

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY**  
**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Director of Legal & Governance, Graham Britten  
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**Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive**  
Mark Jones

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To: The Chairman and Members of Buckinghamshire  
And Milton Keynes Fire Authority

16 June 2014

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** to be held in Meeting Room 1, Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Stocklake, Aylesbury on **TUESDAY 24 JUNE 2014 at 11.00 am** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully



Graham Britten  
Director of Legal and Governance

Chairman: Councillor Busby  
Councillors Bendyshe-Brown, Chilver, Dransfield, Exon, Glover, Gomm, Huxley,  
Lambert, Mallen, Morris, Reed, Schofield, Vigor-Hedderly, Watson, Webb  
and Wilson



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## COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Matters reserved to the Authority include:

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
    - (iv) Setting the Council Tax.
  - (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 Best Value Performance Plan.
3. To determine the Code of Conduct for Members on recommendation from the Standards Committee.
4. To determine all other matters reserved by law or otherwise, whether delegated to a committee or not.

## AGENDA

### Item No:

**1. Election of Chairman**

To elect a Chairman for 2014/15

**2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

To appoint a Vice-Chairman for 2014/15

**3. Apologies**

**4. Minutes**

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 19 February 2014 (Item 4) **(Pages x to x)**.

**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 SOA7.

**9. Membership of the Authority**

To note that the Constituent Authorities have appointed the following Members to serve on the Fire Authority for 2014/15:

Buckinghamshire County Council (12)

Councillors Bendyshe-Brown, Busby, Chilver, Glover, Gomm, Huxley, Lambert, Mallen, Reed, Schofield, Vigor-Hedderly and Watson

Milton Keynes Council (5)

Councillors Dransfield, Exon, Morris, Webb and Wilson

**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) Not all seats on each Committee are to be allocated to the same Group.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 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:               | 11 seats | (64.7059%) |
| United Kingdom Independence Group | 2 seats  | (11.7647%) |
| Liberal Democrat Group:           | 2 seats  | (11.7647%) |
| Labour Group:                     | 2 seats  | (11.7647%) |

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.

Executive Committee

The Authority is asked to make appointments to the Executive Committee (8 Members).

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

Conservative - 5

Liberal Democrat - 1

Labour - 1

United Kingdom Independence - 1

## Overview and Audit Committee

The Authority is asked to make appointments to the Overview and Audit Committee (9 Members).

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

Conservative - 6

Liberal Democrat - 1

Labour - 1

United Kingdom Independence - 1

## 11. Calendar of Meetings

### Fire Authority

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Wednesday 22 October 2014  | at 11.00am |
| Wednesday 17 December 2014 | at 11.00am |
| Wednesday 25 February 2015 | at 11.00am |
| Wednesday 10 June 2015     | at 11.00am |

### Executive Committee

|                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Wednesday 30 July 2014      | at 10.00am |
| Wednesday 17 September 2014 | at 10.00am |
| Wednesday 19 November 2014  | at 10.00am |
| Wednesday 4 February 2015   | at 10.00am |
| Wednesday 18 March 2015     | at 10.00am |
| Wednesday 13 May 2015       | at 10.00am |

### Overview & Audit Committee

|                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Wednesday 16 July 2014      | at 10.00am |
| Wednesday 24 September 2014 | at 10.00am |
| Wednesday 3 December 2014   | at 10.00am |
| Wednesday 11 March 2015     | at 10.00am |

## 12. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

### (a) Local Government Association Annual Conference

To appoint 1 Member to attend as the Authority's representative at the Local Government Association's Annual Conference.

### (b) Local Government Association Fire Commission

To appoint 1 Member and Standing Deputy to represent the Authority at the Local Government Association's Fire Commission.

- (c) Regional Management Board (South East Fire Improvement Partnership)  
To appoint a Representative and Standing Deputy to the Regional Management Board.
- (d) Thames Valley Fire Control Service – Programme Sponsoring Group  
To appoint two Representatives to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service – Programme Sponsoring Group.

**13. Lead Member Responsibilities**

To consider the allocation of Lead Member Responsibilities. The Lead Member Responsibilities are currently as follows:

| <b>Responsibility</b>                 |
|---------------------------------------|
| Community Protection and Control      |
| Equality and Diversity                |
| Finance, IT, Property and Procurement |
| Health and Safety and Corporate Risk  |
| Resource Management                   |

The Authority is recommended to approve the allocation of Lead Member Responsibilities.

Background Papers: None

**14. Recommendations from Committees**

**Overview and Audit Committee – 12 March 2014**

**Review of Financial Regulations**

“That the Financial Regulations as amended (Appendix A) be recommended to the Authority for approval.”

The report considered by the Overview and Audit Committee is attached at item 14 (Pages xx to xx)

**15. Prevention Strategy 2014/15-2016/17**

To consider item 15 (Pages xx to xx)

**16. Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 – Employer Discretions**

To consider item 16 (Pages xx to xx)

**17. 2015-20 Public Safety Plan: For Public Consultation**

To consider item 17 (Pages xx to xx)

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

Minutes of the meeting of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY held on WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2014 at 11.00 am

**Present** Councillors Bendyshe-Brown, Busby, Chilver, Dransfield, Edwards, Exon, Glover, Gomm, Huxley, Lambert, Morris, Reed, Schofield, Vigor-Hedderly, Watson and Webb

**Officers:** M Jones (Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Law and Governance), D Skinner (Director of Finance and Assets), L Swift (Director of People and Organisational Development) J May (Head of Finance [Deputy Director]), G Young (Management Accountant [Plan and Monitor]), D O'Driscoll (Head of Service Development), M Osborne (Head of Service Delivery), J Parsons (Area Manager) S Gowanlock (Corporate Planning Manager), K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer), F Pearson (Group Manager Communications), and E Andrews (Executive Assistant).

**Apologies:** Councillor Mallen

**FA29 MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 18 December 2013, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**FA30 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that:

- (a) Fire Minister Brandon Lewis had visited Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service on Monday 10 February. After a meeting with the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman, he was taken by the Chief Operating Officer to Marlow to see what the Service had been doing to protect flood-threatened homes in Marlow.
- (b) Mr Eric Pickles in his role as Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government when responding to a question in the House of Commons from Mrs Cheryl Gillan (Chesham and Amersham) praising the fire service and the local authorities who are pumping out and saving buildings from flooding by the River Misbourne in Old Amersham and Chalfont St Peter, mentioned the fact that Brandon Lewis had just come back from Marlow, where he had been examining the state of preparedness and reported the fantastic work of local firefighters.

On this note the Chief Fire Officer had received a number of letters of thanks from residents of Marlow, scanned copies of which had been placed in the Member's Library.

- (c) Crews have been working to assist the firefighters of Devon and Somerset on the Somerset Levels.



(The Chairman asked the Head of Service Development to give a brief update on the current situation. The Chief Fire Officer also clarified the position regarding the question of future funding and flood preparation. He explained that the fire service responded to flooding calls for assistance as a moral duty not a legal one and shared his view that a statutory duty might add extra burdens with no extra funding. He explained that the Authority can legitimately use its resources for almost any purpose it wished to without the need for regulatory change. He also explained that many local authorities received money nominally for flooding in their grants but CFAs do not.)

Members rose to join the Chairman to give their thanks to the firefighters for their flood relief work.

- (d) At a previous meeting of the Authority, members had requested further information to help them better understand how the Retained Duty System operated. An information paper has been posted in the member's library which gave a brief background and a forward look as further improvements are planned and being worked upon; and if members would like any further information, Mick Osborne would be happy to oblige.
- (e) The new FBU Chairman's letter to members and the CFO's response has been distributed today. Members would be aware that the firefighters industrial action had taken place over the Christmas and New Year periods, but that no strikes had been called for the past 6 weeks which was generally felt to be a positive sign; and would like to offer thanks on behalf of all of the Members to those who gave up their family celebrations to keep Bucks and Milton Keynes safe.
- (f) He had attended a Fire Commission meeting on Friday 14 February. Topics discussed were: a review of the defence fire risk management organisation and the objective of this review was to identify a more cost effect way of providing fire prevention and risk management services to the Ministry of Defence; the Emergency Services Mobile Communications programme, which was to replace the current mobile network that the blue light services use; and the national position on how the future fire control room service scheme was progressing across England.
- (g) The Chief had written to HM Treasury and copied in the area's 7 MPs to request that some of the Authority's reserves be used to pay off some debt owed to the Public Works Loan Board without penalty by way of early repayment premium.

Although a response from the Chancellor's offices had yet to be received, DCLG had indicated that it would not be feasible because the PWLB has to rely upon the income so as to meet the Government's GILTS commitments. He would ask the Chief to place copies of the correspondence in the Member's library.

- (h) The Chief had also written to DCLG requesting tax breaks for those retained firefighters attending the lengthy flooding incidents. No response had yet been received but he would also ask for those to be placed in the Members' library.
- (i) He was pleased to introduce the Authority's 'latest recruit'— Julian Parsons, who would be working alongside Mick Osborne and Denis O'Driscoll.

**FA31**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

### **Executive Committee – 5 February 2014**

The Authority considered the recommendations of the Executive Committee held on 5 February 2014 relating to:

- Treasury Management
- The Prudential Code, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision
- Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2014/15-2017/18
- BMKFA Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2014 15

#### **(a) Treasury Management.**

The Authority considered the Treasury Management Policy Statement, the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy.

The Authority noted the main changes were an increase from £5 million to £7.5 million to the counterparty limit for Lloyds, that a limited number of non-UK based banks were added to the counterparty list and that a limited number of additional UK based building societies were added to the counterparty list.

**RESOLVED –**

That the Treasury Management Policy Statement, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2014/15 be approved.

**(b) The Prudential Code, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision**

The Authority considered the Prudential Code, Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision.

The Authority noted that the Prudential Code had been established to ensure that capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable and equated to an acceptable level of risk to the Authority.

The Authority was currently in an over-borrowed position but due to the prohibitive penalties early repayment of borrowing was not an option. The Authority would therefore ensure that no additional borrowing be undertaken for the foreseeable future.

RESOLVED –

That the prudential indicators and the minimum revenue provision policy statement be approved.

**(c) Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2014/15–2017/18**

It was noted that the recommendations from the Executive Committee had been superseded by the report on the Medium Term Financial Plan at Item 8 of the agenda.

RESOLVED –

That the two options for precept be noted: i) 0% and accept council tax freeze grant and ii) a percentage rise up to the referendum limit.

**(d) BMKFA Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2014 15**

The Director of People and organisational Development advised the Authority that the purpose of this report was to recommend approval for the Pay Policy Principles and Statement for 2014/15, thus achieving compliance with the requirements of sections 38 to 40 of the Localism Act 2011 with regards to Openness and Accountability in Local Pay.

The Authority also noted that the Pay Policy Statement was based on last year's, with minor amendments to align with guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government. It also noted that the pay policy statement could be updated by the full Authority within year.

RESOLVED –

That the draft Pay Policy Principles and Statement be adopted and published as its statutory Pay Policy Statement 2014/15.

**FA32 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) 2014/15 – 2017/18**

The Authority noted the recommendations and report from the Executive Committee held on 5 February 2014 and also

considered a revised report and recommendations which took into account the final settlement announced on 5 February 2014 and is included in the funding assumptions for government grant funding, business rates and council tax receipts.

The Chief Fire Officer introduced the report and advised the Authority that each year the Authority was in the thrall of its constituent billing authorities whilst they calculate their respective National Non-Domestic Rate assessments. This year, none of those authorities met the deadline of 31 January set by the Government. If this continued in future years, the Authority might wish to consider delaying the precept meeting until later in February. The Chief Fire Officer proposed to write to the Chief Executives and copy in the Leaders of the billing authorities to make them aware of the subsidiary pressure the Service suffers through their lateness and try and avert having to modify its procedures as that would, in turn, have a delaying impact upon them.

The Chief Fire Officer advised the Authority that each year as they agree a budget, he had not overtly acted to protect the base funding for a number of reasons:

- He is confident that the Service could deliver below set budgets and thus create healthy underspends,
- He agreed that the Service should be as low cost as possible without any detriment to service delivery,
- He wished to instill cost control as a core functional responsibility of all managers,
- He recognised the political and democratic will of the Authority.

The Chief Fire Officer had not sought to quantify the proportion of erosion the Authority's base has endured by recent freezes, but he was disappointed that the Government's arrangements on this year's freeze penalised those authorities for previous restraint because this year's tax freeze grant was based upon an incremental approach, thus favouring those who raised taxes in previous years.

The Chief Fire Officer reminded Members that in his opinion, a Combined Fire Authority was a special case when it came to funding. Whilst it tends to be politically constrained by the decisions taken in its parent authorities, it has no access to special funds. In setting the grant levels, from which it has done notably poorly over the last six years, the Government assumes that the Authority would utilise its comparatively healthy tax base to raise the required funds for its assessed needs.

In advising that the freeze grant is achievable for 2014/15 and in recognition that next year's budget setting process will be conducted under the looming shadow of a general election, he implored Members to think of what the decisions taken successively to freeze mean for service delivery. This year's

forthcoming risk management consultation may throw up some difficult issues for Members to deal with if the Authority is to continue to work within budget.

The Chief Fire Officer wished to recognise the efforts of Mick Osborne and Denis O'Driscoll who had led operations and fire safety functions so well that the risk to communities continued to drop year on year. This would allow Members to consider further future expenditure cuts in the certain knowledge that risk levels would not be affected.

The Chief Fire Officer was actively seeking further cost reduction in support services and would investigate all possibilities including shared services and outsourcing. Further to this, he would promote commercial sponsorships to try and gain new and innovative income streams.

The Chief Fire Officer then asked the Director of Finance and Assets to take the Authority through the budget. He was confident that people and resources could be managed and public safety levels be maintained, and improved; enhancing reputation whilst still delivering high quality services at a low cost to tax payers.

The Authority received the statement of the Chief Finance Officer, as required by the Local Government Act 2003, with regard to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations of the budget and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

The Director of Finance and Assets asked the Authority to consider the impact of the national economic position, the effects of Localism (the business rate retention scheme), the Autumn Statement 2013 and Funding Settlement.

The Authority also considered the risk factors in the budget assumptions, with the potential key issues impacting on the budget estimates being, pay awards, increases in Employers National Insurance contributions, LGPS Pensions and Firefighters Pension scheme changes, borrowing, together with any unexpected events, or exceptional conditions.

The Authority noted that it was the view of the Chief Finance Officer that given the level of the General Fund Balance and earmarked reserves available, the prudent approach to the budget setting process for the next financial year and the tighter controls introduced for budget management that there was sufficient capacity in the reserves to cope with the financial risks the Authority faced for 2014/15 and future years and that the methodology applied provided the necessary assurance to the Authority about the robustness of the estimates used in constructing the budget.

The Authority gave detailed consideration to whether it should increase the level of Council Tax Precept, or accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant being offered by the Government, taking account of the implications for future budgets.

It was noted by the Authority that the legislation that had been passed in respect of mandatory recorded votes for agreeing the budget and setting the precept was not yet in force; and that it would not apply to standalone fire and rescue authorities. However, it being moved and seconded in accordance with its standing orders the Authority proceeded to a recorded vote

In the event, the Authority unanimously voted to delete recommendation 4 - a Council Tax precept of £60.31 for a band D property and the revenue budget as set out in Model 2 (1.99% Council Tax increase) at Appendix A(ii) and instead agree the Council Tax Freeze Grant as set out in Model 1.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report and Statement of the Chief Finance Officer at Section 10 be noted.
2. That the information provided at sections 2 to 4 showing the effects of the latest global and UK economic forecast, the Localism Act and Autumn Statement on the funding settlement for 2014/15 be noted.
3. That a Council tax precept of £59.13 for a band D property and the revenue budget as set out in Model 1 (Council Tax freeze) at Appendix A(i) be approved.
- 4 That the capital programme for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix B(i) and the indicative capital programme for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 as set out in Appendix B(ii) be approved.
5. That the general reserve balance should be maintained and note the estimate movements in earmarked reserved as set out in Appendix C be agreed.
6. That the baseline funding summary at Appendix D be noted.

For completeness, details of the recorded vote are set out below:

|                | For | Against | Abstained |
|----------------|-----|---------|-----------|
| Bendyshe-Brown | ✓   |         |           |
| Busby          | ✓   |         |           |
| Chilver        | ✓   |         |           |
| Dransfield     | ✓   |         |           |
| Edwards        | ✓   |         |           |
| Exon           | ✓   |         |           |

|                |   |  |  |
|----------------|---|--|--|
| Glover         | ✓ |  |  |
| Gomm           | ✓ |  |  |
| Huxley         | ✓ |  |  |
| Lambert        | ✓ |  |  |
| Morris         | ✓ |  |  |
| Reed           | ✓ |  |  |
| Schofield      | ✓ |  |  |
| Vigor-Hedderly | ✓ |  |  |
| Watson         | ✓ |  |  |
| Webb           | ✓ |  |  |

**FA33**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA)**

The Director of Legal and Governance advised the Authority that this was an annual report on the use of the powers given to the Authority under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). The statutory guidance requires that the Authority be given an update at least annually on the use by the Authority of surveillance and use of covert human intelligent sources (CHIS) and have the opportunity to review the CHIS and Surveillance policy annually.

The Authority was informed that an inspection by the Surveillance Commissioner was undertaken triennially; the last inspection was in 2012 and was highly complimentary of the Authority's policy. The Authority was also informed that the ethos of the Service was to be supportive and facilitative of businesses and employers in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. As such, enforcement of fire safety legislation would be a last resort and it therefore followed that tools such as RIPA powers that would be used to support enforcement of fire safety legislation, would rarely ever need to be deployed.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update report be noted.
2. That the CHIS and Surveillance policy be approved.

**FA34**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION – PRE-IRMP “LISTENING & ENGAGEMENT” RESEARCH – REPORT OF CONSULTATION OUTCOMES.**

The Corporate Planning Manager advised the Authority that this report was the outcome of consultation work with the Public via a

series of five focus groups across the areas served by the Authority. This early consultation work was designed to help inform the development of the next Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

The Authority was advised that the focus groups were run in two phases. The first was exploring the participants' general awareness and understanding of the Fire and Rescue Service and the issues facing it (without being given any significant background information) and the second was exploring their views and expectations after being more acquainted with the issues and challenges facing the Authority and some potential ways that it could respond to these.

Preparation of the next IRMP, which would cover the period from 2015 to 2020 was currently underway with a view to officers presenting a draft for Members to approve for public consultation at the June 2014 Fire Authority meeting.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

**FA35 CHANGE OF DATE FOR JUNE AGM**

It was agreed to move the date of the AGM from Wednesday 11 June 2014 to Tuesday 24 June 2014 to allow for Members to be appointed by Milton Keynes Council following their election.

RESOLVED -

That the date for the AGM be moved from Wednesday 11 June 2014 to Tuesday 24 June 2014.

**FA36 CANCELLATION OF MEETING ON 9 APRIL 2014**

It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by the Vice-Chairman that the meeting on 9 April 2014 be cancelled.

RESOLVED -

That the meeting on Wednesday 9 April be cancelled.

**FA37 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Authority noted that the next meeting of the Fire Authority is to be held on Tuesday 24 June 2014 at 11.00am.

Before closing the meeting the Chairman thanked Councillor Reg Edwards for his service to the Authority. This meeting would be his last full Authority meeting before retiring prior to the Milton Keynes Council elections on 22 May 2014.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 12.50PM



Report considered by the Overview &amp; Audit Committee – 12 March 2014



## Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>MEETING</b>               | Overview and Audit Committee   |
| <b>DATE OF MEETING</b>       | 12 March 2014  |
| <b>OFFICER</b>               | David Skinner, Director of Finance & Assets  |
| <b>LEAD MEMBER</b>           | Councillor David Watson  |
| <b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b> | <b>Review of Financial Regulations</b>   |
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>     | <p>To present the revised Financial Regulations to the Overview and Audit Committee for recommendation on to the Authority.</p> <p>The Financial Regulations were last approved by the Authority in June 2013.</p> <p>Changes to the latest version include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ minor formatting adjustments for bullet points, spacing and consistency of headings</li> <li>▪ extra wording at 1.2 "to include temporary staff"</li> <li>▪ extra wording at A.2 "(revenue and capital)"</li> <li>▪ additional sentence at A.2 and deletion of the final sentence at C.9 to accommodate the change in the Treasury Management Function now operated in-house and no longer under Service Level Agreement with Buckinghamshire County Council</li> <li>▪ the words "Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)" added to the title at B.3</li> <li>▪ additional paragraph at B.6 to clarify maintenance and formal approval requirements for General Fund Balance and Reserves</li> <li>▪ reference changed from the now abolished Auditing Practices Board to the Financial Reporting Council and to International Standards on Auditing (ISA) at C.4 for the Internal Audit Function Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC)</li> <li>▪ all references to Senior Management Team</li> </ul> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | (SMT) have now been replaced with "Strategic Management Board (SMB)".   |
| <b>ACTION</b>                                     | Information.  |
| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>                            | That the Financial Regulations as amended (Appendix A) be recommended to the Authority for approval.  |
| <b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>                            | Financial Regulations establish the principles of financial control. They are part of the control framework and reflect the finance control hierarchy. They also attempt to underline the role of finance within the Authority, i.e. to provide the financial support and wherewithal to allow the Authority to function effectively, meet its statutory requirements and minimise the level of risk that is associated with financial transactions and exchequer activities.   |
| <b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>                     | As set out in the main body of the report.  |
| <b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>                         | The terms of reference reserve to the Authority the power to vary the Financial Regulations, having considered any recommendations from the Overview and Audit Committee.   |
| <b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>                          | None.   |
| <b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>                     | There are no equality and diversity issues arising from the recommendations.  |
| <b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>                           | In reviewing the financial regulations and instructions the Authority can demonstrate accountability of its use of resources by updating in line with latest legislation and best practice guidance appropriate to the good governance of the Authority and the Service.  |
| <b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b> | Revised Financial Regulations and Instructions, CFA September 2012.<br><a href="http://www.bucksfire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/932C6346-9A7C-4DEC-B954-D6241E49A16E/0/OA20120918.pdf">http://www.bucksfire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/932C6346-9A7C-4DEC-B954-D6241E49A16E/0/OA20120918.pdf</a><br>Approval of revisions to the Authority's constitutional documents CFA June 2013.<br><a href="http://www.bucksfire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/5DF53301-41B6-4C0C-8D39-7ABCD186D979/0/Item16BMKFA12June2013.pdf">http://www.bucksfire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/5DF53301-41B6-4C0C-8D39-7ABCD186D979/0/Item16BMKFA12June2013.pdf</a> |
| <b>APPENDICES</b>                                 | Appendix A - Financial Regulations  |
| <b>TIME REQUIRED</b>                              | 30 minutes.   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>REPORT ORIGINATOR<br/>AND CONTACT</b> | Jacqui May – Head of Finance<br><a href="mailto:jmay@bucksfire.gov.uk">jmay@bucksfire.gov.uk</a><br>01296 744428 |
|--|--|

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## Preamble

Financial Regulations are the regulatory framework within which the financial affairs of the Authority operate; they apply to all the Authority's activities. The regulations identify responsibilities in full, but from a common sense point of view can be summarised as follows:

- Major financial decisions, including setting the annual revenue and capital budgets, must be taken by the Members of the Authority, as advised by the Chief Finance Officer.
- The Authority encourages the Chief Fire Officer and his staff to take day-to-day responsibility for financial management of the service within the agreed budget.
- The Chief Finance Officer (for financial matters) and the Director of Legal & Governance have statutory responsibilities and should be consulted on significant issues or where members or officers have any doubt about the correctness of a possible action.
- Spending must be regularly monitored to ensure that it stays within approved budgets.
- Members, as advised by the Chief Finance Officer, Director of Legal & Governance and Chief Fire Officer, are responsible for identifying significant risks to the Authority and for putting in place a strategy to deal with them.
- Payments, including to staff, can only be made through arrangements approved by the Chief Finance Officer and within the detailed procedures laid down.
- All partnership arrangements must take account of appropriate financial and legal matters.

