A	17
PI.3.03	RTC Injuries - Serious	B	R	18
PI.3.04	RTC Injuries - Slight	B	G	18

COMMUNITIES

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
PI.4.01	Deliberate Secondary Fires (to other's property)	R	B	19
PI.4.02	Deliberate Primary Fires (to other's property)	R	A	19

RESPONSE

INCIDENTS

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
R.1.01	Total incidents (exc co-responders)	R	G	21
R.1.02	Co-responder incidents	A	B	21
R.1.03	Effecting Entry incidents	A	R	22
R.1.04	Average attendance time to all incidents (exc co-responder)	A	A	22
R.1.05	Average attendance time to accidental dwelling fires	G	R	23

RESPONSE MODEL

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
R.2.01	Availability - Wholetime Appliances	R	R	24
R.2.02	Availability - On-call Appliances	R	R	24
R.2.03	Response Model - Wholetime Appliances	A	A	25
R.2.04	Response Model - On-call Appliances	R	R	25
R.2.05	Over The Border Mobilisations into BFRS	R	R	26
R.2.06	Over The Border Mobilisations our of BFRS	G	G	26

OPS RESILIENCE

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
R.3.01	Maintenance of Competencies	B	-	27
R.3.02	Hydrant Availability	?	?	27
R.3.03	High Risk Site Information	G	G	28

A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

PEOPLE

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
GP.1.01	Actual vs Establishment - Wholetime	G	G	31
GP.1.02	Actual vs Establishment - On-Call	R	R	31
GP.1.03	Actual vs Establishment - Support	A	A	32
GP.1.04	Staff Turnover	A	A	32
GP.1.05	Absence	B	B	33
GP.1.06	Welfare & Support	A	A	33
GP.1.07	Employee Engagement	-	R	34
GP.1.08	Appraisal & Objectives Completion	A	R	34
GP.1.09	Mandatory E-Learning Completed	G	G	35
GP.1.10	Grievance & Disciplines	G	G	35

HEALTH & SAFETY

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
GP.2.01	Injury Rate	G	-	36
GP.2.02	Workplace Injuries	G	G	36
GP.2.03	Near Miss Events Recorded	A	A	37
GP.2.04	Vehicle Incidents	R	R	37
GP.2.05	RIDDOR Reportable Injuries	A	A	38
GP.2.06	Attacks on members of staff	A	A	38
GP.2.07	Equipment damage	A	A	39

PUBLIC VALUE

FINANCE

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
PV.1.01	Forecast - Outturn	A	-	41
PV.1.02	Bank Cost	A	A	41
PV.1.03	Fraud	-	G	42

COMPLIANCE

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
PV.2.01	Data Breaches	-	G	43
PV.2.02	FOIs responded to within timescales	G	-	43

ENGAGEMENT

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
PV.3.01	Compliments & Complaints	-	A	44
PV.3.02	Social Media Engagements	B	B	44
PV.3.03	Website Engagements	B	G	45

ICT

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
PV.4.01	Service Desk Response	G	G	46
PV.4.02	Network Uptime	?	?	46

PROJECTS

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
PV.5.01	Internal Audits	-	A	47
PV.5.02	Projects	-	B	47

ENVIRONMENT

Ref	Description	Monthly (in most cases)	Cumulative (in most cases)	Page
PV.6.01	Carbon Emissions	-	-	48
PV.6.02	Printing	-	-	48



PUBLIC IMPACT

PI.1.01 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	23	26	23	19	22	24	24	24	27	25	24	19	B <10%
	2023/2024	28	25	23										G Within 10%
	Status	R	G	G										A >10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	23	49	72	91	112	136	161	184	212	237	261	280	R >20%
	2023/2024	28	53	76										What is good
	Status	R	G	G										Less is better

Ref	PI.1.01
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of dwelling fires where the cause of the fire was recorded as accidental. Dwelling fires are fires in properties that are a place of residence i.e. places occupied by households such as houses and flats, excluding hotels/ hostels and residential institutions.

The number of accidental dwelling fires were comparable with recent years.

PI.1.02 - Number of Serious ADFs

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	8.2	7	7.8	6.8	6.6	7.8	7.8	8	8.4	8.2	7	8.6	B <20%
	2023/2024	11	6	5										G Within 20%
	Status	R	G	B										A >20%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	8.2	15.2	23	29.8	36.4	44.2	52	60	68.4	76.6	83.6	92.2	R >30%
	2023/2024	11	17	22										What is good
	Status	R	G	G										Less is better

Ref	PI.1.02
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of accidental dwelling fires where the fire spread from the item that had first ignited. Fire spread is in relation to heat or flame damage. This does not include smoke damage.

The number of serious accidental dwelling fires were comparable with recent years.

PI.1.03 - ADF Fire-Related Fatalities

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	0	0	0.4	0	0.2	0	0.4	0	0	0.2	0	0.2	B
	2023/2024	0	0	0										G 0
	Status	G	G	G										A > 0 a year
														R > 3 a year
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	0	0	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	1	1	1	1.2	1.2	1.4	What is good
	2023/2024	0	0	0										Less is better
	Status	G	G	G										

Ref	PI.1.03	Number of fire related fatalities recorded at accidental dwelling fires. In general, 'fire-related deaths' are those that would not have otherwise occurred had there not been a fire.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Source	BFRS IRS	

PI.1.04 - ADF Fire Related Serious Injuries

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	0	0	0.2	0.4	0.6	0	0	0	0.6	0.8	0	0.4	B
	2023/2024	1	0	0										G < 3 a year
	Status	A	G	G										A > 2 a year
														R > 4 a year
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	0	0	0.2	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.8	2.6	2.6	3	What is good
	2023/2024	1	1	1										Less is better
	Status	G	G	G										

Ref	PI.1.04	Number of fire related serious injuries recorded at accidental dwelling fires. In general, 'serious injury' can be defined as: at least an overnight stay in hospital as an in-patient.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Source	BFRS IRS	

One serious injury was recorded at an accidental dwelling fire during Q1. This incident was related to a kitchen fire as a consequence of unattended cooking.

PI.1.05 - Dwelling Fires - Cause Not Known

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	1.8	1.6	1.6	0.8	0.6	2.4	1.4	1	1	1.2	0.6	2	B < 1 per month
	2023/2024	1	1	0										G 1-2 per month
	Status	G	G	B										A > 2 per month
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	1.8	3.4	5	5.8	6.4	8.8	10.2	11.2	12.2	13.4	14	16	What is good
	2023/2024	1	2	2										Less is better
	Status	G	G	G										

Ref	PI.1.05
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of dwelling fire incidents attended where the cause of the fire was recorded as 'Not Known'.
 Not known is recorded when there is general uncertainty about the cause or motivation of the fire. 'Not Known' should only be used if absolute necessary.

BFRS now forms part of the Thames Valley Fire Investigation Team. This team delivers additional training (including forensic training) to Junior Officers (level 1 fire investigators). Crews also have access to support from Level 2 Fire Investigators should they need it during an incident.
 This additional training and access to support should help reduce the number of not known causes reported at fires.

PI.1.06 - Deliberate Dwelling Fires

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	1.2	1.4	1.4	2.6	2.8	0.4	2.8	2	1	1.2	1.8	0.6	B < 2 per month
	2023/2024	2	6	4										G 2 per month
	Status	G	R	A										A > 2 per month
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	1.2	2.6	4	6.6	9.4	9.8	12.6	14.6	15.6	16.8	18.6	19.2	What is good
	2023/2024	2	8	12										Less is better
	Status	G	A	A										

Ref	PI.1.06
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of dwelling fires where the fire was started deliberately by someone other than the owner/occupant.
 This includes derelict properties - derelict are buildings which are unfit for further use.

Of the 12 deliberate fires recorded at dwellings, six involved derelict properties. Three of the derelict building were located in or near to High Wycombe and two were in or near to Gerrards Cross.
 The remaining six all saw limited damage to the buildings. A breakdown of the incidents is recorded below:
 Two incidents were in relation to mental health
 Two incidents were in relation to fire spread from outside the property (one car and one pile of rubbish).
 One incident was in relation to rubbish burning in an unoccupied building.
 One incident was in a communal bin cupboard.

PI.1.07 - False Alarms in the Home

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	91	103	95	116	122	114	120	100	100	89	85	81	B <5%
	2023/2024	95	100	115										G Within 5%
	Status	G	G	R										A >5%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	91	193	289	405	527	641	761	861	961	1050	1135	1216	R >10%
	2023/2024	95	195	310										What is good
	Status	G	G	A										Monitor

Ref	PI.1.07
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of incidents attended in dwellings that were recorded as a False Alarm. These could have been fire related or a special service i.e. flooding. However, this does not include where we attended as a co-responder.

Most of the incidents above are in relation to fire related incidents i.e. smoke detectors, smell of smoke etc. The increase in numbers is to be expected. National guidance is still: "In the event of a fire, get out, stay out and call 999". With the number of homes in the county continuing to increase, the number of smoke detectors in homes is increasing due to initiatives such as Home Fire Safety Visit, and the 'Smoke and Carmon Monoxide Alarm Regulations 2022' coming into force.

PI.1.08 - Home Fire Safety Visits

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Target	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	B > 10%	
	2023/2024	341	340	456									G Within 10%	
	Status	R	R	B									A < 10%	
Cumulative	Target	350	700	1050	1450	1850	2250	2650	3100	3550	4000	4450	4900	R < 20%
	2023/2024	341	681	1137										What is good
	Status	R	R	G										More is better

Ref	PI.1.08
Owner	Prevention
Comparison	Against Target
Source	BFRS PRMS

Number of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) completed monthly by operational crews and the Community Safety delivery team. This includes targeted addresses, referrals, post incidents and hot-strikes.

Following a 6 month review, revisions to the approach to targeting addresses were made which prompted increased visit completions in June. The monthly targets have been increased to align to the MTFP as part of the overall drive to improve performance to be in line with the national average.

PI.1.09 - Home Fire Safety Visits - Vulnerable

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	> 80%
	Target	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	G	> 70%
	2023/2024	90%	99%	93%										A	> 59%
	Status	B	B	B										R	< 60%
Cumulative														What is good	
	Target	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%		
	2023/2024	90%	95%	93%										Higher is better	
	Status	B	B	B											

Ref	PI.1.09	Number of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) completed successfully, where at least one vulnerable person was resident. Vulnerability to fire fatality or fire injury is defined in the prevention strategy but includes; age 65 or over, frailty (mobility), disability, dementia, medical equipment use, alcohol or substance use. These align to the categories identified for Home Office reporting.
Owner	Prevention	
Comparison	Against Target	
Source	BFRS PRMS	

Our focus on targeting the vulnerable remains as our visits increase.

PI.2.01 - Non-domestic Property Fires - Accidental

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	10	12.8	11.2	13.2	9	9.4	12.2	10.2	9	11.6	8	9.8	B < 10%
	2023/2024	14	8	8										G Within 10%
	Status	R	B	B										A > 10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	10	22.8	34	47.2	56.2	65.6	77.8	88	97	108.6	116.6	126.4	R > 20%
	2023/2024	14	22	30										What is good
	Status	R	G	B										Less is better

Ref	PI.2.01
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of fires in non-domestic properties where the cause was recorded as accidental.
 This excludes derelict properties (unless four or more pumps were needed) and Prisons.

The number of incidents attended were comparable with recent years.

PI.2.02 - Non-domestic Property Fires - Deliberate

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	11.8	14.6	12.8	16.2	11.8	11.4	14.6	10.8	11.2	13.6	9.8	13	B < 10%
	2023/2024	16	9	12										G Within 10%
	Status	R	B	G										A > 10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	11.8	26.4	39.2	55.4	67.2	78.6	93.2	104	115.2	128.8	138.6	151.6	R > 20%
	2023/2024	16	25	37										What is good
	Status	R	G	G										Less is better

Ref	PI.2.02
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of fires in non-domestic properties where the cause was recorded as deliberate (where the fire was started deliberately by someone other than the owner/occupant).
 This excludes derelict properties (unless four or more pumps were needed) and Prisons.

The number of incidents attended were comparable with recent years.

PI.2.03 - Non-domestic Property Fires - Not Known

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	1.8	1.8	1.6	3	2.8	2	2.4	0.6	2.2	2	1.8	3.2	B < 2 per month
	2023/2024	2	1	4										G 2-3 per month
	Status	G	B	A										A > 3 per month
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	1.8	3.6	5.2	8.2	11	13	15.4	16	18.2	20.2	22	25.2	What is good
	2023/2024	2	3	7										Less is better
	Status	G	B	G										

Ref	PI.2.03	Number of fires in non-domestic properties where the cause was recorded as 'Not Known' This excludes derelict properties (unless four or more pumps were needed) and Prisons. Not known is recorded when there is general uncertainty about the cause or motivation of the fire. 'Not Known' should only be used if absolute necessary.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Source	BFRS IRS	

BFRS now forms part of the Thames Valley Fire Investigation Team. This team delivers additional training (including forensic training) to Junior Officers (level 1 fire investigators). Crews also have access to support from Level 2 Fire Investigators should they need it during an incident.

This additional training and access to support should help reduce the number of not known causes reported at fires.

PI.2.04 - Non-domestic Property Fires - Serious

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	8.4	7.6	7.4	11.4	6.8	6.4	5.2	5.6	5.8	4.8	6.2	7.2	B < 10%
	2023/2024	7	3	9										G Within 10%
	Status	B	B	R										A > 10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	8.4	16	23.4	34.8	41.6	48	53.2	58.8	64.6	69.4	75.6	82.8	What is good
	2023/2024	7	10	19										Less is better
	Status	B	B	B										

Ref	PI.2.04	Number of fires in non-domestic properties where the fire spread from the item that first ignited. This excludes derelict properties (unless four or more pumps were needed) and Prisons. Fire spread is in relation to heat or flame damage. This does not include smoke damage.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Source	BFRS IRS	

The number of incidents attended were comparable with recent years.

PI.2.05 - Non-domestic Property Fires - Fire Related Fatalities

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly	Prev 5 year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	B
	2023/2024	0	0	0									G 0 per year
	Status	G	G	G									A
													R > 0 per year
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	What is good
	2023/2024	0	0	0									Less is better
	Status	G	G	G									

Ref	PI.2.05
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of fire related fatalities recorded at non-domestic property fires. In general, 'fire-related deaths' are those that would not have otherwise occurred had there not been a fire. These numbers exclude incidents in Prisons.

PI.2.06 - Non-domestic Property Fires - Fire Related Injuries - Serious

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly	Prev 5 year	0	0.2	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	B
	2023/2024	1	0	0									G < 2 per year
	Status	A	G	G									A > 1 per year
													R > 2 per year
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	0	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	What is good
	2023/2024	1	1	1									Less is better
	Status	G	G	G									

Ref	PI.2.06
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of serious fire related injuries recorded at non-domestic property fires. In general, 'serious injury' can be defined as: at least an overnight stay in hospital as an in-patient. These numbers exclude incidents in Prisons.

PI.2.07 - Non-domestic Property False Alarms

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly	Prev 5 year	112	125	120	143	136	151	157	142	144	134	116	118	B < 10%
	2023/2024	119	114	130										G Within 10%
	Status	G	G	G										A > 10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	112	237	357	500	636	787	944	1086	1230	1364	1480	1598	What is good
	2023/2024	119	233	363										Less is better
	Status	G	G	G										

Ref	PI.2.07
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of incidents attended in non-domestic properties that were recorded as a False Alarm. These could have been fire related or a special service i.e. flooding. However, this does not include where we attended as a co-responder. These numbers do not include incidents in Prisons.

BFRS continues to monitor and manage 'repeat offender (where we attend a false alarm at the same property on more than one occasion within a year). BFRS has dedicated resource that works with local business to reduce their false alarms.

Crews also use the opportunity while at sites to engage with the occupiers to identify and address any risk to the public and crews. It also provides our crews with familiarisation for certain sites within their local station grounds.

PI.2.08 - Fire Safety Audits

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly	Target	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	B > 29 Per month
	2023/2024	33	15	28										G > 19 Per month
	Status	B	G	G										A < 20 Per month
Cumulative	Target	20	40	60	80	100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240	What is good
	2023/2024	33	48	76										More is better
	Status	B	G	G										

Ref	PI.2.08
Owner	Protection
Comparison	Target
Source	PRMS

Number of Fire Safety Audits Completed.

A fire safety audit is an examination of the premises and relevant documents to ascertain how the premises are being managed with regards to fire safety. Occupants will need to demonstrate to our officers that they have met the duties required by the Fire Safety Order.

Fire Safety Audit numbers are inline with Service targets.