## Introduction and overview

### 1.1 What are the financial regulations?

These regulations identify the financial responsibilities of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Authority, Members, the Chief Fire Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Finance Officer and other officers.

Members and officers should maintain a written record of any decision-making that has been delegated to members of their staff, including seconded staff. When decisions have been delegated or have been devolved to other bodies or responsible officers, references to members or officers in the regulations should be read as referring to them.

### 1.2 Who should read this document?

The regulations and procedures apply to all staff (including temporary staff) and members of the Authority. The prime audience for financial regulations consists of:

- Members
- Chief Fire Officer
- Finance Officers
- Staff with financial responsibilities.

More detailed guidance on how the regulations should be implemented in practice is contained in The Financial Instructions, which apply to all Members and all staff and anyone acting on the Fire Authority's behalf.

### 1.3 Why have financial regulations?

Financial Regulations form part of the means by which the Fire Authority manages its business. They clarify responsibilities and provide a framework for decision-making. Where there are specific statutory powers and duties, the financial regulations seek to ensure that these are duly complied with, as well as setting out best professional practices and processes for all activities and decisions of the Fire Authority, its committees and staff.

In summary, financial regulations are the regulatory framework within which the financial affairs of the Authority operate.

Rather than a barrier to action they should be viewed as providing the framework within which action can be taken, setting out best practice throughout the Authority and ensuring a high quality of financial information, enabling better decision making and improved service delivery.

### 1.4 Corporate governance and financial regulations

All staff and Members must comply with the seven "principles of public life" as set out in the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee):

#### ***Selflessness***

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

#### ***Integrity***

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### ***Objectivity***

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

**Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

**Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

**Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

These regulations also reinforce the corporate governance “standards”, as recommended by the Nolan Committee, governing:

- organisational structures and processes
- financial reporting and internal controls
- standards of behaviour.

**1.5 What do financial regulations cover?**

The regulations apply to all the Authority’s activities. In practice, this means all budgets, money and funds administered by Members and Officers in carrying out their duties across all the Authority’s services and activities. This also includes:

- funds managed on behalf of third parties such as trust funds, community accounts and unofficial funds
- partnership arrangements where the Authority is the accountable body
- external providers such as outsourced services, contractors and consultants are managed through the contract process. The contract document will set out the financial requirements. These include, for example, compliance with key control procedures; performance standards and statistics; attendance at service client meetings’ and access to accounts.

**1.6 Awareness and access**

The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for ensuring that all staff with financial responsibilities are made aware of and have access to these regulations, and to the accompanying financial instructions that set out in more detail how they should implement and comply with the regulations.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff in their departments are aware of the existence and content of the Authority’s financial regulations and other internal regulatory documents and that they comply with them.

All members and staff have a general responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security of the assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of these resources is legal, is properly authorised, provides value for money and achieves best value.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for issuing advice and guidance to underpin the financial regulations that Members, Officers and others acting on behalf of the Authority are required to follow.

### **1.7 Non-compliance with financial regulations**

Failure to comply with these regulations and the accompanying financial instructions may have the following consequences:

- For staff, these regulations supplement the code of conduct for employees, so a breach will normally be considered a disciplinary offence that will invoke disciplinary procedures (and can lead to dismissal).
- For Members, these regulations supplement the code of conduct for Members, so a breach may be reported to the Monitoring Officer, which may lead to sanctions being imposed upon the Member.
- For the Authority, there is an overriding duty to secure value for money by conducting its business in an economical, efficient and effective manner. Failing to comply with the regulations will have wider implications which could result in the misuse or waste of funds received from tax payers and the Government.

These regulations provide clarity about the financial accountabilities of everyone acting on behalf of the Authority, individually or as a whole. To conduct its business efficiently, the Authority needs to ensure that it has sound financial management policies in place and that they are strictly adhered to.

### **1.8 Review of the financial regulations**

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the financial regulations and submitting any additions or changes necessary to the Authority for approval. The Chief Finance Officer is also responsible for reporting, where appropriate, breaches of the financial regulations to the Authority.

### **1.9 Other rules**

Apart from these regulations, all members and officers must comply with certain other rules. These include:

- standing orders
- scheme of delegation to officers
- contract standing orders
- human resources policies and procedures, e.g. employee code of conduct
- financial instructions, procedures and guidance notes
- counter-fraud and corruption policy
- money laundering policy.

### **1.10 Further Assistance**

Finance staff are ready and willing to provide assistance in all areas relating to financial management and financial control. In particular you must seek advice and authorisation if you wish to create a new financial procedure or amend an existing one.



The Chief Finance Officer welcomes feedback on the operation of the Financial Regulations and Financial Instructions to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

**1.11 List of Financial Regulations**

- A. Financial accountabilities and management
- B. Financial Planning
- C. Risk management and control of resources
- D. Systems and procedures
- E. External arrangements

## **2 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

### **Financial Regulation A – Financial accountabilities and management**

#### **A.1 Introduction**

Financial management covers all financial accountabilities in relation to the running of the Service, including the policy framework and budget.

#### **A.2 The Fire Authority**

The Members of the Authority are responsible for:

- approving and adopting the Authority's pay policy and members' code of conduct
- approving the Corporate Strategy and budget (revenue and capital) within which all officers operate
- approving the Treasury Strategy and Prudential Borrowing Limits
- approving and monitoring compliance with the Authority's overall framework of accountability and control, monitoring compliance with the agreed policy and related executive decisions.

The Members are responsible for approving procedures for the delegation of powers to committees and procedures for recording and reporting decisions taken. These include decisions taken by the Authority or delegated by them. These delegations include any subsequently made to committee. The powers and duties of Committees are contained in the Authority's Standing Orders and Committees' Terms of Reference.

The Authority aims to delegate financial management to the Chief Fire Officer so that, as far as possible, the financial affairs are managed by Authority staff.

The Members of the Authority, advised by the Chief Finance Officer, must be satisfied that the Chief Fire Officer exercises delegated financial responsibilities in a proper and effective manner.

The Authority will:

- agree a budget requirement and set a precept after receiving the advice of the Chief Finance Officer
- approve the Chief Fire Officer's proposed allocation of resources as set out in a format agreed by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Finance Officer
- monitor financial outcomes
- identify and agree indicative longer term spending commitments.

#### **A.3 Executive Committee**

The Terms of Reference of the Executive Committee

- to make recommendations to the Authority as to its revenue budget and capital programme

- to consider and determine the annual programme for the replacement of vehicles and other major capital schemes
- to consider and advise the Authority on the financial effects of significant development strategies, plans, major acquisitions, contracts etc.
- to oversee the use of land and property and other significant resources (e.g. information technology, vehicles and communications equipment)
- to deal with any other urgent business that cannot reasonably be held over to the next full meeting of the Authority
- to deal with such other matters of financial significance that the Authority or other committees may refer to it.

#### **A.4 Overview and Audit Committee**

##### The Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee

- to receive, consider and approve the Fire Authority's statutory final accounts
- to consider the Authority's arrangements for corporate governance and make recommendations to ensure compliance with best practice
- to monitor the Authority's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls
- to monitor the effective development and operation of risk management and corporate governance within the Authority
- to consider and make recommendations for action plans arising from internal and external audit reports, including arrangements to ensure that processes which deliver value for money are maintained and developed
- to oversee investigations arising out of fraud and corruption allegations
- to determine insurance matters not delegated to officers, or another committee
- to consider and determine as appropriate such other matters as are required in legislation or guidance and make recommendations to Executive Committee as appropriate.

#### **A.5 Officers**

##### **A.5.1 The Chief Fire Officer:**

The Chief Fire Officer of the Authority acting as the Chief Executive to the Authority together with the Monitoring Officer, is responsible for the system of record keeping in relation to all Authority decisions (see below); and

- is responsible for the corporate and overall strategic management of the Authority as a whole. He or she must report to and provide information for the Authority and its committees. He or she is responsible for establishing a framework for management direction, style and standards and for monitoring the performance of the organisation.

##### **A.5.2 The Monitoring Officer (Director of Legal & Governance):**

The Monitoring Officer, together with the Chief Executive, is responsible for the system of record keeping in relation to all Authority decisions, and

- is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct and therefore provides support to the Overview and Audit Committee
- has statutory duties to report to the Authority if it appears to him or her that any proposal decision or omission did or could cause the Authority to act unlawfully or in such a manner as to constitute maladministration and for ensuring that procedures for recording and reporting are operating effectively
- must ensure that all Authority decisions and the reasons for them are as transparent as possible. He or she must also ensure that Members are aware of decisions made by the Authority and those made by officers who have delegated executive responsibilities
- is responsible for advising all members and officers about who has authority to take a particular decision
- is responsible for advising all Authority Committees about whether a decision is likely to be considered contrary or not wholly in accordance with the policy framework
- is responsible (together with the Chief Finance Officer) for advising the Authority about whether a decision is likely to be considered contrary or not wholly in accordance with the budget. Actions that may be "contrary to the budget" include:
  - initiating a new policy
  - committing expenditure in future years to above the budget level
  - incurring interdepartmental transfers above virement limits
  - causing the total expenditure financed from council tax, grants and corporately held reserves to increase, or to increase by more than a specified amount
- the monitoring officer is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date constitution
- the Authority is required to provide the Monitoring Officer with sufficient staff, accommodation and other resources to carry out his or her duties
- all reports to the Authority and committees must set out the full financial and legal implications arising from the proposals contained within the report. The full legal appraisal must be agreed with the Monitoring Officer. He or she must be consulted on all legal matters and given sufficient opportunity to provide written comments on any report with legal implications
- The Monitoring Officer deals with all matters relating to the preparation and despatch of Authority and Committee agendas, reports and minutes and also the preparation and issue of Decision and Action summaries. The Monitoring Officer has the authority to affix the Common Seal to deeds and documents.

### **A.5.3 The Chief Finance Officer:**

The Director of Finance and Assets acts as Chief Finance Officer of the Authority.

The Chief Finance Officer has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the Authority. This statutory responsibility cannot be overridden. The duties arise from:

- The Local Government Act 1972
- Sections 112 -114 Local Government Finance Act 1988

- Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for:

- The proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs
- Setting and monitoring compliance with financial management standards
- Advising on the corporate financial position and on the key financial controls necessary to secure sound financial management
- Ensuring the provision of financial information
- Preparation of the revenue budget and capital programme
- Treasury management.

Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Chief Finance Officer to report to the Authority and the external auditor:

- if the Authority or one of its committees or officers has made a decision or taken an action, or is about to do so, which involves incurring unlawful expenditure
- if it appears that the Authority's expenditure is likely to exceed available resources
- It also requires the Chief Finance Officer to nominate a properly qualified member of staff to deputise should he or she be unable to perform these duties. The Authority is required to provide the Chief Finance Officer with sufficient staff, accommodation and other resources to carry out the duties under section 114.

The Chief Finance Officer has a responsibility for ensuring that adequate systems and procedures exist to account for all income due and expenditure disbursements made on behalf of the Authority and that controls operate to protect the Authority's assets from loss, waste, fraud or other impropriety. The Chief Finance Officer shall discharge that responsibility in part by the issue and maintenance of Financial Instructions with which all staff of the Authority shall comply.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising the Authority on all financial matters. All reports to the Authority and committees must contain a financial appraisal setting out the full financial implications arising from the proposals contained within the report. The financial appraisal must be agreed with the Chief Finance Officer. He or she must be consulted on all financial matters and given sufficient opportunity to provide written comments on any report with financial implications.

#### **A.5.4 Strategic Management Board (SMB):**

Officers of the SMB are responsible for ensuring that Authority members are advised of the financial implications of all proposals and that the financial implications have been agreed by the Chief Finance Officer.

It is the responsibility of SMB officers to consult with the Chief Finance Officer and seek approval on any matter liable to affect the Authority's finances materially, before any commitments are incurred.

#### **A.5.5 All Managers and Officers with financial responsibilities:**

All Managers are responsible for the observance of Financial Regulations within their service area and for the training of staff to enable them to comply with these Regulations.

Each Manager is individually responsible for the proper financial management of resources allocated to his/her service area through the budget making process and for the identification of income arising from activities within his/her operational areas. This includes the control of staff and the security, custody and management of assets including plant, equipment, buildings, materials, cash and stores relating to his/her service area.

Managers, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, may delegate responsibilities to their staff. These shall be clearly documented and reviewed. The Manager will be responsible for ensuring that all staff are adequately trained prior to delegation, to carry out these roles. The competence of staff in these matters should be assessed as part of the Authority's performance management framework.

## **A.6 Other financial accountabilities**

### **A.6.1 Virement**

The Fire Authority is responsible for agreeing procedures for virements of expenditure between budget headings.

Executive Committee and/or Directors are responsible for agreeing in-year virements within delegated limits in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Finance Officer must sign off all virements.

### **A.6.2 Treatment of year end balances**

The Executive Committee is responsible for agreeing procedures for carrying forward under and over-spending on budget headings.

### **A.6.3 Accounting policies, records and returns**

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for selecting accounting policies and ensuring that they are applied consistently. He or she shall determine the accounting procedures and records for the Authority.

Accounting and other related records must be retained for periods which comply with relevant legislation.

### **A.6.4 Annual Statement of Accounts**

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that the annual statement of accounts is prepared and certified in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's 'Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom: Based on International Financial Reporting Standards (the Code)'.

### **A.6.5 Grants and Other External Contributions**

The Fire Authority is responsible for agreeing additional budgets over and above the approved budget for the year, including match-funding requirements.

The Executive Committee and/or Directors have delegated responsibility for ensuring that any funding conditions are compatible with the aims and objectives of the Authority prior to acceptance of the grant.

The Executive Committee and/or Directors delegated responsibility for agreeing additional expenditure budgets with 100% grant funding within delegated limits in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Finance Officer must sign off all grant applications.

The Chief Finance Officer must examine and certify where required any submission, estimate or claim for payment of grant by a Government Department or funding from any other body. Officers responsible for the administration of such grants, funds and spending associated with them must ensure compliance with the conditions of the grant/funding and where appropriate adhere to the Authority's Minimum Standards for External Funding. (See regulation E, External Arrangements).

The Chief Finance Officer must examine and certify all financial returns to government departments or other bodies.

#### **A.6.6 Pensions**

It is the responsibility of officers preparing to outsource activities of the Fire Authority that involve the transfer of pension rights and liabilities to notify the Chief Finance Officer of any proposal prior to substantive negotiations taking place with third parties.

In consultation with the Chief Finance Officer the full cost and implication of the transfer of pension rights and liabilities must be disclosed in the financial appraisal that is prepared in relation to the outsourcing proposal.

The Chief Finance Officer must be consulted about and approve revised pension arrangements before formal agreements are made.

#### **A.6.7 Use of capital receipts**

All receipts from the sale of assets which were originally purchased from capital financing will be treated as capital receipts and must be notified to the Chief Finance Officer.

## **Financial Regulation B – Financial Planning**

### **B.1 Introduction**

The Authority is responsible for approving its policy framework and budget. In terms of financial planning the key elements are:

- The Medium Term Financial Plan
- The annual revenue budget
- The capital programme.

### **B.2 Policy Framework**

The policy framework comprises the following plans and strategies of the Authority:

- Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)
- Public Safety Plan (PSP)
- Corporate Plan
- Finance and Value for Money Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Plan, including the
- Capital Programme
- Treasury Management Strategy
- Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy.

These strategy documents are underpinned by supplementary strategies:

- Asset Management Strategy
- The Property Strategy
- Red Fleet Strategy
- ICT Strategy
- Information Governance Strategy
- Equipment Strategy
- People Strategy - Workforce Plan.

They are also supplemented by other financial policies and guidance:

- Counter fraud and Corruption policy
- Anti - Money Laundering policy
- Whistle blowing procedure



- Standing Orders as to Contracts
- Invest to Save Policy
- Good Practice Guidance – Creditors
- Good Practice Guidance – Budget Management and Monitoring
- Financial Instructions and other guidance.

In addition, there are procedure notes supporting the correct usage of the Financial System (SAP), and financial training available from the Finance Department.

The Authority is also responsible for approving procedures for agreeing variations to approved budgets, plans and strategies forming the policy framework and for determining the circumstances in which a decision will be deemed to be contrary to the budget or policy framework.

### **B.3 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) / Public Safety Plan (PSP) and Corporate Plan**

The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for proposing these plans to the Executive Committee for consideration before submission to the Authority for approval.

### **B.4 Medium Term Financial Plan**

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for coordinating the four-year Medium Term Financial Plan each year for consideration by the Executive Committee before submission to the Authority. The Medium Term Financial Plan should be clearly linked to the Integrated Risk Management /Public Safety and Corporate Plans.

### **B.5 Budgeting**

#### Budget Format

The Chief Finance Officer will determine the general format of the Medium Term Financial Plan and the budget. The draft budget should include allocation to different services and projects, proposed taxation levels (precept) and the nature and level of contingency funds and reserves.

#### Guidelines

The Chief Finance Officer will issue guidelines for the preparation of the annual revenue budget and capital programme. These will take account of

- Legal requirements
- Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)
- Public Safety Plan (PSP)
- Medium term financial planning prospects
- Available resources
- Spending pressures
- Best value, efficiency savings and relevant government guidelines
- Other internal policy documents.

### Revenue Budget Preparation

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that a revenue budget is prepared on an annual basis for consideration by the Executive Committee and submission to the Authority. The Authority may amend the budget before approving it.

It is the responsibility of The Strategic Management Board (SMB), Directors, second tier managers and other budget holders to provide relevant information to the Finance Team, to ensure that budget estimates reflecting agreed service plans are submitted to the Executive Committee and that these estimates are prepared in line with the guidance issued by the Chief Finance Officer.

The precept has to be notified to the collecting authorities by February in respect of the ensuing financial year. It must be supported by a balanced budget approved by the Authority in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Finance Officer.

### Capital Programme Preparation

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that a capital programme is prepared on an annual basis for consideration by the Executive Committee and submission to the Authority. This will include advice to the Authority in setting an affordable borrowing limit and an assessment of the impact on the Prudential Indicators as required by the Prudential Code (the CIPFA professional code of practice for local authorities in taking investment and borrowing decisions).

The draft capital programme for the ensuing year should be submitted to the Authority for approval and include:

- details of all schemes, showing the total cost and the phased cost to completion
- the proposed method of funding
- an estimate of the revenue implications and confirmation as to whether this can be contained within the agreed revenue budget.

### Budget Monitoring and Control

It is the responsibility of cost centre managers to control and monitor income and expenditure within their area. They should also take any action necessary to avoid exceeding their budget allocation. The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for providing appropriate financial information to enable budgets to be monitored effectively.

Each month, in accordance with the budget monitoring timescales set out by the Chief Finance Officer, cost centre managers must provide the Chief Finance Officer with budget monitoring information. This will include any variances and problems within their areas and must include any proposals for actions to address these, together with a forecast of projected outturn.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for submitting regular reports to the Executive Committee on the budget monitoring position for both revenue and capital expenditure.

### Virement

A virement does not create additional overall budget liability. It is a transfer of budget provision either within or between budget headings and can be used as an effective tool to assist in managing budgets effectively within a cash limit.

The Authority is responsible for agreeing procedures for virement. Cost centre managers and SMB are responsible for agreeing in-year virements within delegated limits and budget line

restrictions. These are set out in Financial Instructions. The Chief Finance Officer must sign-off all virements.

The Executive Committee is required to approve a virement if:

- it involves resources not being used for the purposes approved by the Authority (a change in policy); or
- it results in an addition to commitments in future years; or
- it involves a transfer of resources from revenue to capital in excess of £10,000 (transfers from capital to revenue are not permitted) ; or
- the Chief Finance Officer requires it.

#### **B.6 Maintenance of General Fund Balance and Reserves**

It is the responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer to advise the Authority on prudent levels of reserves.

It is incumbent on the Authority to review the level of reserves each year before deciding the level of Council Tax. Reserves are maintained as a matter of prudence. They enable the Authority to provide for unexpected events and thereby protect it from overspending, should such events occur. Reserves for specific purposes may also be maintained.

All requests for movements, transfers and changes to reserves must be formally approved by the Executive Committee on the advice of the Chief Finance Officer.

## **Financial Regulation C – Risk Management and Control of Resources**

### **C.1 Introduction**

It is essential that robust, integrated systems are in place and maintained for identifying and evaluating all significant operational and corporate risks to the Authority. This should include the proactive participation of all those associated with planning and delivering services.

### **C.2 Risk Management**

The Executive Committee is responsible for approving a Corporate Risk Management Policy statement and strategy and for reviewing the effectiveness of risk management, after considering recommendations from the Overview and Audit Committee.

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for preparing the Authority's Corporate Risk Management Policy and for promoting it throughout the Authority. He/she is responsible for maintaining the corporate risk register, which will be reviewed annually by the Executive Committee.

The Strategic Management Board (SMB) is responsible for identifying and reporting corporate risks of the Authority to the Executive Committee and for monitoring and reviewing corporate risks on a regular basis. The Overview and Audit Committee is responsible for review of the Corporate Risk Management Policy. The Overview and Audit Committee is also responsible for the assurance on the robustness of the governance processes for the Corporate Risk Management Policy.

All managers are responsible for identifying and reporting to The Chief Operating Officer, risks in their area which need to be included in the corporate risk register and for risk management within their areas of responsibility.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising the Authority on insurance matters and for ensuring that proper insurance cover exists.

### **C.3 Internal Control**

Internal Control refers to the systems of control implemented by management to help ensure achievement of the Authority's objectives in a way that promotes economical, efficient and effective use of resources. In addition, the systems of control ensure that the Authority's assets are kept secure and interests are protected.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 require the Authority to conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and to include an approved Annual Governance Statement (previously the Statement on Internal Control), prepared in accordance with proper practices, with its statement of accounts.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising on effective systems of internal control.

These arrangements must ensure compliance with all relevant statutes and regulations and other relevant statements of best practice. They should ensure that public funds are properly safeguarded and used economically, efficiently and in accordance with the statutory and other authorities that govern their use.

It is the responsibility of Directors and second tier managers to establish sound arrangements for planning, appraising, authorising and controlling their operations in order to achieve continuous improvement, economy, efficiency and effectiveness and for achieving their financial performance targets.

#### **C.4 Audit Requirements**

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 require the Authority to undertake an adequate and effective internal audit. A review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit should be conducted at least once a year and the findings considered as part of the consideration of the system of internal control, referred to in C.3 above.

The Internal Audit function is provided through a Service Level Agreement with Buckinghamshire County Council. The Internal Auditors at Buckinghamshire County Council comply with codes and standards outlined in the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government (2006) and International Standards on Auditing (ISA) set by the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB) of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC).

The Internal Auditors have the authority to enter land or any premises used by the Authority at any time and have access to all Authority correspondence, systems, documents, books, property or other records related to the Authority's business. The Chief Finance Officer shall be entitled to receive explanation as s/he considers necessary to establish the correctness of any matter under examination.

The basic duties of the external auditor are governed by section 5 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.

The Authority may be subject to audit, inspection or investigation by external bodies such as HM Revenues and Customs, who have statutory rights of access.

The Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer should be notified immediately of any financial irregularities or suspected irregularities, or any circumstances which may suggest the possibility of irregularities in any of the Authority's functions. Any investigation should be undertaken in accordance with the Authority's Counter-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

#### **C.5 Prevention of Fraud and Corruption**

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Authority's Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy. The Director of People and Organisational Development is responsible for the Authority's Whistleblowing policy.

Directors and second tier managers are responsible for establishing and implementing effective controls to help prevent and/or detect incidents of fraud or corruption, for addressing key business risks, for ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and comply with the Authority's counter-fraud and corruption policy, and for creating an environment where all staff feel able to raise any concerns they may have.

#### **C.6 Anti-Money Laundering Policy**

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Authority's Anti-Money Laundering Policy. All members of staff are required to comply with this policy in terms of reporting concerns regarding money laundering.

#### **C.7 Separation of Duties**

Financial procedures must be established whenever possible to ensure separation of duties. This means different members of staff should undertake different parts of a sequence of operations in order to ensure that no one individual authorises an entire series of transactions.

#### **C.8 Assets**

Directors and second tier managers should ensure that records and assets are properly maintained and securely held in a method approved by the Chief Finance Officer. They should also ensure that contingency plans for the security of assets and continuity of service in the event of disaster or system failure are in place.

### **C.9 Investments and Treasury Management**

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the arrangements for managing the Authority's cash flow, its borrowing activities and its lending activities, in accordance with policies agreed by the Authority.

The Chief Finance Officer shall undertake Treasury Management activities in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.

At or before the start of each financial year the Chief Finance Officer will prepare a report on the Treasury Management Strategy for the coming year for consideration by the Executive Committee before submission to the Authority for approval. The Chief Finance Officer will also report to the Executive Committee and the Authority on the annual performance of the Treasury Management function following the end of the financial year.

The Chief Finance Officer will maintain the Treasury Management Policy Statement setting out the framework for Treasury Management within the Authority.

### **C.10 Staffing**

The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for providing overall management to staff. S/he is also responsible for ensuring that there is proper use of the evaluation or other agreed systems for determining the remuneration of a job.

The Strategic Management Board (SMB) is responsible for controlling staffing by:

- advising the Authority on the budget necessary in any given year to cover estimated staffing levels
- adjusting the staffing to a level which can be funded within approved budget provision, varying the level as necessary within that budget constraint in order to meet changing operational needs
- the proper use of agreed appointment procedures
- maintaining staffing levels within the Workforce Plan.

## **Financial Regulation D – Systems and Procedures**

### **D.1 Introduction**

Sound systems and procedures are essential to an effective framework of accountability and control.

### **D.2 General**

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the operation of the Authority's accounting systems, the form of accounts and the supporting financial records.

Any changes made by Directors to the existing financial systems or the implementation of new systems must be approved by the Chief Finance Officer prior to any new developments or changes.

Directors are responsible for the proper operation of financial processes in their own departments. Any changes to agreed financial procedures by Directors to meet their own specific service needs must be agreed in advance with the Chief Finance Officer.

Directors should ensure that their staff receive relevant financial training that has been approved by the Chief Finance Officer.

Directors must ensure that, where appropriate, computer and other systems are registered in compliance with data protection legislation. Directors must also ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities under any access to information legislation.

The Chief Fire Officer must ensure there is a corporate approach to systems development in line with the ICT and e-government initiatives.

### **D.3 Devolved Budget arrangements**

The Chief Finance Officer will agree standards, systems and procedures for all budget-holding officers within the Service, and the Chief Fire Officer will ensure that all budget-holding officers are accountable to the Chief Finance Officer on all financial matters.

### **D.4 Procurement**

Directors, second tier managers and cost centre managers must ensure that the Authority obtains value for money from procurement and that it is in compliance with the Authority's Standing Orders as to Contracts. The most effective method of procurement must be used including use of the Authority's corporate contracts and processes.

### **D.5 Income and Expenditure**

The Executive Committee is responsible for approving procedures for writing off debts as part of the overall control framework of accountability and control.

As part of the overall control framework of accountability and control, the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for specifying procedures for ordering, making payments and for collecting income.

Directors, second tier managers and cost centre managers must ensure that all income due to the Authority is identified and charged correctly in accordance with the Authority's current charging policy. They must also ensure that all income due to the Authority is collected in a timely manner. It must also be receipted properly and banked (see Financial Instructions for further details).

Directors and second tier managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with procedures set out by the Chief Finance Officer on ordering, making payments and for collecting income.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the payment of all accounts.

#### **D.6 Payments to Staff and Members**

The Director of People and Organisational Development is responsible for the preparation and input to SAP of all payments for salaries and wages to all staff, including payments for overtime, for payment of allowances to members and for ensuring the accuracy and reasonableness of all output payroll files.

#### **D.7 Taxation**

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising SMB and officers with financial responsibilities on all taxation issues that affect the Authority in the light of guidance issued by appropriate bodies and relevant legislation.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for maintaining the Authority's tax records, making all tax payments, receiving tax credits and submitting tax returns by their due date as appropriate.

In accordance with advice received from HMRC and The Anti-Money Laundering Policy, the Authority will not accept settlement in cash in excess of prevailing limits set under the legislation for Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Terrorist Financing.

#### **D.8 Stocks, stores and inventories**

Inventories shall be kept at each location of:

- all items of operational equipment
- all vehicles and plant with a purchase value of over £100
- all items of non-operational equipment and moveable furniture with a purchase value over £100. However, local managers should also include items (e.g. mobile phones) if required.

The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for maintaining proper security of all assets and should aim to achieve the maximum utilisation of such assets in the provision of services.

The advice of the Chief Finance Officer must be sought for the disposal of assets and be in compliance with the Standing Orders relating to Contracts (OC 53).

#### **D.9 Leases**

Any cost centre manager seeking to put in place lease arrangements must seek the advice of the Chief Finance Officer. All leases must be approved and signed by the Chief Finance Officer on behalf of the Authority.

#### **D.10 Information technology systems**

The Chief Fire Officer must ensure there is a corporate approach to systems development in line with the IT and e-government strategy.



## **Financial Regulation E – External Arrangements**

### **E.1 Introduction**

There are and will continue to be requirements to work collaboratively to further the efficiencies of the Authority's activities. The Authority provides a distinctive leadership role for the community and brings together the contributions of the various stakeholders.

### **E.2 Partnerships**

The Authority/Executive Committee is responsible for approving partnership arrangements/joint working initiatives with other local public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to address local needs.

The Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer are responsible for promoting and maintaining the same high standards of conduct with regard to financial administration in partnerships that apply throughout the Authority. They must also consider the overall corporate governance arrangements and legal issues when contracts are being arranged with external bodies.

The Chief Finance Officer must ensure that the accounting arrangements to be adopted relating to partnerships and joint ventures are satisfactory and that the risks have been fully appraised before agreements are entered into with external bodies.

Strategic Management Board (SMB) members are responsible for:

- ensuring that appropriate approvals are obtained before any negotiations are concluded in relation to work with external bodies
- maintaining a register of all contracts entered into with external bodies in accordance with procedures specified by the Chief Finance Officer
- ensuring all partnerships entered into are evaluated and contribute to the achievement of the Authority's objectives
- ensuring that appropriate insurance arrangements are made
- ensuring that such agreements and arrangements do not impact adversely upon the services provided by the Authority
- ensuring that all arrangements comply with any prevailing Partnership Policy and are registered on the Partnership Register
- ensuring that such agreements and arrangements have been properly risk-assessed and linked to the Risk Register.

### **E.3 External Funding**

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that all funding notified by external bodies is received and properly recorded in the Authority's accounts.

The Chief Finance Officer must be consulted on the financial and probity implications of all projects involving funding from external sources (e.g. Specific Government Grants, Lottery Grants, and European Social Funds etc).

In promoting or committing the Authority to any externally funded projects Directors must consult with the Chief Finance Officer, where;

- the additional income is likely to exceed the costs of delivering the outcomes required to qualify for that grant; or

- the acceptance of that new grant or contribution would result in costs being incurred prior to receipt; and/or
- the additional cost commitment exceeds the approved budget for the current or future years.

Once agreed, the Chief Finance Officer must approve a virement to correct the current budget, before the grant offer can be accepted.

All funding received from external bodies or associated parties must be properly recorded in the Authority's accounts.

Key conditions of funding and any statutory requirements must be understood and followed.

Any match-funding requirements must be given due consideration prior to entering into long term agreements and future revenue budgets must reflect those requirements.

#### **E.4 Work for Third Parties**

The Strategic Management Board (SMB) is responsible for approving the contractual arrangements for any work for third parties or external bodies, subject to any advice provided by the Chief Finance Officer and/or the Director of Legal & Governance.

#### **E.5 Local Authority Companies**

Prior to the Authority, or any officer on behalf of the Authority, taking an interest (e.g. membership, share-holding or directorship) in a company, advice should be sought from the Director of Legal & Governance and the Chief Finance Officer.

Any clauses required by the Chief Finance Officer and/or the Director of Legal & Governance to safeguard the Authority's position must be included in the company's constitutional documents.

#### **E.6 Sponsorship and advertising**

Prior to entering into any sponsorship arrangements, formal approval should be sought from the Strategic Management Board (SMB) who in turn has sought advice from the Chief Finance Officer and/or the Director of Legal & Governance. This advice should also be sought for services in-kind arrangements where no or little money changes hands.

For advertising, there are rules set by HMRC for the recovery of VAT. If the advertising is in the form of promoting statutory duties for Fire and Rescue Services then there are no VAT implications. However, if the arrangement can be construed as commercial and in competition with other businesses in the private sector then we will be unable to recover the VAT on those transactions. This would effectively be an additional cost to the Authority and holds penalty risks if not dealt with correctly through the VAT return process. Advice from the Chief Finance Officer should be sought before entering into arrangements which advertise or promote services of the Authority.

## **RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS GLOSSARY AND CONTACTS LIST**

### **Directors**

Chief Fire Officer  
Chief Operating Officer  
Director of Legal & Governance  
Director of People and Organisational Development  
Director of Finance and Assets

### **Contacts**

Head of Service Delivery Tel: 07979 747172  
Head of Service Development Tel: 07736 336686  
Head of Finance & Deputy Director Extn 175  
Resources Manager Extn 182  
Organisation Development Manager Extn 220  
Chief Finance Officer - Extn 174 (Director of Finance and Assets)  
Technical Accountant – Extn 140  
Management Accountant – Extn 178  
Head of Procurement – Extn 136  
ICT Manager – Extn 150  
Corporate Planning Manager – Extn 135  
Business Continuity – Extn 165

**Second Tier Managers** – for contextual purposes only. Any manager who reports to a Director and/or has line management responsibilities for cost centre managers and staff handling cash and assets.



## Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>MEETING</b>               | Fire Authority   |
| <b>DATE OF MEETING</b>       | 24 June 2014   |
| <b>OFFICER</b>               | Mick Osborne, Head of Service Transformation   |
| <b>LEAD MEMBER</b>           | Councillor Catriona Morris   |
| <b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b> | <b>Prevention Strategy 2014/15-2016/17</b>   |
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>     | <p>The Prevention Strategy is an overarching document which both underpins the Service Corporate Plan and informs the future IRMP along with Area and Station plans.</p> <p>This paper has been produced in order to seek Fire Authority approval for the implementation of the Prevention Strategy 2014/15-2016/17. This replaces the current 2012-15 Strategy where it was decided upon review that a new updated strategy was the preferred option over a refresh of the current document. This is based upon greater knowledge and intelligence of those communities that we serve.</p> <p>The strategy is cognisant of the recent Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) publications in respect of community safety and the broad areas within this document reflect these areas. Namely; Homes, Communities, Roads and Businesses. However, the majority of work around businesses will be captured within the new Protection Strategy which is also currently under review.</p> <p>This strategy provides both the direction but more importantly the flexibility, at Area and Station level in order to tailor plans to meet both community and resource requirements, whilst setting out clear objectives with regard to outcomes.</p> <p>Linked to this strategy is a review of the current staffing and support arrangements within the central prevention policy department. The current arrangements and job roles do not appear to be balanced or appropriately focussed in order to support the delivery of the key objectives.</p> <p>Therefore, if Members agree to adopt the new strategy, a review of the current prevention department structure and roles within will be immediately commissioned.</p> |

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| <b>ACTION</b>                 | Decision.  |
| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>        | <p>It is recommended that the Fire Authority:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adopt the Prevention Strategy 2014/15-2016/17;</li> <li>2. Approve the commissioning of the central prevention policy department review, with the emphasis on shaping the team to facilitate and support delivery of the new Strategy.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>        | <p>We are currently updating and integrating our various risk information systems to improve our ability to target those most vulnerable to the risk of fire and other emergencies.</p> <p>No major risks have been identified. By adopting the strategy and consolidating the structure, the service to the public and support to those developing plans should improve and be more consistent, in line with our key objectives and Service vision.</p>   |
| <b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b> | <p>There are no additional costs associated with the changes to the strategy and all activity will be managed within budget allocations.</p> <p>There may be opportunities to make savings once the review has been completed, however these will form part of a further paper once options have been generated.</p>   |
| <b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>     | <p>None envisaged for the new strategy.</p> <p>The legal implications and frameworks for any departmental change are reflected in <i>Managing Organisational Change: Policy, Procedure and Practice (OC70/12)</i>.</p>   |
| <b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>      | No implications envisaged.   |
| <b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b> | No implications envisaged with regard to the new strategy. A people impact assessment will be carried out as part of any organisational review.  |
| <b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>       | <p>The work on developing the strategy to date has been from existing resources within Service Delivery.</p> <p>Communication of the strategy will also be managed from within existing resources in liaison with the communications team.</p> <p>If approved, the work on the prevention structure will include extensive informal consultation with employees directly affected and staff representatives.</p> <p>More limited consultation with wider stakeholders will also take place at the appropriate stages and the terms of reference will ensure that the Human</p> |

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|   | Resources (HR) team is well informed and engaged in any proposals. HR have already had input and given guidance in the formative stages.                                      |
| <b>PROVENANCE SECTION<br/>&amp;<br/>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b> | <b>Background</b><br><br>Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, Prevention Strategy 2012-15;<br><br>Managing Organisational Change: Policy, Procedure and Practice (OC70/12). |
| <b>APPENDICES</b>   | Appendix 1: Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, Prevention Strategy 2014/15-2016/17.   |
| <b>TIME REQUIRED</b>                                      | 10 Minutes.   |
| <b>REPORT ORIGINATOR<br/>AND CONTACT</b>                  | M Osborne<br>mosborne@bucksfire.gov.uk<br>07979 747172  |



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority  
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# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE & MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

## PREVENTION STRATEGY 2014/15 TO 2016/17

# **PREVENTION STRATEGY**

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## **OUR VISION**

**That Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes are the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel.**

To achieve this vision we will engage in activities and partnerships that will contribute to community well-being and promote better levels of safety by:

- Prevention** - Providing education on how to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.
- Protection** - Enforcing, advocating and campaigning for high standards of safety.
- Response** - Where risk levels remain intolerable, despite our efforts to educate, engineer and eliminate them, providing appropriate high quality response services.

Our Prevention Strategy directly underpins our Service's Corporate Plan. It provides a clear plan, for our own staff, our partners and the community to show how we are contributing towards making the communities we serve safer.

The Fire and Rescue Service has a role to fulfil across a broad safety agenda. This requires us to continually improve our prevention, protection, intervention and education activities; making them appropriate, meaningful and accessible to our diverse community.

We will help people take responsibility for their own safety, identify risks and put effective control measures in place to prevent any potential harm, loss or damage.

The Fire and Rescue Service also has a role in building more sustainable communities and we strive to play a full and active part in achieving this. As part of this process, we recognise the strategic areas where issues of health inequality and social deprivation align with issues of fire safety and community safety in general and we will proactively take these issues into account.



This strategy has been written to be cognisant of and reflect CFOAs over-arching prevention publications and provides strategic guidance towards Directorate and Station Plans. This is reflected in the Services' Prevention Strategic Aim and Priorities:

## **AIM**

"We will improve the safety of the community by identifying 'at risk' groups and work with effective partners to help prevent fires and other incidents occurring."

## **PRIORITIES**

1. To reduce the risks to people from fire in the home, targeting those most at risk.
2. To work with effective partners on education programmes which reduce risks to people from accidental and deliberate fires.
3. To reduce the numbers of road traffic collisions in Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes, working with effective partners to improve education, targeting young people and those most at risk.
4. To work with effective partners to deliver programmes to reduce anti-social behaviour and improve wider social well-being in the community through education for young people and youth diversion programmes when capacity permits.

We will also work with our partner agencies to improve our 'risk intelligence' to assist us to locate and quantify some of the more vulnerable elements of the population that we serve, such as recent migrants, using socio-demographic risk profiling tools.

### **We will also:**

- Give priority to parts of the community identified both as high risk and falling outside the areas that we can typically reach within 10 minutes of being called to an incident (the target we set for the attendance of the first response on 75 per cent of occasions).
- Continue to work with our partner agencies to support road safety programmes.

Our Prevention Strategy outlines the key activities that Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service will undertake in the period between April 2014 and March 2016, and brings together the following four overarching environments in which prevention can be applied:

- 1. Homes.**
- 2. Communities and Community Facilities.**
- 3. Roads.**
- 4. Business and Commercial.**

Activities will be detailed within Station Plans with the emphasis on local engagement for local risks. We will use our fire stations, operational personnel and volunteers to meet this local need, ensuring that everyone involved is trained to the highest standard. Community Safety Co-ordinators (CSCs) employed in the three service areas; Milton

Keynes, Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern and South Bucks, are strategically placed to assist the stations to deliver these local interventions.

The Central Prevention Team at Service Headquarters will provide guidance where necessary to ensure consistency in approach across the Service and that the stations are provided with the "tools" to carry out their activities.

## 1 Homes

We will improve safety, health and well-being and reduce the impact that fire and other incidents have on people living in their homes. This will include providing policy guidance and:

- Concentrating on those individuals and communities that are most vulnerable.
- Improving the understanding of the risks to our communities.
- Educating the community to enable them to be equipped to make safe preventative action against risks.
- Promoting engagement with partners to reduce the incidence of inappropriate lifestyle choices that result in increased vulnerability.
- Applying the lessons learnt from fire investigations.
- Reducing the number of deliberate fires (arson).
- Lobbying for greater use of sprinklers especially in social housing and high rise buildings.
- Improving electrical safety.
- Working with partners to improve safety within social housing.