PI.2.09 - Prison Fires

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	2022/2023	4	5	3	9	10	1	1	10	6	6	9	4	B < 10%
	2023/2024	3	6	10										G Within 10%
	Status	B	A	R										A > 10%
														R > 20%
Cumulative	2022/2023	4	9	12	21	31	32	33	43	49	55	64	68	What is good
	2023/2024	3	9	19										Less is better
	Status	B	G	R										

Ref	PI.2.09	Number of fires attended in prisons. All causes i.e. accidental/deliberate were included within these figures. All damage levels are included within these figures.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous year	
Source	BFRS IRS	

Most of the above incidents were recorded at the same location. Collaboration between the Service and staff at the prison continues. An action plan has been developed to help reduce the number of incidents and to prepare and protect staff (including BFRS). Actions include: Station familiarisation visits and drills, and changes to products used within the prison.

PI.3.01 - Number of RTCs attended

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	35	39.2	46	45	44.8	48.4	50.2	56.2	48.6	49.8	38.8	35.6	B < 10%
	2023/2024	38	51	51										G Within 10%
	Status	G	R	A										A > 10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	35	74	120	165	210	258	309	365	413	463	502	538	R > 20%
	2023/2024	38	89	140										What is good
	Status	G	R	A										Less is better

Ref	PI.3.01
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Total number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) attended. This includes all RTCs, from those where an extrication was performed to those where BFRS only provided support with scene safety.

The increase in RTC attendance saw a significant rise in a number of station grounds, notably Aylesbury which recorded 21 RTCs, compared with a previous 5 year average of 11.8. Great Missenden, Marlow, Brill and Buckingham also saw a notable percentage increase in RTCs, however, the actual numbers were low i.e. Great Missenden saw the highest increase (percentage wise): six incidents compared with the usual 1.8.
As you would expect, a significantly proportion of the incidents recorded were during rush hours.

PI.3.02 - RTCs - Fatalities

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	1.2	1	1.2	0.2	2.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.2	0.6	0.4	B < 1 per month
	2023/2024	3	2	1										G 1 per month
	Status	R	A	G										A > 1 per month
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	1	2	3	4	6	7	7	8	9	10	10	11	R > 2 per month
	2023/2024	3	5	6										What is good
	Status	R	R	A										Less is better

Ref	PI.3.02
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Total number of fatalities recorded at RTCs.
It is worth noting that these numbers only reflect where BFRS were requested and attended. It does not represent all RTC related fatalities within Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes.

All six recorded fatalities were recorded at individual incidents.
Apart from three of the six incidents occurring on a Sunday (not the same Sunday), there was no obvious pattern across the RTCs where a fatality was recorded.
Incidents included, a single incident on a motorway, a tree falling onto a car, car vs HGV and car vs motorbike.

PI.3.03 - RTC Injuries - Serious

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	5.8	8.2	10.6	5.8	8.2	5.2	6.6	8.4	4.2	8.2	6	5.4	B <10%
	2023/2024	6	17	8										G Within 10%
	Status	G	R	B										A >10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	6	14	25	30	39	44	50	59	63	71	77	83	R >20%
	2023/2024	6	23	31										What is good
	Status	G	R	R										Less is better

Ref	PI.3.03	Total number of serious injuries recorded at RTCs. In general, 'serious injury' can be defined as: at least an overnight stay in hospital as an in-patient. It is worth noting that these numbers only reflect where BFRS were requested and attended.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Source	BFRS IRS	

The 31 serious injuries were recorded across 26 incidents. As with RTC fatalities, Sundays accounted for most of the incidents, 35% (9 of the 26 incidents) or 39% of injuries (12 of the 31).

71% of the recorded injuries were in relation to the driver (22 of the 31).

84% of the recorded injuries were in relation to males (26 of the 31).

There was not a specific age group which saw a majority of the injuries recorded.

High Wycombe recorded less incidents than usual, also recorded the highest number of serious injuries: six across five incidents.

PI.3.04 - RTCs Injuries - Slight

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	14.2	18.2	20.2	19.2	19.4	20.6	19.6	22.2	17	22.4	19.4	13.4	B < 10%
	2023/2024	13	25	16										G Within 10%
	Status	G	R	B										A > 10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	14	32	53	72	91	112	131	154	171	193	212	226	R > 20%
	2023/2024	13	38	54										What is good
	Status	G	A	G										Less is better

Ref	PI.3.04	Total number of slight injuries recorded at RTCs in BFRS grounds. In general, 'slight injury' can be defined as: at attending hospital as an outpatient. It is worth noting that these numbers only reflect where BFRS were requested and attended.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Source	BFRS IRS	

PI.4.01 - Deliberate Secondary Fires (to other’s property)

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	41	37.6	38.8	56.6	57	40.8	22	19.2	13.2	13.6	19	22.4	B < 10%
	2023/2024	18	35	51										G Within 10%
	Status	B	G	R										A > 10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	41	79	117	174	231	272	294	313	326	340	359	381	R > 20%
	2023/2024	18	53	104										What is good
	Status	B	B	B										Less is better

Ref	PI.3.05
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of secondary fires that were deliberately started by somebody that wasn’t the owner. Secondary fires are generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property. These include refuse fires, grassland fires and fires in derelict buildings or vehicles, unless these fires involved casualties or rescues, or five or more pumping appliances attended.

PI.4.02 - Deliberate Primary Fires (to other’s property)

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	14.2	15.4	17.4	23.4	21.8	16.4	14.6	12.8	10.6	11.8	10.4	13.4	B < 10%
	2023/2024	13	15	24										G Within 10%
	Status	G	G	R										A > 10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	14	30	47	70	92	109	123	136	147	158	169	182	R > 20%
	2023/2024	13	28	52										What is good
	Status	G	G	A										Less is better

Ref	PI.3.06
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Number of primary fires that were deliberately started by somebody that wasn’t the owner. Primary fires are potentially more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property.



RESPONSE

R.1.01 - Total Incidents (exc co-responders)

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	573	602	604	742	710	638	599	568	566	528	490	503	B < 2.51%
	2023/2024	526	592	667										G Within 2.5%
	Status	B	G	R										A > 2.51%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	573	1175	1779	2521	3231	3869	4468	5036	5602	6129	6619	7122	R > 10%
	2023/2024	526	1118	1785										What is good
	Status	B	B	G										Monitor

Ref	R.1.01	Total number of incidents attended within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (excluding co-responder incidents).
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Source	BFRS IRS	

Incident numbers are inline with previous years.

R.1.02 - Co-Responder Incidents

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	54	52	55	66	66	67	57	65	76	60	57	58	B < 2.51%
	2023/2024	29	50	58										G Within 2.5%
	Status	B	B	A										A > 2.51%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	54	105	160	226	292	360	417	482	558	618	675	733	R > 10%
	2023/2024	29	79	137										What is good
	Status	B	B	B										Monitor

Ref	R.1.02	Total number of co-responder incidents attended within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Source	BFRS IRS	

R.1.03 - Effecting Entry Incidents

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly Prev 5 year	18.8	19.4	15	15.4	18.4	17	17.8	19.8	24	18.2	24.8	20.8
Monthly 2023/2024	27	28	18									
Monthly Status	R	R	A									
Cumulative Prev 5 year	19	38	53	69	87	104	122	142	166	184	209	229
Cumulative 2023/2024	27	55	73									
Cumulative Status	R	R	R									

B	< 10%
G	Within 10%
A	> 10%
R	> 20%

What is good
Monitor

Owner	R.1.03
Lead Member	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

Total number of incidents where BFRS were requested to support South Central Ambulance Service in gaining access to a property or room for a medical emergency.

The number of request received to support South Central Ambulance with effecting entry incidents continue to increase.

R.1.04 - Average Attendance Time to all Incidents (exc Co-Res)

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly Prev 5 year	08:22	08:25	09:08	08:51	08:54	08:42	08:43	08:42	08:38	08:25	08:17	08:29
Monthly 2023/2024	08:48	08:41	09:24									
Monthly Status	A	A	A									
Cumulative Prev 5 year	08:22	08:24	08:39	08:42	08:45	08:44	08:44	08:44	08:43	08:42	08:40	08:39
Cumulative 2023/2024	08:48	08:44	08:59									
Cumulative Status	A	A	A									

B	< 10 Sec
G	Within 10 sec
A	> 10 Sec
R	> 30 seconds

What is good
Less is better

Ref	R.1.04
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

The average attendance time to all incidents (excluding co-responding incidents).
The average time is the minutes and seconds elapsed from the time the first appliance was assigned to the incident, to the arrival of the first appliance at the incident.

The average attendance time to incidents increased in Q1 2023/2024 when compared with the previous five years. We predict this will improve as appliance availability improves, however, further investigation is being carried out to better understand the cause of this increase. Areas such as simultaneous demand, incident location, time of incident and speeds travelled will all be analysed.

R.1.05 - Average Attendance Time to ADFs

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Prev 5 year	07:42	07:30	07:54	08:22	08:12	08:24	08:20	08:27	07:26	08:26	07:44	08:07
2023/2024	08:38	08:26	08:03									
Status	R	R	G									

Prev 5 year	07:42	07:35	07:41	07:50	07:54	07:59	08:02	08:05	08:00	08:03	08:01	08:02
2023/2024	08:38	08:32	08:24									
Status	R	R	R									

B	< 10 Sec
G	Within 10 sec
A	> 10 Sec
R	> 30 seconds

What is good
Less is better

Ref	R.1.05
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous five year average
Source	BFRS IRS

The average attendance time to Accidental Dwelling Fires.
 The average time is the minutes and seconds elapsed from the time the first appliance was assigned to the incident, to the arrival of the first appliance at the incident.

As with the attendance time to all incidents, the average attendance time to accidental dwelling fires incidents increased in Q1 2023/2024 when compared with the previous five years.
 This will also form part of the investigation being carried out to better understand the cause of this increase.

R.2.01 - Availability - Wholetime

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly Target	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	B 99% - 99.9%
Monthly 2023/2024	92%	91%	88%										G 98% - 98.9%
Monthly Status	R	R	R										A 96% - 97.9%
													R <96%
Cumulative Target	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	What is good
Cumulative 2023/2024	92%	91%	90%										Higher is better
Cumulative Status	R	R	R										

Ref	R.2.01	<p>The availability of BFRS pumps to respond to incidents. This measure reflects when pumps are “on the run”. With this in mind, should an appliance be at an incident, it would still be recorded as being available.</p> <p>Reasons for an appliance being “off the run” include, crew/skill deficient, vehicle defects and decontamination.</p>
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Target	
Source	TVFC Vision	

A range of initiatives have been agreed by SMB to improve the resilience of frontline resources. This includes temporarily raising the number of Level One Incident Commanders qualified to be in charge of fire appliances, and trialling new ways of staffing on-call appliances.

Growth bids are also being submitted to Members to permanently increase the number of supervisory managers, as well as increasing the establishment of driving instructors and frontline operational training staff.

R.2.02 - Availability On-Call

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly Target	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	B >55%
Monthly 2023/2024	9.7%	7.1%	7.6%										G >29%
Monthly Status	R	R	R										A > 16%
													R < 17%
Cumulative Target	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	What is good
Cumulative 2023/2024	9.7%	8.4%	8.1%										Higher is better
Cumulative Status	R	R	R										

Ref	R.2.02	<p>The availability of BFRS pumps to respond to incidents. This measure reflects when pumps are “on the run”. With this in mind, should an appliance be at an incident, it would still be recorded as being available.</p> <p>Reasons for an appliance being “off the run” include, crew deficient, vehicle defects and decontamination.</p>
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Target	
Source	TVFC Vision	

Traditional on-call recruitment continues to be a challenge, and it is hoped that the trials scheduled for Q3 and Q4 this year will identify new ways of improving the overall resilience of the Service in the longer term.

R.2.03 - Wholetime - Response Model

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Day	Target	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	B
	2023/2024	10.8	10.7	10.5									G > 11
	Status	A	A	A									A > 10
													R < 10
Night	Target	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	What is good
	2023/2024	11.4	11.3	10.9									Higher is better
	Status	G	G	A									

Ref	R.2.03	The average number of Whole Time pumps available at the beginning of each shift, broken down my day shift and night shift.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Target	
Source	BFRS Fire Service Rota	

A range of initiatives have been agreed by SMB to improve the resilience of frontline resources. This includes temporarily raising the number of Level One Incident Commanders qualified to be in charge of fire appliances, and trialling new ways of staffing on-call appliances.

Growth bids are also being submitted to Members to permanently increase the number of supervisory managers, as well as increasing the establishment of driving instructors and frontline operational training staff.

R.2.04 - On-Call - Response Model

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Day	Prev 5 year	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	B > 5
	2023/2024	0.7	0.5	0.6									G > 3
	Status	R	R	R									A < 3
													R < 2
Night	Prev 5 year	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	What is good
	2023/2024	1.1	0.7	1.0									Higher is better
	Status	R	R	R									

Ref	R.2.04	The average number of On-Call pumps available at the beginning of each shift, broken down my day shift and night shift.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Source	BFRS IRS	

Traditional on-call recruitment continues to be a challenge, and it is hoped that the trials scheduled for Q3 and Q4 this year will identify new ways of improving the overall resilience of the Service in the longer term.

R.2.05 - OTB Mobilisations into BFRS Grounds

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	118	132	134	226	189	144	143	125	131	110	94	103	B < 10%
	2023/2024	166	137	206										G Within 10%
	Status	R	G	R										A > 10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	118	251	384	610	799	943	1086	1212	1342	1453	1547	1649	R > 20%
	2023/2024	166	303	509										What is good
	Status	R	R	R										Less is better

Ref	R.2.05	Number of mobilisations of appliance from Over The Border (OTB) into BFRS grounds
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Source	BFRS IRS	

The number of times Thames Valley Fire Control requested an appliance from “over the border” (OTB) increased during Q1 when compared with the previous five year average.

A report has been produced for the Service so that it better understands the cause and effect relating to OTB mobilisations. These mobilisations will also form part of the resource review which is being processed as part of the 2025-2030 CRMP. The Service also produces a monthly performance report identifying the utilisation of appliances in relation to OTB. BFRS pays its neighbouring services on a quarterly basis based on utilisation of their resource. However, the calculation of cost is different for each service.

R.2.06 - OTB Mobilisations out of BFRS Grounds

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	Prev 5 year	45	50	47	69	65	42	51	33	50	39	31	33	B < 10%
	2023/2024	41	49	43										G Within 10%
	Status	G	G	G										A > 10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	51	109	157	254	331	368	420	449	488	525	559	602	R > 20%
	2023/2024	41	90	133										What is good
	Status	G	G	G										Within range is better

Ref	R.2.05	Number of mobilisations of appliance from BFRS into Over The Border (OTB) grounds.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Source	BFRS IRS	

As detailed in R.2.05, OTB mobilisations will form part of the resource review which is being processed as part of the 2025-2030 CRMP.

The utilisation of these mobilisations are monitored on a monthly basis.

R.3.01 - Maintenance of Competencies

	Quarter 1	May	June	Jul
Target	24%	48%	72%	96%
2023/2024	38%			
Status	B			

B	> 5%
G	Within 5%
A	< 5%
R	< 10%

What is good
Higher is better

Ref	R3.01
Owner	Response
Comparison	Target
Source	BFRS IRS

Maintenance of competencies completed by wholetime firefighters and junior officers.

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R.3.02 - Hydrant Availability

Monthly

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Target	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
2023/2024												
Status												

B	< 10%
G	Within 10%
A	> 10%
R	> 20%

Cumulative

Target	500	1000	1500	2000	2500	3000	3500	4000	4500	5000	5500	6000
2023/2024												
Status												

What is good
Higher is better

Ref	R.3.02
Owner	Water Officer
Comparison	Target
Source	Hydra

The number of Hydrants serviced each month.
 Our water officers maintain hydrants located in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to ensure crews have appropriate access to water when responding to an emergency.
 The target ensures that all hydrants are serviced within a two year period.

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R.3.03 - High Risk Site Information

Level 4		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	> 5%
	Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	G	Within 5%
	2023/2024	81%	89%	89%										A	> 5%
	Status	A	G	G										R	> 10%
Level 3															
	Prev 5 year	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	What is good	
	2023/2024	73%	73%	74%										Higher is better	
	Status	G	G	G											

Ref	R.3.03	Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI) for high-risk sites is updated in accordance with the current risk review process. The level of detail obtained is relevant to the level of risk at each site. Site visits to maintain records and training is dependent on both crew and business cooperation and availability.
Owner		
Comparison	Target	
Source	BFRS SSRI	

Performance reports and station performance dashboards help provide crews with their performance and upcoming demand.