### Our Home Safety activities

- **Home Fire Risk Checks** - Free home safety checks which are carried out either by fire crews or Community Safety Co-ordinators, by trained staff from partner agencies or by trained volunteers. These are available to all on request, but are targeted at people assessed as being more vulnerable to the risk of fire. Home Fire Risk Checks currently include the fitting of free smoke alarms and the provision of fire safety information and advice.

Home Fire Risk Checks are a simple procedure that involves us looking for potential hazards in someone's home and suggesting ways of making them safer. This can be as simple as checking or providing smoke alarms and reducing the number of electrical appliances that are running from one socket.

We also concentrate on potential problems in the kitchen, which could result in cooking related fires.

National estimates suggest that approximately 80% of homes now have a smoke alarm but these are not always in the right place or even working. We believe that it is vital that all homes have at least one working smoke alarm that is tested regularly as this substantially reduces the risk of people being killed or seriously injured.

We will aim towards a carrying out a qualitative rather than a quantitative process towards carrying out Home Fire Risk Checks, with an emphasis on the utilisation of relevant data to ensure that we concentrate on the highest risk categories and focus on those more vulnerable.

These will be designed against local need and trends to demonstrate making a difference to the local community with a focus on home safety.

We can do a lot to help people become safe in their homes. However, only when residents themselves think safety first, and take reasonable steps towards home safety, will everyone become safer.

- **Fire Kills Campaign** - By supporting the national media **Fire Kills Campaign** we will offer advice through various channels to raise the awareness of our communities to the risks from fire and the simple measures that they can take themselves to prevent fires and protect their homes. These monthly themes will be planned across the year by each station, reflecting local risk, need and trend.
- **Local Home Safety Initiatives** - Locally, good progress has been made to home fire safety but there is still more progress that can be made. Utilising Acorn Data Systems and accompanying intelligence models, specific residents can be targeted as "at risk" groups. Partnerships will proactively assist us to access "hard to reach" groups to ensure that our message of safety, health and well-being can get to those who need it most. Any initiatives designed to address these risks will be evaluated to ensure productivity and enable learning for further development.

Working in partnership with media organisations we aim to run a series of campaigns which are targeted at those groups of households that have shown an increase in accidental fires, primarily caused by faulty white goods or cooking incidents. This will highlight the risks associated with these two main causes of fire and how we can assist in mitigating this risk.

## **2 Communities & Community Facilities**

We will reduce cost and detrimental impact of fires and other incidents on communities and community facilities by:

- Improving our understanding of the risks to our community facilities.
- Educating the community to enable them to be equipped to make safe preventative action against risks.
- Promoting effective engagement with communities and partner agencies to ensure effective collaborative working.
- Applying the lessons learnt from fire investigations.

- Reducing the number of deliberate fires (arson).
- Lobbying for greater use of sprinklers especially in schools and high rise buildings.

### **Our Community Safety Activities**

- **Community Initiatives** - We will work with effective partners to deliver programmes to reduce antisocial behaviour and improve wider social well-being in the community through education for young people and youth diversion programmes when capacity permits. We already have successful education programmes that tackle these and we are recognised as a highly valued partner with other forms of preventing anti-social behaviour. The unique nature of the Fire and Rescue Service allows us to work with challenging young people on cognitive therapy programmes that help them to recognise the consequences of their own behaviour. We support young people in addressing other behaviours such as aggression, vandalism, anti-social alcohol and substance misuse, the dangers that take place on the roads and our own Firesetter Intervention Scheme (FIS). This offers help and support predominantly to children and young people involved in fire play and starting fires, and on occasion, where appropriate, works with adults who have been convicted of arson or other fire-related crime.
- **Multi-Agency working** - Co-operation and mutual assistance between the Police and Fire and Rescue Service in the investigation of a deliberate fire is not new, but the ethos of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 embodies the multi-agency approach to tackling crime and disorder. It provides opportunities for the Police and Fire and Rescue Service to develop local initiatives and programmes with a range of partners, including the County, District Councils and Unitary Authorities.

Work will also take place at a local level with station attendance at multi-agency partnership meetings to support community well-being, safety and healthy living.

- **Education** - To work with effective partners on education programmes which reduce risks to people from accidental and deliberate fires and other emergency incidents.

We believe that educating residents of all ages and backgrounds is an investment in the safety of communities in Buckinghamshire. We focus our education programmes on embedding responsible behaviour in people and in helping them to make positive decisions about their own safety and of those around them.

We deliver a range of programmes in line with the Government's Fire and Rescue Service Strategy for Children and Young People. In order to meet these aims we will work proactively with partner agencies, ensuring that the welfare of children and young people is at the core of what we do.

Our overall strategy for children and young people is to deliver our safety packages across the Key Stages, from Early Years to Key Stage 4:

- To provide appropriate safety education to young people at selected intervals during their school years.

- To address those parts of our Service area that experience higher levels of arson and fire-related antisocial behaviour.
- To support the work of The Safety Centre in Milton Keynes and provide educational inputs that complements and builds on that work.

We will also deliver safety skills to children and young people who are engaged in groups such as Scouts, Guides, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, youth clubs and other community groups.

- **Local Campaigns and Events** - These will be promoted to benefit the safety and well-being of our communities in Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes. We will engage with a variety of local community groups to provide fire safety messages and support partners at events such as the 'National No Smoking Day'.

### 3 Roads

We will work in partnership to improve the safety of everyone travelling by road by:

- Improving our understanding of the risks to those groups and individuals that are most vulnerable
- Preventing incidents from happening
- Educating road users

Nationally, good progress has been made in reducing casualties over the last ten years. With our partners, we are actively addressing safety issues because we believe that we have a part to play in reducing deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

We are also in a position to bring significant resources to bear in helping our partners to deliver road safety to children while they are at school. Fire-fighters are seen as very positive role models and they have an important part to play in educating children in road safety and giving them skills that they will use for the rest of their lives.

We will therefore support road safety education in schools; specifically we support the work of the Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) schemes that the local authorities operate in both Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

We will focus on specific road users and inconsiderate driver behaviours across our area.

#### **Specific road users include:**

- Car drivers, particularly those in the 17 – 24 age group
- Older drivers
- Car passengers, particularly those in the 15 – 18 age group
- Motorcyclists, including young moped and scooter riders.

### **Inconsiderate driver behaviours include:**

- Mobile phone use
- Non-wearing of seatbelts
- Careless and dangerous driving
- Drink and drug driving
- Inappropriate speed.

### **Our Road Safety Activities**

- Continue to work with and support our road safety partners, particularly the Road Safety Teams from Buckinghamshire CC and MK Council.
- Deliver specific road safety initiatives in support of national and local road safety campaigns, including the BRAKE Road Safety Week and the CFOA National Road Safety Week.
- Ensure that 17 – 24 year olds in our schools and colleges receive the 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' presentation and our own 'Learn & Live' presentation.
- Ensure that Year 11 pupils in our schools receive our dedicated Year 11 road safety presentation.
- Provide facilities and support for our partners to deliver road safety education and training.

## **4 Business and Commercial**

We will contribute to improving the competitiveness, safety and prosperity of businesses and reduce the cost of fires and other incidents to business and commerce by:

- Improving our understanding of the workplace risks.
- Effectively engaging with the business community to assist in developing their understanding of how to ensure the safety and prosperity of their organisations.
- Promoting growth and healthier lifestyles through better regulation and increasing awareness of the responsibilities in the fire safety order.
- Applying lessons learnt from fire investigations.
- Working with the business community to help reduce the impact of unwanted fire alarms.
- Encouraging the better management and use of fireworks, explosives and petroleum.
- Lobbying for greater use of sprinklers in business and commercial premises.

Our vision is to achieve safer business and community sectors where preventable fire deaths or injuries in fires and fire losses are reduced to all time minimal levels. We will also provide businesses with consistent and common advice, information and enforcement practices.

We will enhance firefighter safety and sound operational decision making by Incident Commanders through use of training and information exchange between Protection Officers and response departments, focussing on the built environment.

Our Protection Training Strategy document will evolve to reflect national guidance whilst satisfying local need, providing a framework of qualifications and competence for Inspecting Officers and Protection Managers. This will assist in having the appropriate skills to ensure that we promote consistency and common approach of the legislation by delivering clear processes, effective development of staff and up to date guidance to Inspecting Officers and Protection Managers.

This consistency will be enhanced by our involvement in primary partnership authority schemes, with our overall aim to target our protection activities consistently and professionally in support of the economic needs of local and national business.

This aspect of our Service is co-ordinated through our Protection Department and is included to reflect the role that this plays within the wider prevention agenda.

Our Business and Commercial activities are detailed in the accompanying *Protection Strategy Document*.

This strategy document is supported by Service policy, procedure, guidance, information and technical notes. The index for these are located: N/ Common/ Standard Forms/ Templates/ SD Index/ Prevention & Protection.

# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>MEETING</b>               | Fire Authority  |
| <b>DATE OF MEETING</b>       | 24 June 2014  |
| <b>OFFICER</b>               | Lynne Swift, Director of People and Organisational Development  |
| <b>LEAD MEMBER</b>           | Councillor Roger Reed   |
| <b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b> | <b>Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 – Employer Discretions</b>  |
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>     | <p>The Authority's Support and Control Room Staff are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The Scheme is administered on behalf of the Authority by Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC).</p> <p>The operation of the LGPS, which became a career average scheme on 1 April 2014, is governed by a variety of regulations which define the rights and obligations of both the employing authority (BMKFA), the administering authority (BCC) and employees (scheme members). Contained within the various regulations are a range of discretions which the employing authority can choose to adopt and exercise.</p> <p>As an employer, the Authority is required to adopt, publish and keep under review its policy on some of the available discretions.</p> <p>Whenever a pension scheme such as the LGPS is subject to major change the administration of the scheme becomes more complicated as:</p> <p>Existing members will retain certain protections under earlier schemes which affect their rights and the calculation of their benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some provisions from earlier schemes are incorporated into the new scheme,</li> <li>• Some provisions from earlier schemes are discontinued in the new scheme,</li> <li>• Some provisions of earlier schemes which are discontinued in the new scheme remain applicable to former scheme members who have left the Authority's employment but have deferred their benefits under the scheme</li> </ul> <p>This report and the attached LGPS Pensions Discretions Policy Statement (2014) deals with all</p> |



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|                               | <p>discretions in respect of which the authority must publish a policy by 1 July 2014. The opportunity is also taken to review those discretions previously adopted by the Authority as required by regulation 66 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008.</p> <p>It should be noted that some guidance was only issued as late as 15 May 2014 and the guidance is not yet completely available although some of this relates to administrative rather than substantive issues. However in so far as it is reasonably possible to state this report and its recommendations are accurate.</p>   |
| <b>ACTION</b>                 | Decision.  |
| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>        | That the Pensions Discretions Policy Statement at Appendix 2 be approved.  |
| <b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>        | <p>The risks to the Authority which the proposed policy mitigates are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that a decision exercised, or a failure to exercise a discretion, otherwise than in accordance with a properly agreed and published discretion policy would be ultra vires and payments made would be unlawful.</li> <li>2. that the administering authority would be justified in refusing to process a discretionary decision in the absence of a properly agreed and published discretion policy.</li> <li>3. the administering authority has stated, in an email attached at Appendix 3, that in addition to refusing to process decisions “.....We won’t process any <b>quotations</b> for employers where the request is received after 30 June 2014 until a 2014 employer discretionary policy has been approved.”</li> </ol>  |
| <b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b> | <p>There are no immediate financial implications to the Authority of adopting the proposed discretions policy.</p> <p>The approach that underpins the proposed adoption and exercise of the available employer discretions is that each case will be judged on its substantive merits in terms of whether or not a business case demonstrates that it is in the Authority’s interests and is affordable within its financial resources.</p> <p>The proposed governance arrangements to underpin this approach is that any business case requesting the exercise of an adopted discretion would require sign-off by the Chief Executive/Chief Fire Officer on the advice of the Director of Finance and Assets and the Director of People and Organisational Development.</p> <p>There are no implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan as any decisions to exercise any of the adopted discretions must be justified in a business</p> |

|                                      |   |
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|                                      | <p>case which would mean that it would be effectively 'self-funding'.</p>   |
| <p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p>     | <p>There are five employer discretions introduced on 1 April 2014 (and two existing policies for members, who left prior to April 2014) which the Authority is required to include in an adopted policy statement which must be published, and sent to the administering authority, before 1 July 2014. These are set out in the body of the report</p> <p>In preparing, or reviewing and making revisions to its statement, the Authority must have regard to the extent to which the exercise of discretions "in accordance with its policy could lead to a serious loss of confidence in the public service" [Regulation 60 of the LGPS (Administration) Regulations 2013]</p> <p>The recommendations comply with the obligations under the new regulations; and with the requirement under the existing regulations for the Authority to keep its statement under review and to make such revisions to its statement as are appropriate following any change in its policy.</p>   |
| <p><b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b></p>      | <p>There are no Health and Safety implications of the proposed policy.</p>  |
| <p><b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b></p> | <p>The policy will be applied to all eligible employees regardless of their protected characteristic status.</p>  |
| <p><b>USE OF RESOURCES</b></p>       | <p>Adoption of the proposed pension discretions policy statement will contribute to the Authority achieving its strategic aim to "manage all our resources to provide the best value for the residents and businesses of the communities we serve" as it contributes to managing workforce size to achieve a balanced budget.</p> <p>Once determined the policy must be published one month before it comes into effect.</p> <p>The policy will be subject to periodic review.</p> <p>An appropriately determined policy in respect of the application of pension discretions is an essential building block of managing reductions in the workforce in a fair and financially prudent manner.</p> <p>A properly determined and published pension discretions policy provides for auditable decision making.</p> <p>There are no environmental implications inherent in this policy.</p> <p>The determination of policy on these discretions is clearly an employer matter and not one for negotiation or consultation with the staff. However UNISON have been informed of the recommendations in this report.</p> |

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROVENANCE SECTION<br/>&amp;<br/>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b></p> | <p><b>Background</b></p> <p>The Authority determined its policy in respect of key discretions in respect of the Local Government Pension scheme at meetings of its Human Resources Sub Committee, on 26 October 2010 (which dealt with discretions under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006) and 12 December 2012 (which dealt with discretions under various legislation relating to the LGPS). However, the Government’s fundamental review of public sector pension provision determined that changes were required to the LGPS which are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme should change from a final salary pension scheme to career average re-valued earnings (CARE) scheme.</li> <li>• Scheme retirement ages should be the same as state retirement pension ages</li> <li>• Scheme members and employers should share the increasing costs of providing public sector pension schemes</li> <li>• Existing rights of current scheme members should be protected.</li> </ul> <p>As a consequence of this, a revised LGPS 2014 has been introduced with effect from 1 April 2014, known as the 2014 Scheme. The major change is that the new scheme is a Career Average (CARE) Scheme. However it has also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced new employer discretions.</li> <li>• Deleted some discretions that were available under the 2008 scheme; and</li> <li>• set out some protections for pre 2014 active members and those members who left employment between 1 April 1998 and 31 March 2008; and 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2014.</li> <li>• Equalised the normal retirement age with the state pension age.</li> </ul> <p>Consequently the existing policy statement on the adoption and exercise of discretions under the LGPS requires review. The situation in respect of the LGPS and employer discretions is now quite complicated as there are members with protections that pre-date the 2008 scheme and arise from the 2008 scheme. Some previous discretions disappear as a result of the latest legislation; some are enshrined within it and some need to be maintained in respect of former members of staff who left the Authority’s employment but who</p> |
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|   | <p>have deferred benefits.</p> <p>As well as complying with the new legislation this provides the Authority with an opportunity to reconsider the position it adopted in respect of available discretions when the previous policy was agreed. In producing this report advice has been sought from the administering authority (BCC), although it has largely been unable to respond due to other pressures, and reference has been made to the guide to the LGPS produced by the Local Government Employers (LGE). These decisions were taken in the context of the 2008 Scheme.</p> <p><i>Analysis and Proposed Approach to the Range of Available Employer Discretions</i></p> <p>Set out in Appendix 1 is a summary of the nature of and considerations which underpin the proposed policy on LGPS pension discretions.</p> <p>Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations and Guidance - <a href="http://www.lgpsregs.org/">http://www.lgpsregs.org/</a></p> |
| <p><b>APPENDICES</b></p>                    | <p>Appendix 1 – Summary of LGPS Employer Discretions.</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Proposed Statement of Policy on LGPS Pensions Discretions.</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Copy of email from the Administering Authority.</p>   |
| <p><b>TIME REQUIRED</b></p>                 | <p>10 minutes.</p>   |
| <p><b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b></p> | <p>Martin House<br/> <a href="mailto:mhouse@bucksfire.gov.uk">mhouse@bucksfire.gov.uk</a><br/>                 01296 744622</p>  |

## Introduction

1. In agreeing its initial policy on the adoption and exercise of discretionary powers in early retirement cases in 2010, (HR Sub Committee, 26 October 2010) the Authority indicated, in its discussions, a number of underlying principles that informed its approach, namely:

- it wished to be fair and reasonable in its decisions affecting the benefits of employees leaving their employment early;
- any discretionary benefits conferred should be free from unfair discrimination; it was aware of the exemptions, that still apply, in respect of some age based decisions
- it would seek wherever possible to achieve changes to workforce structure and numbers by voluntary means
- it also needed to have due regard to its duty of prudent management of public money.

2. These underlying principles underpin the existing policy and have been observed in developing the proposals in the attached revised pension's discretions policy statement which has been developed in the light of the introduction of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) 2014.

3. A further factor that has been considered in determining the proposed approach is business need. Whilst the Authority is reshaping and reducing its workforce in line with the need to reduce overall expenditure it is seeking to do this where possible through voluntary measures and natural wastage, retraining and redeployment and voluntary redundancy/early retirement. In developing the proposed revised policy some regard has been given to the reality that opportunities for retraining and redeployment contract with a reducing workforce and therefore the authority may wish to have powers to make voluntary redundancy/early retirement more attractive an option going forward. In the following table each continuing and new discretion is assessed and a recommendation made which is then reflected in the attached formal statement of policy on the available discretions. The new mandatory discretions are in shaded text.

### **Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation ) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 – Regulation 5**

*Power of employing authority to use actual weekly pay to calculate redundancy payments*

#### **Recommendation**

The Authority has already adopted this discretion and it is not proposed to change the current policy of using actual pay for redundancy payment calculations.

**Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 – Regulation 6**

*Power of employing authority to make an additional compensatory payment*

**Recommendation**

The Authority did not previously adopt this discretion but it is now considered that it would be advantageous to have the added flexibility offered by this discretion to augment the number of weeks of statutory redundancy entitlement by being able to pay up to a maximum of 52 weeks' pay including any statutory entitlement. This discretion would only be exercised where a structured business case could demonstrate that it would be in the Authority's interests to do this and that it would be affordable so to do.

**Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 – Regulation 12**

*Power of employing authority to increase total membership of active members*

**Recommendation**

This discretion is no longer available under the 2014 Scheme and does not apply to leavers between 1st April 2008 and 31st March 2014 and therefore does not appear in the proposed revised policy statement (Appendix 1)

**Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 – Regulation 13**

*Power of employing authority to increase total membership of active members*

The Authority did not adopt this discretion which has now been replaced by:

**Regulation 31 of LGPS Regulations 2013**

*Power of employing authority to grant additional pension of up to £6,500 annual pension*

**Analysis**

Regulation 31 gives a Scheme employer the power to award an active member of the Scheme, or a member who was active but dismissed by reason of redundancy or business efficiency, additional pension up to a value of the additional pension to maximum of £6,500 from 1 April 2014 subject to re-valuation each subsequent 1 April in line with the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971. In the case of an active member (one who is currently contributing to the Scheme) a Scheme employer can award the additional pension at any time with the amount being credited to the relevant active member pension account in the Scheme year in which the resolution to award the additional pension is made. In the case of a member who was an active member but has been dismissed due to redundancy or business efficiency, the resolution to award additional

pension must be made within the period of 6 months of the date that the member's employment was terminated. The amount awarded is treated as being credited to the relevant active member pension account on the day before the date of termination of employment.

By awarding extra pension to a Scheme member there is potential for that Scheme member's benefits to exceed the permitted Annual or Lifetime Allowances resulting in a tax charge being made to the Scheme member. This is, however, solely the responsibility of the Scheme member to ascertain.

The cost of providing additional pension is to be determined in accordance with actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State and is based on the age and gender of the member and therefore can only be determined on a case by case basis but could be significant.

The suggested benefits of adopting this discretion are that this discretion could be a useful management tool when used as a recruitment or retention incentive. It could even perhaps be used as a reward system for exceptional performance.

### **Recommendation**

It is not considered that the exercise of this discretion would be of benefit to the Authority and does not fit with its pay policy for support services staff, not all of whom may be in membership of the LGPS, and therefore unlikely to deliver any business benefit. Therefore it is recommended that the Authority does not adopt this discretion.

### **Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 – Regulation 18**

#### *Power of the Authority to grant flexible retirement*

The Authority did not adopt this discretion. However it has now been replaced by:

#### **Regulation 30(6) and 30 (8) of LGPS Regulations 2013**

*Power for the Authority to grant Flexible retirement and to waive any actuarial reduction to which an employer might be subject in respect of early payment of benefits.*

### **Analysis**

Flexible retirement is the situation in which an employee can agree a substantial change in their current contract in terms of hours and or salary and in return receive all part of their pension benefit entitlement early. The current judgment is that with a retracting workforce it could be in the interests of the Authority's resilience and workforce planning to have this discretion available to it. The potential benefits include:

- providing an opportunity to phase change ensuring the structured transfer of accumulated skills and organisational knowledge
- an alternative means to reduce capacity whilst helping to avoid redundancies and be cheaper than early retirement on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency because of the actuarial reduction.
- retention of a balanced age profile within the workforce; and
- an acceptable solution to staff who are a blockage to promotion or reorganisation.