**A GREAT PLACE
TO WORK**

GP.1.01 - Actual vs Establishment - Wholetime

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly	Target	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	B >100%
	2023/2024	288	288	285										G > 94.9%
	Status	G	G	G										A < 95%
														R < 90%
YTD	Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	What is good
	2023/2024	96%	96%	96%										Higher is better
	Status	G	G	G										

Ref	GP.1.01	Total number of people in Wholetime roles v's budgeted establishment
Owner	HR	
Comparison	Target	
Source	iTrent	

We continue to work on a plan to reach 300, which should be achieved by September 2023. The workforce planning group continue to review staff numbers and skills across the service.

GP.1.02 - Actual vs Establishment - On-Call

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly	Target	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	B > 95%
	2023/2024	65.8	65.4	61.4										G > 89.9%
	Status	R	R	R										A < 90%
														R < 85%
YTD	Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	What is good
	2023/2024	68.5%	68.3%	66.9%										Higher is better
	Status	R	R	R										

Ref	GP.1.02	Total number of people in On-Call roles v's budgeted establishment (FTE).
Owner	HR	
Comparison	Target	
Source	iTrent	

Recruitment for On-Call firefighters continues for key on-call stations. This is supported by initiatives such as localised recruitments campaigns, have a go days and awareness evenings. The structure and demand of the On-Call system will feature heavily within the new Community Risk Management Plan, where extensive modelling will identify future action plans.

GP.1.03 - Actual vs Establishment - Support

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly	Target	133	133	133	133	133	133	133	133	133	133	133	B >100%
	2023/2024	126	126	125									G > 94.9%
	Status	A	A	A									A < 95%
													R < 90%
YTD	Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	What is good
	2023/2024	94.7%	94.7%	94.5%									Higher is better
	Status	A	A	A									

Ref	GP.1.03	Total number of people in Support roles v's budgeted establishment.
Owner	HR	
Comparison	Target	
Source	iTrent	

The progress of all support vacancies are reviewed at the workforce planning group. During May and June, 12 support roles were filled. Some of the remaining vacancies are covered by Agency staff, or are a result of an internal move or promotion, which then generated another vacancy.

GP.1.04 - Staff Turnover

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly	Prev 5 year	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	B
	2023/2024	0.6%	3%	1.5%									G < 1%
	Status	G	R	A									A < 2%
													R > 1.9%
YTD	Prev 5 year	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	What is good
	2023/2024	0.6%	1.8%	1.7%									Less is better
	Status	G	A	A									

Ref	GP.1.04	Percentage of employees who leave the Service, expressed as a percentage of the total workforce.
Owner	HR	
Comparison	Target	
Source	iTrent	

Staff that left the Service during Q1 can be broken down by the following:
Groups: 30% of leavers were wholetime firefighters (across all ranks), 39% were support staff and 30% were On-Call.
Reason: 78% of leavers resigned, 17% retired and 4% were listed as other.

The Service regularly reviews and reports on its leavers to better understand the reason for turnover and improve it's retention of staff.

GP.1.05 - Absence

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Wholetime Target	226	226	226	226	226	226	226	226	226	226	226	226	B < 20%
Wholetime 2023/2024	75.5	147	147.5										G < 0%
Wholetime Status	B	B	B										A > 0%
Support Target	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	R > 10%
Support 2023/2024	81.2	81.4	71										What is good
Support Status	B	B	B										Less is better

Ref	GP.1.05
Owner	HR
Comparison	Target
Source	iTrent

The number of working days (shifts) lost per month due to sickness. This covers short and long term sickness.
 The target within the measure is based on the sector average in 2019/2020, as detailed within the National Fire and Rescue Service Sickness Absence Report. The 2019/2020 report was used as not to reflect the impact of Covid 19.

GP.1.06 - Welfare & Support

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly Prev 3 year	13.7	19.7	14.3	7.3	18.0	51.7	31.7	27.7	18.7	21.0	13.3	8.7	B
Monthly 2023/2024	11	23	42										G Within 50%
Monthly Status	G	G	A										A > 50% difference
Cumulative Prev 3 year	13.7	33.3	47.7	55.0	73.0	124.7	156.3	184.0	202.7	223.7	237.0	245.7	R
Cumulative 2023/2024	11	34	76										What is good
Cumulative Status	G	G	A										Monitor

Ref	GP.1.06
Owner	HR
Comparison	Previous three years
Source	Health Assured

The number of times our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) has been contacted via phone or online.

GP.1.07 - Employment Engagement

	2017	2020	2022	
Target	65%	65%	65%	65%
Actual	21%	32%	24%	
Status	R	R	R	

B	> 65%
G	55-65%
A	45-55%
R	< 45%

What is good
Higher is better

Ref	GP.1.07
Owner	HR
Comparison	Target
Source	Supplier of Staff Survey

Most Effective employees are both highly engaged and enabled.

Commentary: Our last employee engagement % was taken from the staff survey in Jan 2022. Budget has been signed off to complete annual staff surveys going forward from Jan 2024.

We continue to look at ways to engage with staff, inc recently holding our revamped People Awards where we recognised each other and the great work we do.

GP.1.08 - Appraisal & Objectives Completion

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Target	75%	95%	95%	95%
2023/2024	58%			
Status	A			
Objectives				
Target	75%	95%	95%	95%
2023/2024	47%			
Status	R			

B	>95%
G	Within 10%
A	< 10% of target
R	< 20% of target

What is good
Higher is better

Ref	GP.1.08
Owner	Learning & Development
Comparison	Target
Source	iTrent

The percentage of all staff that have received their 2022/2023 end of year review and their 2023/2024 objectives.

Throughout this year, face to face and virtual training sessions were held for Managers to attend to learn more about the appraisal process. These sessions encouraged discussion around the barriers to appraisal completion and gave guidance on how to carry out effective appraisals and talked about how Managers can facilitate an appraisal discussion. Further training sessions like this will be rolled out again throughout Q2 to support Managers as they approach the half-year appraisal deadline. Since April 2023 when the end of year submissions for 2022/23 and objective setting for 2023/24 became due, we have created a template for regular reporting to Managers. This was finalised in May and a reminder was sent to Managers on 13 June 2023 to prompt them to complete their overdue appraisals. A further prompt will be sent to Managers again throughout August. Prompts always result in an increased return of overdue performance and development packs showing the importance of regular chasers / follow ups from Organisational Development (OD).

GP.1.09 - Mandatory E-Learning Completed

Wholetime

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Target	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%			
2023/2024	16%	29%	33%									
Status	G	G	G									

B	
G	Within 10%
A	< 10 %
R	< 20 %

Support

Prev 5 year	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%			
2023/2024	12%	23%	30%									
Status	G	G	G									

What is good
Higher is better

Ref	GP.1.09
Owner	Learning & Development
Comparison	Target
Source	BFRS IRS

All BFRS staff are required to complete a number of mandatory e-learning packages every year. These packages cover three main subjects across Health & Safety, Equality Diversity & Inclusion and Data Protection. Within the subjects, there are packages such as Safety Event Reporting, ED&I in the Workplace and Responsible for Information.

Completion rate is inline with expectation. However, managers are being provided with local completion rates to encourage better completion rates in Q2.

GP.1.10 - Grievance & Disciplines

Grievances

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2022/2023	0	1	0	3	1	4	3	0	1	1	0	0
2023/2024	0	0	0									
Status	G	G	G									

B	
G	< 2 per month
A	2 per month
R	> 2 per month

Disciplines

2022/2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	1	1
2023/2024	1	2	1									
Status	G	A	G									

What is good
Monitor

Ref	GP.1.10
Owner	HR
Comparison	Target
Source	HR

The number of new grievances and disciplines recorded each month. Figures include both informal and formal grievances. Where an informal grievance is escalated to being a formal grievance, this will be counted twice.

GP.2.01 - Injury Rate

Quarterly

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Prev 3 year	19.0	15.6	22.6	25.8
2023/2024	18.67			
Status	G			

B	< 15
G	< 23
A	> 22
R	> 30

What is good
Less is better

Ref	GP.2.01
Owner	Health & Safety
Comparison	Previous three year average
Source	H&S Reporting System

The injury rate give the number of people injured over a quarter based on a group of 1,000 employees or workers.

Injury rates are inline with usual outcomes, both local and national.

GP.2.02 - Workplace injuries

Quarterly

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Prev 3 year	9.0	7.3	10.7	12.3
2023/2024	9			
Status	G			

B	< 5 per qtr
G	< 11 per qtr
A	> 10 per qtr
R	> 15 per qtr

Cumulative

Prev 3 year	9.0	16.3	27.0	39.3
2023/2024	9			
Status	G			

What is good
Less is better

Ref	GP.2.02
Owner	Health & Safety
Comparison	Previous three year average
Source	H&S Reporting System

The number of workplace injuries reported across the Service. This includes operational staff, support staff, agency and visitors.

As like the Injury rates, workplace injuries are inline with usual outcomes, both local and national.

GP.2.03 - Near Miss Events Recorded

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quarterly Prev 3 year	12.3	9.7	7.3	9.3
Quarterly 2023/2024	13			
Quarterly Status	A			
Cumulative				
Cumulative Prev 3 year	12.3	22.0	29.3	38.7
Cumulative 2023/2024	13			
Cumulative Status	A			

B	< 5 per qtr
G	< 11 per qtr
A	> 10 per qtr
R	> 15 per qtr

What is good
Monitor

Ref	GP.2.03
Owner	Health & Safety
Comparison	Previous three year average
Source	H&S Reporting System

Number of near miss events recorded across the Service.
A near miss is where a safety event (an accident or incident) occurs, but no personal injury, damage or financial loss results.

As a Service we encourage near miss reporting. All reported near misses are investigated according to it's severity and provide us with evidence and actions to help prevent accidents and injuries.
Of the 13 recorded near misses, 11 were classed as minor or moderate. The two remaining were RIDDOR reported.

GP.2.04 - Vehicle Incidents

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quarterly Prev 3 year	9.7	8.3	10.0	12.3
Quarterly 2023/2024	20			
Quarterly Status	R			
Cumulative				
Cumulative Prev 3 year	9.7	18.0	28.0	40.3
Cumulative 2023/2024	20			
Cumulative Status	R			

B	< 7 per qtr
G	< 13 per qtr
A	> 12 per qtr
R	> 15 per qtr

What is good
Less is better

Ref	GP.2.04
Owner	Health & Safety
Comparison	Previous three year average
Source	H&S Reporting System

Number of reported vehicle incidents involving BFRS vehicles. These numbers include third party liability and all levels of damage.

Of the 20 vehicle incidents six were operational, 12 were during routine activity and two were during training.
17 of the reported incidents were classed as minor and three were reported as moderate. Of the three moderate, two were deemed to be due to third party fault.

GP.2.05 - RIDDOR reportable Injuries

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quarterly Prev 3 year	2.0	0.7	1.0	3.7
Quarterly 2023/2024	3			
Quarterly Status	A			
Cumulative				
Cumulative Prev 3 year	2.0	2.7	3.7	7.3
Cumulative 2023/2024	3			
Cumulative Status	A			

B	
G	< 1 per qtr
A	=> 1 per qtr
R	=> 3 per qtr

What is good
Less is better

Ref	GP.2.05
Owner	Health & Safety
Comparison	Previous three year average
Source	H&S Reporting System

Number of staff who suffered RIDDOR reportable injuries at work. RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reportable injuries are generally considered to be serious injuries to staff and visitors. The definition of RIDDOR injuries can be found on HSE's website.

The three reported injuries were as follows:
 Musculoskeletal hand injury during a drill/training.
 Heat stress during training exercise.
 Blistering during training exercise.

GP.2.06 - Attacks on Members of Staff

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quarterly Prev 3 year	0.7	0.3	1.0	1.3
Quarterly 2023/2024	2			
Quarterly Status	A			
Cumulative				
Cumulative Prev 3 year	0.7	1.0	2.0	3.3
Cumulative 2023/2024	2			
Cumulative Status	A			

B	
G	< 1 per qtr
A	=> 1 per qtr
R	=> 3 per qtr

What is good
Less is better

Ref	GP.2.06
Owner	Health & Safety
Comparison	Previous three year average
Source	H&S Reporting System

Number of incidents in which there was a verbal or physical attack on a member of staff. An incident is recorded if the attack was within the employees working hours, or during work related travel. These figures would also include attacks on visitors while on site.

Of the two reported incidents, one was an attack on firefighters during an operational incident. The other reported incident was during a Home Fire Safety Visit which left a member of staff feeling more uncomfortable than threatened. However, BFRS' policy is to include these events within this reporting system.

GP.2.07 - Equipment Damage

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quarterly	Prev 3 year	10.7	15.3	9.7	12.7
	2023/2024	20			
	Status	A			
Cumulative	Prev 3 year	10.7	26.0	35.7	48.3
	2023/2024	20			
	Status	A			

B	< 5 per qtr
G	< 15 per qtr
A	> 14 per qtr
R	> 20 per qtr

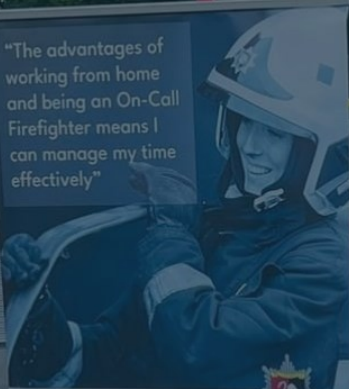
What is good
Less is better

Ref	GP.2.07
Owner	Health & Safety
Comparison	Previous three year average
Source	H&S Reporting System

Number of reported incidents where an item of equipment was damaged. This includes everything from office equipment to demountable equipment on operational appliances. Please note, this does not include damage to vehicles or premises.

Of the 20 reported incidents of equipment damage, 17 were deemed to be minor and three moderate. 10 were recorded in April, three in May and Seven in June. 13 were recorded during operational incidents. One of the moderate recorded incidents was in relation to breathing apparatus during training. One was in relation to the Jockey wheel on a boat trailer. The final involved gas tight suits (not during an operational incident).

"The advantages of working from home and being an On-Call Firefighter means I can manage my time effectively"



What are On-Call Firefighters?

An On-Call Firefighter is someone employed by a fire and rescue service who is paid to be 'on call' to respond to a range of emergencies and to engage with their community.

They have everyday lives and jobs, until their alerter sounds - then they become professional firefighters.

What's in it for you?

- Great way of meeting new people.
- Retainer fee, plus hourly rate when you attend incidents.
- Learn new skills such as firefighting, wearing breathing apparatus, working at heights.
- Opportunities to achieve qualifications in other transferable skills, such as leadership and management, large goods vehicle driving, first aid, trauma care and health and safety.

bucksfire.gov.uk/on-call-firefighter

MAHILL



PUBLIC VALUE

PV.1.01 - Forecast - Outturn (£000's)

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Target	36,450	36,450	36,450									
Forecast	36,450	35,938	35,772									
% Difference	0	-1.4%	-1.9%									
Status	B	A	A									

B	Within 0.5%
G	Within 1.0%
A	Within 2.0%
R	> 2% difference

What is good
Closer to Target

Ref	PV.1.01
Owner	Finance
Comparison	Target
Source	BFRS IRS

The financial measure compares the approved revenue budget (target) against the forecast revenue outturn position (forecast). Negative % difference indicates an underspend whereas positive % difference indicating an overspend.

While the current forecast is showing an underspend of nearly 2%, 1% of this is made up of additional interest return on investments projected and extra funding not anticipated. Without taking these two factors into consideration the performance measure would be within 1% of the target. In terms of utilising the underspend during Q1 and Q2 two in-year budget process, which contains a total of 21 growth bids were submitted for officer approval. It is anticipated this will see a reduction in the underspend to in line with the target.

PV.1.02 - Bank Shift Cost (£)

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly Prev 3 year	105K	95K	99K	104K	114K	114K	130K	120K	101K	59K	77K	82K
Monthly 2023/2024	105k	101k										
Monthly Status	A	A										
Cumulative Prev 3 year	105K	200K	299K	403K	517K	631K	761K	881K	982K	1041K	1118K	1200K
Cumulative 2023/2024	105k	206k										
Cumulative Status	A	A										

B	
G	< 0%
A	> 0%
R	> 10%

What is good
Less is better

Ref	PV.1.02
Owner	Response
Comparison	Previous three year average
Source	BFRS Accounts

The total cost of Bank shifts. Bank shifts are paid to cover shortfall in operational staff or skills at wholetime and day crewed stations.

BFRS is still aiming to reduce its banks shift payments. During the first quarter bank payments were used to ensure those with the needed skills were in place.
 It is also worth noting that the figures used are actual and do not take into consideration the following;
 - pay-rises over the four year period
 - increased payments for certain bank shifts
 - a change in demand on bank i.e. drivers and officers in charge, instead of firefighters.

PV.1.03 - Fraud

Annual

	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Target	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023/2024	0	0	0	0	0	0
Status	G	G	G	G	G	G

B	
G	0
A	
R	> 0

What is good
Less is better

Ref	PV.1.03
Owner	Finance
Comparison	Target
Source	BFRS Accounts

The number of confirmed cases of fraud.

PV.2.01 - Reportable Data Breaches

Annual		17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2023/2024	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G

B	
G	0
A	
R	> 0

What is good
Less is better

Ref	PV.1.03
Owner	Legal & Governance
Comparison	Target
Source	

A data breach means a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data. A reportable data breach is one that triggers a requirement for notification to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) where a breach is likely to result in a significant risk to an individual to whom the data relates.

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PV.2.02 - FOIs Responded to Within Timescales

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	No of FOIs	9	6	7									
		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not in time-scales	1	2	0										
Status	A	R	G										

B	
G	0
A	1
R	> 1

What is good
Lower is better

Ref	PV.2.02
Owner	Legal & Governance
Comparison	Target
Source	Legal & Governance

The number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests responded to within the statutory timescales.
The FOI Act requires that a response to an FOI request be provided within 20 working days from receipt.

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PV.3.01 - Compliments and Complaints

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Compliments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	B 0
	2023/2024	0	1	1									G 1
	Status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Complaints	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	R > 2
	2023/2024	1	2	2									What is good
	Status	G	A	A									Monitor

Ref	PV.3.01	Number of compliments and complaints received each month. This does not identify if the complaints were upheld.
Owner	Legal & Governance	
Comparison	Monitor	
Source		

The two compliments received in Q1 were in relation to Community Engagement, and an incident we attended.
 The five complaints were all in relation to different subjects:
 Driving
 Attendance time
 Damage to property
 Incident Handling
 Community Engagement

PV.3.02 - Social Media - Engagement (000's)

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Monthly	2022/2023	23.5	3.1	3.6	39.1	12.3	4.7	2.9	3.7	11.7	10.5	15.0	34.8	B > 10%
	2023/2024	14.1	13.1	19.6										G Within 10%
	Status	R	B	B										A < 10%
Cumulative	2022/2023	25.5	26.7	30.3	69.4	81.7	86.3	89.2	92.9	104.6	115.1	130.2	165.0	R < 20%
	2023/2024	14.1	27.2	46.8										What is good
	Status	R	G	B										Higher is better

Ref	PV.3.02	Total number of unique engagements with our social media content across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.
Owner	MarComms	
Comparison	Previous year	
Source	Social Media Platforms	

PV.3.03 - Website Visits (000's)

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly	Prev 5 year	13.7	12.5	15.7										B > 10%
	2023/2024	13.2	13.4	17.6										G Within 10%
	Status	G	G	B										A < 10%
Cumulative	Prev 5 year	13.7	26.1	41.9										R < 20%
	2023/2024	13.2	26.5	44.2										
	Status	G	G	G										

What is good
Monitor

Ref	PV.3.03	Our website is our biggest public communication and engagement channel. Website traffic is monitored for user analyse. Currently, we monitor this superficially due to capacity and conflicting priorities. However it enables us to react, when required, yielding valuable insights to help identify audience, improve the customer experience and website performance.
Owner	MarComms	
Comparison	Monitor	
Source	Google Analytics	

The number of visits to the BFRS website were comparable with recent years.

PV.4.01 - Service Desk Response

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly	Target	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	B > 99%
	2023/2024	97.2%	97.6%	98%									G > 95%
	Status	G	G	G									A > 90%
Cumulative	Target	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	R < 90%
	2023/2024	97.2%	97.4%	97.6%									What is good
	Status	G	G	G									Higher is better

Ref	PV.4.01
Owner	ICT
Comparison	Target
Source	Vivantio

The percentage of ICT Helpdesk tickets responded to within Service Level Agreement. These tickets include items such as account unlocks, password resets, CCTV retrieval and accommodating the business needs in relation to starters, leavers and transfers. The ICT team can expect to receive up to 1000 tickets per month.

Service desk responses continue to fall inline with it's Service Level Agreement.

PV.4.02 - Network Uptime

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Monthly	Target	?	?	?									B
	2023/2024	?	?	?									G
	Status	?	?	?									A
Cumulative	Target	?	?	?									R
	2023/2024	?	?	?									What is good
	Status	?	?	?									Higher is better

Ref	PV.4.02
Owner	ICT
Comparison	Target
Source	Buckinghamshire Council

Network uptime is a measure of how well the computer network—whether a local area network (LAN) or a wide-area network (WAN)—can respond to the connectivity and performance demands placed on it. This information is monitored and managed by Buckinghamshire Council

BFRS are waiting on Buckinghamshire Council to provide SLAs and performance reporting.

PV.5.01 - Internal Audits

	Feb-21	Jun-21	Oct-21	Feb-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Feb-23	Jun-23				
Number	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2023/2024	19	23	22	21	22	29	12	13			
Status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Percentage	Target	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%			
	2023/2024	14%	7%	29%	19%	22%	30%	13%	14%			
	Status	A	G	R	A	R	R	A	A			

B	< 5%
G	5% - 9.9%
A	10% - 20%
R	> 20%

What is good
Less is better

Ref	PV.5.01	Number of overdue audits actions following internal audits. This is then compared with the total number of actions.
Owner	PMO	
Comparison	Target	
Source	Audit Providers - (BC)	

Commentary: Internal audit actions are presented to members via the Overview and Audit Committee.

Action: Review all outstanding audit actions with owners and confirm completion timescales with PMO by End of Q2

PV.5.02 - Projects

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
In Progress	-	-	-	-
	2023/2024	15		
	-	-	-	-
Off Track	Target	<3	<3	<3
	2023/2024	0		
	Status	B		

B	0 off track
G	< 3 off track
A	< 5 off track 10%
R	> 4 off track

What is good
Less is better

Ref	PV.5.02	The number of projects the service has in progress, and the number of those deemed to be 'at project status red' (off track - not recoverable). This excludes projects in relation to property.
Owner	PMO	
Comparison	Target	
Source	PMO	

Commentary: We continue to track projects with monthly updates to the Business Transformation board. Tracking projects centrally allows us to review any capacity issues due to competing priorities

Action: To ensure progress is made on all PMO audit actions and complete those due or overdue by End of Q2

PV.6.01 - Carbon Emissions—Tonnes of CO2

	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Target	-	-	-	-
Tonnes	978			
Status	?			

B	
G	
A	
R	

What is good
Less is better

Ref	PV.6.01
Owner	Finance & Property
Comparison	Target
Source	

Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions (comprising gas, electricity and diesel). This will be an annual measure due to the seasonal nature of consumption, and even then a particularly mild or cold winter or high or low number of incidents could have a large impact on the figures.

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PV.6.02 - Printing

Monthly

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2022/2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29.4k	45.3k	41.8k
2023/2024	32.8k	42.8k	41.8k									
Status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

B	< 10%
G	< 5%
A	> 0%
R	> 5%

Cumulative

2022/2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2023/2024	33k	75k	117k									
Status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

What is good
Less is better

Ref	PV.6.02
Owner	Finance
Comparison	Previous year
Source	ICT & 3rd Party Printers

The number of printed sheets of paper (sides), per month, both internally and by 3rd party suppliers. Historical information for this measure was not available. With this in mind, most of 2023/2024 will be used to collect benchmark information for 2024/2025.

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 11 October 2023

Report title: People Strategy 2020-2025 – Year three update

Lead Member: Councillor Gary Hall, Lead Member for People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance

Report sponsor: Mick Osborne, Chief Operating Officer/Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Author and contact: Station Commander – Human Resources Projects – Oli Finch
Ofinch@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Noting

Recommendations:

That the contents of this update and progress made in the key areas are noted.

Executive summary:

The People Strategy 2020-2025 (referred to henceforth as the Strategy), was approved at the October 2020 Fire Authority meeting. It sets out a framework for engaging and developing employees of Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service). The Strategy will support cultural changes which will help the Service to better deliver its vision and strategic priorities, while ensuring behaviours, values and standards are adhered to.

The framework maintains the existing five key areas; however, they were reworded to better reflect our values;

- Key area one – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Key area two – Employee Engagement
- Key area three – Organisational Development and Resourcing
- Key area four – Training, Learning and Development
- Key area five – Employee Health and Wellbeing

Updates for each key area and year four future opportunities are provided in the attached appendices.

The current Strategy can be found on the Service's external website.

The existing Strategy is embedded within the Service and work is on-going to develop each of the five key objectives.

There has been notable progress made in all key areas. Examples include:

- a renewed approach to community engagement supported by a structured Equality, Diversity and Inclusion calendar
- the BFRS Staff Development Pathway Project is being designed to align to the National Chief Councils (NFCC's) [Core Learning pathway](#) and [NFCC Leadership Framework](#)
- the Authority has launched its new 360 Feedback process. This is currently being trialled within the senior management team and will later be rolled out to middle/dept managers
- a significant commitment to increasing the Service's operational establishment, through a range of selection, recruitment and training methods.

The Service are following the recommendations from both the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade and the HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Cost and benefits implications for each initiative outlined in the Strategy will be considered as part of the supporting individual business cases if the requirement for further funding is identified. People Strategy updates will be delivered from existing budgets.

Risk management:

The Organisational Development (OD) Risk Register highlights current and future employee resourcing risks. The Strategy is identified as one of the control measures in place to mitigate resourcing risks by ensuring we attract the employees with the required skills, knowledge and behaviours to progress our organisational objectives. Employee availability continues to present an identified risk, the Service continues to develop new methods to maintain and increase employee availability, which supports the Services operational response model.

The Strategy complements our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) objectives, which were reviewed and updated in 2023. Arrangements are in place to ensure language and content are inclusive and appropriate.

The successful implementation of the Strategy depends on buy-in and energetic support of everyone concerned, therefore employee consultation and engagement will continue to enable its development.

Quality assurance arrangements are in place which ensure the Service can govern the content of the Strategy and how it is used, this will allow opportunities for further development through collaborative working.

Following the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade by Nazir Afzal OBE in November 2022 and subsequent news articles into allegations at South Wales and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services, the service reviewed what was in place for employees and what actions needed to be taken.

A report was presented to March Executive Committee which showed our work to date and planned. A presentation was given on the proposed “Speak Up” campaign. In March 2023 the HMICFRS published the “Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services” report. An Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting was held on 28 April 2023 where the HMICFRS recommendations were approved. A further report was presented to June Fire Authority to give an update on the work to date.

Our People Strategy comprises of key areas that support cultural changes which will help the Service to better deliver its vision and strategic priorities.

The risk of not Exploring our Culture, the HMICFRS Values and Culture report and the actions associated with this has been added to the Human Resources Risk Register and the Corporate risk register.

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations.

Privacy and security implications:

No personally identifiable information is contained within the Strategy. Data Protection Impact Assessments exist for each key area, these will be revised and updated where required.

Duty to collaborate:

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 requires the Service to consider opportunities for collaboration with the police and ambulance services.

Collaboration opportunities arising from the Strategy are identified and actioned proactively and as they present themselves. The Service continues to work closely with our Thames Valley partners in a range of areas and collaborate through the Five Shires collaboration partnership “Addressing Inequalities” collaboration (Buckinghamshire, Royal Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services) which was originally set up in August 2020.

The Service continues to support the Armed Forces Covenant and promises to actively champion the Armed Forces community. It acknowledges that we recognise the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families can bring to our Service. The Service was presented the Gold Award in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme in recognition of this partnership.

Health and safety implications:

There are no implications with regard to health and safety.

Environmental implications:

There are no environmental implications.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

The Service has a statutory obligation under equality legislation to eliminate unlawful discrimination. The Strategy, policies, and procedures aim to support the meeting of these requirements.

If the Service has greater representation of our diverse communities, it will be better equipped to find solutions to barriers in relation to employment and accessing services. This can be achieved through effective recruitment procedures and on-going employee engagement, enabling the Service to identify and address any actual or perceived barriers for employees from under-represented groups.

Diversity is one of our core values and a key area in this Strategy. The dedicated EDI group is fully embedded and meets monthly to progress EDI objectives.

The Strategy aligns to and complements our EDI Policy and objectives.

This proposal supports the Services Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025.

Equality Impact Assessments are carried out in the five key areas to ensure equalities are fully considered.

Consultation and communication:

The Strategy provides a framework, along with the governance arrangements for controlling the Service's workforce development over the next five years and is aligned to the Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025.

The Strategy sets out a framework which supports delivery of the Service's strategic objectives over the next five years. The priorities and objectives within the Strategy will be cascaded to a Directorate, team and individual level and resourced from within the establishment and budgets set by the Workforce and Medium-Term Financial Plans.

The author has collaborated and consulted with key stakeholders to ensure the information provided regarding the five key areas has the relevant detail and is representative of progress made over the previous twelve-month period.

This paper was presented at the 8 September 2023 Business Transformation Board and the 19 September 2023 Strategic Management Board and will be reviewed and considered for approval at the 11 October 2023 Fire Authority meeting.

Background papers:

Public Safety Plan 2020 - 2025

[New five-year Public Safety Plan launched - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/06/fa-160621-item-14.pdf/>

Fire Authority report 14 October 2020. People Strategy 2020 – 2025.

[Fire Authority Meeting - 14 October 2020 - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

Apprenticeship Programme – Annual Statutory Reporting 2020 – 2021 – 21 July 2021

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/07/oa-item-15-210721.pdf/>

Fire Authority Update 15 February 2023 - Apprenticeship Programme Update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/02/fire-authority-meeting-15-february-2023-item-12-bmkfa-apprenticeship-programme-update.pdf/>

Fire Authority report 13 October 2021. People Strategy 2020 – 2025 – Year one update.

[Fire Authority Meeting - 13 October 2021 - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

Fire Authority report 12 October 2022. People Strategy 2020 – 2025 – Year two update.

[Fire Authority Meeting 12 October 2022. People Strategy 2020-2025 - Year two update](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service HMICFRS report – Dec 2021

[BFRS HMICFRS 2021 Report \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

Funding Phase 2 Leadership & Management Development Programme – 23 March 2022

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/03/ec-item-7-230322.pdf/>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025 – Year two update – June 2022

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/05/fa-item-16.pdf/>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025 – Year three update – June 2023

[Fire Authority Meeting June 14. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025 - year three update - June 2023](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	
2	Employee Engagement	
3	Organisational Development and Resourcing	
4	Training, Learning and Development	
5	Employee Health and Wellbeing	
6	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	
7	Year four Future Opportunities	

Appendix 1 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Service is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). There are a range of workstreams across the Service to achieve the EDI objectives. In early 2023 the EDI group discussed and reviewed the EDI objectives to continue the strong focused approach, they have revised them to align with the overarching EDI objectives.

Change 100 Internship

The programme is paid summer work placements and mentoring for talented university students and recent graduates with a disability or long-term condition; they are matched with suitable employers. Change 100 allows access to a unique candidate not accessed before. The Service secured an internship working within the Resource Management Team and the candidate started on the 10 July 2023.

EDI Champions training

53 employees (Watch Commander and Support Services equivalent) were given bespoke face-to-face EDI training by an external consultant. This provided EDI information, legislation, and best practice to ensure they are confident and consistent in their promotion of EDI matters. The aim is to effectively cascade the EDI information and role-model the expected behaviours to their employees.

Equality impact Assessments

One of the 2021 HMICFRS recommendations was that “The service should ensure it has robust processes in place to undertake equality impact assessments (EIA), implement and review any actions required”. The guidance and template for these have been reviewed and consulted on to ensure they reflect current best practice and embedding equalities throughout everything. These are now embedded and part of the business as usual governance process. Over thirty EIA’s have been completed to date, and these are stored centrally for record keeping whilst also offering the opportunity to show best practice.

Individual training toolkits

The HEAT eLearning packages are continuing to evolve and develop for example Equality impact assessments and Deaf awareness, Bullying v’s Banter, Hidden Disabilities, Equality and Diversity in the workplace. Following review, the overall response to EDI packages was not where the Service would like it to be. The review demonstrated this was due to how the packages were set up on the system. Each package has been re-assigned to engage with the entire workforce.

Create interest groups

A women’s network has been established; the first meeting was held on 18 September. It is expected this will enable female employees to raise concerns around facilities, welfare, uniform, etc.