If adopted such a discretion would only be exercised where it is both affordable and in its interests to so do as demonstrated by a structured business case.

It is important with this discretion to ensure that a request is not granted purely to facilitate an employee gaining early access to their benefits which, understandably, is the main motive for the employee. Consequently it is considered that typically a request should involve a substantial reduction (at least 40% to 50%) in salary either through reduced hours or level of responsibility.

If the Authority is minded to adopt the flexible retirement discretion then it would be sensible to also adopt the discretion to waive the actuarial reduction that could accompany such a retirement and accept the pension strain that would arise from such a retirement. (Where the Authority makes an employee redundant or retires them in the interests of the service then it must automatically take the pension strain of early payment of benefits.) This would only be exercised if the business case demonstrated that it was affordable.

### **Recommendation**

The Authority is recommended to adopt the available discretions under Regulation 30 (6) and 30 (80)

### **Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 – Regulation 30**

*Power of employer to consent to an employee retiring early, at their request, between the ages of 55 and 59*

The Authority did not adopt this discretion which is no longer applicable as employees can now retire from age 55 without their employers consent however there will be an actuarial reduction to pay for the pension strain unless the employer adopts the discretion to 'turn back on the 85 Year rule', which is dealt with below.

### **LGPS (Transitional etc.) Regulations 2014 Schedule 2 Transitional Regulations - Paragraphs 2 and 1 (1)(c)**

*Power of the employer to 'switch' back on the 85-year rule for employees*



*retiring between ages 55 and 60*

**Analysis**

Previously, under Regulation 30 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 employees could retire early with the consent of the Authority between the ages of 55 and 59. However the Authority did not adopt this discretion as it would have been required to pay the pension strain arising from the early payment of benefits.

Employees are now able to voluntarily retire between ages 55 and 60, post-31 March 2014 and onwards. The 85-year rule does not automatically apply to members retiring between 55 and 60 as the facility to retire voluntarily between 55 and 60 is a new facility. However the employer has the discretion to 'switch' back on the 85-year rule for employees leaving between 55 and 60, thus allowing employees to not have reductions (or have lesser reductions). In these cases the employer would have associated strain costs that would have to be paid by the organisation instead.

**Recommendation**

It is not recommended that the Authority should adopt this discretion to fund additional cost applicable to the 85 Year rule for 55 to 60 year olds. Employees choosing to retire early will therefore need to fund the pension strain cost themselves through an actuarial reduction in their benefits.

**LGPS (Transitional etc.) Regulations 2014 Schedule 2 Transitional Regulations Paragraphs 2(2) and (1)(1)(a)**

**Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 – Regulation 30A**

*Discretion to Grant an Application for Reinstatement of a Suspended Tier 3 III Health Pension on or After Age 55 and before Age 60 and, if granted, to waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction*

**Recommendation**

This is a continuing discretion which the Authority has not adopted and it is recommended that this remains its policy.

**LGPS (Benefits etc.) Regs 2007 & LGPS (Admin) Regs 2008 - REGULATION 3**

*Contributions payable by active members*

**Recommendation**

This is a continuing regulation and the Authority is recommended to maintain its

current policy of changing the employee's contribution rate when there is a material change in their contractual terms.

**LGPS (Benefits etc.) Regs 2007 & LGPS (Admin) Regs 2008 - REGULATION 16 (4) (b) (ii) (LGPS (Admin) Regs 2008)**

*Facility to extend time limits for active members to aggregate deferred periods of LGPS membership*

**Recommendation**

This is a continuing regulation offering a discretion which the Authority has not adopted and it is recommended that this position is maintained

**LGPS (Benefits etc.) Regs 2007 & LGPS (Admin) Regs 2008 - REGULATION 83 (8) (LGPS (Admin) Regs 2008) - Facility to extend time limits for active members to request a transfer of previous pension rights into the LGPS**

This is a continuing regulation offering a discretion which the Authority has not adopted and it is recommended that this position is maintained

**The Local Government (Discretionary Payments) (Injury Allowances) Regulations 2011 S.I. 2011/2954** (This does not apply to firefighters for whom there is already provision under the Firefighters' Compensation Scheme (England) Order 2006)

*Power to make an injury allowance award*

**Recommendation**

This is a continuing regulation offering a discretion which the Authority has not adopted and it is recommended that this position is maintained

**LGPS Regulations 2013**

**REGULATION 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d)**

*Discretion of employing authority to decide to pay towards the cost of Additional Pension Contributions (APCs)*

**Recommendation**

This is new discretion under which the employer can resolve to voluntarily contribute towards the cost of an active scheme member's decision to make Additional Pension Contributions (APCs) to purchase extra pension benefits (up to £6,500 per annum. It is not envisaged that there would be a situation in which it would be in the interests of the Authority to do this and therefore the Authority is recommended not to adopt this discretion.

## Appendix 1- Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 - Employer Discretions

4. The revised draft LGPS Employer Discretions Policy Statement, which is attached at Appendix 1 reflects the above recommendations. When approved the policy statement must be published for one month, on the Authority Web Site, before it becomes effective.



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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## **Statement of Policy on the Adoption of Certain Employer Discretions**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME REGULATIONS 2013 (S.I. 2013 No. 2356)**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS, SAVINGS & AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2014 (S.I. 2014 No. 525)**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (ADMINISTRATION) REGULATIONS 2008 (as amended) (S.I. 2008 No. 239)**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME REGULATIONS 1997 (as amended) (S.I. 1997 No. 1612).**

**Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority** has resolved that the following Discretions available in the above Statutory Instruments, should be implemented in compliance with Regulation 7 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation ) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, Regulation 66 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008 and Regulation 60 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 as set out below:

**Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation ) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006**

| <i>Where formulation of policy is compulsory</i>   |   |
|--|---|
| <b>REGULATION 5</b>  | <b>POLICY DECISION</b>  |
| <b><i>Power of employing authority to use actual weekly pay to calculate redundancy payments</i></b>   | The Authority has resolved that an employee's actual weekly pay be used for the purposes of calculating redundancy payments.  |
| An employer may resolve to calculate redundancy payments on an employee's actual weekly pay where it is over and above the statutory maximum week's pay as prescribed under the Employment Rights Act (1996)   |   |
| <b>REGULATION 6</b>  | <b>POLICY DECISION</b>  |
| <b><i>Power of employing authority to make an additional compensatory payment</i></b>  | The Authority has resolved to adopt this discretion to the extent that it may award a maximum of 52 weeks compensatory payment including any statutory redundancy entitlement as calculated under its policy in respect of Regulation 5 above., |
| An employer may resolve that, where an employee, being made redundant or retired on grounds of efficiency of the service, has not been granted augmented pension under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2008, to make an additional compensation payment to a maximum of 104 weeks |   |

**Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007**

*Where formulation of policy is compulsory*

| REGULATION 30 A   | POLICY DECISION   |
|---|---|
| <p><b><i>Discretion to Grant an Application for Reinstatement of a Suspended Tier 3 Ill Health Pension on or After Age 55 and before Age 60 and, if granted, to waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction</i></b></p>  | <p><i>The Authority has resolved not to adopt this discretion</i></p> |
| <p>A member who has been retired on tier 3 ill health retirement, and whose payments have been subsequently been suspended, can apply for the reinstatement of their suspended tier 3 ill health pension on or after age 55 and before age 60. It is the Employer's discretion whether to grant this application for re-instatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension. the employer has a further discretion to waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction applied to the reinstatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension paid early (i.e. on or after age 55 and before age 60).</p> |   |

**LGPS (Benefits etc) Regs 2007 & LGPS (Admin) Regs 2008**

*Where formulation of policy is NOT compulsory*

| REGULATION 3<br>(LGPS (Benefits etc) Regs 2007)   | POLICY DECISION  |
|---|--|
| <p><b><i>Contributions payable by active members</i></b></p>  | <p><i>The Authority's policy is to change the employee's contribution rate when there is a material change in their contractual terms.</i></p> |
| <p>Employers determine the contributions payable by members by attributing each member to one of the contribution bands set out in Regulation 3. Employers have the capacity to re-attribute the specific pay band (upwards or downwards) where there is a material change in a member's contractual terms.</p> |  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>REGULATION 16 (4) (b) (ii)</b><br><b>(LGPS (Admin) Regs 2008)</b>  | <b>POLICY DECISION</b>  |
| <b><i>Facility to extend time limits for active members to aggregate deferred periods of LGPS membership</i></b>  | <i>The Authority has resolved not to adopt and exercise this discretion</i> |
| <p>Where a deferred member becomes an active member they can elect to aggregate deferred membership with their active membership. The election to aggregate must be made by the member within 12 months of becoming an active member and the member must be active at the date of election. Employers may allow a longer period than 12 months.</p> |   |
| <b>REGULATION 83 (8)</b><br><b>(LGPS (Admin) Regs 2008)</b>   | <b>POLICY DECISION</b>  |
| <b><i>Facility to extend time limits for active members to request a transfer of previous pension rights into the LGPS</i></b>  | <i>The Authority has resolved not to adopt and exercise this discretion</i> |
| <p>Where an active member requests to transfer previous pension rights into the LGPS, the member must make a request within 12 months of becoming an active member. Employers may allow a longer period than 12 months.</p>   |   |

***The Local Government (Discretionary Payments) (Injury Allowances) Regulations 2011 S.I. 2011/2954 (This does not apply to firefighters for whom there is already provision under the Firefighters' Compensation Scheme (England) Order 2006)***

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Where formulation of policy is compulsory</i>   |   |
| <p>The main purpose of these regulations is to provide relevant employers with the opportunity to award an employee (who is eligible to become a member of the LGPS) an injury allowance where, in the course of carrying out his or her normal work, an employee, who is employed in a relevant employment, sustains either an injury or contracts a disease.</p> | <p><i>The Authority has resolved not to exercise the discretion available to it to create an injury award scheme for employees eligible to become members of the LGPS</i></p> |

| REGULATION 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d)   | POLICY DECISION   |
|--|---|
| <p><b><i>Discretion of employing authority to decide to pay towards the cost of Additional Pension Contributions (APCs)</i></b><br/>                     Where an active scheme member has decided to make Additional Pension Contributions (APCs) to purchase extra pension benefits (up to £6,500 per annum), the employer can resolve to voluntarily contribute towards the cost of this.</p> <p>Note: This does not include instances where the employee is paying for <b>lost</b> pension via an APC where the election was made in the first 30 days – here the employer <b>must</b> pay two-thirds of the cost of such purchase</p> | <p><i>The Authority has resolved not to adopt this discretion</i></p> |

| REGULATION 30(6)  | POLICY DECISION   |
|---|---|
| <p><b><i>Flexible Retirement</i></b></p> <p>Employers may allow a member from age 55 onwards to draw all or part of the pension benefits they have already built up whilst still continuing in employment. This is provided the employer agrees to the member either reducing their hours or moving to a position on a lower grade.</p> <p>In such cases, pension benefits will be reduced in accordance with actuarial tables unless the employer waives the reduction either fully or in part or a member has protected rights.</p> | <p><i>The Authority has resolved to adopt this discretion</i></p> |



| REGULATION 30(8)  | POLICY DECISION   |
|---|---|
| <p><b><i>Power of employer to waive actuarial reductions in cases of flexible retirement</i></b></p> <p>Employers can agree to waive any actuarial reductions due in the case of employees retiring anytime after age 55. This does not have to be due to 'compassionate' reasons.</p> <p>If this discretion is used, the employer will pick up the cost of waiving reductions as an immediate strain cost payment.</p> | <p><i>The Authority has resolved not to adopt this discretion</i></p> |

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| REGULATION 31  | POLICY DECISION   |
|--|---|
| <p><b><i>Power of employing authority to grant additional pension of up to £6,500 annual pension</i></b></p> <p>An employer may resolve to grant extra pension of up to £6,500 (figure at 1 April 2014) to an active Scheme member or within 6 months of leaving to a member whose employment was terminated on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency.</p>  | <p><i>The Authority has resolved not to adopt this discretion</i></p> |
| REGULATION 1 (1)(c) Schedule 2 Transitional Regulations  | POLICY DECISION   |
| <p><b><i>Power of the employer to 'switch' back on the 85-year rule for employees retiring between ages</i></b></p> <p>Employees are able to voluntarily retire between ages 55 and 60, post-31 March 2014 and onwards. Formerly this was only with employer permission and if granted, the employer would have paid any strain cost due if the employee met the 85-year rule.</p> <p>The 85-year rule does not automatically apply to members retiring between 55 and 60 as the facility to retire voluntarily between 55 and 60 is a new facility.</p> <p>The employer has the discretion to 'switch' back on the 85-year rule for employees leaving between 55 and 60, thus allowing employees to not have reductions (or have lesser reductions). In these cases the employer would have associated strain costs that would have to be paid by the organisation instead.</p> | <p><i>The Authority has resolved not to adopt this discretion</i></p> |

There are other non-compulsory discretions available for

to consider, and where these may arise in the future will be considered on an individual basis; the merits of each case being fully investigated.

in exercising the powers available under the above Regulations has acted with due prudence and propriety and considered the financial impact of applying the discretions.

These policies may be subject to review from time to time. Any subsequent change in this Policy Statement will be notified to affected employees.

will notify the Fund of any revisions to this Statement within one month of the revised policy taking effect.

**Signed on behalf of:**

**Completed**  **Position:**

**Signature:**  **Date:**

Appendix 3 – Copy of Email from the Administering Authority

**From:** Lugg, Stephen [<mailto:slugg@buckscc.gov.uk>]  
**Sent:** 04 June 2014 15:30  
**Subject:** FW: IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ - LGPS Employer Discretions / Quotation Requests

Dear Employer

To clarify our earlier email below – we won't process any quotations for employers where the request is received after 30 June 2014 until a 2014 employer discretionary policy has been provided.

The intention is not to stop providing these quotes now; please therefore re-submit any quote requests that may have been returned to you so we can process these ASAP.

Apologies for any confusion caused.

Regards

**Steve Lugg**  
Communications Officer  
Finance & Commercial Services  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
Old County Offices  
Walton Street  
Aylesbury  
HP20 1UD  
Tel no: 01296 382257  
Mob no: 07856 074141

**From:** Lugg, Stephen  
**Sent:** 28 May 2014 16:36  
**Subject:** IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ - LGPS Employer Discretions

Dear Employer

In order to comply with the LGPS 2014 Regulations, some additional employer discretions are required. All participating employers have to formulate, publish and keep under review a Statement of Policy on certain discretions which they have the power to exercise.

In summary, Scheme employers are required to have a policy in relation to 5 specific discretions, which are as follows:

- 1) Whether to grant extra annual pension of up to £6,500 to an active Scheme member or within 6 months of leaving to a member whose employment was terminated on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency;
- 2) Whether, where an active Scheme member wishes to purchase extra

annual pension of up to £6,500 by making Additional Pension Contributions (APCs), to (voluntarily) contribute towards the cost of purchasing that extra pension via a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contribution (SCAPC);

- 3) Whether to permit flexible retirement for staff aged 55 or over who, with the agreement of the employer, reduce their working hours or grade;
- 4) Whether, as the 85 year rule does not (other than on flexible retirement) automatically apply to members who would otherwise be subject to it and who choose to voluntarily draw their benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60, to switch the 85-year rule back on for such members; and
- 5) Whether to waive any actuarial reductions.

A guide is available on our website at <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/pensions/employers/employers.page> Under 'Useful websites'; scroll down the page to 'Discretions Policies' to find the latest version.

Please send a copy of your discretionary policy to [employers@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:employers@buckscc.gov.uk) **by 30 June 2014 at the very latest**. Note that we won't process any quotations for employers until a discretionary policy has been provided.

Please email [employers@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:employers@buckscc.gov.uk) if you have any queries.

**Steve Lugg**

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## Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>MEETING</b>               | Fire Authority  |
| <b>DATE OF MEETING</b>       | 24 June 2014  |
| <b>OFFICER</b>               | Jason Thelwell, Chief Operating Officer   |
| <b>LEAD MEMBER</b>           | Councillor Catriona Morris  |
| <b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b> | <b>2015 – 20 Public Safety Plan: For Public Consultation.</b>   |
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>     | <p>The 2015-20 Public Safety Plan sets out our strategic approach to the management of risk in the communities we serve in what the independent, national review of the fire and rescue service conducted by the former Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, Sir Ken Knight, describes as “<i>a completely different era of risk and demand</i>”. Over the last ten years we have seen total fires attended across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes fall by 54 per cent, with serious injuries down 68 per cent.</p> <p>The plan contains an overview of the risks at national, regional and local level, together with a review of the factors that could impact on these. It also sets out a number of challenges that the Service will need to overcome if it is to successfully adapt to the changing landscape of risk and demand and meet the expectations of the public and other key stakeholders. These challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the targeting and effectiveness of our prevention and protection programmes to ensure that these deliver genuine value for the money and effort invested in them and maintain the downward pressure on incident volumes;</li> <li>• ‘Right-sizing’ our response capacity to deal with the realities of low level day-to-day demand for emergency response services with the relatively infrequent need to respond to major contingencies;</li> <li>• Better matching assets and resources to demand and risk to ensure more even and productive use of our capacity across the areas we serve;</li> <li>• Modernising our ‘on-call’ duty system to improve availability and reliability.</li> </ul> <p>The Plan sets out our broad approach to addressing each of these challenges over the next five years through to March 2020.</p> |

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>ACTION</b>                 | Decision.  |
| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>        | <p>That Members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve the 2015-20 Public Safety Plan at Annex A for public consultation.</li> <li>2. Approve the consultation plan at Annex B.</li> <li>3. Grant the Chief Fire Officer discretion to finalise the presentation of the 2015-20 Public Safety Plan in readiness for the consultation and to determine the consultation questions.</li> </ol>   |
| <b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>        | <p>Re-engineering our service provision to reflect the changing nature of risk and demand in the community will provide opportunities to further mitigate a number of our key corporate risks. Our Medium Term Financial Plan forecasts a revenue budget shortfall of £2.5million by the 2017-18 financial year if we do nothing more to reduce the cost of our current service provision and / or raise additional revenue.</p> <p>Striking a more appropriate balance between the capacity needed to deal with current and anticipated levels of 'day-to-day' demand and that needed to deal with relatively infrequent major emergencies is likely to generate significant savings relative to the current cost of our emergency response provision.</p> <p>Staff availability is also another significant area of risk identified within our Corporate Risk Register. Modernising our 'on-call' duty systems will also present opportunities to improve our overall staff availability and general resilience relative to this important area of risk.</p> |
| <b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b> | <p>The only direct financial impact arising from the publication of this plan is the cost associated with the public consultation process. These are expected to amount to c. £12,500.</p> <p>Further consultation and other costs may arise depending on the nature of and outcomes of the various reviews proposed by the plan. The costs and benefits arising from any recommended changes to service provision will be accounted for in our Medium Term Financial Planning process.</p>  |
| <b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>     | <p>The consultation process will comply with legal requirements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ being undertaken at a time when proposals are at a formative stage;</li> <li>▪ providing sufficient information to allow for a proper and informed response;</li> </ul>   |



|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
|                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ allowing adequate time for response; and</li> <li>▪ having responses - or a summary of them - fed back to the Authority for it to take into account when finally approving any Public Safety Plan</li> </ul>   |
| <b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>        | No direct implications arising from the draft Public Safety Plan. The individual reviews will evaluate the health and safety implications associated with any recommendations arising from them.  |
| <b>EQUALITY &amp; DIVERSITY</b> | <p>The consultation plan is designed to ensure that a representative sample of the community is consulted on the issues and proposals contained in the 2015-20 Public Safety Plan. Focus group recruitment is controlled to ensure that an appropriate gender balance, age profile and factors such as ethnicity and disability are addressed.</p> <p>Any changes to service provision arising from the reviews set out in the Plan will be subject to full People Impact Assessments.</p>  |
| <b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>         | <p>The Plan sets out the Authority's strategic approach to delivery of the vision of making Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel addressing, in particular, the pursuit of the underpinning prevention, protection and response strategic aims.</p> <p><b>Communication with stakeholders</b></p> <p>The development of the Plan was informed by an initial public consultation carried out in November / December 2013 to explore public expectations of the Service and awareness of the issues and challenges facing it together with some of the ways we might potentially respond to these. A summary of the outcomes of the consultation is contained in the Plan and was reported on in full to Members at the February 2014 CFA meeting.</p> <p>Also a cross-section of the Authority's staff were provided with an opportunity to provide input to the development of the Plan via participation in full day planning workshops run in April 2014.</p> <p>Further consultations on the issues and proposals contained in the 2015-20 Public Safety Plan will be undertaken as set out in the consultation plan at Annex B. There will also be follow on consultations with affected stakeholder groups relating to the outcomes of the various reviews of service provision identified in the Plan.</p> <p><b>The system of internal control</b></p> <p>The progress of the public consultation will be overseen by the Business Transformation and Strategic Management Boards. The outcomes of the consultation</p> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>will be reported to the December CFA meeting together with any proposed changes to 2015-20 Public Safety Plan arising as a result of these for the Authority’s approval.</p> <p><b>The medium term financial strategy</b></p> <p>The re-shaping of our service provision implied by the Plan will have significant implications for our medium term financial strategy by addressing how it can be delivered in a more efficient and economical manner appropriate to the changed pattern of risk and demand in the community.</p> <p><b>Balance between spending and resources</b></p> <p>The immediate costs arising from the public consultation will be met from budgeted resources. Costs associated with the various reviews will be met from within budget and / or recovered from future savings arising from the re-shaping of our service provision.</p> <p><b>Management of the asset base</b></p> <p>The plan will have implications for current property and fleet related assets. These will be considered in our Property and Fleet Management strategies.</p> <p><b>Environmental</b></p> <p>Where appropriate any changes arising from the outcomes of the reviews of service provision contained in the Plan will be subject to environmental impact assessments.</p> |
| <p><b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b></p> | <p><a href="#">Public Consultation – Pre-IRMP “Listening &amp; Engagement” research – report of consultation outcomes</a>. 19 February 2014 CFA meeting paper.</p>   |
| <p><b>APPENDICES</b></p>                                 | <p>Annex A: 2015-20 Public Safety Plan for consultation<br/>Annex B: Consultation Plan</p>   |
| <p><b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b></p>              | <p>Stuart Gowanlock, Corporate Planning Manager<br/><a href="mailto:sgowanlock@bucksfire.gov.uk">sgowanlock@bucksfire.gov.uk</a><br/>01296 744435</p>  |