A neurodiversity group has been established to raise awareness of neurodiversity; and how the Service can support the neurodivergent employees and the members of the community.

Work is ongoing to create a Black, and LGBT network, whilst the Service has representatives for national support networks for these groups, to enable sharing of information and best practice.

EDI calendar

There is an established EDI calendar which enables the Service to share information about EDI dates and events via the “Valuing Our Diversity” section of the Intranet.

They signpost employees to linked Service activities such as Islamic calendar events or Pride, providing employees with the opportunity to support the planning process and/or to attend and support.

The EDI calendar is reviewed monthly as part of the EDI meeting. This includes reviewing articles to identify good practice and the areas where engagement has been most effective by reviewing interaction data.

Community engagement to increase the diversity of the Service

The Service delivers a range of positive action events to support recruitment and community engagement activities. There have been targeted On-Call familiarisation events, “have a go” days and public engagement sessions to promote both Wholetime and On-Call vacancies within the Service.

Careers events are supported by the Service’s recruitment team; this is supplemented by other opportunities including stands at the Bucks County Show, National Apprenticeship Show and Fire Station open days.

The Service’s current focus is to continue with the ongoing engagement within the South Asian community to advance the Services presence in the community and promoting careers opportunities in the Fire & Rescue Service. This has so far proved a significant success promoting community engagement, gathering data about what may affect someone’s interest in applying to work for the Service. These activities, alongside local school visits and further follow up activities at local mosques, should help to further raise the profile within the community. A range of Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) events are attended by the EDI group and learning, and resources are shared with employees across the service.

The Service continues to support the LGBTQ+ community and attended the Milton Keynes Pride Festival in September 2023 with an estimated attendance of 20,000 people. Employees support and attend other Pride events in the region and the

Service has invested in promotional materials to ensure the Services presence is visible whilst encouraging effective engagement at these events.

Employers Network for equality and inclusion (ENEI) Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE)

The Service was previously awarded bronze accreditation in 2020, 2021 and 2022. The ENEI TIDE survey was completed by the Head of Human Resources in collaboration with the EDI group and stakeholders from across the Service. The Service has received confirmation it has been awarded silver accreditation for 2023.

Addressing Inequalities Five Shires collaboration

The collaboration Buckinghamshire continues to work collaboratively with the other four Fire Services - Royal Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, and Warwickshire working together to demonstrate the commitment to drive the initiatives forward. The Chief Fire Officers from each service have a strong commitment to improve awareness and understanding of racial equality issues in each Fire and Rescue Service.

The aims of this project are that the services across all five counties:

- are better educated in the issues regarding race inequality and injustice.
- are safe spaces where people can have respectful and constructive dialogue about racism and all the other prejudices present in society
- will have action plans that support continuous and sustainable improvement that makes the service more diverse and inclusive.

Gender Pay Gap

There continues to be progress made regarding addressing inequalities, the 2022 gender pay gap report presented to the Executive Committee in March 2023 was approved for publication. Data was appropriately published by the annual deadline date of 30 March. This was the sixth year of undertaking gender pay gap reporting, and for 2022 the gap decreased by 0.4 percentage points to 13.4% (from 13.8% in 2021) and 6% from first year of reporting in 2017. This is positive and takes the Service 1.5 percentage points below the UK average pay gap of 14.9% for 2022. However, the median (mid-point) gender pay gap has increased for 2022 from 9% to 11.7%. This is largely due to the highest paid employees within the Service being male.

Armed Forces Covenant

The Service is proud to have signed the Armed Forces Covenant, which is its pledge to recognise the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans, and military families can bring to the organisation. The Service was awarded the Defence Employer Recognition Gold Award in October 2022. It is the Services commitment to forces

friendly initiatives such as employing veterans, supporting individuals transitioning out of the armed forces into a new career, and providing flexibility for reservists.

The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

The service is currently supporting two cadet training programmes based at Aylesbury and High Wycombe, and further engagement will lead to a programme based at West Ashland.

EDI group work

These issues have been addressed following them being raised into the EDI group.

- High Wycombe – improved air conditioning / redecorated / repairs made
- West Ashland – improvements have been made to the female firefighter’s locker area and communal shower area
- Service Headquarters - installed an automated front door
- £25k has been made available each year in the Property capital budget to support identified EDI related adjustments to make these improvements – The Property Manager attends the EDI Group meetings this helps in identifying and utilises the £25k to the most appropriate areas.
- Toilet facilities and welfare at incidents – pop up toilet – awaiting tent to pilot, West Ashland and Aylesbury Fires Stations feedback sought on them at station
- Collection of EDI data, the collection of equality data from the workforce is essential to help identify where to focus the Services resources. It allows the Service to assess the value of diversity strategies, measuring progress and maintaining transparency. A review was undertaken, benchmarking against what other organisation collect and best practice the data fields were consulted on, amendments made and agreed. The data is used to ensure a diverse and fair organisation, to understand employees better.

Staff Survey Theme 1 - Recruitment/ Staff availability

Significant work is ongoing to increase recruit to our operational establishment, reducing the Services dependence on Bank Shifts, providing additional resilience and enabling the Service to work against the operational resourcing model.

See Appendix 3 and 4

Staff Survey Theme 2 - Uniform

The feedback on the uniform covered the following:

- Quality
- Fit for Purpose
- Standards
- Badge/Branding
- Availability

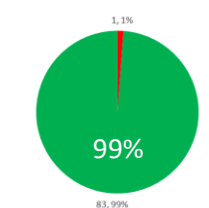
Please note: This excludes Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

There is a renewed focus on uniform which will allow the Service to review the current provision to ensure value for money whilst providing clothing appropriate to our employee's needs.



In January 2023 a softshell branded jacket was made available to all employees. Feedback was extremely positive.

Are you happy with the quality of your jacket?



The allocation of a branded jacket was just the start.

Engagement sessions are underway with teams across the service to understand their requirements for uniform and feed into the project.

Staff Survey Theme 3 - Training

There was an underlying feeling that the training team were focusing on assessment rather than training. The training team have worked hard to move from assessment

to a mix of training and assessment, this has been further enhanced by utilising the Fire Service College to deliver exercises and additional training.

See Appendix 4

Staff Survey Theme 4 - Reward and Recognition

The Service has invested time and resources into celebrating our employees. Acknowledging and celebrating their achievements bolsters self-esteem. Self-assured teams are effective, driven and will actively seek to improve results and performance.

The Employee and Engagement working group has generated ideas for Reward and Recognition and the focus for the first part of 2023/2024 was to relaunch our People Awards.



The 2023 People Awards took place on Friday 14 July and celebrated the work our employees do from across the Service.



The event was attended by over 100 employees and feedback has been positive.

10. Overall, how satisfied were you with the event?

[More Details](#)

Extremely satisfied	9
Very satisfied	13
Somewhat satisfied	10
Not so satisfied	0
Not at all satisfied	0

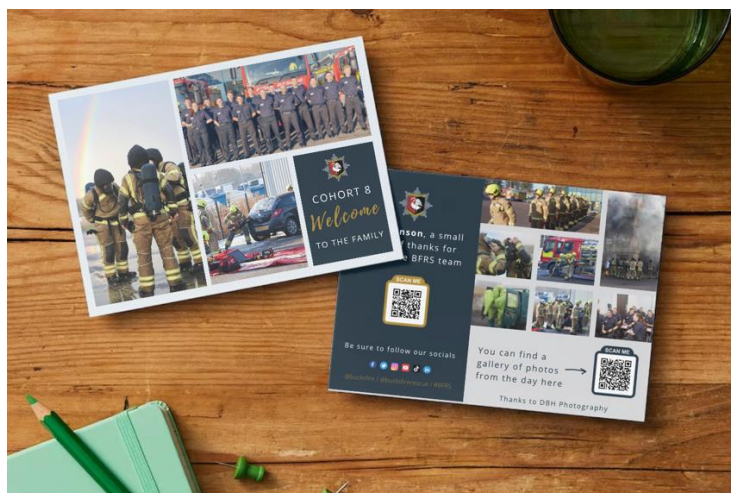


90% of respondents would attend next year.

Pass out Parade.

The Service holds a Pass Out Parade event for each Firefighter Apprentice cohort to celebrate completing their residential training at the Fire Service College. The Marketing and Communication team has commissioned a video of the event <https://youtu.be/9CpfccewGeg> which is used for a momentum for the Apprentices, friends and family and as a recruitment tool.

This year a special edit of the video was produced for every individual and sent them a welcome to the family postcard with a link to their personalised 'graduation video'.

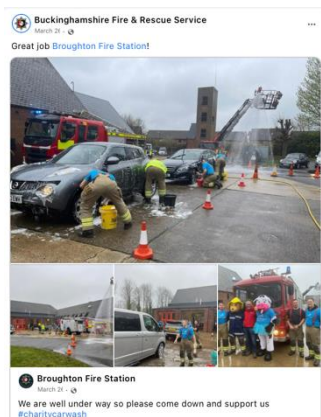


The Employee Engagement Group continue to look for ways to embed the culture of celebrating our people; one way we do this is through social media posts.

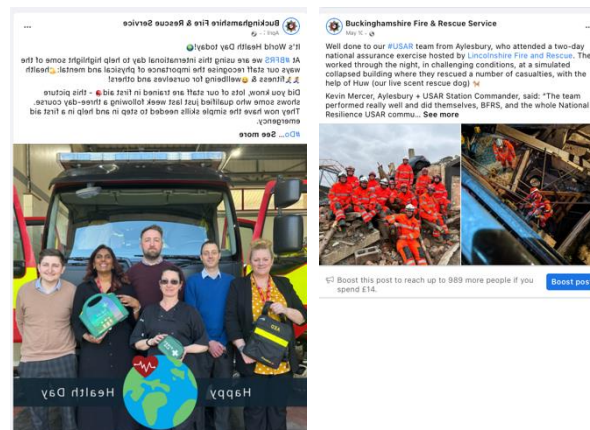
IFE exams



Fundraising events



Additional and specialised skills



Consultation

Policies and procedures are widely circulated for consultation with all employees in advance of going through our formal governance process. This is to give as many employees as possible the opportunity to comment on new, updated or amended documents.

The Service continues to run regular Joint Consultation Forum (JCF) meetings, providing the opportunity for recognised representative bodies to be consulted on forthcoming papers, policies and procedures. This allows constructive two-way dialogue in the early stages with the intention of preventing disagreements or disputes.

As the Service continues to recruit in a range of areas and is working proactively to engage with new starters. This can range from positive action and familiarisation events, to “brew with a crew” events for new starters. Giving new employees the opportunity to meet and speak to other employees and learn about the Service.

Appendix 3 - Organisational Development and Resourcing

Apprenticeships

Following the update presented to members at the [Fire Authority in February 2023](#), the success of the Authority's apprenticeship programme continues to grow.

The apprenticeship programmes offered by the Authority demonstrate the level of investment in new and existing employees across the service which enables succession planning, resilience, and future proofing.

The Authority is now demonstrating further efficiencies through the use of apprenticeships. Due to being effective in fully utilising the levy, the Authority is now benefiting from co-funding arrangements with the department of education, where they fund 95% of the apprenticeship cost and the authority funds the other 5%.

This has developed further as the Organisational Development department have identified further funding opportunities. The Authority has secured a transfer of levy arrangement with Santander – one of Milton Keynes largest employers - to fund the enrolment of two employees on to the Cranfield Level 7 apprenticeship and Santander will transfer the full levy cost to fund this. Discussions are taking place with Santander to see if the potential is there to expand this arrangement with other apprenticeship enrolments, particularly focusing on Firefighter apprentices and a potential sponsorship scheme. It is hoped this will lead to future partnerships with other levy givers.

Leadership and Management Development

National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Supervisory Leadership Development Programme:

Following the launch of the NFCC's Supervisory Leadership Development Plan employees are being offered the opportunity to enrol on the programme as a trial. This is open to ALL employees (operational and support) who are aspiring or existing supervisory leaders.

The supervisory leadership development programme (SLDP), is a self-directed development programme, designed exclusively and collaboratively between the NFCC and CMI ([Chartered Management Institute](#)). It offers supervisory leaders across

the fire and rescue service, a wealth of support for their day-to-day leadership and management activities along with access to learning materials to support any identified development areas.

The programme has been designed exclusively to develop knowledge, skills, and behaviours for every existing, new, and aspiring supervisory leader across all areas of the UK fire and rescue service, regardless of role, contract type or location.

The whole programme has been developed around the NFCC Leadership Framework, which clearly defines the leadership behaviours required at each level of leadership within the UK fire and rescue service.

Feedback will be sought from those undertaking the programme, to identify where this may sit in the future, as part of the BFRS Staff Development Pathway project.

NFCC are currently in the process of developing the Middle Leadership (MLP) Programme which is due to launch in 2024. Expressions of interest have been received for this and it will be communicated and rolled out to employees.

BFRS Staff Development Pathway Project:

The BFRS Staff Development Pathway Project is being designed to align to the National Chief Councils (NFCC's) [Core Learning pathway](#) and NFCC Leadership Framework.

The pathway will provide clarity to employees looking to develop themselves either within their existing role, or with aspiration for the next level role - within BFRS or another organisation.

It will also incorporate the two recently launched professional fire standards relating to Leadership and People: Leading the service and leading and developing people. These standards have been developed to support services in strengthening professionalism and leadership at all levels of their organisation, encouraging more positive working environments for the benefit of their people and the community they serve.

The pathway will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of existing managers as well as provide development opportunities and pathways for future managers and leaders of the organisation.

The objectives/benefits of the Staff Development Pathway are:

- Improved capacity, capability and resilience of managers and therefore, the organisation,
- Improved effectiveness of existing managers, directly impacting on improved organisational performance,
- Improve engagement levels of employees, providing a clear, transparent and consistent development pathway,
- Contributes to improved retention of employees,
- Employees feel supported in their development and have confidence in the training, learning and development provided for career progression,
- Increase attraction and engagement from employees with career development.

The project mandate was approved at the Business Transformation Board in March 2023 and an additional temporary role – Watch Commander Organisational Development – approved as part of the In-Year Bid process to provide the resource to lead and develop the pathway and provide coaching and mentoring to employees.

Assessment, Development and Selection Processes

The Authority's workforce development programme, continues to ensure replenished development pools at each level, resulting in employees with the required skills to fulfil the roles when needed.

An in-year review was undertaken on the Authority's Operational Promotional Procedure to recognise feedback from employees in relation to processes contained within it. In response to this, temporary amendments to the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) requirements were implemented to enable a wider pool of applicants through the promotional process, this had a positive impact, and resulted in an increase in the number of applications.

Promotional processes have been held at all levels in the last 12 months, including for the first time at Strategic Manager level. This development centre formed part of the Authority's succession plans by identifying future strategic managers and then providing a personal development plan preparing them for the roles when they become available.

The promotional processes were opened up to include external applicants and it was positive to see an increase in the number of external applications received, one of which resulted in the appointment of the new Area Commander.

The Authority is fully committed to Equality and Diversity, standing for inclusion, diversity and respect, recognising equality and fairness is fundamental to everything, making it crucial to tailor any development processes to cater for a vastly neurodiverse workforce. Thus, embracing the Authority's objective to embed Equality and Diversity into everything it does internally and externally, encouraging development throughout a variety of levels.

Upon review of the core components of the development and selection process, changes have been made to interview stage. Prior to the interview, candidates will be given preparation time with the interview questions, this is not a trick it enables candidates to consider their responses and set them up for success. Candidates are encouraged to use this time wisely to think of relevant examples they can use to demonstrate their ability and knowledge. They are able to make notes, which they can bring into the interview.

It is important to consider if candidates would like to request arrangements that will assist them in making applications for and attending processes, therefore always ensuring that if there are any adaptations or adjustments that can be made to assist them during the process, then it is a priority to do so. Any requests for reasonable adjustments received are treated with the utmost confidence.

Operational Establishment

The Authority is trialling new ways of working relating to its operational establishment for this financial year – 2023/2024. It is reviewing the balance of roles to determine where changes can be made which will improve immediate operational capability and provide additional career pathway opportunities.

An example of this is the introduction of the firefighter Safe to Command skillset, which is achieved by utilising the safety critical elements of the Crew Commander role map to enable selected firefighters to act up as Crew Commanders on an ad-hoc/temporary basis.

360 Feedback:

The Authority has launched its new 360 Feedback process. This is currently being trialled within the senior management team and will later be rolled out to middle/dept managers.

360 feedback is an important development tool for leaders. It can highlight areas of strength which may not be recognised as well as areas for development.

The 360 Feedback has been created with bespoke competencies mapped to the NFCC Leadership Framework which sets out and defines the leadership behaviours needed at every level in the Fire and Rescue Service. The Framework focusses on four key areas: Personal Impact, Outstanding Leadership, Organisational Effectiveness and Service Delivery.

Following feedback and evaluation of the trial, the 360 Feedback tool will be built into employee development processes.

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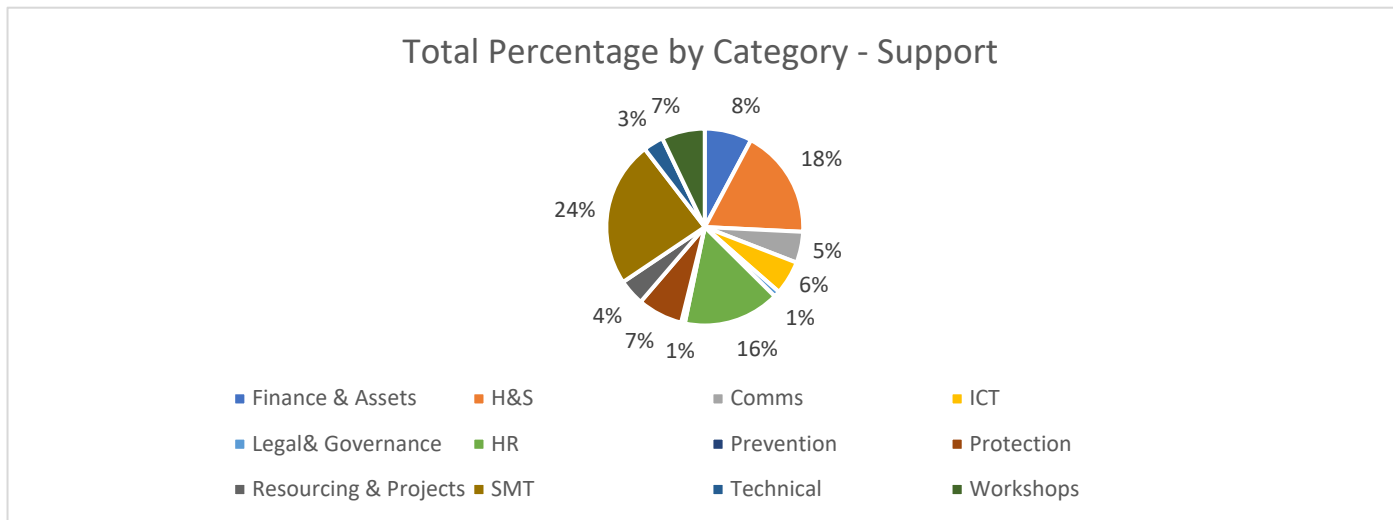
Appendix 4 - Training, Learning and Development

The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) process assesses the need for employees training at least annually. This TNA is translated into prioritised learning programmes, submitted by department managers, approved by the Training Strategy Group (TSG), and scrutinised to ensure alignment with business priorities, business continuity succession plans and approved budgets.

The Service’s 2022-2023 Financial commitment to the training of operational and support employees was comparable with the organisation’s demographic. £139k was invested in operational training and 90k on training support services employees.



There was a spread of investment across a range of departments, significant investment was committed to H&S, Senior Management Team and Human Resources.



In April 2023 the TSG met to review the proposal for allocating funding against the 2023-24 TNA and approved £227k for investment into employees training and development.

Organisational Development work across all the teams in the service to provide further training and development, they support departments to scope and plan innovate learning that develops employees’ skills, confidence and knowledge around subjects which improve their ability to deliver effective services to the community and each other.

Workplace champions play an essential role in shaping and promoting employees' wellbeing both in and out of the workplace. The Service have provided training for EDI Champions, Menopause Champions, along with mental health first aid workers and Trauma support refresher courses.

Operational Training Department

There has been a review of the training department following several changes in personnel through promotions and internal transfers. There are eight Area Trainers in the team from 1 October 2023. In addition, the training department welcomes Firefighters into the team which is an innovative approach to generating a different culture, introducing diversity of thought, and providing a different pathway in which Firefighters can develop themselves, diversify skillsets within BFRS.

To ensure the department remains an attractive proposition for employees the Service has been exploring new and innovative ways of working. This includes training department secondments, providing training and development for existing employees to enable them to reach an associate instructor standard.

The training team is committed to increasing the Services operational establishment with competent, professional Firefighters that are coached and developed to serve the public at their time of need.

The training team are proud to have completed:

- Two Firefighter Development Programs (FFDP) per year using Service instructors at the Fire Service College. Both these programmes have had a total of 18 apprentices each who have started their firefighting journey with BFRS.
- Two competent Firefighter transfer courses per year. The Service continues to develop a new three-week conversion course to support internal and external applicants transferring from on-call to full-time roles. This course can also be utilised to support employees returning to work following long term absences, sabbaticals, or maternity leave. These transferee courses have now opened the pathway for individuals to join the establishment where previously the opportunity was not there.
- Two On-Call training courses per year, increasing the establishment of the On-Call and providing greater resilience during periods of peak demand as per the Resourcing Model.

The training team continue to deliver training, validation of operational employees and set the standards for what good looks like. Fire Service College instructors deliver promotional competency-based courses for Incident Commanders at all levels. All training is Skills for Justice (SFJ) accredited.

Training Assurance

Training Assurance primary focus is on Maintenance of Competency (MOC) and assuring all training being delivered is of the standard expected.

The training platform is the Hub of Education and Training (HEAT), which provides an area where employees can record evidence of competence effectively. Further training and communication were generated this year reference a major change to have employees report and the expectations surrounding competency. The Training Assurance Station Commander changed the MOC year from a calendar year cycle to a financial year, this aligned many of the Services existing measures of success with maintaining competency. Further changes now enable junior officers to train and record more fluently across the year. The Training Assurance Station Commander has set the expectations and responsibilities reference this new MOC whilst creating additional support for new Junior Officers and other supervisory managers that will be developed throughout this first year.

The Training Assurance team complete a range of planned and unplanned visits to Fire Stations. The objective is to support employee development, complete robust Quality Assurance checks on training sessions and provide guidance on processes and procedures.

Good practice is shared through internal communication between Training Assurance, Operational Training and Operational Assurance. Everyone who is training assured are assessed are provided with individual feedback to encourage and support further development. Any individuals who do not achieved the standards required to attain or maintain competency are provided the required support through personal development plans, direct coaching and reassessment.

Operational Assurance

The Operational Assurance Team (OAT) support employee development through a range of informal and formal assessment methods, effective performance management and on-going support utilising a range of methods to include:

- Operational Exercises
- Newsletter
- OAT bulletin
- Quiz
- Learner Review of Command (LRC)
- Operational Reviews
- Operational Assurance Improvement Plan (OAIP)

The operational exercise program continued to run throughout periods of disruption and peak demand, and regularly involved collaboration with other Fire and Rescues

Services, partner agencies and other responders as part of a multi-agency response. The Service utilises a wide range of training sites, including The Fire Service College, local high-risk sites and Service training facilities such as Westcott, which has been developed into a dedicated USAR training resource.

Members of the OAT visit operational crews on Fire Stations, share information on good practice and deliver specific training sessions on thematic areas such as National high-profile incidents and emerging risks. The assurance team also deliver case studies and desk top reviews to improve operational competency.

Good practice and learning opportunities are shared through the publication of a regular internal Operational Assurance newsletter. This helps to share technical training information and good practices, changes in operational procedures and technical assessments which aid assurance of a particular theme for example wildfires which posed a high risk during the summer of 2022.

The team continues to facilitate operational debriefs following attendance at multiple major incidents. The College of Policing format has now been adopted throughout the team which has proved a success whilst the opportunity to evaluate is not underestimated and the OAT is at the forefront of this. Once recommendations have been made and approved through the Operational Assurance Group (OAG) they are added to the OAIP. This improvement Plan then assists in driving meaning change throughout the service.

Good practice and learning from debriefs must be shared far and wide throughout BFRS as this are a key element to how the Service develops and grows without making the same mistakes. The team utilises as many platforms as possible to ensure everyone's individual learning style is catered for, this includes the Services e-learning platform and many of the conduits that have been highlighted above.

Operational and organisational learning is recorded and shared with other Fire and Rescue Services and partner agencies through National Operational Learning (NOL) and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL). There is a recognised process which feeds from NOL and JOL to within operational assurance that accepts learns from across the country and this helps prevent BFRS having similar issues.

Appendix 5 - Employee Health and Wellbeing

The Service continues to promote the value of health and wellbeing with employees throughout all roles and committed to establishing a positive health and wellbeing culture within the workplace, which includes promoting awareness and understanding of wellbeing, implementing effective and fair processes, and instilling positive behaviour by all. The Service recognises that mental and physical health and wellbeing are equally important and acknowledges the potential impact that work can have on both.

Human Resources work closely with the Service's Occupational Health provider in managing employees continued attendance at work, through the routine services they provide and will seek advice to guide in the management and progression of attendance management cases, ensuring employees receives appropriate and reasonable support. All employees with over 28 days sickness absence are managed under the Attendance Management procedure and referred to Occupational Health. For any sickness due to stress, anxiety or depression, employees is automatically referred to Occupational Health regardless of the length of their absence.

Occupational Health determines how work, or the workplace might impact on an employee, as well as how health, lifestyle or personal circumstances may impact on their ability to attend work or to return to work. Working with Occupational Health, the line manager and employee, every effort is made to get the employee back to work as soon as reasonably practicable. Where appropriate and when recommended by Occupational Health, physiotherapy is provided to employees. For cases of long-term sickness absence relating to stress, anxiety, and depression and PTSD, and when recommended by Occupational Health, specialist counselling can also be provided.

All employees have access to an employee assistance programme, a free, independent, and confidential service, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, online or on the phone. The service offers expert advice, guidance, and support to help resolve a wide range of issues, and they will aim to answer any questions immediately or refer the employee to the most appropriate advisor, counsellor, or source of information. In addition, monthly newsletters, and webinars on a variety of topics are available to employees via the Health Assured App and online, and regularly published on the Service's Intranet.

The Service's Welfare Officer is an additional point of contact to ensure employees have access to appropriate welfare support arrangements by providing advice, guidance, and assistance to those absent from work, returning to work, or going through difficult personal circumstances. In addition, the Welfare Officer will provide advice and guidance to line managers to assist with individual cases where welfare

support is required, including return to work plans and ongoing support. The Welfare Officer, along with members of the Service’s mental wellbeing support network (another source of support) can signpost employees to appropriate wellbeing support.

The mental wellbeing support network has 37 mental health first-aiders across the Service. This information has been shared with employees throughout the Service and members of the team are easily identifiable with dedicated lanyards being worn and names posted on noticeboards in all Service Premises.

Trauma support training has been provided for 12 new debriefer, bringing the cadre of available trauma support debriefers to 22. The purpose of trauma support is to provide reassurance about natural reactions to traumatic situations and an opportunity to discuss coping strategies. The focus of debriefing sessions is to see how individuals are coping following a traumatic event in order for appropriate support to be provided and to help individuals adjust post incident after a traumatic event.

The Service’s Intranet has a dedicated “Wellbeing Hub” which is regularly updated with a range of subject areas designed to support Mental, Physical and Personal health and wellbeing.

Service procedures and guidance documents have been updated or created, from supporting menopause in the workplace, flexible working, supporting employees with mental and physical disabilities, supporting employees experiencing domestic abuse and violence, supporting employees with neurodiversity and hybrid working. A suicide awareness package has been added to the Service’s online training system and is accessible by all employees. National campaigns are supported and communicated to employees throughout the year and a range of “me too” articles have been produced and published on the Service’s Intranet, as a way of sharing employee’s stories to help others.

The Service has a social media Wellbeing group on Facebook with over 100 members (and growing), this allows Human Resources to share wellbeing messages with employees using a range of more modern mediums.

The Service has worked closely with The Fire Fighters Charity to introduce online wellness workshops, specifically designed to help and support the health and wellbeing of employees. In addition, The Fire Fighters Charity and Hope for The Community have partnered to run self-management programme for individuals looking to improve their mental wellbeing and resilience, called the Hope Programme, a six-week interactive online programme, focusing on individuals and their wellbeing. Working with The Fire Fighter Charity, the Service has also

established “living well” groups. The intention of these groups is to provide a meeting place for former employees to network and access support where necessary. The Fire Fighters Charity also offers residential mental wellbeing and rehabilitation programmes that are available to current and past employee.

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Service Document Standard Form:

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Appendix 6

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment
Guidance note



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1: Overview information

Name of activity / change / project:	People Strategy 2020 – 2025 – Year three update
Directorate/department:	Human Resources
Name(s) of person(s) completing the assessment	Station Commander Oli Finch– HR Projects
Date of commencement of assessment:	30/08/2023

2: What is the aim and purpose of the activity / change / policy / procedure / project you are assessing?

The aim of the paper is to review the Services current Strategy to assess progress that is being made, identify new or emerging challenges (that may impact the Strategy) and ensure that the Service continues to make progress against measurable objectives.

3: Who will be affected by the activity / change / procedure / project, and how? Consider members of the public, employees, partner organisations etc.

The People Strategy will impact on all employees, prospective employees, partner agencies and the wider communities of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes. As internal and external factors influence our role in the community it is essential that the Service reviews it's "people priorities" to remain a competitive employer. Evidence can be seen of this with the cultural shift to home working and hybrid working.

4: What information is already available that tells you what impact the activity / change / procedure/project has/will have on people? (*please reference*) Consider quantitative and qualitative data, consultation, research, complaints etc. What does this information tell you?

The Strategy has been "live" for three years and is produced to be in its existing format for a five-year period. The Strategy sets out a framework for engaging and developing Service employees to enable cultural changes which will support the delivery of our visions and strategic priorities. The results of the Services culture survey provided evidence relating to areas of the culture survey where further progress can be made.

5: Does the activity/change policy/procedure/project have the potential to impact differently on individuals in different groups? Complete the table below by ✓ the likely impact.

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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Appendix 6

Linked documents: *Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note*



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Assessment of impact on groups in **bold** is a legal requirement. Assessment of impacts on groups in *italics* is not a legal requirement, however it will help to ensure that your activity does not have unintended consequences.

Protected characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Rationale for decision (<i>use action plan in section 14 for negative impacts</i>)
Individuals of different ages	✓			The Service continues to support employees of all ages through youth engagement, recruitment, welfare support, engagement for Service leavers, pre-retirement engagement and support into retirement.
Disabled individuals	✓			<p>The Service has signed up to the Government's Disability Confident scheme, this is a commitment to provide support for individuals with disabilities looking for employment and provides guaranteed interviews for applicants with disabilities.</p> <p>All reasonable adjustments are put in place to accommodate individuals, however due to the physical nature of the role, some applicants may not be able to proceed in an operational role.</p> <p>A neurodiversity support group has been established, the aim is offering support to our employees from a neurodivergent background, and to enable us better serve our neurodivergent communities.</p>
Individuals transitioning from one gender to another	✓			The Service has identified the LGBTQ+ community as a focus area for engagement and

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**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
Appendix 6**

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				recruitment. The Strategy will continue to support activities which improve access to services and employment opportunities for individuals from underrepresented groups.
Individuals who are married or in civil partnerships			✓	There are no identified negative outcomes relating to individuals who are married or in civil partnerships
Pregnancy, maternity and new parents	✓			The Hybrid working and Flexible working procedures provide flexibility to working conditions which may support employees who are pregnant or new parents.
Individuals of different race	✓			The Service continues to engage with a wide range of community groups. The Service is involved in positive action activities to develop community engagement and employment opportunities for both operational and support roles.
Individuals of different religions or beliefs	✓			The Service continues to review working conditions and premises facilities to ensure they are inclusive and support the needs of employees and the wider community who may access our Services.
Individual's gender identity			✓	There are no identified negative outcomes relating to individuals gender identity.
Individual's sexual orientation	✓			The Service has identified the LGBTQ+ community as a focus area for engagement and recruitment. The Strategy will continue to support activities which improve access to

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**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
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				services and employment opportunities for individuals from underrepresented groups.
<i>Individuals living in different family circumstances</i>	✓			The Hybrid and Flexible working procedures provide alternate employment options for individuals from different family circumstances. The employee relations team continue to provide support to employees throughout their career and in a range of circumstances.
<i>Individuals in different social circumstances</i>			✓	There are no identified negative outcomes relating to individuals in different social circumstances
<i>Different employee groups</i>			✓	There are no identified negative outcomes relating to individuals in different employee groups
<i>Other, please specify</i>				

6: What further research or consultation is needed to check the impact/potential impact of the activity/change/project on different groups? If needed, how will you gather additional information and from whom?