# *Continuing the Journey*

# 2015 – 2020

## Public Safety Plan

for consultation



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## ***Introduction from the Chairman***

*There is clearly a lot of data and information which underpins our integrated risk management planning process. What is also clear is that we have been extremely successful in reducing the risks within our communities, not only from the effects of fire, but also from other emergencies. We accept that those that we serve demand a first class response in their hour of need, whatever the emergency, and we are proud that we continue to provide and improve on how we respond to calls for assistance. We are also very proud of our successes in other areas, such as the prevention of emergencies occurring in the first place and our engagement with partner organisations and other stakeholders including the business communities within Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes in helping to protect their businesses and premises. We value and understand the benefits this brings to those we serve and protect in respect of the local economy.*

*To be truly transformational in our quest to reduce risk within our communities, we must embrace more flexible ways of approaching our core responsibilities and the way that we work. With the resources we have available to us, we must focus on where we can provide the very best safety services to those who need them and therefore a more flexible and blended approach between how we prevent emergencies, protect life, properties and the environment and also respond when called upon.*

*This document is based upon our ever evolving integrated risk management planning process and sets out how we plan to continue our improvement journey towards making Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes the safest places in England in which to live work and travel. We would like to hear your views on what you think of our proposals, plans and ambitions.*

## ***Introduction from the Chief Fire Officer***

*The fire and rescue 'landscape' has changed dramatically over the last ten years or so. We have seen a dramatic reduction in the number of emergency incidents and consequent deaths and injuries across the UK including here in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. These changes result from a broad range of measures taken by government, industry and the fire and rescue service to improve the safety of the public.*

*They are all the more remarkable when they are considered against the backdrop of what traditionally has caused rising risks, such as a population that is growing, ageing and becoming more diverse at a time when fire and rescue authorities are having to find ways of reducing their expenditure to cope with reducing funding from central government and constraints on their ability to offset this through local taxation.*

*Whilst fire and rescue authorities have taken steps to respond to this changing environment there is still more to do as the recent review of the fire and rescue service conducted by the former Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, Sir Ken Knight shows. Here in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes we have been at the forefront in terms of making your fire and rescue service a lean and efficient operation whilst maintaining and, indeed, improving our effectiveness. In addition to already being one of the lower cost fire and rescue services in the country we were, this year, able to set the lowest Council Tax rate of any combined fire authority in England thanks to the effectiveness of the measures we have already taken to date.*

*We are not, however, content to 'rest on our laurels' and nor, indeed, can we afford to do so given the continuation of a constrained outlook for the funding of all public services over the next few years. Nor are we complacent about the potential risks facing the communities we serve, despite the reduction in incidents that has occurred. The pace of change in the areas that we serve shows no sign of reducing and this can result in increased or new types of risk as shown in this plan.*

*This plan also sets out how we intend to continue the search for efficiencies so that we can develop and improve the services and value that we deliver to the public that we serve and on whose support we rely. We hope that you will take the opportunity to read this plan and respond to our consultation. Any comments or ideas that you may have will be fully considered and taken into account when we re-present the plan to our Authority Members for approval at their December 2014 meeting following the outcomes of the consultation.*

# ABOUT THIS PLAN

## *2015 - 20 Public Safety Plan*

This Public Safety Plan sets out [Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority's](#) strategy for the provision of fire and rescue services for the five year period April 2015 to March 2020. It supersedes the existing [2012 – 2017 Public Safety Plan](#).

The Plan has been developed using integrated risk management planning methods and is designed to conform to the [Government's guidance](#) in relation to the preparation of integrated risk management plans.



Picture

## *Additional information*

Throughout this plan we have hyperlinks to other documents and external information sources to provide more detailed information on particular issues and to aid understanding.

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority are not responsible for content held on external websites linked to this plan. The inclusion of any such links does not necessarily imply a recommendation or endorse the views expressed within them. We have no control over the nature, content or availability of information held on external websites.

## *Integrated risk management planning*

Under the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#) provision of fire and rescue services in England is a local government responsibility. However, in formulating their plans and policies, local fire and rescue authorities are required to have regard to guidance issued by central government in its [National Framework](#) document. This sets out the government's expectations and requirements for all fire and rescue authorities in England.

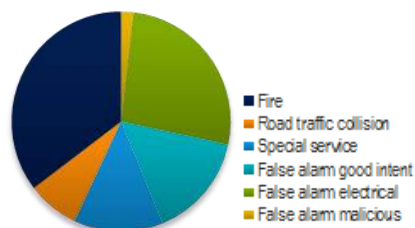
The National Framework requires fire and rescue authority integrated risk management plans to:-

- Identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the communities they serve including those of a cross-border, multi-authority and national nature;
- Demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities through authorities working either individually or collectively in a cost effective way;
- Set out their strategy and risk based programme for enforcing the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#);
- Be easily accessible and publicly available;
- Reflect effective consultation throughout their development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies, and partners;
- Cover at least a three year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that fire and rescue authorities are able to deliver the requirements set out in this Framework;
- Reflect up to date risk analyses and the evaluation of service delivery outcomes.

# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

## Incidents by type

Fires (35% of total incidents) account for our highest proportion of incidents overall, followed by False alarm electrical (27%), False alarm good intent (15%), Special service (13%), Road traffic collisions (8%) and False alarms malicious (2%)



## Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority ('The Fire Authority') is a local government body with responsibility for providing fire and rescue services for the county of Buckinghamshire and borough of Milton Keynes.

It oversees, on behalf of the public, the work of Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service which undertakes the physical delivery of fire and rescue related safety and emergency response services.

The Fire Authority is made up of 17 elected Councillors – 12 nominated by Buckinghamshire County Council and five nominated by Milton Keynes Council in proportion to the size of their respective populations. The members of the Fire Authority make important decisions affecting the provision of fire and rescue services including:-

- Setting the annual budget and [Council Tax charge](#);
- Agreeing the staff, equipment and other resources needed to deliver an efficient and effective service;
- Approving Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service's plans, policies and strategies.

## Our Vision

Is to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live work and travel.

## Some facts and figures

### Last year we:

- Visited 5,934 homes in our quest to target those who are most vulnerable and at risk from fire based upon our research and work with partners
- Received 14,796 calls for emergency assistance
- Attended 6,556 emergency incidents
- Set the lowest Council Tax charge of any combined fire authority at £59.13 for a Band D household.

### We have:

| Count | STAFF                 | Description  | Average cost/year per staff member |
|-------|-----------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| 333   | Wholetime firefighter | 24/7   | £38k                               |
|       | Day-crew fire fighter | 09:00-18:00 full-time cover<br>18:00-09:00 on-call cover | £47k                               |
| 269   | On-call fire fighter  | 24/7 depending on availability of crew                   | £7k                                |
| 21    | Control room staff    | 24/7   | £28k                               |
| 100   | Support staff         | 37 hours per week, green book T&C's                      | £32k                               |

| Count | FIRE APPLIANCE         | Description  | Operating cost/year (crew, fuel & maintenance) per fire appliance |
|-------|------------------------|--|---|
| 9     | Wholetime fire engine  | 24/7   | £1.1m   |
| 4     | Day-crewed fire engine | 09:00-18:00 full-time cover<br>18:00-09:00 on-call cover | £570k   |
| 18    | On-call fire engine    | 24/7 depending on availability of crew                   | £99k  |



# STRATEGIC CONTEXT

## *Fewer Incidents... Reducing Risk... A Safer Environment*

Over the last decade (between 2002/03 to 2012/13) there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of fire related incidents and consequent deaths and injuries across the UK.

| 2002/03 – 2012/13 | Nationally | Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes                                    |
|-------------------|------------|--|
| Fires             | ↓ 63%      | ↓ 54%  |
| Serious Injuries  | ↓ 54%      | ↓ 68%  |
| Deaths            | ↓ 35%      | Too low for meaningful statistical analysis (between 0-6 per year) |

([Source: Fire Statistics Monitor, April 2012 – March 2013](#)).

These changes have been [attributed](#) to the cumulative effect of various measures on fire risk including:

- Better building and furniture regulations
- The introduction of integrated risk management planning across UK fire and rescue services
- An increased focus on prevention and protection activities
- The installation of smoke alarms in most homes
- The success of high profile fire safety campaigns such as the Government's 'Fire Kills' campaign.

## *Facing the Future*

To help fire and rescue services respond to the changed nature of their operating environment the government commissioned a national review of opportunities to improve their efficiency. This review was undertaken by Sir Ken Knight - a former Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser to the Government. The [report](#) found that whilst much progress had been made there is still potential to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of fire and rescue service operations in “a completely different era of risk and demand” by, amongst other things, fire and rescue authorities:

- Better aligning expenditure in relation to risk rather than spending to their current budgets;
- Adopting innovative crewing and staffing models already being pursued within some individual authority areas;
- Increasing reliance on ‘on call’ (part-time) firefighters in areas where risk and demand are low;
- Improving collaboration and sharing of knowledge and learning between fire and rescue services to reduce duplication of effort;
- Improving collaboration with other blue light services by, for example, using Fire and Rescue capacity to support the ambulance service by responding to certain types of incident (known as co-responding) or sharing sites and facilities (co-location);
- Ensuring that there is a sound ‘business case’ behind using firefighters for wider community work such as working with ex-offenders or children at risk of exclusion from school.

The findings of this review have been taken into account in the preparation of this plan and it sets out how we propose to pursue many of the opportunities identified by it.

# PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS

## Listening to the views of the public

To help inform the development of this plan we carried out a consultation exercise with the public. The purpose of this was to explore:

- Awareness of and attitudes towards risks;
- Perceptions of the fire and rescue service, its services and any expectations in relation to these;
- Awareness of the issues and challenges facing the fire and rescue service and general feelings about potential ways that the Fire Authority could respond to these.

The consultation was undertaken in November and December 2013 and was designed to ensure that it embraced a representative sample of the public that we serve. It consisted of five focus groups, involving a total of 50 participants, held in various locations across the area served by the Fire Authority. The focus groups used a 'deliberative' approach which encouraged members of the public to reflect in depth about the fire and rescue service while receiving and questioning background information and discussing important issues in detail.

A flavour of the range of views expressed by the participants about some of the issues explored in the consultation is shown on this page. The full findings of the consultation report can be seen [here](#).

### Funding the Service

*"£59 is not enough!" "Would I be prepared to pay more? Yes I would!"*

*"The question shouldn't be 'should we pay more?' – the question should be should we rebalance the resources of BFRS?" "Are we at risk – do we need to pay more? I don't feel at risk!"*

#### Attitudes to risk

- *"It's understanding and being aware of it but not necessarily worrying about it. Recognising there are things you can adjust to minimise it"*
- *"If you don't understand the risk then you become more of a Pessimist"*
- *"At work I have to be a [Risk] Manager as I have to do risk assessments, but personally I am more of an Optimist".*

#### What people really worry about

- *"The health of your family..."*
- *"Children – I don't want to see them in danger"*
- *"Older children when you let them do things for themselves & you get a phone call in the night"*
- *"You almost worry more for your grandchildren because the world has changed so much..."*
- *"I worry about things like trying to get home from work in time to make sure the kids are fed before they go to scouts. Logistical things rather than dangers... running my life"*
- *"Illness is one... my parents are now in their seventies and they've had a lot of ill-health and if I stop to think about it, it does scare me"*
- *"The day-to-day cost of living; the financial side of things is a worry"*

#### Responsibility for managing risk

- *"Everyone should take responsibility for their actions as much as possible but the Fire Service has to be there to respond to every incident"*
- *"There can be no differentiation at the point of requirement but there must be some education so that everyone takes as much responsibility as they can"*

#### Response times

- *The idea that everyone should be treated equally (that is, equally protected in this context) led some to wonder if response times might be fairer if they were somehow 'equalised'*
- *"Logically we have to accept they're going to be longer in rural areas"*
- *"If its about life and you've got a smoke detector you can get out so then it doesn't matter what the response time is. They are going to save your property...but... not your... life because you're already out".*
- *"Lots of people said it's about risk to life but actually if someone's house is on fire they will want that house to be saved... People wouldn't admit how high they'd put their property in terms of survival – that it's only just a little bit below life"*

#### Working with Others

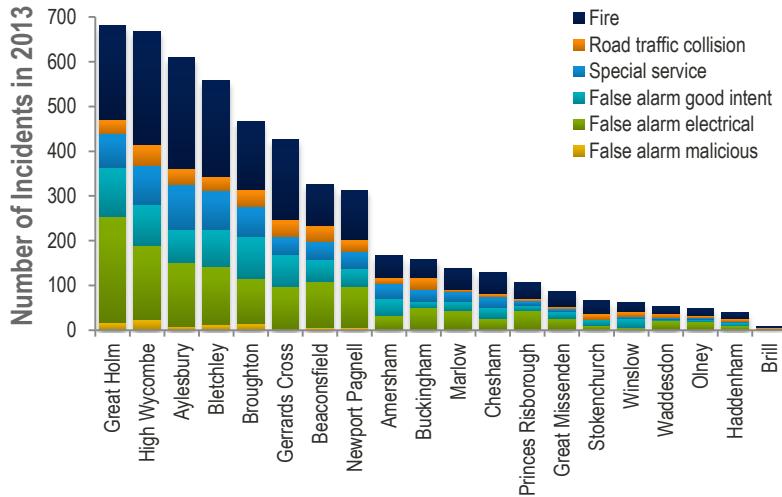
- *"We rang for an ambulance as a lady had come to our meeting with chest pains and I was surprised when a firefighter rolled up really quickly. I thought it was a really good use of resources"*
- *"Why shouldn't every police officer be trained to use a defibrillator for example? I think there's a lot of scope for integration between the services to make some efficiencies."*

#### Attitudes to fire risk

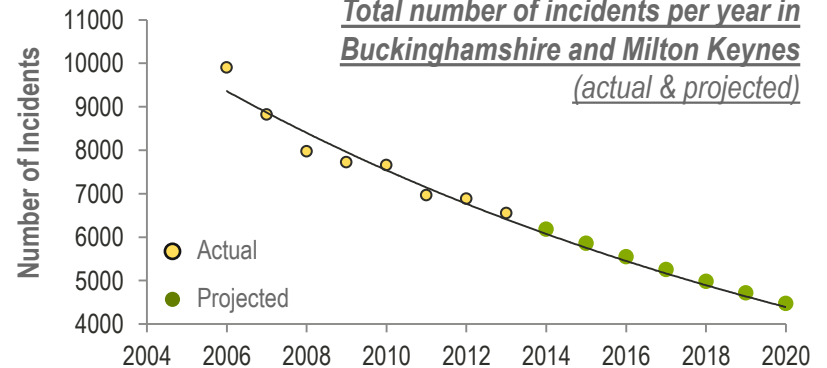
- *"Fire is not really an 'everyday' risk nowadays – due to improved safety measures!"*
- *"I think it's in the manage category isn't it? We've got working smoke detectors and homes are generally a lot safer than they used to be. There's less smoking, fewer open fires"*

# TRENDS IN DEMAND

The number of incidents by type that occurred on each station ground in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes during 2013



Total number of incidents per year in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (actual & projected)



## Demand from incidents is projected to decrease

In 2006 we experienced around 10,000 incidents per year, if the current trend continues, by 2018 that demand will have halved to around 5,000 incidents per year. This decline is being seen [Nationally](#).

## Number of incidents by station ground

Our aim is to align our highest cover with the greatest demand.

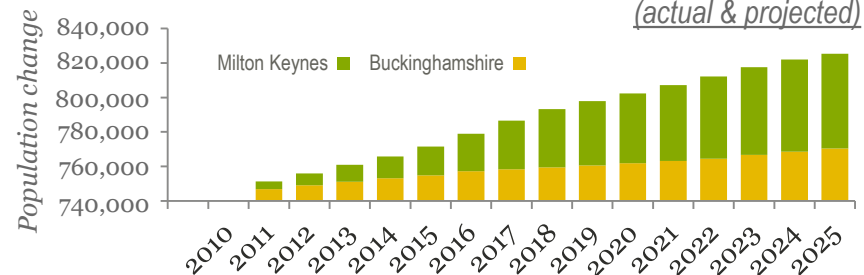
[Whole-time stations](#) are open 24/7 and have crews on site ready-to-go. As we would expect, our whole-time fire stations see the highest demand from incidents, followed by [day-crew](#) and then [on-call](#).

There is however an exception, where the day-crewed station at Gerrards Cross experiences more incidents than the whole-time station at Beaconsfield.

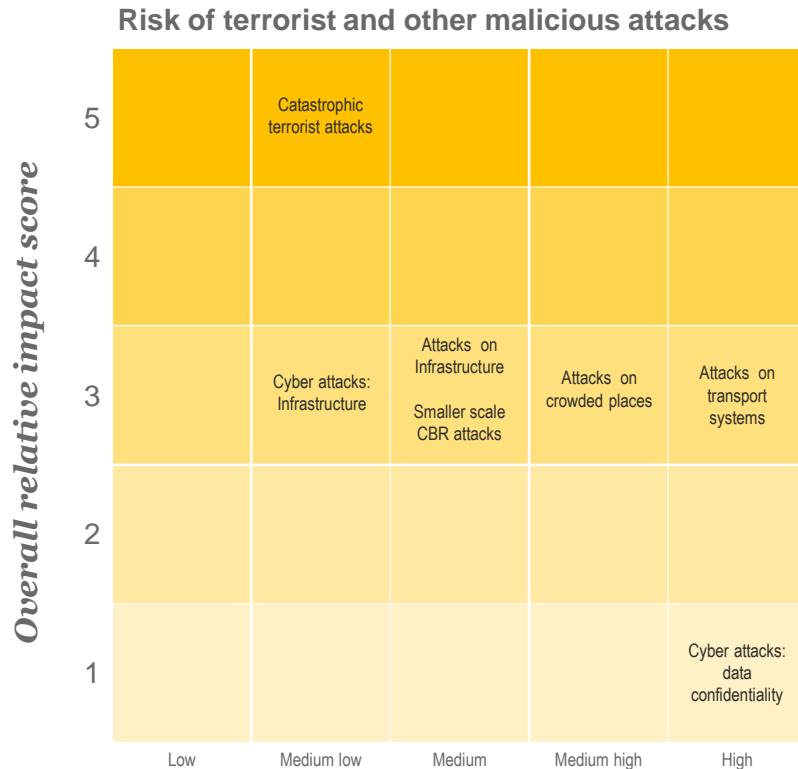
## Despite an increasing population

Between 2004 and 2011 the population of Buckinghamshire increased by 4% and Milton Keynes by 7% according to ONS mid-year population projections.

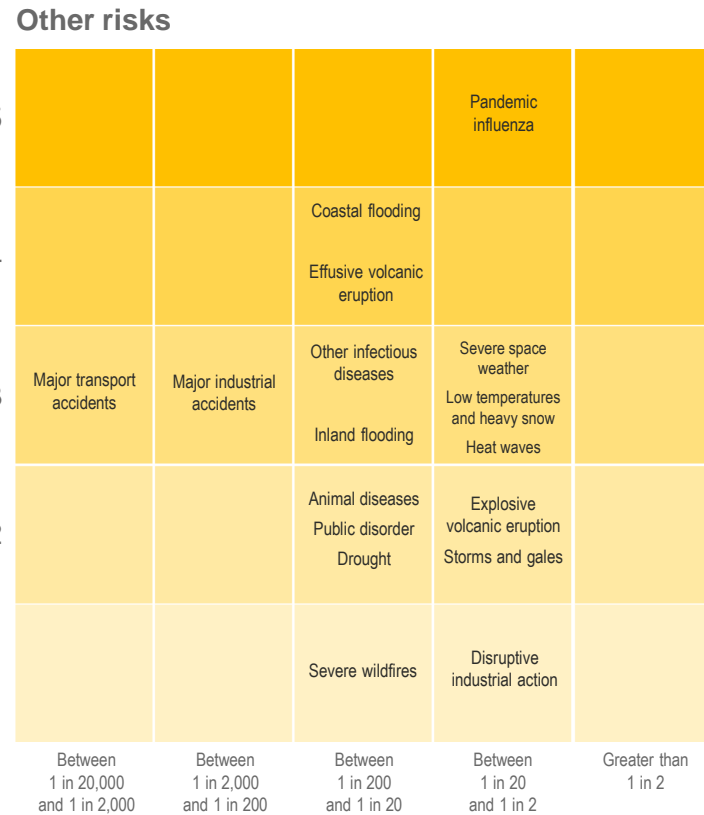
Population change in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (actual & projected)



# NATIONAL & REGIONAL RISKS



*Relative plausibility of occurring in the next 5 years*



*Relative likelihood of occurring in the next 5 years*

## Supporting national and regional resilience

[Government guidance](#) indicates that fire and rescue authorities should consider national and regional risks when preparing their plans. The above charts provide a summary of the Government's current national risk assessment published by the Cabinet Office. The full assessment can be seen in the [National Risk Register](#). A more localised assessment of these and other regional risks is produced by the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum in which we participate. This is published in the [Thames Valley LRF Community Risk Register](#). We maintain a range of specialist capabilities to deal with many of these risks, such as our Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team based in Aylesbury, which can be deployed to major regional or national emergencies as well as being available for local incidents.