The People Strategy will be regularly reviewed to ensure that the Service are making progress in the five key areas. This will involve significant collaboration with key stakeholders, representative bodies and partner agencies (including other Fire Services) The accurate recording of EDI data will enable to Service to identify and evidence where progress is being made and where further progress can be made.

On-going engagement with employees will allow the Service to understand cultural changes and future challenges, this will be formalised through employee surveys and working groups.

Internal review of employee development such as IFE examination pass rates and development centre participation will enable the Service to identify likely workforce models and to identify the need for external recruitment and development.

The Workforce Planning Group will review progress regarding recruitment and retention of both operational and support staff to ensure that the Service employs the required number

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of people with the request knowledge, qualifications, and experience. Analysis of employee welfare data will ensure that the Service continues to provide the right level and type of support for employees. This will support forward planning for the services that may be required now and in the future.

7: Following your research, considering all the information that you now have, is there any evidence that the activity/change/project is impacting/will impact differently or disproportionately on some group of people?

By reviewing and updating our Strategy we will ensure that we are closely aligned to NFCC principles. The NFCC People Strategy has been published and we will review the Services own Strategy, this will be an on-going process to review all five key areas individually to ensure that processes, procedures and guidance remain unchanged.

8: What amendments will you make/have been made to the activity/change/project as a result of the information you have? If a negative effect has been identified, how could it/has it been lessened, does the original plan need changing?

No negative outcomes have been identified. It is essential that the Strategy is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains current and fit for purpose.

9: After these amendments (if any) have been made, is/will there still be a negative impact on any groups?

Yes – please explain below **No** – go to section 11

None identified at this time.

10: Can continuing or implementing the proposed activity/change/project, without further amendment, be justified legally? If so, how?

Not applicable.

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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Appendix 6

Linked documents: *Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note*



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11: How can you ensure that any positive or neutral impact is maintained?

The People Strategy is subject to regular internal reviews to ensure the information provided is current and aligned with the Services strategic objectives. This paper commits the Service to review the People Strategy over the coming year following the publication of the NFCC People Strategy 2022-2027. The Service is committed to improving performance in all areas and there remain opportunities to develop our objectives in all five key areas.

12: How will you monitor and review the impact of the activity/change/project once it has been implemented?

The Station Commander Human Resources Projects has a lead role to ensure the People Strategy is relevant and fit for purpose, achieving it's aims and objectives. The Strategy will be regularly reviewed and updated. Annual updates provide an opportunity for reassessment.

13: Sign off

Name of department head / project lead	Anne Stunell, Head of HR
Date of EIA sign off:	31/08/2023
Date(s) of review of assessment:	EIA to be reviewed on an ongoing basis, to ensure all equalities aspects considered in line with best practice

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14. Action Plan - the table below should be completed to produce an action plan for the implementation of proposals to:

- Lower negative impacts
- Ensure the negative impacts are legal under anti-discriminatory law.
- Provide an opportunity to promote equality, equal opportunity and improve relations within equality target groups i.e., increase
- the positive impact

Area of impact	Changes proposed	Timescales	Resource implications	Comments

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Appendix 7 - People Strategy – Year four Future Opportunities

Key Area 1 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Service will continue to build a representative workforce with the appropriate skills, experience, and leadership qualities to deliver a range of services to our communities, that embraces change and delivers activities to reduce harm and make those communities safe and healthier.

- Demonstrate that the Service is developing a reputation for delivering EDI outcomes and that EDI priorities influence strategic decisions.
- Further develop the role of the EDI Champions and utilise all opportunities to promote the work of the EDI Group and provide further EDI Champions Training
- Terminology - consider the positive impact that inclusive language can have in the workplace.
- Community Engagement to increase the understanding of different community groups and to share the work of the Fire Service
- South Asian Community Work – The Service will continue the work to engage with the South Asian communities within Bucks and MK to enhance relationships, build trust and encourage the diversification of the workforce.
- Engage with diverse communities, including those which are seldom heard, which can face barriers to engaging with the Fire Service
- Continue to engage with employees to identify needs regarding uniform, facilities, Equalities Impact Assessments, and welfare provisions both on-site and at Operational Incidents for all staff groups.
- Work with Property department to develop station standards for Wholetime, Day-Crewed and On-Call stations.
- Engage with the Uniform project to influence the development of the new specification.
- Review the training packages available and assess for currency - do they clearly deliver the EDI message that the Service want to present.
- Attendance at conferences and seminars, both online and in person (e.g., AFSA)
- Promote understanding by continuing to use the EDI Calendar to inform employees of different group and religious events.

Armed Forces Covenant

- Develop and promote the role of Armed Forces Champions within the Service.
- Introduce a mechanism to proactively identify Veterans during “Safe and Well visits” and signpost individuals to relevant support organisations.
- Extend the Armed Forces Cadets program from Aylesbury and High Wycombe to West Ashland

- Consistently promote vacancies through Armed Forces platforms such as CTP and Forces Families jobs.
- Attend Armed Forces career fairs to promote opportunities to serving soldiers and veterans.
- Investigate the procedure for guaranteed interviews for ex-forces personnel into support roles, and guaranteed pathway to employment for operational roles.

Key Area 2 – Employee Engagement

To build the emotional commitment employees have to the Service the plans is to:

- Continue to utilise the Joint Consultation Forum as a place to have early conversations about new processes and policies.
- To ensure the Service can get regular employee feedback the Service has committed to move to an annual staff survey, therefore the service will complete a staff survey in January 2024 ensuring full engagement pre, during and post. Utilising the results to feed into the 24/25 plan.
- Look for other ways to engage with employees in both formal and informal settings.
- Build on the success of the 2023 People Awards to make the 2024 event even better.
- Introduce ways to recognise and reward employees throughout the year.

Key Area 3 - Organisational Development and Resourcing

The National Fire Chiefs Council is developing several People related workstreams that Organisational Development will be reviewing to identify if there is scope to implement within the service and the value they may bring. These include:

- Coaching and mentoring portal
- Talent management toolkit
- Supervisory leadership programme
- Core learning pathways
- NFCC leadership framework
- Improve how Human Resources maintains contact with applicants throughout the recruitment process.

Key Area 4 – Training, Learning and Development

The training and education of employees is fundamental in meeting the future challenges of the Fire and Rescue sector.

- Support operational recruitment and training, whilst continuing to deliver highly effective internal and external training courses.

- Assisting workforce planning to meet the current and future needs of the Service.
- Utilise the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) process to ensure that training funding is appropriately allocated to support training and development across the Service.
- Providing appropriate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for training instructors and associate instructors
- Continue setting standards within training for all employees, developing innovation and introducing a range of training solutions.
- Produce a Maintenance on Competence (MOC) policy to outline the Services training procedure and the expectations placed on employees.
- Ensure compliance with MOC using the new Key Performance Measures to determine success.
- Continued development of systems used to record and report training and competence.
- Improving the electronic learning packages and align them to NOG.
- Seek collaboration opportunities within training, learning and development with other neighbouring services.
- Aligning Operational Assurance with the NFCC good practice guide to create an active feedback system which aims to highlight areas of learning and good practice among operational employees.
- In partnership with Oxfordshire and Berkshire, created the Thames Valley Operational Learning Group, this ensures learns and incidents of interest are discussed and disseminated across the three services.
- Continue to develop the Transferee Courses for both Firefighter and Junior Officers which aid us in increasing the operational establishment.

Key Area 5 – Employee Health and Wellbeing

To continue with the commitment in proving a positive health and wellbeing culture.

- Build upon the Wellbeing Strategy. The ethos behind the current Wellbeing Strategy is 'Start well, work well, age well'. Expanding the Strategy, focusing on psychological, personal, and physical wellbeing as the three pillars of employee wellbeing throughout an employee's lifecycle within the Service
- Continue creating procedures and guidance documents that help support employee wellbeing.
- Utilise the Healthy Workplace Standards to help the Service support the health and wellbeing of the workforce. Engaging with the standards at their three levels to achieve Healthy Workplace Status: bronze, silver and gold.
- Continue to explore initiatives and innovative ways to improve, develop and support employee wellbeing.

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 11 October 2023

Report title: Extend the time period of the BFRS Response Strategy

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse

Report sponsor: Simon Tuffley – Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience

Author and contact: Group Commander Stuart Grosse sgrosse@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision.

Recommendations:

That the Authority approve the extension of the Response Strategy, so that the strategy aligns with, and is informed by, the new Community Risk Management Plan.

Executive summary:

The current BFRS Response Strategy has been live since 2018 and is due to end in 2023. By extending the life of the current Response Strategy and then taking the information used to build the new CRMP, BFRS can better understand the future response needs of the communities we serve and the strategic direction the Service will take. This will enable a well-informed Response Strategy to be delivered, that is appropriate and relevant to the risks and the communities that BFRS Serve. The extension also brings the live strategy in line with the current Public Safety Plan.

Risk management:

By not extending the Response Strategy, BFRS are at risk of having to produce a new Response Strategy that does not fully understand the future needs of the communities we serve. By extending the life of the current Response Strategy and then developing a Response Strategy alongside the CRMP, we can be better informed of the community risks and needs.

BFRS will continue to monitor known and emerging risks, through community engagement and through the BFRS Emerging Risks Group. Examples of this are our wildfire response to the 2022 summer pressures and our early engagement with developers in the growth of Battery Energy Storage Systems in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Though minor elements are now out of date, the current Response Strategy is suitable to be extended until April 2025.

Legal implications:

As part of the extension to the Response Strategy, legal implications were considered but no additional legal implications were identified.

Privacy and security implications:

There are no additional privacy or security implications to the extension of this strategy.

Duty to collaborate:

The Service continues to collaborate with Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service partners, Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service as part of the current Response Strategy.

Health and safety implications:

There are no additional Health and Safety implications.

Environmental implications:

There are no additional environmental impacts.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

An Integrated Impact Assessment forms part of the current Response Strategy (section 19). An Equalities Impact assessment (EIA) has been completed as part of this recommendation; this will be reviewed during the extension period of the Response Strategy. A new EIA will be completed with the 2024 Response Strategy.

Consultation and communication:

The extension of the Response Strategy has been consulted on with the Joint Consultation Forum, corporate planning and the Leadership Group.

The extension of the strategy will progress through Joint Consultation Forum, Business Transformation Board, Strategic Management Board, for approval at the full Fire Authority meeting in October 2023.

Every effort will be made to ensure individuals are fully involved in the review of the Response Strategy and their feedback captured and considered during the consultation process.

Changes to Version 1.1

A title box with the paragraph *'Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Response Strategy 2018-2023 will remain live until its replacement is published alongside the Community Risk Management Plan in April 2025'* has been added to the top of the response strategy.

The title of the Information Asset Owner has changed to Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience.

The title 'His Majesty's' has replaced 'Her Majesty's' when referring to the HMICFRS.

These have been updated in the Response Strategy Version 1.1.

Background papers:

Response Strategy 2018 – 2023 Version 1.1, with additional extension paragraph (in title box) added and updates to asset Owner and HMICFRS.

Appendix	Title
Appendix A	Response Strategy with extension
Appendix B	Equality Impact Assessment

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Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Response Strategy 2018-2023 will remain live until its replacement is published alongside the Community Risk Management Plan in April 2025.

BFRS will continue to monitor known and emerging risks, through community engagement and through the BFRS Emerging Risks Group. Examples of this are our wildfire response to the 2022 summer pressures and our early engagement with developers in the growth of Battery Energy Storage Systems in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

1. Changes since the last version

Version:	1.1
Information Asset Owner:	Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience
Author:	Group Commander Service Delivery South
Approval:	Fire Authority
Date:	17 October 2023

Version 1.1 extends the duration of the Response Strategy (in the title box), until its replacement is published alongside the Community Risk Management Plan in April 2025. Changes to this version include the change of Information Asset Owner and the change of the title of the HMICFRS.

Please note that as Service Documents are frequently updated, if you print a document, its accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Always check the intranet for the latest version.



2. Index

1. [Document changes](#)
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18. [Consultation/publication/communication](#)
19. [Integrated Impact Assessment](#)

3. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a focus on the Service Delivery Directorate's priorities over the next five years, to ensure Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) can deliver the most effective response to the risks and challenges set out in the Authority's Public Safety Plan.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Fire Authority - Ensuring public safety, strengthening collaboration, driving transformation and enhancing effectiveness.

Chief Fire Officer- Responsible for leading the Service on its continued journey of improvement in the Service's governance, performance and financial management.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer- Responsible for Service Delivery, Corporate Development and Planning arrangements.



Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience - Responsible for effective Prevention, Protection and Response activities.

Managers- Responsible for the day-to-day management and delivery of fire and rescue service activities.

All employees- collectively responsible for upholding the expected values, behaviours and objectives of the Authority.

5. Legislative Requirements

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) discharge all their functions under a backdrop of some key pieces of legislation. This legislation establishes our duties and obligations to provide an effective and efficient fire and rescue service.

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

This is our core legislation, establishing our legal powers and responsibilities as a Fire Authority. The Secretary of State prepares the Fire and Rescue National Framework under Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to establish a set of key priorities, objectives and direction for fire authorities to follow.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004

This legislation establishes Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) as a Category 1 responder agency, with specific responsibilities to plan for and respond to defined “emergencies” alongside other agencies. To effectively achieve this we are active members of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum, who collectively plan for a multi-agency response to a full range of incidents across the area.

Policing and Crime Act 2017

The police, fire and rescue and emergency ambulance services now have a duty to collaborate. This Act provides us with a tangible legal framework to increase the scope of collaborative work and keep our communities safer.

6. Our Vision

Our Vision is to ensure Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes are the safest places in England in which to live, work and travel.

7. Our Aim

The aim of this strategy is to enable the Authority to deliver a timely and proportionate response to incidents within the parameters of our existing and



projected financial arrangements, by allocating BFRS assets and resources in relation to anticipated risk and demand.

8. The Challenge

The Authority's Public Safety Plan describes the internal and external factors that will influence our risk and demand challenges into the future.

The Corporate Plan shows how we will meet the challenges we face and our commitment to delivering consistent improvement and taking a fresh look at how we deliver our services in line with those identified risks and demand.

The Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Plan identify the financial resources required, projected into the future based on the delivery of specific aims and objectives as set out in the Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan.

Together these plans establish a responsibility to deliver strategies, which meet these challenges and help us to achieve our aim and vision.

9. Our Values

We will work with all groups to target and reduce risk and will pro-actively seek opportunities to collaborate with our partners.

We will treat everyone fairly and with respect, challenging any prejudice or discrimination and respecting people's right to privacy and protecting any personal information we hold.

We place value on diversity within our Service and the communities we serve.

We will create opportunities to develop and learn, encourage innovation and creativity, work honestly to develop trust and will strive for excellence in all that we do.

We will accept responsibility and accountability for our performance and actions, being answerable to those we serve.

10. Our Principles

The Authority will aim to:

Ensure that all employees are aware of the vision, values and behaviours expected within the workplace

Improve the Authority's performance through building the skills of a diverse workforce that reflect the community



Ensure employees have an understanding of how the Service operates, in order to be as effective as possible within their role

11. Our Priorities

Our priorities are always to prevent incidents that cause harm from happening and to render humanitarian services. We will do all we can to protect homes, public buildings and businesses from the effects of fire.

Our duty is also to ensure that wherever required, we provide a timely and proportionate emergency response to incidents, ensuring we are there to save life, mitigate damage and help safeguard our environment.

To achieve these priorities, we will identify and assess the full range of foreseeable risks within our area, from across a spectrum of local and national influences, and give our employees the tools they need to succeed in ensuring these risks are assessed and managed in the most effective, efficient and safest way.

We will align and integrate our Prevention, Protection and Response strategies, ensuring they complement each other towards achieving our vision.