# LOCAL RISK PROFILE

## Rural Aylesbury Vale:

- Potential for more frequent or severe building fires due to:
  - Older housing stock with unmodernised wiring or heating systems.
  - remote locations with poor road and house signs making properties more difficult to find.
  - Heritage properties with old dry timbers.
- Greater casualty risk due to ageing population
- Serious RTCs as people use A-roads and lanes as 'rat-runs' to avoid getting stuck in town traffic jams, particularly during stormy or extremely cold weather

## Princes Risborough and Great Missenden:

- House fires in older properties in more remote locations
- RTCs on the A4010 and lanes

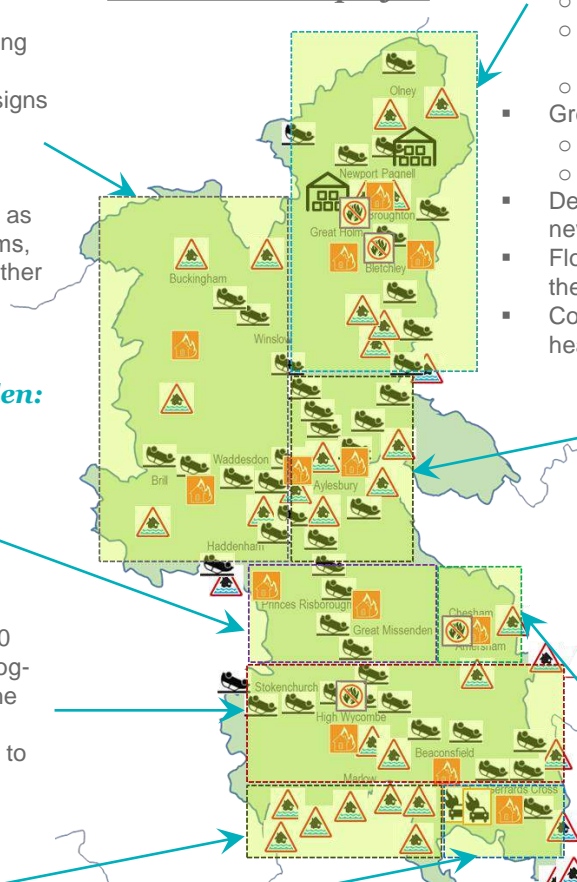
## M40 corridor:

- Driver behaviours on sections of the M40 which undulate and meander, surprise fog-patches; and the M25, which is one of the busiest motorways in Europe.
- Deliberate fires in High Wycombe linked to risk factors associated with deprivation
- Greater casualty risk due to houses of multiple occupancy (HMO)

## River Thames:

- Flood risk to people and property along the River Thames

A map of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to show our current risk profile



## Milton Keynes:

- RTCs due to nature of driving on the road grid-network, M1 and A509
- Fires in warehouses, some of which are un-sprinklered
- Rapid burn house fires due to poor quality build associated with some post-war housing estates
- House fires due to:
  - large population and housing density
  - multi-cultural festivities throughout the year (e.g. use of candles)
  - risk factors associated with deprivation in some areas.
- Greater casualty risk in house fires due to:
  - ageing population
  - houses of multiple occupancy (HMO)
- Deliberate fires owing to the dumping of old furniture and newspaper waste in some areas
- Flooding - the Great Ouse river to the north and River Ouzel to the south
- Commercial risk owing to the large number of business headquarters

## Aylesbury Town:

- Potential for more severe house fires due to poor-quality build of some post-war housing.
- Greater casualty risk due to houses of multiple occupancy (HMO)
- Serious RTCs as people use A-roads and lanes as rat-runs to avoid town
- Flooding causing disruption to commuters and residents due to River Thames and tributaries on the flood plain

## Chesham and Amersham:

- House and deliberate fires due to risk factors associated with deprivation in some areas.
- Greater casualty risk due to houses of multiple occupancy

## South Bucks:

- Deliberate and accidental outdoor fires due to:
  - Stolen cars being dumped and burned in the woods
  - Soil having a high peat content which transmits heat during outdoor fires and keeps relighting itself
- Slower response times as country park users block access gates with vehicles when picnicking or walking
- Flood risk to people and property along the River Thames

**Key**

- House fire
- Deliberate fires
- Warehouse fires
- Flooding
- Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)
- Car fires

# FUTURE RISK FACTORS

## Infrastructure

[East West Rail \(EWR\)](#) construction is due to start in 2016. [High Speed Rail 2 \(HS2\)](#) construction is due to start in 2017. These railway lines will bring *disruption* in the short-term owing to blocked access routes. Construction workers will cause temporary increases in populations, which could *increase the number of incidents*, but in the long-term we might see a *reduction in the number of road traffic collisions* owing to a shift from road to rail use. We might also see *new risks emerging* caused, for example, by the introduction of long tunnels under the Chilterns.

## Neighbouring brigades

We work in partnership with our neighbouring brigades: London Fire Brigade, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire to understand whether they are planning any changes that could affect the emergency response to our communities and to identify opportunities for collaboration.

## Climate change

The Met Office predicts more summertime heat-waves, colder winters, more frequent heavy rainfall events and increased flooding events. Click [here](#) for Met Office report and [here](#) for BBC report.

This suggests that we can expect to see more *summertime outdoor fires*. Historically, the combination of school holidays and outdoor leisure spots (parks and woodland) see increased incident demand with hot, dry conditions. We can expect *greater disruption to travel* owing to extremely cold (ice and snow) winter conditions. *Increased flooding events* are most likely to affect Marlow, Aylesbury and Milton Keynes. Click [here](#) for Environment Agency flood warning plan. More stormy weather will likely affect travel across the County as a result of debris from fallen and damaged trees.

## Built environment

Milton Keynes: Anticipate [28,000 new dwellings](#) by 2026. [Proposed sites](#) include: Stony Stratford, Wolverton, Newport Pagnell, Kingston, Woburn Sands, Bletchley and Westcroft.

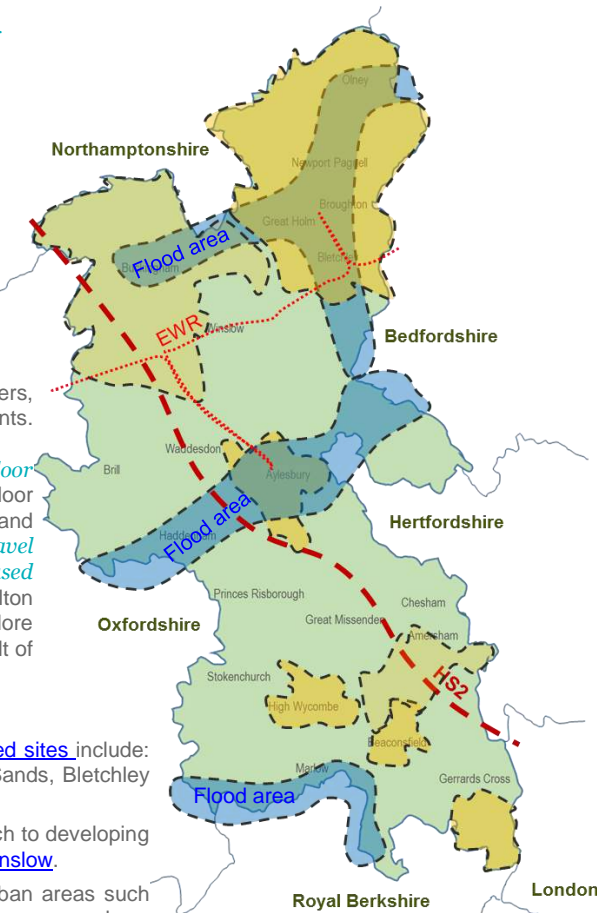
Aylesbury Vale District: Plan has been [withdrawn](#), but the approach to developing a new one is under [consultation](#). A plan has been submitted for [Winslow](#).

[Wycombe District](#): Proposing 480-715 new homes per year in urban areas such as High Wycombe, Wye Valley & Princes Risborough, and rural areas such as Saunderton, Stokenchurch, Kimble and Terrick.

[Chiltern District](#): Require 2650-2900 new dwellings from 2006-2026. Current housing proposal sites include: Amersham, Chesham, Great Missenden, Prestwood, Holmer Green and South Heath.

[South Bucks District](#): Proposed sites include: Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Taplow.

***A map of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to show our future risks colour-coded by type***



## MK population and demographic change

Between 2002-2012, Milton Keynes has experienced a *population growth*, which is forecast to continue. The MK *age profile* is younger than for England as a whole, but is projected to align more closely with England by 2026, except for 5-19 year olds which will be significantly higher. The *ethnic diversity* of MK has increased more than for England generally, with the largest increase seen among Black African, Other White (European Migrants) and Indian. The 2011 Census outlined that the number of MK *residents born outside the UK* has more than doubled, with the largest change from Polish-born residents. Christians account for the largest *religious* group (53%) followed by Muslims (5%), which is about 2.5 times larger than it was in 2001 and Hindu (2.8%), which is nearly double the proportion for England as a whole. *There is the potential for increased incident demand aligned with population increase and more varied causal factors aligned with different cultural backgrounds.*

Click [here](#) for population information and [here](#) for cultural considerations







## Buckinghamshire population and demographic change

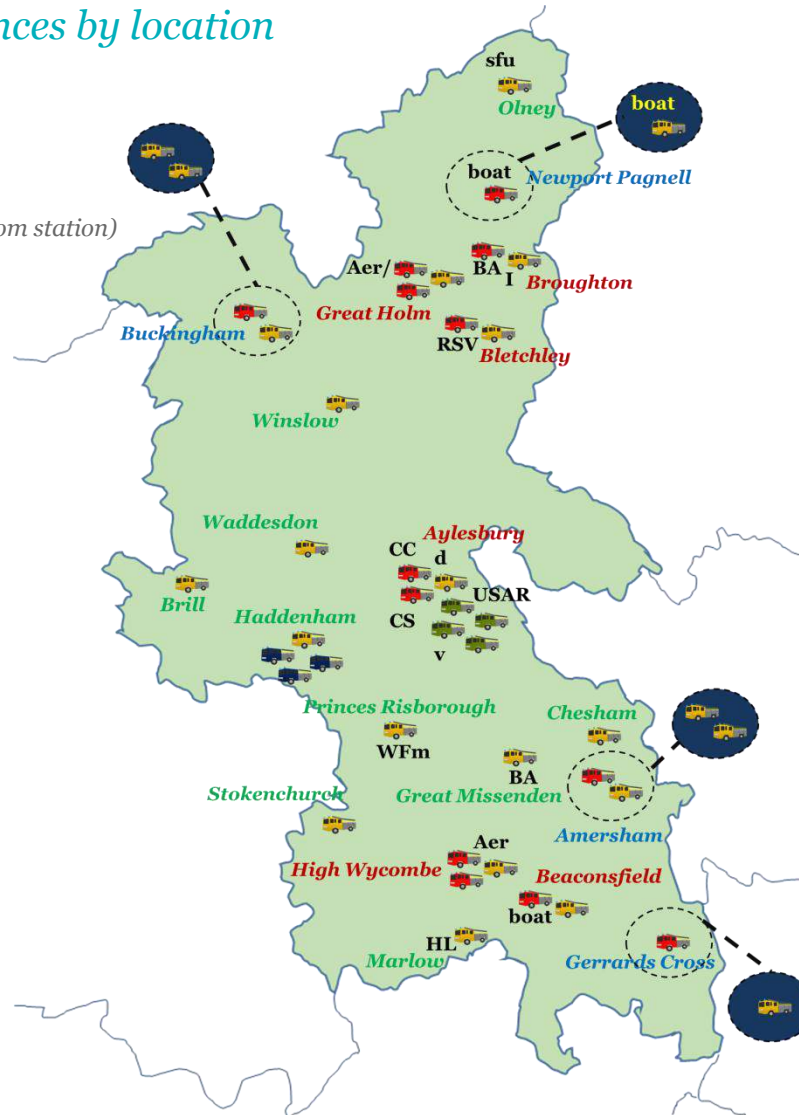
Population density has increased by 9-13% in: Greater Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Beaconsfield and Wexham & Iver wards, and by 5-9% in Buckingham and Amersham wards. All other areas have seen a 0-5% increase except Haddenham and Long Crendon where populations have decreased by -4 to 0%. Fires are well correlated with population density, *This suggests that our future demand from Fires will increasingly come from urban areas and our demand around Brill and Haddenham is likely to reduce.* Click [here](#) for more detail.

Buckinghamshire has proportionately fewer 15-35 year olds than England as a whole. Chiltern and South Bucks have proportionately more 45+ year olds relative to Buckinghamshire as a whole and Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe have a higher proportion of 0-45 year olds relative to Buckinghamshire as a whole. *Older age-groups incur injuries because they find it more difficult to get out in the event of a fire. Younger age-groups tend to incur injuries when they attempt to tackle the fire themselves.*

# CURRENT RESOURCING

A map to show our station locations and duty systems, the number of fire engines by type of cover and specialist appliances by location

-  Full-time  
(crew based on station)
-  On-call  
(crew live/work <5 mins from station)
-  Spare fire engine
-  Training school fire engine
- sfu – small fires unit
- boat – water rescue
- Aer – aerial appliance
- BA – breathing apparatus support van
- O – operational support unit
- I – incident response unit (decontamination)
- RSV – rescue service vehicle
- CC – command & control bus
- d – fire investigation dog van
- USAR – urban search and rescue
- CS – community safety exhibition unit
- WFm – water & foam tanker
- HL – high volume hose layer
-  Day
-  Night



Our **Whole-time** stations provide full-time emergency response cover 24/7, every day of the year. These stations also have additional capacity offered by 'on-call' fire-fighters available on a 5 minute turn-out time.

Our **Day-crewed** stations provide full-time cover during the day (09:00-18:00 hours) and On-Call cover at night (18:00-09:00 hours). These stations are made-up of a blend of whole-time and on-call crews.

Our **On-Call** stations use firefighters who live/work in the area and come in as and when required. They must be within 5 minutes of the station.

We also operate an emergency control room function which deals with calls for assistance although this will be migrating to a new shared facility with Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire at the end of 2014.

# OUR ON-CALL CREWING MODEL

## *Our On-call duty system needs to reflect modern work and lifestyle preferences*

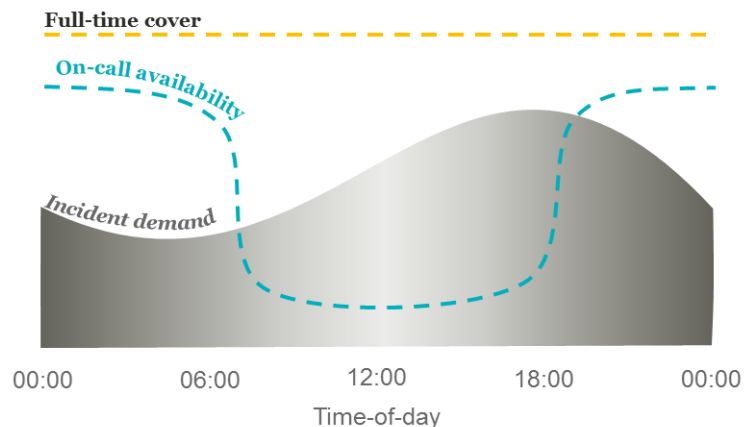
*“We can’t get the personnel during the day when the demand is highest, the local villages and towns just don’t have the business infrastructure to keep people there during the day, so people are travelling further afield to find work...*

*...people also have lots of hobbies and interests and don’t want to be limited to their home area during their spare time....*

**(Quote:** Station Manager, 2014)

### *Availability of our on-call fire fighters is at its lowest...*

*...when our incident demand is at its highest*



Sir Ken Knight’s review of the fire and rescue service identifies the potential for fire and rescue authorities to consider making more use of on-call firefighters as one of the ways of responding to the reduction in emergency incidents that has taken place in recent years and also meeting the efficiency challenge posed by the reductions in government funding for the fire and rescue service, particularly in rural or other lower risk environments. This is because it is a more economical model of providing fire cover than the Wholtime or Day Crew models.

We already make extensive use of on-call firefighters in rural areas with ten of our 20 fire stations crewed solely in this way. We also use on-call firefighters to provide additional capacity at many of our Wholtime and Day-Crew stations where they typically crew a second, third or specialist fire appliance.

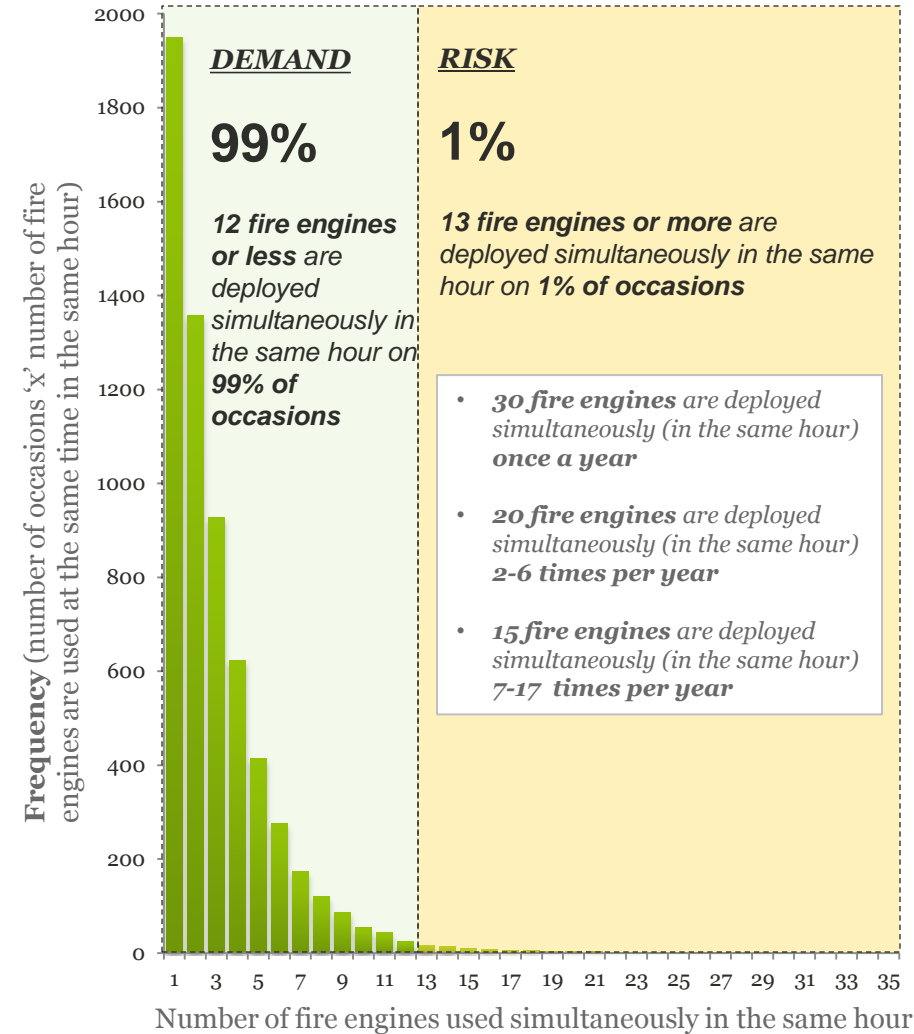
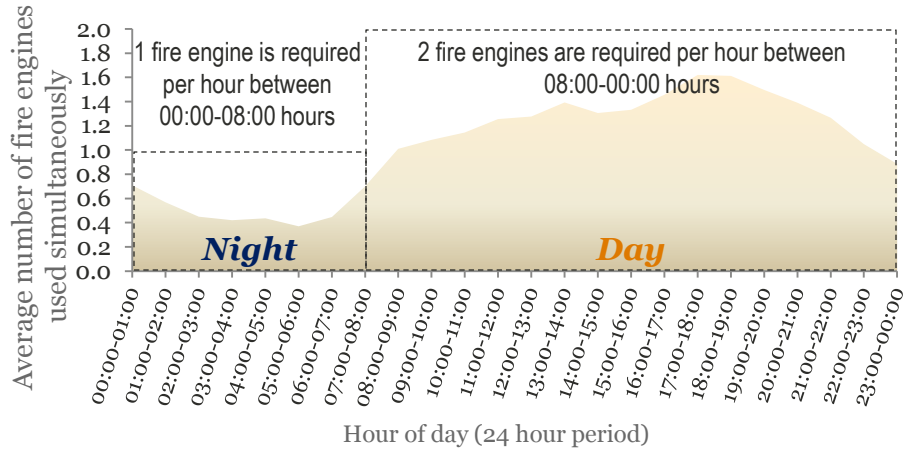
However, as the graph on the left shows, the availability of on-call firefighters in rural areas tends to be at its lowest during the working day for the reasons identified in the quotations. This often means that on-call fire appliances are not available during this period which is also when we experience our highest level of demand for emergency response services. Currently we are able to manage this issue because we have sufficient capacity to back up our on-call stations with cover from adjacent Wholtime and Day Crew fire stations. However were we to move to a model which placed increasing reliance on availability of on-call firefighters during the working day then ways of improving the reliability of this form of cover would need to be found. Details of our approach to this challenge are set out in the next section.



# RESOURCING FOR DAILY DEMAND AND INFREQUENT MAJOR EMERGENCIES

*Fluctuations in simultaneous demand for use of fire engines across a typical day across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes*

*Number of fire engines used simultaneously in the same hour and the frequency with which this occurs across an average year*



## Balancing efficiency with resilience

One of the key challenges we face is striking the right balance between the level of resources we need to deal with normal day to day demand for emergency response services and achieving the response times we set ourselves, whilst also maintaining proportionate and cost effective ways of dealing with less frequent major emergencies. We intend to make changes to the way we provision for less frequent risks to ensure that they are put onto a more sustainable and cost effective footing.

**Low level demand:** The graph above shows that on a typical day we use on average up to 1 fire engine per hour across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes at night and up to 2 fire engines per hour during the day. The service currently has a provision of 31 fire engines.

**Infrequent risk:** The graph to the right shows that on 1% of occasions we require 13 fire engines or more simultaneously in the same hour. We need 30 fire engines simultaneously (same hour) once a year, 20 fire engines 2-6 times per year and 15 fire engines 7-17 times per year.

# MEASURING OUR GEOGRAPHIC CAPACITY

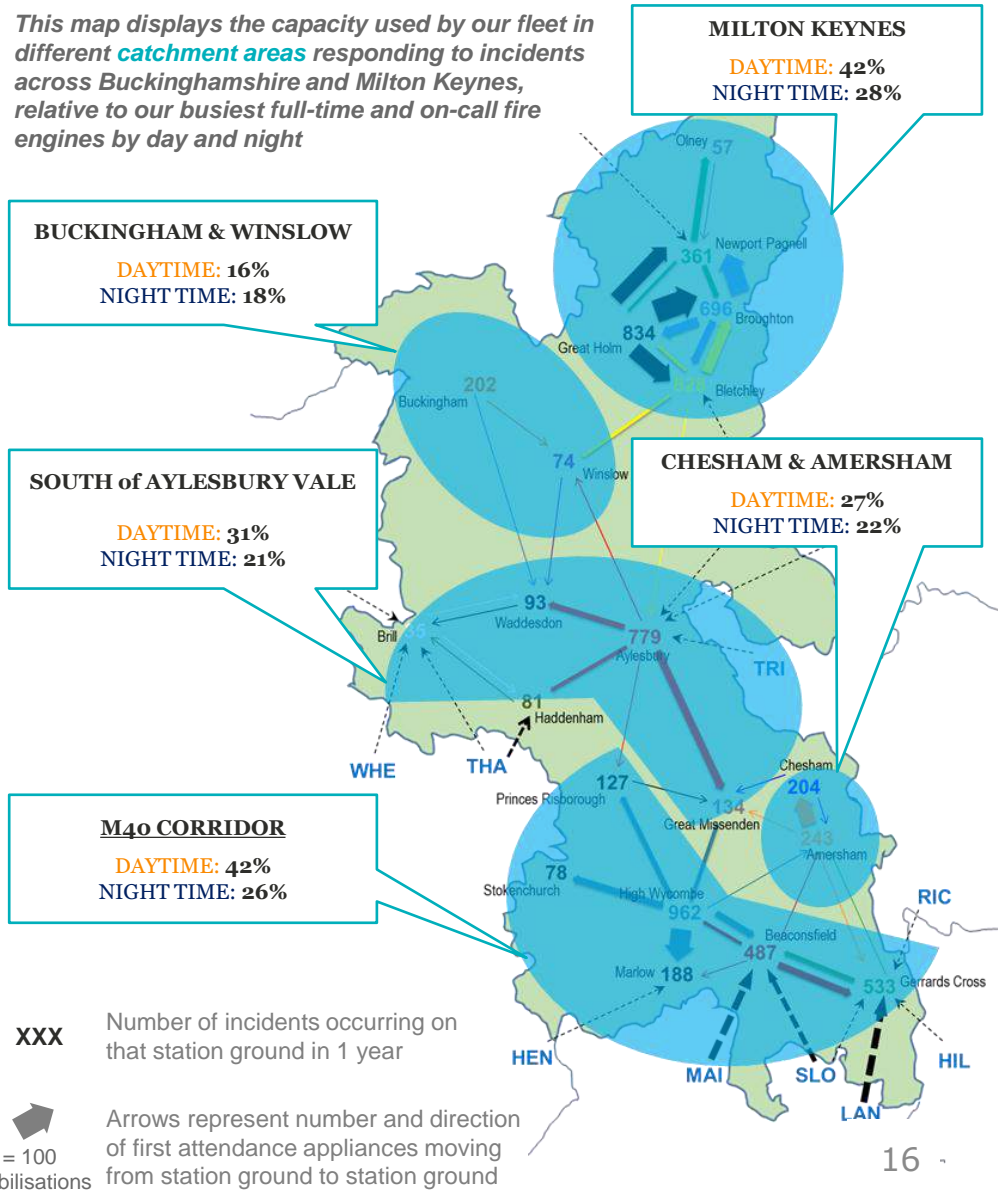
## We would like to optimise the capacity of the fleet

Analysis revealed that our busiest full-time and on-call fire engines attend on average 3.4 and 1.2 incidents respectively in a 24 hour period across the year.

Tracking the movement of fire engines across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes revealed that our Response function is divided into five catchment areas. Fire engines in these areas manage the majority of the demand in those given areas.

The capacities for the busiest fire engines were applied to the provision of full-time and on-call fire engines in each catchment area. We then compared the actual number of incidents that occurred in each catchment area to the capacity of that area, which is displayed by day and night on the map opposite. Across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes our Response function uses on average 32% of its capacity during the day falling to 21% of its capacity at night.

If you consider that nearly 90% of our incidents last less than 1 hour, this means that our busiest full-time and on-call fire engines are typically used for responding to incidents for less than 3.5 and 1.5 hours respectively per day, when theoretically they have the capacity for nearly 24 incidents per day.



# RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

## VISION

“Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes are the safest places in England in which to live, work and travel”

### Prevention

Providing education on how to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies

### Protection

Enforcing, advocating and campaigning for high standards of safety

### Response

Where risk levels remain intolerable, despite our efforts to engineer and eliminate them, providing appropriate high quality response services

## *Achieving our Vision*

Our broad approach to achieving our vision in the context of the risks and challenges set out in the preceding section is to optimise the balance between our prevention, protection and response activities and to ensure that they are as efficient and effective as they can be.

### **In particular we aim to:-**

- Continue to drive down numbers of incidents by improving our ability to target those most at risk of fire and other emergencies and ensure that the measures we take are effective and represent good value for the money and effort involved in delivering them.
- Contribute the safety and prosperity of our economy by working with the business community to ensure that they are well protected from the risk of fire and other emergencies.
- Reshape our emergency response capabilities and resources to ensure that they are right for current and future levels of risk and demand.

We will now set out how we intend to pursue these aims.

# PREVENTION STRATEGY

## *Improving our ability to target, increase and evaluate the effectiveness of prevention work*

*“We have historically seen a reduction in fire calls and have put that down to Prevention work, but there have been a number of variables that were simultaneously changing over that period of reduction. For example: improved furniture regulations, building fire regulations, fire retardant materials, emergency cut-off switches in electrical equipment and an increased tendency to get takeaway food on the way home instead of cooking under the influence of alcohol...”*

*...it also takes a long time to see the impact of Prevention work, take fire setting as an example: if you intervene with a 14 year old and they then don't set another fire until they are 35 years old, is that a success or a failure?”*

**(Quote: Station Manager, 2014)**

We have traditionally focussed on home fire risk checks (HFRCs). This is a free service where we visit households across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to offer home fire safety advice and fit smoke alarms if needed.

However, we only have the capacity to deliver around 8,000 HFRCs per year and there are around 315,000 households across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

We propose to continue to offer free home fire risk checks and seek to improve the targeting and evaluation of the effectiveness of this service using socio-demographic profiling tools to ensure we reach and help those most at risk.

However, given a growing population and the growth or emergence of other risk factors in the communities we serve we need to find other ways of delivering safety messages and advice to larger numbers of people and to do this in a way that is both effective and economical.

The best way to reach a large numbers of people is to use media channels such as television, radio and the increasingly newer media channels such as ‘Facebook’ and ‘Twitter’. However analysis has shown that different household types tend to experience house fires for different reasons e.g. cooking fires, hair straighteners left on, faulty wiring, overloaded plug sockets, faulty white goods such as washing machines and dishwashers or phone chargers overheating. Our socio-demographic profiling tools enable us to gain better insight into which groups of people are more vulnerable to particular types of fire or other risks. Also different lifestyle groups often favour particular types of media so we can potentially use these insights together to target communications at particular audiences more precisely. An example of this approach is shown bellow and we will be looking to expand this kind of activity over the lifetime of this plan

### *Heart Radio Campaign*

We are currently working with Heart Radio using an innovative blend of socio-demographic analysis with Heart Radio listenership data to tailor Prevention messaging and broadcast them at times when that particular lifestyle group is listening. These listeners will then be directed to our website to pick up their promotion or advice and asked to input their address so that we can cross-reference this against our database to make sure the right life-styles are receiving the right advice. Our website it currently being updated to accommodate this new way of targeting and will be ready later on this year.

# MANAGING FIRE RISK IN COMMERCIAL AND NON-DOMESTIC BUILDINGS

## *Our role*

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes contains a large and diverse range of non-domestic buildings and structures. These include offices, factories, warehouses, retail premises, hotels and restaurants, leisure facilities, hospitals, schools, other public buildings, military sites and a range of important National Trust and other heritage sites. The risk factors associated with many of these are identified in our Site Specific Risk Register.

Since October 2006, when the provisions of the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#) (the 'Fire Safety Order') came into effect, responsibility for the identification and management of fire risk in these types of building became the responsibility of the owners or persons in control of them such as employers in places of work. Fire and rescue authorities are now responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Order which confers a range of powers on them including the power to prosecute where other compliance measures have failed.

Ensuring compliance with the Fire Safety Order not only saves lives but also makes a valuable contribution to the health of our economy as in many cases businesses that experience a severe fire go out of business with a consequent loss to the economy in the form of jobs and the impact on customers and suppliers.

## *Our approach*

Our approach to compliance with the Fire Safety Order and to risk reduction generally is constructive and based on proactive and positive engagement with the business community and others with responsibility for the management of fire risk in non-domestic buildings.

Unlike many other fire and rescue authorities we still respond to alarms emanating from automatic fire detection systems. Although our experience shows that over 99% of these are 'false' in that they typically result from a defect in the detection system, or other non fire related cause, they provide an opportunity for us to engage with building managers and offer advice that has helped us reduce numbers of false alarms of this type as well as respond more quickly to genuine incidents thereby reducing risk to life and premises and providing reassurance to businesses and other building owners.

We aim to ensure that public buildings and workplaces are protected from fire risks by promoting ways of making all types of property safer, proactively targeting premises most at risk and, where necessary, enforcing fire safety legislation. In determining our inspection programme, whilst we prioritise in favour of premises that may present a risk to life, we also have regard to the risk to the economy and cases with poor compliance records. Once identified we engage with those responsible for the premises providing risk assessment advice and education. We are also exploring the opportunity to offer business continuity advice and would welcome feedback from the business community on whether they would value this type of support.

### *We are also active in promoting the:*

- use of sprinklers and other fire suppression systems as [research](#) indicates that these valuable means of protecting life, property, the economy and environment are under used in the UK compared with other European countries;
- new 'Primary Authority' scheme which allows businesses with sites in more than one fire and rescue authority area to work with a single fire and rescue authority for the purposes of ensuring compliance with fire safety legislation and regulation. This new scheme is advantageous to businesses as it ensures consistency across the range of fire safety compliance activities as well as a single point of access for advice and guidance.

# WHAT WE PROPOSE TO DO

## *Over the next five years we will:-*

***1/ Systematically change our current approach to managing risks in each of the five catchment areas identified at page 16 of this plan. This will embrace identifying and implementing:***

- the right balance between measures to prevent and protect against risks and residual capacity needed to respond to emergencies;
- the most appropriate crewing models relative to current and expected levels of demand and risk;
- Changes to the number of staff, fire engines and other appliances required to better fit with normal, day to day demand patterns;
- the right number and location for fire stations which may involve moving, merging, closing or co-locating with other blue-light services.

*Our detailed approach to this task is set out overleaf.*

***2/ Identify and implement the level of capacity we need to respond to major local, regional and national emergencies and meet our mutual assistance obligations to neighbouring Brigades.***

This will include consideration of more cost effective ways of quickly generating additional capacity than the current model of maintaining standing resources sufficient to deal with contingencies that we may typically only experience once a year or less frequently.

***3/ Engage and work with our staff and other stakeholders to develop the very best resourcing models for both the service and those that we serve and protect. This will embrace identifying and implementing changes to:***

- staff terms and conditions of employment;
- Crewing models and shift patterns

*Our approach to this is set out at page 22.*

***4/ Continue to develop opportunities to increase the benefits and value that we deliver to the public by using our capacity, resources and assets to meet a wider range of community needs in partnership with others.***

*Our approach to this is set out at page 23.*

***5/ Consider alternative delivery models for some or all of our services. This will embrace consideration of opportunities to deliver services more effectively and efficiently through private sector or employee models of ownership.***

There are precedents for this in both in the UK and overseas. For example:

- the privatisation of the UK helicopter [Search and Rescue Services](#) previously operated by the military;
- in [Denmark](#) fire services have been successfully delivered via private contractual arrangements for many years;
- UK public service employee ownership [models](#).

# REVIEWING THE 'GEO-SPATIAL' DISTRIBUTION OF OUR CAPACITY

*We will change our current operational provision to balance capacity against demand*

*It is evident that there is a **genuine need** to seek alternative ways of delivering front-line services in a more efficient and economical way:*

Analysis identified **three major** response catchment areas: Milton Keynes; South of Aylesbury Vale; and the M40 corridor, as well as **two minor** catchment areas: Buckingham & Winslow and Chesham & Amersham.

*We plan to **change how we manage our response to infrequent events, this will release savings and allow us to focus on getting better trained firefighters to incidents more quickly:***

We propose to start by reviewing one of the **major** (Milton Keynes) and one of the **minor** (Amersham and Chesham) catchment areas.

These reviews aim to identify more **flexible** and **new** ways of delivering front-line services in a more **efficient** and **economical** way.

*Our approach will include a **data-led simulation** followed by a **monitored pilot study:***

These alternative ways will be subject to full risk and impact assessments using **data analysis in a simulated environment.**

This analysis will capture any changes to **speed and weight of response** with a view to understanding, where possible, the likely impact on the **outcomes** *i.e.* injuries, property damage, environmental damage and recovery time or return to normal etc.

Once the most suitable solution has been identified, namely one that **maintains the best possible safety provision for the communities we serve as well as our staff**, *we will consult with you again.*

Once a solution has been **agreed**, we will **implement** those changes.

We will **monitor** the impact of these changes to **detect factors that may not have been captured in the simulated environment.**

To further ensure public and staff safety, we have selected catchment areas at opposite ends of the county to make sure that there is **sufficient back-up** in a neighbouring catchment areas **during the trial period.**

# MODERNISING OUR APPROACH TO RESOURCING FOR EMERGENCIES

*We plan to review our crewing models to ensure they reflect the needs of modern work and lifestyle preferences*

**‘On call’** or ‘Retained Duty System’ firefighters work for us on a part time basis and respond to incidents from their home or main place of work.

Our current on-call crewing model typically requires firefighters to be within five minutes travel-time of the fire station where they are based for an agreed period during the week. This means they need to either live and/or work in close proximity to the fire station. However the modern employment environment means that fewer people live and work in the same location, particularly in rural areas where this form of cover is most appropriate, which makes it difficult for us to attract and retain people to crew appliances using this system during normal working hours as illustrated [earlier](#). We are therefore conducting a review of this crewing model to improve its viability for the future by making it more flexible and attractive to current and prospective on-call firefighters and their employers on whose support we also rely. We will consult these groups as we develop our proposals but, in the meantime, would welcome ideas or feedback from anyone with experience of or an interest in this, or similar, means of providing capacity to deal with emergencies [[hyperlink to consultation questionnaire](#)].

A **‘day-crewed’** firefighter works on a full time basis during the day and responds to personal pagers as an on-call fire-fighter in the evening. The day-shift runs from 9am to 6pm, 7 days per week, using 2 watches working on [rotation](#). Our day-crewed stations include: Gerrards Cross, Amersham, Buckingham and Newport Pagnell.

The day-crew system has been adopted as a **middle-ground** between wholetime and on-call, because:

- [The incident demand isn’t high enough to warrant wholetime cover; and](#)
- [The high property values in these areas seem to exclude professions or lifestyles where people can provide on-call cover during the day](#)

During 2012, a review of crewing arrangements was undertaken and new rotas were designed and agreed at station level, with each station being established to 11 personnel. Since its implementation, the new working pattern has maintained availability, however, due to a number of factors including property prices, they are still experiencing difficulty attracting new staff to work at these stations, which has implications for sustainability at these locations.

The scope of the new review is to consider operational alternatives to safeguard the sustainability and resilience of maintaining effective operational cover for the communities in these areas.



# USING OUR CAPACITY & RESOURCES IN DIFFERENT WAYS TO SAVE MORE LIVES AND BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

## Working with the ambulance service

The review of the fire and rescue service carried out by Sir Ken Knight identified improved collaboration with other blue light services and, in particular, the provision of support to the ambulance service via schemes such as 'co-responder' as being among the ways in which fire and rescue services can make more efficient use of their capacity and improve their value to the public.

We have been operating a co-responding service in partnership with South Central Ambulance Service from Great Missenden Fire Station since June 2011. We have since extended this trial to Amersham/Chesham, High Wycombe and Marlow fire stations. We know from our consultation that the public value this kind of collaboration and we will therefore be looking for opportunities to further develop and expand this service into other areas. In this regard we would welcome further feedback in relation to our using our capacity and resources in this way [hyperlink to consultation questionnaire].

**South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS)** cover Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

- They are required to meet Category A (immediately life-threatening) calls within 8 minutes on 80% of occasions.
- There are some areas where the incident demand places great pressure on their capacity to respond within their target timescales.
- A proportion of the SCAS workforce is voluntary, which also makes it challenging to manage the capacity of their workforce.

*Co-responders are specially-trained firefighters who are dispatched by the SCAS Emergency Operations Centre to a range of medical emergencies to provide life-saving treatment and care to patients before an ambulance arrives on scene.*



*Co-responding has been running from Great Missenden Fire Station since June 2011, and is now being trialled at Amersham/Chesham, High Wycombe and Marlow, initially until 31 May 2014.*

**Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS)**

- BFRS have 600 crew members who are professionally trained to deal with emergency situations and are reliably available when needed.
- Our crew possess 80% of the core-skills necessary to respond to a Category A calls as part of their regular training. It is possible to integrate the additional 20% of skills into the annual training program.
- BFRS have stations and crew in the locations where SCAS face significant challenges in meeting the demand for emergency response.

## Getting the most out of our assets

### Mobile phone aerials on our drill towers

We host aerials on behalf of major mobile phone network providers, which raises £192k per year, but this might diminish in light of advances in aerial technology, opening-up new locations for providers, diminishing the value of ours.

### Refuel tanks

If you go to a forecourt and put diesel in your car when it is supposed to take petrol, the AA or RAC will come and remove it, but they need somewhere to dispose of it safely, this is what re-fuel tanks are for. We have one located in Milton Keynes and it generates £5.5k per year.

### Renting office space to other agencies

We currently rent space to the Meteorological Office, Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance, British Transport Police and are considering working with the Highways Agency. This provides them with good logistical locations and facilitates good cross agency working relationships.

### Solar panels on roofs

We have solar panels on some of our roofs, work is being undertaken to demonstrate the savings this makes relative to using mains electricity.



## **Annex B: Consultation Plan**

This plan is for the consultation associated with the 2015-20 Public Safety Plan. Individual plans will be developed for any further consultation deemed appropriate following agreement by Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) on the plan and proposals for change arising from this.

### **Consultation Period**

A 12 week consultation period is proposed from Monday 14 July to Sunday 5 October 2014. The outcomes of the consultation together with any proposed changes to the Public Safety Plan arising as a result of it will be reported to the Fire Authority for approval at its December meeting. The timing and duration of the consultation are provisional and subject to confirmation.

### **Approach**

In November 2013 Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned under the National Framework agreement operated by the Fire Services Consultation Association\* to undertake some initial 'listening and engagement' research with the public.

This early consultation work was designed to help inform the development of the 2015-20 Public Safety Plan by exploring:

- The participants' general awareness and understanding of the Fire and Rescue Service and the issues facing it (without being given any significant background information);
- Their 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.

The consultation was also designed to create a pool of people who would be better informed about the fire and rescue service and the issues and challenges facing it than a typical member of the public and on whom we could draw on again in any future consultations associated with the development of the Public Safety Plan.

Some 50 people took part in this initial consultation across five focus groups held in the following locations:

- Milton Keynes
- Buckingham
- Aylesbury
- Chesham
- High Wycombe

We propose commission ORS again to reconvene these groups during the consultation period with, as far as possible, the original participants with additional recruitment to make any shortfall in the overall numbers and consult them on the issues, themes and proposals contained in the Public Safety Plan.

## **Annex B: Consultation Plan**

### **Benefits**

The main benefit of this type of approach is that it is more representative of the public than public meetings which experience shows are typically poorly attended or attract an audience that is not representative of the public or community as a whole. Also it allows participants to engage fully with the consultation materials, ask questions, debate and offer informed opinions and perspectives on what it proposed.

### **Other consultation activities**

In addition to the above we also propose to:

- publish the draft plan on the website and intranet to facilitate wider public and staff feedback;
- consult with the representative bodies;
- circulate the plan to –
  - Neighbouring fire and rescue services
  - Thames Valley Police
  - South Central Ambulance Service
  - Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Primary Care Trusts
  - Buckinghamshire County Council and District Councils
  - Milton Keynes Council
  - Town and Parish Councils and Meetings
  - A range of other public and voluntary organisations with whom we work in partnership
  - Chambers of Commerce and other organisations representing business interests.

To facilitate feedback from these also propose to provide an online consultation feedback facility which would be accessible via our own website and intranet but be hosted by ORS.

### **Follow on Consultations**

The Public Safety Plan identifies aspects of service provision, or the way in which this is delivered, that will be subject to change. Any detailed proposals arising from these will be consulted on an individual, case – by – case basis using methods appropriate and proportionate to the nature of the proposals. It will also be possible to re-convene the public focus groups again for any changes that would have a broad effect across the areas that we serve as a whole.