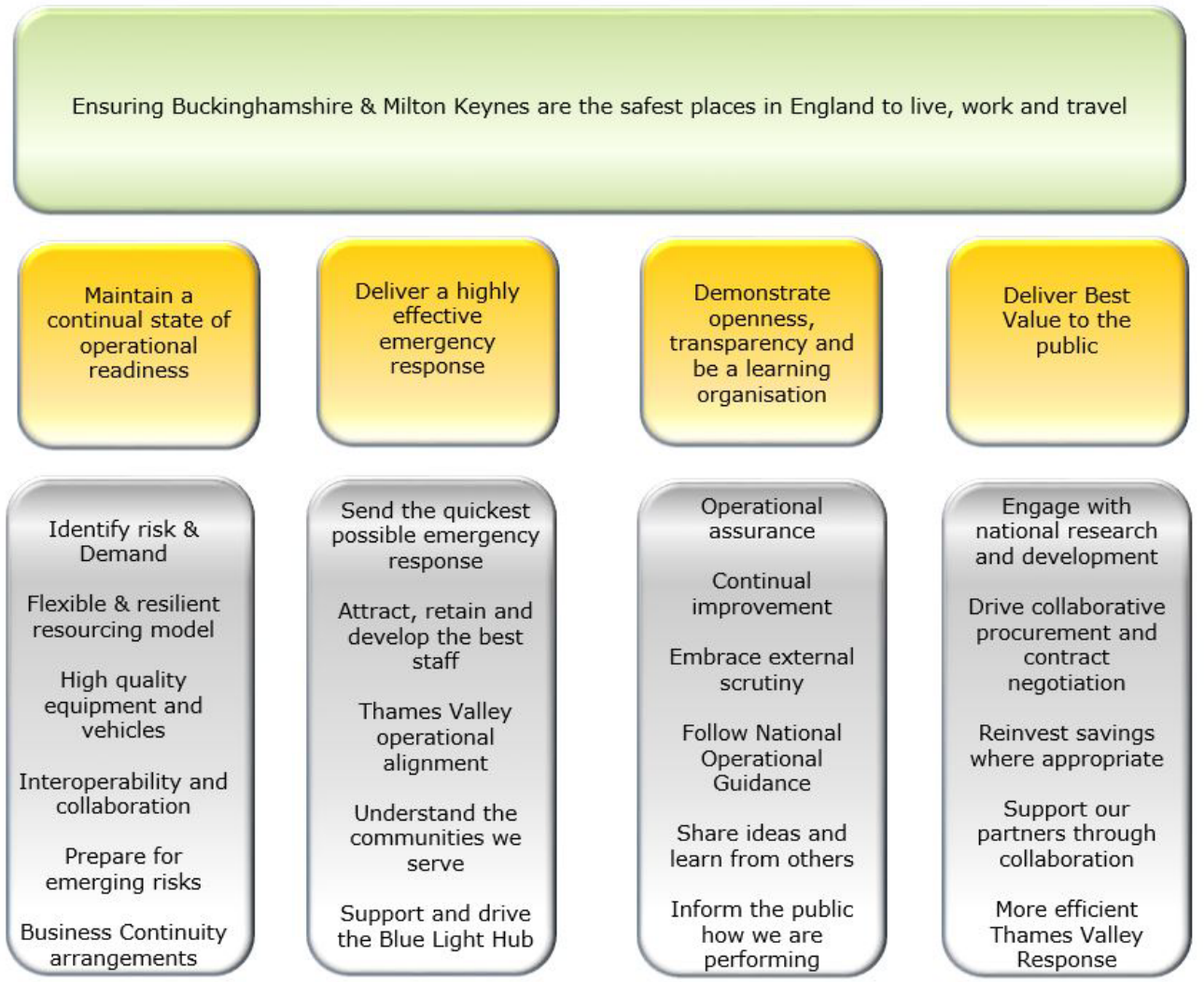
12. Measuring Success

The performance of our Response Strategy's aims will be continually measured on the following criteria:

- How effective we are at responding to fires and other emergencies
- How well we understand our current and future demand and risk
- How well we use our resources to manage risk
- How effective we are at responding to national risks
- How well we secure an affordable way of managing the risk of fire and other risks now and in the future

13. Response Strategy framework

Our commitment to responding to emergencies focuses on four key pillars:



14. We will maintain a continual state of operational readiness

The Challenge

Over the past decade there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of fire related incidents and consequent deaths and injuries across the Country. This reduction is reflected across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, but against a local backdrop of extensive housing and infrastructure growth, with particular focus on expansion across Aylesbury, Milton Keynes, Princes Risborough, Haddenham and Winslow. This is coupled with infrastructure projects like the HS2 and East/West Railway and road networks, all of which lead to an increase in population of those who live, work and travel within our area.

Other influences such as an increasing ageing population, a changing environment, and a number of houses in multiple occupation and pockets of social deprivation amongst an abundance of new housing stock will effectively redesign our risk and demand profile over time, creating a challenge to maintain



a timely and proportionate response within the parameters of our Medium Term Financial Plan.

Our Public Safety Plan describes a risk profile that indicates a potential for severe building fires, road traffic collisions on our rural roads and busy motorways and an increase in the number of low frequency, high impact events such as wide area flooding.

Therefore, we need to secure the right people with the right skills and resources to respond to our changing daily risk and demand profile, whilst ensuring we are resilient to the higher demand incidents which we occasionally face.

What we will do

Our aim is to make the best use of our resources. We will:

- Identify and assess the full range of fire and rescue related risks in our area taking a collaborative approach wherever appropriate
- Align the design and shape of the Service with current and future demand at a local, regional and national level
- Collaborate with other fire and rescue services and other partners to deliver intraoperability and interoperability in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles.
- In partnership with other agencies, ensure we are able to provide a multi-agency response to the threat of terrorism within our area.
- Provide and maintain excellent operational equipment and vehicles and deliver high quality training, validation and assessment to our employees.
- Enable our staff to maintain the required levels of fitness to carry out their role
- Establish and embed a resourcing model which delivers a flexible and resilient response to the wide range of incidents we attend
- Ensure we are resilient through sound business continuity and multi-agency planning
- Engage and prepare the Service for HS2 and other emerging risks

15. We will deliver a highly effective emergency response

The Challenge

It is imperative that when we are called upon in an emergency, we deliver an excellent service to the public. An effective emergency response is of the utmost importance to us all. The challenge is to deliver a timely and proportionate response to incidents amidst the landscape of reduced budgetary provision and our evolving risk and demand profiles.

Increasing demands on other public services, such as our partners in Policing and Health has led to collaboration opportunities in the field of medical response,



and searches for high-risk missing persons, where we can assist in saving lives in a different way. Where this is achieved, it must be done without any negative impacts on our core functions as a fire and rescue service.

Following our move to Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) in 2015, we now work closer than ever with our Thames Valley colleagues in Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire fire & rescue services. This move has opened up the challenge to better align our services across the Thames Valley, to share resources when planning and modelling for incidents, and when responding to and evaluating the incidents we attend.

What we will do

Our aim is to deliver a first class emergency response. We will:

- Ensure the public are receiving the quickest possible emergency response appropriate to the type of incident to aid recovery for individuals and communities affected by emergencies
- Work with our partners in TVFCS to secure the best possible call handling and pre-determined mobilising arrangements in place to effectively deal with incidents
- Ensure our crews understand the needs of their communities, including changing demographics and risks associated with the incidents they may attend
- Work with partners to keep communities informed of ongoing incidents and advise on action to be taken
- Achieve operational alignment with Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Services and a single Thames Valley Mobilising Policy with TVFCS
- Mitigate road risks by returning unnecessary resources at the earliest opportunity once incidents are dealt with on scene
- Continue to support the medical response partnership with South Central Ambulance Service where appropriate
- Support and drive the Milton Keynes transformation project to provide a state of the art Blue Light Hub in West Milton Keynes, enhancing intraoperability with our blue light partners.

16. We will demonstrate openness, transparency and be a learning organisation

The Challenge

As a public service, it is important that we demonstrate an open and transparent approach to conducting our activities. With the recent reintroduction of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), there will clearly be a revitalised focus on how we demonstrate our effectiveness and efficiency to the public. A focus on continual improvement, with an honest



and open approach not only makes individual organisations more resilient, but by sharing learning services can also learn from each other. The challenge is to make this information accessible to all the public we serve in a way that is easily understood.

What we will do

Our aim is to be an “Outstanding” fire and rescue service. We will:

- Utilise an operational assurance model and improvement plan, providing a sound mechanism and focus for continual operational improvement.
- Attract and retain the best staff and provide opportunities for robust development and training
- Develop performance metrics to measure our effectiveness and use them to influence decisions and drive continual improvement
- Publish our performance outcomes with a commentary which is easy to understand, using a benchmark against other similar fire and rescue services.
- Keep up to date with national best practice through our policies, procedures, guidance and information
- Share our own learning at a local, regional and national level through collaborative working and National Operational Learning
- Continue to review this strategy to continually meet our anticipated risk and demand.

17. We will deliver Best Value to the public

The Challenge

Reduced budgetary provision amid a landscape of rising running costs continues to influence the way in which we provide our services to the public. The challenge is to continue to deliver a first class emergency service within the parameters of our Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Plan by prioritising our activities to drive down cost and gain the most benefit from our resources as risk and demand profiles change.

What we will do

Our aim is to deliver a highly efficient, effective and resilient fire and rescue service. We will:

- Drive collaborative procurement and contract negotiation to deliver best value and better use of operational resources
- Share our good practice and be open to learn from others
- Where appropriate, reinvest savings in new technologies which assist fire and rescue services and partners in improving key service delivery activities



- Engage with national research and development programmes, including those overseen by the National Fire Chiefs Council.
- Utilise a new national procurement framework to equip firefighters with the next generation of firefighting and rescue protective clothing, whilst delivering best value to the public through enhanced economies of scale and joint tendering processes.
- Develop our equipment, procedures, guidance and tactics in response to the changing operational environment
- Replace our old fire appliances with a new collaborative fire appliance with a specification and inventory for the Thames Valley Fire & Rescue Services' at a significantly reduced cost to the taxpayer than if purchasing alone.
- Create efficiencies at our County border deployments by aligning operations within the Thames Valley partners. This will lead to fewer appliance and officer mobilisations whilst maintaining the quickest possible appropriate response.
- Support our partners to deliver some of their key functions more efficiently, for example when assisting the Police in the search for high risk missing persons, or assisting South Central Ambulance Service when responding to medical emergencies.

18. Consultation/publication/communication

Development of this strategy is supported by engagement with:

Joint Consultation Forum

Leadership Group

All BFRS Employees

Our partners and key stakeholders through the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum.

Following approval at the Combined Fire Authority, the strategy is published on the BFRS Document Management System with an externally facing version published on the Bucks Fire website.

19. Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

A) The impact table

Are there any possible impacts which need further investigation? To complete the table tick ✓ the likely impact.



Impact Table						
Impact on people (protected groups and "others")	External Individuals			Authority Employees		
	Positive	Negative	None	Positive	Negative	None
People						
Gender	✓					✓
Race	✓					✓
Age	✓					✓
Religion/Belief	✓					✓
Sexual Orientation	✓					✓
Gender Reassignment			✓			✓
Pregnancy / Maternity			✓			✓
Marriage/Civil Partnership			✓			✓
Disability	✓					✓
Place						
Strengthen Community Cohesion	✓					✓
Tackling Poverty / Promoting Social Inclusion			✓			✓
Privacy	✓					✓
Health	✓			✓		
Environment	✓			✓		

If you have a tick in any negative box, you need to consider why and include this in your risk assessment.



B) Privacy impact assessment screening questions

These questions are intended to help Authority staff involved with new projects and / or processes (or significantly changed processes) decide whether an Impact Assessment is necessary. Answering 'yes' to any of these questions is an indication that an Impact Assessment would be a beneficial exercise.

Privacy Screening Questions		
Question	Yes/ No?	Comment
Will the project involve the collection of new information about individuals?	No	
Will the project compel individuals to provide information about themselves that they have not had to previously?	No	
Will information about individuals be disclosed to organisations or people who have not previously had routine access to the information?	No	
Are you using information about individuals for a purpose it is not currently used for, or in a way it is not currently used?	No	
Does the project involve you using new technology which might be perceived as being privacy intrusive? For example, the use of biometrics or facial recognition.	No	
Will the project result in you making decisions or taking action against individuals in ways which can have a significant impact on them?	No	
Is the information about individuals of a kind particularly likely to raise privacy concerns or expectations? For example, health records, criminal records or other information that people would consider to be particularly private.	No	
Will the project require you to contact individuals in ways which they may find intrusive?	No	



People Screening Questions		
Question:	Yes/No:	Comment
<p>Will the project you are undertaking affect any of the following factors explicitly?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Race - Disability - Gender - Religion/Belief - Sexuality - Age - Gender Reassignment - Pregnancy / Maternity - Marriage / Civil Partnerships 	No	
<p>Could the progression of your project have a negative effect on a particular person/group of persons within the organisation or externally?</p>	No	
<p>Does the progression of your project affect the status of any person/s within the organisation or externally?</p>	No	
<p>Will any person/s within the organisation or externally be negatively impacted, with respect to their personal status, by the completion of your project?</p>	No	
<p>Is there any new technology within your project that will negatively impact the wellbeing of a person/s within the organisation or externally.</p>	No	
<p>Is there any aspect of a person/s status that will negatively impact your project?</p>	No	
<p>Is there any risk that your project could fail to comply with all relative people laws, e.g. the Equalities Act 2010?</p>	No	
<p>If your project requires you to employ new members of staff, is there likely to be any people based prejudice within the recruitment process?</p>	No	

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Service Document Standard Form:

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



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1: Overview information

Name of activity / change / policy / procedure/project:	Extension to BFRS Response Strategy 2018 - 2023
Directorate/department:	Response
Name(s) of person(s) completing the assessment	Stuart Grosse
Date of commencement of assessment:	24 March 2023

2: What is the aim and purpose of the activity / change / policy / procedure / project you are assessing?

To extend the duration of the BFRS Response Strategy 2018-2023 until April 2025. This will enable the new Response Strategy to align with the Community Risk Management Plan. The current plan is suitable to be extended until October 2024. The Response Strategy has an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) from when it was first published, this IIA is still valid. The EIA reviews the Response Strategy and covers the period of the extension.

3: Who will be affected by the activity / change / policy / procedure / project, and how? Consider members of the public, employees, partner organisations etc.

The Response Strategy is available to all BFRS employees.
By extending the Response Strategy, it will allow time to build a new well informed Response strategy to better represent the communities BFRS serve.

4: What information is already available that tells you what impact the activity / change / policy / procedure / project has/will have on people? (*please reference*) Consider quantitative and qualitative data, consultation, research, complaints etc. What does this information tell you?

The Response Strategy is a current 'live' document, it is available to be commented on by BFRS employees.

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5: Does the activity/change / policy/procedure/project have the potential to impact differently on individuals in different groups? Complete the table below by ✓ the likely impact.

Assessment of impact on groups in **bold** is a legal requirement. Assessment of impacts on groups in *italics* is not a legal requirement, however it will help to ensure that your activity does not have unintended consequences.

Protected characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Rational for decision (<i>use action plan in section 14 for negative impacts</i>)
Individuals of different ages			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Disabled individuals			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individuals transitioning from one gender to another			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individuals who are married or in civil partnerships			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Pregnancy, maternity and new parents			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individuals of different race			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individuals of different religions or beliefs			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individual's gender identity			✓	No specific impacts identified.
Individual's sexual orientation			✓	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Individuals living in different family circumstances</i>			✓	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Individuals in different social</i>			✓	No specific impacts identified.

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<i>circumstances</i>				
<i>Different employee groups</i>			✓	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Other, please specify</i>			✓	No specific impacts identified.

6: What further research or consultation is needed to check the impact/potential impact of the activity/change/policy/procedure/project on different groups? If needed, how will you gather additional information and from whom?

The extension of the Response strategy is to be circulated through the Leadership Group. Any amendments will be considered and the document will be sent to BTB for sign off.

7: Following your research, considering all the information that you now have, is there any evidence that the activity/change/policy/procedure/project is impacting/will impact differently or disproportionately on some group of people?

No evidence.

8: What amendments will you make/have been made to the activity/change/policy/procedure/project as a result of the information you have? If a negative effect has been identified, how could it/has it been lessened, does the original plan need changing?

No change.

9: After these amendments (if any) have been made, is/will there still be a negative impact on any groups?

Yes – please explain below

No – go to section 11

No

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10: Can continuing or implementing the proposed activity/change/policy/procedure/project, without further amendment, be justified legally? If so, how?

11: How can you ensure that any positive or neutral impact is maintained?

Review this EIA as the new Response strategy is built.

12: How will you monitor and review the impact of the activity/change/policy/procedure/project once it has been implemented?

Review this EIA as the new Response strategy is built.

Ensure that the Response strategy 2024 is published with an updated EIA.

13: Sign off

Name of department head / project lead

AC Tuffley

Date of EIA sign off:

17/04/2023

Date(s) of review of assessment:

October 2024

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14. Action Plan - the table below should be completed to produce an action plan for the implementation of proposals to:

- Lower negative impacts
- Ensure the negative impacts are legal under anti-discriminatory law
- Provide an opportunity to promote equality, equal opportunity and improve relations within equality target groups i.e. increase
- the positive impact

Area of impact	Changes proposed	Timescales	Resource implications	Comments

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